

Narrative Time and Tense: The Past, the Present, and the Future Kenya in Oginga Odinga's *Not Yet Uhuru* (1967)

Kesero Tunai, PhD

Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology,
Kakamega, Kenya

Abstract

The usual practice in most autobiographies is to employ past tense to tell the subject's life of what has already happened. However this is not always the case. This essay examines how the past, present and future tenses are all interwoven in Oginga Odinga's Not Yet Uhuru, the autobiography of Kenya's anti-colonial and independent Kenya's opposition leader, in order to argue that Odinga's life story is about Odinga and Kenya of the past (narrated time), the present (narrating time) and the future (prospective time). Odinga's story is told from the standpoint of the present and a predictive future to indicate that the challenges (such as landlessness, poverty and imperialism) that the narrative confronts will persist into the future Kenya postcolonial dispensation and these challenges will need a similar resilience as that harnessed in the struggle against British colonialism. Using a postclassical narratological approach this essay argues that Kenya's problems are not only of the past, but more so of the present and the future, and the tenses exist nearly harmoniously to invoke reflection, urgency, and contemplation on the issues narrated.

Keywords: narrated time; narrating time; prospective narration; *Not Yet Uhuru*.

Introduction

In most autobiographies the author focuses on his past life and writes about this life in the past tense looking back and recording as accurately as possible what he can remember. But it is also largely understood that the past that the autobiographer documents is documented from the position of the present, with the present circumstances (time of narrating) playing a pivotal role on the past (narrative time) that is presented. So that an autobiography is as much about the subject's past life as it is about his present life at the time of writing. This is what happens in Jaramogi Oginga Odinga's *Not Yet Uhuru: The Autobiography of Oginga Odinga* (1967) which narrates the life story of Kenya's anti-colonial leader and foremost government oppositionist in immediate postcolonial Kenya. The book covers the period from about the time of Oginga Odinga's birth in 1911 up to immediately after his resignation from the independent Kenya government as

Vice-President in 1966. Although the past events, told through past tense, dominate Odinga's life story the present too is felt through reference to current events, individuals, and places as they are presently known and this is conspicuously done by the use of the present tense. In addition to past and present tenses, through the use of the future tense Odinga's book purposely inserts a future dispensation thus prophesying what might happen in Kenya beyond 1966. This then makes *Not Yet Uhuru* a story about Odinga and Kenya during colonialism, at independence, soon after independence, and further into post-independent Kenya. It is the employment of past, present and future tenses in the portrayal of the past, present and future lives of Odinga and Kenya that I shall discuss in this essay and analyze how this interweaving presents Jaramogi Odinga's beliefs and vision.

The Past and History

The past is always an important component of a person's life story. The beginning of *Not Yet Uhuru* delves into Odinga's past, narrating about the history of his lineage and family beginning with his great-grandfather (Odinga 4-6). Many other autobiographies begin at the birth of the protagonist, but Odinga begins in the manner he does because he intends to invoke a sense of community in his self, in other words, as he shows throughout his book his life is not only an individual's life but an embodiment of the life of community and nation. Most of the story in *Not Yet Uhuru* obeys chronological time, presenting events on paper in the order in which the events happened in real life, so that what narrative theorists such as Gerald Genette and Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan have called analepsis—evocation after the fact of an event that took place earlier than the point in the story where we are at a given moment” (Genette 40)—are few in Odinga's book. One notable exception is the analepsis (flashback) that comes right at the beginning of the book that gives the prophecy given by the forecasters of the Luo of Central Nyanza long before Odinga is born. In this forecast the forecasters had foretold of the coming of the Europeans into Luoland; that the Europeans would:

come with thunderstorms and they will burn the people'...the elders had warned that we should never, never try to fight them because their weapons were better than ours.... They would be intent on devouring our land and our wealth but we should be wary of them...we should study their minds to know exactly what they wanted.... But we knew that when we had studied them our children would probably be able to get rid of them (Odinga 1).

This statement told to the young Odinga by elders of his village is placed at the beginning of Jaramogi's life story to anchor his story on this prophecy that carries the spirit of an entire Luo community. Even though Odinga is not witness to the arrival of the Europeans, he is witness to the Whites' doings—their burning of the people, their devouring of the land, and the Africans' attempt to get rid of them. From the very beginning *Not Yet Uhuru* the book is positioned as a work not only about Odinga the boy and man, but also as a work about the Luo community's [Kenyan community's] response to colonialism, and the attendant anti-colonial struggle in which Odinga is a key player. In this book Odinga personifies the tribulations and aspirations of Kenya, and the narrative technique in the autobiography presents Odinga as a nationalist and a visionary. The collective first-person plural voice that employs the pronoun “we” dominates the opening pages of the autobiography where Odinga discusses the rural/village community life that he was socialized into by listening to the stories of the village elders and by himself being a partaker in the day-to-day family and village activities as a child. He narrates how the community participated in activities in a group spirit and how the elders ruled evenly, and thus tranquility prevailed. In a statement such as “the elders were always at a distance supervising us [boys], watching to see if our animals strayed into a garden, and when we neglected our duties they approached among us to chastise us” (Odinga 8) Odinga presents the community's point of view as the village life was then lived. It is this seamless flow of life that the European colonialists disrupt when they invade Luoland thus fulfilling the prophecy of the Luo forecasters referred to above, a

prophecy that goes into an indeterminate past, likely long before Odinga is born. Thus Odinga invokes a past before the beginning of his life in order to construct a particular cultural identity of himself, the Luo and Kenya. After all as Pike (327) has said culture plays a role in determining the individual's conceptions of time and his sense of himself.

As Edward Carr has argued in his seminal book *What is History?* history is the study of a corpus of ascertained events and facts of the past and these events and facts are factual, true having been verified through sustained research (6). Carr further says that the historian sources his information from materials such as documents, photographs and oral testimonies (ibid), and "that history is a continuous process of interaction between the historian and his facts, an unending dialogue between the present and the past" (Carr 35). Furthermore according to Jeremy D. Popkin, Paul Ricoeur defines "historical narratives as stories characterized by organization according to calendar time, by an awareness of the succession of generations, and by reliance on datable traces or documents" (Popkin 40). *Not Yet Uhuru* fulfills many of Carr's and Ricoeur's requirements—the autobiography's narrated events are by and large factual in that they can be corroborated by other sources. Furthermore specific dates are given on when events occurred—dates being an important characteristic of history in establishing truth. Events such as Kenya becoming a British protectorate in 1895 (Odinga 17) the collection of the first hut tax in the year 1900 (18), and the banning of the political party Kenya African Union (KAU) and the declaration of the state of Emergency over Kenya by the British colonial government in 1952 (114) can be confirmed by history textbooks as undisputed events of the past. And as the story moves nearer to the time of writing, i.e the 1950s and 1960s, ascribing dates to events becomes even more meticulous involving giving us not only the years of events but also the days and months when events occur—for instance, the formation of the Kenya African Union (KANU) party in May 1960 (193), the first Lancaster Constitutional Conference begins 12 February 1962 (228), and the KANU Limuru Conference of March 1966 (299). In tracing the political development in Kenya *Not Yet Uhuru* gives dates to events thus vouching for the truth of these events. As in most political autobiographies history then occupies a significant place in *Not Yet Uhuru* and as Jennifer Muchiri has observed "autobiography is intertwined with history and sometimes people read autobiographies as historical documents or evidence for the analysis of historical movements, events or persons" (84).

Sometimes Odinga's autobiography records a period; for instance, chapter two which talks about a time when Odinga is only ten years old has little to do with Odinga as individual, but rather tells how people in his Luo homeland begin to rise against colonialism. The chapter is mainly on what is happening in Nyanza, but this is juxtaposed with the occurrences in Nairobi by mentioning Harry Thuku and Jomo Kenyatta of the Young Kikuyu Association (28-29). In this juxtapositioning I agree with the views of Hayden White that history is a literary practice that incorporates subjective and ideological elements (qtd. in Popkin 35, 36) and James Olney that writers of histories impose their own metaphors on the human past (Popkin 35). By incorporating happenings from other parts of Kenya into his narrative Odinga is imposing a metaphor of colonialism as uniformly oppressive throughout Kenya, and he is articulating an ideology of political unity of the various communities and regions of Kenya in the anti-colonial struggle that *Not Yet Uhuru* champions. Aside from the occurrences in the larger Kenya, Odinga informs us that the narrative in chapter one of his book ends in about 1920 and chapter two in 1923. He wishes us to be clear about when the events in Kenya took place and at what place he narrates them in his life story and in this way he is laying another metaphor on the material, and this metaphor is that not only is Kenya rich in historical events, but that even his own life resonates with history. In this way I agree with Popkin who paraphrases Ricoeur that by and large autobiography has features of both history and fiction (Popkin 40-41). And as we have seen like history, autobiography can be situated in calendar time, and like fiction autobiography does employ figurative use of language (metaphor).

Not Yet Uhuru like other historical narratives records the deeds of groups, Associations, Movements, and individuals. The undertaking of each of the various entities—Welfare Associations, political parties, and political groupings—is conscientiously documented with appropriately corresponding dates. We are informed of when political parties and groupings such as the KANU and the Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU), African Elected Members Organization (AEMO) come into existence, and regarding their struggles and maneuverings in the anti-colonial dispensation. The Mau Mau Movement against colonialism even if not taking place within Odinga's homeland of Nyanza and even though Odinga is not at the centre of the Movement, is given a special place in Odinga's life narrative. The autobiography presents the Mau Mau as a historical Movement that championed the rights (especially land rights) of Kenyans. Despite many views to the contrary, Odinga shows that Mau Mau was a national movement that had membership beyond the Kikuyu, Meru, and Embu ethnic communities. And Mau Mau does receive considerable backing from beyond its three core ethnic support base group; for example, an instance in which Mau Mau escapees from Mageta and Sayusi island prisons on Lake Nyanza are housed, fed and given safe passage back to the forests by Luo villagers (Odinga 133). The photographs of the Emergency period 1952-1960 that appear in *Not Yet Uhuru* have the Mau Mau Movement at the foreground since it is the activities of this Movement that lead the British colonial government in Kenya to declare a state of Emergency in the country in 1952. Seven photographs cover various aspects of the Mau Mau period—such as the detention of the Kapenguria Six, the Operation Anvil of rounding up people in Nairobi, a detention camp, and the capture of Dedan Kimathi the Mau Mau leader. As Kathryn Carter has observed photographs are a good way of capturing past moments and arresting time (417-418).

In Odinga's life story another distinguished place is accorded to the Independent African churches as a significant player in Kenya's anti-colonial political and cultural struggle. These churches were against the systemic indoctrination of African people with White peoples' values. Chapter four of the autobiography narrates how the Kenya Africans rejected the patronage of the White missionaries, their churches and their education, broke away from European churches and formed Independent African churches across the Kenyan landscape—the 'Piny Owacho', Nomiya Luo Church, and the African Israel Church in Nyanza, Dini ya Roho and Dini Ya Msambwa in Western, the Joshua arap Chuma church in the Rift Valley, and Dini Ya Kaggia in Central Kenya which later spread to Ukambani and Nyanza. Dini Ya Msambwa did spread to Kalenjinland in the Rift Valley and also into parts of Eastern Uganda. Odinga's book records the coming to birth of these churches and indicates that this church movement commenced during the colonial period not only as a religious revolt, but also as "an aspect of the nascent political struggle" (75) so that as early as 1907 for the Luo Nomiya Church (Odinga 68) and 1927 for Dini ya Roho (69) the Independent churches were already involved in opposing colonial rule.

Narrating Time and Present Tense

Odinga writes about Independent Churches as movements of the past and present. Writing in 1966 Odinga says that "roughly speaking there are today in Kenya well over thirty independent Churches" (74). Dini ya Roho founded in 1927 "has propagated its faith far beyond Maragoli" (69) and that Bishop Lucas Nuhu who became its leader in 1940 "now heads the Nairobi branch where he has been a key figure in the organizing of Kenyan and East African Independent African Churches" (ibid). Odinga also writes that "the Church of Jorocho persists in Nyanza to this day. The present leaders are Barnaba Walhoho, Isaya Goro and ex-Chief Zefania Abungu" (70). Since all that the churches advocated for has not been accomplished at the time of writing (narrating) the position is that Odinga envisions these churches as relevant to independent Kenya's circumstances in the nation's future struggles for economic emancipation and for a society free from cultural imperialism and neocolonialism. In this regard Odinga refers to Dini Ya Msambwa leader Elijah Masinde's

sermons in the present tense, not only because he is still alive and practicing, but also more importantly because his message is still as pertinent and relevant in 1966 as it was forty years before. After all as A.A. Mendilow has stated in narrative “every moment is conceived as the condensation of earlier history, and the past is not separate and completed but an ever-developing part of a changing present” (270). Since the past tense has an attitude of relaxation (Ricoeur 69) Odinga uses the present tense to invoke intensity and a sense of immediacy and urgency in the matters he narrates. Furthermore *Not Yet Uhuru* lives up to the view expressed by Burton Pike (and indeed many other life writing critics) that what is real to the autobiographer is the present moment, the time of writing, and not the past as it may have “happened” (334) and therefore the present moment, the moment of writing, is the determinant moment in autobiography (ibid 337). And Odinga demonstrates this from very early in the autobiography by showing the reader the influence that the present has on the past through conscious use of the present tense in the narrative.

According to Watson and Smith (qtd. in Tagwirei 336), in autobiography there is always a need to recreate the meaning of the past in the act of remembering and engaging in the past in order to reflect on identity in the present. The present tense is used to reflect on the past and show how the past has led to the outcomes in the present, and how the present is influencing the past particularly through narration. Right in chapter one the narrator in *Not Yet Uhuru* makes it clear, through the use of tenses that the past and present happenings in his life, his Luo community, and Kenya are interwoven. After narrating in the past tense about the role of mothers [including his own mother] in disciplining children during the time of Odinga’s childhood (1920s) he goes ahead and puts matters in the present (1960s) perspective in the present tense: “in our custom it is really not a harshness directed against the women, but an instance that women are the custodians of the children and their educators” (11). Every significant issue must be placed in the present perspective so that the audience may understand how that issue affects them, for as Mendilow has said “writers being themselves men of their times and writing for audiences of their time, tend to write in the terms and with the attitudes of their times” (256). This incorporation of audience in a discussion on narrative is in line with David Herman’s argument that postclassical narratology also concerns itself with how narratives are designed for particular audiences in particular times (Herman 12).

Not Yet Uhuru uses the present tense to name things, situations, and people as they are at the time of narrating: “our examination results were announced at the end of 1936 at the Government Central Offices, which are today Nairobi law courts” (38); “the students at Makerere came from all over East Africa and their names now dot cabinets and government services in the independent states of East Africa. Uganda’s attorney-general, Godfrey Binaisa, was there, and Dr Sam Mukasa, the Kabaka’s private doctor...” (39); and in talking about the printing press that Odinga founded he says that one of the “first apprentices who later became the manager of the press in Kisumu was Atinga Otima, the present Chief of Alego Location” (82-83). Indeed there are plenty of other instances in the book where similar interconnections are made. This locates the text’s writing within a particular time and the inherent influences of this specific time. This is meant to bring the readers closer to the matters being narrated since some of the readers may have physically been to some of the places named but even if they have never been there reference to the present circumstances creates familiarity when a book mentions a place that exists today i.e at time of writing/narrating. This is the same familiarity created when Odinga names real people who existed in the past Makerere and now this people exist in the present in various capacities in various places. In this way the author testifies to the reality of his work as nonfiction. This manner of narration shows that the situation and time of the reader is a significant consideration in the Odinga narrative again echoing Herman’s view of a need to examine how narratives construct audiences. Time tenses are employed to rope the reader more closely into the story.

According to Tagwirei (339), “the past remains a constitutive element of the present, continuously dialoguing with the latter.” In *Not Yet Uhuru* the past finds continuity in the present and cautions that whereas it is important to keep to some influences of the past it is pertinent that we discard past habits that are retrogressive; for instance, the book condemns the British colonial policy of favoring some regions through divide and rule, and laments that “up to the present day [1966], the remnants of this pattern of splintered political development play havoc with Kenya national unity” (Odinga 146). Throughout the autobiography Odinga advocates nationalism in Kenya, and he uses the present tense to underline this and his other beliefs; true to what Pike argues that the past and present are used by the autobiographer to construct a particular identity of himself.

Odinga’s autobiography uses the present tense and the present moment of narrating to reflect on, evaluate and pass judgment on the past, now likely from a point of more knowledge, experience and wisdom. For instance, as regards constitution making in the 1950s and 1960s the narrative says that “looking back now, ... I have always believed that what went on among the people outside the conference halls was a great deal more important than the discussions in the legislature and round the tables of the Colonial Office” (180). Instead of Odinga giving the day-to-day constitutional meetings in diary form he chooses to offer a summary by way of his interpretation of how the entire constitution-process was conducted and what it meant and what it means as he understands it now at the point of narrating.

Sometimes the narrator reflects on the past and from his present vantage position delivers a moral teaching. For example after talking about his business enterprises in his homeland and the need to take risks and be patient in business Odinga concludes with a wrapping up lesson: “no man should presume to judge another by his appearance, but men should be approached with the idea that all men are equal. People should be respected as individuals, not as members of a particular tribe” (86). And Odinga tells of when as a prefect at Maseno school on closing day he carried some paraffin from school without permission but was intercepted by the principal, was given four strokes of the cane, and detained in school for four days for being a thief, and then offers his current moral judgement: “I have always remembered this lesson that one must never misuse a position of authority” (34). These examples support what William R. Ochieng’ has said that “the autobiographer offers himself, his life and his story for illumination and judgment” (Ochieng’ 79). Illumination points light toward the brighter side of a person’s life for admiration and emulation, and in the foregoing illustrations *Not Yet Uhuru* does this.

The present time of writing is also used as a time of commendation. In a predominantly present tense Odinga’s book celebrates the life of political leader Pio Gama Pinto assassinated on 24 February 1965 (Odinga 251-252). Gama Pinto starts his political career as a member and official of the Kenya Indian Congress party. Later he is fully involved in Kenya’s anti-colonial struggle. Among other roles he organizes defences for arrested leaders and members of KAU, and maintains political links between the Mau Mau forest fighters and Nairobi. For these activities he is detained but after his release he campaigns for the release of other detainees and prisoners. As we have indicated earlier Odinga pays tribute to the Mau Mau Movement about which he comments on in the present tense at the end of chapter six. He names successful battles and their Mau Mau leaders (120) and after mentioning the propaganda of the colonial government that called Mau Mau a savage atavistic movement Odinga argues that this Movement was not only of the past, but is also of the present “only now in Kenya is it becoming possible to present a truer version of the events of this time” (121). This truer version was being presented by life story writers and historians. For instance as of 1966 a number of life narratives by Mau Mau survivors had been published detailing the Africans’ suffering and resilience during the Emergency period—a notable example here being Josiah Mwangi Kariuki’s *“Mau Mau” Detainee: The Account of a Kenya African of His Experiences in Detention Camps, 1953-1960* (1963). As the sub-title to Mwangi’s book shows the book intended to depict an

African's experiences written by himself so as to counteract the numerous accounts that had been written from the Europeans' point of view. Kenya African historians were also conducting research and many writings emerged in the 1960s and after detailing the Mau Mau history from the African's point of view. A good amount of documentary evidence has been used in *Not Yet Uhuru*. Whereas there is no doubt that Oginga Odinga and his collaborating author, Ruth First, who "edited the manuscript and gave it shape" (*Not Yet Uhuru* "acknowledgements"), both had to refer to books, magazines, newspapers and the parliamentary *Hansard* among other documents in order to verify facts, dates, and even names of people and places, many of these references have not been directly included in the book. However, the last third of the book eminently shows the autobiography's reliance on documentary sources by quoting directly from the written sources such as memos, letters, newspapers, government reports, Minutes of meetings, parliamentary proceedings, speeches, and party manifestoes. At this point Jomo Kenyatta has been released from prison and restriction, discussions are ongoing about a constitution for independent Kenya, and independent Kenya is laying the path it will take economically and politically in postcolonial times. This is a period of transition both for the country and for Odinga as individual. This is the period during which Odinga is being politically isolated for fighting against neocolonialism and for advocating that the independent government solve the problem of landlessness in Kenya as a way of fighting poverty. In this last third of the book the autobiographical subject's core beliefs are tested and he harnesses all means possible to explain his stand on issues affecting Kenya at its birth as a nation.

A quoted statement is a statement from something said in the past that is used to support arguments of the present so one would argue that a quotation belongs to the past. Nonetheless a speaker or a writer chooses to quote rather than paraphrase in order to keep the immediacy and power of the words and the words' authenticity. This immediacy and power is largely provided for by the present tense that the quotation preserves. Through the present tense the quoted material is transported to the present of here and now so that even if the quoted material is of happenings of the past, the fact that the present tense is maintained provides the quotation with the strength of the present moment and as Joseph Beach has indicated gives "the reader the sense of being present here and now in the scene of the action" (qtd. in Mendilow 275). Thus the quotations in *Not Yet Uhuru* move the narrative more and more into the present, and this prevalence of quotations in Odinga's autobiography is deliberate as the story moves nearer to the time of narrating where narrative time will meet narrating time. In other words the final third of the book is dominated by present tense.

Many of the written sources are quoted at length—most of them at least a half a page. Bildad Kaggia's correspondences with Minister of Lands and Settlement, Minister of Agriculture, and Prime Minister Jomo Kenyatta (Odinga 262-267) are quoted exhaustively without ellipsis and in the case of Kenyatta's letter to Kaggia it is presented in its entirety (265-266). Kaggia's solution to the land issue outlined in one of the longest quotations in the book (267-268) presents Kaggia's philosophy on landlessness (i.e the government must find a way somehow of giving land to every citizen), something that irks the Kenyatta establishment since Kenyatta espouses a 'forgive and forget...there will be no free things outlook.' The government land policy soon after independence makes it difficult for the landless and squatter Africans to acquire land. Departing settlers' land is expensive and loans are difficult to obtain and the government is not developing African cooperatives to enable Africans come together to get money to purchase the European settler farms. Kaggia (who was among the Kapenguria six detained together with Kenyatta) advocates for support of African cooperatives to get land "with a view to increasing the agricultural production the Government must be prepared to set aside farms to be handed over to properly organized cooperative societies without asking the cooperatives to buy the land first" (268). Kaggia, like Odinga, is a believer in hard work. Odinga together with Achieng Oneko and Pio Gama Pinto supported Kaggia's ideas on land and Kaggia's criticism

of Kenyatta's acquisition of large farms. This is a mark of true nationalism where resources should be made available to the entire population of a country. Kaggia is persistent in his mission—writing letters to members of the cabinet, Kenyatta and the press prompting Kenyatta to ask him to resign since he is unwilling to abide by the collective cabinet stand on land. The collective position was that of willing-seller willing-buyer indicating that Kenya had taken a capitalist position which was far from what the Mau Mau freedom fighters had expected when they had taken up arms to fight for the return of land bequeathed them by their ancestors and later grabbed by the European colonizers. This bitter irony of fate that people whose land had been confiscated from them while they fought for that land cannot now have that their land in independent Kenya is well articulated in Kaggia's correspondence in the present tense as an urgent pressing issue that needs a solution now.

Another long quotation (303-304) comes from the manifesto of the Kenya Peoples Union (KPU) political party that Odinga forms when resigns from the government and the ruling party KANU in 1966. This quotation sums up Odinga's solution to the land issue in which he proposes that free land should be distributed to the neediest people including those who had lost land during colonialism, and Odinga says that the KPU would advocate the reduction in the size of farms held by individuals and land would be consolidated and cooperative farming done on land taken over from European settlers. Some in the independent Kenya government would have wished the matter of the land alienated from the Africans during colonialism forgotten about under Jomo Kenyatta's mantra "forgive and forget" but not Odinga Odinga who was Kenyatta's Vice-President and not Bildad Kaggia who was Junior Minister of Education in Kenyatta's government. Thus in *Not Yet Uhuru* the land predicament is a present pressing issue and as we shall see the autobiography forecasts that the land problem will be a pertinent matter of the future. Documentary evidence is used not only because documents are available, but Odinga believes that documents have more permanence than oral sources, and for vindication anyone in doubt can seek verification from the original written sources themselves. Odinga is giving intensity to his argument as the truth and emphasizing the significance of his message. Furthermore the quotations characterize the autobiography as a well-thoughtout and authoritative account.

As the book's narrative approaches the narrating time and thus the end, the author employs concurrent narration in which Odinga records situations more or less as they take place. The autobiography's last chapter, covering the period 1963-1966 when Kenya is now an independent nation, has plenty of concurrent, simultaneous narration as Odinga discusses Kenya's current problems of joblessness, landlessness, neocolonialism and general disillusionment of the population at the non-fulfillment of the *uhuru* (independence) promises. Instances of concurrent narration include: "this account of events is an attempt to explain the background of my resignation from the KANU Government and the formation of the new party which I lead, the Kenya People's Union (the KPU)"(300); "there is major emphasis on the agricultural sector, whereas what any underdeveloped country needs is an industrial base, and a meager allocation to industry under the public capital expenditure program, meaning that the Government as such is evading responsibility for the development of this sector" (312); "imperialist tactics in southern, central and east Africa are clear. They are to hold back the assault on the southern strongholds of colonialism" (312); and "if Kenya started *uhuru* without an African elite class she is now acquiring one.... Civil servants are still paid according to the old colonial salary scale"(302). Odinga sees Kenya's problems as mainly economic and dwells on economic issues in this last chapter thus mapping out his economic vision for the present and future Kenya. The examples that I have cited above support Uri Margolin's view who says that this "tell as you live" rather than "live now, tell later" is more authentic, vivid, and immediate (Margolin 161). And further that "one could possibly argue that the depth and intensity of the reader's immersion, involvement ... are enhanced by ... reporting the events...in the right here and now of their occurrence.... The reader as

participant in the game can now imagine being then and there as the events unfold”(ibid 162). In concurrent narration and in the prevalent use of dates to show when events occur, *Not Yet Uhuru* borrows heavily from characteristics of the diary form which records things as they happen and dutifully assigns date and even time to each recording. In our argument regarding time in Odinga’s book we can borrow from Kathryn Carter’s analysis of diaries that diaries and [photographs] have “a desire on the one hand to account for and document atomized moments of time and, on the other hand, to leave traces for an unknowable future” (418). Odinga arrests the moment for the future generations to experience it as it was lived.

In *Not Yet Uhuru* at times tenses shift in mid-sentence something quite uncommon in narrative writing: “the clans were named after women in recognition that they are the mothers of the children and thus the founders of the clans” [past tense to present tense] (Odinga 11); “in our custom this is not really a harshness directed against women, but an insistence that women are the custodians of the children, and their educators: if the children misbehaved it was their mother who had to be shown the error of their ways” [present tense to past tense] (ibid); “food at the school was very scarce, and water had to be fetched far from the school, for Maranda is a very dry place” [past tense to present tense] (32); and “there is no phase of our struggle in which he [Pio Gama Pinto] did not play an invaluable part” [present tense to past tense] (251). To some extent I would agree with Burton Pike’s assessment that change of tense in mid-sentence could imply a tension between present and past (Pike 338) for there seems to be competition (each pulling to her side) between past and present for control of the narrative in *Not Yet Uhuru*—the present tense refusing to give closure to matters as the past tense would like to. However, by and large the Odinga narrative shows mutual co-existence between the two tenses, and the two tenses accept co-ownership of the story as belonging to the past and present. And as we shall discuss shortly the future tense joins in this co-ownership of story and probably to mediate between past and present presents a thinking that looks into the future of Kenya beyond *Not Yet Uhuru*.

Prospective Narration

I agree with Francis Owino Rew’s argument that Odinga’s autobiography remains as prophetic today as it was when it was written fifty years ago (Rew 1). *Not Yet Uhuru* uses prospective narration (future tense narration) to show that matters in this book go beyond 1966. Prospective narration involves “a prediction, prognosis, scenario, projection, conjecture, wish, plan, and the like”(Margolin 153). Quite early in Odinga’s life story elements of projection and wish are evident; for instance, Odinga’s urge to historians and others to write the history and narratives of the Mau Mau (121-122) is continually being fulfilled bit by bit and my estimation is that the Mau Mau is probably the one single anti-colonial movement in Kenya that has attracted the largest quantity of work in research and interpretation. To date numerous works have been published that portray Mau Mau as a heroic struggle against colonial exploitation and oppression. For example the Kenyan historian Maina wa Kinyatti has done extensive research and published a lot on the Movement. Apart from scholarly historical researches, life story writers continue to document their experiences during this period; for instance, Gakaara wa Wanjau’s *Mau Mau Author in Detention* (1988), Wambui Waiyaki Otieno’s *Mau Mau’s Daughter: A Life History* (1998), and Wairimu Nderitu’s *Mu□kimi Kimathi: Mau Mau Freedom Fighter* (2017) are evidence of ongoing revelations about the time.

Aside from the White writers and commentators with a white colonial prejudicial mentality that Odinga castigates in his book, a number of White researchers have given a fair interpretation of the Mau Mau period. One example is Caroline Elkins whose book *Britain’s Gulag: The Brutal End of Empire in Kenya* (2005) is the result of nearly a decade of research through examining archival documents, other written sources, and fieldwork of listening to oral testimonies of Mau Mau veterans and survivors. The book comes to the conclusion that British colonials employed torture and other human rights abuses to combat an

uprising of the Kenyan people demanding the return of appropriated land and the right of self-determination. Elkins' text shows how the Mau Mau supporters and all those believed to be their sympathizers were humiliated, screened, confined to guarded villages, tortured and detained without trial. It is remarkable that evidence from this book together with David Anderson's *Histories of the Hanged* (2005) assist a great deal when Mau Mau veterans and torture victims lodge a court case in London against the British government for reparations for crimes committed against them by the British colonial government in Kenya. The veterans win the case and are awarded £20 million compensation in 2013. This compensation is of course meager compared to the injustices that the veterans and their families suffered, but the fact that research that presents a truer picture of Mau Mau (as Odinga advocated) can lead to a fair court ruling gives deep meaning to Odinga's prophetic call.

Although the reader meets predictive statements earlier in *Not Yet Uhuru*, the future through the use of the future tense is more ingrained in the narrative in the last chapter that deals with post-colonial Kenya. The last few pages of the book are full of futuristic statements of things that may happen post-*Not Yet Uhuru*. The main argument in Odinga's autobiography is that even with the attainment of political independence in Kenya in December 1963, freedom (*uhuru* in the Kiswahili national language of Kenya) has not yet been fully achieved both at people's individual levels and at the level of the nation. Therefore the struggle continues, and the book emphasizes that Kenya's struggle will be tough (314) and that there will be great challenges ahead for the struggle will be long and hard (315). *Uhuru* will only be truly achieved when all Kenyans have land which is the main resource of production, and when poverty has been eradicated (314). But in order to achieve these Odinga says Kenyans will walk a rough road with immense difficulties to surmount. It is clear from the book that freedom to speak one's mind is still curtailed in the Kenya of 1963-66 as evidenced when Bildad Kaggia puts across an alternative view regarding landlessness. In a rather arrogant tone Prime Minister Kenyatta dismisses Kaggia's view and tells Kaggia to resign as Junior Minister. Unable to abide by this government's 'collective responsibility' that would be unfair to the Kenyan masses Kaggia resigns and joins Odinga to form the KPU. Kaggia and others mistakenly think that Kenyatta is a democrat who will tolerate opposing views, but as evidence reveals in the happenings in post-*Not Yet Uhuru* Kenya, Kenyatta's government does not allow the KPU to operate, sell its agenda and propagate its ideas, but instead persecutes the leaders in the KPU and detains them (e.g Odinga in 1969) entirely paralyzing the existence of opposition politics in independent Kenya. In *My Journey with Jaramogi Odinge Odera*, Odinga's speech writer, details how the KPU is razed to the ground and proscribed in 1969. And for the next twenty years fear reigns in the country.

Not Yet Uhuru predicts that Kenyans will not endure unemployment and hardship forever and that every year will increase those opposed to government policies and that this people will rise to put in place a popular government (314). But with nearly the same breath the narrator says: "inside Kenya the struggle before us will be stern and exacting What form will the struggle take? Is our country to see government and high office riddled with corruption and men in power using force and manoeuvre to block expression of the popular will?" (314). In these rhetorical questions Odinga expresses cautious optimism. After 40 years of independence a ray of hope shines when KANU is defeated in the presidential and parliamentary elections of December 2002 and Mwai Kibaki is elected president under the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) of parties. Having observed the governance by NARC, Ali Mazrui proffers similar caution in a speech delivered in July 2005. Mazrui argues that it is still not yet *uhuru* in Kenya and using the concept of Uhuru-Gap Mazrui identifies eight stages that signify the distance that is to be covered before real *uhuru* can be achieved. The eight stages are democratization, domestication (making foreign institutions relevant to Africa), indigenization, diversification, horizontal interpenetration (cultivating solidarity with societies of comparable levels of development), vertical counter penetration (involving penetrating the citadels of

power), and globalization. It is clear from Mazrui's analysis that it would be a herculean task for any society in the world to achieve the eight stages, but Mazrui is warning Kenyans that even with the monumental achievement of free and fair general elections in 2002 [a step toward democratization], challenges lie ahead. And this is supported by Francis Rew who states that the issues that Odinga wrote about in *Not Yet Uhuru* regarding the fight against poverty, equality for all, and restoration of human rights to the citizens continue to form the struggle motif in Kenya (Rew 1) even after multi party politics was reintroduced in Kenya in 1991, and I would add that even after a new more people-driven constitution was enacted in 2010. These two events partially fulfill Odinga's prophecy: "our cause is the cause of the people of Kenya and so must triumph, however long and hard the struggle" (Odinga 315). For instance devolution of resources to the County Governments created under constitution 2010 is a positive thing.

Poverty, landlessness, and corruption persist in Kenya. These together with lack of sufficient freedom of expression are the issues that lead to the violence that engulfs Kenya soon after the general elections of December 2007. Over the years Kenyans have complained about inequalities on land issues and successive governments have done little or nothing. When Kenyans' choice for president is denied through an unconvincing election result the people (mainly the political opposition and her supporters) express their anger by attacking, injuring and even killing fellow citizens thought to be of the opposing political group and destroying individuals' and government property. Soon the issue coalesces into an economic one in which indigenous people especially in traditionally land-inequity problem areas such as the Rift Valley and the Coast see the settlers (those thought to have acquired land through purchase) as exploitative. Whereas the initial problem has to do with a dispute over the tallying of votes for the presidential vote by the Electoral Commission of Kenya, soon the issue mutates into an economic one when people are driven out of their lands, businesses are robbed, and militia groups take over in some parts of the country soliciting levies for provision of security and safe passage. As Katumanga (134) argues the conflict finally revolves around the state's inability to guarantee individual and collective socio-economic reproduction. The economically marginalized get an opportunity to exert power and they seal off spaces which they proceed to 'govern'.

Conclusion

We have analyzed how *Not Yet Uhuru* employs time tenses to examine Kenya's problems during colonialism and at independence and then predicts a future post-independent Kenya. Using the concurrent narration the book shows that the problems that face Kenya are dire and they need urgent, immediate solutions. We have also examined that Odinga uses the future tense to indicate that the Kenyan struggle is not yet over. At the very end victory will be obtained, but as indications have shown, up to now 53 years after independence the triumph that Odinga talks about may come in another 50 years or even 100 years.

Not Yet Uhuru begins with a prophecy about the coming of the Europeans into Central Nyanza; a prophecy that looks back to a prediction but also the prophecy looks into the future for the prophecy's accomplishment. The prophecy by the Luo forecasters is largely fulfilled in the course of the Odinga autobiography. And the book ends with a prophecy by Odinga Odinga, and we can say that fifty years after the publication of *Not Yet Uhuru* we have witnessed the bit by bit fulfillment of this prophecy in Kenya over the years, although there is still a lot to be done for example on the matter of landlessness. So even now the struggle continues and it is not yet uhuru.

Works Cited

- Carr, Edward Hallet. *What is History?* New York: Vintage Books, 1961.
- Carter, Kathryn. "Accounting for Time in Nineteenth-Century Manuscript Diaries and Photographs." *Life Writing: Exploring the Contemporary Meanings of Life Narrative* 12.4 (Dec 2015): 417-430.
- Elkins, Caroline. *Britain's Gulag: The Brutal End of Empire in Kenya*. London: Pimlico, 2005.
- Genette, Gerald. *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*. Trans. Jane E. Lewin. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980.
- Herman, David. Introduction: Narratologies. *Narratologies: New Perspectives on Narrative Analysis*. Ed. David Herman. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1999. 1-30.
- Katumanga, Musambayi. "Kenya: Imagined Closed Spaces of the Political Economy of Violence." *(Re)membering Kenya*. Ed. George Gona and Mbuigua wa-Muingai. Vol.2. Nairobi: Twaweza Communications, 2013. 132-169.
- Margolin, Uri. "Of What Is Past, Is Passing, or to Come: Temporality, Aspectuality, Modality, and the Nature of Literary Narrative." *Narratologies: New Perspectives on Narrative Analysis*. Ed. David Herman. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1999. 142-166.
- Mazrui, Ali A. "Uhuru Bado Kidogo: Africa's Condition of "Not Yet Uhuru": The Balance Sheet." Lecture. Jaramogi Oginga Odinga Foundation. Nairobi. 15 July 2005. <http://igcs.binghampton.edu/igcs_site/dirton28.htm>. Accessed 2 April 2011.
- Mendilow, A. A. "The Position of the Present in Fiction." *The Theory of the Novel*. Ed. Philip Stevick. New York: The Free Press, 1967. 255-280.
- Muchiri, Jennifer. "The Intersection of the Self and History in Kenyan Autobiographies." *Eastern African Literary and Cultural Studies* 1.1-2(2014): 83-93. 27 Jan 2015. Print.
- Ochieng', William. R. *Place of Biography in Kenyan History: 1904-2005*. Kisumu, Kenya: Mountain View Publishers, 2005.
- Odera, Odinge. *My Journey with Jaramogi*. Nairobi: African Research & Resource Forum, 2010.
- Odinga, Oginga. *Not Yet Uhuru: The Autobiography of Oginga Odinga*. Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 1967.
- Pike, Burton. "Time in Autobiography." *Comparative Literature*. 28.4 (Autumn 1976):326-342. 21 Jan 2010. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1770020>>. Print.
- Popkin, Jeremy D. *History, Historians, and Autobiography*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2005.
- Rew, Francis Owino. "Jaramogi Oginga Odinga's Vision and Legacy for Democracy in Kenya." Symposium. Jaramogi Oginga Odinga Memorial. Tom Mboya Labour College, Kisumu, Kenya. 5 March 2010. <<http://blog.jaluo.com/?p=4393>>. Accessed 31 March 2012.
- Ricoeur, Paul. *Time and Narrative*. Trans. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer. Vol. 2. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1985.
- Tagwirei, Cuthbeth. "The Simultaneity of Past and Present in Ian Douglas Smith's *The Great Betrayal: The Memoirs of Ian Douglas Smith* (1997)." *Life Writing: Exploring the Contemporary Meanings of Life Narrative* 13.3(September 2016): 335-350.

BIO

Kesero Tunai completed a PhD in Literary Studies and Creative Writing at the University of Hawai`i at Manoa where he took courses at the University's renowned Center for Biographical Research. He has published on the narrative, and on the Kenyan autobiography. His latest work is the co-edited (with Jairus Omuteche) *Critical Readings on Eastern African Autobiography*(2016) a pioneer text on Eastern African life writing criticism. He has taught at various universities and is currently Lecturer at Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology, Kakamega, Kenya, where he teaches Eastern African Literature, Children's Literature, Life Writing Studies, the Literature of Migration, and Literary Research.