

SYMBOLISM OF FUNERALS IN THE BAMILÉKÉ PEOPLE OF CAMEROUN FACING THE CHALLENGE OF GLOBALISATION

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Abstract:-

Every people have its culture at the heart of its existence and thereby presenting itself as the guardian of the later. This is the reason why the Bamiléké people through funerals promote their cultures in the whole world; hence the need to take an interest in this phenomenon. This study intends to show the place, the primary value of funeral practices in West Cameroun in contact with exogenous cultures, especially the western ones so-called modern. These cultures thereby meet themselves in the proliferation of globalization, taken as the meeting point for cultures of the whole world. We have thereby used semiological and anthropological methods to see how funerals as heritage in the Bamiléké zone do to keep their values in the context of globalization. Thus, the opening of African cultures to others is not devoid of consequences because if this cohabitation results in the spread of local cultures, the result is a progressive loss in the originality of the later, specifically the Bamiléké funerals.

Mots Clefs: - Symbolism, Funerals, Bamiléké, Globalization.

INTRODUCTION

The Bamiléké, a constituent group of the West Cameroon Highlands region still known as "Grassland" or "Grasfields", are variously perceived by author's vis-à-vis the origin of the name and the people. However, there is agreement in relation to its origins of the Nile from which they would have left, following the multiple invasions of Ousman Dan Fodio, a famous missionary of Islam in Africa. He came in search of the so-called pagan followers on behalf of Islam and supporters across the African continent. The Bamiléké would therefore have arrived on the western highlands in their flight from the invader's ideology, to settle on the territory it now occupies in West Cameroon. This being the case, they constitute one of the four major cultural areas of Cameroon. In this reflection, I will focus on the funeral practices in the cultural area of Cameroon is commonly referred to as Africa in miniature because of its proven cosmopolitan culture composition. It has four major cultural areas namely: the peoples of the forest of South -Cameroon, the Sudano-Sahelian peoples in the North Cameroon, the peoples in the Littoral Sea and the Grassfields people in the West Cameroon. They each refer to an originality through history, artistic productions, architecture, politics and societal organizations. The grassfields peoples of the West Cameroon where I come from, in order to see their adaptation to the contemporary globalization context.

In the African traditions, if there is one that resists the effects of modernity, and is growing in seize, it is certainly that of funerals (Ndongmo and Kouam, 2001: 5). In the Bamiléké's cultural sphere (West Cameroon), this practice constitutes the demonstration of piety proper to the living for the dead or towards their deceased ascendants. They want to pay them a final tribute, raise them to the rank of ancestral dignitaries through rites of passage that end up in a festive celebration.

Funerals constitute an institution in the Bamiléké zone, that is, a social fact. It is in this sense that they constitute an integral part of these people's collective memory. They are "*ways of acting, thinking and feeling*" which preceded and survived with man (Rocher, 1968: 28-29). This practice is part of a vast field of belief and a collectively represented system shared by the Bamiléké people. It is consubstantial to the cult of ancestors² as an expression of religious sentiment and symbolically translate the family relationship between the living and the dead³. The Bamiléké considers the ancestors as intermediaries between the living and God, as spiritual humans with unexpected spiritual abilities. They may be at the origin of the fortune or the misfortune of their off springs. Hence the interest to organize their funerals because the "*the dead are not dead*"⁴.

THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

In the context of this reflection, we shall use two methods of analysis. The first method is semiotics or semiology. In fact, these two approaches mean the same thing; since the first one is of American origin and is defined by Charles Senders Peirce as "the doctrine of essential nature and fundamental varieties of semiosis" (1978: 135) or trial of sign. The later means "all what communicates in any way a defined notion of an object". (Peirce *ibid*: 116). Semiotics or the science of signs contains according to the American trend both linguistic and non-linguistic elements. The use of this approach which identifies two aspects of the sign: (linguistic and nonlinguistic) consist of decrypting, not only the essentials of verbal communication surrounding funeral practices in the Bamiléké land, but also to analyze the facts, the attitudes, in short the entire non-verbal signs which accompany this practice. Furthermore, the anthropological approach is defined as a science devoted to the study of man. It is a pluridisciplinary approach in varied domains, among other specialties; educational anthropology and cultural anthropology.

1. This is the domestic ancestor worship, which is a religious ceremony, a sacrifice or offerings in honor of the dead with whom we have family ties. (Fouomena, 1996: 45).
2. Indeed, ancestor worship is based on a principle: "I cannot make libations by way of offerings to an ancestor if this dead person is not one of my ancestors or indeed during his lifetime I did not have vital relationships with this dead man "(*ibid.*).
3. It should be noted that the followers of the so-called revival churches do not make these commemorations because they do not tolerate the relationship between the dead and the living.
4. http://dictionary.reverso.net/frenc_definition:/anthropologie.consulté le 07/01/2020 à 08:03 P.M.

The later centers its subject of study on culture in order to bring out all the intellectual aspects peculiar to a civilization, a nation and all the acquired forms of attitudes. Anthropology would then be in the sense of Marie-Helene Carre considered the most appropriate study of human groups. The use of this approach will enable us to better assess the attitudes, even the devotion of the Bamiléké people to funeral practices.

I- Overview of funerals in the Bamiléké land

In the Bamiléké's cultural sphere (West Cameroon), this practice constitute the demonstration of piety proper to the living for the dead or towards their deceased ascendants. They want to pay them a final tribute, raise them to the rank of ancestral dignitaries through rites of passage that ends up in a festive celebration. Funerals constitute an institution in the Bamiléké Zone, that is, a social fact. It is in this sense that they constitute an integral part of these people's collective memory.as earlier mentionedthey are "*ways of acting, thinking and feeling*" which preceded, transcendent and survive whit man.

I.1 Socio-cultural foundations of funerals

This section will focus on the origins of funerals practices, prerequisites to their organization, objectives, functions and social representation.

I-1.1 Origins of the practice

Many arguments have been forwarded by our informatory in the field concerning the origin of funeral commemoration in the Bamiléké land.

A school of thought forwards the argument of tradition, by affirming that this practice exists since the time of the ancestors. The founding ancestor of the tribe or of the village who wanted to say goodbye to his dead one introduced a practice. He then invited the others in order to organize this commemorative ceremony in honor of the deceased. This strongly implemented practice in the Bamiléké land as well as in many other part of Africa will loan or from afar meet that of the countries said to be civilized. In this regard, Erick Herman Siake writes:

Many are then people said to be civilized who practice cult to their dead ones. The rituals can vary the objective remain the same. The westerners and Asians keep in their houses the ashes of their dead ones. The Chinese practice rituals to their dead ones during "the dead's feast". Erick Herman Siake (2015:14).

Since then, this practice has been institutionalized and stood as a debt or a moral obligation towards the society and continues until date to perpetuate from generation to generation even though it is noticed that it progressively wins remarkable proportions relating to social dynamics.

Another school of thought thinks on the contrary that this cultural practice of the Bamiléké people has a biblical foundation. In fact, they estimate that just as we commemorate Christian feasts, funerals are the commemoration of a parent's memory, deceased father, deceased mother, etc. It is a traditional form of asking graces and blessings. In this move, the sacrifices done during these ceremonies constitute exploratory sacrifices and mean acts of repent for the people concerned by these cultural ceremonies. In their analysis, the fathers Ndongmo and Kouam (2001:55-58) observe that the commemoration of funerals in the Bamiléké land (and even in old Egypt) obeys the implicit practice of the Exodus 20:12 which says we ought to honor our father and mother in order to have a long life and blessings. These people watch over it with dexterity. However, this conception is nevertheless an abuse of interpretation, since it is well known that the holy bible mentioned here as reference forbids all veneration or worship of the dead and advocates an effective consideration of living, as can be seen in the book of Mathew 8:22 "but Jesus said to him, follow me and let the dead bury their dead". Another thesis not too far forwards the point of view that funerals as celebrated nowadays could be introduced by the disaster of the colonial period. In fact, facing the hostile resistances witnessed in the Bamiléké land, the colonizers used the napalm⁶ to exterminate the Bamiléké people. Since then, the chiefs or families organized funerals, either collectively or individually to commemorate their dead ones of long dates. It is then in this way that, the practice perpetuated as years were passing to be of the magnitude that characterizes it nowadays. Nevertheless, whatever thesis is forwarded concerning the practice of funerals, the organization of these ceremonies requires absolute prerequisites.

I-1.2 Prerequisites to the organization of funerals

Generally, in the Bamiléké's culture, these ceremonies require a long period of preparation given their festive and sumptuous character to avoid any improvisation⁷. To organize the funerals of a dead, you have to first be the principal heir of the componned, that is, the head of the family and then respect the traditional conditions aimed at the organization of the former.

After the death of an individual, and the period of lamentations, his successor is designated (most often by the deceased during his lifetime in a written or oral will delivered to relatives) and publicly presented to other family members. The successor therefore inherits all the prerogatives of the deceased and becomes the new head of family, the officiant or the priest of the family with all due respect to its rank and function. As such, after an estimated sufficient period, he exhumes the relic or the skull of the deceased to keep it in the family altar, while waiting for the funeral's organization. It is right that Fouomena (1996:47) observes that:

6 Chemical weapon used by the settlers on the highlands of West Cameroon during the period of and which at the time caused enormous loss of life.

7 We often observe sham in the organization of funerals, which is the cause of public disorder. To remedy this situation, for example, the sub-prefect of Dschang had decided that any request for a declaration of event due to funerals must be initiated by the successor or principal heir and pass through the village chief before arriving for he level for study.

In fact, in this ethnic group (the Bamileke), when the head of a lineage dies, before his funerals takes place after two or three years, his skull is exumed⁸ after one or two years and kept in the family altar by its heir. The heir will now on present himself to the head of lineage's offspring as the (Nzen- Ndah) heir and "priest of the family".

The respect of traditional conditions concerning the organization of funerals is based on two duties; the duty towards the family and harmony towards social hierarchy. The duty towards the family implies that the heir should summon the sons-in-law of the dead in order to determine the amounts or contributions of each group or sub-group. In addition, the time limit of payment is determined. During this meeting, the heir has the right to receive his guests. This is most often about killing a pig, preparing it and serving it to his guests. We should note that another pig is killed and distributed to the in-laws in the form of steaks. Every in-law then has the responsibility to mobilize the required amount to be paid to the heir and that will serve in "purchasing the course of mourning"⁹. This amount will enable the heir to organize the ceremony and receive the guest on the great day¹⁰. All this, without any consideration of the individual reception of the offspring concerned by those funerals. They each have their "mourning or funeral house"¹⁰ during this general organization. Furthermore, it is important to note that all these parameters undergo changes according to the social status of the deceased.

For those who have few or no sons-in-law, the head of family summons all his family so that they can all together fix the date of the funerals and the required amount that everyone is going to pay and date of payment for these amounts of money. Funerals also appear as an excuse to seal the unity of the family. Indeed, the various family councils organized are forums where all the outstanding issues in the family are exposed and resolved. The agreement required between the various members of the family here below is also *the prefiguration of the one sealed beyond between the ancestors and the deceased* (Ndongmo and Kouam 2001, 20).

On the other hand, the hierarchy must be respected. The council of notables, headed by the chief of the village, firstly verify if the claimant is effectively the one having the right to organize these funerals. Moreover, they verify if the dead had paid all his rights to the secret society to whom he belonged in order for the successor to fulfill if need be. In addition, the dead must have celebrated his father or parent's funeral before. Likewise, we should note that despite the fact that some authors consider the practice of funerals as a tradition of wastage as Romarin

8 Skulls are essential material supports for ceremonies. They update the presence of the ancestors within the members descending from their lineage or their tribe. Because, according to the beliefs of the Bamiléké, the immortality of an ancestor goes through the immortality of his soul in his skull

9The heir is in fact responsible for the main court of mourning and this, as we said above, on the sidelines of the mourning house (reception) of any member of the family.

10In the Bamiléké tradition, when the funeral of an ancestor is organized, each son or daughter must be able to receive apart guests in a house that he has either built or rented for this purpose. But he is still responsible for having built his own house before the funeral of his ancestors

Djiako points out when he says: "(...) fast calculation, two hundred thousand francs for drinks, a pig of one hundred and twenty thousand francs, goats, a sheep, fish, two hundred and forty thousand francs for fresh provisions, five hundred thousand francs for shitless cutlery, red wine..." All this is minimum five millions that JM originating from the district of PenkaMichel¹² spent in one day for his parent's funeral meanwhile he was still nothing in the village.

Others on the contrary, joined by traditional dignitaries, guardians of tradition consider funerals as a factor of development regarding the economic activities and jobs that develop around this practice. Thus creating what people called "*industrial funerals*". In some villages, the organizer is obliged to show his development committee card. Briefly, we realize that all these human and economic investments around a practice having socio-cultural and biblical foundations come from a consequent organization chart. Nevertheless, this practice also comes from the tool that constitutes it.

II- ANALYSIS OF THE FUNERARY ARSENAL IN THE BAMILEKE LAND

This is to describe the material constituents of funerals, to see if the increase in globalization has taken away nearly all man's domain of intervention. Thus, the domain of funeral is not excluded from these mutations.

II.1.1 Funeral Clothing

In the Bamileke culture, when involved in a ceremony, being it traditional, ritual or religious, a particular attention placed on clothing, linked to given symbolism. The funeral practices cannot be carried on without these clothes. The constitution of the later is not ordinary. In fact, they are made of stained fabrics and various patterns. They are known for their notorious traditional values under the name of "*ndop*¹⁴". This is a traditional tissue colored blue on a white background, on which there are careful arrangements of geometric figures such as; rhombus, squares, circles which alternates throughout the tissue. We can notice the alteration of these geometric figures. These constituents express elements of the universe linked to culture. According to Djache (1994-131), "*the circle refers to the whole world; the sun refers to the four cardinal points, the patterns of life and dead. For them, the triangle and the rhombus has a feminine nature. They are signs of feminine fertility*".

These "*ndop*" tissue representations are also identified on the decorative art at the entrance of many upper chiefdoms.

11RomarinDjiako is a journalist for Menoua actu magazine which is published in Dschang in the Menoua department of west Cameroon

12District located in the department of Menoua west Cameroon

13See Menouaactu n ° 001 of March 2017.

14The "*ndop*" is the name of this prized fabric, which is of primary value in Bamiléké ceremony and which is also known as the main garment at funerals.

This tissue can vary in themes of color. The multiplicity of these colors as observed is not a simple gratuity. In fact, the colors do not only have an aesthetic purpose, they also express aspects of religious beliefs and aspects of human realities. Red refers to blood, life and power for he who sports it. He can be the heir, the sovereign or any other person; he is also the renaissance in power of the dead, beneficiary of the funerals. He also traditionally connotes danger and even death. For darkness, it symbolizes death, invisibility. As for the blue on this tissue, it refers to mourning.

For him, the white color in funeral circumstances is a connotation of dead's color, ghosts. It also refers to mourning. As we can see, the *ndop* tissue and the colors constitute a major symbolism in the Bamiléké funerals.

***Ndop* loincloth**



(Photo: *Ndop* loincloth during funerals, Foréké Dschang January 2017)

II-1.2 Masks during funerals

Generally, in African societies, masks are elements that represent godly people or ancestors; revive their poor life to restore among sensitive humans. We should thus note that the mask is a ritual object, which beyond the visible physical aspect is also a major element linking the world of the living and that of the dead. It is a major element of cult in the Bamiléké cult. This is what explains their presence during funerals in the Bamiléké land. The mask has many realities; it may be according to cases theatre object, idle purpose, playful. It is also considered according to anthropologic research as an instrument of protection for the community or for he who sports it. Thus, Christiane Falgayrette-leveau cited by AnastasieGweth (2008:42) affirms; “(...) the mask protects he who forgets his own face to become another one. The mask accompanies him up to the limit of life and supernatural in order to put face to face the gods, the spirits, men”. Here, it is considered in human, godly or even animal sense. It is to embody the respect of the deceased’s spirit and threat for the non-initiated. The mask’s sacred nature makes it an essential element in traditional dances, which constitute the Bamiléké funerals. Nevertheless, all what is said on masks are non-verbal, yet, they pass on concrete information for the initiated and this brings them to an initiate function. However, on this initiate side, the patterns and features that it carries can understand the messages of masks whenever it equally carries important elements of communication. According to their diverse natures, masks that enter the Bamiléké funerals are important.



(Photo: Elephant hooded mask, Babajou December 2020)

II-2.3 Fire arms:

If at the beginning, firearms had purely war functions, the Bamiléké have readapted them for other purposes due to globalization. We would recall that firearms of circumstances nowadays are of very high invoice compared to those of few years ago. If it is an important element in the organization of funerals, it is linked to all the senses that it carries. When dancing groups perform, launching of guns are jointly executed with the objective to produce the most possible noise on the burial site so as to clean it up with any unhealthy mind that could be wandering around. Moreover, gunshots on the funeral site are important in the transition process of the deceased from one world to the other in an extraordinary manner. In fact, the gunshots are executed to announce to the underworld the arrival and enthronement of the deceased in his new world, the world of the ancestors where he is now registered. The number of gunshots has no constraint. According to their purchasing power, the organizers can shot as they want as long as it participates in to the success of the festivities. However, restrictions emerge from the former aspect in relation to the current events of our country. The use of firearms is in fact restricted in some regions of the country among which is the West region until further notice to better control the situation that prevails in the Anglophone regions¹⁵ of the country... on both sides, this gap is progressively replaced by fireworks that sets up progressively.



(Photo 4: Modern weapons in funerals, Foréké Dschang January 2017)

II-2. Other power tools in funeral practices (feathers, ponytail and elephant’s tail and, pearls.)

In this study, we are going to limit ourselves to some tools among which feathers, ponytail and elephant’s tail, pearls.

In the history of the Bamiléké people, there are elements that emerge from the difficult war period through which these people went through. During war, when a warrior came back with ponytail, he was considered a winner who conquered the opponent. In this regard, Ecclesiastes Djeudji makes clarifications: “during the confrontations between the first Baleving¹⁶ king and the Peuls, it was very difficult to disarm a rider. The king thus decided to attribute a title to anybody who comes back with ponytail as a sign of victory. Ponytail has then become a 15 for nearly four years now, Cameroon, an independent and sovereign state, has been facing a crisis. security situation in the English-speaking regions of the country, pitting the regular army against the unidentified bands, secessionist armies, perpetuating attacks, kidnappings and massacres, thus undermining not only the stability of these regions, but of the country as a whole.

16Balevin is among the oldest villages in the Menoua department and is located in the Nkong-nhi district.

Symbol of victory, power and invincibility. Its use during funerals is in homage to the deceased whose act of bravery are celebrated, power. It is the base, a simple ponytail whose color can be black or white but we should note that people who are sensitive to aesthetics add pearls on it in order to beautify the item. It is currently noted that chiefs use ponytails colored white. As for the elephant’s tail, we can say that it gets its name from the fact that it has many properties. In fact, compared to ponytail, it is not widely spread. Chiefs mostly own them because they are not only mystical but they also enable the chief to avoid being attacked by evil spirits, moreover, their hairs have therapeutic properties.

2-2-2. the leopard’s skin:

The leopard is known as one of the most wild and dangerous animal on the earthly space because of its ferocity. uring our research, we were told that during their initiation to the lah’kam (secret society of the chief initiation in the Bamiléké land), they receive among other totems the leopard, and it is also an element that justifies the presence of the leopard’s skin in nearly all the areas of cult or sacred areas in the Bamiléké land. The presence of the leopard’s skin during funerals consists of affirming the power that the deceased benefited. The aim here is therefore to show this power through the leopard’s skin that is waved throughout the ceremony, which participates to his introduction to the rank of ancestors and thus the power he will use to protect, bless and helps his close ones. Let us clarify that the leopard is not the only animal of totemic category, there are many others.



(Photo: Panther skin during funerals)

II-2-3. Feathers and pearls

Generally, in the Bamiléké culture, we notice that feathers are fixed on traditional caps, on hoods. They contribute in adding the decoration of the pieces that wear them and even their ritual values. Feathers symbolize softness, peace. In addition, they are signs of power given to an individual within a secret society. When they appear on hoods, they are strictly feathers of roosters. As for pearls, they are white round concretions that form themselves in some shell. They are scarce objects whose priority comes from this scarcity. They carry important symbolic meanings and values. In fact, every grain represent a life that forms a whole with the others, one's survival depends on the other's survival. We therefore realize that the pearls united on both sides refer to union and solidarity. It still matters to note that in addition to these meanings, their arrangements enable to come out with traits referring to a female genital organ, symbol of fecundity and fertility. Apart from the representation of fertility, we sometimes find provisions referring to the spider, which is symbol of wisdom, intelligence and foresight. They are mostly found on other elements of value.

II-3. Funeral decoration in the Bamiléké land

Funeral ceremonies in Bamiléké land are given equal attention in such a way that the sole decoration of the funeral space is an art. This part will make insistence to the meaningful elements that can be observed during these ceremonies.

II-3-1. The implantation of the "AKOUP"

The "AKOUP"¹⁷ is a decoration that is implanted either at the center or at an angle of the principal mourning compound. It originates from the first funeral practices in the Bamiléké land. In fact, this funerals element is transversal in the west region (Bamiléké). Most often, during funerals of simple individual, only few clothes and a picture of the deceased are exposed in the principal funeral compound. It is one of the most important items during funeral ceremonies. It is constituted of divers elements; banana clusters all dug up with their trunk, fruits from rapid, bunches of palm kernel, rods of peace tree, one picture, a basket containing maize and even one cloth of the deceased. When the funerals are in homage to a man, the choice of these elements is a symbol of what he was during his lifetime. In case it is a woman, a hoe, a feminine dress and a picture of the deceased are added as far as the meaning remains the same, in order to show the memories of a person who worked during his lifetime to provide for his off springs here on earth. During funerals in memory of men and women (mixed) twinning of the two sexes is practiced when it includes individuals who died at a marriageable age. Banana clusters are added, they symbolize youth. The rest of the decoration is done with trees of peace. Beyond the first aspect centered on memory, this element can also symbolize final shielding of the funeral place. Its 17 this word is borrowed in the "Yenba" language and refers to all the tubers, crops and crops of the deceased to these are added a photo, some clothes of the deceased etc.

Implantation also seals the door to claims. Its implantation in the middle of the principal compound is done in the evening at the eve of the great day and marks the conclusion of customary terms. From then start traditional dances. In particular circumstances, it can be implanted earlier (before the eve of the great day). In fact, when it concerns chief's funerals or any other dignitary that takes place in more than one week, it has to be implanted earlier as possible in order to welcome the different delegations that coming from elsewhere (the chief and notables). As we can see, Akoup is traditional and a key element that participates in funeral practices in the Bamiléké land.



(Photo 13: The Akoup, Foréké Dschang January 2017)

III-3-2. Statues

They are full relief figures, representing a human being. In the Bamileke culture, they occupy a central place and their constructions take into consideration animal and human structures. Statues are regularly disposed in any side of the funeral compound not for decoration as many uninformed people may think. In fact, these statues are evil load-bearer and magic put in them. This evil load is the principal reason to be of the later on the funeral place. They protect the funeral place from any attack that may disturb the good functioning of this cult. They refer to the power of the animal or human represented.

III-3-3. Traditional dances

In the African story, dance has also been at the center of all life-specific events. Being it a death, a ceremony that consist of chasing away evil spirits, ceremonies of public award of a good hunting trip, a warrior victory, a birth or even a marriage, everyone has always been accompanied by parades or traditional dances. Here, the later are from a definite meaning, that is why in the Bamileke tradition, they occupy a place of choice. Dufait.M, cited by Ngoungang 2015, 23 affirms; “dancing before any other thing is to communicate, unite, meet, and talk to the other with the depth of his being. Dancing is the union, the union between man and man, the union between man and the universe, the union between man and the God” thus the interest given to traditional dances. Beyond the folk character, which they present, they have a social and cultural meaning in all their aspects. It is in this direction that Ngoungang (2015, 24) says;

The traditional dance (Fouoc-seh in the menoua) is mostly executed to accompany the deceased and protect his offsprings against the latter's admonition if unhappy or evil spirits of all nature.

Many families claim to have regain peace and happiness after accomplishing this duty. Thus, the performance of every group of dance depends on the presence or not of the upper chief, the chief of the village and the head of the quarter¹⁸. When the chief takes part of a funeral, he officially open the ceremony by the dance named “*keza 'fo 'o*”¹⁹, who does the solemn opening of funeral dances.

At the end of this part, which centered on the constitutive arsenal of funerals, we realize that the sacred aspect of funerals in the Bamiléké land greatly relies on all the elements staged. However, the social mutations linked to globalization have led to all the visible changes in funeral practices.

III-3-4. The attenuation of certain requirements in the organization of funeral practices in globalization context.

Funeral celebration nowadays benefits a liberalization, which in turn leads to modernization of the rite. From there comes the negligence manifested through the resistance of some people who have spent many years in town to go to the village and celebrate their parents funerals, which have been buried there after their death, and refuse that theirs should be celebrated after they die. Some are followers of religion revealed orthodox, Pentecostal and other obedience, which have a high propensity due to globalization. They fight against the said practices by referring to Holy Scriptures. The progressive imposed track rule by imported data, either from the western world or, from urban zones. The urban mind progressively clears off the attributes that once belonged to the rural world and made it the temple of traditions. This is not without consequences. In fact, these mutations cause curses in the Bamiléké families. Because refusing to go and do parents funerals and refusing our children to celebrate ours when we die is refusing to refund and give back what our parents and ancestors ate during their life time in the village during order people's funeral celebration.

¹⁸Representative of the senior chief of a given quarter

¹⁹A dance performed by the chief to officially open the funeral ceremony he is attending.

²⁰L. MebengaTamba, Anthropology of funeral rites in a Cameroonian urban environment, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2009, p. 184.

On the contrary, this non-refunded food now becomes a “poison” that will fall on the future generation and the descendants of the deceased. That is why we cannot cut some segments of tradition and mostly funerals. We equally deplore that with globalization, there is the deportation of some funeral celebrations to urban zones because by celebrating them in town, there is the same risk since you feed strangers and town people who do not have the same lacks as the those who live in the village. It should be reminded that funeral celebration is also aimed at feeding the populations, thus we cannot feed people who do not manifest lack of food. Besides, the deportation breaks with the principle of refunding, because, you have to feed, not those whom your parents and ancestors ate their food during other funerals and celebrated burials in the village. That is why despite all the cases of misled, funerals is a strong link of the Bamiléké culture. The umbilical cord between the Bamiléké population in town and the one in the village, and rural world will remain the meeting point for their celebrations. This attenuation is also characterized by the refusal by some youths to honor some obligations near the traditional authorities. Funeral organization requires obtaining a permission from the chief, to fulfil certain obligations, for instance if the person whose funeral is to be celebrated belonged to a secret society. Moreover, some children transformed by urban mind refuse to give all what the custom requires.

Furthermore, instead of using traditional meeting for their parent's funerals they content they with band and of the choir which they brought from town, which use orchestra that the person's whose funeral is organized did not even know during his life time. It has thus settled lightness in the observance of some traditional obligations in these ceremonies, with others who prefer coming from town with sound system devices that sings and makes noise all the night during the burials. Meanwhile the corps of the deceased is waiting sadness in order to know how his relatives are missing him after his physical disappearance. Because, it must be said that, in Bamiléké cosmogonies, “the dead are not dead and their soul turns around their corps after the loss of breath by the body²¹”. Others make directly funerals and burials.

Apart from this new way of proceeding, which focuses on the burial, the traditionalists, it is also important to point out that; the unanimity of the practice is being increasingly challenged for various reasons in an ever-operational globalization.

Thus, on the one hand, supporters of religious currents who do not identify with this practice whom they call an idolater because of the Christian ideology he defends. Nevertheless, they are still recovering in remembrance of celebrations of other kinds to remember their dead and therefore, to thank God in these cases they say to celebrate the mass / action cult of grace. During these ceremonies the organizers devote themselves to prayers of song and divine praise which for them is a celebration in memory of a loved one disappeared. On the other hand, funeral

21M. Kuété and A. F. Dikoumé, Space, power and conflicts in the highlands of West Cameroon, Yaoundé, PUY, 2000, p. 45.

Ceremonies in the globalized world are also making in the face of an ideology that does not identify with any of the above-mentioned forms of celebration. For the latter, there is no need to celebrate the funeral in any form, be it in its form traditional (traditional rites and rituals enhanced with magical-spiritual practices), or still in their religious form, namely celebrations furnished with the Eucharist and other songs and religious practices. Included in the in-between, these would constitute a cripples some of the Bamiléké people.

CONCLUSION

The desire to understand the phenomenon of funeral symbolism in the Bamiléké land has implied the attention that we paid to thinking that was centered on the symbolism of funerals in the Bamiléké land according to globalization context. Firstly, it appears that funerals are important rituals where ceremonies celebrated in honor of a deceased a certain time after his inhumation. We have been made to question ourselves on a central issue on the practice of this captivating reality, which increasingly mobilize itself in the Bamiléké land: how do the funerals in the Bamiléké land keep their value when they encounter external culture (western culture)?

We have therefore arrived at the fact that, as the practices present themselves in a contemporary way, they are a new flagship for the domains of culture.

Conclusively, the new instruments that enter funeral organization in all plans due to globalization participate in the brightness and thus the major visibility of this practice. For most of them, they are material innovations and do not encroach much the spiritual aspect of this cultural practice. A clear analysis of the funeral arsenal in the Bamiléké land lets appear the cultural meaning still superficially perceived by the *doxa*, meanwhile the godliness relevant to dignity constitute the main course of this practice dear to these people. Apart from this, the Bamiléké culture gets its survival from elsewhere; they are ultimate occasions of cultural manifestations of large-scale. Still, the economy takes its capital from the multiple exchanges and operations takes place there. Nevertheless, for a strong culture, efficient, a backup is necessary. The introduction of new elements linked to globalization in the Bamiléké culture will not go without consequences. It should be noted that these practices which are precious to Bamiléké peoples, and which until then were leading to a strong mobilization of human pools, is experiencing a notorious disturbance and even an outright suspension due to the global corona virus pandemic also known as covid-19. Indeed, the funeral practices in Bamiléké land are today at half-mast in order to avoid the spread of the virus that is decimating the world. It should be noted that this measure is not only applicable to the Bamiléké since the ban was imposed by the public authorities and proscribed gatherings of all kinds, all this in order to contain the evolution of the virus throughout the national territory. Thus, it is according to this logic that the celebrations of funerals though, a part of the habits of these people must be refrained till further notice.

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