

## The Journey Motif in Butakean Dramaturgy: Lessons for the Developing World

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### Abstract

This paper seeks to demonstrate in what perspectives the plays of Cameroonian prolific literary baobab, Bole Butake, could be relevant not only to his ancestral territory but also to continental and transoceanic geopolitical realms. Among several plausible matrixes, it examines the journey motif in his nine published plays, two collections of plays, two adaptations for cinema and stage performances to underscore salient beyond-border migratory phenomena characteristic of his craftsmanship. Taking Thomas Sebeok's global semiotics, Sanders Peirce's triads and Jack Child's pansemiotics into account, the paper adopts as approaches *theasemiotics* and *cinesemiotics* in the critical study of the key constituents of paratextuality, dramatic composition, and performance features in Butake's plays. Through this endeavour, the paper establishes a reliable continuum among different plays by the same author; it highlights the much acceptable taxonomy of Butakean drama as well as enkindles interest in the art world on Butake's invaluable input to the definition and edifice of African dramaturgy – a dramaturgy that is simultaneously committed, functional and educative for a universal readership and audience.

**Keywords:** *Dramaturgy, signs, theatre, drama, theasemiotics, cinesemiotics, semiotics.*

### Introduction

The quest for security, freedom, and economic progress, in the face of atrocious repression, xenophobia, corruption, social injustice, power misuse, espionage and censorship in the post-colony has heightened migratory tendencies among contemporary sociocultural groupings the world over. Be it North-South or South-North movements, the question of migration is a cause for concern among committed contemporary African writers, in general and Cameroonian playwrights, in particular. They deal with this subject matter in their creative works through symbolism, connotation, allegory, orature and metaphor. Bole Butake is one of Africa's prolific, iconic and committed literary baobabs whose craftsmanship is insightful in x-raying the predicaments of post-colonial Africa.

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This paper sets out to highlight how, from the perspective of themes, the journey motif in his artistry is relevant not only to his ancestral territory but also to continental and transoceanic geopolitical realms. Of his nine published plays, two adaptations for cinema and given stage performances, this paper delves on his *Lake God* (1986), *The Survivors* (1989), *And Palm Wine Will Flow* (1990), *Dance of the Vampires* (1999), *Zintgraff and the Battle of Mankon* (with Gilbert Doho, 2002), *Family Saga* (2005), and *Betrothal without Libation* (2007, 2011) to underscore salient beyond-border migratory phenomena and lessons for the developing world. Taking Thomas Sebeok's global semiotics, Roman Jakobson and Sanders Peirce's semiotic triads and Jack Child's pansemiotics into account, the paper adopts *theasemiotics* and *cinesemiotics* as useful critical approaches in this study. Semiotics, in Peircian and Sebeokian terms, is a metascience dedicated to the study of signs and the meaning they bear. Peirce's index-icon-symbol and qualisign-sinsign-legisign as well as Jakobson's metonymy-metaphor-synecdoche triads are useful here. On its part, global semiotics is the holistic application of semiotic theories to all societal phenomena. 'Theasemiotics' and 'Cinesemiotics' respectively designate the application of these semiotic theories to the production of meaning in drama /theatre texts as well as cinema. Through this endeavour, the paper establishes a reliable continuum among different plays by the same author as well as enkindles interest with regard to Butake's invaluable input to the definition and edifice of African dramaturgy – a dramaturgy that is simultaneously committed, avant-gardist, functional and educative for a universal readership and audience. For a better understanding, a synopsis of the various plays is useful.

### 1. A Synoptic Expedition

In *Lake God*, the refusal of Fon Joseph, a fanatic Christian monarch, to appease the lake god because of the manoeuvres of his mentor, Reverend Father Leo, results in an irrevocable catastrophe. The only survivors of the calamity set out for Ewawa to look for assistance to bury their dead. In *The Survivors*, five victims of a bombing raid continue their journey to Ewawa but they cannot move on because Officer and his stratocracy would not let them. On its part, *And Palm Wine will Flow* recaptures Shey Ngong's successful undertakings to right the wrongs of the very corrupt, avaricious, and power-drunk Fon Chila Kintasi of Ewawa through Kibaranko and "the savoury juice" of the women's vaginas. *Dance of the Vampires* ostends Psaul Roi, Monarch of a vampire

kingdom whose vaulting craving for “absolute power” pushes him to auction his manhood. His impotence and unquenchable thirst for blood lead to “a terrible calamity in the land” compelling the people to flee. But there is hope when Albino, an emissary from Albinia surfaces to salvage the kingdom. *Zintgraff and the Battle of Mankon* chronicles the encounter between the visionary Fon Galega of Bali, Kamerun and the colonising Zintgraff of Germany as well as their ensuing war against Bafut and Mankon.

In *Family Saga*, Kamalo’s dependence on his “Papa” and his conversion of their deed of brotherhood and mutual understanding into a bond of bondagehood, greed, and self-satisfactory superciliousness push Kamala and his children to undertake an investigative journey into their family history. In *Betrothal without Libation*, in spite of their love for each other, Fointam Ngong would not be allowed to marry Eyong Elissa because of tribal lores. But the “risk of witchcraft” and the prediction of soothsayers would not deter them. This synoptic overview provides a base for our global semiotic, pansemiotic and theasemiotic reading of Butake’s strategy in the journey motif through such elements of dramatic composition as characterization (characters who undertake the journey) and setting (places the characters move to or from) as well as performance features.

## **2. Characterization: Naming the Itinerants**

Characterisation is quite important to plot, setting, action, actantiality and central to subject matter. Butake draws his characters from various worlds and backgrounds – human world, spirit world, various walks of life (priests, tappers, police officers, fons, teachers, children, men, women, guards, house wives, etc.), traditional and modern set-ups (Tanto, Fointam Ngong, Fon Joseph, Galega, Kwengong and Elissa) and alien cultures (Zintgraff, Huwe, Albino, Father Leo, Yaman, Fiekafhim, and Baackingoom) a vast majority of whom undertake a physical, psychological or spiritual journey with individual, community, national, and continental inter-textual semiotic ramifications. For purposes of illustration, this paper focuses on two categories of characters that grow into other characters.

In the physical and psychological journeys from one character to another in the Woman-Mboysi-Kwengong-Earth-Goddess continuum, Yensi / Woman in *Lake God* turns out to be Mboysi in *The Survivors*. Mboysi (which means saviour in Noni Language) undertakes a risky venture to rescue her people and take them to the dreamland of milk

The Journey Motif in Butakean Dramaturgy: Lessons for the Developing World and honey in Ewawa. Unlike the tramps in *Waiting for Godot* who never catch a glimpse of Godot, Mboysi meets Officer on several counts and succeeds to bring him down. She suffers and dies in this process sacrificing 'all' a beautiful woman of her pedigree could have. Thus, she cannot get to Ewawa in her human form. Like Antigone and Saint Joan of Arc, and even more like Jesus Christ in John 12: 47b, she must die to become a goddess possessing the extra-terrestrial moral potential she requires in Ewawa, if success has to be attained. John S. Mbiti (1969, p. 157) corroborates that in African religions, "death is conceived of as a departure and not a complete annihilation of a person. He [the deceased] moves on to join the company of the departed, and the only major change is the decay of the physical, but the spirit moves onto another state of existence". Like Antigone and Saint Joan of Arc, Mboysi's vicarious death is accounted for less by her individuality than the need for her to become a goddess to rescue the people she dies for. As her name implies, she is a legend with saintly or celestial authority. More than Rosa Parks, Antigone and Saint Joan of Arc, the Woman-Mboysi-Kwengong-made goddess is not just "the epitome of the independent courageous female, willing to stand up to [white or] male authority and suffer whatever consequences they are forced to endure" (Wilson, 1991, p. 222). Kwengong spearheads a collective action that pays off. The Kwengong-Earth-goddess combination becomes part of the spiritual force required to clear Ewawa of its evil, transforming it into a veritable Promised Land. Earth-goddess empowers Kwengong on her journey to deal with the source of evil and suffering in the land. Consequently, by positioning a woman at the fore of the problem-shooting process in Ewawa, by presenting Kwengong-Earth-Goddess as the finale of the transformation of Woman into Mboysi, is Butake insinuating that the world would have been a much better place to live in if Jesus Christ were a woman? Or is it another prophetic act of his that on Christ's second coming, he shall take the form of a woman? Butake's take-home message in this build-up is that underdeveloped countries of the South cannot pull alone. Collective action for collective progress should be the watch word. What makes the United States of America great is its several states working collectively. The survivors can never get to Ewawa because Mboysi their torch bearer, full-heartily or single-handedly commits murder on the way and gets killed. The survivors' limping movement to Ewawa becomes Butake's painting of heavily indebted and needy countries of the South which beggarly seek aid from the North in the backdrop of rich raw resources at home. They have to start thinking and

acting collectively to tackle common issues instead of working single-handedly. In addition, Kamala's experience is a pointer to oppressed peoples and communities in similar contexts to shun docility and undertake self-liberating action. This seems to be Butake's central lesson.

In the Father Leo-Albino-Zintgraff triad, Father Leo (*Lake God*) utilizes his Bible, his church and other murals to propagandize Christianity and to attempt providing solutions to the people's sociocultural and economic problems through Europe-imported obsolete "econocratic and technocratic models" (Cernea, Serageldin & Taboroff, 1994, p. 55) without taking local realities into account. His materialism and hypocrisy make his efforts unreliable and ephemeral, especially as he undermines African religion and culture. Father Leo employs anthropological and sociological approaches in his acculturation drive of the traditional society passing judgment on norms and institutions like Kwifon, the Fibuen, Shey Bo-Nyo's priesthood and traditional worship as demonic thus worsening the iniquity of colonization and its obliteration of African religion, customs and decorum. He transforms the village into a neo-colony in which imported ethnocentric Western cultural models are the most valuable paradigms by which African culture is to be appraised. In such a neo-colony, Leo, Albino, and Zintgraff are neo-capitalists par excellence fulfilling the capitalist basic principles of private ownership, free business, the search for new markets and the hunt for profit. This pecuniary attitude is at the core of Leo, Albino, Yaman, Fiekafhim, Baackingoom, and Zintgraff's quests in Africa. These business mercenaries and agents of Northern capitalism quickly transform into profit hunters contrary to their original 'cahiers de charge'. It is their decadent or "stinking form of self-centredness" and their little or no regard for the common good that ruin the humanitarian drive of Europe in Africa and the third world. These neo-Marxist mercenaries in Butake's plays end up facing humiliation in the hands of Africans because they "approach Africa on European terms, with European attitudes and values, without regard for African thought or belief" (Magel, *Ngam*, 1981, pp. 57-58). Like Titanji and Fon Joseph, Father Leo is compelled to commit what David Émile Durkheim (2011) calls animic suicide. He is swept away in the storm of African mysticism by the lake god.

Not having heard of him for a long time, Europe sends a money-totting Albino (*Dance of the Vampires*) to track Father Leo. But like the hare in the tale that got derailed by termites on its way to Heaven, Albino is derailed in his course of finding Father Leo

The Journey Motif in Butakean Dramaturgy: Lessons for the Developing World by the very rich resources of Africa. Instead of offering the people the reliable and conciliatory humanitarian response Albania sends him with, Albino transforms himself into a con man robbing the people of their resources. His materialism and desire to exploit the resources for himself and maybe for his country land him in his own waterloo.

Albino's failure to deliver the expected results pushes Europe to dispatch a gun-toting Zintgraff to the region to right the wrongs of the past. Zintgraff finds in Fon Galega the friend and dupe he needs in attaining his goal as Father Leo found in Fon Joseph. Since Leo's Bible failed and Albino's money proved worthless, Zintgraff thinks his fire-spitting "tube" will help him accomplish his annexation mission. But Zintgraff is not the least different from Albino; he falls in the same termite trap. Instead of exploring the territory in search of his Leo brother as Henry Morton Stanley went after David Livingstone, and instead of conceiving victory-bound war strategies, Zintgraff losses business focus and spends a bulk of his precious time exploring the contours of Kassa's topography as his fingers work dexterously down Kassa's waist in the same manner Yaman, Fiekafhim, and Baakingoom sexually exploit Kamanda (*Family Saga*).

While Fon Joseph, Psaul Roi, and Galega are synecdochic icons of African 'vampire' marionettes who allow themselves to be duped by their European counterparts, what George Nyamndi (1996, p. 230) terms "the African playing agent to his own destruction", Father Leo, Albino, Zintgraff and Kamalo's papa are materialistic artificialisations of "Western powers bent on having a full grip on 'independent' African countries so as to continue enjoying the advantages they had during the colonial era". In this sense, Vampirehood figuratively and axiologically becomes equivalent to living on the sweat of the people, looting and raping their economies, killing and sucking the people's blood in occultic and folkloric rites, repression and accumulation of functions.

Indeed, like Clarence in *Camara Laye*, the fate that befalls Father Leo, Albino, and Zintgraff in Africa is the fate that awaits Europe in the face of African mysticism. The mysticism which explains the probable continuum between Leo and Zintgraff, Martin Fusi brings to light vividly in his film version of *Lake God*. In this screenplay, a white journalist, Jacob Kayerts sets out to investigate what happened to his uncle Father Leo following a disaster near Wum. He learns from Ntobu that Father Leo seems to have died from a curse in the village resulting from the totalitarian rule of Fon Joseph. In a journey that turns out to be hyper mystical through a stretch of metaphors and symbols, Ntobu's

never healing and continuously bleeding wound cannot be cured even in the Bamenda hospital nor by Father Leo but it is to a medicine man the medical doctor refers Ntobu for a solution to his problem and those of the community. Thus, in the Butakean plays concerned and Fusi's screenplay, African mysticism consists in the lake god mystery, the beauty of her women, her rich resources and war prowess. What Anthony Cecil Brench says of Clarence holds sway for Leo, Albino, and Zintgraff, that through the European expedition to Africa, we "look forward to the time when Europeans would find an antidote to the sterility of Western materialism in the mysticism of Africa" (Ngam, 1981, p. 61).

The first lesson worth underscoring in this transformatory journey from one character to another is that following Father Leo's confrontation with Kwifon, Albino and Zintgraff's Waterloo in Africa, European logic that conflicts with African common sense, Europe's crumbling demise in the face of African mysticism and spiritualism, international organisations have begun to "encompass the status of taking culture into account in African development in the widest possible context" (Serageldin & Taboroff, 1994, p. 268) – a context deeply rooted in social, political, economic, historical, and cultural local realities.

The second lesson is that Leo's introduction of the money economy through his purchase of cattle and other raw materials, Albino's misuse of Albanian money, and Zintgraff's sexual assault on Kassa have far-reaching consequences on the economic systems and other domains of community life. These are indices that these aliens derailed from their original terms of reference for self-interest. Behind the original terms of reference of their missions lurked the hidden dimension to swindle the rich resources of the people. Frantz Fanon takes this to global or pansemiotic scaffolds when he avers that "The wealth of developed countries is our wealth too. For in a very concrete way, Europe has stuffed herself inordinately with the gold and raw materials of the colonial countries. ... Europe is literally the creation of the third world. The wealth which smothers her is that which was stolen from the underdeveloped peoples" (Tcheuyap, 2002, pp. 180-181). Butake succeeds to artificialize this message in his plays. These emissaries of humanitarian action from the North should have had follow up or control missions trailing them.

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**3. Bases and landings**

Also important to the journey motif are the places and spaces characters move to or from. Bole Butake uses an eclectic geography in his “drama of migration” (Simo, 1994, March, p.3). According to Peirce’s trilogy of signs, these spatial entities are presentative sinsigns whose toponymic study broadens our comprehension of the total message and the theme of migration, particularly. Such places as Ewawa, Ngangba, Kombi, Yaounde, Kingogo, Osse, Mankon/Bamenda, Njinikom/ Fundashing, Batibo, Mbengwi, Bali, and Bafut, as well as such spaces or attractions as palm bushes, lakes, market places, estates, twin-streams, groves, courtyards, palaces, barns, flower gardens, battle fronts, tents, village squares, raffia bushes, and churches constitute the destination characters move to or from. In this paper, a few cases are analysed to illuminate how they connote migratory tendencies.

*Lake God* and *And Palm Wine will Flow* are set in imaginary societies that are typically traditional African herb-dominated and patriarchal with strong religious belief and mystical traditions. They are “organised collectivities of people living together in a common territory, co-operating in groups to satisfy their basic social needs subscribing to a common culture and functioning as a distinct social unit” (Tabuwe, 1990/1991, p. 149). While *Lake God* is set in an unnamed place near Ngangba, Kingogo, and Kombi, *And Palm Wine will Flow* is set in Ewawa. Ewawa becomes the place where the survivors hope to obtain help to bury their dead (p. 88). It is a land of invitation and hospitality. Shey Bo-Nyo echoes this aspiration in stating that:

*They have different gods in Ewawa.  
We shall seek refuge there.  
Perhaps they will help us burry our dead.  
They are good people; and they will be glad  
To give us food and shelter (Lake God, p. 88).*

The image of hope and the survivors’ aspirations in Ewawa as the promised land resonate in the following exchange:

**Ngujoh:** *We will get to Ewawa before the sun goes down*  
**Tata:** *Songs and children in the village square.*  
**Bolame:** *Laughter and food!*  
**Mboysi :** *Smiling faces! Open arms and music and dance! But...*  
**Ngujoh:** *Foofoo, roast chicken and palm wine!*  
**Old One:** *I am looking forward to a really descent meal. My mouth waters even at the mere thought. Foofoo, roast chicken in palm oil and pepper and palm wine! (The Survivors, p. 17).*



*And Palm Wine will Flow* takes place in the grove and only shifts to the palace in a brief but decisive flashback in which Earth-goddess and the naked women at the twin-streams complete Shey Ngong's inevitable war against Fon Chila Kintashi. In this war, Shey Ngong uses Kibaranko as a B52 jet bomber, a raid chopper or a drone striker whose action in the palace is tele-commuted from the grove: "Kibaranko in action!/ Let their heads be crushed like pumpkins .../ Let smoke rise from the rooftop, and the palace lie desolate!/ Kibaranko! Perform your task!" (*And Palm Wine will Flow*, pp. 39-40). Mbuh Tenu Mbuh (2014, p. 158) comments that when Kibaranko raises the palace to ruins, "we are meant to see this as the nullification of a [neo-] colonialist power structure that installed autocracy based on a warped Nietzschean strongman-will-to-power". Kibaranko's going on attack missions without restrainers is like pilotless war planes. The powerful Kibaranko becomes a transportation medium for Shey to reach out to the palace psychologically and physically. Butake also uses Nsangong as a spy-plane and the naked women at the twin-streams as marine war ship or an AC1 Gun ship whose twin-stream action torpedoes the Fon through the vagina liquid. Beyond its therapeutic value, urine transforms into war machinery and becomes an irrevocable *deus ex-machina* and an antidote used to relief the community of its pervading ills. Theasemiotically, urine becomes Butake's retaliatory device and part of a new form of neutron bomb or nuclear weaponry whose breath asphyxiates Fon Chila Kintasi to death in exactly the same manner as Father Leo, Angela, and the victims of the Lake Nyos 'bomb' die by suffocation. It is such armor that Shey Ngong combines with the raid chopper Kibaranko, spy-plane Nsangong, his wives, the women cult and Earth-Goddess marines to launch a raid on the palace overthrowing the Fon and his regime. Manyaka Toko Djockoua (2014) attests that to attain this blend, Butake, like O'Neill, relies on expressionism and magic realism. Whatever crimes are committed against his person, his people, his nation, and his world in *Lake God*, Butake succeeds in avenging them in *And Palm Wine will Flow*. In theasemiotic or global semiotic terms, the *Lake God* disaster becomes a physical replica of the moral and spiritual decadence and disaster our contemporary society goes through as well as an extended metaphor for drone strikes that have thus far characterized NATO's war strategy in the Gulf, Iraq, Syria, Vietnam, Libya, Afghanistan, Ivory Coast, and Central African Republic.

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In *Lake God, And Palm Wine will Flow*, and *Zintgraff and the Battle of Mankon*, the grove or shrine is not only the abode where Shey Bo-Nyo, Shey Ngong, and Galega go to liaise with the gods and ancestors, but its coolness contrasts with the world without and transforms it into a place to which Shey Bo-Nyo, Shey Ngong, Nsangong, and others return for comfort, revitalisation, and hope; where Tapper goes for devout renewal after undergoing humiliations in the outside world; where Kibaranko returns for rest after devastating the palace; the sacred grove by the lake is where the seven pillars of Kwifon retreat to attempt saving the land. It is basically the place from which the solution to the major problems raised in the texts has to come. Djockoua (2014, p. 175) confirms that “Earth-Goddess’s (Kwengong) journey from the twin-streams to the palace aims to free the Ewawains from a burdensome and dictatorial reign”. In terms of Sebeok’s global semiotics and Jacobson /Peirce’s semiosis, these locales and spaces are metonymic and representative icons or metaphors for the United Nations, the UN Security Council, the African Union, the National Assembly and the Senate, where authorities retreat to seek lasting solutions to burning international and national questions.

*Family Saga* and *Betrothal without Libation* are allegorical with names of persons being names of places. Beyond the denotative level, Kamanda is German Kamerun, Fiekafhim is France, Baackingoom is Britain, Sawa is South-West Region, Ngong is North-West Region, Kamalo and Kamala respectively are La Republique du Cameroun and Southern Cameroons just as Elissa and the Itoh Eyongs are representative of the South-West Province while Fointam Ngong/ Bobe Ngong’s family represent the North-West Province. Jacques Raymond Fofié (2011, p. 243) explains that “The anthroponymic and toponymic onomastics blend in Bole Butake’s creation, which is, in effect, an originality”.

In *Betrothal without Libation*, Fointam Ngong and Elissa Eyong’s physical journey from Bamenda (Mankon) to Fundashing (Njinikom) theasemiotically metamorphoses into a painful but liberating movement from the present into the past, from literacy into illiteracy, from light into darkness and from the earth into hell like Jesus Christ. The journey is worth undertaking to free Bobe Ngong, his progeny and the Bikoms from primitivism and backwardness. Bobe Chia validates this when he admits remorsefully to Fointam Ngong that “We are all ignorant people, living in a world of our own ... My son, forgive us all for our ignorance” (p. 74). Butake exploits the Ngong-

Elissa successful bond to delve iconically, analogically, and allegorically on the unity between the two Anglophone Cameroon regions (North-West and South-West) as well as transposing it to the level of state. Fofié reiterates this mental image that the play “advocates for concord among Anglophone Cameroonians themselves before uniting with their francophone counterparts. In this light, the message in *Betrothal without Libation* foreshadows the general message in *Family Saga*” (2011, p. 251). In global semiotics, they become representational metaphorical representamen of feudal communities in the world.

It is evident from our character and setting analyses that as a result of frustration and the desire for improved living conditions, the survivors in *Lake God* set out for Ewawa village – a symbol of hope, land of glory and hospitality. Unlike the biblical Noah and the chosen flood survivors who undertake a physical and spiritual journey into the future, and as an index to the thousands of immigrants fleeing their native lands for greener pastures to America, Europe, and Asia (in the face of domestic hardship, xenophobia, obsession, and alienation) but who never really arrive as a result of ship or boat wrecks, plane crashes or strict immigration laws, the *Lake God* survivors, as they set out on their torturous physical journey to Ewawa, actually begin their long day’s journey into night. Like the black Americans who never get their dreams realized in Langston Hughes’ celebrated poem “Harlem (A Dream Deferred)”; like the Tyrones in O’Neill’s play who undertake a psychological journey into a past that never was and thus into oblivion, the survivors set out to have their dream thwarted and to be torn apart; worse than Estragon and Vladimir in Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot*, the survivors in *The Survivors* never really get going; like Brutus Jones in *The Emperor Jones* who gets caged or lost in the dark forest of his misdeeds and like the Youngers in Hansberry’s *A Raisin in the Sun* who never move into their new house in the all-white residential allotment, the survivors cannot move to Ewawa. They must wait to undergo a physical metamorphosis through saviour Mboysi’s antigoneic and Saint Joan of Arcian death or undergo a psychological death and change their identity like Sizwe in Athol Fugards’ *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* if they must get to Ewawa. There is a powerful lesson Butake dishes out to the developing world here. That Shey Bo-Nyo, the symbol of moral uprightness survives the toxic gas and the wrath of the gods is an invaluable index that African Religion triumphs over Western religion. The survivors learn their lesson by the end of the play but choose

The Journey Motif in Butakean Dramaturgy: Lessons for the Developing World to trail the wrong course. They prefer to escape to Ewawa instead of opting for a self-reliant new beginning at bay especially as there are greater chances for procreation with a man and a woman, a boy and a girl, surviving. The survivors' journey into oblivion or into the unknown could be viewed as not only a replication of African people's migratory nature in search of greener fields and escape from sociocultural, political, economic and natural havocs but more as Butake's lesson to his fatherland (Southern Cameroons). The survivors' migration is a vivid theasemiotic recapture of Southern Cameroons' nightmarish journey to the East in search of brotherhood and protection, but the fate that befalls her there is the chaos in *And Palm Wine will Flow*. East Cameroun becomes Southern Cameroons' Ewawa and Golgotha as Nalova Lyonga (1993, p. 161) intimates that the Lake Nyos catastrophe is now "a metaphor of repression or dissemination ... The historical disaster at Lake Nyos in the North-West Province is now a potent symbol of the victimization to which the Anglophones are prone". This is accountable for why Southern Cameroons is currently licking the wounds from its unwise decision to undertake a journey East into oblivion. Indeed, as Backingoom condemns Kamala for his disregard of advice, "The stubborn fly follows the corpse into the grave" (*Family Saga*, p.19), Asia, Europe, and America become Ewawa for the thousands of migrants who get hurdled as they seek better life there. The journey motif becomes a metaphor for life that rather pilots man to self-destruction or infraction of family ties. What Joséphine Ndagnou dramatizes in her film titled *Paris à tout prix* (2007) and what Jean Emmanuel Pondi (2006) focuses on in *Migration et diaspora: un regard africain*, tend to foreshadow Butake's treatise against unwise purposeless and unexplained immigration or brain drain into the unknown. That it is Shey Bo-Nyo or Old One who proposes departure to Ewawa in spite of his wisdom and that Kamala's wife runs away to a polygamist abandoning him with two kids and a resourceful estate, are theasemiotically reminiscent of reallife persons who, for economic, religious, sociocultural, political, and adventurous reasons, champion the course of rural and continental exodus. Igwezu, in Soyinka's *The Swamp Dwellers*, counsels that there is "no earthly use to change one slough for another" (p. 40). This is why Butake, unlike Calixthe Beyala, Mongo Beti, Gilbert Doho and many other Cameroonian and African writers, repudiates all immigration opportunities offered to him and has remained at bay as an emulatable example of what option the survivors in *Lake God* ought to have taken. Stephen Mforteh (2014, p. 399) confirms that Butake gives hope

to his readers and audience by “staying on while his peers chickened out and went to look for greener pastures elsewhere in the closing years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century”. Officer gets exploitatively attracted to Mboysi because of her beauty. Mboysi’s charming beauty transforms into a synecdoche of the beautiful world which the survivors abandon behind them for an unknown Ewawa. The survivors’ escape from their resourceful land to Ewawa is evocative of Moses and the Israelites’ escape from Egypt to the Promised Land through the Red Sea. The clearing becomes the survivors’ red sea while Ewawa becomes their Promised Land, and the fate awaiting them there is similar to the current Israeli-Palestinian imbroglio. *Lake God* and *The Survivors* are hence, Butake’s rewriting of the Bible story for the local people and contemporary society.

Kamala’s union with Kamalo becomes a replica of the survivors’ journey to Ewawa. Kamala’s journey to ask his father, Baackingoom, to revoke the deed of brotherhood turns out more frustrating and Kamalo’s papa’s night-time visits to the common estate barn theasemiotically extrapolate the journey motif to transoceanic echelons. It becomes expressionistic of third world leaders or former colonies that run back to their colonial masters to seek ready-made solutions to homeland challenges. The May 17, 2014 Paris Summit on Boko Haram bringing together presidents of Boko Haram-affected African countries and the French President as well as previous summits on Libya, Zimbabwe, and Tunisia are cases in which major decisions on issues affecting African peoples are taken in countries of the North. Fointam Ngong and Elissa’s tedious physical journey from Mankon to Fundashing become an expression of the mental ordeal they must go through to get married. Ntobu’s uncertain journey to the hospital in Bamenda to seek lasting solutions to Laka’s undiagnosible illness turns out to be a cinesemiotic scientific journey to pit modern medicine against African mysticism and the victory of the latter lays bare the short-comings of the former especially as the Bamenda Doctor admits that “We’ve done what we can, but it can’t hurt to take him (Laka) to a traditional healer” (*Lake God*, Film script, p. 53).

The trend in the North-South ecotourism differs from the South-North (im)migration. In Butake’s “theatre of migration”, Leo, Albino, Zintgraff, Yaman, Fiekafhim, and Baackingoom are pansemiotically or globally reminiscent of European explorers who travel southwards for economic, sociocultural, eco-touristic and political interests in a new form of post-Marxist Northern dominance of Southern economies

The Journey Motif in Butakean Dramaturgy: Lessons for the Developing World whereby the natural and human resources of Southern countries are swindled to countries of the North with impunity, with the complicity of hard-hearted puppet leaders in power resulting in the regression of the third world economies. Such puppets like Officer, Psaul Roi, Fon Joseph, Galega and Chila Kintasi hold their respective economies hostage on behalf of their neo-Marxist Northern masters.

In this neo-Marxist framework, the solutions to the socio-political and economic crises of African and third world countries are sought in Northern countries. In this new dispensation, Fon Joseph, Psaul Roi, Galega, and Kamalo opt to sell their national patrimonies to Leo, Albino, Zintgraff, and Fiekafhim respectively without bothering about the fate of the local people they are supposed to protect. These leaders in power become agents of neo-imperialism and are teddy bears at the mercy of Western neo-Marxism. To attain their various goals, Father Leo uses the Bible; Albino depends on the power of money while Zintgraff relies on the authority of the gun. But how effective these imperialist instruments become in the face of African mysticism remains by far abated. Be it the North-South or the South-North voyage, the migrants hardly attain their onset objectives and suffer – the survivors never really get to Ewawa, Officer and Mboysi get shot, Zintgraff gets beaten in battle, Albino's adventures turn out to be shambolic and Yaman, Fiekafhim and Baackingoom's exploitative feats are defeated with the Kamalo-Kamala self-discovery and reconciliation.

Since dramatic texts are only a means to playable texts, performance designs effectively enhance the journey motif in Butakean dramaturgy. Here, the theatres that have thus far hosted the performances of Butake's plays and the place of the audience stand out significantly. The architectural designs, contributed immeasurably as venues in setting the tone and the atmosphere of the plays. The structure of these theatre halls and audience sitting positions facilitated the actor-audience encounter and prepared them for a psychological journey into the performances. The halls which hosted Butake's performances in Europe (Leverkusen, Bayreuth and Gelsenkirchen) were essentially oval in shape. Like them, the shape of Amphitheatre 700 of the University of Yaounde I and the open-air and in-door Amphitheatres of the National School of Administration and Magistracy (ENAM) with their fixed audience elevation vis-à-vis the built-in actors' depression, projected the audiences' superiority and submissive undertaking of a psychological journey into their inner selves to view on stage what went on in their sub-

conscious. The actors' play, scenery, technicalities, aesthetics, directing and other paraphernalia were facilitating theasemiotic instruments charting the course of this psychological journey.

## **Conclusion**

This paper has attempted to demonstrate that through the journey motif, Bole Butake's dramaturgy is well as meaningful to both the local and the international geopolitical realms – a leading constituent of Anglophone Cameroon literature which Tande Dibussi (2008, p.12) depicts as “buoyant and thriving ... impatiently waiting for the world to discover its depth, diversity, and beauty”. Through his creative legacy, Butake's applied theatre or Theatre for Development (TfD) potential as well as its participative and people-oriented approach enhance its specificity, originality, relevance, authenticity, textuality, commitment and writerly disposition in regard to local and global questions. This is surely why Christopher Odhiambo (2012, p.15) sees Butake as not “just a committed writer, but a prophet”. The playwright utilizes theatre as an invaluable instrument for mobilization, conscientization, and development. Through this kind of theatre, Africa and the Developing World discover self, “the falsity of their hegemony is exposed ... [and replaced with a] morally tenable social system in which the right to equal opportunities, justice, truth and freedom of expression are guaranteed” (Ngongkum, 2008, pp. 210-211) and different peoples the world over are made to “discover their common humanity [as well as] ... help to bring mankind together, open the door for peace building and peaceful coexistence” (Alembong, 2014, p. 46).

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