

Representation, Identity, and Resistance in Two Selected Cameroonian Literary Texts by Victor Epie Ngome and Rosemary E. Ekosso

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Abstract

Representation and identity are complex concepts with diverse connotations that involve the binaries ‘the self’ and ‘the other’. These oppositions could either be referring to an individual, a group, or a particular sex. However, some concepts like Hanna Fenichel Pitkin’s ‘Concept of Representation’, Edward Saïd’s discourse on *Orientalism*, and Michel Foucault’s Concepts of Power and Resistance present a contradiction in the notion of representation, identity, and resistance. What then is a true representation, a real identity? Is resistance always predetermined or an entity in its own right? This article seeks to examine the relationship in these concepts in two Anglophone Cameroonian literary texts notably, Victor Epie Ngome’s *What God Has Put Asunder* and Rosemary Ekosso’s *House of Falling Women* and to assess the validity of the textual representation of a union between two parties and the representation of the African woman in Ngome’s and Ekosso’s texts respectively. The methodology employed is comparative, analytical, and descriptive. The study tentatively concludes that, in as much as paradox abounds in the treatment of representation and true identity, it is observed that the self is in the best position to present itself, that representation, identity, and resistance are intrinsically intertwined, and that Ngome and Ekosso are actively engaged in a textual representation of the grievances of the Minority Anglophones and the unfavourable treatment of the woman in a patriarchal setting respectively. Otherness is found as the root cause of power dynamics.

Keywords: Representation, Identity, Resistance, Power, Textuality

1. Introduction

This book article entitled, “Representation, Identity, and Resistance in Some Selected Cameroonian Literary Texts” sets out to censoriously examine the relationship inherent in representation, identity, and resistance in the chosen literary texts by Ngome and Ekosso. The two texts by a female and male Cameroonian author are not chosen haphazardly, but because they depict the thematic concerns of the article, being representation, identity, and resistance. The article seeks to demonstrate that the self is in the best position to present itself concretely given that the representation of others, other than the self is usually flawed by cultural, personal biases or other secret agendas as depicted in the false union between Weka and Garba. The world sees Weka and Garba as a perfect match, whereas Weka finds herself in hell as she is exploited by Garba. This could depict the many false representations of West Cameroon by East Cameroon that has led to serious identity crisis in the nation as well as the representations of Africa by the West, or the portrayal of the Orient by the Occident.

In chauvinistic societies as portrayed in Ekosso’s text, the African woman is looked upon as weak, dependent on the man, with no voice of her own. Ekosso’s text debunks these false representations and misconceptions of the African woman in

patriarchal settings. the other. This study is significant in its proposal to rely mostly on the presentation of the self by the self, than on its representation by the other which is usually flawed by prejudgements. It equally shows the interrelationship between representation, identity, and resistance.

This article will be subdivided into an introduction, which gives an overview of the article; Part 1, which portrays representation and identity as the problematic of the study is anchored on the conceptual framework of two critiques, Hanna Fenichel Pitkin and Edward Saïd; Part 2, which handles the notion of resistance from a double perspective as an entity in its own right and as a solution to the problematic raised in the study based on Michel Foucault's conceptual framework of power discourses and resistance. The article concludes with a restatement of the article thesis.

2. Representation and Identity

Representation, identity, and resistance are complex concepts with rich theories in themselves that could be explored further, but this article will focus on the conceptual framework of critiques like Pitkin's in her seminal book, *Concept of Representation* and Edward Saïd's discourse on *Orientalism* which both borders on questions of representation and true identity. What appears to be a representation of an individual or group is sometimes very faulty given that the person sitting in for the other is a different personality altogether who is only seeking to appear like the person or the group in question that he/she is representing or acting on his/her behalf as in the case of an attorney. One can also insinuate from the word 'represent' that the affixed 're' intimates to make present, to stand in for, to sit in for, or to make present again. How could one make present what is actually absent? There seems to be some contradiction in the whole idea of representation.

On the other hand, one's personal or ethnic identity is derived from one's personal or ethnic characteristic that distinguishes one or a group from the other. Language, dressing, moral values, beliefs, religion, dishes, profession, hobbies, and cultural practices form part of this distinction. However, one's personal identity could change or be maintained, based on whether the moral values remain constant or are changing. Some individuals for example could experience a change in their age, gender, profession, political affiliations, or sexual orientation which is tantamount to a change in personality too. While personal identities could change with individual circumstances, the family and social identities such as gender, surnames, language and ethnicity remains unchanged since it is a communal feature and not personal. Another problem seems to arise where one could equally question the authenticity of the representation of a personality who has undergone some personal changes without the knowledge of the representative. Representation could sometimes be false based on a number of unforeseen issues. Identity as used in this context will refer to the distinguishing character and personality of an individual or group, while representation will refer to the portrayal of the other by the self, as influenced by their cultural, societal, or personal beliefs and preconceptions. Identity is also discussed in this section as a consequence of misrepresentation and as having a close affinity with representation.

3. Conceptual Framework and Discussions

Suzanne Dovi, in "Hanna Pitkin, The Concept of Representation" explores four different views of representation being the formalistic, descriptive, symbolic, and substantive representations. The word 'representation' emanates from the latin 'representare' which means to make present something that is not in fact present. For Pitkin therefore, representation is a matter of existential fact which to an extent is arbitrary and generally accepted. This is also seen in the case of a crown standing for a king, a scepter or a mitre for a bishop and so on. This type of presentation is glaring in symbols such as emblems and the flag that represents a nation. Literature refers to this as metonymy where a name of something or part is used as an attribute or substitute for a whole.

In view of all the different types of representations, where an object either stands for an individual or a community, where individuals are chosen to represent groups, or constituents being more effectively represented by legislators who are either similar to them or just interested in representing the agenda of the group, Pitkin finds a paradox in the concept of representation and states that genuine representation respects the autonomy of the represented and the representative. The contradiction in this concept keeps increasing if representation is seen as a matter of existential fact. Yes, it is assumed what is being represented actually exists, but at the moment of representation the object or subject of concern is usually absent. How genuine is a representation therefore? Could a representation be a mere supposition in this light? In view of this foregoing argument, the perspective of Edward Saïd's discourse on *Orientalism* that tilts mostly towards a textual and discursive representation of the self and the other appears to lend some credence in disputing the existentialist fact about representation.

4. Theoretical Framework

For Saïd, "[t]he representations of Europe to itself and the representation of others to Europe were not accounts of different peoples and societies but a projection of European fears and desires masquerading as scientific objective knowledge" (85). Saïd's foundational 'Orientalism' examines the process by which this discursive formation emerges. The orient "was almost a European invention and had been since antiquity a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences" (87). He asserts "that European culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self. . . ." (89) and that the Orient or Occident are all man-made following "Vico's great observation that men make their own history, that what they can know is what they have made and extend it to

geographical, cultural, and historical entities. The Orient and Occident both support as well as reflect each other. Since the Orient was neither created, Orientalized, or a work of imagination, he concludes therefore, that the relationship between Occident and Orient is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony. The faulty representation of the East is therefore portrayed as a scheme to project the West as superior to the East. This article will employ this tenet where representation lends itself more to a power relationship between the self and the other.

In this same submission, the Antiguan writer Jamaica Kincaid in *A Small Place* questions those patterns which established the English as superior and Antiguan as inferior. Kincaid draws attention “not only to the power of textual representations but to the ideologies and technologies through which these were and are disseminated and rendered normative” (86). This ideology is further explained by Louis A. Montrose who establishes the relationship between theory and ideology stating that “‘theory’ does not reside serenely above ‘ideology’ but rather is mired within it” (16). To him, ideology which traditionally referred to the system of ideas, values and beliefs common to any social group has also been associated in recent years, with the processes by which social subjects are formed, re-formed and enabled to perform as conscious agents in an apparently meaningful world. A representation is therefore heralded more by ideologies than reality.

5. Representations of Cameroon Literature

There are different ways in which the representation of Cameroon Literature could be perceived: From the perspective of the Southern Cameroon Problem; where Cameroonians of English Expression (Anglophones) feel marginalized by the ruling Francophone regime by virtue of their small numbers and culture, from a common perspective; where Cameroonians of the English and French Expressions (Blacks) resist the exploitative and discriminative attitude of the colonial masters and the neoclassic rulers, from the perspective of gender; where most female writers like Rosemary Ekosso, Werewere Liking, Calixthe Beyala, Margaret Afuh, and Philomène Bassek resist their representation by men. The broad scope of this research paper will be delimited by focusing on Anglophone Cameroon Literature as an imaginative presentation of reality where the worries of the Anglophones, the nation as a whole and the women in particular are taken care of.

Post Coloniality is a discourse of binary oppositions such as the self/other, centre/margin, male/female and a talking back, and questioning of some of the values of colonial discourse. Kincaid states “THE ANTIGUA THAT I knew, the Antigua in which I grew up, is not the Antigua you a tourist, would see now” (92). Kincaid gives a true picture of Antigua as an indigene as opposed to the false representation by the Europeans. Critics such as G.W.F. Hegel, and Kant Emmanuel, saw Europe as Centre and any other as inferior, barbaric and unclean. In the same light, some Cameroonian writers are preoccupied with the representations of the past and the present-day Cameroon. Cameroon Literature is also preoccupied with the questioning of some of the values of the colonial masters and other secondary colonizations.

6. Representation and Identity in *What God Has Put Asunder*

Henry Kah Jick (2008), quotes Emmanuel Ngara where he asserts, “The dynamics of political struggles and social change affect the content and form of works of art so that if we are to understand fully and appreciate the rise, development and styles of the literature of a nation we must see that literature in relation to the history and struggles of its people and in relation to the various ideologies that issue from socio-economic conditions” (Epasa Moto, 53).

Victor Epie Ngome’s *What God Has Put Asunder* makes a reversal of the biblical quotation usually used in marriages which states that no one should put asunder what God has put together (husband and wife). Ironically, the author presents a situation where what is meant to be apart is brought together in a forced union. The playwright presents an unstable marriage between a girl named Weka and a man known as Miché Garba. Before the forced union, Emeka, Nyasse, Jomo and other orphans are sheltered and taken care of by the Rector, Reverend Gordon and Sister Sabeth. The Utopia consists of a religious upbringing of Weka and the others who begin their day with prayers and are trained to say an act of contrition whenever they sin against God and their authorities. Weka gets up late exclaiming, “Blessed Virgin, I can’t believe it’s already morning” (5) while we hear Sr Sabeth inquiring, “you remember to pray at least, I trust?” and Weka responding, “Of course. Many times. . . .” (5) after having missed her morning devotion. The impression one gets is that the orphans are in good hands, but no sooner than later, the orphans and the reader begin discovering the other side of these so called religious patron and matron.

After Sr Sabeth and Rev. Gordon have secretly contracted a marriage for Weka, Sr Sabeth orders Weka to meet the Rector while she takes leave of them. But Weka rises and stands in her way saying, “No, you’re not going anywhere, Sister Sabeth. I want you to stay here and see Reverend Gordon browbeat me into marrying against my will” and when Rev. Gordon addresses her as ‘child’ begging her to shut up, she questions him, “Do you take your children to b. . . I mean, when you used to call me up to clean the mission house, and then drag me into your bedroo. . .” (12). The representation of the religious in the orphanage seems fake and as experienced by Weke and the others. They gain self-discovery of their own selves becoming aware of falsehood and pretense under the umbrella of religion and self-formation. Weka’s personal experience of Rev Gordon’s falsehood with Sr Sabeth begins shaping her perception of her God parents differently. Rev. Gordon’s hypocrisy is further shown when she tells Sr Sabeth, “The child is in a queer mood. You must make her say her Act of Contrition” (13). The author employs a situational irony, where the Rector who has raped and deflowers Weka does not say his own act of contrition, but expects Weka to say hers after brainwashing them through Christianity as portrayed. Sr Sabeth herself is baffled as she questions

Weka, "But... Weka, is...is it true?...That Reverend Gordon took you to...I mean...are you no longer a virgin?" (13). Weka remains silent for a while and then snatches Sister Sabeth's handkerchief as she breaks down in tears.

Representation and real identity are a bit complex and could be likened to the notions of the self and the other: Rev. Gordon is out to exploit the orphans but hides his ills under the veneer of religion and kindness. While the orphans initially perceived him as an ideal man, he alone knew his motives for the orphanage more than the others. When Garba begins rehearsing his speech to take over from Rev. Gordon and Sr Sabeth, the latter tells him, "In a short while Weka will be gone for good. Remember this is an orphanage, and it will be ages before you have another fresh full bodied thing like her. Enjoy yourself, man" (20). The imagery of a virgin and fertile land full of resources and untrodden is personified in Weka. Gordon tested the first fruits and still wishes to continue through Garba his surrogate.

Like his predecessor, Garba ironically makes his campaign speech as chair of the The People's Party, condemning acts of tribalism, bribery, corruption while Kinge his campaign manager proposes a "toast to the inevitable victory of the People's Party" as well as announce on the same august occasion the "taking in [of] a brand new wife in the next twenty-four hours" (21) to enlarge Garba's family. The union which is dramatic is conducted by Reverends Unor and Gordon amidst the jeerings and murmuring of the audience as Weka's consent was not given. To serve themselves from further embarrassments, Rev. Unor declares that "courts are still open, even after we conduct this marriage. And let me remind you that Weka chose Garba of her own free will" (24). To this bold lies, Emeka retorts bitterly:

Which free wheel?... 'Ngwanu' [move on], You may proceed-only because I respect church. But one day we shall visualize who be who. All those cunny-cunny which you people are doing in confidential will composed in opendential. It is me, Emeka Nwachukwu of Umudele Delta who has spoke it. (24)

The use of broken English, historical allusions to 'Delta' and 'Douala' as well as familiar names like 'Emeka' helps the reader in situating the historical context of the play.

When Weka is forced to give her consent by she asserts, "but I don't even know the man, Sister Sabeth" and "something tells me I can't trust this man. I just wonder if someone here cares what happens if he turns mean later. What seems to matter is for me to say 'yes, I do' Okay, Yes, I do" (25). The Representation of the union by Reverends Unor, Gordon, and Garba is valid for them to achieve their agendas, while the same union by Weka, Emeka, and the congregation is not valid. The marriage is temporarily conducted without the matrimonial rings giving the couple a decade to get to know themselves better before the official ceremony can take place if they so desire it. Power according to Foucault is not always physical, but manifested in what people think, speak, and do as eminent in some institutions such as political parties, marriages, prisons, and schools.

Juliana Makuchi Nfah-Abbenyi, in *Anglophone Cameroon Poetry* states that the British and French colonial legacy remains central to what it means to be Anglophone, to be Francophone, to be Cameroonian and it is intrinsic to the representation of postcolonial identities in (Anglophone) Cameroon literature. In her view, being Anglophone or Francophone in this post colony is to be much more than a speaker of English or French. "Anglophone" and "Francophone" are codes fraught with meanings that can simultaneously conjure cultural, political, linguistic complexities/tensions complicated by concepts of nation and/or ethnicity.

The play could be said to have two meanings, the connotative and the denotative meaning. The union between Weka and Garba has another underlying meaning which could be interpreted as the political union between the people of the former southern Cameroon and those of La République du Cameroun today symbolized by the Anglophones and Francophones in Cameroon. The play which could be said to be allegorical makes a real match between the characters in the play and in real life situation: It suffices to state that Weka (West Kamerun) could stand for the English-speaking former Southern Cameroons while Garba (Ahmadou Ahidjo) could be representing the French speaking La République du Cameroun who has cordial relationships with Reverend Gordon and Sister Sabeth who could be representing France and Britain as colonial masters to Garba. The Orphanage could represent Africa as a continent, where the orphans like Emeka (Nigeria), Nyassa (Ghana) and Jomo (Kenya) were neglected by their colonial masters.

According to Shadrack Ambanasom (2012), "Garba's neglectful but exploitative attitude towards Weka represents the attitude of the Francophone leadership towards Anglophones in present day Cameroon, a behavior that has come to represent the central grievance in what Anglophone Cameroonians have identified as the 'Anglophone Problem in Cameroon'" (231). He concludes, that the playwright could be appreciated as one of the radical visionaries and revolutionary writers committed to bigger and more serious socio-political change (24). It is clear from the play that the Subalterns do not always speak when they should. Even though Weka stands up against Garba, one would have expected that she would have done same when forced into marriage. She could be termed a partial Subaltern according to Gayatri Spivak's theory.

For Nfah-Abbenyi, Anglophone Cameroon writing generally reflects the postcolonial melancholy of a union that for some never was and therefore in need of dissolution; a union that for others is fragile, diseased, in dire need of healing and reconciliation. Anglophone Cameroon literature is as such obsessed with what is known as "The Anglophone Problem" for it showcases the anxieties of a marginalized group of people that is required to assimilate and often deprived of the rights of full citizenship. Most of the Cameroonian writers could be said to be actively involved in the question of representation and their defense of their distinctiveness, where they perceive themselves as truly unique and distinct from others.

On a discourse on the Cameroon Novel of English Expression Ambanasom (2012), states, "[l]ike their counterparts in other post-colonial societies, the Anglophone Cameroon writers, having adopted the novelistic form and the English language, are imaginatively exploring, dramatizing and exposing the social problems that preoccupy Cameroonians" (95). The Anglophone writing is a creative terrain for the assessment of post-colonial discourse because of the successive layers of colonial damage

that has settled on the Anglophone consciousness leading to a collective experience. Postcoloniality, therefore, lends itself well to a critic of Cameroon situation where we observe the hegemonic class seizing the voice of the marginalized group, thereby silencing the aggrieved class, and articulating their problem from a wrong angle with the problem of misrepresentation setting in. Southern Cameroon as a whole could be seen as Subaltern in a political Cameroon situation where the minority has little or no say in the government.

7. Representation and Identity in *House of Falling Women*

Unlike Ngome's *What God Has Put Asunder* which focuses on false representation and identity politics and ethnicity, Ekosso's *House of Falling Women* (2008) equally handles the question of representation and identity, from a gender perspective where the woman is doubly condemned; firstly, as a woman and secondly, as a Subaltern. She therefore decides to stay in this condition or speak out and liberate herself. Subalternity can be contextualized with regard to gender and politics. Talking on representation and resistance, Ashcroft and his colleagues posit that much about feminism and its intersection with both colonialism and post-colonialism is based necessarily on two aspects: representation and resistance. Once the subjugated person starts thinking of what he/she is, resistance sets in.

When one looks closely at *House of Falling Women*, one notices how deeply-rooted male supremacy is. In an article, *Resetting Power Structures* in Rosemary E. Ekosso's *House of Falling Women*, Florence Mbi Nchia (2023), opines that "Ekosso deconstructs the gender role stereotype set by the society, thereby creating a new society where the woman is in total control of her destiny and not dependent on the man" (2). Ekosso's piece is contrived as a treatise on women's rights specifically. The text is set in Cameroon and the Netherlands where the woman is a construction of the male dominated society: The woman is trapped in societal norms and expectations and she is usually married off to an older person and has no say in her marriage. For example, when Mrs Elive urges Martha to marry lawyer Etchu's son, Martha rejects the idea on the basis of not having seen him or being sure he would love him. These are stereotypical representations of the woman as not having a voice in matters that typically concerns her wellbeing. Martha's speaks for real herself by pointing out the abnormality in getting married to someone she has never met before.

On the contrary, Martha's parents find this strange given that their contracted marriage has been successful all the same. Mr Elive tells Martha he had never seen her mother before getting married and he respected the arrangement made by his paternal uncle and they are twenty eight-years married already. The same is true for Alice Kimbong who is married off to Herbert at fourteen. Widows like Hannah are expected to marry their brothers-in-law after their husband's death. These representations are being given critical attentions by the author in the manner in which the characters speak out.

When Alice is beaten up by her husband, she escapes to her parents and is sent back to her husband's home on the basis that they are not financially viable to take care of her with her brothers and sisters. "Her parents did not want to hear about her problems. Marriage, said her father sanctimoniously, was for better and for worse" while her mother added "you act as if you never saw your father beating me. As he said, it is for better and for worse. That is how the world is. Men can do what they want. It is their better, and our worse. That is how life is" (131). The institution of Marriage is presented as worse for the female character and better for the male. Alice's mother finds nothing wrong in a man assaulting his wife. This is just normal and should be condoned with. In some cultures, it is even a sign of love and concern for a man to beat up his wife and pet her later on. This ideology and representation of marriages in patriarchal communities is being reversed as some characters will go in for divorces in search of a better lifestyle and happiness.

Lauretta Ngcobo in "African Motherhood- Myth and Reality" states that "marriage amongst Africans is mainly an institution for the control of procreation" (533) where every woman is encouraged to marry and get children in order to express her womanhood to the full. She equally posits that "a dowry must be paid; not to buy the wife as missionaries have wrongly understood. The dowry not only gives exclusive sexual rights to the man, but essentially it is a means of social control over the children that the woman might bear in marriage" (533-34). This explains why most women feel they must be married and bear children to be considered fulfilled in a patriarchal society like the one in question. Nora does all she can to get hooked up to Brown Trail as a means of being happy even when she becomes depressed with Brown Trail impregnating the house help and dating other women like Ophelia whom she beats up.

Filomina Stead in *The Black Woman Cross-Culturally* states "true feminism is an abnegation of male protection and a determination to be resourceful and reliant (qtd in Davies, 561). She further states that "the struggle for equal rights between the sexes is going to prove even more difficult than that of de-colonization because in essence, it is a struggle between husband and wife, brother and sister, father and mother" (562). Ogun-dipe-Leslie is of the view that "the most important challenge to the African woman is her own self-perceptions since it is she who has to define her own freedom" (Davies 562).

Martha refuses to be a victim of norms dominated by male and in favour of the man. She decides to carve out her path which she happily treads after having discovered her identity and mission in life. She sees no reason why men like the yardman she employs feels a rich woman like her with no husband or child at thirty must be depending on another rich man, why a woman must have children and do the household chores, while the man does something better. She also questions why girls who sleep with men at will are considered bad and prostitutes while the man goes free and is still respected, why men's authority should not be questioned, why men should feel as bosses when female students pose questions to them, wash their socks and bed sheets on weekends, why it is normal for an old man to date a young girl but scandalous for an old woman to date a young man, why the Bible written by man stipulates that man is the head and the woman a subordinate. The representation of women in

literature was felt to be one of the most important forms of socialization since it provided the role models which indicated to women and men, what constituted acceptable versions of the 'feminine' and legitimate feminine goals and aspirations. (Barry 122). This section has reviewed some faulty representation of the woman especially in the institution of marriage based on societal constructions which are questionable.

8. Resistance to Misrepresentation and Loss of Identity in *What God Has Put Asunder*

Resistance in this article is portrayed as a consequence to one's loss of identity or a misrepresentation as analysed in the selected texts. Michel Foucault's works on power and resistance relates particularly to social structures and institutions where he handles issues with many of the assumptions that people hold about governance and the role of individuals and marginalized groups in resisting oppression by regimes (Mills 31). Edward Saïd's *Orientalism* about post-colonial theory is influenced by Foucault's work based primarily on the reconceptualisation of power relations not as something which is imposed on another but as a network or web of relations which circulates through society (Mills 29). Power, for Foucault, goes with resistance. For Norman Fairclough, Foucault places discourse and language at the heart of social practices and process. "Power is implicit within everyday social practices which are pervasively distributed at every level in all domains of social life" and power according to Fairclough "should not be understood as a matter of physical violence only but of language, of everyday practices, routine business and habits we no longer think about" (qtd in Döring 24).

The first concept of resistance which is most clearly put forward is attributed to Selwyn Cudjoe in his *Resistance and Caribbean Literature* and by Barbara Harlow in her book, *Resistance Literature*. For Cudjoe and Harlow, "resistance is an act, or a set of acts, that is designed to rid a people of its oppressors, and it so thoroughly infuses the experience of living under oppression that it becomes an almost autonomous aesthetic principle. Literary resistance under these conditions, can be seen as a form of contractual understanding between text and reader", one which is embedded in an experiential dimension and buttressed by a political and cultural aesthetic at work in the culture (qtd in Slemon 107). Resistance literature can therefore be seen "as that category of literary writing which emerges as an integral part of an organized struggle or resistance for national liberation" (107). Ngome and Ekosso's are engaged in this type of struggle. Michel Foucault in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* put forward a very persuasive theory of power that "power itself inscribes its resistances and so in the process seeks to contain them" (108).

Godfrey B. Tangwa in "Is There Really an Anglophone Problem in Cameroon?" avers:

A people's identity is very much tied to their history. If we throw a historical bird's eye view on our recent history we can see that we have evolved within the last 30 years from 'The Bilingual United Republic of Cameroon' to 'The Republic of Cameroon' The sign-posts along that historical path include the Fomuban Constitutional Conference (1960), Referendum and Reunification (1961), Single Party Rule (1966), Unitary State (1972), New Deal Regime (1982), Return to Multiparty Politics (1990) . . . whatever positive elements there may be in this evolution, it is incontrovertible that today many Anglophones feel like a conquered people . . . beginning with the Fomuban Conference, Anglophones have generally lost their bargaining power, as an identifiable group of people with a common history/destiny, shared values, aims, objectives and way of thinking. (50)

This loss of bargaining power is directly connected with the lack of a credible leadership, exacerbated by the inability or failure of the populace to stand up for their rights or take their destiny firmly into their hands. According to Tangwa, the Fomuban deal, a raw deal for Anglophones, "did provide for biculturalism, bilingualism, relative autonomy and juridic equality such as in the provision that the President and Vice-President of the Republic could not come from one and the same federated state" (51). These terms of agreement have not been respected after the Fomuban Conference.

In an interview with Charles Ngiewih Teke entitled "Postcolonial Innovative Creativity and Transformational Poetics: An Interview with Nkemngong Nkengasong", Nkengasong like Tangwa, attests to the reality of an Anglophone Problem stemming from dubious practices with the aim to completely erase the identity of the Anglophone Cameroonian in a one-time Federated Republic. A restoration of the independent federal state seems to be a solution to the disenfranchised Anglophone Cameroonians. The current Anglophone crisis in the restive North West and South West Regions of Cameroon seems to be a reaction to the misrepresentation and loss of identity of a people with a distinct culture and a self-governing system which has been technically and completely erased over the years.

In Ngome's text, resistance to the false union and loss of identity is portrayed when Weka shouts and insults Garba for his infidelity and corrupt practices. She stops preparing food for him when he abandons her to herself. Garba complains, "A man returns to his house, can't even have a bite to eat..." (32) and she responds, "oh yes, of course, a bite to eat, That's what I came here to become--a cook. And yet, how many times a week do I stay awake till late in the night warming supper which you never come home to eat?" (33). Weka questions him about his attitudes, but he would not tolerate any questioning from her. She packs to her father's compound after Garba slaps her and after discovering that he is unfaithful, exploitative, oppressive and unbearable. Emeka and the other men like Jim shun Garba for his poor treatment of Weka. He does not care about his family and treats his children like bastards. His egoistic nature is again portrayed when he visit Weka urging her to return to their former home so that he could continue exploring and exploiting her father's forest and other valuable resources. He tells Weka, "you are going back with me" and she laughs, "Am I? Well, go bring all your brethren, and a stretcher, or better still, a bulldozer" (45). She categorically tells him, "Garba, I have every right to shout or do whatever I like here. Just go away. You have no

business here. Between you and me, it's finished! Why can't you grasp it. Are you so thick . . ." (46). The conjugal union between Weka and Garba is incompatible and born out of economic consideration than out of love for Weka. Besides, Garba and his collaborators steal money from the cooperative society with no accountability.

9. Resistance to Misrepresentation in *House of Falling Women*

As regards *House of Falling Women*, Martha, in opposition to all the norms set by men and the society, freely goes to bed with men such as Tom, Samuel, The king of Rats (Kingsley), Charles, Eyong and Cornelius while abroad. She knows how to please herself and requests for sex for the pleasure of it and not for financial or academic purposes like others did. In Martha's opinion, it was not designed that every woman must marry and bear children because others have a different way as "Every creature has a way to replicate itself and continue the race" (91). Marriage to her is a form of bondage to one man and she wants to be free to chart upon her own course (93). Martha is resisting the societal construct that attaches much importance to the bearing of children by the woman than on love. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's "Can the Subaltern Speak?" addresses precisely the issue of whether people in subordinate, colonized positions are able to achieve a voice (Habib, 748). Martha seems to do so in her way of thinking and actions which defy the acceptable norms in her society.

Similarly, Ophelia Taboko declares she does not hate men, but the problem is that "men hurt and they occupy your life to the exclusion of most other things" (111). Men, though attracted to woman do not want to see them in control. Even though most patriarchal societies have specific norms patterned only for the girl child, these norms are sometimes violated by a few others such as Martha, who sees herself as unique and distinct from others: She defiles the representation of the woman by the society and seeks to please her own very self first by alluding to what pleases her. She has the courage to map out her own path rather than follow the crowd which has no fixed destination.

One of Martha's strongest views is that power comes in when one has options to choose. It is against this background that she opens a Women's House situated at Bekoko Junction with the following objectives: To create awareness in women, endow them with skills and knowledge that will give them more openings in life, and thus placing them in a better position to choose for themselves without being forced into any situation, be aware of what men have done to them, what they have done to themselves, and what they don't know at all. Martha successfully trains about four hundred women improving their livelihood and making them independent of their husbands, living for themselves and not for people who dominate them. Financial viability is seen as a way of giving women control of their independence. Martha fights against aspects of African cultures that cause any segment of a society to lose some privilege to the benefit of another segment. Such aspects in her opinion "should be scrapped" (125).

In the same vein, any religion that restricts one to an extent where one's life is in danger should not be followed. After two years of training in the House of Women, Alice comes to the realization that "you become what you are by the choices you make" (189), and not probably on what society wants one to be. Other literary heroines who, like Martha, have fought against unfavourable norms in the African and African-American societies include; Margaret Afuh's Abo, Buchi Emecheta's Adah, and Zora Neale Hurston's Janie. These protagonists, based on their identities and misrepresentations, stood up against unjust traditional practices against the woman.

Martha makes use of some common examples of culture or ideology in the past which were initially considered right before they were being questioned and corrected or abandoned. She makes use of the example of chiefs in some cultures who were buried with their entire household such as, wives, slaves and livestock and the belief of the Catholic Church that the world was flat until it was proven otherwise. Logically, what the society holds about women has to change for good.

Talking about a good literary piece, Shadrach A. Ambanasom states that the most important concept to consider in a good novel, play or poem is the technique (*The Cameroon Novel*, 26). Ekosso's narrative technique is well structured where she reveals the characters and the central character (Martha) through a flash back technique amidst suspense and humour, with the opening of a Women's House where she recreates the cadence of battered women communing together and sharing their story. Her bilingualism is reflected in her usage of the English and French languages. The novel is a fierce attack on patriarchy as she deconstructs gender hierarchy in favour of gender equality. Economic viability is considered an essential tool in the deconstruction process.

The question that arises from the text which could be given further consideration is why some of the women of the house still long to return to their domineering husbands and why ladies like Martha and Ophelia who are financially viable still dreads the thoughts of being under a man when they could quit at any moment if threats of a control are exhibited. Martha after her encounter with Charles the Councillor, confesses that she is not interested in marriage but needs someone to make love with "someone to overhaul the old juice ducts from time to time" (158). She needs someone who is completely hers, but to whom she is not subjected to. Gladys who is threatened with a gun from her husband while in the States still feels like returning to him. The question of representation and identity could therefore be considered more personal than general.

Representation and Resistance is a common phenomenon in post-Colonial studies. Representation could be defined as the image someone gives of another, while identity is the image someone gives of himself. Most of the representation is done by the self to show the other what is better. Resistance is talking back and questioning some of the presumptions. For example, Joyce Carey's *Master Johnson* was a false representation of the Igbos in Nigeria by a European colonial administrator, while Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* was a talking back as the true self, or a form of resistance to their misrepresentation by the other. Most of Bate Besong's and Mongo Beti's works amongst others reflect this form of talking back.

10. Conclusion

This study had as aim to examine the relationship in the concepts representation, identity, and resistance in two texts by Ngome and Ekosso using the conceptual frameworks of Pitkin, Saïd, and Foucault. This article concludes that the texts used as a working paradigm are allegorical in their representation of an alluded ethnic grievance and gender misrepresentation respectively. It was observed that the self cannot be genuinely represented by the other as the self is in the best position to talk about itself. The paradox in the notion of representation is partly resolved in a textual representation which is discursive in nature and anchored more on ideologies which are imaginative in nature. Marriage in both texts is presented as an institution where the minorities and the woman is suppressed and denied their basic rights. It was equally discovered that textual resistance by the authors of the chosen texts acts as a deconstruction to notions about a legal union between West and East Cameroon as depicted in the marriage between Weka and Garba which is still pending the verdict of the court as to the validity of the union and as a solution to the misrepresentation of the woman based on a biological difference. Representation, Identity, and Resistance are interrelated with some concepts either acting as autonomous or predetermining the other.

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