

MYTH AND MEMORY IN NARRATING A NATION: JENNIFER MAKUMBI'S *KINTU*

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT FOR THE
AWARD OF DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN LITERATURE, UNIVERSITY OF
NAIROBI.**

2020

DECLARATION

DECLARATION

This Research Report is my original work and has not been presented for examination and/or the award of a degree at any University.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to my Family. You have been my support pillar throughout my life.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research project report would not have been successful without the guidance, commitment and support of my supervisors, Prof. Hellen Mwanzi and Dr Alex Wanjala. I am grateful for your support, guidance and patience.

To my course work lecturers in the Department of Literature: Dr. Godwin Siundu, Prof. Ciarunji Chesaina, Prof. Peter Wasamba, Prof. Monicah Mweseli, Dr. Jennifer Muchiri, Prof. Henry Indangasi, Prof D. H. Kiiru, Dr. Miriam Musonye, Prof. Alina Rinkanya, Dr. Kimingichi Wabende, Dr. Kitata Makau, Dr. Tom Odhiambo, and Mrs. Ann Mwangi. I am grateful for your lectures which contributed much to this project.

My sincere gratitude to classmates, Kevin Mosigisi, Ruth Openda, Esther Nengo, Susan Kavaya, Christine Mbugua, Kennedy Mugo, Ludwick Ongeti, Samwel Mwabu, Linda Ouma, Angeline Asiko, Peter Odongo, Patrick Makokha, Joseph Katelo, Audilia Wakesho, Janet Kangogo, John Auna, Bramwell Wesonga, Enock Yego, Fred Oluoch, and Athanas Mutisya. I am really grateful for the moral support and encouragement during the course.

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the use of myth to create the narrative of a nation. The study seeks to understand how the myth of a clan (Kintus) has been married to that of Buganda Kingdom and Uganda along a course that converges and diverges as the stories of the characters in the novel intersect. The study places myth at the center of nation narration. The myths of a people are important in grafting, imagining and narrating their past. Makumbi uses myth to create a narrative of the Kintus and that of (B)Uganda. Myth becomes a memory reservoir for the Kintus who are united by an imagined shared past. Myth and oral history are presented as both the existing and legitimate evidence of a peoples' past successes and failures. Makumbi places Africa's precolonial past as an important point in the reconstruction and creation of national narratives and the formation of nations. The problems that the characters in *Kintu* face are associated with and can be traced to the curse that Ntwire put on Kintu's family. Political instability in post independent Uganda can also be traced to the past where assassinations and violence was there in Buganda kingdom. Shared memory and forgetting are presented as necessary for people to imagine and view themselves as one. Family spaces intersect with national spaces as the narrative of the nation develops. These two spaces complement and supplement each other as the narrative of a nation develops. The nation operates at the micro and macro levels. Different communities have similar or distinct memories. The difference is a reflection of different journeys that gave these communities similar or related experiences. With these heterogeneous narratives and journeys, the result is a shared experience in terms of sufferings, glories and mistakes.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Jennifer Nansubuga Makumbi, the author of *Kintu*, was born and grew up in Kampala Uganda. She was brought up by her aunt Catherine Makumbi Kulubya. She went to Trinity College Nabbingo for her secondary school education and Kings College Buddo for her Advanced level education. She studied and qualified for a Bachelor of Arts degree with Education majoring in English and Literature in English at the Islamic University in Uganda. In September 2001 she joined Manchester Metropolitan University to do a Master of Arts degree in Creative Writing. Later she enrolled for, and successfully completed her PhD in Creative Writing at Lancaster University. Jennifer Nansubuga Makumbi has taught at various universities in the United Kingdom. She has published several literary works which include “Let’s Tell This Story Properly” (2014) that won the 2014 Commonwealth Short Story Prize targeting new and emerging writers from the Commonwealth, “The Joys of Fatherhood” and “The Accidental Seaman” (2012).

Her novel *Kintu* (2014) won the Kwani? Manuscript Project in 2013 under the title *Kintu Saga* and was subsequently published in 2014 as *Kintu*. The novel is set in two time periods. It is set in Contemporary Uganda in 2004 and past Buganda Kingdom in 1750. These two time spaces allow the reader to experience what and how things were in the remote past and how things are in contemporary Uganda in 2004. We are, therefore, able to get a view of the story before we get to read what happened between the past and contemporary Uganda. Makumbi presents the story of Kintu family over many generations. In the prologue, she gives us the picture of Bwaise, Kampala in 2004 and the life of Kamu Kintu who is murdered by a mob at the hands of Local Councilors. Makumbi then uses a flashback to take us back in time to the start of the family tree

in Buddu Province of Buganda Kingdom in 1750. Here we get to see Ppookino (Governor) Kintu Kidda and the mistake he made that attracted a curse that would plague his descendants for generations. Kintu Kidda was a Governor (Ppookino) in Buganda Kingdom. He married Nnakato, who was a twin with Babirye, against Ganda custom which demanded that twins should either be married by one man or at least one should wait until the elder twin is married. After marriage, Nnakato did not conceive for a long period. Nnakato's sister Babirye was not married either. Nnakato asked her sister to bail her out by having children with Kintu Kidda. Babirye accepted to bail her sister four times every time giving birth to twins, nursing them and weaning them before leaving Kintu Kidda. The children were assumed to be Nnakato's as per the Ganda custom.

However, after waiting for a long time, Nnakato finally conceived and gave birth to Baale. During this time, a Tutsi man, Ntwire, was in Buddu Province on his way to Buganda's capital to look for work at the Kabaka's *Lubiri*. Ntwire came to Kintu Kidda's homestead with an infant in his hands and explained using gestures and demonstrations that his wife had died while giving birth. The young boy, Kalemanzira, was taken and nursed by Nnakato as Baale's twin brother. Ntwire did not continue with his journey to the capital but worked for the Ppookino as a herdsman. Trouble started when Ntwire wanted Kalemanzira (Kalema) to accompany Ppookino to the capital to look for a job there. On their way to the capital through Olerwa (a desert during the time of Ppookino Kintu) the entourage camped for the night in a cave. The next day, Kintu Kidda sent Kalema to fetch water from a nearby spring. Kalema, against custom that forbade anyone to drink from Kintu's dedicated utensils, drank brewed wine that was remaining in the gourd before fetching water. Kintu who had been taking a walk saw this and rushed to the scene, he raised his hand in an attempt to slap the gourd off Kalema's hands but instead the hands

landed on the boy's jaws. Kalema collapsed and died. Kalema's death was not announced, neither was he given burial rites. Ntwire disappeared after placing a curse on Kintu Kida and his descendants.

A series of misfortunes followed that led to the disintegration of the Kintus. First, Baale died on the morning of his wedding day, Nnakato committed suicide and Kintu Kida became mad and disappeared never to be seen again.

After these events, the family was scattered all over Buganda Kingdom. However, each family branch kept the family oral history and that of Buganda Kingdom alive by narrating it to succeeding generations. The Kintus continued to experience problems such as madness, sudden death, suicide and loss of memory until they decided to look for their kin and come together for a ritual that would cleanse them from Ntwire's curse. They gathered together in their ancestral land in Kiyirika. The novel also captures the various Buganda Kabakas and the struggle for power among the royalty. We also see the period of colonialism and period after independence. Makumbi captures how things were at independence, how Obote overthrew Kabaka Mutesa, the reign of Idi Amin, how Obote recaptured power with the help of Tanzanians and the 1980s period during the Bush War in Uganda. The various stories about different family branches, the development of Buganda and post-independence politics of Uganda in the novel all converge in contemporary Uganda in 2004 which we had be given in the Prologue. The Kintus gather together in a clan reunion for a cleansing ceremony. Makumbi gives another side of history that influences the journey of Buganda and Uganda to their modern state.

In this project, I study *Kintu* as a novel that attempts to create the narrative of a nation using myths to re-present Buganda's past and blending it with the events during colonialism to imagine and legitimize narrative of a people. The study seeks to understand how the myth of a clan (Kintus) has been married to that of Buganda Kingdom and Uganda along a course that converges and diverges as the stories of the characters in the novel intersect. The desire of the Kintus to unite and the imagined shared history and memory of its people is important in exploring the narrative of nation formation. The novel presents a narrative of a people that was in existence before colonialism. It seems to suggest that colonialism happened but this is not the only factor that forms and radiates the path of a nation. The Kintus, Ganda, and Ugandans have their own past that requires proper retelling; hence the novel seems to say, to quote the title of Makumbi's short story, 'Let's Tell this Story Properly'. To tell this story properly, she borrows from Ganda myths and grafts a family oral history that takes us back to remote past in Buganda Kingdom.

Many scholars have explored the idea of the 'nation' and how the sense of a nation is imagined, created, and asserted by a people with the aim of uniting them. Benedict Anderson in *Imagined Communities* (1991) defines a nation as 'an imagined political community'. Anderson further says that it is imagined because even the people who consider themselves as one do not even 'know each other' neither have they met or even heard of them yet 'in the minds of each lives the image of their communion'. This study engages the idea of 'communion' that tends to bring people together and make them imagine and live as one even when they are physically separated from each other as in the case of the Kintu descendants. In the novel, Makumbi presents us with characters that come from as far as Tanzania during the family homecoming. This is significant in asserting that the sense of communion which here is read as a people gathering as a nation is

driven more by the will of the people to unite. This will is always motivated by a people's myth which tends to create an imagined shared past and thereby presuppose a shared present and project it into a shared future.

This study looks at the presentation of narratives of a nation. The study focuses on the family spaces which present the main narrative of the Kintus, then proceeds to look at other narratives that are embedded in the family oral history. The aim is to look at Makumbi's *Kintu* as a novel which writes back in time in order to tell the story of a nation *properly*. The idea of the nation is explored at two levels. There is the idea of micro-nation and macro-nation. These two captures the sense of 'nation' as imagined and 'lived' by small groups on one hand, and that narrative which is created and/or imagined to assert the gathering of larger groups such as people in a country on the other hand.

Definition of Terms

Nation

The term 'nation' in this study refers to a people who consider themselves as one characterized by shared past memories whether real or imagined. I draw this definition from Benedict Anderson's definition of nation as "an imagined political community". I have also borrowed from Timothy Brennan's definition of a nation as "a local community, a domicile, family condition of belonging" (45). Brennan further writes that a nation is an imaginary construct which depends for its existence on an apparatus of cultural fictions (47). Nation is therefore that feeling of a people to consider themselves as one whether they are in one country or not.

For the purpose of this study, we shall explore nation at two levels; ‘Micro-nation’ and ‘Macro-nation’. **Micro-nation** refers to the ‘we feeling’ and sense of communion shared by smaller groups (say Kintus in the novel or the Ganda people) while **Macro-nation** refers to the ‘we feeling’ and sense of communion shared by larger groups of people (say various tribes and communities or people in a country). In the novel, nation has been used generally to refer to “a people” who consider themselves as having a share past. The Ganda themselves in the novel considered themselves as a ‘nation’. They considered their neighboring communities such as the Ssoga and Bunyoro as ‘other nations’. During the colonial period, different communities which before regarded themselves as ‘nations’ were forced to be under one larger political setup. This meant that many tribes in Uganda faced similar or related challenges of colonialism. As these communities started demanding for independence, they realized that they had shared experiences and a common enemy. This led them to start seeing a bigger sense of a nation – that of identifying themselves as Ugandans. The novel therefore uses the term nation in two perspectives; that of smaller groups such as tribes like the Ganda on one hand and the citizens of a country in this case Ugandans on the other hand.

Myth

Wole Ogundele in the essay “Devices of Evasion: Mythic versus the Historical Imagination in the Postcolonial African Novel” in *Research in African Literatures* (2002) has defined myths as “creative interpretations of experiences in the process of which facts get turned into fiction (myth), and what starts as fiction can also be subsequently remembered and narrated as fact” (130). In the novel, myth has been used to capture the remote past of Buganda and create a memory reference for Kintu descendants. From the omniscient narrator, we get to know about Ppookino Kintu Kida and what he did that attracted a curse to his family and descendants. These

'facts' about Kintu from the accounts of the omniscient narrator get twisted, turned and some elements added to the myth has the oral history of the Kintus is narrated from one generation to another. The myth as used in Kintu provides cultural memory for the people. It carries their mistakes and glory; it justifies their sufferings, it makes them celebrate the madness/insanity that runs in their family. The myth becomes a unifying factor for all Kintu descendants.

Statement of the Problem

Jennifer Nansubuga Makumbi has appropriated a family myth to tell the story of Uganda in *Kintu*. Using myth, the author grafted a family oral history that goes back to remote past. Makumbi uses Ppookino Kintu to show how a mistake in the past can have effects on future generations. The myth reveals the glaring effects of violence caused by power wrangles both in Buganda kingdom and Uganda. A study on why Makumbi chose to use myth to tell the story of Uganda to take us to a remote past is important in the sense that it is certain to throw light onto the causes of political upheavals that have eluded explanation. Myths are popular among African writers who use orality to preserve the cultural memory of a people. I use Makumbi's *Kintu* to contribute to the debate on the role of myth in the creation of a nation's narrative. The choice of a family myth and its role in creating a narrative of a people foregrounds the importance of a shared history, whether real or imagined, to hold people together. I seek to understand why the current generation of Kintu descendants need to go back in time to trace the genesis of their problems and what this means for Uganda in seeking solutions to their current problems as a nation and the need to look beyond colonialism to trace the root of the problems that afflict the current generation.

Objectives

The objectives of the study are to

- i. Examine the use of myth in narrating a nation in the novel *Kintu*
- ii. Analyse the way family spaces intersect with national spaces in the novel *Kintu*

Hypotheses

The study intends to investigate the hypotheses that

- i. The novel places myth at the center of nation narration
- ii. Family spaces intersect with nation/national spaces

Justification

The novel *Kintu* imagines and narrates the past of Buganda and Uganda using a family myth. The choice of Jennifer Nansubuga Makumbi as a writer was motivated by the curiosity to see how a contemporary Ugandan novelist imagines, creates, recreates, and fictionalizes the narrative of a nation while giving an historical memory to the nation. *Kintu* is a recent novel that narrates the story of a family across many generations. The family oral history is used to narrate how a curse came to haunt the Kintu family and its effects on Kintu descendants. Being a novel published in 2014, it presents a new point of reimagining a nation's past. The novel attempts to write back in time as opposed to the tendency to write 'back to the empire'.

Kintu goes back and forth between modern Uganda and past pre-colonial Uganda. The colonial period is only mentioned in passing. The family myth is narrated and presented as a thing that has been along a path which not even colonialism could change its course. To correct the mistakes made by a 'people' in the past, the novel suggests a ritual of revival. This in itself calls for an understanding of the strategy used to imagine the past.

Literature Review

The literature review includes the primary text *Kintu* and other secondary works that explore the issue of nation and narration.

Homi Bhabha in his book *Nation and Narration* (1990) contributed to the debate on nation as narration. He sees the nation as a 'Janus-faced god' because of its ambivalent nature. The nation 'as a form of cultural elaboration is an agency of ambivalent narration that holds culture at its most productive position as a force for subordination, fracturing, diffusing, reproducing as much as producing, creating, and guiding' (5). Bhabha says that 'nations, like narratives, lose their origins in the myths of time and only fully realize their horizons in the mind's eye' (5). . Homi Bhabha further argues in his book *The Location of Culture* that as people become scattered, their need to gather involves revisiting the past and 'gathering the memories' and the past in a 'ritual of revival and gathering the present' (199). Bhabha adds that 'in the midst of these lonely gatherings of the scattered people, their myths, fantasies and experiences, there emerges a historical past of singular importance (200).

My study agrees with Bhabha's argument because the nation has been seen as an ideology that looks back and forth at the same time. Narrating a nation involves going back into a real and/or imagined past and forging a link between a people in the past and a people today so as to show how the past is tied to the present. This helps to develop a sense of 'nationness'. This study looks at how *Kintu* tries to tie the past of Buganda with the present of both Buganda and Uganda in an attempt to forge a gathering of people as a nation.

Ernest Renan in his article “What is a Nation?” in *Nation and Narration* (1990) argues that a nation is a soul, a spiritual principle which constitutes two things. One lies in the past and one in the present. One is in the possession in common of a rich legacy of memories; the other is present-day consent, the desire to live together, the will to perpetuate the value of heritage that one has received in an undivided form (19). The present is tied to the past and both merge to create a common pivot for creating and asserting a sense of nationness. This study agrees with Renan’s work since the process of narration presupposes looking back into the past and telling what happened or what is imagined to have taken place in an attempt to establish a shared memory. However, Renan posits that if different communities happen to have and hold different memories this could lead to many nations and therefore the fall of a macro-nation into micro-nations. In addition, Renan has argued that “it is not the soil which makes a nation” but the soil “furnishes the substratum, the field of struggle and of labour; man furnishes the soul. Man is everything in the formation of this sacred thing which is called a people” (18). While it is true that the maps or physical boundaries may not form a nation, these boundaries or the soil also provide a reservoir for memory. This study seeks to explore the link between the ancestral land of the Kintu descendants in the novel and gathering of its people, in this ancestral land, as a nation.

Timothy Brennan in “The National longing for Form” in *Nation and Narration* (1990) writes that “the nation is both historically determined and general” and includes the “modern nation-state and to something more ancient and nebulous – the ‘natio’ – a local community, a domicile, family condition of belonging” (45). Brennan writes: “nations are imaginary constructs that depend for their existence on an apparatus of cultural fictions in which imaginative literature plays a role” (47). This study agrees with Brennan especially in his argument that nations are

‘imaginary constructs’. It also borrows the idea of “condition of belonging” as a necessary aspect in catalyzing the longing for form of a nation.

Benedict Anderson in *Imagined Communities* defines a nation as ‘an imagined political community’. Anderson further says that it is imagined because even the people who consider themselves as one do not even ‘know each other’ neither have they met or even heard of them yet ‘in the minds of each lives the image of their communion’. This study benefits from Anderson’s argument because to study narration of a nation, the myths used tell the story of an ‘imagined community’ so as to foster a sense of ‘communion’ tends to bring people together and make them imagine and live as one even when they are physically separated from each other as in the case of the Kintu descendants. In the novel, Makumbi presents us with characters who come from as far as Tanzania during the family homecoming. This is significant in asserting that the sense of communion, which here is read as a people gathering as a nation, is driven more by the will of the people to unite. This will is always motivated by a people’s myth which tends to create an imagined shared past and therefore presuppose a shared present and project it into a shared future.

However, Anderson has only conceived a nation as an ‘imagined political community’. This has the meaning that all nations are political or must have a government. My understanding of a nation is not tied to political power but the will of a people to see and consider themselves as one with shared myths and memory even when in different countries. The nation-state, which is a political set with a government, should not be confused for a nation. A nation may include a nation-state as long as the people in the nation-state live and see themselves as a nation. Consequently, we may have many nations within a nation-state.

A nation may grow from many smaller nations which here I call ‘micro-nations’ and forge a larger unit (which I call macro-nation) based on repeated shared experiences in the past, whether real or invented. This may explain why countries which were earlier considered as nation-states develop into nations with time. How a nation-state and/or micro nations develop into one nation depends on the national myths that are imagined, created and narrated to the current and future generations. This study looks at the family and national spaces and how these spaces interact to generate a national narrative.

Wole Ogundele in the essay “Devices of Evasion: Mythic versus the Historical Imagination in the Postcolonial African Novel” in *Research in African literatures* (2002) posits that Europhone African Literature started as a reaction to colonialism and were concerned mainly with “culture and nationhood” where culture implied “myth and folklore” while nationhood implied “history and politics” (125). Ogundele has defined myths as “creative interpretations of experiences in the process of which facts get turned into fiction (myth), and what starts as fiction can also be subsequently remembered and narrated as fact” (130). He adds that colonialism severed African past and that independent nation-states saw themselves as new nations with “new people, new language, new dawn: history abolished, history starting anew” (131). Nation-statism called for the “nationalization and homogenization (the ignoring) of pre-colonial pasts of different peoples trapped in the new states” (131).

This study benefits from Ogundele in that it looks at the way oral history and myth has been used to create a narrative of a nation of people and its fusion with history in a way that makes the imagined past appear as real. As Ogundele notes that in imagining the past, facts get turned into fiction and what starts as fiction may end up being narrated as fact. The creation of Kintu oral history and myth in the novel *Kintu* and its marriage with the Buganda’s and Uganda’s past is

important in showing how national narratives are created, invented, re-invented, and disseminated for purposes of asserting nationness.

Abiola Irele in *The African Imagination; Literature in Africa and Black Diaspora* (2001) posits that ‘imagination plays a crucial role in any narrative recollection of the past...the task or vocation consists precisely of a discursive or textual reconstitution of the completed past (101). Irele adds that reconstitution involves ‘selection and rearrangement of the material to be presented in narrative form’ and employs different ‘rhetorical strategies’ (101). Makumbi has used myth to reimagine the past. The recollection involves fusing history and fiction in order to create a narrative of a people.

This study benefits from Irele in examining how a nation’s narrative is created. More important is the selection and rearrangement of materials in the process of editing the past in order to develop a convincing narrative that a group of people can identify with and one which unites an imagined community. How Makumbi imaginatively interrogates the past is crucial in understanding the idea of nation as narration.

Isidore Okpewo in *Myth in Africa: A Study of Its Aesthetic Relevance* (1983) asserts that for African writers to preserve the mythic traditions of their people as a homage to the roots of their creative genius, loyalty to tradition is often accompanied by the urge to lend to a larger cultural appeal in tune with contemporary taste (174). Makumbi has used Orality to imagine Buganda’s past and also in a way provide a cultural memory for her people. The use of orality helps Makumbi to reconstitute the past of the Kintus and Buganda and blend it with what the characters in the novel experience in contemporary Uganda. Makumbi appropriates myth as a

carrier of history and reservoir of cultural memory. This is because myth is a ‘quality ‘of fancy’ or creative resource available just as much to the writer as to the oral narrator (Okpewo 158).

This study benefits from Isidore Okpewo because the myth has been used by the author as a resource to imagine and represent the past. Kintu family myth is used to take us back to the start of family tree, the beginning of the narrative of a nation.

James Ogude in *Ngugi’s Novels and African History* (1999) explores how Ngugi in his novels uses myths to create, legitimize and reconstruct Kenya’s history which is necessary in creating and sustaining a sense of shared national identity. Ngugi therefore appropriates Agikuyu myth of Gikuyu and Mumbi to narrate the history of Gikuyu and Kenya. Ogude argues that the myth of origin of the Gikuyu has been used “to naturalize birth of the Agikuyu nation and by extension the Kenyan nation” (90). The process of ‘nation formation’ instead of being manufactured becomes a natural process. Myth becomes a legitimizing ideology which transcends historicity (90). Ngugi’s Novels, according to Ogude, are involved in a narrative that attempts to invent and intervene what colonialism had repressed. It is an attempt to give a different history from that of the colonial powers and the subsequent governments after independence.

This study has benefited from Ogude’s work in that it attempts to understand how *Kintu* by Jennifer Makumbi uses family oral history to narrate the history of Ganda and Uganda. The name Kintu was the ancestral father of the Ganda people and is also the ancestral patriarch of the Kintu family which the novel is about. The name Kintu in the novel is therefore a reservoir of memory and symbol of history to the Kintu descendants and by extension Uganda as a nation.

This study, however, seeks to explore how the modern 'Kintu', Ganda, and Uganda nations began to scatter and later gather together as a nation without attaching much emphasis to colonialism as a major factor in the history of nation formation. The novel is a representation of family histories which also translate into community and national histories. My interest is to look at how family spaces interact and intersect with community and national spaces in forging shared memory and experiences that are necessary ingredients for nation formation.

Anthony D. Smith in his book *Myths and Memories of the Nation* (1999) posits that myths and memories are important in grafting and disseminating narratives of the nation. He further argues that what gives nationalism its power are the myths, memories, traditions, and symbols of ethnic heritages and the ways in which a popular *living past* has been, and can be, rediscovered and reinterpreted by modern nationalistic intelligentsias (9). He argues that memories and myths are often appropriated by nationalists to create narratives of inclusion and exclusion. It is from these elements of myth, memory, symbol, and tradition that modern national identities are constructed in each generation as the nation becomes more inclusive and its members cope with new challenges (9).

My understanding of this is that nations rely on myths and memory to assert and justify its narrative of nation formation. Any nation must invent a national narrative that legitimizes its existence as a nation-state and unify its diverse peoples in an imagined homogenous national narrative. The invention involves the appropriation of existing narratives and imagining others as a means of developing and disseminating the narrative of a nation.

In his book *The Novel and Politics of Nation Building in East Africa*, Peter Simatei explores the extent to which novelistic discourses contribute to the narrative of nation building. He posits that there are contradictions in the creation, recreation and appropriation of national narratives from the political elite and the novelists. “The dialogic formulation of the novelistic vision clashes with the homogenizing vision of the nation-state” (160). The novelistic discourses present varying narratives of the nation that operate within independent spaces in the nation, but which oppose the one-way narrative of the nation-state. The novelistic discourse ‘activates the disparate and at times discordant identities within the national space’ (160). He concludes that novelists give different responses to the idea of national project. Ngugi for instance writes with the objective that ‘seeks to replace one dominant ideology with another’ because ‘reconstruction of the history of a nation is central to his vision of a new Kenya’ (161). This is because ‘history has been hijacked and manipulated by the political elite and put in the service of neo-colonialism’. History and memory here are important in the creation and dissemination of the national narrative ‘because for them to write politics of the nation-state they must engage its evolution’.

My study benefits from Peter Simatei’s works since it provides an understanding of the dialogues that literature has had with politics and the narratives of nation formation in East Africa. However, my study focuses on the attempt by Jennifer Makumbi to revisit the past in an attempt to provide solution to a nation of people without giving emphasis on the effect of colonialism in the history of Uganda as a nation. I look at how the story of the Kintu family interacts with the story of Ganda and that of Uganda. The aim is to see how *Kintu* reconstructs the narrative of a nation by giving alternative history different from that of colonialism. The novel narrates how the curse that inflicted the Kintu family for generations started, how the family members were

befallen by problems for generations, how the family members were scattered, disseminated and later gathered together in a ritual of reunion. What is foregrounded throughout the novel is the power of oral history to capture and pass on the family myth. The novel therefore re-imagines Uganda by using a curse that befell Kintu descendants and locates where the troubles of a nation started. History and myth is used to graft a shared past among a people and to legitimize their need for togetherness.

Alex Wanjala in “Historiography or Imagination?” The Documentation of Traditional Luo Cultural Memory in Kenyan Fiction” posits that traditional Luo society was not a pre-political society and that it had a form of social organization and religion even before the advent of colonization of East Africa by the British (170). He studies *Miaha* as a novel which exploits orality through myth to explain how rituals are carried out and give their significance so has to “preserve Luo indigenous culture through her novel” (172). Wanjala concludes that *Miaha* should be read as a historical novel, without distinguishing between the aspects of culture presented in a mimetic manner and the externally analogous elements. In so doing we would be subjecting the text to reading that takes into consideration the continuity of oral tradition in the written form (179).

My study benefits from Wanjala’s article because I intend to study *Kintu* as a novel that exploits orality to represent the past of Buganda and Uganda while creating the narrative of a people. We could therefore say *Kintu* in a way is a historical novel that goes to that precolonial period to give us the history and cultural memory of a people. By arguing that traditional Luo society was not pre-political, Wanjala demonstrates that Luo had their own history, their own political and social set up before colonization. *Kintu* as a novel goes back to a remote past of Buganda and gives us the genesis of the troubles the Kintus.

Bwesige bwa Mwesigire in a review article “Jennifer Nansubuga Makumbi’s *Kintu*” argues that the “novel turns its attention from those usual tropes of post colonialism to African contemporaneity”. The story is, therefore, told from an African perspective of history. It challenges the belief that African history started with the contact with Europeans. “African self-imagination is more important than colonialism in shaping the African present and future”. The point here is to acknowledge that other events contributed to the narratives of the nation. Mwesigire further argues that ‘Africans are more driven to self-invent than to mimic Europeans and they creatively interpret their past (non-colonial if we must add) to understand and shape their present and future’. Mwesigire sees the novel as an attempt to counter over-estimated Europe’s contemporary or historical influence on Africa and to assert that “contemporary Africans frequently return to something beyond colonialism to explain their situations or even solve their contemporary problems”.

This study builds on the position advanced by Mwesigire above to demonstrate how *Kintu* reconstructs the narrative of nation formation by going back to the pre-colonial past. My interest is to argue for the privileging of important events that took place in the past that do not have any relationship with colonialism, but which are important in the development of nations. I look at the myth of the family curse and how this has been used throughout generations in the *Kintu* genealogy to create a ‘Kintu nation’ and by extension Ganda and Uganda nations. This is important in positioning the myths to act as memory reservoir for history of shared experiences which are necessary for a people to come together in an act of gathering after long period of scattering.

Beatrice Lamwaka in a review article “Jennifer Makumbi narrates the Ugandan story in *Kintu*” comments that *Kintu* is ‘telling the Ugandan story properly’. Lamwaka argues that the novel was inspired by Makumbi’s ‘urge to tell the Ugandan story, which she felt was skewed, especially in the West’. The Ugandan story had either been suffocated by hegemonic history of the nation-state in Uganda or had been hijacked, manipulated and suppressed by colonialism. It could have been trapped in the postcolonial debates which held the view that African history started at the time of contact with the West. Lamwaka quotes Makumbi who said “I wanted to bring the Ugandan story to the literary table with the rest of Africa”. The novel explores ideas of transgression, curse and perpetuity, looking back at the history of Buganda Kingdom and tracing the birth of modern Uganda.

My reading of the reviews by Mwesigire and Lamwaka shows that the history of Uganda is retold with an African perspective that privileges Africa’s precolonial past as an important point in the reconstruction and dissemination of national narrative. Makumbi ignores that colonial phase which she feels was just a story that had little impact in the direction that the main narrative embedded in the oral history of *Kintu* had on the history of Uganda. This is the reason why the story goes back to the time of Ppookino (Governor) Kintu Kidda in 1750s and then to the contemporary Uganda in Bwaise 2004.

In a review article “Of *Kintu*, the Witty, Sensual and Provocative Page Turner” in the *Daily Nation* on 27th June 2014, Tom Odhiambo describes the book as ‘very Bugandan/Ugandan’. This implies that the book is not just about Kintu and his genealogy, but it is the story of Buganda and Uganda nations embedded in a family oral history. Odhiambo writes that “the seeming triumph of the neo- traditionalists, all with the revival of the tribe/clan’s shrine under the supervision of a Cambridge-educated modern seer would make an impressive case for many

among Africans today who believe that the only salvation for Africa's madness is to go back to its 'traditions'. The novel here is seen as a trigger of past memory of the people. It is an attempt to go back in time and celebrate 'that rare past' which is the source of and pivot point for the modern Uganda nation. The article also questions the idea of 'going back to the past in order to solve Africa's madness'. As Odhiambo notes "the poetic uncertainty about the competing worldviews in *Kintu* is the perfect provocation for further debate on what values Africa needs to retrieve from its past to save itself from self-destruction". History and memory are important in the creation of a narrative that is necessary for nation formation. However, as Odhiambo notes that Makumbi seems to say "Africans should pick their lessons from the past carefully".

This study uses the ideas in Odhiambo's article especially the novel's attempt to recover the sanity of the current generation of Uganda by going back to history and 'telling it' as a way of correcting the mistake that led to the curse in Kintu family. The novel uses characters such as Miisi who are western educated and still want to correct their past mistakes through a ritual. It points to the need for a people to imagine, create and disseminate a shared past through myth in order to assert a sense of togetherness. The myth here is viewed as a space for grafting shared identities through imagined and/or real past experiences that the Kintu descendants and by extension Ugandan people have in common. The study also seeks to show that the narrative of a nation is not always rosy as we believe but it is punctuated with its negative moments that should be regarded as part of the evolution of the modern nation.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study intends to use Narratology, Postcolonial and Mythological theoretical frameworks. Narratology will help in looking at the narrative techniques used in the novel and its effectiveness in using myths to establish and develop the narrative of a nation. Postcolonial theory will help in understanding the position of culture in establishing a shared memory through myth. Mythological theory will help in understanding the archetypal elements of the Kintu myth in the novel.

Narratology theory looks at the narrative techniques used in a text to present a narrative. I will use Gerard Genette's ideology of narratology. I will use the ideas of temporal order, frequency and focalization to analyze the text to understand how the narrative of a people has been mythologized and narrated. This helps to understand the narrative techniques employed by Makumbi to imagine the narrative of the Kintu's and by extension Uganda as a nation.

Postcolonial theory focuses on the effect of imperialism on the cultures of the colonized. This field 'draws attention to questions of identity in relation to broader national histories and destinies' (Selden, *et al* 224). It is an area of study that engages with the various ways in which discourse for colonial dominance was used to effect cultural dominance. The theory is associated with the works of Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, Gayatri Spivak, Benedict Anderson, Chinua Achebe, Ngugi wa Thiongo among others. This field of study concerns itself with issues like:

The study and analysis of various institutions of European colonialisms, the discursive operations of empire, the subtleties of subject construction in colonial discourse and the resistance of those subjects, and, most importantly perhaps, the differing responses to such

incursions and their contemporary colonial legacies in both pre- and post-independence nations and communities. (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 187)

Postcolonial studies gained momentum with the publication of Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1977). Edward Said argued that the West created a narrative that portrayed the East as the 'Other'. This binary narrative ensured that the imperial culture was designated as the 'center' which was to influence and change the 'other'. Said argues that a distinction between 'Occident' and the 'Orient' West versus East, North and South was instrumental in legitimating the imperial domination. The West then became 'civilized' while the East was seen as 'lazy, irrational, and uncivilized

Homi Bhabha in *The Location of Culture* (1994) posits that 'it is important to think beyond narratives of originary and initial subjectivities and to focus on those moments or processes that are produced in the articulation of cultural difference (2). It is this 'overlap' and 'displacement of domains of difference that the intersubjective and collective experiences of *nationness*, community interest, or cultural values are negotiated (2). The concept of nation and narration has been explored based on how the culture of the people, their myths, memory, and shared past is used to graft and represent a narrative of a people with the aim of conceptualizing and presenting them as a nation. As Bhabha writes:

Postcolonial criticism bears witness to the unequal and uneven forces of cultural representation involved in the contest for political and social authority within the modern world order. Postcolonial perspectives emerge from the colonial testimony of Third World countries and discourses of 'minorities' within the geopolitical divisions of East and West, North and South. They intervene a hegemonic 'normality' to the uneven development and

the differential disadvantaged, histories of nations, races, communities, peoples. They formulate their revisions around issues of cultural difference, social authority, and political discrimination in order to reveal the antagonistic and ambivalent moments within the “rationalization” of modernity (Quoted in Lazarus 3)

Mythological theory concerns itself with the nature and structure of myths as used in folklore and fairytales. I will use the archetypal elements of myths according to Northrop Frye and Carl Gustav Jung to understand the *Kintu* myth in the novel. Frye sees myth as the imitation of actions near or at the conceivable limits of desire (136). Frye and Jung argue that myths have an element of rebirth, reincarnation, and the aspect of spirit. The world of myths has the character of mother-symbol which can be a god, animals with human like characters, and spirits. The mother-symbol is ‘associated with things and places standing for fertility and fruitfulness’ (Jung 15). The mother symbol has both positive and negative connotations with the positive associated with ‘magic transformation and rebirth while the negative being anything ‘secret, hidden, dark, the abyss, and the world of dead’ (Jung 15).

Research Methodology

The study involves a close reading of the primary text *Kintu* in order to examine the idea of myth and memory in nation narration. In addition, reference to other texts by the author will be made to complement the study. Secondary materials focusing on myths, history, memory, and nation narration will be consulted in order to understand *Kintu* as a novel that attempts to go back in time to imagine, create, and graft a narrative that informs the process of nation formation.

Scope and Limitation

This study is limited to the novel *Kintu* by Jennifer Nansubuga Makumbi and will focus entirely on myth and memory in narrating a nation. References will be made to secondary materials to help achieve the objectives of the study.

CHAPTER TWO: ORAL HISTORY AND NATION NARRATION

Introduction

This chapter looks at how *Kintu* as a novel exploits orality to reimagine and create a nation's past and the role that oral history has played in preserving the history of descendants of Kintu over several generations. Oral history is narration of history of a people through the word of mouth from one generation to another. I look at the journey of a nation from its past to the present using the oral history to trace its path. We look at the Kintu myth embedded in the family oral history and how this myth has been significant in uniting the Kintu descendants. The Kintu myth in the novel is the mythical past of the Kintu that can only be associated with what is narrated in Book One of the novel about Ppookino Kintu Kidda and his reign in Buddu Province of Buganda kingdom. Whatever is imaginatively narrated according to the novel is in a remote past. The myth fuses the 'facts' as presented in Book One of the novel together with what Kintu descendants received and added as they passed on their family history from past generation to the present. The Kintu oral history on the other hand is the family lineage history that Kintu descendants in the contemporary Uganda in 2004 are narrating about their ancestors. Each family tree knows their immediate grandfather and great grandfathers. While the Kintu descendants tell their family oral history, they first tell of Kintu Kidda and his twin wife Nnakato before that of their immediate ancestors who they know where they lived and buried as seen when Magga and Kato were telling Miisi their family oral history.

We also look at how truths are created and added to the myth as the oral history of Kintus is passed on by word of mouth. The genesis of the myth is the curse which befell Kintu and his descendants. The circumstances surrounding the death of Kalemanzira (Kalema) and how this is

narrated to future generations is significant in distinguishing what the non-focalized narrator in Book One of the novel narrates and how characters like Suubi's grandmother narrates. The Kintu myth is read as the center pole for holding the Kintus together. I shall also look at the development of the narrative of Uganda from remote past of many communities to its modern state, the role of myth in serving as a memory reservoir and the creation and dissemination of national narratives

Oral History of the Kintus

Makumbi reimagines the past and exploits orality to represent the past of Buganda and Uganda while creating the narrative of a people. This is because 'orality has preeminent virtues as an expressive modality within the symbolic universe that all forms of social participation require for their full and proper mobilization' (Irele 27). Makumbi imaginatively represents the past of the Kintus by grafting a Kintu myth and family oral history. The family oral history as presented in the novel has a remote past that has been mythologized as the Kintu myth. The Kintu descendants in contemporary Uganda have little knowledge about the remote past of Ppookino Kintu's time except what they received from word of mouth. These descendants however, know their immediate antecedents. For instance, Magga and Kato chronicled their lineage to Miisi from their fathers to their great grandfathers. The myth and oral history of the Kintus intersect together and the myth is narrated alongside the family history. The difference is in the time; while the myth is placed in the remote past, the oral history cuts across the past and present. The oral history connects the mythical past with the present since it is something that the characters in the novel received by word of mouth. The family oral history becomes both the carrier and reservoir of the Kintu myth that the Kintus as a people (read in broad sense as communities/tribes) use to explain their origins. The Kintu oral history has the element of myth

about the Kintu's founding ancestors. Oral history helps to unite the Kintus together through shared origin. Any group of people which considers or imagines itself as one must always show the point of connection. This connection is forged from a real and/or imagined shared history in terms of culture, language, and geographical heritage. For a people like the Kintu descendants, to tell their history, they need to know who they are, where they came from and their ancestral heritage. As Opolot comments while urging Suubi to search for her family '...that to know where one was coming from was to know one's full self and where that self was going' (163). Through Opolot, Makumbi seems to say it is important for a people to tell its current and future generation members that they as a people came from somewhere, that they have had their struggles as a people, and that they had their share of sufferings, misfortunes and victories. As Ernest Renan notes:

The nation, like the individual, is the culmination of a long past of endeavors, sacrifice, and devotion. Of all the cults, that of the ancestor is very legitimate, for the ancestors have made us what we are. A heroic past, great men, glory (by which I understand genuine glory), this is the social capital by which one bases a national idea. To have common glories in the past and to have a common will in the present; to have performed great deeds together, to wish to perform still more – these are the essential conditions for being a people. One loves in proportion to the sacrifices to which one has consented, and in proportion to the ills suffered. (Renan 19)

A people must tell its past if it wants to legitimize its present and transit into the future. This past cannot be told without its connection with ancestors of a people or, in the case of Uganda as a country, the disruption of their order by colonialism and the subsequent struggle for independence by the political elites forms part of their narrative as a nation. This is the reason

why Makumbi gives both the happy and the sad moments of the Kintu descendants. Generally, experiences of a people's past are told with pride because it shows them who they are. It provides a basis for their sense of belonging and identity. This identity could be at the individual level, community level or the national level.

The history of Kintu's descendants in the novel was passed on from one generation to another by word of mouth. The narrator adopts a non-restrictive perspective that allow the reader to see beyond what the characters knows. Using Gerard Genette's idea of focalization, the story of Ppookino Kintu is told by a non-focalized narrator for instance, we are introduced to Kintu Kidda's story as he was preparing to visit the capital of Buganda;

It was odd relief as Kintu stepped out of his house. A long perilous journey lay ahead. At the end of the journey was a royal storm – the princess had been fighting for the throne again and weapons had not yet been put away. He could be carried back, his head severed from his shoulders – commoners tended to lose their heads when royals fought. (3)

From the above quoted narrative, Kintu was aware that the situation in the capital was tense. The narrator tells the reader how Kyabaggu became Kabaka. "Kyabaggu had grabbed the throne and announced Lubyahill the new capital claiming that Namugala had abdicated" (4). Through the narrator, we also see how things were a few days before Baale's wedding. We see how the preparations were and how a pimple that looked like acne appeared on Baale's nose. "It was a week since Ntongo's dowry day and another week another week until her arrival. Kiyirika was gripped with anticipation. "(82). From this, we can see the narrator does not restrict the perspective to Kintu Kidda's view. We can see other things even during the time when Baale

had died, Nnakato had committed suicide, and Kintu had disappeared. “Three seasons after Baale’s death, Mayirika, Kintu’s main house, stood derelict because an heir to Kintu had not been chosen. The Problem was that Kintu’s body had not been found” (89). The story of Kintu Kidda, therefore, which is narrated alongside that of Buganda kingdom uses zero focalization. This legitimizes the oral history because the style is non-restrictive. This is to say that the Kintu story is given authenticity through a narrative voice that is non-partisan. When later we encounter the story being narrated by Kintu’s descendants, we are in a position to compare the oral history as narrated by family members to their children and the history as it happened according to the accounts of the non-focalized narrator in Book One of the novel.

There are variations concerning certain elements of the narrative in the myth and the narrative in Book One. Suubi Nnakintu has forgotten most things about her past, probably due to what the Kintus believe to be the effects of the curse or due to memory lapse, but she still remembers her grandmother’s stories. Through Suubi, we see that the myth which is the foundation of the Kintu nation is a product of continuous recreation. What is considered the basis of a nation’s foundation is a dynamic reproduction of the past as opposed to a fixed past with one linear, unchanging history of a people. There are certain elements about the Kintu’s and Buganda’s past that are integral in the oral history and thus remain unchanged. However, other aspects are lost deliberately or due to memory lapse with time

Suubi gave in and her grandmother’s voice flooded her mind:

In the beginning Buganda was serene, our *ba kabaka* ruled the kingdom with wisdom. Buganda was huge; its borders touched Buule on the one hand and Bweya on the other, reaching all the way into Tanzania. We had everything – rivers, lakes, mountains, animals, good climate, fertile land. There was food everywhere: matooke ripened in the

garden and was eaten by birds and monkeys. We did not eat cassava – we planted it on the borders of our gardens in case of famine. There were no wars, people lived in such harmony that no one emigrated. Of course, when a nation has plenty and peace reigns, foreigners start to flock in and you know with foreigners: they bring their troubles with them. At that time, people from nations around Buganda had started to arrive, especially the Lundi, the Ziba and the Tutsi.

Now we Ganda were known the world over for our hospitality because we treated those who settled among us well. However, we ask for one little thing in return for our hospitality; one little thing – that everyone who settled among us become Ganda, you see, it was important that we were all one people – same language, same life, same everything – so that people don't stumble on each other's difference.

Then one day came a man who refused to integrate. He was Tutsi. His name was Ntwire. Ntwire stood away from everyone, from everything. He took no part in the rites nor feasts not even funerals. He did not learn our way of life and he did not attempt to speak our language.....Then one day Ntwire's child misbehaved. When Kintu, our grandfather saw him, he chastised him like any parent would do to his own children. In truth, Kintu did nothing much to the boy; he just nudged him like that. But the boy, ppu! He dropped dead-just like that. (98)

From the accounts of Suubi's grandmother, there are elements that are added and twisted to portray Buganda and Kintus as people who were powerful, peaceful and prosperous than their neighbors. This shows the subjective nature of oral history. It can be changed by whoever is narrating to present a particular perspective. In Book One of the novel, we see Buganda Kingdom and the royalty fighting for power many times. Ppookino Kintu is preparing to go and pay homage to Kyabaggu, the new *Kabaka*, who had overthrown his brother Namugala and killed him. This differs with what Suubi's grandmother says that peace reigned in the kingdom and that foreigners came in with their troubles. For here we find that even before Ntwire came,

there was political instability in Buganda. The royalty was always fighting for power. The kingdom was always fighting with neighboring kingdoms as revealed below:

In his service as Ppookino, Kintu had so far served five kings. He remembered Kagulu, the first *kabaka* he served. In his short reign, Kagulu had slaughtered more subjects than goats. In the quarterly *lukiiko*, the parliament, governors watched their breath. Kagulu turned like Nnalubaale Lake – now serene; now agitated; now deadly; now laughing. The gods deserted Kagulu after he put his half-brother, Musanje, to death for killing another brother while wrestling. (5)

This narrative quoted above demonstrates that Buganda Kingdom really had its internal problems of violence and instability. This is not similar to the rosy picture that a reader gets when they read what Suubi's grandmother narrates. Kagulu actually killed his own subjects. The narrator uses even harsher terms to depict the kind of suffering that the subjects and governors faced during the reign of *Kabaka* Kagulu 'in his short reign, Kagulu had slaughtered more subjects than goats' (5). Kintu's descendants, may have deliberately or due to memory lapse added and deleted aspects of both Kintu oral history and that of Buganda kingdom as they narrated the history from one generation to another. This aspect of recreating and adding events in the oral history is important in mythologizing their ancestry. In order to present their ancestry with some form of magic that makes the descendants feel proud of their past, there is need to ignore unpleasant parts, add some 'truths' to their ancestry and present a past with many glories.

What Suubi's grandmother narrated was mainly the victories, and things that showed a past Buganda with peace and plenty, but its neighbors depicted as lacking and people who brought their problems to Buganda. For instance, she says that Buganda conquered many neighbors

including the Ssoga. But she did not mention the violence and instability within the kingdom. This aspect of editing the past in an attempt to rewrite their history is necessary in mythologizing a narrative of a people. While it should give both their victories and failures, not every aspect of failure is to be narrated because the narrative of a people is mainly to make them proud - ordinarily people despise being associated with failure. But again, even the suffering and failures of the Kintus have been hinged on a curse such that even normal mistakes of Kintu's descendants that ought to be narrated as their failures are carefully grafted and creatively associated with the curse thereby absolving them.

Another aspect of variation of the Kintu myth is seen when Magga and Kato are narrating family history to Miisi. "Baale had a child – Kidda that we three share. Baale had Kidda by a servant called Zaya." (349). Kato thinks Zaya was a servant in Kintu's household. Magga refutes this but, cannot explain why Zaya was staying in Kintu's home. In Book one of the novel, Zaya came to Kintu's home after she ran away from her husband Gitta:

When Nnakato learned that Zaya was fugitive, she had invited her into the home and asked Kintu to let her stay while her marriage was being sorted out. Kintu dissuaded Gitta from returning Zaya to her parents, reasoning that she might be a slow developer needing the firm but gentle handling of a mother. On her part Zaya swore to kill herself if she was returned to Gitta. Kintu left Zaya to Nnakato and Babirye to groom and asked Gitta to give her time. (23)

From the above, we can see the variations on what happened and what Magga and Kato narrate as what happened. This variation shows the impact of time and the narrator on the myth. When the story shifts from the accounts of the non-focalized narrator in Book One to internal focalized

narrator, each character recreates and tells their family oral history according to what they remember and what they heard. The same family oral history and Kintu myth is narrated differently by different family members. The narrative employs Gerard Genette's technique of multiple focalization. This is where the same narrative is narrated multiple times by different characters. The result is the variation that captures both the deliberate loss of information and the loss of information due to loss of memory. Abiola Irele argues that 'in the mythical narratives and epics that have often come down to us in several versions, we observe that the textual variations from one version to another are as much a factor of the memory and general disposition of the bards who recreate them as of the particular circumstance (35). Apparently, Miisi was the only person who survived a family tragedy when his mother set the family houses on fire. Magga and Kato do not have all the information about the past and the information that they may have received by word of mouth could have been altered due to memory lapse. However, before they proceed to tell Miisi about the family reunion, they all chronicle their ancestry.

The men started by each reciting his parentage back to his sixth paternal grandfather who, in both cases, was called Kidida. Miisi thought it was strange; recitation of one's genealogy was done at traditional engagement rites to eliminate common ancestry between the couple. He had never seen it happen between people who were meeting for the first time. He hoped that the men did not expect him to do the same for he did not even know his immediate grandfather's name. He did not need to worry. Magga, when he had done his own genealogy, looked straight at Miisi, reminded Miisi of his own name, his father's and grandfather's. Magga even knew where Miisi's father and grandfather had lived and where they were buried. Then he recited four more

generations of Missi's grandfathers. ...Miisi's sixth grandfather was also Kidida – the common ancestor between the three of them. From then on, their histories merged as Magga talked about Kidida's father, Baale, the youngest son of Nnakato of old. (349)

Magga and Kato had to establish a link between them and Miisi by narrating their genealogy from their fathers, grandfathers and great grandfathers until they get to a point of connection where their histories merged by a common ancestor. This genealogy is now the oral history of the Kintus. This is used to legitimize the visit and the object of the visit. The genealogy of the three men is hinged on their ancestor Kidida, who was Baale's son. This sets the pace for the family reunion which the two elders came to tell Miisi about. The call for family reunion at the ancestral land in Buddu is creatively presented through a myth of Kintu embedded in the family oral history as each elder was narrating his genealogy to Miisi. The idea of the gathering of the Kintus as a micro-nation here is given a natural source of a mythical past as opposed to artificial gathering.

However, we also see variations in some aspects of the myth as narrated by both Kato and Magga. While they are narrating to Miisi about Nnakato, Ppookino Kintu's wife, they both believe that Kalema (Kalemanzira) Ntwire's son was adopted from the Tutsi man so that Baale, an only child without a twin, would have one. "She only gave birth to twins, you see, until Baale came along. ...Baale was indulged by his parents. Apparently, because he was the only child without a twin, he asked for his own twin. His parents adopted a Tutsi, Kalema, as his twin and the two boys grew up together" (349-350). From the Kintu story in Book One, we learn that Kalema was not adopted but rather his father brought him to Kintu's household after the baby's mother had died in child birth. Thus, the two perspectives of the oral history become a measure of what is lost from and/or what is added to a people's history as it is passed from one generation

to another. Even though the family members were scattered throughout Buddu province of Buganda Kingdom, each tree of the Kintu descendants always passed their family history to their children. This therefore ensured that the Kintus were always united by their shared ancestor. However, there are family members who did not remember their family history such as Miisi, or those who deliberately chose not to pass on the knowledge of family history to their children like Kanani

Kintu. Kanani being a Christian had believed that telling his children about the family ancestors and the heritable curse was against his beliefs. However, even though Kanani did believe that his faith had washed away the family curse and that his children were safe from the curse, he still remained skeptical about his Christianity being able to erase the curse and its wrath. ‘The only thing that Kanani insisted upon was that Faisi would never slap the twins on the head. When the twins started school, Kanani informed the teachers that due to a medical condition, his children should never be slapped on the head.’ (188). We relate this to what Ppookino Kintu had insisted after seeking the help of a medicine man in order to protect his family and descendants from Ntwire’s curse. ‘On top of sacrifice and ablutions, the medicine man directed that Kintu’s children should never be slapped on the head as Ntwire was bound to revenge in a similar manner. Kintu made this a directive in his house; no child should ever be slapped on the head’ (57). Through Kanani Kintu, the novel demonstrates how individuals rewrite their past, how they deliberately leave out some facts while adding others. Kanani appears to understand the curse and fears it but cannot tell his wife Faisi about the curse. In fact he insists to the teachers that his children have a medical condition. The reader can see a character who is fixated in his past while denying the same.

From the accounts of Suubi's grandmother, Magga and Kato, the family oral history was passed on alongside the history of Buganda Kingdom. Each family tree had to tell the history of their great ancestor, Kintu Kidida who was a governor. Being a governor, Kintu's history had to include his role and also represent the many *Kabakas* that he served and their reigns. Read in its broad sense, the Kintu oral history captures the oral history of the royalty in Buganda kingdom. The novel thus brings out not only the oral history of a family through many generations but also that of Buganda as a nation.

Narrative Journey to the Modern Uganda

The narrative of a nation is a product of many past events both real and/or imagined that helped to concretize the narrative of her people to the modern state. This past is precolonial Uganda where various communities that today form part of Uganda had their own sense of nation. *Kintu* uses a family myth to take us back in time so that we can see the path that the narrative of Uganda as a nation took. As Timothy Brennan notes, 'nations are imaginary constructs that depend for their existence on an apparatus of cultural fictions in which imaginative literature plays a role' (Brennan 47). To study the narrative development of the nation, one has to look into the past because the nation in the words of Homi Bhabha is a 'Janus-faced god'. The nation in this sense is like an individual who has to look back and understand where and how they reached their current position before transiting into the future. The Kintu myth in the novel is a lens that enable us to look back at the journey of a nation from its remote past and the things that have united or disintegrated a people in a nation. The nation as a form 'is an agency of ambivalent narration that holds culture at its most productive position as a force for subordination, fracturing, diffusing, reproducing as much as producing, creating, and guiding' (Bhabha 5). To unite and bring people together as a nation, proper revisiting of the past and

imaginatively creating a people's narrative is necessary. This is because we 'find narration at the center of nation' and in this narration there are 'stories of national origins, myths of founding fathers, and genealogies of heroes' (Bennington 121). Makumbi exploits the aspect of narration as central pole of nations that allude to myths of origin and founding fathers in her novel to put together a narrative that uses family as an entry point in order to bring to surface how narratives about a people can be imagined, created, and disseminated to enhance cohesiveness among people in a nation.

The family oral history in *Kintu* is punctuated by various stories of family members. The characters adopt focalized narrative in the sense that they each narrate what they know. What comes out here is the way in which many branches of the family tree are held together by a common denominator, the name Kintu, which is the defining factor for the 'Kintu nation'. Makumbi begins the novel with the prologue that gives us the brief life of Kamu Kintu in contemporary Uganda in 2004.

There was a knock. Kamu's Woman woke up and climbed over him to get to the door. She picked a *kanga* off the floor and wrapped it around her naked body. Sucking her teeth at being disturbed so early in the morning, she walked to the door with the annoyance of a proper wife whose husband was at home. ...when Kamu stepped out of the house, each man bid him good morning but avoided looking at him. 'Come with us Mr. Kintu. We need to ask you some questions,' one of the men said as they turned to leave. (xv)

The story then shifts to Buddu province of Buganda Kingdom in 1750 where we encounter the story of Ppookino Kintu Kidu. These two different times made to follow each other in a reverse order opens up the lens in which I study the narrative journey of Uganda as a nation. The story

of Kintu Kidda happened in the remote past before that of Kamu Kintu which takes place in contemporary Uganda. The order of the arrangement of the events in the narrative and the time of the story are reversed. Using Genette's idea on temporal order to analyse the story and the time of the narrative, we see that the death of Kamu Kintu and his life in contemporary Uganda is given prominence. This technique helps to link the story from the contemporary Uganda to the time of Kintu Kidda, who is Kamu's ancestor. From this prologue and the opening of Kintu Kida's story, we pick two important markers of memory; the name Kintu and Kampala. Kintu being the name shared by many descendants held by a common myth while Kampala being the capital of Uganda and also that of Buganda kingdom.

The novel *Kintu* poses important questions concerning the development of and the narrative that Kintus, Gandas, and Ugandans have had in their journeys towards the modern nation. Why does the novel begin with the story of Kamu Kintu in 2004 when he is about to be murdered? Why does it go back to remote past in Buganda Kingdom after Kamu's story? Makumbi seems to say we are here now, but how did we get here? How do we tell the story of Kamu's journey to this place? How do we tell the story of Uganda/Buganda/Kintus to its modern state? Since we cannot get all the facts, why don't we anchor the narrative of the nation in a myth that makes people believe in a shared past. This is because 'at the origin of the nation, we find a story of the nation's origin' (Bennington 121). These questions are important in placing the myth as a center pole that holds the house of Kintu together.

By going back to Buddu province of Buganda Kingdom, Makumbi traces the narrative to time when there was normalcy in Kintu family and by extension the Buganda nation. This is similar to the beginning of a play where everything seems to go on normally before an event changes the course of things and something dramatic happens. In the story of Kintu Kidda, the Kintus are

intact and the kingdom is one though with its problems of power wrangles and assassinations among the royalty. Then the problems of 'Kintu nation' starts with the unintended murder of Kalemanzira, Ntwire's son. This is the turning point in the family oral history.

As moments right to disclose passed – he did not call Kalema's death as he stepped past the threshold of the main house either -Kintu realized that he would never master the courage. When he sat down in his private lounge, he knew that he would not hold funeral rites for Kalema. He also knew that while Kalema's death was a tragedy, not holding funeral rites for the lad was reckless. (49)

While Kintu did not intend to kill Kalemanzira, he deliberately chose not to announce his death when he and his entourage arrived from Lubyia, Buganda's capital at the time.

Kintu did not tell Ntwire when he inquired about his son and whether it was possible to bring him next time he travelled to the capital but only said it was not possible to bring him. It is at this point that Ntwire placed a curse on Kintu and his family.

I am going to look for my child. If he's alive, I'll bring him home and apologize. But if I don't find him – to you, to your house and to those who will born out of it – to live will be to suffer. You will endure so much that you'll wish that you were never born.' Ntwire's voice shock as he added, 'And for you Kintu, even death will not bring relief' (56).

It is at this point that the family myth is created, and its major elements are slowly grafted together. Here the threat of Ntwire's curse is introduced. Northrop Frye posits that myths has the introduction of an omen or potent, or the device of making a whole story a fulfillment of a prophecy given at the beginning (139). Ntwire's curse becomes the omen that Kintu's

descendants will be striving to break. When Ntwire left after placing a curse on Kintu's household, Kintu Kidida sought the help of a medicine man to protect his family and his descendants from the curse. After performing ritual to protect Kintu's descendants from Ntwire's curse, the medicine man also instructed that no child in Kintu's household or his descendants should ever be slapped on the head. The ritual did not help as we see Baale, Kintu's son, died mysteriously on the morning of his wedding day. This drives his mother Nnakato to commit suicide. The death of Baale and Nnakato, Baale's mother, drives Kintu to madness and he strays to o' Lwera never to be seen again. Here the Kintu myth and that of Nnakato is successfully created. What is mythical here is the fact that no one knows exactly why Kintu killed Kalemanzira (Kalema) since he did not tell his men or family what transpired moments before he slapped the boy. In addition, Kintu did not reveal to his family the death of Kalema until the time he sought the help of medicine man to counter the curse of Ntwire. The little information that the family has is probably from hearsay by the men who had accompanied Kintu to the palace.

After Kintu disappeared to o' Lwera, Nondo, his Headman, tried to convene a meeting of his sons in order to choose the next Ppookino but these meetings did not bear fruit since each person always voted for their mother's child. The meetings ended in fights. Be that as it may, Baale's unborn son Kidida was to be the heir in line since Kintu had already chosen Baale as the next Ppookino in line. From the accounts by Magga and Kato, Miisi was the clan head hence the headship should go directly to him. When Kintu disappeared, the family members were disintegrated and scattered. As different members of the family were scattered all over Buganda, their journeys to the modern Uganda as opposed to Buganda slowly started to take shape.

The Narrative of a nation which takes three levels in the novel all converge in contemporary Uganda in 2004. It is the representation of Kintu narrative, Buganda narrative, and Uganda narratives as nations at distinct levels that are summed up in the prologue. The author has given stories of different branches of Kintu descendants through the lives of four major characters: Suubi Nnakintu, Kanani Kintu, Isaac Newton Kintu, and Miisiriyamu Kintu. These characters narrate their stories alongside those of their family and Uganda. We get to see different perspectives of similar or related events from different focal points. The narrative technique used is the multiple focalization where each character narrates the Kintu story from their understanding and the political developments of Uganda from their own perspective. The story of each character is given independently in a Book. This signifies the distinct parts that their narratives take. However, the story of Kamu Kintu, which is given in the prologue, appears at the beginning of each Book before the story of each character. In the prologue, Kamu is killed by a mob at Bwaise market. His body is later taken to Mulago Hospital Mortuary. The author reminds the reader of Kamu at the beginning of each Book.

Kamu's story becomes the opening of each character's narrative. The narrative uses Genette's technique on frequency to bring us Kamu's story at the beginning of each book. This helps to remind us what happened to Kamu in the prologue. For instance, in Book Two of the novel which gives us Suubi Nnakintu's story, the narrator opens with:

At six o'clock in the evening, the door of Mulago Hospital Mortuary opens and an attendant steps in. it is not a new arrival – it's collection. Kamu has been in the mortuary for the last five hours" (95).

The next book which has the story of Kanani Kintu starts with Kamu again “it is already ten o’clock, but the police have not arrived to collect Kamu’s body (171). Here we are taken back to what happened in Bwaise market before Kamu’s body was moved to the mortuary. Again, we see the temporal order of events in the story in that Kamu’s body being in the mortuary is narrated before the story when his body was still at Bwaise market. The same story of Kamu’s body at the mortuary is seen in the opening of Isaac Newton Kintu’s story in Book Three of the novel. “It is ten o’clock at night at Mulago Hospital. The door of the mortuary opens again” (241). This aspect of frequency foregrounds Kamu’s story and its relationship with the other characters’ story. This event is narrated again in the beginning of Book Four where Miisi’s story is narrated. However, Kamu’s story is not narrated at the opening of the last book in the novel which talks about the homecoming and family reunion at Kiyirika. This could imply that Kamu was used as a binding force for the Kintu descendants which is crystalized in the coming of the family in a reunion as envisaged in the title ‘Homecoming’. The mission for bringing the people together as a nation of Kintus had been achieved hence Kamu Kintu’s story which had punctuated the beginning of each Book was not necessary in the last Book. In addition, it is also in the last book at the homecoming that Kusi finds out Kamu is dead. Kusi travels to Kiyirika to inform the elders and her father about Kamu’s death. Kamu’s story may have missed in the last book of the novel because the news of his death symbolically implied he was coming home.

Kamu is both a representation of the ordinary Ugandans and of Kintu descendants entangled in the narrative development of Uganda as a nation. It is the summary of the lives of people who have identified more with the identity of Uganda as a nation - the people who have suffered the effects of colonialism and political instability. The mob which kills Kamu releases all their anger and frustrations of poor governance in Uganda on him.

Angry men just arriving asked, 'Is it a thief?' because Kamu had ceased to be human.

The word thief summed up the common enemy. Why there was no supper the previous night; why their children were not on their way to school. Thief was the president who arrived two and half decades ago waving 'democracy' at them, who had recently laughed, 'Did I say democracy? I was so naïve then, Thief was tax-collectors taking their money to distribute it to the rich. Thief was God poised with a can of aerosol *Africancide*, his finger pressing hard on the button. (xvii)

The prologue therefore gives a picture of the current political situation in Uganda. The temporal order of stories in the narrative has been reversed and enables us to see the current situation before we delve into the remote past. It captures the things that bring the people of Bwaise and by extension Uganda together. The current Ugandans, just like the Kintu descendants are united more by the sufferings in the hands of political class. The sufferings of war and poverty become their shared experiences that bind them together. Like the Kintus who were united by effects of a curse, Bwaise residents are brought together by frustrations and the sense of betrayal from the leaders who earlier on had promised democracy to the people of Uganda.

Kamu was the only surviving son of Miisi and apparently, according to the family myth, Miisi was to be the next in line since his father was in the lineage of a Ppookino. Consequently, Kamu being the only son was to be the next Ppookino after his father Miisi. Symbolically, Kamu becomes the binding force of all the other characters' stories.

Uganda as a nation as opposed to many nations started to take root when colonialists came to East Africa. One perspective on the narrative development of Uganda and the political instability in Uganda is demonstrated through the life and story of Isaac Newton Kintu. Isaac lived with

Ziraba, his grandmother, in Katanga slums in Kampala city. At independence, the Gandas still hinged on to the possibility of Buganda going back to its former self. On the other hand, Uganda was becoming the new reality of all the tribes within it.

After independence, Uganda- a European artefact – was still developing as a country rather than a kingdom in the minds of ordinary Gandas. They were lulled by the fact that Kabaka Mutesa II was made president of the new Uganda. Nonetheless, most of them felt that ‘Uganda’ should remain a kingdom for the Ganda under their *kabaka* so that things would go back to the way they were before Europeans came. Uganda was a patchwork of fifty or so tribes. The Gandas did not want it. The union of tribes brought no apparent advantage to them apart from a deluge of immigrants from wherever, coming to Kampala to take their land. Meanwhile, the other fifty or so tribes looked on flabbergasted as the British drew borders and told them that they were now Ugandans. Their histories, cultures and identities were overwritten by the mispronounced name of insufferably haughty tribe propped above them. But to the Ganda, the reality of Uganda as opposed to Buganda only sank in when, after independence, Obote overran the *kabaka’s lubiri* with tanks, exiling Mutesa and banning all kingdoms. (255)

At this point, there was transition of tribes, which during the precolonial period regarded themselves as autonomous nations, into one larger unit as Uganda. During the precolonial period, each tribe had its own sense of a nation, some had well elaborate political structures in the form of kingdoms. The Gandas for instance had Buganda Kingdom while the Nyoro had Bunyoro-Kitara Kingdom.

The narrative of Uganda developing into a macro-nation from many micro-nations which included kingdoms and tribes was first created by the drawing of the borders of Uganda. This implies that the union was artificial, and many tribes were not happy about the merger. This foundation of the nation was artificial as opposed to what Benedict Anderson called ‘imagined political communities’ where the will of the people to unite is more effective than artificial. For instance, the Ganda did not want to be part of a larger political unit. They wanted things to go back to normalcy the way they were before colonialism. Other tribes were also unhappy with the merger because they felt that their cultures, histories and identities were forcefully merged and overwritten by name of one tribe and that they were now ‘Ugandans’ – a name drawn from the Ganda. These other micro-nations saw the merger as a threat to their autonomy which would lead to them being ruled by the Buganda Kingdom. This was made worse by the fact that Kabaka Mutesa II was made president of the new nation –Uganda.

Since Uganda as a nation was initially a European creation during colonial period, one would wonder why many tribes/communities in Uganda wanted independence. Colonialism had disrupted the day to day operations of various kingdoms and communities in Uganda. Some like the Ganda had their land taken away by the colonialist. In fact it was not just their land but the land in the *Kabakas* capital Lubiri in Kampala. Through Kanani Kintu, we get the picture of Kampala and how the hills were “measured and marked and demarcated into streets, roads and lanes...”(174) Though Kanani viewed this as bringing ‘order and civilization’, we can see that it had affected the Gandas deeply since Kampala was the kingdom’s capital and a symbol of their unity and power. This had effects even after independence since as Kanani notes “Ugandans related to the land and the hills but not the art drawn on them...The land was theirs but the city belonged to the British” (174). Even though the kingdoms were allowed to continue operating,

things were never the same again since most of their earlier way of life had been interrupted. Missionaries had brought Christianity and education. The loss of land, autonomy and disruption of their economic activities by the colonialists seemed to bring the tribes/kingdoms in Uganda together to challenge a common enemy. The histories of the many micro nations could have intersected during the colonial phase as different people migrated to Kampala, the colony's capital. An expanded sense of identity was taking shape.

This could be the reason why the sense of Uganda evolving as a nation from the natives' perspective was slowly developing. However, independence to most communities meant going back to the way things were before colonialism. The Ganda wanted their kingdom back because the idea of Uganda to them meant immigrants from other communities to Kampala their capital which was also the capital of the new nation. The other micro nations wanted their autonomy as well. They felt that Uganda under Kabaka Mutesa II, who was the king of Buganda at the time, was just like an extension of Buganda Kingdom. This made the other communities which in this case were nations in their own sense not to identify with the sense of them being one people, one nation- Uganda.

In the long run, the forming of Uganda as a macro –nation from many micro nations became a reality. This transition drifted slowly from the European idea of the map of Uganda, to the coming together of many communities in Uganda to demand for independence after facing the effects of colonialism, to the time at independence when Kabaka Mutesa II was made president of the new nation - Uganda as a country and nation had been formed. Even with the skepticism of many micro nations within the new Uganda, the sense of the new nation had taken root. What was remaining in the narrative of this new nation was to make the many people who still doubted the sense of the new nation believe in the new narrative; the new order.

After looking at the transition of the narrative of Uganda as nation from the colonial period to the period immediately after independence, I will now look at another element which is necessary and sometimes used to forge a union of many micro nations to a macro nation: coercion. As Ernest Renan argues that 'unity is always effected by means of brutality', the union of many tribes or communities which earlier had their own sense of nation sometimes requires force and /or brutality in order to coerce people to be united and identify with a new narrative of nation. Renan further argues that the 'union of northern France with the Midi was the result of massacres and terror lasting the best part of the century' (11). The people who effect this force will always have a ready narrative to disseminate and justify their actions. The reason could simply be an ambitious undertaking by certain leaders to widen their territories and prove their power to the neighboring nations. Leaders have had the habit of staking claim on a certain part of another nation's territory and always having a narrative which draws its legitimacy from oral history or myth. Kintus in the novel uses myth to justify their right to return to Kiyirika and build a shrine for their clan although the Kintus did not use force. Kabaka Kyabaggu had his own ambitions when he took power. 'Kyabaggu had made it clear that his eyes were set on the Ssoga people in the east. Annexing them to Buganda Kingdom would be his legacy' (47). Kyabaggu used force against the Ssoga in order to build his own legacy. Makumbi here brings out the effects of greed for power and ambition. While it was normal for Kyabaggu to expand his territory, build himself a legacy and make the Ganda proud, the actions that would bring this legacy would destroy lives and livelihoods as happened to the Ssoga. This can be compared to what happens in the novel in Uganda after independence.

Force has always been employed to align a people and make them identify with the narrative of a nation. During the precolonial period, Buddu province of Buganda Kingdom was annexed from Bunyoro Kitara Kingdom. As Ppookino Kintu was giving a report on the state of his province to Kyabaggu, we learn that Buddu was once a territory of Bunyoro:

Kintu expounded on the state of his province and illustrated his plan to extend Buddu beyond the banks of Kagera River to Kyamutwara. He assured Kyabaggu that, like his father and grandfather, he had not intentions of looking back at Bunyoro Kitara, the kingdom from whence his province was plucked six generations earlier. Kyabaggu looked at Kintu condescendingly.

Kintu swore that the pitiful Nyoro blood – he spat – had been wrung out of his family, that no one was more Ganda than the people of Buddu. (43-44)

The people of Buddu were once Nyoro but they were forcefully annexed and forced to be part of Buganda. I say forcefully because it was not common for a kingdom or nation to voluntarily cede part of its territory to another nation especially during precolonial Uganda. In addition, no people, say Buddu people, would willingly accept to be part of another nation unless they are coerced. The fact that Buddu was once Nyoro many generations back confirms the assertion that a union of micro nations or tribes to form a larger unit – macro nation – is in most cases effected through force. The people of Buddu with time have deliberately forgotten their history. They have identified fully with Buganda Kingdom and even see themselves as ‘more Ganda’ than the rest of Buganda. In a way, one can say the force which was used to annex Buddu and make it part of Buganda was successful since their narrative and history has been merged with that of entire Buganda.

Kabaka Kyabaggu had stated that he wanted to annex Ssoga to Buganda as his legacy. This was another attempt to use force to forge a union of another nation or part of another nation into Buganda Kingdom. He tried this many times but always failed. However, the attempts were brutal to the people of Ssoga. Kyabaggu would attack the Ssoga, overpower them and appoint governors to rule on his behalf. As soon as he went back to Buganda, the Ssoga people would kill the appointed governors. This went on many times without yielding any result. ‘As soon as he returns to Buganda they will kill the governors and they shall go on like that until Kyabaggu gets tired or killed’ (67). The attempts by Kyabaggu to increase Buganda territory is also captured in the oral history that Suubi’s grandmother narrates. “He wanted to make Buganda even bigger, to swallow Bunyoro and all those tiny little kingdoms around Buganda. He subdued the Ssoga many times but because of the Nile he failed to annex Busoga to Buganda. (99).

This does not only demonstrate that force was employed by leaders to annex and force people to be part of another nation, it also shows that precolonial Uganda, as we see in Buganda, had organized systems of culture and governance. The people saw and imagined themselves as one and desired to erase boundaries. As Alex Wanjala in his study on *Miaha* by Grace Okoth posits, traditional Luo society was not a pre-political society. It had a form of social organization and religion even before the advent of colonization of East Africa by the British (170). Precolonial Uganda had its narrative and the narratives of many tribes – nations – intersected as they fought to protect their territories or to annex territories from other nations. The issues of political instability, violence and war that is seen in post-independence Uganda is something that is not new and can be traced back to precolonial Uganda. There was a lot of power wrangles among the royalty in Buganda which often resulted in deaths and assassinations. For instance,

Kyabaggu killed his brother Namugala in order to get the throne. When we later encounter power wrangles among the political class in Uganda after independence, we can relate to the precolonial times.

After looking at how kingdoms in Uganda during the precolonial period used force to annex other kingdoms or parts of those other kingdoms so as to increase Buganda's territory, I will now demonstrate how *Kintu* captures the use of force to forge a union of many voices of dissent and create one narrative of Uganda after independence. As argued earlier, each tribe in Uganda had their sense of a nation. They regarded themselves as nations. To bring these micro nations together after independence, force was used to coerce people to believe in and identify with the national narrative by the political class. After Kabaka Mutesa II was made president, there was a lot of mistrust among the many tribes put together as Uganda. There was the national government and the kingdoms operating semi autonomously.

However, things took an about turn when Obote captured power and exiled Mutesa II. 'To the Ganda, the reality of Uganda as opposed to Buganda only sank in when, after independence, Obote overran the *kabaka's lubiri* with tanks, exiling Mutesa II and banning all kingdoms' (255). The actions by Obote to overthrow Mutesa II may be seen by political scientist as a way to capture power. But there is more into this, considering the fact that by this time all kingdoms in Uganda were allowed to operate semi autonomously. This implied that the tribes still existed as micro-nations. This act was not good for a young fragile nation which was still an idea in the minds of many who advocated for kingdoms. Considering that Uganda has more than fifty tribes and that not all tribes had kingdoms, allowing those with kingdoms to be semi-autonomous would create divisions between kingdoms and sense of exclusion among those tribes without kingdoms. Thus, while those without kingdoms were under the national government, those with

kingdoms had both advantages; having their own kingdom and also identifying with the national government. Why then would Obote ban all kingdoms after taking power? To Obote, to have all people in Uganda identifying with the idea of Uganda being one, some memory had to be erased. To achieve this, there was need to ban all kingdoms so that people can identify with one government. We can relate this to what Peter Simatei in *The Novel and Politics of Nation Building in East Africa* calls the 'homogenizing vision of the nation-state' where political leaders advocate for a one way narrative that opposes the novelistic discourse which 'activates the disparate and at times discordant identities within the national space' (160). Obote represents the homogenous national narrative that is forced on the people. To Obote, if the people only had one government, they would slowly start to imagine themselves as one larger nation having distinct histories which shared the effects of colonialism. Obote, therefore, used force to make the people believe in the idea of belonging to one country and one nation. We can see this evidence since people soon started to identify with a larger entity "As Buganda faded and Uganda started to take root, it became clear that education was paramount in the new nation (256). Indeed, when the kingdoms were banned, people lived in fear. Since many kingdoms were affected, the people from different parts felt it and hence due to fear, they slowly started getting used to the idea of Uganda being for them all. Obote's actions demonstrates how force was used in post-independence Uganda in order to bring many micro nations together as one.

Another angle to the narrative of the nation is demonstrated in Suubi Nnakintu's life. Suubi Nnakintu's narrative represents elements of the manifestations of the curse according to the myth. Suubi, a twin called Nnakato, had a twin sister Babirye also known as Ssanyu. Ssanyu Babirye died at young age but kept reappearing in Suubi's life. This reappearing is akin to rebirth and reincarnation that is alluded to in myths where there is the 'process or the

disappearance and return, or the incarnation and withdrawal' of a person or character (Frye 158). This reappearance is an element of the Kintu myth where a person who died long time appears to Suubi and can even talk to her. Even when Suubi lived with her aunt Kulata, Ssanyu appeared and even threatened Kulata if she dared hit Suubi again. From the myth, the curse had signs like sudden death, suicide and madness. Suubi's twin sister Babirye died after birth then the mother died too. Kulata says:

'I tell you my sister chose a family with the kind of madness that goes beyond having children with. And I am saying badly wired, short-circuiting, fuse-blowing mental kind of madness.' Now she drew closer to the tenants and whispered, 'The father, Wasswa, Hacked his twin brother to death' [...] 'asked: *why did you kill your twin?*' Kulata carried on whispering, '*Because they were coming for him. Who was coming for him? They.* That kind of madness [...] Kulata continued to whisper. 'The following day, thankfully, Wasswa committed suicide [...] the last I had this child was taken by the grandmother, Wasswa's mother, but as the saying goes: *when it rains on a pauper, it does not stop to allow his cloths to dry.* The other day I had that the grandmother had also died and I said to myself, what kind of misfortune does that family have?' (108)

Suubi's life is a demonstration of the harsh effects of the curse on her branch of the family tree. She suffered a lot but still hinges on to life. Kulata and other people expected her to die since she was emaciated and looked sickly since birth. Interestingly, everyone, including Suubi herself, waited for her to die. Kizza, Suubi's aunt, is very surprised when she met Suubi with Opolot. She even tells Opolot 'this Suubi child! Her mother named her well' (166). Her hinging on to life even when everyone else expected her to die is associated to her name. 'My twin, she

was named Ssanyu which means “happy”. I was named Suubi which means “hope” because I was so scrawny at birth that they only hoped that I would live’ (437).

While living with Kulata, Suubi learns from the land lady about Uganda’s political developments in the 1970s and 80s. Through Kulata’s landlady, we get the image and sufferings of the people in the hands of political class. She claims that Bulange, had ambition and was becoming an affluent residential area “But then Idi Amin came and one by one, the men erecting modern houses disappeared. Her own husband had disappeared in 1977. Sometimes she would point at the incomplete houses naming their owners and the dates that they disappeared and she would cry” (111). The incomplete houses is symbolic of broken dreams and betrayal by the ruling class who are more interested in power than the well-being of the people.

The phase of political instability in Uganda is also captured in the story of Misirayimu Kintu (Miisi) In Book V of the novel. After finishing his studies in Russia, Miisi was advised by his family not to go back to Uganda because “Idi Amin was killing the educated” (399). Miisi went to Britain and applied for scholarship has he waited for Idi Amin to be deposed. When he came back in 1979, Miisi realized that Uganda as a nation had deteriorated and that there was a lot of poverty. “What he returned to were people struggling to survive, who in the process had lost the ability to discern what is right and wrong. Anything that gave them a chance to survive was moral. (343). We can see the state of hopelessness that is demonstrated by what Miisi saw as soon as he arrived in Uganda after many years abroad.

After Idi Amin was deposed and Obote recaptured power, things did not get better either. This is seen in the narratives of Miisi, Suubi and Isaac Newton Kintu. These three characters stories intersect with the events during the period of instability in Uganda. Miisi remembers the 80s war

and the fateful night when soldiers invaded their village in the pretext of weeding out any rebels in the region. “It was a bad raid with bullets flying about for days. As he dodged gunshots, Miisi drifted further from the house. ...on the fourth day, the first people Miisi saw without guns were strangers, so he stayed put. Then he heard Kaleebu’s voice and emerged from the passion fruit ticket he had occupied for two days. (358). Miisi lost one of his sons Nkaada, a disabled boy, who could not run into the night during this raid. Miisi’s son Lamula had joined the rebels while his two other sons, Ssendi and Jumba had been enlisted to join the rebels after that fateful night that Nkaada was killed.

Many people were killed and others displaced during the war. The army attacked any village that they suspected of harboring rebel activity indiscriminately. This is the mess that Uganda’s journey as a nation was going through. It was a phase of hopelessness and suffering among the people. From the events after the raid at Miisi’s house, the narrator gives us a vivid picture of the events that followed:

Miisi and Kaleebu spent that night up a tree. When they saw a group of women and children come towards them, they came down and joined the throng. They started their exodus in August 83 and went round in circles for months until January 84 when the group was rounded up and put in a concentration in Ssemuto. It was a year later while in the camp, that Miisi learned that Ssendi and Jumba had been killed close to home shortly after enlisting. (361)

This extract captures the historical period in Uganda when there was resistance in what was known as the Bush War which is alluded to in the novel. The suffering of the people as indicated above became a uniting element for them as they hoped for better days to come. The

people put in a concentration camp at Ssemuto is a representation of what was happening in other parts of Uganda. It also points to the fact that when war comes, people running for safety come together irrespective of their tribes or clans. The fear of war and the need to get to safer grounds becomes a uniting factor as they later look back and narrate their suffering. Thus, Miisi and Kaleebu moved around in circles with other people who included mainly women and children. The aspect of moving around in circles and not getting to any new destination is symbolic of Uganda during this period. It captures the absurdity and hopelessness of life; it captures the suffering of people as family members are killed and others displaced; it captures the suffering of children as parents die and they are left with no one to take care of them except fate. As Miisi was wondering about children who were hurling insults at elders as they welcomed the New Year, he blames “their parents’ negligence but then remembers that to some children having parents was a myth, for some homes were run by twelve year-olds and children grew up like weeds.” (313). Indeed, the likening of children growing up to weeds is to show how children suffered without anyone to provide for them, to correct them, to teach them societal values as most children had lost their parents during the war.

Another symbolic representation of suffering and hopelessness in Uganda during the 80s war is the fate of Miisi’s sons. As Miisi’s was introducing us to the Bush war through flashback, we saw the glaring effects of war at a family level. “...three days later, when a whole family was killed in the night, villagers started to sleep in the bush at night” (356). This was a sign of a country sinking down to the path of destruction. Similarly, after the war, Miisi had lost five sons, we see the pain that families undergo when they lose their loved ones due to war. We can only imagine the pain and suffering captured, thus: “The tragedy was that four of the sons shared a mother, his second wife. At the end of the war, when the bodies of all her progeny with Miisi

had been located, exhumed and reburied, she had laughed, ‘what was all that sex about?’” (356). The picture that comes out through Miisi’s family and the effects of the war on him at family level is symbolic of what was happening to other families during the war period.

Makumbi has also captured the period of wars through Isaac Newton Kintu’s story. Isaac was a resident of Katanga slums in Kampala. Katanga slums is a symbol of many tribes coming together. It shows how different people from different cultures had been brought together by common problems. Katanga became the home for many poor Ugandans who had migrated to the city with the hope of seeking employment. Katanga is a slum for the poor and it is here that one can see how the sense of Uganda was taking shape. People now were migrating to the capital to look for employment. It became a melting pot of many cultures and political beliefs. Isaac also represents a new generation of Ugandans; the people born in the city who know little about their ancestral home and who identify with the idea of a nation more easily than those from rural areas. Isaac Newton Kintu became the ‘urban community’ who are united by sufferings of war and poverty just like the Bwaise residents that are captured in the prologue. Katanga residents had with time acquired an identity of their own. “The wonderful thing about being Katangese, as Katanga residents were called, was that Amin’s brutality flew above their heads and towards the hills, especially Nakasero and Kololo where the elite resided (271). While here we learn about Amin’s brutality on Ugandans especially the rich, we also see the residents of this slum having their own identity. War and poverty had made them to be united. They identified with their area of residence.

During Amin’s time, people were either fighting his army or fighting for him. There was no time to ask who was from this tribe, kingdom or community. War and suffering had brought people together. It was also a period of reckoning for Ugandans, they no longer looked at the

community as a source of identity. There were the broader issue of war and brutality that the people faced which affected people across the country.

“When the war arrived, the Katangese stopped laughing, Isaac had seen young men from Katanga and poorer backgrounds rush to join Amin’s army because of the power and wealth it brought. [...]it rained continuously during the war. Vegetation all over Kampala thrived on a combination of abundant rain, decomposing bodies and the absence of humans. Marabou storks migrated to Nakasero Hill while the bats in Bat valley went into exile”. (272).

The picture depicted here is horrible. People killed, decomposing bodies all over and absence of humans. The absence of humans could mean many were killed and the remaining were displaced. The gravity is further demonstrated by the fact that even Marabou storks and bats were affected and had to migrate. Here we see Uganda as a nation at its lowest point.

After looking at the narrative of Uganda through the lives of Suubi, Miisi and Isaac, I will now look at Kanani Kintu and how Uganda’s narrative is captured in his life. Kanani Kintu was a Christian who did not identify with the Kintu myth. To Kanani, to identify with the myth was to acknowledge the curse in their family. Kanani and Faizi did not tell their children about politics or family history. Kanani represents the people who saw colonialism as doing favor to Africans. Through his imagination, we see his opinion on colonialism and independence:

Kanani had seen Kampala city take shape in the hands of the British. When it came to curving out landscape the white man was a wizard. First the Mpala antelopes which the *ba kabaka* had hunted for generations were banished from the hills. Then the hills were measured and marked, then dug and demarcated into Streets, Roads, Lanes, Places,

Squares and Mews. [...]there was hope then. There were systems. There was order. Uganda was on its way to civilization. Then independence came. Kanani was pessimistic right from the start. (174).

Kanani seems to suggest that precolonial Buganda, and by extension, Uganda had no order nor systems. He takes the view that colonization was good and brought order. However, we can see even from the above excerpt that development of Kampala affected wildlife and disrupted the traditional way of life of the Ganda.

Kanani did not care about politics. Neither did he let his children know about political developments in the country. He only worried himself about his place in heaven. This is illustrated by the way Ruth, Kanani's daughter, is shocked to learn about the anger that the Ganda had over Obote when he took power from Kabaka Mutesa II as seen below:

Even the day that Amin took power from Obote, Ruth went to walk. That morning Ruth found all the repressed Ganda anger over Obote's exiling Kabaka Mutesa II spilling in the roads everywhere in villages and trading in songs, dancing and poetry. All this was new to Ruth. She had never been aware of anger – her parents never discussed politics, as all worldly concerns were nothing but wind. (204)

In Kanani, we see the other side of Kintu descendants who were not interested in their roots. They welcomed Christianity and colonialism wholeheartedly and saw it as a way out of what they considered pagan ways.

The narrative journey of Uganda to its current state, as captured in the prologue in contemporary Uganda in 2004, had many intersecting narratives of the Kintus, Gandas and Ugandans. The stories of war that characters and their families faced are also the stories of Uganda as a nation.

As we encounter narrative journeys of individual characters, we also encounter the development of Uganda's narrative as a nation. We have seen the narration of a nation from a clan level captured in the Kintu oral History which runs concurrently with that of Buganda Kingdom. We have also seen the period during colonialism and the post independent Uganda. All these stories converge together at various levels to develop a narrative which Ugandans with time have come to identify with.

The narrative development of a people/nation looks back to a remote past where we can locate the origin of a people, whether this past is real or imagined. It involves imaginatively representing the past in what Abiola Irele has conceptualized as a 'collective expression of a people, of their heritage as constituted national community' (5). In the journeying of a nation, those rare moments about the past become the foundation through which the current generation can create, own, and disseminate new national narratives. Makumbi uses a family myth to foreground the importance that the people of Uganda have their own stories, that the story of each community is a testimony of their triumphs and failures, that these stories though from different communities share the effects of political instability in many kingdoms in pre-colonial Uganda, that their journeys were faced by the challenges of political instability after independence. All these experiences of the Ugandan people after independence as captured in the stories constitute their history and heritage; its effects on Kintu descendants and Ugandan people cannot be underestimated. The experiences, sufferings and struggles have made them who they are as a people. They can look back at their lowest moments, their failures and victories with pride as they narrate their journey as a nation.

Myth as Memory Reservoir

The family myth which is embedded in the family oral history provides a memory reservoir which is necessary for imagining and revisiting the past. Narrating a nation implies devising a way of grafting a past that combines both fact and fiction and creates a narrative of its people. In the process, some information about the past may get lost while other elements are added to make the narrative more inclusive and accommodative to new cultural dimensions. Similarly, where there is not enough information about the past, new narratives about the past are imagined, grafted and disseminated for purposes of asserting a shared past. Thus, the process of imagining and narrating a past may involve both factual information and fiction fused together. The narrative of a nation appears to occupy the borderline between fact and fiction due to its blurred nature. Wole Ogundele posits that in “imagining the past, facts get turned into fiction and what starts as fiction may end up being narrated as fact” (130). My argument concurs with Ogundele in that Makumbi has creatively presented the family myth and oral history as having both ‘factual’ and fictional information fused together. It does portray a situation where some information has been lost since the oral history was committed to human memory. In addition, the retelling of the family history and the myth throughout many generations could have erased certain facts and subsequently added other information to account for what was forgotten or what was deliberately omitted in the process of creating the narrative of the Kintus. In the novel, different family members sometimes hold different views about certain family history. For instance, Miisi believes that he survived a family fire tragedy with his sister. When Miisi was asked by Kato and Magga about bees which camped in his house he says, “my sister who believes in that sort of thing buried them” (353). However, other clan members from another family tree know that Miisi was the only surviving member of his family and that when Miisi

was taken to an orphanage, the Catholic missionary gave Miisi a girl who was in the orphanage and told Miisi that he had a sister. This was because the Missionary wanted Miisi to recover from the trauma occasioned by the tragedy. In this case, there are two ‘truths’ about Miisi’s past. How then does the family myth in the novel *Kintu* serve as a reservoir for memory? By memory reservoir here I imply the trigger of memory whenever the myth is narrated to the Kintu descendants and by extension the people of Uganda. First, the oral history and the myth in the novel have significant names of places and people that by their very existence trigger a certain memory among the Kintus. This is because in many cultures, names are associated with meanings. Names of people who lived in the past could symbolize or mean certain things according to the culture of its people. These names of people in the past could also carry the weight of the actions of those people associated with the names. In addition, names of places that Kintu and his descendants lived and visited in the past bring back memories of the events in the past.

The name Kintu reappears through many generations in the novel. In the Prologue we meet Kamu Kintu whom we later learn that he is a descendant of Kintu Kidde. Several other clan members in the novel’s contemporary Uganda also have the name Kintu as their surname. The name Kintu serves as a memory reservoir. Its reappearing many times denotes the rebirth and/or reincarnation in mythology. As Northrop Frye notes, man exhibits the ordinary cycle of life and death, in which there is a generic rebirth and not individual rebirth (158). The name therefore represents the rebirth of Kintu in the myth. It reminds the Kintus of Ppookino Kintu Kidde and his mistakes that attracted a curse to his family, it reminds them of their sufferings due to the curse, and it reminds them of their origins as a clan. In a broader sense, the name Kintu is

significant among the Ganda people. This is because the Ganda myth of origin posits that Kintu was their first ancestor. As Bwesigye bwa Mwesigere writes in an article on *Kintu*:

Kintu, according to the Ganda, came to Uganda with his cow and lived as the first person there. From the sky came Nnambi, a beautiful woman, and she saw Kintu with his cow in the plains of Buganda. She was with her brothers, all from heaven, where their father, the creator, lived. Nnambi fell in love with Kintu and decided to marry him. (1)

If we compare the Kintu myth and the Ganda myth of origin, we note that Kintu was the ancestor and patriarch in both cases. Thus, the name Kintu is not only a memory reservoir for the Kintus but also the Ganda. It gives the people a sense of belonging and identity. This shared identity is what gives the Kintu family, the Ganda, and Uganda a reference point in the past to assert and construct an identity which is necessary for nation formation.

Twin names and recurrent names in the family oral history is an indicator that names serve as memory reservoir. These names portray element of rebirth, reincarnation and reappearance as an aspect of myth. The names Nnakato, Babirye, Bale, Nnakintu, Nnabaale, and Kidda bring out memories of the past whenever a new member in the Kintu family is given these and other names. Nnakato and Babirye bring back memories of the twin wives of Ppookino Kintu. In these names lies the threat of the curse. For instance, the twins of Kanani were supposed to be Waswa and Nnakato. However, Kanani gave them Christian names. This did not stop his children from committing incest which lead to birth of Paolo Kalema. Again, in the name Kalema, the rebirth of the Tutsi lad who was Ntwire's son is realized. This name triggers the memory of Ntwire's curse which became an omen to the Kintu descendants. In addition, Suubi's father Waswa, who was a twin, killed his brother and then committed suicide. These names are

significant in remembering the ancestors and also reminding the Kintus of the curse in their family. The high number of twins in the family brings memory of four sets of twins that Babirye had with Ppookino Kintu on behalf of Nnakato. Whenever twins are born in the Kintu family, there is often a rebirth of their ancestors and the hovering threat of the curse. The twin names were regarded as a sign of being a 'true Kintu'. Whenever clan members discuss their roots, they always mention the fact of having had twins in their family as if to confirm that indeed they are blood. Isaac had twins with Nnayiga named Babirye and Nnakato. The twins however, died moments after birth. When Isaac was taken by his mother to his family to meet his relations the first time, the family members were so happy to see their kin and even commented on Isaac having twins "did you hear he has had twins as well? Do you see the nature of blood?" (296). Twins and twin names as contained in the myth were always used by the Kintus to assert their identity. Twins reminded them of their past as a people.

The names of places in the myth serve as memory in two ways. First these names symbolize the challenges and successes of the people in the past. For instance, o Lwera stands for the difficulties that trekkers faced while crossing the desert. "For Kintu, o Lwera marked the beginning of uncertainty...o Lwera was o Lwera. Even at a distance, a dirge, the hum of its heat, was audible. Waves of radiation danced in the air warning: you traverse these grounds at your own peril" (25). O Lwera is the genesis of the curse in the family because this was where Kalema was killed and buried. As a desert, o Lwera provided very little hope for life. It brings back memories of the sufferings of Kintu descendants. O Lwera is an archetype that has negative connotations of mother-symbol. It represents the mythical aspects of things that are 'secret, hidden, dark, the abyss, the world of dead' (Jung 15). In the myth, many people who traversed this desert died. O Lwera is the place where Kintu was last seen before he disappeared. All the

things associated with o Lwera during Ppookino Kintu's time are resurrected whenever the name o Lwera is mentioned in the family myth and oral history.

Kiyirika was the home of Kintu. This is where his family was although other wives were scattered across the province. By the mere mention of Kiyirika in the family, the memory of the past is triggered. It brings back the time of normalcy and plenty among the Kintus before the effects of the curse began to be felt. The name of this ancestral land has changed over time. The current generation calls it Kiyiika. The name change can be seen as a rebirth of a new generation in what Frye Northrop calls 'generic rebirth' (158). The rebirth is a positive connotation associated with 'transformation' that represent 'growth and fertility' (Jung 15). While Kiyiika is a geographical place, it captures the culture of the Kintu people; it ignites memories of their ancestor, and it helps the people to relive their past. The ancestral land in Kiyiika is therefore a space for creating, recreating, and affirming the identity of Kintu descendants as Gandas and by extension Ugandans. Ernest Renan notes that "it is not the soil which makes a nation" but the soil "furnishes the substratum, the field of struggle and of labour; man furnishes the soul. Man is everything in the formation of this sacred thing which is called a people" (18). Kiyiika serves as a space for remembering and celebrating the past of a people whose sufferings have not disintegrated their will to unite. This memory of their ancestral land as captured in the myth provides the physical basis for the link to their past. As Anthony D. Smith posits, "Myths and memories are important in grafting and disseminating narratives of the nation" (9). This is witnessed in the action of the Kintus going back to Kiyiika during the reunion. It should be noted that none of the Kintu descendants live in Kiyiika. In fact, they are all strangers; Kiyiika has over time become the home of other people. Elders Kityo, Miisi and others have to inform the residents of Kiyiika about their intentions. In this case, myth is presented as a powerful and

legitimate archive of a people tracing their roots. From a myth, these Kintus visited Kiyiika, a land somewhere in southern Uganda, and build a clan shrine. It looks strange, but again, the myth of Kintu and Nnakato has over time been narrated by the current residents of Kiyiika until they have even named a hill “Nnakato’s hill”. While these residents do not identify with the characters in the myth, they have owned it in a different way by drawing their taboos associated with the myth. To these residents, Kintu and Nnakato never really existed. To the Kintu descendants, Kintu is not just a mythical character but their ancestor.

This appeal to myth by Makumbi is critical in creating and asserting a shared past. Myths have an element of attaching a spiritual twist to narratives. The spiritual aspect in the novel is seen when Miisi has a dream in which an old man covered in bees leads Miisi to where their ancestor Kintu’s body is. The bee man also shows Miisi where Kalemanzira is buried, where Nnakato is buried. The bee man takes Miisi through the dream to the ancestral land in Kiyiika where the family shrine will be located. From this dream, the elders begin a journey for a family reunion and homecoming during which they perform a ritual to break Ntwire’s curse. The emergence of an old man who appears in a dream relates to what Carl Gustav Jung says that in myths ‘the old man always appears when the hero is in a hopeless and desperate situation from which only profound situation or idea, in other words of spiritual function or an endopsychic automation of some kind- can extricate him’ (113). The bee man in Miisi’s dream is crucial in the homecoming since it enables Miisi and the elders to learn about the places where Kintu, Kalema and Nnakato’s bodies are buried and also the necessary ritual procedures required to break the curse. In the myth, Miisi is actually the clan head whose lineage places him as the Ppookino in the current generation. He is, therefore, the one to lead the family; hence the responsibility of leading the clan in the ritual makes him the hero. Since he cannot ‘accomplish this himself, the

alluded knowledge needed to compensate comes in the form of personified thought' in the form of a dream (Jung 114). The ritual and homecoming in Kiyiika are accomplished thanks to the dream and the mythical aspect of spirit and old man that are important elements in myths'

The spiritual element calls for belief in them as opposed to questioning. If they were put simply as historical events and/or facts, then it would do less in bringing the Kintu descendants together but because of the mythical elements, the people tend to believe in their shared past. This is because of the cultural attachments that myths have. The myth answers many questions that the Kintu descendants have concerning their troubles; the incidences of madness that runs in the family, sudden deaths, and many cases of suicides.

Creation and Dissemination of National Narratives

Memory is an important aspect in national narratives. People tend to have the will to unite if they believe or perceive that they share similar or related memories. Makumbi has used family myth to draw attention to the need to revisit a past in order to create a national narrative. You cannot just wake up one morning and tell a people they are one. One has to create a point of convergence among a people in order to make them perceive themselves as one. Creating and disseminating national narratives calls for attention to the past. You have to revisit the past because that is where their memory lies. In the past lie their successes and failures. In the past lie their mistakes and achievements. More importantly, appeal to the past, especially mythical past, places the foundation of a nation in the times of ancestors. This puts a spiritual twist to the narrative of a nation.

In grafting a narrative of a nation, Makumbi has used a curse that plagued Kintu and his descendants. This curse was brought about by a rash mistake of Kintu Kidu which led to the death of Kalema. The curse tends to unite the Kintus more than the victories of their ancestors and even those victories of Buganda Kingdom. To bring people together, their sufferings and defeats always work to the positive. For instance, as the Kintu descendants face more challenges linked to the curse, they become more willing to seek their family reunion and ties. Thus, when Kanani Kintu's twins turn to each other and Paolo Kalema is born, Kanani becomes more aware of the curse and even doubts if his Christianity can actually overrun it. On the other hand, Misirayimu Kintu (Miisi) becomes excited with the knowledge that he belongs to a large clan. Although Miisi has lost many children in the bush war in Uganda, the thought of belonging to a large clan gives him relief and sense of hope.

Looking at the way the Kintu descendants are determined to have a family reunion and a ritual to break the curse in their family, I argue that the human spirit is more willing to unite in fighting challenges and the evil than in celebrating success. In fact, whenever a people gather to celebrate a victory, it is always a way of remembering the challenge and/or the defeat which necessitated their unity. Thus, in the novel *Kintu*, the Kintus are more willing to come to the family reunion to be part of the ritual and defeat the curse and stop the suffering. Their unity is informed by the failure of their ancestors to break the curse for many generations. As Ernest Renan writes about a nation that "in our own day, we have seen Italy unified by its defeats and Turkey destroyed by its victories. Each defeat advanced the course of Italy; each victory spelled doom for Turkey" (12). Renan further argues that Italy is a nation, but Turkey is not. I cannot argue for or against Renan's assertion that Turkey is not a nation, but I emphasizes that even

among a people who are considered a nation (say Italy above) their mistakes, sufferings, failures, and defeats are a strong force for unity than their victories.

As the family narratives gain base in uniting the Kintus, the narrative of Buganda and Uganda is also developing. Colonialism created Uganda as a country of more than fifty tribes. This artificial act first threatened the sense of nation for most tribes which had their own territories and sense of *nationess*. The name Uganda was hated by both Gandas and non Gandas. This was because in the name lay the narrative of exclusion and inclusion. In fact, it was like a way of forging exclusion through inclusivity. Gandas felt they were being infiltrated through inclusion of other tribes especially since Kampala was to become the capital of the country. Other tribes felt they were being excluded from the new nation by using the name of one tribe to bring them together under it. However, when Obote exiled Kabaka Mutesa II and took power, the reality of Uganda became apparent for Gandas. This was further compounded by the subsequent political instability and wars. When Obote took power, a lot of people suffered as Kaleebu illustrates during a conversation with Miisi “Obote avoided the educated because you people scream loud that they hear you across the seas,’ Kaleebu smiled. Instead he terrorized us peasants and there were no embargoes this time, were there?” (324). Similarly, when Idi Amin took power from Obote, many more people suffered. In the midst of these wars and power struggles, a national narrative was developing. The people (say the poor in rural areas and slums) discovered that they were going through the same experiences of sufferings: Vegetation all over Kampala thrived on a combination of abundant rain, decomposing bodies and the absence of humans...only funeral songs played on the radio (272). The educated and the political elite also suffered during these wars. In the end, the sense of belonging to and identifying with a tribe as

belonging to a micro-nation was slowly fading and the reality of identifying with a larger unit and forming a macro-nation was becoming more probable.

This developing narrative of Uganda was forged through many shared experiences of suffering and defeats. We see this in the period of instability captured in the stories of Suubi, Isaac, Miisi and Kanani. Many people were killed during Amin's reign. Miisi was advised not to come home after his studies in Russia because "Amin was killing the educated" (339). We also see the sufferings of people during the Bush war. These historical events served to provide a common archive of memory for the people of Uganda. While each tribe goes back to its myths and oral history to create a narrative for them and call for gathering of its people as a micro-nation, they also go back to the experiences of the whole country during the wars. This then brings them together because they can revisit, with pride, their past and in it see how together they fought to defeat the challenges and develop their nation. For the people in Uganda to identify with and fight for Uganda as their nation, they need to know how they came to be. The political challenges and the wars gives them a shared past. This is because "suffering in common unifies more than joy does (Renan 19).

The narrative of a nation relies on forgetting as an ingredient to achieve a common pivot. For a people to relive their past, they ought to have forgotten other things. In this, I mean that not all things about our past are necessary for national cohesion. Sometimes certain memories are best useful when they are buried and forgotten. Forgetting an historical error is a crucial factor in the creation of a nation (Renan 11). Forgetting enables a people to create new 'truths' about certain parts of their journey towards becoming a nation. These new truths are grafted basing on what we intend to achieve with the narrative that we come up with.

Suubi Nnakintu was forced to create her own story when she went to live with Kulata. This story of her life was constructed from a woman who used to visit her in school. This woman did not say who she was. We later learn that it was her auntie Kizza. Suubi told her classmates that her parents were in London. When Suubi later works as a house help in Kiyiga's home, she starts to imagine that her parents had returned from Britain. At first Suubi had created the story of her parents in London deliberately. However, when she lives and studies while at Kiyiga's home, Suubi's forgetting become apparent. Her auntie Kizza tells Opolot that this forgetting was a clan thing. Thus we find Suubi saying she is the third born of Kiyiga's family. When Kizza meets Suubi and tells her about her past which she had forgotten, this knowing became painful for Suubi. During the family reunion, Suubi "had convinced herself that since her mind had chosen to bury the past, there was not need to exhume it. In any case remembering had been painful" (386). Though Suubi needed to know her past, some aspects of her past were extremely painful.

The development of Buganda kingdom into a large territory had come about through annexing of other kingdoms. This annexing was through wars in which lives were often lost before the losers surrendered and accepted to be part of Buganda. From the Kintu story in Book 1, we learn that Buddu province, the largest province in Buganda, was annexed from Bunyoro Kitara kingdom. When Kintu was paying homage to Kabaka Kyabaggu:

He assured Kyabaggu that like his father and grandfather, he had no intentions of looking back at Bunyoro Kitara, the kingdom from whence his province was plucked six generations earlier...Kintu swore that the pitiful Nyoro blood – he spat – had been wrung out of his family, that no one was more Ganda than the people of Buddu. (43-44).

While the people of Buddu have over time become Gandas, they still remember that they came from Bunyoro, but they may not remember the brutalities that led to the annexure of their province. It is, therefore, good for the unity of Buganda when the people of Buddu do not remember these things. Forgetting is important for Buddu to continue being part of Buganda. For those who still remember like Kintu, they should let go of this past. As in the case of Suubi, it is good for a people in a nation to learn how to forget. To develop a narrative of a nation, it is important to note that the “essence of a nation all individuals have many things in common and also that they have forgotten many things” (Renan 11).

There may be need to exercise caution when handling any one dominant myth that is likely to foment feelings of marginalization and dissent within a nation. It is always easier to appeal to a popular myth and/or a dominant myth. While this may work to create a narrative that most people identify with, it may also suppress other margin narratives thus denying the people who identify with and regard the myths that are not dominant as their source of cultural heritage. A dominant myth can therefore be used by political elites in a nation-state to create a narrative for domination and oppression. This will suppress voices of dissent and margin narratives within a nation-state. In creating national narratives, a dominant myth should not be used to legitimize marginalization and oppression of dissent voices within a nation. A narrative that borrows from dominant and margin myths will ensure that there is inclusivity in the nation as opposed to exclusivity.

I have discussed the idea of creating and disseminating of national narratives. However, I must emphasize that in revisiting the past and looking for shared experiences, it is not always a direct reproduction of the past. It calls for careful selection of what is to be picked, what is to be added, what is to be suppressed, and what needs to be included from the current generation. A

nation, like the individual is always on the move. A nation is therefore like a moving target. It is always moving hence what you use to capture and impress it will always change depending on the position, speed, generation and the needs of that generation. It is not always the same sufferings and defeats in the past that you narrate to current or future generations. Sometimes, changes to these narratives are necessary in order to achieve the vision and objectives of various national narratives. The memory of a nation requires continuous backup, restructuring, erasure of certain facts or myths, and inclusion of other information into national narratives. This helps to maintain a rich archive of national memories. “Where national memories are concerned, griefs are of more value than triumphs because they impose duties and demand common effort” (Renan 19). In revisiting the past of a people, it is important to pay attention to their griefs than their victories. Where none exists, it is necessary that certain materials are added to serve this purpose. The memory that served past generations may not serve the needs of current and/or future generations. As other things in the national memories are forgotten either deliberately or due to memory laps, other ‘facts’ need to be imagined, created, and introduced in order to sustain the narrative of a nation.

From the narrative about Kintu Kidda in Book 1 of the novel, the point of scattering of Kintu descendants (which here is read as the Kintu nation) is therefore accounted for. The family is scattered all over Buganda kingdom in the effort to escape the curse. The use of oral history by the author is a deliberate attempt to create a narrative of a nation. We encounter a family which has gone back to the past by appealing to their family history in an attempt to justify their need for reunion.

CHAPTER THREE: INTERSECTING NARRATIVES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NATION

Introduction

In this chapter, I will focus on the main and margin narratives that intersect to develop a nation. The family oral history will be considered the main narrative and the Ganda/Uganda history will be read as marginal narratives that intersect with the main narrative to form the narrative of a nation. I intend to argue that in developing national narratives, family spaces intersect with national spaces to create many related narratives that move towards the same goal. Family spaces present the main narrative that gives the day to day activities of characters at family level. The narratives of these characters move alongside margin narratives within the nation. As people carry on with their daily lives, their actions will always have implications on the larger scale – the nation. The narrative of the Kintus as a family and the narrative of Buganda and Uganda as nations give the entry point of interrogating how these spaces affect each other. The Kintu narrative operates at the family space while that of Buganda and Uganda operates at the level of nation. Family spaces represent the idea of the nation at its tiny form - the micro-nation, while the national space here refers to the representation of the nation at its larger unit, say Buganda and by extension Uganda – the macro-nation. I shall look at how a family unit is a model of a nation. By this I imply that what happens at a family level, for instance specialization and division of labor, delegation, religion and exercise of power, is a representation of what happens at the national level.

Family Spaces and the Main Narrative

By family spaces here, I am referring to the role and responsibilities within the family level that characters in the novel undertake in their day to day lives. As people carry on with their duties and responsibilities in the family, their decisions and actions affect and are also affected by what happens at the national level (say tribe or country). When the family unit is stable, there is a high chance that the nation being a collection of many family units will be stable. The family space will be looked as the foundation of the nation.

The family myth is the basis for the main narrative. There are various sub stories of the family that merge together to form the grand family history. In each of these sub stories, the author has used multiple focalization to give the family myth as received and narrated by different family branches in Kintu family. The same family myth and oral history are captured in the narratives of the characters. In the novel, there are sub narratives which gives accounts of the lives of selected members of the clan. For instance, we have the narrative of Kintu Kidda in Book 1 which places the family history in a remote past. It also lays basis for the other narratives since they will be revolving around a common ancestor.

When we look at the story of Ppookino Kintu Kidda, we are also introduced to the story of Buganda kingdom and the royalty. This means that while Ppookino Kintu is carrying out his mandate as a governor in Buganda kingdom, he is also making and ‘writing’ the history of his family and descendants. There are five main stories of Kintu descendants that pivot around a common point. We read the story of Kintu Kidda as the main narrative that anchors the sub narratives of his descendants. This point of convergence is the name Kintu. These stories are those of Kamu Kintu, Suubi Nnakintu, Kanani Kintu, Isaac Newton Kintu, and Misirayimu Kintu. The story of each main character in the novel, except that of Kamu Kintu, is presented in

its own book and each book divided into many chapters. The other individual narratives appear to operate on their own but move towards a point of convergence. While each of these characters has their narrative, that of Kamu Kintu which is presented at the prologue punctuates each of them. This captures what Gerard Genette defines as narrative frequency. This is the repetition of the occurrence of the event and the narrative statement. In a narrative, ‘the same event can be told several times not only with stylistic variations but also with variations in point of view (Genette 115). The same event that took place before and after Kamu’s death is narrated many times. In the beginning of each book, the narrator gives the story of Kamu while his body lies at Mulago Hospital Mortuary. Sometimes the story is restricted to the view of the mortuary attendant and in other instances we get the story from a zero focalized narrator. While the event of Kamu’s death and his body lying in the mortuary being narrated many times is an aspect of frequency, it also resonates with Genette’s multiple focalization. This relates to narrative frequency in that the ‘same event may be evoked several times according to the point of view’ of several characters or narrators (Genette 190). The narrator invokes the death of Kamu many times at the beginning of each book in the novel.

The family of Ppookino Kintu and how it was organized presents a model of a nation. Kintu had many wives who were scattered all over Buddu province. Kintu being a governor exercised his powers at the level of nation in Buddu province and at family level in his home in Kiyirika. The power hierarchy at the family level had Kintu at the top. Nnakato being the elder wife was second in command and had power over the other wives. ‘...Nnakato was in charge of the wives. When a bride arrived, she named and allocated her a role within the family – there were those good with the children, creative ones who concentrated on craft; those with a lucky hand in farming and who created more food’. (16) Kintu’s family had an organized structure of

production and command. We see Nnakato had a role as the overall wife who delegated duties and responsibilities to the other wives. This meant that Kintu had more time to concentrate on issues of the nation.

By dividing roles to each of the wives, Nnakato ensured that there was interdependence within the family. No one was self-reliant and hence each wife depended on the other for what they could not produce. Each wife played a significant role which ensured that the whole family benefited from it. Those good at farming supplied food to the others, those good at craft supplied their wares to the other wives. In addition, those good at looking after the children were left to take care of the children while others concentrated on economic activities. This specialization at the family enhanced cohesiveness since they all needed each other. The different roles played by each wife in Kintu's household symbolizes the diversity in a nation. This is similar to how a nation is organized. Each tribe or community, which here I call a micro-nation, has something to offer to the others and hence the macro-nation is held together by need for each other. The socio-economic organization of a nation is such that some communities are good at food production, others deal with animal production while others deal with other economic activities.

By having his wives in many parts of the province, Kintu was keen to ensure his power and presence was felt all over even when he was not physically present. This is akin to the decentralization of power that is seen in modern day nation-states. Although the capital of Buddu province was in Kiyirika, Kintu was keen on ensuring his authority was felt in all other areas of the province. 'The families, especially in far-flung regions of the province were a reminder to the local populace of his presence'. (16). Kintu having many homes in the province shows how his role at the family space also extended to his role in the national space. While

visiting his wives in the various regions, Kintu would also be touring his province, thus, killing two birds using one stone.

At the family space, we see Nnakato being the head wife and exercising power over the other wives. In Kintu's home, each wife had power over her own household while Nnakato was their head who deliberated on the matters that affect the whole family and also advised Kintu on matters that related to Buddu province (which here I call nation). The homestead, therefore, became the space where women exercised their power. Tom Odhiambo posits that it is within the 'home environment where women, who are generally precluded from the political domain, have had their power bases for ages' (70) Nnakato deputized her husband both at the family level and informally at the national level. This portrays another aspect of power and authority in the family during precolonial Buganda. While women were not explicitly shown to have much power, we can see that they had immense power over their husbands even when their husbands were rulers.

“When Kintu was away on *kabaka's* duties, Nnakato visited the wives checking on the progress of the children and the state of the land they lived on. When the children were older, she rounded the age groups and brought them to Mayirika for instruction. She also garnered, informally, local moods and major incidences reporting back to Kintu. Nnakato made sure that the wives visited each other regularly and the children visited each other to meet their siblings (16)

While the power that Nnakato had was not formal, we can see that her role at the family also had an impact on the nation's affairs. She handled major issues of the province during her visits to the other wives. Her actions and decisions impacted the way Kintu governed Buddu.

Consequently, we can say that Kintu sought the advice and opinion of his wife Nnakato on matters of the nation. While Kintu was telling Baale the importance of knowing Ntongo before marrying her, we see his trust on Nnakato running affairs of the whole family.

What I am saying is that we are a very large family. Sometimes, what seems a private decision might have consequences beyond ourselves. For example, would Ntongo run an extensive home the way Nnakato does? (62).

From this excerpt, we see the role that Nnakato played in Kintu's homestead. The power she wielded had impact beyond the family space that she occupied. If Kintu's family had been managed poorly by Nnakato, this problem would have impacted the way Kintu governed Buddu province. By extension, the unity and affairs of the entire Buganda kingdom would also have been affected. We can, therefore, say that although women did not exercise explicit power and authority, they had a lot of impact on the actions that men undertook with regard to national matters.

A similar scenario of power and authority at family level is seen at Bwanika's family. Magda, Ruth's auntie, is married as second wife to Bwanika. Bwanika had three wives and each wife had a home and a farm far from the other. Each wife also had a unique economic activity. For instance, Magda 'had coffee and cotton shambas, the first wife reared cattle while the third wife lived on the poultry farm' (204). We can see the kind of activities in each home and how this ensures there is interdependence among the wives. Bwanika is the head of the family and his authority is unquestionable. Ruth says that Bwanika was treated with reverence whenever he visited. The atmosphere was tense due to his authority and fear that Magda and the children had for him. The first wife was always the head of the other wives. We see this in the way Bwanika

gives her more time than the rest. 'Bwanika spend two weeks with his first wife and a week each with Magda and the third wife in Ssemuto' (204). We can see the time allocation as a sign of authority that the first wife holds with respect to her position. This is akin to Nnakato, Kintu's first wife, who had authority over the other wives. When Bwanika visited Ruth after she gave birth, he came with the other two wives and the first wife sat in front on the passenger seat with Bwanika. This was a way of showing she was the head wife and that she was second in command. In Bwanika's family, children could stay in any of the homes irrespective of who their mother was. Ruth was surprised to see that some of the children in Magda's house resembled the other wives. This also echoes the time of Ppookino Kintu when the elder children were brought to Mayirika to stay with Nnakato and receive instructions. The set up in the family where children can stay in any home ensures children grow up knowing all their siblings and stepmothers. It cements their communion as a family. If family members are connected and play their roles within the family space as expected, there is high chance the family will be united and stable. Progress and unity within this family space as we see in those of Kintu and Bwanika will affect the affairs of the nation at large. This is because the family is the building blocks of the nation. If these blocks are not well knit, the entire nation will crumble.

The working relationship between Kintu and Nnakato can be compared to what we see in Margaret Ogola's *The River and the Source* between Akoko and her husband Chief Owuor Kembo. On the one hand, we see Owuor Kembo did not take another wife despite pressure from the elders and their marriage remained monogamous, on the other hand, in *Kintu*, Nnakato was able to convince Kintu to marry Babiryé. These two women in their own set up were able to influence the decisions of their husbands. Owuor Kembo being a chief always sought the advice and opinion his wife Akoko. Every evening, against custom, Owuor Kembo would go to

Akoko's hut to seek her advice which he always found 'sound' (27). Kintu and Owuor Kembo tap on the wisdom of their wives to manage their homes and seek advice on matters that affect the areas which they govern. In so doing, the men seem to acknowledge that good leadership always begins at the family level. The family being the nuclear of society has to work cohesively and progressively if the nation endeavors to build unity. Thus, we can say that 'despite the peripheral position that women occupy on the terrain of power and authority, they still exert considerable influence on men, either as mothers or wives. (Odhiambo 78). The political set up of a family and a nation cannot be discussed without appreciating the influence that women have. Whatever actions, decisions and opinions that are undertaken or made at the family space will reflect how the society will operate in general.

The Kintu family was intact and members lived harmoniously. However, this unity and coexistence was affected by Kintu's mistake which attracted a curse to his family and descendants. This mistake becomes a turning point to the Kintus, and the people of Buddu province. Having discussed how Kintu's household was run before the family disintegrated, I will now look at the events that led to this disintegration. This will show how an error at the family space can cause disorder both at the family and the national levels.

When Kalema died and Kintu did not inform Ntwire or his family about what had happened, the family narrative took a turn. Kintu keeps it to himself and refuses to tell Nnakato even when the latter could sense that something was amiss. Kintu was the head of the family and a Ppookino. He was a symbol of unity both at the family level and that of Buddu province. His presence and authority could not be challenged by his family. He was the center of command and authority thus we can say he was the pole that held the family together. If we take the family to be a model of a nation, anything that shakes the center will affect the stability of the house. If the

center pole falls, the house will definitely fall. What happens then when the house collapses? Makumbi seems to say, this fall of the center pole leads to destruction and disintegration. We see this in the symbolic use of the gourd that Kintu slapped off Kalema's jaws. The gourd breaks into pieces which scatter all over the place. These fragments symbolized how the family was later scattered.

This error by Kintu led to a series of misfortunes to the family before they finally disintegrated. Baale, Kintu's son, who was to be the heir to the post of Ppookino died on the morning of his wedding; hence he left no heir. Nnakato then committed suicide and Kintu disappeared to o' Lwera. The scene captured when the gourd was shattered into pieces emerges. Everything was shaken. For the gourd to literally work, its many pieces must be brought together. As long as the pieces are still scattered, read as people in a nation remaining scattered and still distancing themselves with the national narrative, the gourd will never be whole again. There must be a deliberate effort to bring the pieces of the gourd together in order to restore it to its former form. However, in restoring the gourd, it will not result in its former form but something close to it. In the same way, bringing a people who had been disintegrated and scattered for a long period together will not restore the family to its old form but rather bring back the communion that was there in the past.

Kintu, being the center that held the Kintus together was no more. This meant things both at the family and national spaces were not operating as usual. This scene resembles what is captured in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*. Obierika and Okonkwo were discussing the strange things that had affected their clan. Their culture had been adulterated by the missionaries and the people were leaving their ways and following the ways of Christianity brought by the missionaries. The center was facing a lot of pressure from the missionaries and Africans who

had deserted their culture. Obierika says ‘he has put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart’ (125). In the end, when the center could not hold anymore, it collapses and ‘things fall apart’. Similarly, the Kintus could not hold together as a family. Nnakato who was the head of the other wives and Kintu who was governor and patriarch had ‘collapsed’. The result was confusion and scattering of the entire family.

When the family members were scattered, the administration of Buddu province was adversely affected. This is because there was no apparent heir to the post of Ppookino since Baale who had been chosen by Kintu had died. The other sons could not agree on who to succeed their father. This shows the pace at which the family had started to disintegrate. ‘Nondo had attempted to organize meetings with Kintu’s children to choose the new Ppookino but the meeting tended to end in arguments and fights. Everyone voted for their mother’s son’ (90). Failure to elect an heir to Kintu’s seat meant that affairs of Buganda as a nation were derailed. Nobody would govern Buddu as a representative of the *Kabaka*. The events of Kintu’s family had affected Buganda as a nation. Buddu, Kintu’s area of jurisdiction, was the largest province in Buganda. Any threat to the functioning of this province could also threaten the nation’s unity.

Having looked at looked at the family spaces in Kintu’s household and the influence the exercise of power and authority had on the family and national spaces, I will now turn to the narrative of Kintu’s descendants, which forms part of the main family narrative. As I said earlier, the novel is an amalgam of five different books put together with each book being a standalone narrative. It looks like five different novellas which are linked together through a myth. This form used by the author brings out the independence of each family branch after family disintegration. It shows the extent to which the family members were scattered after the center pole fell. It also shows that even though the family members lived far from each other, the curse affected each of

them. This could be the reason why their stories merge in the last book titled 'Homecoming'. It foregrounds the need for Kintus to come together in order to defeat the curse. The brief life of Kamu Kintu is narrated in the prologue. At this point nothing about his family or relations is given. The only thing we get to know about his life is the woman he lives with, how the local councilors come for him, and how later he is killed by a mob at Bwaise market. After his death, the author keeps bringing back the story of Kamu in the beginning of each book except Book 1 which is about Kintu Kidda's story. The story of Kamu Kintu being given at the beginning of each story of the other main characters serves as a reminder of the family curse and the bond holding Kintu's descendants.

The stories of Kintu's descendants echo the disintegration and misfortunes that were brought about by the curse. Each narrative captures the agony of the Kintus. Suubi's story, for instance, is filled with pain and suffering. She lost her parents and twin sister at a young age and is forced to live with her auntie Kulata. The manifestations of the curse were apparent. She lost her memory and could not remember her past. We see this when Opolot tries to ask her about her family and she could not remember anything. Suubi's story shows the struggle that Kintu descendants faced generally as well as the struggle with identity that came as a result of her forgetting. Memory loss was one of the effects of the curse as captured in the myth. Suubi constructed her own story and imagined her parents were in London. She also associates herself with Kiyiga's family where she had worked as a house help. In her quest to belong and acquire an identity, she searched for her family and through Opolot, she found her auntie Kizza. The desire to belong and know her past shows how family spaces are important in influencing our sense of identity and belonging. The family spaces do not only give us a room for exercising power and authority, but they also give us the space to construct our own identity.

Another sub narrative in the family narrative is that of Isaac Newton Kintu. His childhood is filled with suffering. The story of Isaac in Book 4 of the novel brings about manifestations of the curse as contained in the myth. Isaac's childhood is peculiar. He becomes mute and still crawls like a baby for seven years then one day he speaks and walks at the same time. I call this peculiar because his life seemed to be controlled by some supernatural forces. He could speak and play with a snake. When his grandmother Ziraba asked him who he was speaking to he said that he was playing with his friend:

When did he start coming?

He is always been there?

Since when?

Always (261).

We get to know that this friend had appeared to him in many forms and Isaac always knew when the friend came. Thus, we can relate this to the life of Kintu Kidda when he died. The myth has it that when Kintu died he did not receive burial rites nor was he buried in a grave, hence his spirit was still trapped on earth. However, the myth also says since Kintu's spirit is 'still here', he always protects his descendants. Thus: we can forge a link between Kintu's spirit and the friend that always visited Isaac. Ziraba's neighbors associate the snake with family things. 'Why don't you find his roots. Take him to meet his people. Some clans have all sorts' (261). The peculiar things in Isaac's life are a living testimony of the family myth. When the neighbors urge Ziraba to search for the roots of Isaac's family, we see the importance of family in giving one an identity. For Isaac to define his future, he must know his roots. Knowing his ancestry enables him to have a family space in which to fit. Isaac's mother Nnamata shows this

importance when she decides to look for Isaac's kin when Isaac got married. 'When Isaac brought a pregnant woman to his house, Nnamata realized that whatever the circumstances of Mr. Kintu, Isaac needed to know his roots as he was starting a family' (294). In other words knowing his family should give him hope. He noticed how family members talked about their misfortunes with pride as if confirming their true identity as Kintu descendants. Finding his roots helped Isaac reconcile his past. He now has a larger family to play a role in. We see how Isaac was important in the family reunion as the elders appointed him to represent his father. Knowing his roots had given Isaac an identity and sense of belonging. He had also been given a responsibility in the clan set up as an elder though he was young.

The story of Misirayimu Kintu (Miisi) symbolizes how national affairs affect people at family level. Miisi's family was affected by political instability in Uganda after independence. Miisi was forced to stay in Europe even after he had completed his studies. Amin was killing the elites and the educated. This separation from his family and hard times occasioned by what was happening at the national space led to Miisi's children not continuing with their education. When Miisi returned to Uganda, his second wife had remarried, and his family was leading a poor life. We can see how even the social set up of a family is affected by national issues. Miisi lost his five children to the bush war in Uganda then his other five children died of disease which he calls "our new thing". On the eve of the Easter holidays during the family reunion, it is discovered that his only surviving son Kamu was dead. Miisi lost a lot of children and his family life was severely affected due to events that were dictating the national narrative even as we can see his daughter Kusi serving as a senior military officer in the army. She is the only child who joined the rebels and survived the war. Kusi's participation in family reunion is affected by her role in national matters. This shows how the role that people play at national level may

sometimes limit their involvement in family matters. Kusi does not attend the family reunion until the last day. Probably she would not have come if she had not discovered that Kamu had died and brought the news to her father who was at the reunion. Kusi's role at the national level symbolises the intersection between national and family spaces. Kusi was involved during the Bush war and later integrated into the army. Most of her life she has been involved at the national level doing her duties as demanded by her position. Kusi puts more time and effort to her role in contributing to the national space. I read Kusi's story as a representation of the people whose role at the national space sometimes pushes them to ignore and/or defer their roles in the family space. Through Kusi, we see that when family and national duties intersect, those of the nation supersede those of the family should they come into conflict. The national role that individuals are given always comes first before the family role. This is because any failure at the national space has more impact than the one at the family space.

Another important sub narrative in the family history is that of Kanani Kintu. Kanani represents a section of people in a nation who deliberately ignore the importance of national politics. His story is given from a restrictive perspective. Kanani chose to limit what his children should learn about the family myth and curse. In a way he censored what his children learned about the politics of Uganda. Using Genette's idea of internal focalization, we see that in Kanani's sub narrative, the narrator is equal to the character. Except when we encounter Bwanika who later tells Ruth about their family oral history and the curse, the narrative is restricted to the world view of Kanani. He represents a class of people who do not identify with the narrative of the nation both at the micro and macro levels. We see Kanani does not care about the family oral history neither does he care about the politics of Uganda before and after independence. While all other members of the Kintu descendants narrated their family oral history to their children,

Kanani did not. He only cared about religion and ignored everything else as not being worth worrying about. He believed that his faith in Christianity would deliver his family from Ntwire's curse. Kanani's story in the family main narrative represents the divergent views that a section of people in a nation hold pertaining to what most people believe in. It implies that even within a main narrative, there is always variance in terms of the people who subscribe to it. Even those who seem to question this narrative like Kanani are always skeptical. We see Kanani still insisting that his children should not be slapped on the head.

In Kanani, we see a conflicted person who wants to deny his past but at the same time afraid of it. Kanani's story does not capture the myth except in passing. In a nation, some people may not believe in the events that give birth to the narrative of the nation. They will seek different opinions in order to counter it. However, as we see when Kanani's two children commit incest and have a son Paolo, the other family members relate it with the curse. Kanani is also conflicted and starts to doubt if his Christianity had overcome the curse. The coincidence that Paolo is named Kalema and her mother Ruth has the twin name Nnakato brings back the story of Nnakato, Kintu's wife and the Tutsi lad Kalemanzira (Kalema). The name Kalema and Nnakato become a rebirth of the past - a memory trigger of Ntwire's son Kalema and Kintu's wife Nnakato. Kanani's role in the family history, therefore, serves as a reminder that a nation cannot deny its past. However, much it has developed in terms of socio-economic and political set up, a nation must have pride in her past and narrate it to the current generation. The current generation has to know their past for them to appreciate the actions being taken to correct past mistakes. Kanani failed, to appreciate his role as an elder within the family space. He failed to bring up his children according to the custom of Ganda. In the end, he was not able to hold his

family as the center pole. When we ignore the role that family spaces play as they intersect with national spaces, we get exposed and cannot control even the basic unit of the nation- the family.

Collectively, these individual narratives of the family members form the main narrative of the novel. This is a series of narratives that are linked together by a common ancestor and share similar or related experiences. These narratives converge in the last Book of the novel under the title “Homecoming”. The main narrative is anchored on the Kintu myth. We see a people who have exploited their family myth as a way of legitimizing their narrative of originality. Consequently, a family narrative is born. This narrative is narrated over many generations in an attempt to create a nation. This nation is held by griefs and misfortunes brought about by a curse. Their need to gather in a ritual of revival and break the curse is evident in the family reunion. The main narrative in the novel provides an umbrella that holds the other narratives. These are the narratives that I call margin narratives.

The death of Kalema, Ntwire’s son, was unintended. However, the subsequent events that were entirely Kintu’s decision became a blunder. His rush decision that killed Kalema and his refusal to seek advice or announce the death of Kalema became too costly for the family and the nation. By making a solo decision on matters that had impact on a wider scale across many generations, Kintu’s own words caught up with him that ‘what seems a private decision might have consequences beyond ourselves’ (62).

Margin Narratives and National Spaces

Margin narratives are the stories that are not necessarily about Kintu family but are narrated alongside the family oral history and the stories of individual characters. These narratives are dependent on the main narrative and become apparent as we read the family narrative. In the

novel, we have the story of Buganda kingdom which runs alongside the stories of the house of Kintu. In addition, we get the story of Uganda from the colonial period through independence to the current Uganda of 2004. To explore the margin narratives and national spaces, I look at the story of Buganda and the royalty. I will also look at the period after independence and how struggle for power at the national level affects the way families live and operate.

The narrative of Buganda and Uganda has been married to the Kintu myth. In the novel, Kintu's descendants have over time narrated the story of Buganda and Uganda in the myth as if they were one or inseparable. This marriage of the Buganda oral history to the oral history of the Kintus as captured in the myth shows how family spaces and national spaces always intersect with each other. We see this when Suubi remembers how her grandmother used to narrate her family's history: "In the beginning Buganda was serene. Our *ba kabaka* ruled the kingdom with wisdom.... we had everything. Rivers, lakes, mountains, animals, good climate, fertile land. Everything (98). As we read the story of Kintu, we also learn about Buganda. The oral history of Buganda has been mythologized in the Kintu myth. The author has appropriated the Kintu myth and expanded its horizon to include both Buganda and Uganda. Isidore Okpewo asserts that for African writers to preserve the mythic traditions of their people as a homage to the roots of their creative genius, loyalty to tradition is often accompanied by the urge to lend to a larger cultural appeal in tune with contemporary taste (174). Over time, the myth has undergone changes and incorporated the names of some *Kabakas* and what they are remembered for.

The story of Buganda kingdom is punctuated by moments of grief and happiness. Through the Kintu story and myth, we get to see the picture of the kingdom from the eyes of Kintu. This picture reveals the inadequacies in the royalty and the negative effects that come with greed for

power. The family spaces within the royal family will be regarded as part of national spaces. The Buganda royalty captures an aspect of family spaces that operate within the nation's peak. These spaces translate to national spaces by virtue of the position of the royal family and power in the kingdom. The Kabaka in Buganda kingdom was a symbol of power and authority. However, at the royal family level, there were other faces behind the scenes which wielded power and authority. These are the king mothers and princess. While they could not hold the position of kabaka, their behind-the-scenes operations determined who became the kabaka and who became the wife of the kabaka.

King mothers (*Namasole*) had a lot of influence in the Buganda royalty. In the novel, king mothers had immense power over the king and this power always affected the affairs of the kingdom. *Kabaka's* children belonged to 'their mother's clan' (6). This ensured that the leadership was distributed among many clans in Buganda. This 'custom bestowed immense power to the king mother'. A king mother would want to retain this power her entire life time. Thus, they always encouraged brothers to overthrow each other. This is because, if a younger brother took power from the elder brother, the king mother would still remain the *Namasole*. While Kintu is reflecting about *Kabaka* Kyabaggu who had just overthrown Namugala, the hand of their mother Nnabulya was evident. King mothers wanted the *kabakaship* to remain with their clan so they encouraged 'brothers to inherit the throne' (6). This inheriting is not as peaceful as it may sound. It involves a brother killing their king brother so that they take over power. We see this in the way that the three sons of Nnabulya succeeded each other. The elder son Mwanga deposed Mawanda. Then later Mwanga was overthrown and killed by Namugala. Nnabulya also planned for Kyabaggu to overthrow his brother Namugala. By planning for Kyabaggu to be on the throne, Nnabulya had a 'third chance to be king mother' (7) All these power wrangles led

to the death of the incumbent *kabakas*. To live as king mother for a long time, Nnabulya always planned for the brothers to succeed each other.

In addition, the king mother always had influence on who became the wife of the *kabaka*. As seen in Nnabulya, she chose weak women who would not threaten her position as the *Namasole*. As Kintu notes, Nnabulya did not allow Nnanteza to be the wife because she felt that her authority as king mother would be threatened. Nnanteza tells Kintu that she ‘didn’t even get a royal viewing’. This means Kyabaggu did not even see her since she did not go beyond the king mother because Nnabulya ‘decides who goes into his presence’ (40). Thus, at the royalty level, the power that women, especially the king mother, exercised affected who became the *kabaka*. By extension, it affected the politics of the kingdom and the unity of people in the kingdom.

The power and authority of women within the family and national spaces was also wielded by princess in Buganda. During the reign of *Kabaka* Kagulu, he killed many people including his half-brother Musanje. Nnassolo, a princess, fled the kingdom with her other brothers and Musanje’s sons. Nnassolo was regarded as a ‘wrathful princess’ and the kingdom stood on its toes since no one knew where she had fled to. Nnassolo returned to the kingdom to seek revenge for her brother. ‘Nnassolo was back rumbling like Kiyira, the Nile. Kagulu fled and Nnassolo pursued him’ (5). We can see the power and influence that Nnassolo had. Kagulu being a king ran away from the palace in fear of Nnassolo. It sounds weird that a sitting king could run away from his office in fear of a princess. But again, we can see the implicit power that women wield at the family set up which also dictates the affairs of the nation. Though this fight for power within the royal family destabilizes the way things are, it underlines how power and authority operates. Nnassolo exhibits this power in the way she sends shivers down the spine of *Kabaka* Kagulu:

Kagulu hid in the ditches and caves in Buto region. When he was captured, Kagulu who had put masses to the spear, would not face his own death like a man. Mercifully, Nnassolo had him drowned. Nnassolo then installed the softly-softly older brother Kikulwe as kabaka' (6).

Nnassolo did not only have Kagulu killed, she also installed a king to the throne. This brings out the immense power that princess and by extension, women had in the royalty. From deciding who should become *kabaka* to who should become the wife of the *kabaka*. This had impact on the royal family and on the affairs of the nation.

The way members of the royalty exercise power and authority affect their unity as a family. They tend to be skeptical of each other because anyone in power can be overthrown anytime. If there is no peace and unity within the family, the general affairs of the kingdom are also affected. Members of the royal family always lived in fear and this affected the general mood of the nation:

'Kings and princes lived the shortest lives. Any prince could stake claim to the throne at any time. The victor always massacred his siblings and cousins. Clever women did not declare their sons as princes. Cleverer women watched the throne and alerted their sons when it was ripe for seizure' (5)

This fear became true for Kyabaggu when his sons Jjunju and Ssemakokiro, the children that he had with Nnanteza, conspired and killed him. Thus, we can see the fears that Nnabulya had over Nnanteza. She did not want her to be Kyabaggu's wife because she knew Nnanteza was a tough woman. Through her sons, Nnanteza became king mother her entire life because Ssemakokiro took the throne from his brother and killed him. In the midst of all this power wrangles, women

especially king mothers and princess have immense power on who takes over the throne. They determine the direction that power, and authority takes. Some of these power and authority that they hold is not explicit, for behind the scenes, they are like the directors in a movie who decide who will be in the cast and what role they play.

There were series upon series of assassinations among princes as they struggled to take over power. What this points to is that the problem of political instability is not something new in Uganda. Though this is specific to Buganda kingdom, it could paint a picture of what happened in other kingdoms in Uganda. The idea of political assassinations, wars, and power struggles is not something brought by colonialism. We read that Kabaka Kagulu ‘had slaughtered more subjects than goats.’ (5). The act of killing opponents and citizens as a way of silencing them that we see in most countries today is not a new thing. That Africans can always trace the troubles of their nation, the genesis of the nation’s griefs to something beyond colonialism –the culture and heritage that are contained in our myths of originality. I read the narrative of Buganda as a representation of the individual stories of other kingdoms and tribes in Uganda. These kingdoms and tribes had and pursued their own sense of nation. Each of them viewed themselves as a nation. In essence, these communities were nations. Their stories, though somehow different and even opposing in many instances, merged together because of the experience that subjects in each micro-nation had.

After independence, the national space shifted from the narrative of Buganda to that of Uganda. Uganda as a nation which was initially a European creation became a reality. As Benedict Anderson calls imagined political community, the people in the new nation had to imagine themselves as one and then work towards developing a common will. The physical presentation of Uganda as a nation needed the human spirit for it to be complete. This captures what Ernest

Renan refers to as “the desire to live together, the will to perpetuate the heritage” (19). I argue that for the people to coexist as a nation, the will to unite is a necessary ingredient. The many micro-nations in the new nation had to cultivate this will in order to become a macro-nation. The struggle for power and political instability became a phenomenon of a larger unit that went beyond Buganda to include many tribes in Uganda. The fusion of different cultures and different political formations was occasioned by similar or related experiences of the micro-nations. The limits of the ‘other’ that the communities in Uganda used to view their neighbors were turned from the ‘boundaries outside’ to the ‘finitude within’ hence the problem of difference in culture was no longer a threat. It became ‘the otherness of the people as one’ (Bhabha, 215). This broadening of the national space meant that many narratives of other tribes were plunged into political wrangles as a narrative of a young nation in the making developed. The climax of the shifting national space was when Kabaka Mutesa II was overthrown by Obote. The fact that Kabaka Mutesa II was the king of the Ganda and the president of the new nation is significant in showing the extent to which the space literally shifted from the focus of Buganda to Uganda. Symbolically, the idea of a new nation become more apparent not just to the Gandas but also the other tribes in Uganda.

The power wrangles after independence affected the stability of the nation and also that of the families. Kaleebu tells Miisi how they suffered during Obote’s reign. We see how the peasants suffered. “Obote avoided the educated because you people scream so loud that they hear you overseas” (324) instead he terrorized the peasants and there were no embargoes. Amin’s strategy was different because he attacked and killed the educated. Peasants were not much affected as Kaleebu says “majority of Ugandans did not feel Amin harshly as you did. We peasants apart from lack of soap, sugar, salt and those little luxuries that we could no longer afford, Amin kept

away from us” (323). The picture that we get from both Obote’s and Amin’s reigns shows how the affairs at the national space had affected peasants and families of the educated and elite in independent Uganda. The elites were eliminated by Amin irrespective of their tribes. We get this picture when Suubi was living with her aunt Kulata. The land lady narrated how people disappeared in the 1970s. “Her own husband had disappeared in 1977. Sometimes she would point at the incomplete houses naming their owners and the dates that they disappeared and she would cry” (111). These scenes of suffering and killings continued to the period of the bush war in the 1980s.

The political instability affected families and created fear among people. While Miisi is narrating about the bush war, we see the effects of it on the family level. “When a whole family was killed in the night, villagers started to sleep in the bush at night” (356). This created fear among people. What started as power wrangles at the national spaces had trickled down to the grassroots and now affected people in the family space. The narrative of Uganda as a nation captures this period of instability and the post Bush War period. Together with the narrative of Buganda and those of other tribes in Uganda, a grand national narrative that operated at the national space was created. This creation involves stories and events that run independently and intersected at some point due to undergoing similar experiences.

As I argued earlier, the narrative of Uganda did not start with colonialism. In fact, from Buganda and other micro-nations came a series of different but related experiences that with interaction through education, people migrating to the capital led to a melting pot of various narratives. This melting led to the birth of Uganda as a country then later a nation. This means that before independence, the Ganda and other ‘nations’ in Uganda felt that the course of their narratives

was being interfered with by colonialism. First, the sense of Uganda was not liked by the Gandas and the other tribes.

Uganda as a nation put together the memories of all her tribes and started to add on its archive the events prior to and immediately after independence. We can therefore see the power struggle by Obote, Idi Amin, and the bush war as a reincarnation of what used to happen in Buganda kingdom during the pre-colonial period. The misfortunes and sufferings of Ugandans amidst the power struggles become the basis for their unity as a people. This serves to remind Ugandans of the lives lost and thus become an important memory in the development of Uganda's narrative as a nation. As Kintu descendants remember the sufferings brought by the curse, Ugandans ought to remember the lives lost in post independent wars.

Makumbi, therefore, seems to say that we need to look beyond colonialism in order to trace the journey of a nation. We need to interrogate our past if indeed we want to change our narrative. We cannot change this narrative if we do not have a point of reference. Our past provides us with a point of reference from where we can locate our target and go ahead to prescribe a plan of getting there as a nation. We cannot wait and blame everything on colonialism when our own past is marked by scenes of massacres of people, greed for power, and political instability.

As the main narrative and the margin narrative intersect to create a national narrative, the Kintu as a family are still faced with the threats of Ntwire's curse. On the other hand, Uganda as a nation still faces her own threats of political instability and rebels such as Kony in the north. The Kintus at their micro-nation level strive to undo a family curse through a ritual as they gather in the clan ancestral land in Buddu. Uganda is also striving to eliminate a threat to its unity. We see Miisi's daughter, Kusi also known as general Salamander in the Ugandan Army is the one tasked

with eliminating the Kony threat in the north of the country. For Kintus to come together in the family reunion, their family myths which detail their suffering as a people is instrumental in cementing the sense of their communion and sense of belonging. Uganda as a nation should also remember the experience of various micro-nations before independence and the suffering of her people during the period of political instability in order to cement their sense of communion as a people.

Makumbi presents myth as a genre that can be exploited by both male and female novel writers to fictionalize the history of a nation. She borrows from Ganda myths to tell the history of the Kintu descendants. In the oral history of Kintus that contains the myth, we see the powerful and influential women who had impact on national matters. Makumbi suggests that within the family and national spaces, women can always make decisions that affect the affairs of the nation. The novel seems to say women should not limit themselves and should always venture beyond what is considered male dominated. For instance, we see that in the Buganda royalty, Makumbi presents the *Namasole* (king mothers) who were very powerful and decided who became king or wife of the king. We also see that princess Nnassolo was a very powerful woman who had *Kabaka* Kagulu killed after which she installed a king of her choice. Nnakato was also influential in Kintu's household. She always helped Kintu in the affairs of the family and those of Buganda kingdom. The current residents of Kiyirika have Nnakato myth from which many of their taboos are derived, including the name of a prominent hill, Nnakato's Hill.

Makumbi uses this to advance the course of women. She seems to say that women play important roles within the nation and their actions can and are always remembered and mythologized like the myth of Nnakato. Through Kusi, we see that women play big roles in the narrative of the nation. Kusi being an Army General is task with eliminating the threat of Kony

in northern Uganda. Myth, therefore, becomes a space that women use to create stories about female characters such as Kusi and princes Nnassolo who are brave and determined to challenge the dominant narratives within a nation.

CONCLUSION

In this study, I examine *Kintu* as a novel that attempts to create the narrative of a people using myths imaginatively. The appeal to their family myth and oral history by Kintus and their desire to come together as a clan using imagined shared history is significant in exploring the narrative of nation formation. I look at how myth has been used to narrate a nation in the novel and how family spaces intersect with national spaces.

The study makes the assumption that the novel places myth at the center of nation narration. *Kintu* myth is a representation of clan myth and oral history which translates to community myth and history and by extension national myths and history. As the narrative of the Kintus and their history move from the family to that of Buganda and later Uganda, family and national spaces intersect. These two spaces affect each other both ways. They complement and supplement each other as the narrative of a people gradually develops.

The study finds that *Kintu* myth has been used to show how societies rely on myths in creating national narratives. Myth becomes a memory reservoir. It provides cultural memory to the Kintus. As the Kintus seeks to unite and come together as a nation, their myth and oral history become necessary to create a shared past. The important ingredient here is a shared past. Whether that shared past is real or imagined, it plays the same role: that of making people identify with a narrative and trigger their will to gather together as a people.

Myth and oral history are presented as both the existing and legitimate evidence of a peoples' past successes and failures. In *Kintu*, Makumbi presents characters who are well educated in western world but who still hold on to and regard their family myths as memory and reflection of their past. Makumbi thus challenges the notion that history and the sense of nation narration was

influenced by colonialism. The novel places Africa's precolonial past as an important point in the reconstruction and creation of national narratives and the formation of nations. The problems that the characters in *Kintu* face are associated with and can be traced to the curse that Ntwire put on Kintu's family. Similarly, the scenes of war, conquest, political assassinations, and brutality to instill fear in Buganda kingdom is something that was there before colonialism. It is these events that have contributed to the history and memory of a people who have now gone back in history to restore what was *lost*. Colonialism in *Kintu* is, therefore, presented as a marginal event which did not or could not alter the course of this narrative of a people whose shared past reveals their glory and mistakes that bring them together.

The novel presents the Buganda/Uganda nation as an entity which has been on a continuous line of development along a path which can be traced to the past. This past has nothing to do with what colonialism brought. The novel attempts to break away from the common forms of writing among African post-colonial writers who see and/or present colonialism as a major event in the formation of nations and nation-states in Africa. On the one hand, early writers like Chinua Achebe, and Ngugi wa Thiongo wrote mainly to engage with experiences of imperialism and subsequent governments after independence. These writers wrote with an imagined nation of people in which colonialism is at the center of the events that lead to their narrations. On the other hand, Makumbi presents the narrative of a people that is independent of colonialism. She seems to suggest that colonialism happened but this is not the only factor that forms and radiates the path of a nation. The Kintus, Ganda, and Ugandans have their own past that requires proper retelling. Creative imagination of the past has therefore been used to enable a people to relive their past, see the mistakes and glory of their ancestors and by extension give them a pivot from which to forge a shared memory.

Makumbi has imaginatively presented the narrative of Uganda as a nation by alluding to myth. From the novel, we can trace the journey of Uganda as a nation from its micro level. We can see how the Kintu descendants and Ganda have relived their past. We can see the celebration of cultural heritage and history to bring people together. This cultural heritage forms part of the memory of Uganda as a nation. They use this as part of their markers of national identity. Through the ritual of revival that calls for cleansing of Kintu descendants, Makumbi seems to say for Uganda to move forward as a people with a shared past they should accept the mistakes done by her people in the past. The ritual is a symbolic rebirth of a new nation- a new Uganda. Just like the Kintus, the novel seems to suggest that Uganda as a nation have a better future if it can accept her history of political instability and bring all their national afflictions in order to break away from the curse of bad politics and leadership that led to suffering of her people.

When I talk of national narrative, I imply that various narratives intersect to form a grand national narrative. This is not a linear, unitary narrative. It is actually many autonomous stories with similar or shared experiences that when put together always compliment and supplement each other to form one narrative.

The many distinct memories held by different communities/tribes within a country (micro-nations within a macro-nation) does not imply disunity. The difference is a reflection of different journeys that gave these communities similar or related experiences. With these heterogeneous narratives and journeys, the result is a sense of shared experiences in terms of sufferings, glories, and mistakes. Shared memory and experiences among a people is important in narratives of nation formation. It helps in creation of a narrative that people, present and future, can identify with.

In the novel, the creation and narration of Uganda's history as a nation is a composition of diverse memories from many tribes. To talk of difference in memory is not to say that the different tribes/micro-nations do not share a common past. Difference in memory held by a people in a nation is cemented by similarity in experiences. We realize the homogeneity of a national narrative in its heterogeneity.

Having discussed how myths are relevant in nation narration and legitimizing national narratives, I think there is need to study how appeal to cultural memory can be utilized to create narratives that advance cohesion and national unity. Even in a country with diverse rich cultures, there is need to blend these cultures through domestication of each unique culture and bring it into the national narrative.

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