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# INTERROGATING NOTIONS OF NATIONHOOD, NATION AND GLOBALISATION IN POSTCOLONIAL AFRICA: A TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF FOUR AFRICAN NOVELS

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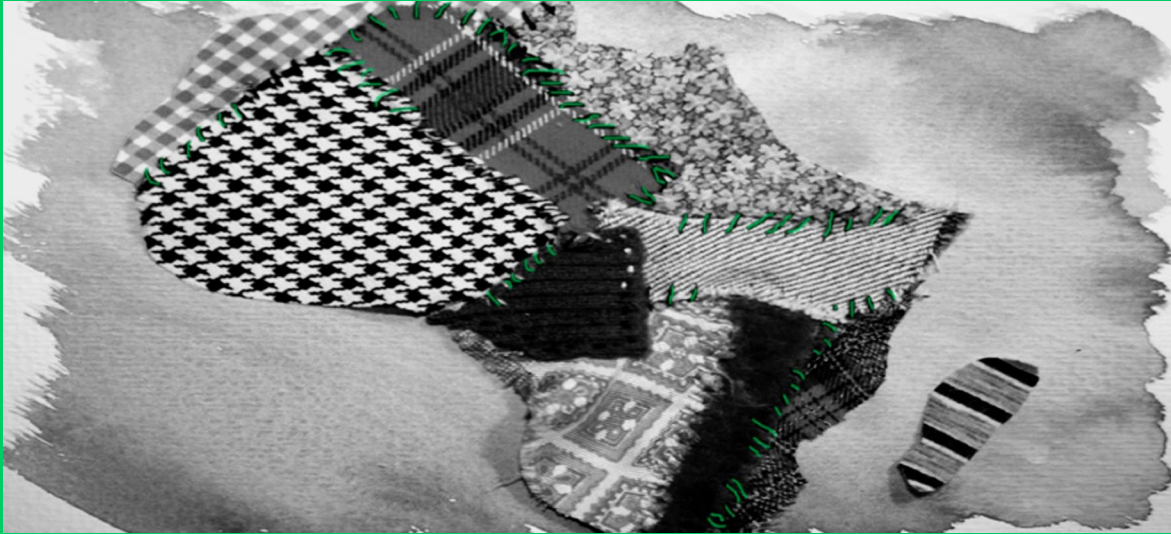
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Abstract || Through the analysis of Pepetela's *Mayombe*, Ngugi's *Petals of Blood*, Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah* and *A Man of the People*, this article interrogates concepts of nationhood and nation in postcolonial Africa within the framework of the postcolonial theory. Postcolonial theory deconstructs grand narratives such as the nation and nationhood, hence deconstructs such narratives as they are problematic. This study shows problems associated with definitions of a nation in which some members are sidelined. Also explored is the idea of nationalism and its importance in forming the nation. It is revealed that nationhood is problematic in post independent Africa even though nationalism served a critical role during decolonisation because variations are noted as differences in gender and ethnicity disturb nation building. Globalisation is also threatening, challenging and undermining the existence of nations.

Key-words || Pepetela | *Mayombe* | Ngugi | *Petals of Blood* | Achebe | *Anthills of the Savannah* | *A Man of the People* | Ethnicity | Gender | Globalisation | Nationhood | Nationalism | Postcoloniality.

## 0. Introduction

Ever since nations came on the scene and national identities began to be promoted as the prime focus of collective identification they have been associated with controversy and frequent upheaval as their limits have been questioned. When nation building was at its height, the meaning and purpose of nationhood was taken more or less for granted and nations were treated as providing a fixed context within which social processes could be examined and analysed. It was as if social relations occurred naturally within the boundaries of nations while political and diplomatic relations happened between them. An attempt to critically study the idea of nationhood is very important as clearly evidenced by the upsurge of nationalistic feeling and action and the continuing instability and political reorganization. New national divisions are appearing and questions of national identity seem to be taking a new relevance in the context of debates about ethnicity and new forms of political representation emerge both above and below the national level. It is within this view that it becomes imperative to interrogate the concept of nation/nationhood. This research employs textual criticism, a method applied to written source materials as objects of analysis (Jankowski and Jeven, 1991: 62).

This research is delimited to the colonial and postcolonial era. The colonial period is reflected in Pepetela's *Mayombe* which shows the economic marginalization, political subjugation as well as the reactions of the colonized people as they resist colonial rule. We note problems of the nation as it seeks to accommodate the individual and the ethnic groups that want to pursue their cultures without being imposed. Achebe's *Anthills of the Savanna* reveals how nationhood appears a specifically male prerogative. Conceptions of nationhood under globalization are put to question given the emergency of new multi-cultural and transnational identities which supersede the old national loyalties. This is highlighted in Ngugi's *Petals of Blood* and Achebe's *A Man of The People*.

### 0.1 Background of the Study and Literature Review

The nature of nationhood and national identity is clearly close to the heart of modern African societies because of the territorial demarcations made by European imperial forces during colonialism in the 1880s and 1890s. Industrialized Europe looked at Africa for the supply of raw materials; they also saw it as a possible market for their manufactured goods. Africa was also colonized as part of what Taylor (1984) called the struggle for supremacy in Europe. This was competition for control of European territories among European powers. Another reason why Europeans colonized Africa was that,

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as white, they had to civilize Africans. Parson (1998) highlights that by 1920 most of the states in the South, Central and East Africa had become colonies of direct rule. In West Africa there was indirect colonial rule, with some of their mining and farming areas exploited by capitalist companies. There was also the development and spread of European formal education in its disciplinary division and hierarchical organization providing the social as well as professional skills for the would-be post colonial elites. This education was provided only so far as to satisfy the colonialist need for local low level functionaries or to satisfy missionaries' consciences about their civilizing mission. However, a nationalist consciousness was evolved, which led to the formation of various national movements within Africa to fight against colonialism. This saw the liberation struggle which finally led to the independence of many African nations and states. The idea of nationhood was fostered in the struggle that won the liberation as African people identified themselves as a physical and psychological entity which existed in the form of a geographical location where cohesion subsisted amongst members who felt a sense of belonging, patriotism and pride.

There are two contrasting schools of thought that explain the development and origin of the nation, as revealed in Day and Thompson (2004). The two schools are the modernist and ethnicist. Modernists see the nation and nationalism as phenomena whose roots do not extend back beyond a period associated with the major socio-economic process of modernity such as industrialization, capitalism, the rise of the modern state and major related political changes, (Gellner, 1983). In contrast, ethnicists hold that nationalism has its roots in pre-modern ethnic identities. Antony Smith (1991) maintains that while nations may be modern their origins are not, but can be traced to earlier ethnic (named human populations with shared ancestry myths, history and culture having an association with a specific territory and a sense of solidarity). For Smith, the maxim is that the forces described by modernists transform these ethnic without destroying them.

Anderson (1991) argues that membership of a nation requires people to carry out an act of imagination through which they identify with others whom they will never actually meet or even see. This is possible under certain conditions with the recent arrival of print media, capable of uniting people across large stretches of time and space. Anderson describes how a population able to read the same newspapers or enjoying the same novels in the same language is at the same time capable of grasping those who appear within them as inhabiting the same social world sharing a deep horizontal comradeship (1991: 16). Anderson (1983) cites sovereignty as another concept of nationhood. He examines especially the formation of nation states and nations in the Americas where each nation is

conceptualized as a sovereign power within its particular sphere of influences.

Regarding specific discourses of nationhood, Calhoun (1997) identifies ten distinctive properties. None of them are indispensable but together they form a pattern of interrelated concepts and assumptions that confer reality upon nations and people.

They include boundaries, indivisibility, sovereignty, legitimacy conferred by conformity with the interests of the people, popular mobilization and participation, direct individual membership, common culture, historic depth, common descent and territoriality. (4-5)

The discourse of nationalism helps determine the form in which nations are conceived. For example, according to Anderson (1991), they are thought of as bounded, sovereign and horizontally uniform regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each. Concepts of nationhood shall be interrogated largely in the vein of the postcolonial theory. As a literary theory or critical approach, according to Ashcroft et al (1995), post colonial theory is an engagement with and contestation of colonialism's discourses, power structures and social hierarchies. The theory of postcoloniality dezes the grand narratives or any clear definitions such as nation, nationhood, nationality and so on. The postcolonial theory is applied to describe colonial discourses analysis to determine situations and experiences of the subaltern groups whether in the first or third world. The theory also interrogates knowledge constructions of the West and calls for a rethinking of the very terms by which this knowledge has been constructed by the West. The nation and nationalism are problematic in post independence even though nationalism served a critical role during decolonization.

## 1. Aims of the Study

The aims of this study are to establish the relevance of nationhood/nation in as far as nation building is concerned; also, to validate the conceptualization of nationhood/nation in the era of globalization and to locate the position of women in the nation and to justify their importance in nation building.

### 1.1 Towards the Construction of a Nation . An Analysis of Pepetela's Mayombe (1983)

Angola is abundant with natural resources; it has rich oil deposits and timber. The huge mineral deposits were the prime reason for the struggle for military, territorial, commercial and political control of this land. Van De Waals (1993) reveals that by the end of the

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nineteenth century, Angola was recognized in international circles as part of Portugal's colonial empire. Independent kingdoms of the interior were therefore subjugated as Portuguese farmers settled. Shortage of labor restrained economic development thus forced labor became an integral part of the Portuguese policy. As part of the colonial package, the Portuguese developed a policy of assimilation which was also used by the French. Assimilation as a colonial administration policy encouraged the destruction of the African socio-economic-political structures, that is, it urged the total obliteration of anything African only to be supplanted with the metropolitan structures. The major aim of assimilation was to engender a black Frenchman or black Portuguese. Tidy and Leeming (2005) assert that French assimilation went as far as treating French colonies as an extension of France. In reality, assimilation was the rejection of all that embodied the African. However, the Portuguese did not extend the privileges of assimilation to all but only targeted the elite, a small clique of intellectuals who ironically were to discern the hypocrisy of the Portuguese policy. This led to the development of nationalist consciousness which culminated in the armed struggle against colonial forces. The People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), according to Van Der Waals, stressed that Portuguese colonialism could only be defeated by an all out struggle waged by a united front of anti-imperialist forces in Angola. This required that the Angolan people mobilized and fought on all fronts in order to weaken Portuguese imperialism to make Angola an independent country.

It is within this brief background that Pepetela (1983), a former guerrilla in Angola, writes from experience of the armed revolution as he fights to liberate his nation. He does not want to be identified from a racial point of view. He chose his war name to show his identification with the objectives of the Angolan revolution. The guerrillas are part of the MPLA liberation movement and the enemy is the International Police for the Defense of the State (PIDE) of colonial. Pepetela was a scholar who believed in the Marxist ideology. He was inclined towards the peasants and workers. The white colonial masters had monopolized the means of production and reduced the native Africans into wage earning labourers. The relationship between these two classes was both a racial and exploitative one.

The idea of a nation has enabled postcolonial societies to invent a self image throughout which they could act to liberate themselves from imperialist oppression. Wallerstein (Haralambos and Holborn: 2005) argues that colonialists led to the division of Africa into sovereign states. These states often contain diverse groups of people, for example, in Mayombe there are diverse groups of people like Kikongo, Kimbundu, Fiote and Umbundu. Nationalism is therefore recognized for its important psychological dimension of bringing people together. Calhoun (1997: 99) describes the social construction



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of nations where he cites that nations exist only when their members understand themselves through the discursive framework of national identity. They are commonly forged in the struggle carried out by some members of the nation in the making to get others to recognize its genuine nation-ness. For example, the MPLA in Mayombe to a greater extent succeeded to win the people. It scored a number of victories in terms of mobilization, political consciousness, courage and civilian support, which is the duty of the Commissar, Joao. We realize that the strength of the mass or the collective is greater than the individual parts. We note the co-ordination between guerrillas and the civilians who would provide guerrillas with information. Fearless actually acknowledges the working class, joining the struggle as an indicator that they are winning. In the creation of a nation, national identity is very important. In Mayombe this is realized through the conscientisation of the mass by the Commissar.

Portrayed in Mayombe is a diverse mix of people who consider themselves a nation. There are different ethnic groups, the Kikongo, Kimbundu and Umbundu and it is the nationalistic ideology which serves as emotional glue. Thierme (2003) views nationalism as an ideology which affirms the autonomy of the nation state and is usually represented by political movements that seek to achieve national unity or, in this case, from colonialism, independence from colonial rule. For most African states under colonial rule, like Angola portrayed in Mayombe, nationalism becomes an important tool for gaining independence from imperialists and external rule.

Appaiah (1992) asserts that identity is a product of history and that every human identity is constructed by society and is historical. Mayombe, however, reveals that sharing the same history of colonialism is not the same as sharing the same identity. In the text, it becomes clear that there is no one identity for a people as we meet freedom fighters (the MPLA). The novel discusses the tensions within this national liberation movement which included people from all ethnic groups in Angola, Kikongo in the North, Kimbundu in the centre, Umbundu in the South and some who are detribalized. What loosely unites these freedom fighters in Mayombe is the nationalistic ideology, the need for freedom for the liberation of Angola.

From the beginning, ethnic differences which characterize the freedom fighters threaten the struggle for the independence of Angola. It is a struggle rocked by suspicion of each other and hate. The Operations Chief, together with New World, Ekuikui and Miracle, all suspect Struggle of being a sell-out. Also, they do not trust the Commander, Fearless as he is Kikongo and they are Kimbundu. The command itself is divided by tribalism and ambition. Thus, in this national struggle, according to Basil Davidson (1992), the struggle to transform colonial territories, the wealth of ethnic cultures is found to

be both distracting and hard to absorb, hence they fall back into the colonial mentality of regarding it as tribalism. Tribalism is portrayed as a dangerous yet realistic ideology which threatens the success of nationalistic consciousness. For example, the Commander asked for volunteers to look for Muatianvua when he did not show up after the retreat. No one volunteered because he (Muatianvua) was detribalized.

Nationalism becomes problematic as an artificial construct. This is reflected by Theory, a mulatto who is an embodiment of hybridity. His voice in *Mayombe* confronts essentialism, hence the nation state becomes a political construct which ignores the ethnic diversity in Africa. There is no homogeneous African identity. The question that arises is 'Can these contentious voices be harmonized?' Tarmer (2000) asserts that the nation is sustained as well through both reactive and proactive measures. Nationalistic ideologies can serve as 'emotional glue' when there is no threat from outside or when threat does not appear imminent through regular exercises of solidarity which became accepted by members of a nation as natural.

The other problem highlighted in *Mayombe* with regards to the creation of a nation and nationalism is the diversity of missions. The guerrillas tend to embark on personal missions in the name of a nation. The nationalistic ideology claims that all guerrillas are fighting for liberation, one therefore tends to question 'Whose liberation?' Everyone has his personal interests. For example, the Operation Chief is fighting in Cabinda so that his own territory would have few enemies. Theory's mission is to find acceptance in a world where racial hybrids are not recognized and the mission of the guerrillas is to establish peace, independence and social equity in Angola. They therefore designed means and methods to attain their goal which included the armed struggle.

*Mayombe* also hints on the question of belonging especially towards the construction of a nation. Classical theorists of nationalism reify a nation as a unified and culturally homogeneous entity formed in Smith's (1998) case around an ethnic core. This is being subjected to growing criticism by social theorists who stress that the nation is always subject to contestation especially about who belongs to it. Theory brings in this dimension. His commitment to the struggle is not so much of a developed inner consciousness; it is a result of an external driving force. He first defines himself by where he comes from to legitimize his cause. He is acknowledging that he is a colored person and as such he is suffering an identity crisis, he does not know where he belongs to, thus he says: 'I carry in me the irreconcilable and that is my driving force' (Pepetela, 1983: 1). His mission is to find acceptance in a world where racial hybrids are not recognized. His method is to join the guerrillas. Theory is



challenging the myth of racism especially in as far as nation building is concerned. This element destroys the essential sameness of the people and by fighting on the less-privileged side, Theory is proving the point that color difference does not matter. He is demystifying race to prove that what must be regarded as a parameter of national identity is not race; identity must be equal to shared consciousness. He identifies with Gabela, a place where he comes from which is a material reality which credits him hundred percent citizenship of Angola.

The problem is that all guerrillas do not look at this shared consciousness. He therefore is prepared to endure physical and spiritual pain and even death, fighting for Angola and its inhabitants hence his refusal to return to the base to recover his injured knee. He has made a choice to abandon his family in order to prove his identity. Theory therefore demystifies the concept of race in the nation. The main thrust is that while it is ideal to live in social groups, it should be remembered that human beings are complex even as individuals.

The aspect of regarding a nation as homogeneous brings in connotations of equality and this conceals important differences amongst people as reflected in the novel. Pepetela's argument is that there is need to transcend ethnic boundaries of the homogeneous nature of the definition of a nation from a western point of view. At the same time, Mayombe stresses the idea of a nation as being important in the fight against colonialism. The idea of a nation has been adopted as foci of resistance to colonialism by most African people. People were taken to be one as they fought during the liberation struggle, but even as they fought, differences continued to emerge.

The picture of a nation portrayed at the end demonstrates the value of the syncretism of the collective which is brought about by Fearless's death. He is buried together with Struggle in the same pit, which reflects that a commander and a soldier are one in a revolution. The death of Fearless leads to the development of a nationalist consciousness that transcends barriers of narrow tribalism and individualism which ultimately result in the formation of a nation where individuals participate as a collective.

Miller (Day and Thompson, 1995: 6) considers nations to be created and sustained by active processes of thought and interchange among relevant body of people. Hence a nation is a form of community whose values and identity are the subject of ongoing negotiation and reflection. Such practices (nationalism) are designed to operate, to bring together large numbers of people into a new kind of consciousness and collective identity. The discourse of nationalism conclusively helps determine the form in which nations are conceived. It is within this vein that Brubaker (Day and Thompson, 2004: 11) suggests to start to think less in terms of how nations develop and

instead concentrate on the various ways the nation as a category is involved, institutionalized and more generally used as a cognitive frame.

## 1.2 Panacea to Africa's Political Challenges: Dephallocising the Nation in Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah*

Pepetela's account makes nationalism appear an exclusively male pre-occupation whereas women's lives are said to centre elsewhere. The liberation movement fighting in Mayombe consists of men while females are seen to play minor roles like teaching. Nationhood in this case appears as a specifically male prerogative since it is being associated with terms like liberation, colonialism and nationalism which are masculine, as it is associated with violence, penetration, invasion, and it is the male guerrilla that is seen to protect the (feminine) nation. Achebe's (1987) *Anthills of the Savannah* dephallocises the nation and reflects the extent to which this is manifest in postcolonial Africa. Achebe reflects how these masculine aspects promote corruption, selfishness and greed which give birth to issues of bad governance, denial of rights as well as military coups which are violent. Achebe is therefore disregarding this concept of a nation in *Anthills of the Savannah*.

The novel is set in a fictional West African state called Kangan, which is ruled by dictatorial president with a military background. He rules the country with a tight grip and a rather corrupt government and there appears to be no parliament. Masculinities of postcolonial Africa were largely a mimic of their colonial masters. Sam rules with an iron fist and tramples on everyone in his cabinet but it becomes ironic when he is soft and jelly when dealing with a white female journalist.

Nationalist movements rarely take women's situation as their point of departure. On the contrary, nationalism often suppresses women's concerns or puts them aside until the more important issues of the nation's fate are decided. Hence Enlore (Molande, 2004: 44) concludes that nationalism typically springs from masculinised memory, masculinised humiliation and masculinised hope. Achebe therefore is challenging the masculinised nation which fails as it is always associated with coups and political unrest.

Beatrice in *Anthills of the Savannah*, therefore, openly challenges male chauvinism when she says 'What every woman wants a man to complete her is a piece of male chauvinism bullshit I had completely rejected before I knew there was anything like the Women's Lib' (Achebe, 1987: 88).

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Ikem also questions the oppression of women. He seeks to offer background information against the oppression of women and he attacks chauvinistic ideas that women are inferior. He acknowledges women especially in as far as nation building is concerned. Beatrice is a woman that evolves as a symbol of development from childhood. She is also a symbol of hope in terms of the political situation in Kangan hence making the apt naming in vernacular image seem valid for the emancipation of women in society. Amaechina, Elewa's child, becomes a symbol of hope in the advance of the political situation in Kangan and in women as the possible hope in the reigning political status quo in the Kangan government.

Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah* eventually re-valorises women. Beatrice inhabits the postcolonial world of Kangan as a Senior Assistant Secretary in the Ministry of Finance and the only person in the service with first class honours degree in English. She therefore represents a small minority of women in a lopsided system in which African men received a well rounded education while, like in the mid-nineteenth century, African women received only utilitarian cosmetic skills in domestic science centres. Having transcended these barriers and the prevailing patriarchal European conception of women's purely domestic life, Beatrice earns respect from her male counterparts and joins the revolutionary elite combating the oppression inflicted by a military dictatorship.

Achebe's view of women is also reflected through the names Nwanyibuife ('A female is also something') and Amaechina ('May the path never close'). Achebe's vision is that females are equal stakeholders in the nation as males; therefore, they should be viewed as interested parties and responsible participants in the road to self redemption. Achebe advocates for the inclusion of females in the nation. When they have been given their rightful place then the road to self redemption and recovery may never close.

*Anthills of the Savannah* shows that women will be forerunners in the journey towards recovery but with the youths, workers, peasants as trusted lieutenants. The military will come though at a lower level. All these people represent various social groups showing Achebe's social vision of populist inclusiveness that is the inclusion of all social class in matters of the state with the female on the forefront in the road to freedom. Beatrice fractures the post independent masculinity which is not influenced by feminine attitude. The feminine narrative represented by Beatrice comes in as a counter narrative, she stands up to Sam, the President and refuses to be used and dominated. She also appears to be one of the forces who can stand up against the government. The feminine principle therefore comes in to mend the damage done by the failure of this ultra-masculine nation. Order is being restored by women; hence femininity is important in building

the nation. Achebe therefore hints that the masculine nation is not the ideal.

Morokvasic (Day and Thompson, 2004) concedes that women often embody the nation, and that they are bearers of its honour and love. In nationalist discourse a woman is either the mother of the nation, or the sex object. She is either a protector and regenerator of the collective, or a possession of the collective. These symbolic images have been used by the media in getting the nation ready to face the enemy. The nation is gendered therefore at its very core and masculinity was the foundation of the nation. Emphasis is placed upon women's reproductive role in the formation of the nation and national consciousness. On the other hand, this is a biological contribution; women are the mother of the nation who produces its next generation. Constructions of nationhood usually involve specific notions of both manhood and womanhood. In this case gender is imbedded in the very meaning of nation, what is to be national, how members of a nation should behave. Achebe's sentiments are seen to differ and conflict through Beatrice when she opens Ikem's eyes by telling him that his politics and his knowledge has no clear role for women in his political thinking and he doesn't seem able to understand it+ (Achebe, 1987: 91). This is also highlighted in Ngugi's (1997) female character Wanja in *Petals of Blood* and Wariinga in *Devil of the Cross* (1982), who are playing active roles in their nation's histories by resisting being pushed or tempted into accepting subservient, degrading or decorative roles.

Equipped with education, resilience and the will to survive, females are placing no limitation on their capabilities and Achebe expresses the urgent need for strong female voices in African societies. He truly believes that as the world crushes around Man's ears, Woman in her supremacy will decent and sweep the shards together+ (Achebe: 89).

### 1.3 Globalization - a threat to the Nation/Nationhood: An interrogation of Ngugi's *Petals of Blood* and Achebe's *A Man of the People*.

The two novelists, Achebe and Ngugi, interrogate the nation and acknowledge that all certainties about it should now be suspected. The global sensibilities of all the major witnesses remain muted and submerged in the novelists' need to imagine the nation as geographic and culturally integrated space. The two authors confront globalization as a threat to the nation's integrity since nationalism places a nation at the centre of its concerns and seeks to promote national autonomy, national unity and national identity (Smith, 2001). Emenyonu (2006) contends that the nation still exists in consciousness as stored memories that may shape people's responses to the new space.

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Globalization makes political borders increasingly irrelevant as it transcends mental as well as physical barriers. Harvey's (1989) notion of time-space compression has become influential in making sense of globalization. For Harvey, the world shrinks as a consequence of technological innovations enabling people and commodities to travel more quickly than hitherto, and reducing distance as an obstacle to communication. These technological advances facilitate the increased interconnectedness that constitutes a core component of discussions of globalization. For some, the age of nation-state is already passing. Held (Day and Thompson, 1994) argues that while national governments remain significant actors, they are no longer the principal form of governance or authority. For example, a wide range of transnational actors now play important roles in global politics including multi-national corporations, global social movements and transnational bodies as the World Trade Organization and the United Nations. However, Holton (1998) holds that the appeal of nationhood and the idea of the nation-state are far from diminishing referring to the robustness and persistence of national identity and nation-focused sentiments. In doing so, he shows how globalization and nationalism often understood as mutually oppositional are not necessarily so. Thus, members of diasporan population may perceive themselves as belonging to a global community retaining links with their national homeland, while also holding citizenship of their adopted community. Furthermore, Vhutuza and Ngoshi (2008) contend that nationalism will continue to exist as long as mankind lives, and forms associations to question injustices in societies. This is supported by Smith (1998) who also contends that the loss of sovereignty does not necessarily entail the withering away of nationalism. Although this is threatened by globalization people keep identifying at national levels through for example, national days as Independence Day in Zimbabwe. There are also solid political reasons why the nation state continues to be a key actor in establishing the economic, political and social conditions necessary for economic growth and for attracting foreign capital. Therefore the appeal of nationhood is far from diminishing due to the robustness and persistence of national identity and nation-focused sentiments.

The old Ilmorog in *Petals of Blood* is destroyed by progress. Ngugi places the four characters, Munira, Abdullah, Wanja and Karega in remote Ilmorog now inhabited only by those too old, the young and feeble. A few Ilmorog's older residents such as Wanja's grandmother, Nyakinyua, offer residual memories of the village's former glory. She laments the old Ilmorog whereas Mzigo, Chui and Kimeria are referred to as having



built Ilmorog from a tiny nineteenth century village reminiscent of the days of Krapf and Rebman into a modern industrial town that even generations born after Gagarin and Armstrong will be proud to visit (Ngugi: 5)

When a persistent drought threatens the very survival of the village, residents Karega suggests a delegation travel to Nairobi to appeal for assistance from their Member of Parliament. Ngugi uses the delegation's reception in Nairobi to reveal the hypocrisy of various elite-run institutions in postcolonial Kenya. After the pivotal Ilmorog delegation village to the national capital, *Petals of Blood* relates the destruction wrought to the old village by progress. The village is soon visited by increasing intrusion from the city, a church, a police station, the African economic bank and eventually the Trans Africa highway. The new Ilmorog becomes a better town, complete with all urban vices, led by the most despicable of selfish exploiters such as Kimeria, Mzingo and Chui. *Petals of Blood* is written after forces of colonialism have been defeated in Kenya.

Chui betrays his people all of a sudden; he does not want to learn anything African such as African history, and African literature. But for anything, there has to be a centre, from which to study, experiences differ so there is no homogeneity especially in as far as culture is concerned. Ngugi therefore attacks universalism and wants African unique elements to be identified and not to be clouded by globalization or universalism. Ngugi appropriates that there is a black experience and blacks have to be in control of their own affairs. Politics, business and education are the major factors that strangle Ilmorog because they are imbued with ideological complexities that elude most of the characters at first.

When Wanja allows herself to be attracted by Western values, she becomes a prostitute only to acquire beauty, dignity and wholeness by returning to be a peasant at the end. Nyakunyua is the memory bank of the people, the repository of her people's history and her memory goes back to the time of the first resistance against colonialism. She is the link with the orator of the past, thus informs the young generation. The old informs the young as they are memory banks of history, so even in the face of globalization they are able to face and challenge it because they remain connected to their past. She even teaches the people of Ilmorog how to brew *Theng'eta* an inspirational drink within the culture so that people remain connected to their past and together they make up a collective experience. The aspect of history becomes a memory bank of the people and people draw lessons and it provides link and anchorage which people can forge ahead into the future. Thus we have in *Petals of Blood* communal voices coming together to narrate their experiences through different voices like Wanja, Munira and Karega.

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The bourgeoisie represent the reactionary forces set in to kill the people's initiatives; for example MP Nderi turns Theng'eta into a commercial brew getting the sole license to produce it himself. The transnational highway also passes through Ilmorog thus providing a pathway of exploitation. Fanon (1963) discusses the unpreparedness of the educated class, the lack of practical links between them and the masses of the people. For example, MP Nderi rarely interacts with his constituency as MP. The national middle class are said to be in a predicament as they try to replace the bourgeoisie of the mother country. Instead of focusing on production and development of their constituency, they are concentrated in the capital accumulating wealth. Chief Nanga and Nderi are never in touch with their people but are popular for their wealth, big spacious houses, expensive cars and expensive lifestyles. Their psychology is that of the business man. MP Nanga for example, wants the road that passes through his village to be tarred because he had purchased ten buses. Therefore the bourgeoisie becomes the tool of capitalism and fail to be fruitful in their nation.

Globalization exploits, denigrates and humiliates Africa in the same way slavery and colonialism did. This is reflected by Ngugi in *Petals of Blood* where a road that had once been a railway line joining Ilmorog to Runaini carrying wood, charcoal and wattle barks from Ilmorog forests had eaten the forest and after accomplishing their tasks the two rails were removed and the ground became a road. Foreign companies therefore exhaust resources and leave when they find no more use, thus humiliating and denigrating Africa.

Transnational companies have become powerful organizations which try to control the global economy while nation states feel compelled to offer a competitive environment to attract investment. In *A Man of the People*, the government had maintained to promote local industry and the Minister of Foreign Trade announced a twenty percent rise in import duties on certain types of textile goods but the firm of the British Amalgamated took steps to bring in three shiploads of textiles (Achebe, 1966: 99). Thus, globalization has used one chief weapon to incorporate the Third World into the global world through neo-liberal policies.

McLuhan (1960) argues that the world market is expanding to exclude localism and nationalism and that people's consciousness has been globalised. In *A Man of the People* the elite put on expensive robes made from European wool material with tags written 100% wool made in England (Achebe: 1966: 64). The youth wore Italian type shoes and tight trousers and girls wore lipstick and hair stretched with hot iron (Achebe: 94). There is also consumption of global food like coca-cola and hamburgers. The experience of colonial domination

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shows that in the effort to perpetuate exploitation, it also provokes and develops cultural alienation of a part of the population either by assimilation of the indigenous people or by creating a social gap between the indigenous elite and the popular masses. As a result of the divisions within society it happens that a considerable part of the population notably assimilates the colonizer's morality and considers itself culturally superior to its own people and looks down upon their cultural values. This is consolidated by increase in the social privileges of the alienated group. MP Nderi in *A Man of the People* enjoys these privileges. Ministers' residences are very huge with seven bedrooms and seven bathrooms. His children attend a foreign school and can hardly speak their local African Language. Nderi represents the corruption and greed of Kenya's political, economic and social elite who, after the struggle for freedom from the British rule have not returned wealth of the land to its people but rather perpetrates the social injustice and economic inequality; features of colonial aggression.

Globalization can also be charged of promising empty shells. Ruigrok and van Tulder (1995) argue that many governments and global financial institutions like the World Bank and IMF as well as transnational companies claim that globalization will ultimately improve the lives of people all over the world. They argue that globalization is the best thing that could happen to a developing country and that opening up trade and markets as part of globalization will lead to prosperity everywhere. It promises a better tomorrow and harmony between the people of the world who will all benefit from greater economic efficiency and increased world in the long run. These assumptions are contradicted by the evidence in *Petals of Blood* where in the guise of development, peasants had been lured into taking loans to fence off their land and buying imported fertilizer. However, the majority failed to pay off their loans resulting in confiscation of their pieces of land which were later sold off leaving the peasants landless, thus failure to benefit or even improve in the face of globalization.

The effects of globalization especially on the elite are emphasized when Odili says that:

a man who has just come in from the rain and dried his body and put on dry clothes is more reluctant to go out again than another who has been indoors the whole time. The trouble with our new nation as I saw it then was that none of us had been indoors long enough to be able to say to hell with it. We had all been in the rain together until yesterday (Ngugi: 37).

He goes on to talk about how a handful of his group of people become the smart and the lucky and how they had scrambled to the one shelter their former rulers left and taken it over. The above metaphor is very powerful and the point is that a person who goes from having nothing like Nanga, to having everything is going to be more reluctant to go back to having nothing, compared to someone that has had everything the whole time, thus making him more greedy to gain power and more defensive against giving up his power. Odili emphasizes that the new nation was never indoors but together in the rain and they desperately needed to experience little shelter. This shelter was a manifestation of globalization which encourages only a handful to benefit at the hands of the majority.

## 2. Conclusion

This article advances the view that the term nation is infested with acute weaknesses which stem from the definition itself. In Mayombe, it is emphasized that common imaginations can tie people together and nationalism is shown to have played a major role in fostering nationhood. The study reveals that nationhood is being threatened and undermined as the world becomes a global village that makes political borders irrelevant. Sovereignty is threatened as national governments become insignificant as they are no longer the principal form of authority. This paper also maintains that the discourse of a nation and nationhood which purport to engage everyone in a nation in the same way with the same degree of intensity does not fully reflect this equity as variations and differences are noted on the axis of gender where nations are mainly gendered.

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