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Staging Nation Statist Self-Identity in Jaramogi Odinga's *Not Yet Uhuru (1967)*

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Abstract

This article argues that an autobiographer, at the time of writing about self, is aware of existing public perception about who s/he is. The construction of self in the autobiography is therefore a form of staging self as an interplay between knowledge of self against nuanced public understanding of the autobiographer and circumstances which produce him. The paper employs Istvan Dobos's argument on autobiography as a staging of self to analyse how Oginga Odinga constructs self in his *Not Yet Uhuru*. The paper is also informed by Craig Calhoun's theory of nationalism particularly his arguments on the construction of civic nationalist identities. The paper relied on close reading of the text to evaluate how the autobiographical self-constructs self-relative to his thematic thrust a well as relative to other characters in the text. However, insights of the context which informed the autobiography were gleaned by extrapolating other secondary texts.

Keywords: civic nationalism, staging, nation statist

Public Interest Statement

Fictionalisation of history and the historisation of fiction are significant paradigms in the construction and reconstruction of any nation state's collective memory. The postcolonial State in Africa is at a stage in which a nuanced conversation of its sense of collective identity has intensified in view of the onslaught of the fast moving and quickly shifting global stage. Autobiography is an important site in which such a conversation can be produced and circulated. This paper analyses Jaramogi Odinga's autobiography which was written at the nascent stage of Kenya's postcolonial State as an attempt to retrieve the beginnings of such a conversation.

Book Summary

Jaramogi Odinga, Kenya's first Vice President published *Not Yet Uhuru* in 1967 after his resignation from government. He had, while in government, associated himself with the socialist redistribution politics, while Jomo Kenyatta whom he deputised inclined himself towards capitalist accumulation. *Not Yet Uhuru* is a reconstruction of Odinga's contribution to the nationalist project through the colonial period and attempts to define his political philosophy. Written retrospectively, the autobiography highlights what the author views as the significant trajectory of the journey of Kenyan nationalism and suggests that the nascent postcolonial State missed hers steps in confronting the ideals of the nationalist project.

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1.0 Introduction

Dobos (11) argues that by narrating self the autobiographer is in a transient process of becoming, through re-instantiating self-understanding. Dobos further argues that narrators reproduce the narrated self in the state of crossing the border towards changing their identity. Autobiographers utilise their roles as narrators and protagonists to stage their identities in the state of crossing the border towards changing their identity. As argued in this paper the identities the autobiographer changes are those of self to public. The facts which the autobiographer chooses to make public, about self, illustrate nuanced public symbolism. This is because, as Lejeune (36) argues, the narrator reconstructs the story of her/his life from the unique perspective of the entity that actually experienced it. The experience the autobiographer goes through even in the most private moment is nuanced with public correctness. In the process of recollection, the autobiographer battles with private interpretation of self-identity against postulations of his/her identity as known to the public. The changing of self-understanding of an autobiographer postulates a continuous process of losing and recreating identity in the course of recollection (Dobos, 11). The narrator establishes identity through the staging of the recollected self, the fundamental condition for which is exactly the need to get to some distance from herself/himself. For one who recollects, the staging of self-offers opportunity to relive the

old self while changing own identity through facing the possibilities of surfacing in it. The narrated autobiographer is willing to change roles, to create a persona who replaces and expresses an ego in order to contemplate self as other (12).

2.0 Re-Memory and Self (Re)construction

Not yet Uhuru is narrated as a recollection of the narrator's struggle against colonial hegemony and residual colonial hegemony in post-colonial Kenya. It narrates the staging of Odinga's civic nationalist identity in a shifting social structure that mutates from colonialism to neocolonialism. Although published barely half a decade after Kenya attained independence from Britain, in 1964, the title of the autobiography questions the existence of independence and freedom in Kenya (the Kiswahili word Uhuru ambivalently suggests two closely related but different ideals: independence and freedom). This is a clever strategy the narrator employs to position his centrality in the narrative. The adverb 'yet' suggests a continuum in which Kenya's independence within the implied time frame is cast in doubt. The title teases the aspirations of the past against the expectations of the future within the time frame of the implied present. The title as conceived in 1967 by the author infinitely remains the signature of the narrative suggesting the infinite reinvention of the time frame suggested by the adverb 'yet'. It invites us to see the shifting nature of the social structure by suggesting that the colonial subject remains under subjugation in a neocolonial experience. This opens up possibilities for the narrator's staging of a resilient portrait of self which is adversarial to both colonial and neocolonial spaces. He positions himself as a civic nationalist agent in the infinite nationalist struggle for independence and freedom in Kenya. The adverb 'yet' mutates as an insignia of the militant narrative voice that forever craves the elusive attainment of independence and freedom. The shifting time frame implied by the adverb 'yet' questions the possibility of closure in the context and meaning of these two lexical items: independence and freedom. This suggests that independence and freedom in Kenya are suspended in idyllic time and space; forever awaiting attainment. The narrator defiantly announces his presence by pointing out the absence of these nationalist ideals which, by implication, he cherishes. The adverb "yet" also persuades the reader to contemplate the narrator as the alternative voice of how these ideals can be imagined, constructed and staged. This foregrounds his agency as a committed civic nationalist.

The narrator recollects and recreates his life relative to the struggles fought during colonial and postcolonial Kenya. In the colonial period he plays a key role in the nationalist movement. At independence he briefly joins the post-colonial government as Kenya's first

Vice President. However, he becomes disillusioned because the ideals of the nationalist movement are underachieved or subverted as the colonial condition mutates into a neocolonial one. The narrator consistently foregrounds his desire to locate a space to enhance his civic nationalist agency against the neocolonial structure. He, on the other hand, describes his resistance to the subjection of the colonial and neocolonial structures' attempt to construct his identity by inscribing racial, gender, class and ethnic codes.

As a first person narrator, in fiction, the autobiographical narrator tells his narrative with the advantage of hindsight. He processes his thoughts, feelings and actions to suit his self-portrait. In this case, Odinga constructs himself as a consistent freedom fighter, a liberator and civic nationalist who sacrifices self-gratification for the good of the country. He cites examples of how he forgoes many of his personal interests to attain the greater national good. For instance, following Carey Francis's advice he sacrifices his ambition for higher education to participate in building his country as a teacher. He also suggests that he resigns from Maseno (his first teaching appointment in colonial Kenya) not only because he intends to encourage African teachers at the missionary school to stand up for their dignity but more importantly to resuscitate Maseno Veterinary School where African students who are considered less endowed attend school. He tells us that these students are treated with indignity and humiliation. They are despised and discredited. A conversation with a senior officer at the Veterinary School confirms the position:

> I don't think there is anything you can teach the boys because most of them are dupes who cannot learn. You could help me go round the barazas to lecture your people in the field how to look after those *Shensi Ngombes* (primitive cattle). I don't know your language so you could translate my English and we would train your people than by wasting time with the few dupes you have (59).

This conversation foregrounds the racist world view of the white veterinary officer. It also sets up a stage for the reader to contrast it with Odinga's civic nationalist world view. The dupes in the school are as inconsequential to the white veterinary officer as are the '*Shensi Ngombes*' in the neighbourhood: their value is inexplicably co-related. However, whereas the *Shensi Ngombes* require his help he reckons that the students don't. Any cognitive knowledge is irrelevant to them. Even the physical environment depicted by the school structures is despicably derelict. The narrator dramatises how he struggles to change this impression and how he engages his energies to transform the school's

policy to advance a meaningful education to the students. Despite significant challenges from the school administration he reconstitutes the students' image of themselves. He describes how he persuades them to see his point of view regarding their agency as respectable individuals whose destiny only they can shape. As a result, he transforms the school into both a practical and intellectual centre. By foregrounding this piece of information the narrator deliberately uses juxtaposition and parallelism for three rhetorical strategies: to characterize, to set a scene and to evoke a powerful atmosphere. First, the humanity of the students is juxtaposed with the bestial nature of the cows. Second, the primitive (Shensi) quality of the African cows is a parallel description in line with that of the student 'dupes'. This highlights to the reader the cruel mindset and character of the coloniser. But more importantly, it sets the stage for the narrator's self-accomplishments as liberator especially by highlighting what he is up against. This use of rhetorical strategy recurs within the narrative frequently and contributes greatly to establish the heroic stance of the narrator within the narrative.

The narrator utilises re-memory to select his thoughts, feelings and actions. By carefully selecting what he prefers to remember from the kaleidoscope of his life and what he thinks about that which he remembers, he constructs an attitude that is consistent with the nationalist liberation project of the Kenyan state. However, his first person point of view limits him from understanding the split and fragmented nature of his self-identity. He portrays himself as brave, relentless, resilient, and dedicated to what he considers just no matter the cost to his physical, socio-economic or political life. As the hero of his narrative, he presumes agency in the role he plays in his life and, later, in the autobiography, the role he plays in the community around him. He characterises himself as one who bravely confronts those in positions of power and demands for justice so long as he feels obliged. The narrator creates the impression that he does not falter in his political vision and in his interpretation of political events both in the colonial and post-colonial periods. His resistance to the colonial structure remains the same even as the colonial structure mutates into a neo-colonial one inviting new actors to instantiate its presence.

The narrator exploits the largesse availed to him as a first person narrator to shape the perspective through which we can view narrative events. As readers we are able to share in his thoughts, reach to his heart in a manner that we cannot with other characters. We end up knowing him more than we do other characters. This makes us close to him and to view the narrative events from his perspective. This makes us sympathetic towards him and to relate to his circumstances with great understanding and sensibility. The reader

traces his childhood as he struggles to attain education against the difficult circumstances that he lives. Steeped in poverty and physical hardships, the narrator describes how he struggles to economically emancipate himself and his Luo people and how he subsequently faces immense challenges in establishing his businesses. The reader follows him as he delves into politics and shares with him the frustration of political manoeuvres and insincerity which characterises nationalist struggles despite his relentless effort to achieve equity and justice to the African colonial subjects and later to the subjects of the post-colonial state.

The narrator positions himself relative to his characters so that we interact with his characters within his narrative strategy. He stages self as the protagonist in the narrative while other characters provide the backdrop for his character development. We, therefore, see all the major characters (Carey Francis, Jomo Kenyatta, Tom Mboya, Achieng Oneko and others) through his eyes and within the spectrum of the portraits he sketches for us. For instance, he describes his friends within AEMO, except Mate, using totemic images: Muliro, a sailing boat; Ngala, a young hippo; Mboya, a rabid black dog; Oguda, a black dog and Moi, a giraffe. But reserves a more dignified human description for self "… I myself was called Mzee, the elder one" (145). By using totemic images to describe his colleagues the narrator calls our attention to the symbolic meanings associated with those images and cleverly suggests how we are to analyse them. There exists a glimpse of his attitude to each of these characters if one considers the tone he employs in this descriptive vignette. Of all the characters it is only he and Mate whom he describes in human terms.

The narrator dramatises how the colonial media simulates images of Mboya (a character whom he throughout portrays as his main rival in both the struggle for independence and in the post - colonial period) as the alternative African leader and attempts to muzzle the narrator's opposition to Mboya's connivance with the colonial structure to exclude Kenyatta (and by extension his supporters) from the united approach to the advancement of African Nationalism. According to the narrator, the East African Standard editorial, for instance, says, "Mr. Mboya's motion was put down from irreproachable concern for his fellow men. He and his colleagues will be quick to realize how their case has been weakened… by Mr. Odinga's outburst" (157-158). He quotes another paper as saying, 'let the people come forward now and hound Odinga out of political life forever' (158). By staging these alternative portraits between his own and that of Mboya's the narrator inscribes greater nationalist credentials for himself than Mboya's by suggesting that Mboya pursues narrow personal interests rather than national ones. The point the narrator is trying to make is that the emotive nature of the colonial media

reportage underscores the prevalent view of muting the narrator's voice and in consequence the voice of Kenyatta as the colonial structure reinvents itself into a neo-colonial regime. It also underscores the urgency with which the colonial structure negotiates anxieties within it in the face of the narrator's perceived militancy.

The narrator traces in a systematic manner how he consistently interrogates the space and time he is located and tries to manoeuvre his existence as a questioning agent rather than as a silent object. The narrator is critically interested in the time and space occupied by the emerging identity of the Kenyan state and signals a significant sense of doubt and uncertainty in its axiology particularly of the post colony. Throughout the narrative the narrator locates himself in various intersections within which his actions shape the experiences of both colonial and post - independent Kenya. As a teacher at Maseno High School, the narrator portrays himself as almost single handedly having challenged the social and psychological afflictions imposed (by the colonial agents within the institution and outside of it) on the African teachers and students by resisting the symbols of colonial power. He is keen to project this resistance as a microcosm of his civic nationalist agenda. The symbols of colonial power within the institution manifest in diverse ways. These include names given to and used to identify African teachers; differing entry points for salaries of African teachers who have to enter at a lower level as opposed to their white colleagues with similar training; levels of social engagement, whereby African teachers are discouraged from, for instance, entertaining female guests in their houses; duties and responsibilities, whereby African teachers are expected to be supervised by their white colleagues of similar rank and the general treatment of African teachers whereby African teachers are disciplined like school boys.

3.0 Resisting Colonial Bodily Inscription

The narrator foregrounds the centrality of names in constructing individual identity. He dramatises how he resists to be addressed as Mr. Adonijah arguing that his colleague white teachers including, the school principal, Mr. Carey Francis are officially addressed by their surnames (47). For instance, he argues that Mr. Edward Carey Francis is not referred to as Mr. Edward but as Mr. Francis yet the narrator is not referred to as Mr. Odinga but as Mr. Adonijah, his first name. The narrator demonstrates how he militates against this silencing of African names by dropping his English names Obadiah Adonijah and retaining his African name, Oginga Odinga. He also dramatises how the debate on African names extends to the church during the baptism of his first sons; Oburu Odinga and Raila Odinga. After great persistence he has his children baptised by their African

names (54-5). Underlying this debate on names the narrator draws our attention to the greater question of national identity by foregrounding how in the cartography of colonial geographies mapping of colonial spaces paid significant attention to the naming of the body. As a counterpoise to this colonial cartography nationalist geographies produced the dialectic opposite by renaming these spaces. The narrator suggests that as a postcolonial agent he resists to be subsumed by the colonialist social structure (and later by the neocolonial structure) as the dominant ideology by announcing his physical identity symbolised by his name.

The narrator dramatises his struggle against racial discrimination. For instance, he describes how he rejects a lesser pay of 70 shillings per month. According to him his worth is 90 shillings according to government regulations. This is what his white colleagues earn and he would like to earn the same. The Ministry of Education headquarters in Nairobi vindicates him when it instructs Carey Francis to pay him the higher figure. His resistance to a lesser pay is not essentially an economic matter but a perceptual one. The exchange value of white labour surpasses that of African labour not in relation to the use value of either but as a consequence of simulated images of race and class which the colonial social structure invents in favor of the colonialist and which the narrator resists. The narrator also tells us about how he rejects any humiliation from his white colleagues at Maseno School. According to school tradition, an African teacher could be in charge of a dormitory and be responsible for the welfare of a group of children; but at the head of every three or four groups is a white master who supervises the African. An African teacher may be in charge of a class but over each group of classes is a white supervisor. In sports, the African teacher could be responsible for organizing athletics or football but above him is the white teacher. These white supervisors stomp into the classes and humiliate African teachers in the presence of students or overturn decisions made by sports teachers in the presence of students. The narrator suggests that he asserts his agency by insisting on his right to make individual decisions and to be held accountable to them causing great fury among the white fraternity.

He dramatises how his agency is resisted by colonial agents who defend the colonial structure with its underlying race and class dominance. Colonial institutions including schools do not expect African subjects to be endowed with the brain to think. The narrator describes a conversation with a senior veterinary officer at Maseno Veterinary School thus:

> Look here, Oginga', he said, 'you are very intelligent, but you must understand that your brain is no better than the brain of my six-year-old son because you Africans have not developed anything. My son can push a wheel barrow, and he can think, but you cannot because you have not been brought up to do so. When the first European came to Kenya he found not even a wheel. Your people have not invented anything and it will take you three hundred years to reach the level of the Europeans (Odinga, pp. 58-59).

In the narrative, the colonial structure reinvents itself within the nationalist movement conniving with its leadership to scuttle the civic nationalist ideals. The colonial structure invites the leadership of the nationalist movement to imagine the comfort it would enjoy by inheriting the privileges of colonial power in neocolonial institutions (173). Such an invitation is irresistible and a significant section of the leadership of the nationalist movement does not mind gaining the transfer of such power hence differing with the narrator in his insistence on Kenyatta's release. The narrator's body is also inscribed with ethnic and racial codes. This can be seen in the description between him and others during both the colonial and post-colonial period. This significantly constrains his space and renders him greatly vulnerable to manipulation by institutions within the social structure. For instance, during the struggle for independence, as an African, the narrator is not expected to think for himself because his brain is not thought to be mature enough to reflect on his social or political conditions. In one instance, he describes an interesting episode in which he has an encounter with the District Commissioner after his election to the Central Nyanza African District Council:

> The commissioner ... interrupted me while I was talking. I did not know what I was talking about he said, I had best sit down. At that I, too, lost my temper. 'I'm not going to sit down,' I said. 'You must sit down,' he shouted. Then: 'if you don't sit down, get out of the room,' and 'if you don't leave this room I'll get you out of it'. Council members appealed to me to give way, but I strode angrily from the council chamber (91)

This incident suggests the staging of the narrator's civic nationalist agency as he insists to participate in political action. However, the racial codes inscribed on his body undermine his agency as subsequent events show. First the commissioner reprimands the

local chief for choosing such 'a fool' as the narrator to the council. Then the District Commissioner reports him to the white Provincial Commissioner who demands that the narrator either apologises to the District Commissioner or is removed from the council. He refuses to apologise leading to the loss of his seat in the council (91). The colonial structure also inscribes ethnic codes on the natives including the narrator. The narrator's body is, for instance, not only read as that of an African especially when relating with the hegemonic agents of colonial authority; it is also read as that of an ethnic Luo. The colonial social structure intends to entrench its presence by setting up the Luo against the Kikuyu to undermine national feelings and nationalism. The narrator gives the example of the killing of a Luo councilor in Jericho by people suspected to be of Kikuyu ethnic background. The killing of Ambrose Ofafa at Jericho is, especially, played out to encourage intertribal feelings. The narrator proclaims his civic nationalist agency by asserting that he militates against the tribalization of Ofafa's killing by calming the sentiments of his Luo community. He describes how he organises for the construction of the Ofafa Memorial Hall thus tactfully diverting the destructive energy of tribal feelings into a constructive energy of (re)memory among the community members. Later, in the narrative he dramatises how the arrest of Achieng Oneko ironically protects him from arrest, despite his political agitation. According to him, the colonial social structure believes that if the narrator was to be arrested, "...the Luo might be provoked...into direct involvement on the side of the freedom fighters.... My arrest, the government must have known, might have meant the incitement to rebellion of Luo: it would have been stupid tactics to open a new front of struggle in Nyanza" (131).

The narrator escapes detention not because of his political inclinations or otherwise, but because of the ethnic codes inscribed on his body. Being seen as Luo comes with associations outside his purview. The narrator dramatizes how vulnerable he is to the social structure which attempts to cocoon him to specific ethnic set ups. His knowledge of self though extensive as well as his knowledge of what constitutes the truth of his circumstances is juxtaposed with the determinations of the social structure which undermine his existence as an actor in the social network and the existence of the circumstances which inform his civic nationalist agency. He cannot claim complete knowledge of his present much as he conceives its events from the position of an involved actor. As a first person narrator he lacks omniscience. His point of view is limited. So is his space and time in relation to the events he relates to us. His limited knowledge constrains him from describing the outcome of events in more than one possible outcome he anticipates. Neither can he predict with any certainty the eventual consequences of his

actions. The reality he presents is a reality as he sees it and not necessary as it is; thus the potential for him to misread that reality. As the narrative evolves the reader is increasingly aware of the narrator's predicament in his sense of awareness of self on the one hand, and on the other hand, the narrator's limited understanding of issues and events: a limitation that can only be overcome by omniscience which the autobiographer as a first person lacks.

4.0 The Nation State as a Commonwealth

A consistent motif in *Not yet Uhuru* is the narrator's determination to demonstrate nationalist credentials. Odinga constructs self around the ideal of civic nationalist identity and the nation-state building project. Odinga's nationalist consciousness is aroused at an early age. Actions of agents of the colonial structure, which he bears witness to, prick his consciousness and stir his identification with the perils of his people. For instance, he is highly critical of government and Christian actions, which undermine or threaten his people's sense of self pride and self-belief. He has a dim view of the government's collection of tax from the Africans without Africans being represented in government (2). He is also critical at the manner in which Christian missionaries teach that the European custom is better than African custom (3).

His critical stance against colonial hegemony prepares ground for the construction of his civic nationalist identity as an ideal he foregrounds. As he grows up he is acutely aware that agents of the colonial social structure do not want leaders in whom the people have confidence but rather men who can be used for their purposes. When chiefs and head men come to be selected, men who the British find in positions of leadership are frequently by passed and others installed out of them (20). The chief, as representative of government, is harsh in both his language and his treatment of the people and does not hesitate to slap an elder if he does not quickly stand or sit where he is told. Any instructions given to the people are accompanied by beatings. The *Askari Kanga* is cruel and weighs heavily on the people singled out by the chief. When the District Commissioner is due at a *baraza*, the atmosphere is tense and the people get frightened. As the commissioner approaches all people have to stand and if one is slow to rise to his feet the *askaris* might seize a chair and hit out with it (15-16). This repression and oppression of his people stirs in him national consciousness. It fosters in him the urge to see his people restore their sense of dignity and sense of worth.

The narrator is critical of the role which interpreters play in the colonial period as mediators of colonial and native knowledges. He observes how knowledge can be a

powerful tool in national discourse. For instance, he notices at an early age that the interpreters are in key positions to inveigle themselves into positions of authority. Although it is the chiefs, who are initially asked to send their sons among the British to be trained as interpreters; they refuse because they fear to lose their sons. So they send subordinates who when they return have not only a new language and access to the new government but also a body of *askaris* with them to enforce their will (22). This subversion of traditional structures of power and hierarchy distort the African construction of credible civic networks and solidarities. The African social structure of order is destroyed by this subversion as the subjects' sense of civic leadership is undermined. The subversion of traditional institutions including the power structure greatly destabilises African communities. The narrator is keenly aware of the role knowledge (its production and circulation) plays in destabilising this traditional power structures as evidenced by the role interpreters play during the colonial period. Later, the narrator takes advantage of his formal education to upset the colonial agenda and construct a base for a civic nationalist ideal. The narrator's critique of the tactics of the interpreters in their use of knowledge for self-gratification goes beyond the mere tools of formal knowledge but rather addresses itself to the question of knowing and being known.

The narrator demonstrates that he also observes at a tender age how colonial institutions alienate colonial subjects from traditional networks and sense of solidarity. For instance, he observes that the educated not only dress and live like the white man; they read from his books sing his hymns and share his aspirations. This colonial mimicry makes the educated move into the highest spheres of achievement. A man becomes a leader by virtue of his education but his very education estranges him from his people and fosters in him the illusion that he need not be answerable to them. In this way, docile African hangers-on who defer without murmur to the moral superiority of all things white and Christian are enlisted to serve white government and an educated group emerges that is separated by a great gulf from the mass of the group (63).

Craig Calhoun (54) argues that civic nationalist identity propounds the idea of representation seen to be a community instituted by the people of a country as an internally unified group with common interests and the capacity to act as a collective entity. Political legitimacy is seen to 'ascend' from the people rather than 'descend' from God or dynastic ancestry (54). By gaining political legitimacy from amongst the people themselves, the citizens pay greater attention to continued importance of national networks and solidarities (1). This leads to the development and integration of national culture within territorial boundaries. The narrator suggests that he believes in the voice

of the people as central in a civic nationalist identity. For instance, he gives the example of a group which is sent to the District Commissioner to say that they do not like what the Europeans are doing and that they reject the colony. "Who asked you to say that?" The spokesmen are asked. "Who is behind you?" To this question comes the reply "Piny Owacho" (the country says) (25).

The narrator describes in glowing terms the Piny Owacho movement not only because it suggests the rising national consciousness of his Luo people against colonial hegemony but presumes a conversation with other movements across the nation. The narrator tells us that the Piny Owacho movement shook Nyanza in the twenties. The administration, he says, was extremely perturbed by the political wave of political consciousness (65). Its leaders, Jonathan Okwiri, Simeon Nyende, Benjamin Owuor and Joel Omino were, according to the narrator, influenced by the Thuku - led campaigns of the Kikuyu (65). Although the activities of Piny Owacho happen when the narrator is a mere child, this reverence to the will of the people is evident throughout his narrative and suggests his sense of civic loyalty above loyalty to self. For instance, the narrator disagrees with AEMO members over the release of Kenyatta. He says:

> AEMO meeting suggested that I should apologize for my stand. I asked for time to consider that. I sent an urgent wire to D.O Makasembo, Chairman of the Central Nyanza Association, to convene a meeting in Kisumu that weekend. Under heavy cordon of police armed with tape recorders I addressed an audience of over, 6000 people. I repeated what I said in the legislative Council Chamber and asked for their opinion. The people stood as one body to support me; I had said exactly what they felt about Jomo Kenyatta, they said (158).

In the narrator's struggle towards the release of Jomo Kenyatta, he triumphs over his political adversaries because his voice is in synchrony with the voice of the people. The narrator's reverence for the voice of the people is discernible in various intersections of the narrative. When he resigns from government, he argues that:

> I have a conscience and this in fact does prick me when I earn public money but with nothing to do. I consider this a waste of public money and I am worried lest the future generation questions my sincerity, when they would

learn that I allowed myself to hold a sinecure post in the midst of poverty and misery in our country" (300).

The narrator demonstrates awareness that nationalism can also be approached through its more brand forms in a variety of ceremonial events and symbolism such as dress codes. When the narrator enters the legislative council chamber for the first time the kind of dress he wears suggests this understanding. He enters the legislative counsel chamber wearing a skin round his waist, a coat of long tails, beaded stockings, sea - shell sandals, a beaded collar and cap, and carries a whisk of a cow's tail. The narrator shows a strong belief in instruments of civic nationalism such as political parties. His membership in the Kenya African National Union (KANU) is purely because he sees it as the best vehicle to achieve a civic nationalist agenda. He shares the party's view of a centralised government responsible for implementing development policy. This is how he understands KANU's victory over KADU as representing a nationalist constitutional order. The nationalist movement, in the days before independence, is divided along lines of ethnicity, personal ambition, regional interests and very different ideas on how the economy can be developed. Odinga believes in civic nationalism with Kenyatta as the symbol of national unity. The narrator's ambition for inclusionist politics as opposed to exclusionist politics leads him to two different strategies. He tries to relate nationalist politics to socialism because of the exclusionist practices of class politics. This leads to his friendship with communist countries. He also becomes interested with the politics of redistribution of wealth to the bottom of the Kenya society. He especially advocates for the redistribution of land to the landless peasants. This civic nationalist politics leads to the class war between the narrator and Kenyatta, his onetime political mentor. He portrays Kenyatta's strategy of nationalism as being through mobilisation of ethnicity.

5.0 Conclusion

The autobiographical narrator, as a first person narrator, suffers from many limitations. He lacks omniscience. His perception of other characters is limited to what he can humanly comprehend. His projection of self is devoid of perceptions from others. His understanding of the issues he narrates is highly subjective. The narrator's existence is negotiated through associations of self and other within the social structure. The narrator's body is inscribed with class codes which are determined by individuals and institutions which are beyond his control. For instance, actions of others chart the trajectory of his evolution as a significant political actor in the struggle for independence

in Kenya by giving him an early lead among the emerging group of African elites and the political class. Having joined this class orientation, he cannot distance himself from the perception that he belongs to the emerging petty bourgeoisie despite his peasant background. No matter his efforts to speak for the underprivileged he is forever bound to do so from his privileged speaking position as elite. In this transient identity, in which the narrator moves from his private self to a public identity it is notable that *Not Yet Uhuru* was written after the fall out between Kenyatta and Odinga. In this fall out Odinga believes that Mboya connived with Kenyatta to isolate him from government. The public space which Odinga occupies and therefore the selection of what goes to construct his public self is highly informed by this nuanced political dialogue. This political dialogue being in the public domain allows Odinga to construct and subsequently stage self as a deliberate intersection between the instantiation of his private sense of self with that of the public as part of an ongoing conversation of what it means to be Kenyan and what nationhood and citizenship would mean in post-colonial Africa.

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