



Representation of Society, Home and the Self: An Intertextual Inquest into Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Weep Not, Child* and *Dreams in a Time of War*

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Article Information

Submitted: 10th August 2019

Accepted: 19th October 2019

Published: 22nd October 2019

Conflict of Interest: No conflict of interest was reported by the authors

Funding: None

Additional information is available at the end of the article



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ISSN 2523-0948 (Online)

ISSN 2520-4009 (Print)

Abstract

Ngugi wa Thiong'o's autobiography, *Dreams in a Time of War*, seem to be, body-and-soul, a direct replica of his fiction, *Weep Not, Child*. The various thematic and episodic underpinnings of the two narratives appear to confirm this. It is against this background that this paper seeks to analyse intertextuality based on three thematic areas in terms of representation of society, home, and the self in the two narratives. The paper argues that the two narratives are intertextually linked and that *Weep Not, Child* is a precursor to *Dreams in a Time of War*.

Keywords: *autobiography, fiction, home, intertextuality, self, society*



NAIROBI JOURNAL

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Introduction

Ngugi wa Thiong'o's fiction, *Weep Not, Child* and autobiography, *Dream in a Time of War* are intertextually linked. Many scholars on intertextuality have made valuable contributions to the concept and agree that the concept emanates from the early to mid 20th century. Alfaro (1996) and Haberer (2007), agree that T.S. Eliot is the ancestor of the original idea of intertextuality. They observe that although Eliot does not use the word 'intertextuality' in his essay, "Tradition and the Individual Talent," his argument that, "No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone" and that every new poet's significance and appreciation "is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists" (Eliot, 1919:15) is as much as to say, there is always an intertextual link between a new text and an existing one.

Available literature indicates that Kristeva was the first to use the word 'intertextuality' although "this concept was not created *ex nihilo* out of" her "fertile brain" (Haberer, 2007: 56). After Kristeva, the term 'intertextuality' has been used by various scholars in various ways in reading and understanding a text. For example, Allen argues that, "works of literature" are constructed "from systems, codes and traditions" instituted by preceding literary works; so, identifying the correlation in "texts, whether...literary or non-literary" renders the text(s) "as lacking in any kind of independent meaning" (Allen, 2000: 1).

Haberer argues that there is not a single established mainstream definition of intertextuality (Haberer: 57). Allen agrees with Haberer and further posits that "poststructuralist critics employ the term intertextuality to disrupt notions of meaning, whilst structuralist critics employ the same term to locate and even fix literary meaning" (Allen: 4). This is a confirmation enough that intertextuality is a flexible concept.

Gerard Genette is one of the theorists who employs the structuralist approach to intertextuality. He endorses the fact that texts can be "definite, stable and incontrovertible" (qtd in Allen, 2000:4). To a structuralist like Genette, the definition of intertextuality needs to be succinct in order to help critics and readers understand it. This is what informs his next step to further develop the idea of 'Transtextuality' in his *Palimpsestes* (1982). By Transtextuality, he means everything that is found in a text; be it obvious or concealed, that links one text to others. He thus proposes five subcategories of transtextuality namely: Intertextuality, Paratextuality, Metatextuality, Architextuality and Hypertextuality.

Mirenayat & Soofastaei (2015) posit that Genette's Intertextuality comprises quotations, plagiarism, and allusion. They further observe that, "Genette divides intertextuality into three categories as implicit or explicit; covert or overt; hidden or open" (Mirenayat & Soofastaei, 2015: 534). For them, the explicit intertextuality expresses an obvious presence of a new text in the precursor text. The new text's

author does not aim to hide his/her text's echo of the precursor; hence the presence of the precursor text can easily be seen in it.

If we agree that T.S. Eliot is the ancestor of intertextuality, then it is appropriate we agree with his averment that, “If we approach a poet...we shall often find that...the most individual parts of his work may be those in which the dead poets, his ancestors, assert their immortality vigorously” (Eliot, 1919: 14). This means that a new work by an author would certainly have a connection with older text(s). This confirms Mirenyat & Soofastaei observation of Genette as stated above. Intertextuality is thus a useful instrument for critical discourse on autobiographies and fictions since, as Allen argues, “texts, whether they be literary or non-literary, are viewed by modern theorists as lacking in any kind of independent meaning. They are what theorists now call intertextual” (Allen, 2000:1).

Following from above, it is obvious that the various strands of the concept of intertextuality, in my view, means putting two or more texts side by side and looking at what is common in them. This paper therefore looks at how Ngugi wa Thiong'o's autobiography, *Dreams in a Time of War* has affiliation with his fiction, *Weep not, Child*, as far as three thematic areas of representation of society, home and the self are concerned, and argues that there exists intertextual links between the two texts. Since *Weep not, Child* was written and published earlier in 1964, and *Dreams in a Time of War* 2010, the forty-six years between the two texts will provide the platform to argue that *Weep Not, Child* is a precursor to *Dreams in a Time of War*, and that the latter explicitly and vigorously echoes the former.

Various studies have been carried out on fiction and autobiography all over the world. In recent times literary critics and scholars in Africa have also shown great interest in critiquing fiction and autobiography. Unfortunately, one is yet to encounter a scholarly discourse where intertextuality, as a concept, is applied to critique African fiction and autobiography at the same level. It is against this backdrop that this paper seeks to establish a new dimension of scholarly discourse on the two genres by drawing the intertextual relationship between fiction and autobiography.

Oswald Ducrot and Jean-Marie Scaeffler argue that, “a literary work can be understood on different levels, so its generic identity is always relative to the level(s) that one considers as relevant” (qtd. in Shands et al: 9). Close reading is therefore preferred as a methodology to unearth the intertextual links between the various issues addressed by Ngugi in the two narratives.

Representation of Society in *Weep Not, Child* and *Dreams in a Time of War*

The first major noticeable intertextual link between Ngugi's fiction, *Weep Not, Child*, and autobiography, *Dreams in a Time of War* is how the Kenyan society is represented in the two narratives. Three racial groups, namely the Europeans, the Indians and the Black Africans represent the Kenyan society in the fictional world of *Weep Not, Child*

and in the factual/autobiographical world of *Dreams in a Time of War*. In the worlds of both narratives, the Europeans are the settlers, the colonialist, and the subjugators. Accordingly, two groups of Europeans are represented in both *Weep Not, Child* and *Dreams in a Time of War*. The colonialists form the Kenyan government under the auspices of the Queen of England hence constituting the upper class. They are feared and respected by the other racial communities in Kenya.

...the Indians feared Europeans and if you went to buy in a shop and a white man found you, the Indian would stop selling to you and, trembling all over would begin to serve him... (*Weep*: 7).

In *Weep Not, Child*, Mr Howlands represents the European settlers and subjugators who see black men as “mere savages” (*Weep*: 77). In *Dreams in a Time of War* the likes of Mr Doran, a European inspector of schools (*Dreams*: 168), represents the European authority in Kenya. Mr Doran sees to the strict compliance with rules and regulations as spelt out by the colonial administration for schools in Kenya. The fictive Mr Howlands in *Weep Not, Child* and the factual Mr Doran in *Dreams in a Time of War* are English, who represent the settler community and authority in the Kenyan society.

The subjugated European community represented in the fictional world of *Weep Not, Child* and the factual world of *Dreams in a Time of War* is the Italian Prisoners of War. In the fictional world, Ngugi presents how the Italian prisoners construct the Kenyan roads under duress and supervision of their British masters.

Who made the roads? Rumour had it that it came with the white men and some said that it was rebuilt by the Italian prisoners during the big war that was fought far away from here (*Weep*: 5).

In the factual world we see a vibrant and a meticulous illustration of how the conquered Italian prisoners constructed the Kenyan roads through the recollection of the narrator.

We saw white men making a road, white men who were not supervising the blacks but were actually breaking the stones themselves... We nicknamed them Bono: I would learn that they were Italian prisoners of war taken between May and November 1941 when the Italian surrendered at Amba Alage and Gondar... the prisoners were imported labour charged with building the road from Nairobi to the interior... The prisoners became a regular sight in our village and every house had an Italian tale to tell (*Dreams*: 39 – 40).

The plight of the Italian prisoners emanates from a historical fact of the Second World War as represented in the extract above. The suppression of one European

group by the other portrays the fact that there is serious conflict among Europeans. This is what triggers a rhetorical question and a subsequent reflection from the innocent narrator in *Weep Not, Child*.

Why should the white men have fought? Aaa! You could never tell what these people would do. In spite of the fact that they are all whites, they killed one another with poison, fire and big bombs that destroyed the land. They had even called the people to help in killing one another. You could not really understand because although they said they fought Hitler, Hitler was a white man (*Weep*: 6).

The narrator, Ngugi, in the extract above receives an answer from the more reflective Ngugi in *Dreams in a Time of War* through Ngandi's narration that:

The British had done it in Ireland in 1939. And in Malaya in 1948...Adolf Hitler had done it in Germany in 1933. And what had followed? War. Concentration camps (*Dreams*: 155).

But roads are not the only marks the Italians leave behind in both *Weep Not, Child* and *Dreams in a Time of War*. They as well leave an amazing mark behind: children. In the fictional world of *Weep Not, Child*:

The Italian prisoners who built the long tarmac road had left a name for themselves because some went about with black women and the black women had children. Only the children by black mothers and Italian prisoners who were also white men were not really 'white' in the usual sense. They were ugly and some grew up to have small wounds all over the body and especially around the mouth (*Weep*: 5 – 6).

In the factual world of *Dreams in a Time of War*, we see similar reference to Italian prisoners going about with black women and having babies with them. These babies are later abandoned to their fate as seen in *Weep Not, Child*.

But the Bonos left their sociological mark in broken families and fatherless brown babies born in several of the villages they had visited (*Dreams*: 41 – 42).

The next racial group represented in both *Weep Not, Child* and *Dreams in a Time of War* is the Indian community. The Indian is represented as the middle class, the business and entrepreneurial community in Kenya. They are seen as very rich since they own most of the businesses in Kenya. The native Kenyans always conjecture if the Indian is also a white man or not. This is because the Indian's colour and culture seem to be meaningless and confusing as far as the opinion of the native Kenyan is concerned.

You did not know what to call the Indian. Was he also a white man? Did he too come from England? Some people who had been to Burma said that Indians were poor in their country and were too ruled by white men (*Weep*: 8) ...You could never like the Indian because their customs were strange and funny in a bad way. But their shops were big and well-stocked with things. The Indian shops were many. The Indian traders are said to be very rich (*Weep*: 7)

Thus the Kenyan-Indians are a very close society.

The Indian community kept to itself, connected to Africans and whites only through its shops. In the front was the Indian merchant. Otherwise family life was in the backyard. The only African people who had glimpses of the life of an Indian family were cleaners and sweepers, who said that Indians were many nationalities, religions and languages. (*Dreams*: 56).

The Indians, like the white men, employ black Kenyans in their shops and treat them derogatorily. "They too employed some black boys whom they treated as nothing" (*Weep*: 7).

One significant thing about the Indian is that they revere their independence icon, Ghandhi, very much. In both *Weep Not, Child* and *Dreams in a Time of War*, the story is told of how in each Indian shop the picture of Gandhi is hanged conspicuously.

The native Kenyans are the most populous community in the worlds of *Weep Not, Child* and *Dreams in a Time of War*. They are original owners of all the land in Kenya and they hold a very strong kinship to their god-given land. Unfortunately, they are the most subjugated and the most abused community in the two worlds of the narratives. They have lost all their lands and their rights to the white settlers. Land, which the native Kenyan regards as blood, is therefore the root of the major conflict in the fictional and factual worlds of the two narratives. The native Kenyans are also peasant farmers. Some of them as well own shops just like the Indians.

Accordingly, three varied groups representing different strata of society are embodied in the fictional and factual worlds of Ngugi wa Thiong'o's fiction, *Weep Not, Child* and autobiography, *Dreams in a Time of War*. It is around these groups that the stories in the two narratives are woven to unfold the echoes of the developing issues.

Representation of Home in *Weep Not, Child* and *Dreams in a Time of War*

Another intertextual link in the two narratives is representation of home. Home is represented in various perspectives in the two narratives. Notable among these perspectives is the vivid description of physical landscape of the home as the eye can see.

Another perspective of home is mirrored through the lenses of the family as a unit. Looking at the physical representation of home, it is obvious that similar structural

features and picturesque spatial locations of the protagonists' house in the fiction, *Weep Not, Child* and in the autobiography *Dreams in a Time of War* are epitomized. In *Weep Not, Child*, we see the artistic and fictional representation of home thus:

A fairly large 'hill' stood outside Ngotho's household. Years of accumulating rubbish had brought this into being. If you stood there in the day time, you could more or less see the whole of the land of Jacobo (*Weep*: 40).

Similarly, in *Dreams in a Time of War*, we see a detailed factual description of the home emulating same in *Weep Not, Child*.

My earliest recollection of home was a large courtyard, five huts forming a semicircle. One of these was my father's, where goats also slept at night. It was the main hut not because of its size but because it was set apart equidistant from the other four... Women collected the cow dung and goats' droppings and deposited them at the dump site by the main entrance to the yard. Over the years the dump site had grown into a hill covered by a green stinging nettles. The hill was so huge and it seemed to me a wonder that grown-ups were able to climb up and down it with so much ease (*Dreams*: 9 – 10).

From the above it is obvious that there is no difference between Ngugi's fictional home and his factual home as far as the landscape and the physical structural depiction in the two narratives are concerned. There is a 'hill' at the entrance outside the house and this 'hill' comes about due to dumping rubbish there over the years.

The sense of home as family unit is first revealed in the polygamous practice of the protagonists' fathers in both fiction and fact. In *Weep Not, Child*, Njorege's father, Ngotho, marries two wives. One would have expected acrimony in such homes as Ngotho's but it is rather the opposite. There is always peace and harmony in the house since he gives equal treat to his first and second wives.

Ngotho bought four pounds of meat. But they were bound into bundles each of two pounds. One bundle was for his first wife, Njeri and the other for Nyokabi, his second wife. A husband had to be wise in these affairs otherwise a small flaw or apparent bias could easily generate civil war in the family (*Weep* 10 – 11). The feeling of oneness was a thing that most distinguished Ngotho's household from many other polygamous families. Njeri and Nyokabi went to the *shamba* or market together. Sometimes they agreed among themselves that while one did that job the other would do this one. This was attributed to Ngotho, the centre of the house (*Weep*: 40).

Ngotho's wisdom in handling his two wives fairly, makes it possible for his home to be devoid of "civil war in the family" as the narrator puts it in *Weep Not, Child*.

Equally, in *Dreams in a Time of War*, Ngugi's father, Thiong'o wa Nduchu, has a polygamous home. Here, he marries four wives and has twenty-four children. In spite of this, harmony, love, unity and togetherness reigns among the members of the family, especially the wives. As Ngugi puts it:

I was born into an already functioning community of wives, grown-up brothers, sisters, children about my age, and a single patriarch (*Dreams: 26*) ...The four women forged a strong alliance vis-à-vis the outside world, their husband and even their children...We could feed from any of the mothers. They resolved serious tensions through discussion, one of them, usually the eldest, acting as the arbiter (*Dreams: 27*).

From the above it is noticeable that there is an intertextual link between fiction and fact as far as *Weep Not, Child* and *Dreams in a Time of War* are concerned.

Aside the wives, one can also see genial relationship among the siblings of the different mothers. This is why Njoroge and Kamau get along very well in *Weep Not, Child* in spite of the fact that they belong to different mothers.

Boro, Kori, and Kamau were all the sons of Njeri, Ngotho's eldest wife. Njoroge's only true brother was Mwangi who had died in the war. But they all behaved as if they were one mother (*Weep: 22*).

In *Dreams in a Time of War* all the children from the different mothers play together and do everything together happily.

One day my brother and I were playing with our siblings in an open space...with a ball made of cloth and tied tight with string. Even the girls had joined in (*Dreams: 95*).

Story telling is one of the recreational activities the families in both *Weep Not, Child* and *Dreams in a Time of War* are deeply involved in. In *Weep Not, Child*, we learn that "story-telling was a common entertainment in their family" (*Weep: 21*) and that Ngotho is a very good story teller. Indeed, it is through the captivating story Ngotho tells his family that Boro and his siblings get to know that the land on which they are squatters now is actual the ancestral land of the Ngotho family. Ngotho passionately goes back into time to recall how the land was acquired and owned by his ancestors until the advent of settler occupation, and repackages it into an insightful story for his children.

In *Dreams in a Time of War* the narrator tells us about how his family is a story-telling family. He recalls how the family always sits by the fireside to tell and listen to stories from various individuals in the family gathering.

Wangari...was a great storyteller. Every evening we children gathered around the fireside in her hut, and the performance will begin. Sometimes, particularly on weekends, the older siblings would bring their friends and it would then become a storytelling session for all. One told a story. After it ended, another person from the audience would (*Dreams*: 28).

These story sessions help to keep the warmth, love and affection in the family, hence making each and everyone feels a strong belongingness.

It is through such affection and belongingness that *Weep Not, Child* reveals to us how Njoroge's mother, Nyokabi, agrees to marry Ngotho, his father. Due to love and unity in the family, Kamau, Nyokabi's step son, good-humouredly queries her that he would not have married her if he were his father.

Later in the evening Kamau came to Nyokabi's hut. "Tell us the story." "Now, now, don't be troublesome," Nyokabi said. "It is a bad woman this. If had been my father, I would not have married her." "Oh! But he could not resist me." "It isn't true," said Ngotho... "You should have seen how happy she was when I proposed to her. Nobody could have taken her. So I pitied her." "I refused all the young men that wanted me. But your father would have died if I had refused him." "Don't you believe a word she says" (*Weep*: 22 – 23).

Thus step son, husband and step mother involve in a very hearty chat to reveal how husband and wife get to marry each other. This dialogue comes about when Nyokabi jokingly declines to tell a story that evening and rather wants Ngotho to take the mantle.

A related courtship story manifests between Ngugi's mother, Wanjiku and his father Nducu, in *Dreams in a Time of War*.

And your father? He was not to be denied. I don't know how he knew where I worked in my father's field...but he would somehow appear, just smile and say few words. what a pity if such a hardworking beauty should ever team up with a lazy man, he would tease me...But I did not want him to think that I would simply fall for his words and reputation, and I challenged him...The following day he came back, hoe on his shoulder...without waiting for my invitation even, he started to work. It became a playful but serious competition to see who would tire first...Don't you think you and I should combine our strengths in a

home? He again asked...He went away and I thought that he would never appear again. But he did come back, on another day, without a hoe, an enigma of smile on his face...He took out a bead necklace and said: Will you wear this for me? Well, I did not say yes or no, but I took it and wore it (*Dreams*: 23 – 24).

Here, just as we learn about Njoroge's mother and father's courtship story in *Weep Not, Child*, we also learn about how Ngugi's father and mother got to marry each other in *Dreams in a Time of War*. We see how Nducu schemed and worked for Wanjiku several days before proposing to her with a bead necklace. This confirms the story Nyokabi tells us in *Weep Not, Child* that Ngotho would not have survived should she reject her.

Although the polygamous home of fictional Ngotho and factual Nducu have always been full of joy and love, this vitality sometimes eludes one of the wives in both narratives. In *Weep Not, Child*, Nyokabi, Njoroge's mother, suffers from domestic violence in the hands of her husband, Ngotho. He beats her mercilessly when Nyokabi tries to talk him out of the impending general strike. He does this out of frustration since he himself is confused about the strike; he doubts if the strike could be successful at all. If the strike fails Ngotho will lose his job. And here is his wife; a mere woman drawing his attention to the consequences should the strike fail. They will starve. Nyokabi's warning about the strike and its possible failure infuriates and frightens Ngotho so much that he feels his authority as a man is being challenged.

Ngotho could bear it no longer. She was driving him mad. He slapped her on the face and raised his hand again. But Njoroge now found his voice. He ran forward and cried frantically, "Please, father" (*Weep*: 53)...Njoroge had never seen his father quarrelling with his wives. Whenever there was a quarrel, the children were never allowed to know about it. So when Njoroge came from school and found Nyokabi crying, he was shocked (*Weep*: 52).

In *Dreams in a Time of War*, Wanjiku, Ngugi's mother, suffers the same fate of domestic violence as Nyokabi. In Wanjiku's case, the husband's frustration stems from psychological depression due to loss of property. First Nducu loses his land to a fellow black Kenyan due to a fishy deal by the land owner who earlier sold it to him. Then a more devastating disaster strikes when her husband's goats and cows, which are the source of his wealth and worth, strangely succumb to a strange illness which kills all the livestock. This sudden change in destiny leaves an everlasting injury and bitter imprint on Nducu's memory. Indeed, Nducu hates married men who ambush their wives on their way from market for a share of the money they have made from their sales. But now he begins to do same and he has even been forcibly taking the weekly

wages of his daughters from them when they receive their pay. Wanjiku also falls a victim to Nducu, her husband's frustration and strange behaviour. He attempts to forcibly take Wanjiku's proceeds from her. She firmly resists him and refuses to allow herself to be subjugated by her husband's machismo. This sparks a disturbing quarrel between husband and wife.

By the end of the season, my mother had harvested just about the best crop of peas and beans in the region...Other women offered to help her harvest and shell, filling ten sacks with peas, four with beans, and her barn with corn...My father decided that the harvest was his to dispose of, even to sell...My mother firmly refused. One day he came home picked quarrel with her and started beating her up...My brother and I were crying for him to stop. Mother was crying in pain...the other women try to restrain him...As he turned toward them in fury, my mother managed to slip away with only the clothes she wore, and fled to her father's house...leaving behind her goats and harvest (*Dreams: 93 - 94*).

Thus Njoroge and Ngugi have their fathers beating their mothers in both Ngugi wa Thiong'o's fictional narrative, *Weep Not, Child* and factual narrative *Dreams in a Time of War*.

Mother-child relationship also constitutes a major representation of home in both *Weep Not, Child* and *Dreams in a Time of War*. In both, the closest family member who makes a great impact on the life of the protagonist is the mother. In the fictional world of *Weep Not, Child*, Njoroge's mother calls him and passionately asks him if he would like to go to school. This question dazes and hypnotises him making him immediately spell-bound since going to school has for a long time been his unspoken wish and dream.

Nyokabi called him..."Would you like to go school?" "O, mother! Njoroge gasped. He half feared that the woman might withdraw her words. there was a little silence till she said, "We are poor. You know that." "Yes, mother." His heart pounded against his ribs slightly. His voice was shaky. "So you won't be getting a mid-day meal like other children." "I understand." "You won't bring shame to me by one day refusing to attend school?" *O mother, I'll never bring shame to you. Just let me get there. Just let me.* (*Weep: 3*).

This same conversation between mother and child occurs in the factual world of *Dreams in a Time of War* where Ngugi's mother calls him and asks him if he would like to go to school. He experiences the same trance as he does in *Weep Not, Child*.

One evening, my mother asked me: would you like to go to school? It was in 1947. I can't recall the day or the month. I remember being wordless at first. But the question and the seen forever remain engraved in my mind...It was the offer of the impossible that deprived me of words. my mother had to ask the question again. "Yes, yes," I said quickly in case she changed her mind. "You know we are poor." "Yes." "And so you may not always get a midday meal?" "Yes, mother." "Promise me that you'll not bring shame to me by one day refusing to go to school because of hunger or other hardships?" "Yes, yes!" "And that you will always try you best?" (*Dreams*: 58 - 60).

Like in *Weep Not, Child*, Ngugi confesses in *Dreams in a Time of War* that he nurses the desire for schooling in silence for a long time; so when his mother divinely comes out with the idea to make his dream come true, he becomes more than overjoyed. But something very noteworthy is obvious. In the fictional world of *Weep Not, Child*, Njoroge's father plays a role in Njoroge's going to school. This can be deciphered from when his mother tells him that

Alright. You'll begin school on Monday. As soon as your father gets his pay we'll go to the shops. I'll buy you a shirt and a pair of shorts (*Weep*: 3)...Ngotho was proud that his son would start learnin. When anybody now asked him whether he had taken any of his sons to school, he would proudly say, "Yes!" (*Weep*: 12).

Conversely, in the factual world of *Dreams in a Time of War* Ngugi's father plays no role in Ngugi's going to school. It is his mother who takes up every responsibility of his schooling.

My father had no say one way or another in this enterprise. It was my mother's dream and her entire doing. She raised the money for the tuition and uniform by selling her produce in the market. And then one day she took me to the Indian shopping centre (*Dreams*: 60).

Njoroge and his mother in the fictional world and Ngugi and his mother in the factual world are a resemblance of the same account in the two narratives. The two mothers in these narratives take great satisfaction and interest in the academic work of the sons. They feel very proud that the sons are getting education. In *Weep Not, Child*, the narrator refers to Nyokabi as being:

Proud of having a son in school. It made her soul happy and light-hearted whenever she saw him bending double over a slate or recounting to her what he had seen at school. She felt elated when she ordered her son to go and do

some reading or some sums. It was to her the greatest reward she would get from her motherhood if she one day found her son writing letters, doing arithmetic and speaking English (Weep: 15 - 16).

In *Dreams in a Time of War*, Ngugi's mother, like Njoroge's, in *Weep Not, Child*, also takes dedicated interest in his academic work. She always asks him about his progress in school.

When I go home...my mother asks me what and how I had done and I say I rubbed off everything she says: Then don't, wait for the teacher to tell you what to do. The teacher also corrects me...and when later she starts writing 10/10, and my mother asks me what I had done and I say, ten out of ten, she would ask probing questions ending with: Is that the best you could have done? This is a question she will keep asking in response to my schoolwork, class exercises, and tests...she seems more interested in the process of getting there than the actual results (*Dream: 64*).

In this way, Wanjiku's probing questions serve as source of motivation for Ngugi to work hard in school to impress his mother.

Brotherly bond between two siblings is also another representation of home as family unit in both *Weep Not, Child* and *Dreams in a Time of War*. In *Weep Not, Child*, a strong bond between Kamau and Njoroge exists. Kamau is the first person to whom Njoroge relates the news of his going to school. Njoroge gingerly tells Kamau that, "I shall go to school" (*Weep 4*) which Kamau receives with joy. The bond between Njoroge and Kamau is seen in the keen interest Kamau has in Njoroge's academic work and his general well-being. This is why in times of need Kamau makes sure he provides the necessary needs to get Njoroge going.

All his brothers, except the lonely Kamau, were no longer at home. When the time for circumcision came, it was Kamau who met the cost. It was he who kept the home together, buying food, clothes and paying fees for Njoroge (*Weep: 84*).

The replica of Kamau in *Dreams in a Time of War* is Wallace. He and Ngugi get on well and Wallace takes keen interest in Ngugi's academic life and general well-being. He always feels happy and proud when he sees Ngugi reading. This is why he denies Ngugi the opportunity to touch any of his working tools since he wants him to be an academic and not a carpenter.

My brother would not allow me to meddle with his tools. I felt it unfair that he allowed my younger brother much more freedom with them...he liked it best when I was holding a book or a news. Then he would draw the attention of his friends to what I was doing (*Dreams*: 151).

Wallace's love for Ngugi and his faith in Ngugi's future success and prospects are what drive him to risk visiting Ngugi on the eve of his final examination to encourage him to try his best.

Then my brother turned to me and said, don't fear. I know will be taking exams soon. I came to wish you good luck (*Dreams*: 224).

Indeed, the fictional Kamau in *Weep Not, Child*, is a carpenter just as the factual Wallace in *Dreams in a Time of War* is a carpenter. In *Weep Not, Child*, Kamau tells Njoroge, "You know I am being trained as a carpenter. I cannot drop the apprenticeship. But I am glad you're going to school" (*Weep* 4). He makes this statement when Njoroge attempts to convince him to also go to school. Kamau, although an apprentice, quickly learns how to make chairs and beds. He therefore does not complete the apprenticeship before he leaves his master, Nganga. "Kamau left Nganga and took a job with another carpenter at the African shops" (*Weep*: 48). In the same manner, Wallace, in *Dreams in a Time of War*, does not complete his apprenticeship before abandoning it to establish his own workshop although, "Such an apprenticeship was supposed to last several years, but after only a few months my brother had started making his own things on the side" (*Dreams*: 148). Wallace also establishes his workshop at the "African market place" (*Dreams*: 145).

Representation of Self in *Weep Not, Child* and *Dreams in a Time of War*

Representation of self is also one of the intertextual links found in the two narratives. The life story of fictional Njoroge in *Weep Not, Child* and the life story of factual Ngugi in *Dreams in a Time of War* follow the same pattern and are therefore direct replication of each other. For example, in both narratives it is the mothers of the two protagonists who give birth to the idea of enrolling each of them in school as earlier examined above. In *Weep Not, Child*, Njoroge accompanies Mwihaki, daughter of his father's landlord, the first time he goes to school. Mwihaki's sister teaches in the school and she is actually Njoroge's first class teacher.

On Monday, Njoroge went to school. He did not quite know where it was...Mwihaki took him and showed him the way...Mwihaki was the daughter of Jacobo. Jacobo owned the land on which Ngotho lived...Jacobobo had small

boys and one big son and big daughter. The big daughter was a teacher. He name was Lucia (*Weep*: 13).

Similarly, in *Dreams in a Time of War*, Ngugi accompanies Njambi, daughter of his father's landlord, the very first day he goes to school. Njambi's sister teaches in the school.

The day I wear my khaki uniform and walk two miles to Kamandura is when I enter and float in the soft mist of a dreamland. I am in the mist of Njambi, the landlord's youngest daughter, who has guided me to school on the first day, shows me my starting class, sub B, taught by her older sister, Joana (*Dreams*: 61).

Again, in *Weep Not, Child*, Njoroge does very well in his class at school. This makes it possible for him to be promoted and jumped from the first to the third class. This means that he has been jumped over the second class.

At the beginning of next year, he was promoted to the third class. It was called standard I for the other two were just preparatory – beginners' classes. The second beginners; class was found unnecessary for him. Standard I was the class that Mwhiki too would attend. Njoroge had caught up with her. He was glad (*Weep*: 38).

The same feat is seen in *Dreams in a Time of War* where Ngugi jumps the classes just as does Njoroge.

I drift through the initial classes, not quite understanding why I have been moved from sub B to sub A to grade one, all within the same quarter, a skipping of classes that continues from term to term so that within a year I am in grade two (*Dreams*: 64).

Writing and passing promotional examination to intermediate school is a very daunting enterprise. For the most part students fail this examination. This is a deliberate act by the examining authorities to keep the number of black people who will continue formal education in check. Keeping the numbers in check is very important for the settler farmer since it enables the system to provide labour for their tea and coffee plantations. Indeed, this promotional examination is a major hurdle Njoroge and Ngugi respectively clear in *Weep Not, Child* and *Dreams in a Time of War*. In *Weep Not, Child*, anxious Njoroge is seen frightened by the very thought that he will

fail the examination. But he, at the same time, encourages and readies himself for any outcome.

It was at the beginning of the New Year. The room was packed, for the whole class had come to know whether they had passed or not. Njoroge sat in a corner, silent. Mwihaki too was there...Teacher Isaka came with a long sheet of paper. Everybody kept quiet. Njoroge had prepared himself for this moment. He had many times told himself that he would not change even if he failed. but now when the teacher began to look at the long white sheet, he wanted to go and hide under the desk. And then he heard his name. it was topping the list. Mwihaki too had passed...Each wanted to reach home and tell their parents the good news. Njoroge wanted his mother to know that her son had not failed. He would now go to an intermediate school (*Weep*: 55).

Ngugi's performance in the intermediate examination in the factual world of *Dreams in a Time of War* is not a different case from that of Njoroge's in the fictional world of *Weep Not, Child*. He passes well and this helps heighten his reputation in the eyes of many.

I was now in my second year at Manguo. I had already completed the Competitive Entrance Exam at grade four and passed well. It was a terminal exam, a real hurdle in the competition for school...So many kids would fail, ending their education...Passing the exam added to my reputation among my brother Wallace's friends (*Dreams*: 124 – 125).

From the above it is obvious that passing the intermediate examination is a turning point in the lives of both Njoroge and Ngugi in their fictive and factual worlds respectively.

Njoroge once again passes a final examination leading to admission to High School. Njoroge has been the only student in his hometown who goes through examination and would thus be going to the "big mission school at Siriana."

"Nojorege is going to High School." High School!" "Yes. He has gone through K.A.P.E."...He was to learn later that he had been the only boy in all that area who would go to High School...The news of his success passed from hill to hill (*Weep*: 105).

The same episode advances in *Dreams in a Time of War* where Ngugi was the only person who passed a final examination that qualifies him to gain admission to the best High School in the region. His teacher tells him:

“You have been accepted at Alliance High School,” he told me, breaking into a broad smile...The news does not sink in. I don’t know how to enjoy it. Even when I go home and say that I have passed the KAPE and have been accepted at Alliance High School, my mother has only one question: Is that the best? (*Dreams*: 242 – 243).

Another similar circumstance worth taking note of in both *Weep Not, Child* and *Dreams in a Time of War* is the protagonists’ change of school in both narratives. In *Weep Not, Child*, the narrator tells us that Njoroge leaves his former school and now finds himself in a new school.

Njoroge left school. He had now been in this new school for two years...his new school is five miles away from home. And he had to do all the journey on foot. This was what education meant to thousands of boys and girls in all the land. Schools were scarce and very wide spaced. Independent and Kikuyu Karing’a schools, which had been built by the people after break with the missions, had been closed by the government (*Weep*: 68 – 69).

In *Dreams in a Time of War*, the narrator recounts how he changes his school from one to the other.

One day my elder brother Wallace Mwangi, with my mother apparently in agreement, told me that I had to leave Kamandura for Manguo. It was very sudden, unexpected...my Kamandura period was over, but I would forever carry in me the magic of learning to read ...Manguo was a short distance away: It stood on the ridge opposite our home...The shorter distance and the news that my younger brother would be starting school at Manguo were enough to cheer me, and I started feeling good about the change (*Dreams*: 70 – 71)...Thus in moving from Kamandura, a Kirore school, to Manguo, a Kiarung’a school, I was cross a great historic divide (*Dreams*: 114).

One other related incident in both narratives which is worth mentioning is the guilt and regret that afflict the protagonists for feeling ashamed about his personal clothing in *Weep Not, Child*, and the clothing of a younger brother in *Dreams in a Time of War*. In *Weep Not, Child*, Njoroge feels very upset when he comes across Mwhaki while he has only a piece of calico covering his body. This feeling drives him to want to avoid meeting Mwhaki and that is exactly what he does.

Before Njoroge went very far, he saw her coming along the same path but from the opposite direction. If he went on he will meet her. Suddenly he realized that he did not want to meet her while he had on that piece of calico, which when blown by the wind, left the lower part of his body without covering. For a time, he was irresolute and hated himself for feeling as he did about the clothes he had on...he would never have thought that he would ever be ashamed of the calico, the only dress he had ever known since birth. He turned to the left and followed another path (*Weep*: 19).

In *Dreams in a Time of War*, the upset has to do with the clothing of Ngugi's younger brother, Ninju. Ngugi goes to a sports festival with his brother at the grounds of Limuru Bata Shoe Company. Ngugi fully dresses in his school uniform while his brother does not. His brother only dresses in a traditional. This embarrasses Ngugi very much when he and his brother come across some students from Ngugi's school. Although Ngugi does not know the students he feels very much ashamed about his brother's dressing. To avoid the embarrassment, he plays a trick on Ninju so that he will take another path. This would prevent the unknown students from seeing Ninju.

One weekend when there were sports...I was allowed to put on my school uniform. My brother...simply put on shorts and knotted his garment...My brother and I found fun walking around the sports field mingling with the crowds...ahead of me, I saw some students I did not even know well, coming toward me. Suddenly I was aware, as if for the first time, that my brother was in his traditional garb. The embarrassment that had been seeping into my consciousness of the world around me...came back intensely. Panic seized me. I did the only thing that I thought would save the situation. I asked my brother whether we could take two different paths around the field and see who would get to the other side first (*Dreams*: 72 – 73).

Ngugi's behaviour ruins the rest of the day for him and he sincerely regrets it.

Schools teachers play pivotal roles in the lives of the two protagonists in both narratives. In *Weep Not, Child*, it is teacher Isaka's first lesson with Njoroge's class that has a lasting impact on Njoroge. Njoroge "always remembered his first lesson" (*Weep*: 33). It is a lesson in which teacher Isaka teaches Njoroge's class the sounds of the English alphabets. He teaches them the "Aaaa's", the "Eeeeeee's", the "liiiiiiii's", the "Ooooo's" and the "U-u-u-u-u's." Interestingly, teacher Isaka's name from that day "had become U-u" (*Weep*: 35). The lesson remains unforgettable memory in Njoroge because he enjoyed the practical way teacher Isaka related the reading lesson to the class.

In *Dreams in a Time of War*, Ngugi remembers Mr Samuel G. Kibicho as a teacher who most influenced his life. He recalls the creativity of the teacher and how he can innovatively go outside the prescribed text to cite practical examples for the class from their immediate environment. The most memorable thing about Mr Kibicho, for Ngugi, is the books in Mr Kibicho's library.

There were many primary school teachers who, in their own ways, contributed to my intellectual growth. But the one who most influenced my life was Mr Samuel G.Kibicho...I don't know how he noted my interest in reading, but he gave me the simplified Dicken's Great expectations, which I passed on to Kenneth (*Dreams*: 218 - 219).

The fictional world of *Weep Not, Child* as well as the factual world of *Dreams in a Time of War* accordingly recognise teachers' contribution in the lives of the protagonists in the two narratives.

An unpleasant incident at a Christmas party, where the landlord's wife reprimands the protagonist in both *Weep Not, Child* and *Dreams in a Time of War*, constitutes yet another parallel in fiction and fact. In *Weep Not, Child*, Njoroge and another child find it very difficult to resist the temptation of the sweet aroma and the appetizing look of the food that has been served the guest, children from the neighbourhood, including Njoroge. During a prayer session before the meals, a child makes a strange funny sound; Njoroge follows with a giggle and this spells the doom of the day for them.

On Christmas Day...many children...were invited for a party by Juliana...she had bought much bread. How appetizing it all looked as it lay on a tray nearby, forming a sharp-pointed gleaming white hill! Njoroge's mouth had watered and he had a lot of difficulty in swallowing saliva for fear of making some audible sound at the throat which would betray him to his hostess and her children. But the tragic part of the day's proceeding came when they were all told to shut their eyes for Grace...one child had made a sound which had at once made Njoroge giggle...he was joined by another, who giggled even loudly, till both of them burst out in open laughter (*Weep*: 18).

This behaviour infuriates Juliana so much that she takes time to severely chastise Njoroge and all the other children for their uncouth behaviour.

In *Dreams in a Time of War*, it is Ngugi and his younger brother, Ninju, who fall victims of irony of fate. Just as the unfortunate case of Njoroge and the child, Ngugi and his brother fail to resist the temptation of the alluring and appetizing food that has been served.

I have always associated Christmas to with parathas and curry...So to be invited to a children's Christmas party, moreover in the mysterious landlord's house, was something new in our lives...I was a little disappointed that the party took place in the kitchen..but still the pile of jam sandwiches in huge containers made up for any shortcomings...I thought that after the long welcoming preliminaries and the discourse on the meaning of Christmas we would immediately be served the tea and the gleaming white bread sandwiches. Instead we were told to shut our eyes for prayer. My brother and I had never said prayers...for food...In the middle of it I opened my eyes to peep at the pile of sandwiches. I met my brother's eyes doing the same...we giggled loudly (*Dreams*: 80 – 82).

Lilian, the landlord's wife becomes incensed and severely admonishes Ngugi and his brother just as what happens to Njoroge and the child in *Weep Not, Child*.

One interesting thing worthy of note is the attention paid to the description of the landlord, Jacobo's house, especially the kitchen, in both narratives. In *Weep Not, Child*, the picture of the kitchen serves as a prelude to the day's happening. It is where all the actions of the Christmas party take place. The narrator tells us that "the kitchen was a separate building, a round, mud-walled, grass-thatched hut that was used for all the cooking" (*Weep* 18). The kitchen also serves as the bedroom for the servants in the house. In *Dreams in a Time of War*, a picturesque description of Reverend Stanley Kahahu's house takes our attention to it. We see a beautiful "thicket of pine trees surrounded by the homestead" (*Dreams* 80). The description further draws our focus to the main house which is "a four-cornered building with walls of thick wood" (*Dreams*: 81). The description then ushers us into the kitchen. Like in *Weep Not, Child*, the landlord's kitchen is separate from the main building and that is where the party takes place leading to Ngugi and his brother's infamous giggling just like Njoroge's.

A further corresponding subject in both *Weep Not, Child* and *Dreams in a Time of War*, is the protagonists' penchant for the Bible. The Bible becomes the favourite book for the fictional protagonist and the factual protagonist in both narratives. In *Weep Not, Child*, the biblical stories serve as the source of motivation for Njoroge; he therefore places a great faith in the Bible and its teachings.

The bible was his favourite book. He liked the stories in the Old Testament. He loved and admired David, often identifying himself with this hero. The book of Job attracted him though it often gave rise to painful stirring in his heart. In the New Testament, he liked the story of the young Jesus and the sermon on the Mount. Njoroge came to place faith in the Bible (*Weep*: 49).

In *Dreams in a Time of War*, Ngugi's discovery of a Bible which belongs to his half-brother, Kabae, becomes a game changer in his reading. The Bible becomes his reading companion and he always reads it during the day and night.

I come across a copy of the Old Testament, it may have belonged to Kabae, and the moment I find that I am able to read it it becomes my book of magic with capacity to tell me stories...I read the Old Testament everywhere at any time of day or night (*Dreams*: 65).

In the Bible Ngugi comes across both frightening stories and encouraging ones. He reads about Cain and Abel and why Cain kills Abel. He reads about David and Goliath, how Jonah was swallowed by a whale and later vomited unhurt, the Jericho walls and host of other stories in the Bible. These helped frame him.

There are various other instances of intertextual links in both *Weep Not, Child*, and *Dreams in a Time of War*. One such example is the story of Dedan Kimathi. In both narratives Kimathi is presented as a heroic figure that possesses and uses supernatural powers to achieve great feats. A major story that is told about Dedan Kimathi in the fictional world of *Weep Not, Child* is how he outwits the police by transforming himself into a white police inspector and takes away a new motor-bike owned by the police leaving his old one behind (*Weep*: 67). An analogous story is found in the factual/autobiographical world of *Dreams in a Time of War* where Dedan Kimathi "disguised himself as a white police officer and went to dine with the governor" and later sends the governor a letter thanking him for the great reception (*Dreams*: 195).

Similarly, the attack and assassination of a chief by unknown assailant at Murang'a, in a broad daylight, as reported in the 'Interlude' in the fictional world of *Weep Not, Child* (*Weep*: 62 – 63), has an intertextual link with the assassination story carried out in the factual/autobiographical world of *Dreams in a Time of War*, where Senior Chief Waruhiu was horrifically murdered in "a Chigago gang-style killing" also in a broad daylight (*Dreams*: 153 – 154).

How the barber together with five other prominent men in Njoroge's village in the fictional world of *Weep Not, Child* have been summarily executed (*Weep*: 85 – 86), has a direct intertextual link with how Kimuchu, Njerandi, Elijah, Karanja, Mwangi and Nehemiah were also summarily executed in the factual world of *Dreams in a Time of War* (*Dreams*: 161 – 162).

Conclusion

The central argument of this paper is that there exist a strong sense of intertextual links between Ngugi wa Thiong'o's fiction, *Weep Not, Child*, and his autobiography, *Dreams in a Time of War*, as far as the three thematic areas of representation of society, home, and the self are concerned. The paper also demonstrates that the various other issues addressed by Ngugi wa Thiong'o in the two narratives have intertextual links. It

further reveals the fact that intertextual links can be drawn from two different genres at the same level. It is therefore obvious that both narratives make use of the same historical facts differently, to drive home the same messages Ngugi wants to carry out. It seems appropriate, therefore, to conclude that *Weep Not, Child* is the precursor being echoed by *Dreams in a Time of War* since the one is written before the other.

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