A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF NGUGI WA THIONG’O’S *WEEP NOT, CHILD AND DREAMS IN A TIME OF WAR*

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JULY, 2018
DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is the product of my original research, and it has not been published or presented, in whole or part, for the award of a degree anywhere in the world, and that all references to other works have been duly acknowledged.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my Mother, Justine Condobrey, my wife, Felicia Sika and my children, Laura Senam Bingah, and Nadia Selorm Bingah. Above all I dedicate it to Almighty God.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am grateful to my supervisors, Prof. Albert A. Sackey and Dr. Mawuli Adjei for the guidance they have given me in writing this thesis. I am as well grateful to them for their incisive criticisms and comments which have helped me to shape this work as it is now. My gratitude also goes to Prof. Kofi Anyidoho for introducing me to the works of Ngugi wa Thiong’o and particularly whipping my interest in *Dreams in a Time of War*. I am also thankful to Auntie Herty of the Department of English, University of Ghana, Stanley Akabua of Bank of Ghana, Hohoe Branch, and everyone who has been part of this success.
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ABSTRACT

The interrelationship between fiction and autobiography provides the grounds for a comparative study of two literary works of Ngugi wa Thiong’o’s *Weep not, Child* and his *Dreams in a Time of War*. The two texts are therefore placed side by side to draw the intertextual links between them. Ngugi’s works, both fiction and non-fiction, often articulate issues concerning his personal experiences as well as the socio-political concerns of the Kenyan people. Undertaking the comparative study of these two narratives is therefore aimed at unearthing various similar issues addressed in them. It is also aimed at critically examining the generic differences between fiction (*Weep Not, Child*) and autobiography (*Dreams in a Time of War*), to determine the extent to which each genre employs artistry. It is further aimed at examining the autobiographical dimensions of *Dreams in a Time of War*. The conclusions drawn from this study are arrived at through the use of qualitative study based on content analysis. The study thus puts the two texts side by side and looks at issues such as, Ngugi’s representation of society, home, and the self; land ownership, land appropriation and land alienation; and then the Mau Mau revolutionary resistance and the state of emergency in both narratives. It further looks at the narrative techniques in terms of Time, Narrator and Point of View. The study confirms the fact that Ngugi uses the same data/material in different genres - one a fiction and the other an autobiography - to dwell on the same issues hence making the two genres intertextually linked. The study further confirms that although *Dreams in a Time of War* is also a literary work, *Weep Not, Child*, being a work of fiction has more flexible narrative freedom than *Dreams in a Time of War* which is an autobiography and employs more memory. The study is significant because of the years between the two texts, since *Dreams in a Time of War* was written forty-six years after *Weep not Child* was written, yet the same data is used in the two different genres to achieve the same purpose.
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

According to Singh (2015), Saint Augustine’s Confessions (c.AD 398-400) is often considered as the trendsetter to writing Western autobiography. The major feature of St Augustine’s Confessions is to construct a history of selfhood, a process which helps the author to discern who he is. Confessions is therefore written to represent a religious experience as an example for others; Singh writes:

Autobiography is traditionally a Western genre drawing on the Catholic ritual of confessions. The classical autobiographical genre based on introspection of the self, confession of sins, expression of remorse and guilt is indeed very theological in letter and spirit (Singh).

In their introduction to “Writing the Self: Essays on Autobiography and Autofiction” Shands et al (2015) remind us that the word ‘autobiography’ comes from “Greek αὐτός-autos self, βίος-bios life, and γράφειν-graphein write.” Based on the definition above, autobiography denotes self-writing – that is, the account of an individual’s life written by him or herself. Autobiography therefore means writing about one’s self (Shands et al 7). Eakin (2004) defines autobiography as “a discourse of identity delivered bit by bit in stories we tell about ourselves day in day out” and that “autobiography structures our living” (Eakin). From the above it is obvious that ‘self” stands prominent in what autobiography is.

It is a well-known fact that African self-writing existed long before the three main literary genres began on the continent; but not many people write autobiographies. Ngwenya (2001) in his “The Historical Dimensions of South African Autobiography” observes that South African autobiographies like Kingsley Fairbridge’s The Autobiography of Kingley Fairbridge (1927) and Francis Carey’s Slater’s Settler’s Heritage (1954) date as far back as “the colonial era” (Ngwenya). In Ghana, Caseley Hayford’s autobiographical fiction Ethiopia Unbound
(1911) and Kwame Nkrumah’s *Ghana: The Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah* (1957) are examples of autobiographical writings of Africans.

It is thus clear that Africans carry out self-writing long before writing the novel, drama and poetry took centre stage on the continent from the late 1950s. Self-writing in Africa can thus be said to be as old as, if not older than, the three major genres. However, scholars have rather made significant contributions on the development of the novel, drama and poetry. Not much attention is paid to self-writing, let alone scholarly contribution to it, until the early 1980s when writers like Wole Soyinka, Chinua Achebe and Ngugi wa Thiong’o began writing their life stories.

Wole Soyinka’s *Ake: The Years of Childhood*, Chinua Achebe’s *There was a Country*, Ngugi wa Thiong’o’s *Dreams in a Time of War* and *In the House of the Interpreter* are examples of some of the autobiographies that have been written by well-known and well-grounded authors in the African Literary world.

At present, Africans from all walks of life have taken to self-writing. For example, apart from the autobiographies of the established African writers, now educationists, physicians and politicians are also coming out with their autobiographies. Nelson Mandela’s *Long Walk to Freedom* and recently John Dramani Mahama’s *My First Coup D’état* are examples. Most of these African autobiographies which attract critical discourse are analysed in terms of their thematic underpinnings. Mbembe and Rendall’s contention that:

Three fundamental elements of slavery, colonisation, and apartheid…serve as unifying centre of Africans’ desire to know themselves, to recapture their destiny, and to belong to themselves in the world…show how current African imagination of self is born out of desperate but often intersecting practices, the goal of which is not only to settle factual and moral dispute about the world but also to open the way for self-styling. (Mbembe 2002).
is true and cannot be ignored. What Mbembe and Rendall are saying in the above extract is that the experiences Africans undergo have a bearing on how they write about themselves in their novels and autobiographies. Thus, Africans fundamentally write fiction and nonfiction to address various issues ranging from colonial subjugation, politics, economics and culture. Few examples can be seen in the autobiographies mentioned above. These thematic underpinnings are so dominant in African fictional works and autobiographies that they always skew critics’ attention more to the themes than other concepts. For example, the concept of intertextuality in critiquing these African narratives is noticeably absent.

The two texts chosen for this study are Ngugi wa Thiong’o’s fiction, Weep not, Child and his autobiography, Dreams in a Time of War. These two texts are narratives which recall the author’s life experiences. The two texts chronicle the experiences of the author from his childhood to his secondary school days and the circumstances surrounding these experiences. Ngugi was born in 1938 and he wrote Weep not, Child in 1964 when he was twenty-six years old. Dreams in a Time of War was written in 2010 when Ngugi was seventy-two years old. Although the time gap between Weep not, Child and Dreams in a Time of War is forty-six years, in narrating his experiences, the issues tackled by Ngugi in these two texts reveal the same pattern of circumstances. The same data is therefore used in two different genres; that is the issues raised by Ngugi in Weep not, Child, which is a fiction and for that matter a work of art, is the same as the issues raised in Dreams in a Time of War, which is nonfiction/autobiography. This research therefore seeks to critically study Weep not Child and Dreams in a Time of War to determine the relationship between fiction and fact/autobiography in order to see how far they are intertextually linked.
1.2 Statement of the Problem

Although a few intertextual critical discourse on contemporary African novels can be found, the same cannot be said about the intertextual links between fictions and autobiographies in African literature. Critical discourse on intertextuality between fictions and autobiographies is therefore practically non-existent.

Reading Ngugi wa Thiong’o’s *Weep not, Child* and *Dreams in a Time of War*, it is clear that both texts, although fiction and nonfiction/autobiography respectively, appear to explore issues that follow the same trend. Ngugi thus uses different literary approaches in addressing the same thematic foundations.

This researcher therefore sees the concept of intertextuality as relevant to critical discourse on African fiction and autobiography hence seeks to feel the hiatus by engaging *Weep not, Child*, a fiction, and *Dreams in a Time of War*, an autobiography, to draw the relationship between the two.

1.3 Objective of the Study

This study intends to examine *Weep not, Child* and *Dreams in a Time of War* with the aim of unearthing their intertextual links through the eyes of fiction and autobiography.

To achieve this, the research will:

- Unearth the various issues addressed by Ngugi in the two narratives
- Critically examine the intertextual links between fiction and autobiography as portrayed in *Weep not, Child* and *Dreams in a Time of War*
1.4 Literature Review

1.4.1 Literature Review of Autobiography and Fiction

Klein et al in “A Theory of Autobiographical Memory: Necessary Components and Disorders Resulting from their Loss” (2004) aver that “One’s sense of self depends…on memories of one’s past experiences and the capacity to call those experiences to mind.” Here, Klein et al hold that the nous of self, results from how one’s memory recalls the incidents that occur in one’s life. ‘Memory’, ‘experience’, and the ‘capacity to recall’ are therefore fundamental in self-representation. For Klein et al, the nous of ‘self’, arising “from memory alone may be too extreme.” They therefore propose what they refer to as “an initial step toward mapping…psychological processes needed to transform a memory trace into an autobiographical memorial experience” (Klein et al).

Accordingly, two forms of knowledge, namely declarative and procedural knowledge are identified as stored in the memory. The procedural knowledge which “is our repertoire of rules and skills by which we navigate the world” (Klein et al) has not received much attention from Klein et al as does the declarative knowledge. The declarative knowledge is the “factual information about the world” (ibid).

The declarative knowledge is looked at from two perspectives, namely semantic memory and episodic memory. The semantic memory expresses facts such as *I am affable; I am a Ghanaian; I was born in Hohoe; I was a student of University of Ghana* (examples mine) about the self which can be “remembered but not re-experienced” (ibid). The information from the semantic memory is therefore recognized in the same manner as one would say sea water is salty; (example mine) a fact that cannot be altered.
Episodic memory has to do with “knowledge of a previously experienced event along with an awareness that the event occurred in one’s past” (ibid). This means that everyone has capacity to remember or recall a particular incident or incidents that occurred in his/her life in the past and the sense of reliving the occurrence and knowing that it really happened. They opine that episodic memory enables an individual to psychologically journey back in time to revive events previously experienced by that individual; hence

Our knowledge of self is...tied up with the ‘story’ of how what we have experienced has made us who we are, and how who we are has led us to do what we have done. Autobiographical self-knowledge...requires a capacity to represent the self as a psychologically coherent entity persisting through time, whose past experiences are remembered as belonging to its present self (ibid).

They further opine that once an individual lacks the ability to reminisce the “past and present states as aspects of the same personal identity,” that individual would not be able “to know that a current mental state represents an episode or state previously experienced” (ibid). What they are saying here is that one must be able to remember and revive the past to shape today for the future.

Klein et al thus propose three capabilities the individual must possess in order to experience memory as autobiographical self-knowledge. These are: first, the “capacity for self-reflection”, which they explain as the ability to reflect on one’s own mental states, to know about “my own knowing.” This means that the individual must be able to revisit his or her memory and find out what s/he can remember about his/her past experience. Secondly, one must have “a sense of personal agency” and “personal ownership.” This means that each individual believes that “I am the cause of my thoughts and actions and the feeling that my thoughts and acts belong to me” (Klein et al). Finally, “the ability to think about time” as recounting of personal undertakings “centred about the self” (ibid).
Conway (2000) and Nelson (2003) hold similar views on autobiographical memory in their respective works, “The Construction of Autobiographical Memories in the Self-Memory System” and “Self and Social Functions: Individual Autobiographical Memory and Collective Narrative.” as Klein et al. Conway in his work posits that “autobiographical memory is of fundamental” importance for the self, emotions and “the experience of personhood” which brings “the experience of enduring as an individual, in a culture, over time” (Conway 2000). He observes that one outstanding characteristic of autobiographical memory is that it always contains “knowledge at different levels of specificity.” He identifies this knowledge at different levels of specificity as “Lifetime Periods”, “General Events” and “Event-Specific Knowledge” (ibid).

Lifetime Period, according to Conway, has to do with distinctive periods of time with “identifiable beginnings and endings.” The content of lifetime period therefore symbolizes “thematic (italics as in original) knowledge about common features of that period” (ibid). He gives such examples as when I was a boy, when I was in India, when I lived with my uncle (examples mine) and so on, as representing lifetime period. On General Events, Conway posits that they include both repeated events and single events and these “events are more specific and at the same time more heterogeneous than lifetime events” (ibid). He gives examples of repeated events as early morning health walks and single events as my journey to Paga (examples in italics mine). Event Specific knowledge is taken as a crucial characteristic of memory vividness since it encompasses lifetime event and general events. For Conway, the three broad levels of specificity are very important in helping to establish “the nature of the self” (ibid). Nelson holds that autobiographical memory is individual knowledge based on self-experience that may be shared with others.

Autobiographical memory is as imaginative as future projection of the self…based on past experience re-imagined (or re-constructed) to fit the present or future circumstances, although typically we believe memory to be more mimetic with
respect to ‘reality’ and future plans to be freer of constraints of what has already taken place…These…reveal the closeness of the connection between autobiographical memory and fiction (Nelson).

From the above, it is obvious that memory is very significant as far as autobiography is concerned. Memory is an important element because it, with time, encumbers and dispels in order to recreate. Memory does not always keep hold of its purity hence an individual’s experiences gradually becomes fictive with time. In narrating the autobiographical self, strong emotions experienced in the past may lose significance or may be over exaggerated since “retrospective perceptions of the past can vastly differ from the lived experience” (Kennedy 2013) hence making it fictive. Lucyna Wille (2014) in her “Literary Confession: Autobiography” agrees with Kennedy and posits that:

Most declared autobiographies are partly fictional, since it seems impossible to deliver a completely truthful report about the past. No matter how hard and honest the attempt may be, it is bound to entail (intentional or unconscious) modifications, additions and omissions, which are actually tantamount to fiction (Wille 2014).

The question then arises as to what a work of fiction is. Fiction refers to a story an author creates from his or her imagination. According to Edgar (1992) “the essence of fiction is narration, the recounting or telling of a sequence of events or actions.” Edgar posits that fiction imitates works such as “historical accounts, reports, biographies, autobiographies, letters, personal memoirs and meditations” (italics as in original). But he makes a distinction between fiction and these works by observing that although fiction bears a resemblance to these works it has a separate distinctiveness since it emanates from the “creative” and “imaginative” prowess of the author. Thus “fiction may include historically accurate details” but its main objective is to “tell a story and say something significant about life” (Edgar 53). Accordingly, fiction dwells on the complex human nature and motives, like, as Cooper (1709) puts it, “passion, humour, caprice, zeal, faction, and a thousand other springs” (qtd in Edgar 1992: 54).
Edgar identifies various elements of fiction that help the reader to “understand and assimilate the work as a whole” (65). Notable among these elements are verisimilitude, character, plot, structure and themes. Others are narration, style, point of view, description and dialogue. The rest are tone, symbolism and allegory. On verisimilitude he opines that fiction is strong because it is very “real” and “personal.” He observes that although the circumstances or characters in fictions are the creation of the author, they exhibit similar traits as seen in real life. Consequently, most characters in fiction “have both first and last names; the countries and cities in which they live are modelled on real places.” He additionally observes that the “actions and interactions” of the characters, coupled with “the social, economic, and political conditions that affect” their “lives” in fiction, are just like those that “readers themselves have experienced, could experience, or could easily imagine themselves experiencing” (54).

According to Edgar, plot is “the story’s map, scheme or blueprint” which is “based on the interactions of cause and effects as they develop sequentially or chronologically” (Edgar 59). He posits that the actions in fiction “follow one another in time” as the protagonist and the antagonist encounter and try to prevail over “forces of opposition.” Plot is thus the sequence of events in a story. Linked closely with plot is the narrative structure. The narrative structure “is the way in which a plot is assembled” (59). The narrative structure can thus be chronologically arranged or “get pieced together through out-of-sequence and widely separated episodes, speeches, remembrances, dreams, periods of delirium, fragments of letters, overheard conversations, and the like” (59). The plot, the structure and all the other elements are very vital to the development of the themes in every fiction. Theme is therefore the central idea in every work of art.

Following from above, it is important to examine the relationship between autobiography and fiction as literary genres. While autobiography has been traditionally regarded as factual and for that matter nonfiction with historical details originating from the personal experiences of
the author, fiction is seen as a work of art which originates from “the creative, imaginative powers” (Edgar 53) of the author. Unlike autobiography which has its scope limited to the memory of the author and the immediate society around him or her, there is nothing beyond the scope of fiction.

In spite of these few distinguishing factors between autobiography and fiction, both genres exhibit various similar characteristics. Among these characteristics is narrative voice. Narrative voice denotes the voice of the person who narrates a story. It also refers to the angle from which a story is told. A story can thus be told from the first person point of view or third person point of view. Genette (1972) in his Narrative Discourse posits that in autobiographical narratives, there exists “two actants,” namely “the narrating” voice “I” and “the narrated” voice “I” who are “juxtaposed” and “interwoven, but…never completely merged” (Genette 252-253). The narrating voice is the speaker or the narrator who reminisces and re-lives the narrated voice. The narrating voice, thus, always shows more experience, maturity and understanding of the present state of affairs than the narrated voice.

The syntax of autobiographical discourse” thus “always posits a subject “I” performing actions: I do things, I feel and I will; I remember and plan…When we talk about ourselves…when we fashion an I-character in autobiography, we give a degree of permanence and narrative solidity…to otherwise evanescent states of identity feeling (Eakin 2004).

Voice, which is always either in the first person narrative “I,” or third person, is thus used to deepen the projection of the narrator’s identity so that we can see and appreciate his or her real self.

The same thing can be said about fiction. Lehtimaki (2005) in “The Poetics of Norman Mailer’s Nonfiction” posits that the novel largely borrows or simulates the first-person “narrative features of an authentic autobiography, memoir, or diary, whereas the…fictional narrative is a mimesis of factual forms such as history, chronicles, or newspaper accounts”
What this means is that “the techniques of literary realism and naturalism”, as Hartsock (2000) argues, “were long practiced in nonfiction narrative forms” before the modern novel, “which borrowed techniques attributed to realism from earlier nonfiction narratives” (qtd in Lehtimaki 9). Lehtimaki therefore, argues that “we may speak of reciprocal relationship between fictional and factual modes” (9). Lehtimaki thus puts forward that the give-and-take switch over between fiction and nonfiction to a certain extent authenticates the proposition that “there are no natural and original differences between fictional and nonfictional regimes” (10). This position confirms Edgar’s as earlier stated in this thesis that fiction imitates works “such as historical accounts, reports, biographies, autobiographies, letters, personal memoirs, and meditations” (Edgar 53). Thus:

Point of view is one of the many ways in which authors make fiction vital…Authors use point of view to raise some of the same questions in their fiction that perplex us in life. We need to evaluate what fictional narrators as well as real people tell us, for what they say is affected by their limitations, attitudes, opinions, and degree of candidness (Edgar 61).

It is obvious from the above that autobiography and fiction, though different genres, share similar features as far as narrative voice is concerned.

Another major similar feature both autobiography and fiction share is their contents. Tudor (2013) in an essay, “Narrative, Fictionality and Imaginary” argues that the factual and the fictional narrative may be “different in terms of tone, as well as structure” but both still lie in “the realm of literary work…given that there is a dose of factual in the fictional and a dose of fictional in the factual” (Tudor 2013). This means that no fictional narrative can completely exist without facts or reality in it and at the same time no factual narrative can completely exist without fiction or fictiveness in it. Tudor further observes that both factual and fictional narratives make use of certain marked elements that enable them to be accepted “in the realm of literary works” (ibid). She gives such examples as “oral style, direct manner of addressing
the reader” and the use of “verbs in the past tense to report already concluded happenings” (ibid). Schaeffer (2013) holds similar view with Tudor and postulates that “every narrative induces varying degrees of immersive experience” and that “both fictional and non-fictional narrative texts invite readers to imagine a world” which “is a process of immersive simulation” (Schaeffer 2013). Here Schaeffer is as much as to say that readers of fiction and non-fiction always imaginatively participate in the unfolding experiences in these narratives hence “narrative immersion is not limited to fiction” alone (ibid). Tudor and Schaeffer’s observation above are supported by Kennedy (2013) and Wille (2014) as discussed earlier in this thesis.

The public/private interplay in both autobiographical and fictional narratives also forms one important similar feature both genres share. On autobiography, Zahavi (2015) observes that, “a self… is something that emerges in a process of social experience and interchange.” It is “a social construction…that is more a matter of politics and culture, than of science and nature.” Zahavi further opines that no individual can be a self on his or her “own, but only together with others” since “the only way to obtain the reflexive self-relation…is by being socialized into a publicly shared space” (Zahavi 2015).

Zahavi’s argument above is that since autobiography is a life story written by the person himself or herself, it enables the author to embrace all occurrences, both personal and public, of his or her life from infancy. The author’s memory alone cannot recall and report everything as they unfold. The narration is done after the events unfolded. A lot of what happened might reflect but cannot be recorded exactly from the past experience in the narration. This is because by the time the happenings are recorded the narrator must have experienced other experiences. The narrator therefore needs to depend on other people or history to be able to vividly reminisce some of his or her earlier experiences.
Nelson (2003) agrees with Zahavi that the self-narrative is a collective “construction” that “turns individual memories into shared conceptual systems” (Nelson);

Whether religious, secular poetic, or historic in form, communal narratives tend to reflect…societies, providing information for individuals of their place within the society…The memory burden for the individual is then different; it has more sources outside the person’s own experience (ibid).

From the above, it is clear that an individual may experience a lot of happenings in his or her life but cannot always be at the centre of these events. S/he therefore depends on history or the public to articulate these events.

On fiction, Edgar observes that:

In fiction you may expect characters from every area of life, and, because we all share the same capacities for concern, involvement, sympathy, happiness, sorrow, exhilaration, and disappointment, you should be able to interest yourself in characters and the ways in which they deal with their circumstances (Edgar 58).

This is as much as to say that fictional worlds are always created by authors to resemble the real and factual world we are physically experiencing.

Finally, the use of dialogue in both fictional and autobiographical texts, the out-of-sequence and widely separated episodes in the structure of both fictional and autobiographical texts authenticate the fact that there is an interrelationship between the two genres.

Odoi (2010) in his thesis, “Elements of the Autobiography in the West African novel” and in a 2015 paper “Application of the Genettean Theory of the Narrative Discourse on Three West African Autobiographies” classifies West African autobiographies into four categories namely: the fictional autobiography, the literary autobiography, autobiographical fiction and factual autobiography. Odoi argues that out of the four categories, the first three “have literary value…because they are works of practising novelists who make conscious efforts to include the aesthetic ingredients needed in a literary work.” The forth category only deals with “factual/historic record” (Odoi 2015).
Odoi thus uses Gerard Genette’s narratological approach to analyse, as he classifies them, Camara Laye’s fictional autobiography, *The African Child*, Wole Soyinka’s literary autobiography, *Ake: The Years of Childhood*, and Ayi Kwei Armah’s autobiographical fiction *Fragments*, to draw the differences.

Per Odoi’s classification above, Ngugi wa Thiong’o’s *Dreams in a Time of War* can also be classified as literary autobiography since it is of the same category as Wole Soyinka’s *Ake: The Years of Childhood*.

1.4II Literature Review of Ngugi wa Thiong’o’s Works

Most scholars have observed that Africa and its encounter with Europe and the consequences of the encounter in terms of social, political, economic and cultural situations have influenced the writing of Ngugi wa Thiong’o’s fictions and non-fictions. Pydah (2014) argues that, “Ngugi’s novels hold a mirror to his personal and social visions and exposes the picture of the evolution of the African from the colonial to the independent and the post-colonial.”

For Pydah, land ownership, its appropriation, and alienation constitute one of the major issues which feature significantly in both Ngugi’s fictions and non-fictions. He observes that Ngugi copiously uses language and various forms of linguistic features namely “verbal and non-verbal, symbolic and silent” to efficiently drive home his frustrations about the forced and wrongful seizure of Kenyan lands, leading to its control and exploitation by the white settlers. Pydah thus argues that “Ngugi’s confrontation with the present is charged with a historic sense” (Pydah 110). This historic sense, in Pydah’s opinion, is what triggers Ngugi to always try in many circumstances to expose the absolute dislocation of the black consciousness in the colonized world. Pydah enumerates various examples in *The River Between*, *Weep Not, Child*, *A Grain of Wheat*, *Petals of Blood*, *Devil on the Cross*, and *Home Coming* where alienation of blacks from their land feature prominently. He finally concludes that Ngugi’s
writings make major contribution to the perspective from which the African views life, politics, culture and history during and after colonialism.

Waita (2013) in a paper, “Identity, Politics and Gender Dimensions in Ngugi Wa Thiongos’s, *Wizard of the Crow*” presents a significant overview of how Ngugi treats themes of identity, politics, and gender in *The Wizard of the Crow* and observes that the novel mirrors slavery, colonialism, neo-colonialism, and globalisation and their effect on the African. In Waita’s opinion, one of the most significant queries Ngugi raises in the novel is the question of why Africans still allow themselves to be haunted by the “disease of contradicting identities.” He further observes that Ngugi suggests in the novel that unless Africans rediscover their personal identity and emancipate themselves, they would eternally remain subjugated and alienated in their own land. Another critical issue the paper puts forward is how Ngugi seeks to satirise the African political elite in the novel. For Waita, Ngugi questions how the present-day political elites in Africa hide behind the new multi-part political dispensation to champion their despotic inclinations through repressive acts against their fellow citizens. Waita finally discusses Ngugi’s presentation of women in the novel by projecting their quest to remain steadfast in the face of the daunting task of the Twenty-first Century social, political, and cultural adversities that afflict them.

Muchiri (2014) argues that Ngugi wa Thiongos memoirs, *Dreams in a Time of War* and *In the House of the Interpreter* proffer a child’s viewpoint of Kenya’s colonial history. She emphasizes that the two narratives give us an opportunity to understand “history from a kind of ‘domestic’ perspective; how the evils of colonialism affected families and how children interpreted what was going on around them” (Muchiri 87). Muchiri recounts Ngugi’s experiences in *Dreams in a Time of War* as the one which throws more light on colonial subjects’ struggle to survive through thick and thin to gain freedom from their colonial masters. It further captures the fight of the colonial subjects to get an education which some
Africans portray as part of their subjection to foreign ways. She further observes that *In the House of the Interpreter* continuous the childhood story of Ngugi and interweaves his high school experiences as student with the story of Kenya at that time. Muchiri, like Pydah, concludes by stating that Ngugi’s memoirs vividly use historical sources to recount the challenges faced by families during the state of emergency in Kenya.

Ndigirigi (2016) re-echoes Muchiri and puts forward that a close reading of Ngugi’s memoirs evidently illustrates the fact that “Ngugi was subjected to a disorienting experience that he captures through vivid imagery of ruin, terror and dislocation” (Ndigirigi 100). He observes that the all-encompassing retelling of the horrors of the emergency in Ngugi’s fictional works, essays, and the passion with which he narrates these harrowing experiences in his memoirs qualifies him as a trauma victim. For Ndigirigi, “Ngugi is able to articulate his grief as a grievance specifically because he is a product of the colonial school” (Ndigigi 93). He again agrees with Muchiri and Pydah that although some of the experiences Ngugi narrates are from historical sources, they represent the general mood of the people of the post-colonial Kenya. He further observes that Ngugi’s ability to capture trauma in *Weep Not, Child*, through Njoroge, *A Grain of Wheat*, through Mugo, *Petals of Blood*, through Abdulla, and in almost all his essays, is noteworthy and evidence of his trauma. Ndigirigi finally concludes that Ngugi’s core message in his two memoirs, *Dreams in a Time of War* and *In the House of the Interpreter* is the audacity to remain visionary in spite of all odds.

In sum, one can garner from the above literature that Ngugi’s writings and his themes reflect his personal experiences. That his writings also serve as a platform for the advancement of the African people, and challenge them to fight and rise from subjugation to emancipation in terms of social, political, economic and cultural setbacks. Finally, his writings and themes are creation from historical antecedents.
1.4III Biographical Sketch of Ngugi wa Thiong’o

Ngugi wa Thiong’o, was born in 1938, in Limuru. He had his high school education at the Alliance High School during the emergency period in Kenya. Ngugi received Bachelor’s Degree in English from Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda, in 1963. He also had a degree in Leeds University, Yorkshire, England, in 1964. After doing graduate work at Leeds, he served as a lecturer in English at University College, Nairobi, Kenya, and as a visiting professor of English at Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois, U.S. From 1972 to 1977, he was senior lecturer and chairman of the department of literature at the University of Nairobi.

His Weep Not, Child (1964), is considered as the first novel written by an Eastern African. His A Grain of Wheat (1967), generally held to be artistically more mature. It focuses on the many social, moral, and racial issues of the struggle for independence and its aftermath. A third novel, The River Between (1965), which was actually written before the others, tells of lovers kept apart by the conflict between Christianity and traditional ways and beliefs and suggests that efforts to reunite a culturally divided community by means of Western education are doomed to failure. Petals of Blood (1977), deals with social and economic problems in East Africa after independence, particularly the continued exploitation of peasants and workers by foreign business interests and a greedy indigenous bourgeoisie. He wrote many other novels and plays in both Gikuyu Language and in English Language.

Ngugi later published three memoirs, Dreams in a Time of War (2010), about his childhood; In the House of the Interpreter (2012), which was largely set in the 1950s, during the Mau Mau rebellion against British control in Kenya; and Birth of a Dream Weaver: A Writer’s Awakening (2016), a chronicle of his years at Makerere University. Ngugi currently teaches in the United States of America.
1.5 Research Questions

The research questions below address the concerns of the study:

- What are the various issues addressed by Ngugi in the two narratives?
- How does Ngugi demonstrate the intertextual links between fiction and autobiography in *Weep not, Child* and *Dreams in a Time of War*?

1.6 Methodology

This research is a qualitative study based on content analysis. “Content analysis is a research technique for making replicable and valid inference from texts to the context of their use” (Krippendorf 18). This researcher chooses content analysis because it makes it possible to investigate “new insights” and “increases a researcher’s understanding of particular phenomena” (Krippendorff ibid). In *Content Analysis: An introduction to its Methodology* (1989), Krippendorff puts forward that every text means something to someone and it is produced by someone to have meanings for someone else. These meanings therefore must not be uncared for and must not violate why the text exists (19). He further opines that every text has meaning relative to “particular contexts, discourse, or purpose” so an analyst can choose the framework within which s/he intends to glean meaning from a given text. Once the analyst chooses the framework for his/her intention, s/he must construct a world in which the text makes sense and can answer his/her research questions (24). He additionally argues that “a context renders perceptual data into readable texts and serves as the conceptual justification for reasonable interpretations, including for the result of content interpretation” (24).

In this light the researcher draws data from Ngugi wa Thiong’o’s *Weep not, Child* and *Dreams in a Time of War* as primary sources and analyses them within the framework of intertextuality where the one is seen as a work of art which addresses socio-political issues.
and the other as a fact which attempts to explain Ngugi wa Thiong’o’s personal identity. The work would thus look at textual analysis of the two genres and first show the similarities in data used in both of them. The work will then continue to show the generic differences of how data is used in the two genres by means of Time, Narrator and Point of View. The autobiographical model will further be used for the autobiography which is *Dreams in a Time of War*. The researcher also does library research on the genre of autobiography, fiction, and the concept of intertextuality, by assessing relevant on-line scholarly journals on these areas.

To answer the research questions, the researcher examines the various issues explored in the two genres. Issues such as Representation of Society, Home, and the Self; Land Ownership, Appropriation and Alienation; and the Mau Mau Revolutionary Resistance and State of Emergency are thus explored in both *Weep not, Child* and in *Dreams in a time of War* to showcase the extent to which fiction and fact/autobiography relate.

### 1.7 Conceptual Framework

This research employs the concept of intertextuality to draw a link between fiction and non-fiction/autobiography. In his “Tradition and the Individual Talent”, T.S. Eliot avers 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.” This means that a new work by an author would definitely have an affiliation with older text(s). This research therefore looks at how Ngugi wa Thiong’o’s *Dreams in a Time of War* has affiliation with his *Weep not, Child*. The research will further argue 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 these two texts will serve as a marker to argue that the same material is handled in two different ways as earlier stated.
Ayo Kehinde (2003) avers that “the relevance of intertextuality to the analysis of contemporary African Drama has been widely discussed.” However, “the theory in the production and criticism of contemporary African fiction” has not been very prominent. He makes this observation in his 2003 article “Intertextuality and the Contemporary African Novel.” In this article, he discusses the basic issues relating to the concept of intertextuality to the appraisal of the contemporary African novel and observes that “African Writers rely on oral traditions of their society...most especially the intertextual links between oral and written text” (Kehinde 2003).

Kehinde’s observation about the African novel can be conveniently related to African autobiographies. Self-writing in Africa enjoys very little critical discourse on the concept of intertextuality. For the most part, African autobiographies are analysed in terms of language, staging the self, the relationship between the narrating and the narrated self, memory and identity, the experience of estrangement and the structure of the text. Kennedy (2013) confirms this and posits that “Autobiographical narratives are ontological mappings of an individual’s perceived existence...history and memory, identity and imagination” and that “autobiographies advance towards the speaker’s self-interpretation as a means of self-creation” (Kennedy). This shows that critical discourse on self-writing is always skewed toward ‘self’, ‘memory’, ‘history’, ‘identity’ and ‘imagination’ (Dobos). In their essay, “African Modes of Self-Writing” J.A. Mbembe and Steven Rendall (2002) identify slavery, colonization, and apartheid as “three historical events” that influence self-writing in Africa. Recent scholarly works on autobiographies only delve into narrative structure, voice, point of view and episodical patterning of the genre. Otieno (2014) in “Autobiographics in Ngugi wa Thiong’o’s Dreams in a Time of War: A Childhood Memoir and In the House of the Interpreter” only explores artistry in the two autobiographies and does comparative studies on them. Also, Nyantimo (2014) in an unpublished thesis “Representation of memory in
Ngugi wa Thiong’o’s *Dreams in a Time of War* and Wole Soyinka’s *Ake: The Years of Childhood* only seeks to “compare and contrast the way childhood memories are represented” (Nyantino) in the two autobiographies. Not enough literature has been found on the intertextual links between fiction and fact/autobiography.

The drive to explore intertextual links between fiction and fact/autobiography is therefore, triggered by the necessity to contribute to the relatively limited literature on the concept.

Following from above, it is important to look at the general overview of various dimensions regarding intertextuality. Scholars on Intertextuality have made noteworthy contributions to the concept and agree that the concept stems from the early to mid-20th century. Alfaro (1996), and Haberer (2007), in their respective individual articles, “Intertextuality: Origins and Development of the Concept” and “Intertextuality: Theory and Practice” agree that T.S. Eliot is the forerunner of the fundamental idea of intertextuality.

Although Eliot does not use the word ‘intertextuality’ in his essay, “Tradition and the Individual Talent” (1919), 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) is as much as to say, there always exists intertextual links and for that matter affiliation between a new text and an existing one. It thus always seems as though the new texts are continually being affected by the works of existing texts since there are connections between the earlier work and the new one.

What happens when a new work of art is created is something that happens simultaneously to all the works of art which preceded it. The existing monuments form an ideal order among themselves, which is modified by the introduction of the (really new) work of art among them (Eliot).

Bloom takes a similar line of reasoning as T.S. Eliot, and seeks to offer a theory in *The Anxiety of Influence* (1973) which he terms “poetic misprision” or the account of “intra-

First, ‘Clinamen’ according to Bloom, refers to poetic misreading or “mispriision” where a poet swerves away from the parent poem or precursor. Secondly, ‘Tessera’ refers to a situation where the new poet retains the terms of the precursor but means another thing all together. ‘Kenosis’ is a movement toward discontinuity with the precursor where the new poet empties himself of his own creative impulse or inspiration yet the precursor poem still smells in the new poem. ‘Daemonization’ is where the later poet opens himself to what he believes to be a power in the parent poem that does not belong to the parent proper, but to a range of being beyond that precursor. Then, ‘Askesis,’ or movement of self-purgation, intends the attainment of a state of solitude. Here the later poet does not undergo a revisionary movement of emptying but of curtailing; he yields up part of his creativity in order to separate himself from others, including the precursor. Finally, ‘Apophrades,’ or the return of the dead holds that the poet who affiliates with the predecessor makes his poem so open to the forerunner’s work that one may believe the “wheel has come full circle” and the extraordinary effect is that the new poem’s achievement makes it seem as though the later poet himself had written the forerunner’s typical work (Bloom 15).

The observation both Eliot and Bloom express in “Tradition and the Individual Talent” and The Anxiety of Influence confirms the fact that their ideas are compatible with the concept of intertextuality.

Michele Koven (2015) in his article, “Intertextuality” agrees with Eliot and Bloom’s ideas and posits that intertextuality exposes all instances and types of discourse which is either
spoken or written and bears relationship to other instances and other types of discourse. There
are consequently no “stand-alone” communicative events; that there are always intertextual
links not only between individual communicative events but also between genres (Koven).

Available literature indicates that Kristeva was the first to use the word ‘Intertextuality’
although the concept was not created, “ex nihilo” out of her “fertile brain” (Haberer 2007).
According to Haberer, Kristeva, introduced the term in her interpretation of Saussure and
Bakhtin's works she studied and holds that meaning could no more be seen as a finished
product but now trapped in a process of production (ibid).

Allen (2000) asserts that Saussure’s study of semiotics, as means of language and
communication on one hand, and Bakhtin’s fundamental idea which depends on the
conception that an utterance or a literary work cannot be measured as independent, or
unrelated to previous or future utterances or literary works on the other hand, influenced and
provoked the thoughts of Kristeva to introduce the term intertextuality (Allen 3).

After Kristeva, the term ‘intertextuality’ has been used by various scholars in various ways in
reading and understanding a text. For example, Roland Bathes proposes the concept which
states that texts cannot be considered in isolation without taking any other text into account;
that all texts hold rudiments of other texts previously uttered. Bathes, in “The Death of the
Author” (1977) argues that a text is made up of several writings and so it is a product of array
of sources. The author simply assembles, intermingles and rearranges the text. Consequently,
authors are not the originators of the text, since all texts must be understood in relation to
other texts (Bathes).

Allen posits 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).

They are…call intertextual. The act of reading plunges us into a network of textual relations. To interpret a text, to discover its meaning, or meanings, is to trace those relations. Reading thus becomes a process of moving between texts. Meaning becomes something which exists between a text and all the other texts to which it refers and relates, moving out from the independent text into a network of textual relations (Allen 1).

There is no established mainstream definition of intertextuality (Haberer 2007). According to Allen (2000), “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” (4). This is a confirmation enough that Intertextuality is a flexible concept. Shakib (2013) shares the same view with Allen that “Intertextuality…has a broader meaning in today’s context” and that “there are conflicting views among scholars on this topic.”

The various strands of the concept of intertextuality as examined above give meaning to intertextuality as putting two or more texts side by side and looking at what is common in them. Intetextuality is thus a useful instrument for critical discourse on fiction which is the work of art and autobiography which is factual, real, and for that matter nonfiction. Allen argues that texts, whether they are 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 1).

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). This study will therefore be concerned with looking at intertextual links between Ngugi wa Thiong’o’s fiction, Weep not, Child and nonfiction Dreams in a Time of War since the researcher considers it as relevant to the study.
1.8 Significance of the Study

A lot of research has been carried out on fiction and autobiographies all over the world. In recent times, Africa has also seen many scholars writing and critiquing same respectively.

Intertextuality has also been widely studied all over the world where the concept is used to critique various art forms. The same can also be said about critical discourse on intertextuality in Africa where the concept is applied to the three main literary genres, namely prose, poetry and drama.

Unfortunately, this researcher is yet to see a scholarly discourse where intertextuality, as a concept, is applied to critique African fiction and autobiography at the same level. This study will therefore establish a new dimension of scholarly discourse on the two genres by drawing the relationship between fiction and autobiography. It will also add to critical dialogue on Ngugi wa Thiog’o’s literary work by attempting an intertextual examination into his fiction, *Weep not, Child* and his autobiography, *Dreams in a Time of War*, by drawing the relationship between the two. Drawing the relationship between the two is very significant because of the many years in-between the two narratives. *Weep not, Child* as fiction, was written in 1964 when Ngugi was 26 (twenty-six) years old while *Dreams in a Time of War* as an autobiography, was written in 2010 when he was 72 (seventy-two) years old and more reflective and experienced. This means that *Dreams in a Time of War* was written 46 (forty-six) years after *Weep not, Child* was written. But it is clear that the same material or data is handled in two different ways – that is as fiction in *Weep not, Child* and as fact/autobiography in *Dreams in a Time of War*. Thus as fiction, *Weep not, Child* is a work of art hence data can be skewed and manipulated by the author. As fact/autobiography, *Dreams in a Time of War* deals with memory and reflection. The researcher is therefore convinced that this study would make a distinctive input into putting fiction and fact/autobiography side
by side to draw the intertextual relationship between the two genres and at same time showing their differences. The study would also add to scholarly works of Ngugi wa Thiong’o, who is already an established literary figure.

1.9 Justification of the Study

This research is limited to analysing Ngugi wa Thiong’o’s *Weep not, Child* (1964) and *Dreams in a Time of War* (2010) as the primary texts to provide an intertextual inquest into fiction and fact/autobiography. The study is justified because it attempts to see how far the same data or material is used differently after so many years later under different genres to tell the same story. The study is also justified because it makes it possible for the two texts to be juxtaposed and jointly analysed although they are different genres and there are so many years in-between them.

1.10 Delimitation

The two texts are chosen from two different orientations as far as narratives are concerned. *Weep not, Child* is a fictional narrative whereas *Dreams in a Time of War* is an autobiography, a nonfictional narrative. Ideally the two texts should have been of equal terms; that is they should have been either two fictional narratives or two non-fictional narratives. Thus there is crossing of genres as far as the selection of these two texts is concerned. However, the researcher believes that the texts will help achieve the objective of the study which is the intertextual connections in both texts since the same material or data is used in both. The only difference in the two narratives is that they are fiction and fact/autobiography respectively.
1.11 Thesis Structure

The thesis comprises an introduction, four chapters, conclusion and recommendation. The Introduction is composed of the Background to the Study, the Statement of the Problem, the Objective of the Study, Literature Review, Research Questions, Methodology, Conceptual Framework, Significance of the Study, Justification of the Study Delimitation of the Study as well as the Thesis Structure. Chapter One dwells on the basic similarities in terms of data between the two genres where data from three thematic areas are compared. These thematic areas are: Representation of Society, Home, and the Self; Chapter Two looks at the Generic Difference between the two genres in terms of Time, Narrator and Point of View. Chapter Three puts a spotlight on the Autobiographical Dimensions of *Dreams in a Time of War*, while Chapter Four looks at the Themes, Characterisation and Diction of both genres. The study finally looks at the Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations.
This chapter examines the raw data, that is the story and events as they occur, between *Weep Not, Child* and *Dreams in a Time of War*. It looks at the basic similarities in terms of data between the two genres where data from three thematic areas are compared to establish their intertextual link. These thematic areas are: Representation of Society, Home, and the Self.

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

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 concern.

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

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 *Weep Not, Child* and *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 othe 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 a 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, filing 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).
2.3 Representation of Self in *Weep Not, Child* and *Dreams in a Time of War*

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…Jacobo had small boys and one big son and big daughter. The big daughter was a teacher. Her 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 Mwihaki 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 help heightens 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 Kiaring’a school, I was across 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 Mwihaki while he has only a piece of calico covering his body. This feeling drives him to want to avoid meeting Mwihaki 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 “Aaaaa’s”, the “Eeeeee’s”, the “Iiiiiii’s”, the “Oooooo’s” and the “U-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.

In sum there exist a strong sense of intertextual links between *Weep Not, Child*, which is fiction, and *Dreams in a Time of War*, which is an autobiography as seen from above.
CHAPTER TWO

THE GENERIC DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WEEP NOT, CHILD AND DREAMS IN A TIME OF WAR

Having looked at the raw data in both fiction and fact/autobiography, that is Weep Not, Child and Dreams in a Time of War, and having established the intertextual link between the two genres, and having confirmed that the data used in the two genres are the same but treated differently, it is appropriate to look at the respective structures of the two works in this chapter. By structure we mean the discourse, the form, the how or the rhetoric of a work. The focus will therefore shift to the methods used in presenting data in both texts, that is the way each of the two genres (fiction and autobiography) explore their data in terms of the three major sub-structures of a narrative: ‘Time’, ‘Narrator’ and ‘Point of View.’

In my discussion of the various narrative categories, I will here and there use the terms and analysis of Genette as outlined in his essay on narrative discourse. I find his model a convenient tool, and I will here and there resort to his methodology in my analysis. I begin with the explanation of time in both works in the way time is ordered and paced. In a narrative, Time is ordered either linearly or anachronously, and in assessing the two works, I shall examine both lineal and anachronous Time Order.

3.1 Linear Time Order in Weep Not, Child

In Weep Not, Child, the linear story time begins with the period of Njoroge’s boyhood where his mother asks him if he will like to go to school, to the period of his attempted suicide after he has dropped out of school. The story time may thus be summarised as follows: Njoroge’s mother asks him if he would like to go to school. He agrees and his mother promises he will
start the following Monday (Chapter I P3). In Chapter II P13-14 Njoroge goes to school as his mother has informed him earlier.

Njoroge makes his mother angry after three weeks in school when he gets home late after closing from school (P15). Njoroge asks his mother to tell him a story since he could not tell one in school when he was asked by the teacher (P16). Njoroge’s father tells them a story about the land and for the first time Njoroge gets to know that the land Mr Howlands occupies is the ancestral land of their family. P18-19 Njoroge suffers embarrassment at a Christmas party in Jacobo’s house. In Chapter IV P33-35, Njoroge shows his prowess as a pupil who enjoys reading in school when teacher Issaka teaches them the sounds of the English alphabets. Njoroge gets promoted from the beginners’ class to Standard One due to his good performance. He thus jumps one class which the teachers feel is unnecessary for him. In Chapter V P44-45, Njoroge finds himself confused in class in responding to question-and-answer drills. His class on another day confusedly responds ‘sir’ instead of ‘madam’ to a visiting European woman’s greetings. In the same chapter V P49 the narrative tells us that Njoroge places his faith in the Bible, and he hopes that through this his family and village will see salvation. For the first time Njoroge witnesses his parents’ quarrel leading to his father beating his mother because of an impending strike.

In Chapter VII Njoroge passes his examination that would enable him to go to the intermediate school. He tops the class and happily runs home to break the good news to his parents. He reaches home and encounters trouble looming. He remembers the day is the appointed day for the strike. His father causes a stir during the proceedings at the gathering by attacking Jacobo and he gets hurt in the process (P55-56). Later a state of emergency is declared in the country. In Chapter VIII P68 Njoroge enrols in a new school where he hears strange stories about Dedan Kimathi’s wondrous deeds. In Chapter IX P73, Njoroge gets highly disappointed when he learns that Jomo Kenyatta, a person he regards as the black
Moses and saviour of Kenyan people, lost his court case and has thus been incarcerated. In Chapter X, the narrative tells us that Njoroge goes to school another day and learns that Kimathi has posted a letter on the wall of the school ordering the headmaster to close down the school or find himself and the pupils in trouble (82-83). Njoroge meets Mwihaki after a long while in Chapter XI and both agree to meet on Sunday in church. Mwihaki invites Njoroge to her house after church service. Although he protests, Mwihaki persuades him to agree. Njoroge, for the first time since the state of emergency, encounters Jacobo, Mwihaki’s father. Jacobo briefly engages Njoroge in a conversation and asks him about his progress in school. He further encourages him to study hard since they are the future leaders who would rebuild the country. Njoroge and Mwihaki later go to the countryside to be all alone together. Mwihaki suggests she and Njoroge elope to somewhere and come back after all the troubles in the land. Njoroge rejects the idea and promises to forever remain a friend to her (P92-96).

In Chapter XII, Njoroge, his friend, Mucatha, teacher Isaka and a few people get arrested on their way to a Christian gathering a few miles away from the town. Njoroge and Mucatha narrowly escape the gruesome fate of death by producing letters from their former headmaster indicating that they are school boys. Teacher Isaka fails to produce any document and hence gets murdered in cold blood.

Chapter XIII tells us that Njoroge has passed his K.A.P.E. and he is the only candidate from his area who qualifies to go to High School. He therefore goes to Siriana Secondary School. In Siriana, Njoroge meets Stephen, Mr Howlands’ son, during a sports festival when Stephen’s school, Hill School, visits Siriana. They quickly get acquainted and make friends with each other (Chapter XIV). Njoroge is picked up in school by the police in Chapter XV and sent to a detention camp under suspicion that he played a role in Jacobo’s death. He suffers torture at the hands of the homeguard and Mr Howlands. His father and mother have also been picked up, detained and tortured. In Chapter XVII Njoroge drops out of school and
gets employments at an Indian shop as a sales boy but fails to execute the work at the shop satisfactorily. In Chapter XVIII, Njoroge schedules to meet Mwihaki. When they meet he suggests they elope as Mwihaki has once suggested. Mwihaki too rejects the idea of elopement and advises that they better wait as Njoroge once advised (P133). After meeting with Mwihaki and getting disappointed, Njoroge nurses the idea of committing suicide which he attempts. But his mother timely intervenes and saves the situation. Thus in Weep Not, Child, the linear narrative unfolds chronologically from point A to point B down to point Z.

3.2 Linear Time Order in Dreams in a Time of War

The linear story time in Dreams in a Time of War covers the period of Ngugi’s birth in 1938 to the point of his arrival at Alliance High School in 1954. This is sixteen years. The story commences from Episode II P9 with the birth of Ngugi in 1938. In Episode VIII, Ngugi’s mother proposes the idea of his going to school to him in P58.

He started the school in 1947 and enrolled in starting class B. Teacher Isaac Kuria registered him as Ngugu wa Thiong’o instead of the name he himself gave as Ngugi wa Wanjiku (P61). He performed creditably at school and got promoted from sub class B to sub class A (P64). Ngugi came across a copy of Old Testament which became his reader (P65). In 1948 Ngugi changed school from Kamandura to Manguo. In Episode XI P80-82 Ngugi suffered embarrassment during a Christmas party in Reverend Kahahu’s house. In Episode XIII P96, his father ostracised him together with his brother from his home and warned them to not play with their siblings. In episode XVI P16-17, Ngugi wrote an essay in Gikuyu which attracted his teacher’s attention. The essay was subsequently read in the school’s assembly. He showed his prowess as a singer and became a travelling troubadour in Episode XVII P123-128. Ngugi dropped out of school in Episode XXI P166-167 until 1953 due to a ban on
Karing’a and Kisa schools which were schools run by the native Kenyans. He got circumcised in Episode XXV P196-203.

In Episode XXII P176 he got baptized and christened as James. In Episode XXVI P207-208 Ngugi got nearly arrested in a police swoop during the emergency. Unfortunately, the police killed his deaf brother in the swoop. In 1954 he got into trouble with the emergency laws when he and his friend got arrested and Ngugi went through a very rigorous interrogation in Episode XXIX P237-240. Ngugi later learned he had passed the KAPE P242 and was the only candidate selected for admission to the prestigious Alliance High School in the whole district. In Episode XXXI P254-256 Ngugi faced the realities of the time when a European railway official stopped him from boarding the train to school because he had no pass. Fortunately for him, an African assistant station master helped him board another train to Kikuyu Township. The linear time order in *Dreams in a Time of War* ended with Ngugi finally arriving at Alliance High School.

Looking at style and the compositional techniques of *Weep Not, Child*, which is fiction and *Dreams in a Time of War*, which is autobiography, it is apparent that both narratives make use of Time differently. While *Weep Not, Child* shows a great deal of artistry the same cannot be said about *Dreams in a Time of War*.

In spite of the basic outlines in both *Weep Not, Child* and *Dreams in a Time of War* above, the typical features of style and compositional technique found in both narratives are various instances of Anachronies. It is observed that there exists flexibility in terms of narration in *Weep Not, Child* where movement between analepsis (flashback) and linear Time abounds. Also, it is noticeable in *Dreams in a Time of War* that the narrative dwells expansively on analepsis (flashbacks) only, where the past is recalled to bring forth Ngugi’s story. Detailed analysis of the anachronies in both narratives is done as follows.
3.3 Anachronous Time in *Weep Not, Child* and *Dreams in a Time of War*

3.3.I Exterior Analepsis

One outstanding feature of telling the stories in both *Weep Not, Child* and *Dreams in a Time of War* is the creative means by which the narratives retrieve the past in various forms. One of the means by which the narratives retrieve the past is through moving to a time before the story begins (exterior analepsis). Accordingly, the First World War stories in both genres are incidents which took place outside the story. For example, the First World War took place long before the story in *Weep Not, Child* began. Thus Ngotho was a mere boy before his conscription to fight in “the first big war” (*Weep* 25). This happened long before the story in *Weep Not, Child*.

In *Dreams in a Time of War*, the First World War ended twenty years before Ngugi was born; since available historical facts show that the war ended in 1918 and Ngugi was born in 1938. Another example of exterior analepsis in both texts is found in the story of how the parents of the protagonists in both genres got married. In *Weep Not, Child*, Njoroge’s mother, Nyokabi and his father, Ngotho teasingly describe how they got married.

“Oh! But he could not resist me.”

“It isn’t true,” said Ngotho who just then entered the hut.

“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.”

(*Weep* 23).

Wanjiku, Ngugi’s mother tells us a similar story about why and how she got married to Ngugi’s father, Nducu.

It was because of his two wives, Wangari and Gacoki, and their children...They were always together, such harmony, and I often wondered how it would feel to be in their company. And your father? He was not to be denied...But I did not want him to think
that I would simply fall for his words and reputation…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).

It is obvious from the above that the two genres purposely use these exterior analepses to enable the past to give explanation to the present events and prepare us to see the story in the light of the past as they unfold.

3.3.II Interior Analepsis

Various instances of interior analepsis, a flashback of an event in the form of a recall, are evident in both Weep Not Child and Dreams in a Time of War. The information on the strike incidents in both genres comes to us in the form of a flashback. In Weep Not, Child we receive the news about the strike in Chapter VII P56–59 when after receiving the good news of passing the promotional examination to intermediate school, Njoroge came to meet total panic at home. The panic at home was due to an incident that happened earlier during the day in the narrative which Njoroge was not privy to, since he was at school then. The occurrence had to do with the strike action where Njoroge’s father, Ngotho, attacked Jacobo. It was after Njoroge rushed home eager to divulge the good news of his promotion to his parents that he got to know what had happened earlier during the day. Njoroge learned from a woman that while Kiari was addressing the gathering, the colonial police, accompanied by Jacobo, stormed the meeting. Njoroge’s father, Ngotho, in frenzy, walked toward Jacobo and made a bid to attack him. Everyone in the gathering followed suit and this compelled the police to throw a tear-gas bomb to disperse the crowd. When Ngotho was running away a police man struck his face with a truncheon and this rendered him unconscious. This is the situation Njoroge meets at home after school. From the above narration, it is understandable that Njoroge is being told what had earlier occurred in the narrative. The story about the strike as
told by the woman to Njoroge is a recall hence a flashback of past event. Indeed, the strike marks one of the major turning points in the fiction.

A similar data found in Dreams in a Time of War about the strike is presented differently in Episode XVII P139 thus.

Most dramatic was the new rumour that all workers in Kenya had come together under the umbrella of the East African Trade Union Congress; that they had called a general strike to oppose the granting of royal charter to Nairobi, in 1950, which raised its status from municipality to a city (Dreams 139).

Evidence from this data as compared with the one in Weep Not, Child confirms the certainty that the two texts present similar data in different modes. This is due to the fact that Weep Not, Child being a fiction employs exaggeration by adding more flesh to what had happened during the strike. But the historical data explored in the factual world of Dreams in a Time of War is succinct and straight to the point.

Another example of interior analepsis is found in the information about the arrest of Jomo Kenyatta and the declaration of state of emergency. In the fictional universe of Weep Not, Child the information comes to us first through the narrator who tells us that:

One night people heard that Jomo and all the leaders of the land were arrested. A state of emergency had been declared (Weep 63)

These two statements, the first one a compound sentence and the second a simple sentence, are direct narrations which give more information about what happened earlier. After giving these information, the narrator plunges us into dialogue.

“But they cannot arrest Jomo,” said the barber.
“They cannot.”
“They want to leave people without a leader.”
“Yes. They are after oppressing us,” said the barber. He did not speak with the usual lively tone.
“What’s a state of emergency?” a man asked.
“Oh, don’t ask a foolish question. Haven’t you heard about Malaya?”
“What about it?”
“There was a state of emergency.”
(Weep 63 – 64).

This is to portray how dramatic the arrest and the declaration of the state of emergency seem to the people. Weep Not, Child, being fiction, uses dialogue to enable us see the emotional states of the people and the tension Jomo Kenyatta’s arrest evokes in them. The questions and the answers to the questions in the extract also portray the ignorance of the one who asks the questions and the ignorance of the one who answers them. So, from direct narration through dialogue and ending up with questions, we receive the news from a recall of earlier events that took place in the story.

We receive information about a similar instance of Jomo Kenyatta’s arrest and the declaration of state of emergency through a recall in Dreams in a Time of War.

And then on October 20, 1952, came the shocker. Jomo Kenyatta, Bildad Kaggia, Fred Kubai, Paul Ngei, Achieng Oneko, Kung’u Karumba, and other had been arrested...Philip Mitchell had declared a state of emergency (Dreams 154).

Here the whole episode is brought to us through direct narration and summary. A lot of information is therefore elided. We do not have opportunity to see the emotional state of the narrator as we have seen in the characters in the extract from Weep Not, Child. Dreams in a Time of War, being an autobiography, gives us the actual date the news of the arrest and the declaration of state of emergency happened through a recall.

The vivid and dramatic means by which the episode in Weep Not, Child is presented as against the direct narration in Dreams in a Time of War shows the generic difference between fiction and autobiography. In terms of Interior Analepsis therefore, the use of artistry is more distinctive in Weep Not, Child than its use in Dreams in a Time of War.
3.4 Time Duration in Weep Not, Child and Dreams in a Time of War

Duration is the narrative pace or movement or speed at which a narrative moves. Scene and Summary in which dialogue and narration are used respectively constitute the two major techniques used by Weep Not, Child and Dreams in a Time of War.

In Weep Not, Child, the conversation between Njoroge and his mother, Nyokabi, when the latter asks the former whether he would like to go to school in Chapter I P3 is one of the scenes in the narrative.

Nyokabi called him. She was a small, black woman with a bold but grave face. One could tell by her small eyes full of life and warmth that she had once been beautiful. But time and bad conditions do not favour beauty. All the same, Nyokabi had retained her full smile – a smile that lit up her dark face (Weep 3).

“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…
“I like school.”
“All right. You’ll begin 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).

The above extract is a scene in time duration which furnishes us with a hint that Njoroge will be going to school.

Through dialogue between mother and son we are informed about plans for Njoroge to go to school.

The scene starts with direct narration where the omniscient third person narrator tells us everything about Nyokabi. It is through the narrator’s commentary, where he summarises Nyokabi’s present status, that we know that she was once a beautiful woman. Just after the
summary, we are plunged into a dialogue. The simple interrogative sentence, “Would you like to go to school?” is enough to send Njoroge into trance. Njoroge’s response in a simple exclamation, “O, mother!” shows how overjoyed he is on hearing the news that he will be going to school. In the rest of the dialogue we see Nyokabi, Njoroge’s mother, giving more information through the use of simple declarative sentences. Examples are: “We are poor”, “You know that”, “So you won’t be getting a mid-day meal like other children.” It is observed from the dialogue that in Njoroge’s responses to his mother’s first question and to all the information given to him, he uses only two-word phrases. For example, “O, Mother!”, “Yes, mother.”, “I understand.” This shows his excitement and how urgent and very important the news is to him. He is therefore ready to put up with every condition given him.

Thus from the conversation between Njoroge and his mother we learn about the conditions given him. He must strictly observe these conditions in the future to enable him attend the school. He agrees and his mother promises him that he will go to school the next Monday. This keeps us in anticipation as to which school Njoroge will be going to and how he is going to fare when he goes to the school. We will also like to know if he is able to live up to expectation by strictly observing all the conditions his mother gives him.

We are therefore not surprised when on the next Monday Njoroge goes to school. We are also not surprised by Njoroge’s subsequent performance throughout his school life. This is due to the promises Njoroge makes to his mother that he will study hard and never do anything which will bring shame to her.

In *Dreams in a Time of War* a similar data which talks about Ngugi’s going to school is treated differently.

One evening my mother asked me: would like to go to school? It was in 1947. I can’t recall the date or the month. I remember being wordless at first. But the question and
the scene were forever engraved in my mind. My mother had to ask the question again (*Dreams* 58).

Here, it is obvious that the same events are treated in different forms. The above extract is a summary in time duration. It gives a specific historical date of the incident and it summarises everything there is to say. For example, it tells us the exact time of the day, and the year Ngugi’s mother called and told him about his going to school. This enables us to see the generic difference between fiction and autobiography. While in the fictional world of *Weep Not, Child* ‘scene’, ‘summary’ and ‘elision’ is employed to make the work lively and interesting, in the factual/autobiographical world of *Dreams in a Time of War*, the information comes through direct narration which is in the form of summary.

The news which carries the message of the Chief’s assassination by unknown assailants at Murang’a in the Interlude P62-63 in the fictional world of *Weep Not, Child* comes to us through dialogue which is Scene in Duration.

“Have you heard, brother?”
“No!”
“But you have not asked me what.”
“My children cry for food.”
“But don’t you want to hear what happened in Murang’a?”
“Oh, Murang’a. That’s far away…”
“A chief has been killed.”
“Oh! Is that all? My wife is waiting for me.”
“But it’s all interesting—“
“I’ll come, then, in the evening for the story.”
“All right. Do. Other people are coming. I have a wireless set.”
“My wife calls. Stay in Peace.”
“Go in peace.”

…

“He was a big chief.”
“Like Jacobo?”
“No. Bigger. He used to eat with the Governor.”
“Was he actually killed in daylight?”
“Yes. The men were very daring.”
“Tell us it all again.”
Woman, add more wood to the fire and light the lantern for darkness falls…Now, the chief was a big man with much land. The Government had given it all to him, so he might sell the black people. The men were in a car. The chief was also in a car. The two men followed him all the way from Nairobi. When they reached the countryside, the men drove ahead and waved the chief to stop. He stopped. “Who’s the chief?” “I am.” “Then take that and that. And that too.” They shot him dead and drove away—“In daylight?” “In daylight. The man on wireless said so.” “This generation.” “Very daring. They have learned the trick from the white man.”

(Weep 62 - 63)

This extensive and elaborate dialogue during the interlude is an example of scene in duration which vividly tells us what happened to the Chief and mirrors a gloomy picture of the state of affairs. The dialogue also shows that the two characters are in a fix and wonder what awaits the society in future. It is through the dialogue that we receive the news on how the chief was assassinated. The dialogue brings out the fact that the chief is a traitor since he dines with the Governor. Additionally, we also learn that the chief owns much land and that this land is given to him by the Governor.

A comparable data of an assassination story carried out in the factual world of Dreams in a Time of War tells the same story but uses a different mode of presentation.

It was from the radio that in early October 1952 we heard that Senior Chief Waruhiu had been assassinated in what Mburu Matemo described as a Chicago gang-style killing, a car trailing the chief’s, then pulling alongside, some people dressed in fake police uniforms politely asking the chief to identify himself and then pumping him with bullets before driving away, and all this in broad daylight (Dreams 153 – 154).

In the extract above the assassination episode comes in a form summary in time duration. Thus the mode of presentation of events in the two worlds of Weep Not, Child and Dreams in a Time of War follow different patterns. As seen above we experience dramatic scene in the one and direct narration in the other.

Another instance of Time Duration in Weep Not, Child, where ‘narrative time’ equals ‘story time’, is found where Ngotho beats his wife Nyokabi in Chapter VI P52-53. It is through
dialogue - where Nyokabi attempts to convince her husband, Ngotho, not to take part in the strike due to the seeming disadvantages of taking part - that the story is unveiled. The verbal exchange between husband and wife is dramatic and full of passion.

“I must be a man in my own house.”
“Yes – be a man and lose a job.”
“I shall do whatever I like. I have never taken orders from a woman.”
“We shall starve…”
“You starve! This strike is important for the black people. We shall get bigger salaries.”
“What’s black people to us when we starve?”
“Shut that mouth. How long do you think I can endure this drudgery, for the sake of a white man and his children?”
“But he’s paying you money. What if the strike fails?”
“Don’t woman me!” he shouted hysterically. This possibility was what he feared most. She sensed this not of uncertainty and fear and seized upon it.
“What if the strike fails, tell me that!”
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 52 – 53).

The dialogue above depicts a vivid scene where we can imaginatively see the two characters arguing about whether or not Ngotho should take part in the strike.

In a similar data where Wanjiku, Ngugi’s mother, suffers the same fate of domestic violence in *Dreams in a Time of War*, the data is presented through direct narration which summarises the incident as it occurred.

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, filing 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).
Unlike in *Weep Not, Child* where we see extensive and comprehensive dialogue which shows the happening in a Scene in Duration, in *Dreams in a Time of War* it is through Summary in Duration, as captured in the extract above, that information about Ngugi’s mother being abused by her husband comes to us. The same data is therefore presented in different modes. The artistic effect here is that in presenting the issues in both narratives, *Weep Not, Child*, which is fiction, employs more artistry through dialogue and exaggeration than *Dreams in a Time of War* which presents the event through narration.

Additionally, in *Weep Not, Child*, Scene is the means through which Kamau makes known the murder of the six prominent men of the village to Njoroge in Chapter XI P85-86. Njoroge meets his brother very much lost in thought. When he finds out from him the reason behind his being moody, the following dialogue ensues.

Njoroge found Kamau not working. There was an uneasy calm over the whole town.

“Is it well with you, brother?”
“IT’s just as well! How is home?”
“Everything in good condition. Why are you all so grave?”
Kamau looked at Njoroge.
“Haven’t you heard, that the barber and – and - ? Six in all were taken from their houses three nights ago. They have been discovered dead in the forest.”
“Dead!”
“Yes!”
“The barber dead? But he cut my hair only – oh dead?”
“It’s a sad business. You know them all. One was Nganga.”
“Nganga on whose land we have built?” “Yes!”
“Yes!”

“Who killed them really, the white men?”
“Who can tell these days who kills who?”
“Nganga really dead!”
“Yes. And the barber.” (*Weep* 85 - 86).

The above conversation is an illustration of Scene in Time Duration. It is through the dialogue between Njoroge and Kamau that we hear for the first time in the narrative about the murder of the six prominent men. It is observed that there is a brief summary where the
narrator runs commentary on Kamau’s demeanour before Njoroge arrives and finds out from him about what has made him look so dejected. It is then that Kamau breaks the news of the killings to him.

In *Dreams in a Time of War* an identical data is presented in a different mode. Here, the news of the murder comes to us through narration which is a summary.

A white man, a British officer, with a gang of African paramilitary, came for Kimuchu by night. His wife assumed that he had been arrested the way Kenyatta and others had been. But when she and other relatives enquired at police stations they got no news. After a few days what happened became clear. Kimuchu, Njerandi, Elijah Karanja, Mwangi, Nehemiah, some of the most prominent men in Limuru, all picked up the same night, had been summarily executed by the British officer at a wooded glen in Kinenii, a few yards by the road (*Dreams* 161 – 162).

It is clear from the two extracts above that while in the fictional world of *Weep Not, Child* the narrative uses Scene in Duration to break the news, in the factual world of *Dreams in a Time of War*, Summary in Duration is used to break the news. It is therefore important to note that the same messages from the two texts are presented in different modes.

From the data cited above in both *Weep Not, Child* and *Dreams in a Time of War* it is obvious that in *Weep Not, Child* there is always an alternation between Scene and Summary hence narration and drama are mainly intertwined to give us detailed information. There are also various instances of pauses and elisions in *Weep Not, Child*. All these mark the narrative’s core of the fictive version of the events.

In *Dreams in a Time of War* most of the data captured above are done in Summary in Duration only; there is therefore heavy dose of elision in presenting data. Consequently, the generic difference between the two genres (fiction and autobiography) is, while fiction (*Weep Not, Child*), extensively uses Scene, autobiography, (*Dreams in a Time of War*) uses Summary. The fiction then is more imaginative and artistic. In the autobiography, the author
seems to be more cautious with the facts, while in the fictional universe, Ngugi feels more freedom in his use of the imagination.

It is however instructive to note that in a very few circumstances, both *Weep Not, Child* and *Dreams in a Time of War* make use of Scene in Duration where dialogue is used in presenting the same data. These can be found in certain very important episodes which mark the turning points in the lives of the narrators in both genres. One such episode is the escape story of the protagonist’s brother in both fictional world of *Weep Not, Child* and factual world of *Dreams in a Time of War*.

In *Weep Not, Child*, Kori, narrates his arrest and escape in a dialogue as seen below:

“Many, many will be in prison. What a waste!”. Then he turned to his brother. “So you are one of the three who escaped?”

“We were five.”

“They said you were terrorists.”

“How did you -?”

“After they took us to the field…we were put into trucks. We did not know where we were being taken. I feared that we might be killed. The feeling became stronger when we came to a forest and the truck in which I was slowed down. I immediately got the idea that I should jump, which I did. They were taken by surprise and before they could fire, I had vanished into the forest. Look at my knee-”

(*Weep 70*).

In this dialogue Kori tells us about how he manages to escape when he is earlier arrested. It is from the dialogue that we are informed that Boro is also arrested but he has escaped earlier. The information is carried to us through Scene, and dialogue is used to present an analeptic event to us.

A similar scene is found in *Dreams in a Time of War* where the narrative tells us about the arrest and the dramatic escape of Good Wallace from the police in Epidoe I P5-6. The scene is described in such a fashion that we imaginatively visualize ourselves participating in a Hollywood thriller.
“He was caught red-handed.” Some were saying.
“Imagine, bullets in his hands. In broad daylight.”
“We could hear gunfire,” some were saying.
“I saw them shoot at him with my own eyes.”
“But he didn’t die!”
“Die? Hmm! Bullets flew at those who were shooting.”
“No, he flew into the sky and disappeared in the cloud.”
(Dreams 5 – 6).

This is a very vivid scene portrayed in a dialogue of some spectators who have witnessed the whole drama which describes the escape earlier in the day. From the two extracts above it is apparent that both Weep Not, Child and Dreams in a Time of War use dialogue which is scene in duration.

It is worthy to note that in certain circumstances too Weep Not, Child uses only Summary throughout in presenting data without resorting to scene. An example is found in Chapter II P18-19 where Njoroge had an embarrassing experience in Jacobo’s house during the Christmas party.

In the same vein, Dreams in a Time of War uses Scene in Duration where dialogue is comprehensively used without resorting to narration. An example is found in a situation where the narrative conveys to us the horrendous grilling Ngugi went through in the hands of the colonial police when he and his friend were arrested during the emergency. The dialogue is found in Episode XXIX P238-240. During the interrogation the police officer brutally assaulted Ngugi. The brutal assault was to enable the officer take information about Wallace from him.

Finally, the conversation that brought the news of Kenneth and Ngugi’s examination success is an example of scene in Dreams in a Time of War.

“Kenneth,” he started, smiling, “you have passed the exams.”
“But we don’t know what high school you have been admitted to.”
“And you, you have been accepted at Alliance High School,” he told me, breaking into a broad smile. “Alliance High School announces its admissions earlier than other schools” (*Dreams* 242).

The above Scenes in Duration are some of the very few scenes found in *Dreams in a Time of War* when dialogue is used.

In conclusion the integration of Summary and Scene in Time Duration established in *Weep Not, Child*, makes it possible for a significant space to be committed to dramatic experience in the form of pure dialogue. In all the Summaries, ellipsis and pauses are intertwined and embedded; this is similar to the kind of summary found in drama. In all the Scenes, Narrative Time is at the same pace in Duration as Story Time. Consequently, it is observed that all the scenes in *Weep Not, Child* dramatize a very strong sense of action corresponding with the most intense moments of the episodes in the narrative hence showing their dramatic power. This is what makes *Weep Not, Child* more artistic than *Dreams in a Time of War*.

In *Dreams in a Time of War*, Summary is the major technique employed in the narration. Since the narrative is an autobiography, it depends heavily on memory and not everything can be remembered by the narrator. Thus a lot of ellipses occur in the course of narration in *Dreams in a Time of War* hence making it less dense than *Weep Not, Child*.

But the dialogues used in *Dreams in a Time of War* also portray a strong sense of artistry. This is what draws our attention to the fact that the narrative is a literary genre.

### 3.5 Time Frequency in *Weep Not, Child* and *Dreams in a Time of War*

Frequency refers to the number of times an occurrence is told in a story. An event may occur once but narrated several times. The event may also occur several times but narrated only once. In both *Weep Not, Child* and *Dreams in a Time of War*, it is apparent that the First and
the Second World Wars occurred only once in their respective years. But these events are repeated several times in the narratives.

Taking *Weep Not, Child* first, the issue of the First World War is raised at least four times. In the first place, the narrative tells us that Ngotho had been to the First World War.

He always loved to listen to the barber. Somehow the talk reminded him of his own travels and troubles in the First World War. As a boy he had been conscripted and made to carry things for the fighting white men. He also had to clear dark bush and make roads. Then, he and others were not allowed to use guns (*Weep* 10).

The second mention of the First World War has to do with land appropriation. Here again Ngotho is at the centre. He tells his children the story of how the Gikuyu lands were appropriated, how Mugo wa Kibiro, the Gikuyu seer, prophesied and warned the people about the coming of the white man. Not long after, the white man arrived.

“Then came the war. It was the first big war. I was then young, a mere boy, although circumcised. All of us were taken by force. We made roads and cleared the forest to make it possible for the warring white man to move quickly. The war ended…We came home worn out…We wanted to go back to the soil and court it to yield…but Ng’o! The land was gone” (*Weep* 25).

Additionally, when Kiarie addresses the crowd during the strike he also has this to say about the First World War.

“Later our fathers were taken captives in the first Big War to help in a war whose cause they never knew. And when they came back? Their land had been taken away for a settlement of the white soldier” (*Weep* 57).

The First World War also has something to do with Mr Howlands. “He was a product of the First World War” (*Weep* 30). But in search for internal peace Mr Howlands decided to settle in Kenya after the First World War.

It is observed from the above that two major reasons are responsible for the repetitiveness as far as the First World War is concerned. The first is conscription where the black Africans
were taken by force to clear roads for the fighting white soldiers. The second issue has to do with land appropriation where the native black Kenyans lost their lands to the white settlers after the war.

The issue of the Second World War is raised at least nine times in *Weep Not, Child*. The first time it occurs is when we hear about the Italian prisoners of war. The Italian prisoners rebuilt the Kenyan roads “during the Big War that was fought faraway” (*Weep* 5). The barber also gives a vivid picture of the Second World War when he boasts about his exploits during the war (*Weep* 9 – 10)

“I learnt it during the Big War.”
“And it was all that big?”
“My man, you would not ask that if you had been there. What with bombs and machine guns that went boom-crunch! Boom-crunch! Troo! Troo! Troo! And grenades and people crying and dying! Aha, I wish you had been there.”
“Maybe it was like the first war?”
“Ha! Ha! Ha! That was a baby’s war. It was only fought here. Those Africans who went to that one were only porters. But this one…this one, we carried guns and we shot white men.”
“White men?”
“Ye-e-e-e-s. they are not the gods we had thought them to be. We even slept with their women.”
“Ha! How are they-?”
“Not different. Not different. I like a good fleshy black body with sweat. But they are…you know…so thin…without flesh…nothing.”
“But it was wonderful to…”
“Well! Before you started…you thought…eh – eh – wonderful. But after…it was nothing. And you had to pay some money.”
“Are there-?”
“Many! Many who were willing to sell. And that was in Jerusalem of all places.”
People around became amazed.
“You don’t mean to say that there’s such place as Jerusalem?”
“Ha, ha, ha! You don’t know. You don’t know. We have seen things and places

(*Weep* 9 – 10).

In the extract above the barber reveals his experiences during the Second World War to us.

The narrator earlier tells us in the summary that the barber can speak English and he can also
dance. He is virtually an entertainer. The barber confirms that these feats are inherent in him when he converses with the crowd listening to him.

In this scene, the barber reveals his exploits during the Second World War. It is obvious that this is a glowing scene that recalls the past.

Then, for the first time, we learn that Ngotho’s son “died in the Big War” (Weep 16). Boro, one other son of Ngotho, has also been to the Second World War. Boro actually witnessed his brother’s death in the war. This has affected his bearing badly. Boro’s change of character is blamed on the Second World War again when we learn that “Boro had changed. This was all because of the war. Ngotho felt the war had dealt ill with him. It had killed one son! And the other was accusing him” (Weep 39). Boro’s change is again blamed on the war by his mother when Njoroge says that, “Boro is queer. Our elder mother says that it was the war that changed him. Some people say however that it is something to do with our other brother, the dead one” (Weep 42). Kairie also mentions the Second World War when he addresses the crowd during the strike and says “when the second Big War came, we were taken to fight” (Weep 57). Mr Howlands also lost his son in the Second World War. The narrative tells us that. “Mr Howlands grew to like his son and the two walked together…Then European civilization caught up with him again. His son had to go to war” (Weep 31).

In Dreams in a Time of War the First World War is mentioned at least three different times in the narrative. First, in Episode III P15 the narrative gives background information of the cause of the First World War by telling us that on June 28, 1914, a Serbian student murdered the heir to the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The second mention of the First World War is found in the same Episode III P17 when we learn that after the war, African lands were taken away from them and given to the British ex-soldiers. The final mention of the First World War is seen in Episode XVII P127 where the narrative again tells us that “after the First
World War more Africans had their lands taken from them to make for soldier settlement” (Dreams 127).

The mention of the Second World War recurs at least six times in *Dreams in a Time of War*; notable among them is Episode II P9 when the narrator says that he was born in 1938 under the shadows of the Second World War. The next mention of the Second World War is in Episode V P33 where the narrator tells us about his brother’s enlistment as a soldier.

I don’t know if it was voluntary or forced – he went to fight for King George VI, in the Second World War, as a member of the King’s African Rifles (Dreams 33).

Then in P34 the narrative again tells us that “Kabae was not the only one from the extended family who fought in the Second World War” (Dreams 34).

Cousin Mwangi, the eldest son of Baba Mukuru, had joined. Names of strange people – Mussolini, Hitler, Franco, Stalin, Churchil and Roosevelt – and places – America, Germany, Italy, and Russia, Japan, Madagascar, and Burma – occasionally cropped up in the story sessions at Wangari’s fireside (Dreams 34-35)… But evidence of war was not to be found simply in stories; it was all around us (Dreams 36).

The above extract makes use of flashback and the narrator recalls the incidents of the Second World War through narration. We are given specific dates of happenings. Evidently, the narration states that the war was not about fairy-tales.

The Second World War is again mentioned in Episode XI P84 when we are told that Mugikuyu “had lost a son in the Second World War” (Dreams 84). Additionally, in Episode XVII P125 the Second World War is mentioned when the narrator remembers how some army men had a gruesome accident in the murrum quarry. We are again told in the same episode P127 that in 1941, African men went to fight for the Europeans in the Second World War but after three years the Europeans decided to expel the residents of Ole Ngurueni.

Then in 1941, even as our men went to fight for them in the big war, Europeans settlers started expelling squatters from their farms (Dreams 127).
Finally, in Episode XVIII P140 the narrative again tells us that Kabae and others had gone to fight in the Second World War.

We can see from the above that each reference to the wars always adds up in the constant repetitions to enable the partial information knit together to make complete stories in both genres. But this is more skilfully handled in *Weep Not, Child* than it is done in *Dreams in a Time of War*.

This is due to the fact that *Weep Not, Child* is a work of art and has the freedom to manipulate data hence the barber is made by the author to fantasize the war as opposed to *Dreams in a Time of War* which is an autobiography and depends mainly on memory where realistic picture of the factual world is recalled.

In sum, the constant repetition of the First and the Second World Wars in both *Weep Not, Child* and *Dreams in a Time of War* is a deliberate choice by the narrator to achieve effect and emphasis. The emphasis exposes the ills of the two World Wars and draws our attention to the extent to which the native Kenyans are affected by these wars.

### 3.6 Narrator and Point of View

*Weep Not, Child* makes use of traditional narrative perspective where the narrator is primarily omniscient third person narrator who is outside the story. He moves freely in time and space inside and outside the characters’ mind. *Dreams in a Time of War* employs the first person narrative voice. Here the narrator is the same as the protagonist of the story hence the story is seen from his viewpoint. The first person narrator always uses the first person ‘I’ in the narrative.

In *Weep Not, Child*, we see the narrator often exercising his all-knowing omniscient posture by giving information, summarising events, making comments about individuals or issues.
under consideration. A variety of examples abound in the text. An explicit example of this kind can be found in how the omniscient narrator tells us about the embarrassing experience Njoroge has during the Christmas party in Jacobo’s house.

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).

Here we see the omniscient narrator outside the story but he moves freely in time and space inside and outside Njoroge’s mind. This is why he is able to know that “Njoroge’s mouth had watered and he had a lot of difficulty in swallowing saliva...” (ibid 18) as captured in the extract above. Indeed, the narrator knows all about what Njoroge goes through during the prayer session. The narrator goes into Njoroge’s consciousness and finds out that the food displayed on the table looks very appetizing to him hence his giggling during the prayer time.

Another example is found in when Njoroge and his classmates await their promotional examination results that would enable them progress to intermediate school.

It was the beginning of 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. She was growing into quite a big girl; certainly she was not the same person who five years back had taken Njoroge to school. The two had sheared each other’s hopes and fears and he felt akin to her. He always wished she had been his sister. A boy chartered and shouted in a corner, but his friends did not want to to play. The boy sat down again while the two others regarded him coldly. One or two others laughed. But the laughter was rather subdued. Though they sat in groups, each was alone. That was all. Teacher Isaka came with a long sheet of paper. Everybody was quiet. Njoroge had prepared himself for this moment. He had many times told himself that he would not change even if he failed. He had tried his best. 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 (Weep 55).
The above extract again portrays the all-knowing posture of the omniscient narrator who uses the third person point of view in narrating to us everything that goes on in the room where the students are packed. We see the narrator telling the story as an observer from a third person point of view. Being an omniscient narrator he is able to penetrate through the consciousness and state of mind of Njoroge and the rest of the students at will.

The first person narrative voice in *Dreams in a Time of War* enables Ngugi, the narrator, to update us what he experienced firsthand. Thus, the first person narrator, the ‘I’ narrator tells his own story in *Dreams in a Time of War*. An example can be found in the extract below where Ngugi and his brother experienced embarrassment during a Christmas party in the factual world of *Dreams in a Time of War*.

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).

Here the narrating ‘I’ is the same as the narrated ‘I’; hence Ngugi is the same person who is telling his own story. The only difference is that Ngugi, the narrating ‘I’, is more experienced than Ngugi, the narrated ‘I’. This is due to the fact that the ‘I’ narrator relies on recollection of his past memory.

An important observation made from *Weep Not, Child* above is the question of objectivity as far as narrative voice is concerned. Having adopted the omniscient third person point of view it is expected that the narrator tells the story as an observer from a distance. But it is observed that the narrator in *Weep Not, Child* is not detached enough from the way he presents the
issues. The narrator seems to be subjective and for that matter biased. This may be due to his being a Pan-African writer who feels very passionate about the issues he raises in the fiction.

In the case of Dreams in a Time of War, the self is Ngugi himself presenting his personal story from memory. The First person ‘I’ is thus doing a recall in all the issues presented.

In comparative terms it is understandable from the above analysis of ‘Time’, ‘Narrator’ and ‘Point of View’ in Weep Not, Child and Dreams in a Time of War that although both of them are literary texts Weep Not, Child is more artistic than Dreams in a Time of War because the former is fiction which employs more artistry; and the latter is an autobiography which dwells on history and employs more memory.
CHAPTER THREE
THE AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL DIMENSION OF DREAMS IN A TIME OF WAR

Having ascertained the differences in how data is presented in Weep Not, Child and Dreams in a Time of War, in terms of ‘Time’, ‘Narrator’ and ‘Point of view’, and having confirmed the fact that Weep Not, Child employs more artistry in its narration than Dreams in a Time of War, we shall now look at the autobiographical dimension of Dreams in a Time of War. Accordingly, we will look at three crucial dimensions of autobiography namely memory, selection and the narrative voice.

4.1 Ngugi’s Autobiographical Memory in Dreams in a Time of War

The main reason which informs why Dreams in a Time of War seems less artistic than Weep Not, Child is that it is an autobiography. Being an autobiography therefore, it employs autobiographical model in its narration. However, being an autobiography and having employed an autobiographical model in its narration does not mean that it is not a literary text. The question then arises as to how Dreams in a Time of War employs an autobiographical model in its narration. In the first place the narrative is a retrospect; as a result, retrospection extensively influences its narration. According to Klein et al (2004), as captured earlier in the introduction,

Our knowledge of self is...tied up with the ‘story’ of how what we have experienced has made us who we are, and how who we are has led us to do what we have done. Autobiographical self-knowledge requires a capacity to represent the self as a psychologically coherent entity persisting through time, whose past experiences are remembered as belonging to its present self (Klein et al).

In this sense, being an autobiography, Dreams in a Time of War consists of a series of past memories, pleasant and unpleasant, of the narrator which is seen in the light of the present. Consequently, the ‘I’ of the narrative is making a recall, and all the accounts in the narrative
are recollections of the past from memory of the adult Ngugi. Memory, pleasant and unpleasant, therefore constitutes the first autobiographical model in *Dreams in a Time of War*.

**4.1.1 Ngugi’s Pleasant Memories**

Ngugi’s pleasant autobiographical memory is portrayed in various dimensions as found in *Dreams in a Time of War*. One of such memories is his recollection of home. The earliest reminiscence of home by Ngugi is a very fond one filled and enveloped with love and passion.

Ngugi’s autobiographical memory is portrayed in various dimensions as found in *Dreams in a Time of War*. One of such memories is his recollection of home. The earliest reminiscence of home by Ngugi is a very fond one filled and enveloped with love and passion.

My earliest recollection of home was of 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 and equidistant from the other four. It was called a *thingira*. My father’s wives, or our mothers as we called them, would take food to his hut in turns. Each woman’s hut was divided into spaces with different functions (Dreams 9).

The picture this early memory of home Ngugi paints in this description portrays affluence, peace, unity and serenity in the family. He tells us that each of his father’s wives has her own household with a storage facility for food. Ngugi warmheartedly remembers that “the granary was a measure of plenty and dearth” which is always full “with corn, potatoes, beans, and peas” when the harvest is good (Dreams 10). They could therefore tell if days of food shortage approached by sizing up how much food stock they have in the granary. This tells us that the household had enough food to feed the family, and enough accommodation to house the members of the large family.

Another captivating early memory of home Ngugi expresses in *Dreams in a Time of War* is about his father’s kraal for his cows and the smaller sheds for his calves. Ngugi recalled that
the kraal and the sheds were attached to the house. He also called to mind a hill right in the
main entrance of the house. Indeed, Ngugi’s father had a reputation as “the richest in goats
and cows” (Dreams 20) in Limuru. Ngugi remembered how, over the years, depositing cow
dung and goat droppings
from the kraal and smaller sheds at the dump site by the main entrance to the house grew and
became “a hill covered by green stinging nettles” (Dreams 10).

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. Sloping down from the hill was a forested
landscape. As a child just beginning to walk, I used to follow, with my eyes, my
mothers and older siblings as they went past the main gate to our yard, and it seemed
to me that the forest mysteriously swallowed them up in the morning, and in the
evening, as mysteriously, disgorged them unharmed (Dreams 10).

This was a sweet, innocent and unadulterated childhood memory of home as Ngugi saw it at
the time. It was only afterwards when he could walk a bit further from the yard that he
realised that after all, the forest had not been strangely swallowing his family in the morning
and strangely disgorging them in the evening. There were, in fact, paths among the trees
which Ngugi later learned led to Limuru township and went across the railway line to the
“white-owned plantation” where his older siblings went to pick tea leaves for pay.

Overall memories of Ngugi’s childhood experience of home positively impacted his adult
family life in terms of unity, love and peace. It makes him to always fondly recall those
moments of joy and togetherness that existed among all and sundry in his father’s home at his
early ages.

Memory of school also constitutes one of Ngugi’s pleasant autobiographical self-knowledge
in Dreams in a Time of War. The narrative recalls Ngugi’s first encounter in the school

The teachers are characters in a dream. Big-eyed Isaac Kuria is registering new
pupils. He asks me my name. I say Ngugi wa Wajinku, because at home I am
identified with my mother. I am puzzled when this is greeted with giggles in the class.
Then he asks: what’s your father’s name, and I say, Thiong’o. Ngugi wa Thiong’o is
the identity I shall carry throughout this school (Dreams 61)
One beautiful memory of school Ngugi recalls in *Dreams in a Time of War* is about some students at Kamandura who he always remembers. He always remembers them for their uniqueness in diverse ways. He remembers Lizzie Nyambura, a very good student who later became the first person from the region to be admitted to Makerere University, Burton Kihika, who was reputed for being the fastest runner in the school, Njambi Kahahu, who was his early guide to school, and Ndung’u wa Livingstone, the only one who had a slate with indented lines and whose handwriting was a model for all the students. There were also Mumbi wa Mbero who became the first person to ride a scooter in their town; there was Mary who used to wrestle big boys to the ground and Ngugi shuddered to get close to her; and there was Wamithi wa Umari who later married one of Ngugi’s half-sisters. Ngugi also remembers Juma, who although a Muslim, attended a Christian school and then finally, Igogo who stopped schooling because the pupils knick-named him a “crow.”

Ngugi does not also forget some of his teachers at Kamandura. Some of these teachers were Isaac Kuria who registered him with the name Ngugi wa Thiong’o instead of “Ngugi wa Wanjiku, because at home I identified with my mother” (*Dreams* 61). There was also Paul Kahahu; there was Joana who Ngugi credited for helping him to learn how to read. There was Rahabu Nyokabi Kiambati, and finally Benson Kamau who was knick-named Githuru or “Old Man.”

The most pleasant memory about Ngugi’s school experiences had to do with his drifting through the initial classes where he had “been moved from sub B to sub A to grade, all within the same quarter, a skipping of classes that continues from term to term so that within a year” (*Dreams* 64) he was in grade two. Additionally, his passing the intermediate examination made it possible for him to progress to the intermediate school and passing the K.A.P.E. which made it possible for him to go to high school. Indeed, all these pleasant experiences of
school had positive impact on Ngugi’s academic life throughout his life. His mother’s question, “Is that the best you could have done?” (*Dreams* 64) propelled him to do more. This planted the seed of Ngugi’s intellectual growth since his childhood. It is therefore not surprising that Ngugi today is an internationally recognised scholar. The memory of the teachers he encountered in school also shaped his life and made him the academician he is today.

Finally, Ngugi’s initiation into manhood was one of the episodes he always reminisces. The initiation took the form of circumcision which is a rite of passage marking the transition from youth to adulthood. Ngugi meticulously recounted the ceremony and inform us that the entire ceremony took three stages which were the preparation, the act of circumcision itself and the healing of the wounds. Ngugi makes us aware, through his recollection, that the rite of passage was communal, familial and at the same time personal. Through Ngugi’s memory we see the carnivals that were associated with the circumcision rites. During the preparation stage, where the candidates were educated on the dos and don’ts, there was always music and dance every night. People were allowed to sing erotic songs and talk freely about sex except getting engaged in it.

Boundaries are drawn strictly between mime and reality. Satire verses alternate with vulgar abuses and equally vulgar responses ending in reconciliatory tender lyrical words. the whole night is a musical feast of melody after melody, dance after dance, with constant to and fro of human traffic (198).

The second stage was the real event which was the circumcision itself. There was the taking off of the clothes which was “an enactment of shedding childhood.” This was closely followed by “the ceremony of shaving off head and pubic hair” of the candidates where “the shorn hair is buried in the ground, symbolising the burial of that stage” of the candidate’s life (*Dreams* 199). The candidates were then taken to the river side for the actual circumcision. Ngugi recollects what he went through during the actual circumcision.
I am made to sit on the grass…My legs are open, knees bent, firmly planted on the ground…My manhood is there for all to stare at, but in reality they are not interested in it; they are more concerned with my reaction when the knife meets the fore skin. I hear some movement. It is the surgeon. My guardian is standing behind me holding me down by the shoulders. I remain completely frozen…The cold water numbed my skin. My guardian quickly covers me with a white cotton cloth that extended from my shoulders to my feet; all the women are ululating with pride. I know I have come through (Dreams 200 – 201).

This was how Ngugi went through the second stage of the rite of passage. The next and final stage was spending some time in the healing shed. This was where the candidate stayed until his wound completely healed. No one was allowed, not even relatives, to contact the candidate in the healing shed apart from his guardian. The candidate could only be contacted through his guardian. The guardian was a mentor to the circumcised candidate; he therefore taught and trained him as to how to manage self-control when he felt pain. Ngugi tells us that girls were occasionally brought to tease them out so that their manhood could erect. This was one of the healing processes. Thus from retrospect, Ngugi’s memory brings to us one of the beautiful traditional cultural practices of the native Kenyans in the Limuru community.

Indeed, initiation and circumcision were a very important rituals among the African society. It was a traditional education and graduation from one stage of an individual’s life to the other stage. During this ritual, various lessons were taught and learned. Ngugi’s initiation was therefore very important since it was a new stage in his life where he learned various lessons from his mentor and instructor. Some of these lessons were for every initiate to remain manly, have self-control and be able to endure every adverse circumstance in life. Certainly, all the lessons Ngugi learnt under the tutelage of his mentor and instructor carved his personality. Ngugi remains an individual who never gives up even in the most uncompromising situations. For example, in 1977 he produced a play in Gikuyi language entitled, Ngaahika Ndeenda (I Will Marry When I Want). This play was intended to empower
the peasant farmers of Kenya so that they could see themselves in the play and critically examine and evaluate their lives. This play caused him to be imprisoned; but he was not deterred. After his release from prison he continued to draw the peasants’ attention to their plight through writing in the Gikuyu language. This again landed him in trouble with Moi in 1987. In spite of all these, Ngugi never stopped writing to critique the status quo. The lesson of persistence he learned during the initiation thus left indelible mark on his character and it never lost on him. In sum, it is apparent from Ngugi’s pleasant memories that the experiences he had during these pleasant times had positive impact on him and helped mould him to be who he is today.

4.1.1 Ngugi’s Unpleasant Memories

There are moments when Ngugi had distasteful experiences which are recalled in Dreams in a Time of War. For example, Ngugi’s pleasant memory of home was short-lived when he noticed a sudden change in the state of affairs at home.

Then our mothers stopped cultivating the fields behind our courtyard; they now worked in other fields far from the compound. My father’s thingira was abandoned, and now the women trekked some distance to take food to him. I was aware of trees being cut down, leaving only stumps, soil being dug up followed by pyrethrum planting. It was strange to see the forest retreating as the pyrethrum fields advanced…the changes in the physical and social landscape were not occurring in any discernible order; they merged into each other, all little confusing (11).

Nevertheless, after putting bits and pieces together, Ngugi recalls, the reality came revealing itself to him. He learned that his father’s land was no longer his father’s. The land became part of property that an African landlord, known as Reverend Stanley Kahahu, owned.

Ngugi chronicles how his father bought the land in Limuru from Njamba Kibuku and “paid in goats under the traditional system of oral agreement in the presence of witnesses” (Dreams 18). However, Njamba later resold the same land to Reverend Stanley Kahahu and his brother
Edward Matumbi. The resale, unlike in the case of Ngugi’s father, “was recorded under the colonial legal system, with witnesses and signed written documents” (*Dreams* 19). This resale created a lifelong tension between Kahahu and Matumbi on one hand, and Thiong’o wa Nducu, Ngugi’s father, on the other hand. Ngugi recalls the case eventually landed at the Native Tribunal Court at Cura where “orality and tradition lost to literacy and modernity” (19).

My father bought land in Limuru from Njamba Kibuku. He paid in goats under the traditional system of oral agreement in the presence of witnesses. Later, Njamba sold the same land to Lord Stanley Kahahu,…the resale was recorded under the colonial legal system, with witnesses and signed written documents. Did the religious Kahahu know that Njamba was selling the land twice, first in goats to my father and second in cash to him? Whatever his knowledge, the double transaction created a lasting tension between the two claimants, my father and Kahahu…orality and tradition lost to literacy and modernity. A title deed no matter how it was gotten trumped over oral deeds…as to Kahahu, my father always thought himself the rightful owner of the land Kahahu occupied (*Dreams* 18-19,86).

Ngugi’s tone in the above extract depicts the extent to which he found it difficult to come to terms with the realities of how his father lost the land he legitimately acquired and owned. Ngugi recalls what followed after his father’s first loss. They were expelled from their homestead.

Although it was not clear to me how the transition occurred, the second phase followed my father’s expulsion from the fields around the homestead, because now his hut was rarely occupied and we did not share meals with him anymore (88).

In spite of the unfortunate loss, Ngugi’s father’s wealth, which was cows and goats, still remained intact. Ngugi’s maternal grandfather offered Ngugi’s father a grazing and cultivating right on his land where Ngugi’s father built a new kraal for his livestock.

But, Ngugi recalls, another devastating disaster which struck his family. His father’s goats and cows, which were the source of his wealth and worth, strangely succumbed to a strange
illness, leaving only the empty sheds behind. The strange illness afflicted and killed all the livestock. Ngugi recalls:

Their tummies puffed up, followed by diarrhoea and death. Traditional medical expertise was no match for the disease. There were no veterinary services for African farmers at the time. His animals died one by one (90).

This was the final occurrence which wrecked Ngugi’s father hence leaving the family in perpetual poverty. This sudden change in destiny marked another period in Ngugi’s life. It had a negative impact on him by leaving a bitter imprint in his memory. Hirpara (2010) observes that such “wounds and shocks of childhood create long lasting impact on one’s entire life. It emerges as a kind of haunting which moulds one’s personality and the self.” This indeed, was the case in Ngugi’s life and it keeps recurring in all his writings.

Ngugi painfully recalls three major incidents that had direct impact on him after his father’s misfortunes. The first was the change in his father’s demeanour. He became a drunkard and failed to do any work at all again. The second was his mother’s ejection from her matrimonial home. Ngugi calls to mind how his father hated married men who ambushed their wives on their way from the market for a share of the money they made from their sales. However, Ngugi realised that his father started doing exactly what he scorned. He had even been forcibly taking the weekly wages of his daughters from them when they received their pay from Reverend Kahahu. This made them to be avoiding him hence leading to some of them escaping into early marriage. Ngugi recollects how his mother also became a victim to the same ordeal; however, Ngugi’s mother’s resolve to stand firm and not to allow herself to be subjugated by her husband’s behaviour dearly cost her marriage.

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, filing 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 (93-94).

Thus Ngugi’s mother unceremoniously departed from her matrimonial home leaving Ngugi and his younger brother under the care of their elder mothers, Gacoki and Wangari. This unpleasant incident stuck firmly in Ngugi’s mind and he always recalls it with regret. Ngugi therefore does not stop openly reprimanding his father for that incident.

However, if his mother’s departure was painful and regretttable, then the next incident that followed was disastrous and scandalous. Ngugi and his brother were disowned by their father. He asked them to leave his house immediately. This drama, Ngugi recalls, unfolded when he and his siblings, both boys and girls, were playing cheerfully together. Ngugi recounts the episode thus:

One day my brother and I were playing with our siblings in an open space...my father suddenly turned up. He stood at a distance and beckoned my brother and him to accompany him...We ran to him, sure that he was going to tell us news of our mother’s return. I want you to stop playing with my children. Go, follow your mother, he said, pointing in the general direction of my grandfather’s place. We did not have a chance to say farewell to the other children and tell them that we had been banished from their company and from the place that up to then had defined our lives (Dreams 95-96).

Ngugi recollects the traumatic effect the expulsion from “paradise” which was the only place he knew as home had on him. His tone is very bitter when he recounts his father’s action against him and his brother. Ngugi finds it very difficult to comprehend why his father should mete out such an excruciating pain to him and his brother. His father’s demeanour toward him remains embossed in his mind and heart forever and Ngugi reminisces that, “…it is not a good thing to have your own father deny you as one of his children. The move deepened my sense of myself as an outsider, a feeling I harboured since…” (Dreams 97).
Memories of the Second World War period and its aftermath are also some of the unpleasant experiences Ngugi recalls in *Dreams in a Time of War*. Ngugi “was born in 1938, under the shadow of another war, the Second World War” (*Dreams* 9). Having been born in this era of turmoil, Ngugi’s life was directly affected by the war in various ways from his birth. One of the ways his life was affected was that his half-brother, Kabae fought in the war and returned home unemployed, and as traumatic as many of his contemporaries. Also, many black people who went to fight for the whites in the war lost their lands to the British War veterans. The loss of land, and unemployment among the African war veterans led to a revolt against the British colonial rule in Kenya. The Mau Mau group therefore came into being to fight for freedom from British colonial rule and reclaim the lost land. The Mau Mau activities affected Ngugi’s life directly since his brother, Wallace, who together with his mother took care of his education, joined the group in the forest. After Wallace had joined the group, Ngugi, his mother, and Wallace’s wife lived in a perpetual panic. Ngugi was particularly affected emotionally. Ngugi recalls that:

> My brother’s flight to the mountains changes our external relationship to our immediate world. But I learnt it the hard way (*Dreams* 215).

From the above extract it is clear that Ngugi’s life had never been the same after his brother had joined the Mau Mau insurgency. The Mau Mau activities also led to a split in Ngugi’s family where his half-brothers Kabae and Tumbo worked as agents of the colonial state and Wallace fought against the colonial state.

Thus, having been born during the turmoil of the Second World War, and having grown in the midst of the Mau Mau reprisal against the colonial government, memories of the violence visited on the black freedom fighters and for that matter Ngugi’s immediate family, had never escaped his thoughts. These memories have devastating impact on him and they keep haunting him until today. This is why he always recalls it in his writings.
In effect, it is obvious that Ngugi’s pleasant memories had positive impact on his personal development hence he recalls them with excitement in *Dreams in a Time of War*. In recalling the unpleasant memories, it is obvious that the experiences had traumatic impact on him. But the traumatic impact these unpleasant experiences had on him was what strengthened him to be able to endure a lot of adversities and tribulations in his life.

### 4.2 Ngugi’s Autobiographical Selection in *Dreams in a Time of War*

According to McAdams (2001), “autobiographical memory helps to locate and define the self within an ongoing life story that, simultaneously, is strongly oriented toward future goals.” He therefore posits that a person who writes his own life story can put together “a more or less plausible account of the past that functions primarily to maintain a personal coherence rather than provide an objective report of what has transpired in that person’s life.” What McAdam’s postulation here suggests is that in writing an autobiography the author is always selective. This is true about Ngugi, and it is evident in *Dreams in a Time of War* that Ngugi uses autobiographical selection to project his ideal self and represses the real self. This is what creates and embosses his positive image in the eyes of society. By so doing it enables society to celebrate him as a hero and this is how we see Ngugi today. How then does Ngugi project his ideal self and suppresses the real self?

### 4.3 The Ideal Self Versus the Real Self in *Dreams in a Time of War*

In *Dreams in a Time of War* it is noted that Ngugi selects and projects his positive and favourable self-image and suppresses or edits out the negative and unfavourable period of his life story. If there is any unpleasant story at all about Ngugi in *Dreams in a Time of War*, then it is meant to whip up our sympathies toward him. An example can be found in Episode XI P81-82 where he and his brother giggled during a Christmas party in Rev Kahahu’s house. They giggled to show that their attention was more drawn to the food that was served at the University of Ghana http://ugspace.ug.edu.gh
table than the prayer that was being offered to God. This attracted a very severe reprimand from Lillian, Rev Kahahu’s wife. In this, although Ngugi felt ashamed of the uncouth behaviour he and his brother put up, he took more offence in the phrase Lillian used against them, that they were “not brought up in Christian ways,” (Dreams 82) than the wrong thing he and his brother did during the prayer session. Ngugi therefore tries to invoke our sympathies toward himself in the narrative by getting angry at Lillian for admonishing him with that phrase.

Apart from the above episode, there is not, a single negative story about Ngugi’s personality throughout Dreams in a Time of War. Most of the stories are selected to project and glorify his positive representation. In the first place the heroic self-image Ngugi propagates about himself as a travelling troubadour is an example of projecting his ego identity.

It was at such a gathering in my new home that I first sang the Ndemi Mathathi song, at the playful urging of the young men and women in my brother Wallace’s place. The emotion I put into the singing came from a heart soaked with recent loss…My brother Wallace decided I was a singer. Wherever there was a gathering of young men and women he would find a way of making sure that I displayed my talent. Being small of my age, I always aroused curiosity. The result was the same: adult involvement, adulation afterward. The boy is smart. The boy who wrote the essay that Mwalimu, Fred Mbugua read at assembly was also a singer (Dreams 124).

The above extract portrays a projection of the positive self-image of Ngugi where we see the musical talent inherent in him as a very good singer. He therefore “needed only to start singing and grown-ups would take it up” (Dreams 126). Ngugi further tells us that his singing made some of his brother’s friends start talking to him (Ngugi) “about affairs of the land as if I myself was a grown-up” (ibid).

Another positive self-projection of Ngugi can be found in how he endured and survived the atrocious assault on him during his interrogation by a white officer. This happened when he was arrested together with his friend Kenneth after a Sunday church service.
I felt rather than saw the blow to my face. I staggered but managed to remain on my feet…I was now a man; I was not supposed to cry…For one reason he took my refusal to cry or scream as defiance and rained more blows on me. I fell down…I was shaken by the ordeal, but I felt a little pride at not having cried (Dreams 239 – 241).

This is a projection of a positive heroic self, where Ngugi endured the horrific torture in the hands of his tormentor without crying. He explained that he did not cry because he had been initiated and needed to endure as a man.

The story of Ngugi’s self-defence in a fight against Kenneth is also one of the episodes that seeks to project his positive self-image in Dreams in a Time of War. Kenneth was a bully who kept making life uncomfortable for Ngugi and his brother.

Kenneth was big for his age and was a bully. He used to terrify my younger brother and me sometimes threatening to confiscate our tire rims that we drove with sticks as our “cars.” When I told my mother about the threat, she spoke to his mother, Josephine, but Kenneth did not stop harassing us: Things got even worse…I reported Kenneth to my mother again. She said, do you want me to fight him for you?...I realised that she would not scold me for defending myself (Dreams 172).

The sarcastic tone with which Ngugi’s mother responded to his second complaint about Kenneth in the extract above emboldened him to fight Kenneth. The sarcastic tone was a subtle way of telling her son to be bold, fight and defend himself. So when one day Kenneth threatened Ngugi and his brother again, Ngugi stood his ground and dared Kenneth to touch him. Ngugi did defend himself and overpowered Kenneth in a brawl that subdued Kenneth’s ego.

He stepped toward me, and angry and furious I lurched at him. Taken by surprise, he fell to the ground and I was on him. Quickly recovering from the shock, he struggled to get the upper hand by turning me over. I had not the slightest doubt that he had the strength to overpower me but I was determined not to let him (Dreams 172 – 173).

After this fight Ngugi confirms that, “that was my first lesson in the virtue of resistance, that right and justice can empower the weak” (173). This is self-projection to glorify his positive personal identity.
One of the things that stands out in Ngugi’s self-narration in *Dreams in a Time of War* is that on certain occasions he narrates episodes that show that people saw him as a mythical figure. The people believed Ngugi’s presence in their lives served as a good omen to them. Ngugi therefore recalls these episodes to project his ideal self. For instance, Ngugi’s maternal grandfather saw Ngugi as a bird of good omen.

One evening Mukami stops me outside Njambo’s hut. I should visit Grandfather first thing in the morning…Later in the evening Mukami tells me that I should do the same the following morning. Visiting my grandfather before any other visitor knocks at the door becomes part of my daily routine. I see it as some kind of privilege and savour the honour. It makes me feel even closer to him…My grandfather believes that boys bring him good luck. He wants a boy to be his first encounter before a woman, any woman, even a girl, crosses his path. I am the new bird of good omen. Apparently good things happen to him after I visit him at dawn (*Dreams* 107 – 108).

It is clear from the extract above that Ngugi is seen by his grandfather as a mythical personality surrounded with good fortunes. His grandfather, having recognised this in him, harnessed it fully to his (the grandfather’s) advantage. Ngugi therefore tells us in this extract that he became the object of his grandfather’s dreams of good fortunes. This is evident because, “apparently good things happen to him” anytime he visited the (ibid) old man early every morning before the old man encountered anyone else. Ngugi’s aim for bringing this episode to our attention is that wants to frame and influence our opinions about him that he seen as a good omen in people’s life; we must therefore regard him as such.

Being bold to challenge Lillian, Rev Kahahu’s wife, as to whether she was a true Christian is another example of how Ngugi projects the ideal self in *Dreams in a Time of War*. This incident occurred when Lillian refused to pay a whole week’s wages to those who worked for her on the grounds that they had stolen her plums in the orchard.

We are many, adults and children, from different corners of the village. Some kids, hungry and thirsty, jump over the fence into the Kahahus’ orchard and pick some plums. I am not one of them. My mother would kill me for stealing, and her definition of theft is very wide. Lillian discovers the theft and in the evening, when we take our
pick for weighing, she asks the culprits to give themselves up or for the innocent to
tell on them…The guilty do not give themselves up; the innocent do not tell on them.
Then come comes the judgement. We are all going to lose our wages unless we hand
over the culprits…No one, not even the adults among us, protests. The unfairness of it
all cuts deeply into me. I step forward. I raise my voice…You cannot do this: It is not
right, I find myself telling her. She recovers from the shock. Yes, I shall, unless the
culprits give themselves up, she says coolly. And you call yourself a Christian? I ask.
(Dreams 174 – 175).

Indeed, Ngugi’s reaction to Lillian’s behaviour was something unusual hence shocking to
Lillian and everyone who witnessed the scene because, “Lillian, the wife of Lord Reverend
Stanley Kahahu, the manager of the estate, has never been challenged by any of her workers”
since “she hires and fires” (Dreams – 175) with impunity. The incident became news in the
town. After a lot of criticism and protests from parents Lillian finally gave in and paid
reduced wages to the workers but refused to pay Ngugi.

Lillian gives in but pays reduced wages. She does not pay me. My loss is the gain of
others. Here was my second lesson in resistance (Dreams – 175).

Here again we see Ngugi as a determined character who would not allow himself to be
intimidated no matter how uncompromising the situation. He shows us that being resilient
and tough when facing adverse circumstances gains you respect although this comes with a
price. Indeed, Ngugi’s standing up to Lillian was what made her to pay reduced wages to the
workers. It also made the whole village regard him in high esteem. It is clear therefore that
Ngugi uses this episode in Dreams in a Time of War to create a positive image for himself.

From the discussion above it is obvious that what Ngugi seeks to do in Dreams in a Time of
War is to select memories that help him create and maintain his positive face and his heroic
character for posterity. He therefore seems to edit certain negative episodes from his memory
and allows them to be overshadowed by the positive projection of himself.

The effect of memory on Ngugi’s story in Dreams in a Time of War then is that what Ngugi
recalls is what he puts down. This is due to the fact that retrospective perceptions of the past
can differ from the one experienced. Nelson (2003) rightly put it by saying that “autobiographical memory is as imaginative as is future projection of the self. Both are based on past experience re-imagined (or re-constructed) to fit the present or future circumstances.” Nelson’s postulation agrees with Macdams (2001) earlier stated above. Thus Ngugi’s viewpoints of his childhood experiences have changed over time. He therefore “re-imagined” and “re-constructed” those past memories in his autobiography, *Dreams in a Time of War*, to immortalise the ‘self’ (that is his name), for future generations to learn from.

4.4 The Fictive/Factual Interrelationship in *Dreams in a Time of War*

The fictive/factual dichotomy is another important factor which informs the autobiographical dimension of *Dreams in a Time of War*. Tudor (2013), as earlier discussed in the introduction, argues that in every factual/autobiographical narrative there is a dose of fiction. Schaeffer (2013) agrees with Tudor and further argues that “every narrative induces varying degrees of immersive experience” and that “both fictional and non-fictional narrative texts invite readers to imagine a world.” It is observed in *Dreams in a Time of War* that although the narrative is an autobiography, certain occurrences narrated to us are fictive. Fiction and fact are therefore intertwined with exaggeration to make the autobiography interesting and entertaining. An example is the hunting expedition embarked on by Ngugi and his compatriots to capture a hare.

What we longed for was to hunt and capture a hare, or even an antelope…We had often heard of boys who had managed to land one or the other, but it was clear…that without a dog to help us, we would never manage to catch a hare, let alone an antelope…we persuaded Njimi and Gitau to bring their dogs to help us catch an animal and carry the carcass home…We were lucky and spotted a hare and, led by the dogs, we immediately started chasing it. Soon the dogs and the hare left us behind, but the barking led us to a thick thorny bush. The dogs were barking at the bush, inside which a very frightened hare was ensconced, and no amount of stones thrown inside or shaking of the bush would persuade the hare to leave it lair. We never captured a hare (Dreams 55).
The way this scene is narrated sends the reader back to childhood adventurous days in the village. The reader sees him or herself in the same kind of escapade running following the dogs and commanding them to catch the animal. Sometimes a rat or a mouse would be caught. There were other times where not a single animal is caught. The episode in the extract above is therefore a fact that is entwined with fiction to make *Dreams in a Time of War* entertaining and interesting reading.

Another interesting and entertaining episode in the narrative where fact and fiction are twisted together is the story of Ngugi’s first time of attempting to ride a bicycle.

After showing me how to hold the handles and assuring me that pedalling was as easy as drinking a calabash of water, he held the bike as I got on, then he let it go without telling me he would. Once I started pedalling I panicked. I looked back, and within seconds the bike had veered from the lane…and was going down the slope toward buildings on the opposite side. I did not know how to steer. My legs slipped off the pedals. I was paralysed with fear. I held on to the handles, my legs spread out in the air. The bike was picking up speed. I was sure I was going to smash into a wall, and then, suddenly, thud! I hit two passersby. They fell, I fell, and the bike lay a few yards away, the wheels spinning (Dreams 152 – 153).

This scenery is very funny and entertaining because it is typical of every boy’s first time of learning to ride a bicycle. The panic that envelops you when you mount the bike, the mistake you make by either looking back or elsewhere, unintentionally hurting other people, accidentally destroying people’s property, and finally hurting oneself are all part of the normal experience of learning to ride a bicycle. Although the scene as described in the narrative was very serious and could cause a serious accident, it is so vividly exaggerated and portrayed that one could not help but laugh heartily at the narrator.

The incidents in the two extracts above are fictive since they confirm Tudor and Schaeffer’s postulations that “every narrative induces varying degrees of immersive experience” and that “both fictional and non-fictional narrative texts invite readers to imagine a world.” Indeed,
we get deeply immersed in the narrator’s stories in the two extracts above while we read. We therefore imagine what he must be experiencing.

4.5 The Narrative Voice in *Dreams in a Time of War*

The narrative voice in *Dreams in a Time of War* is important since it contributes to its autobiographical dimension. According to Eakin (2004) as discussed in the introduction,

> The syntax of autobiographical discourse always posits a subject “I” performing actions: *I do things, I feel and I will; I remember and plan…* When we talk about ourselves…when we fashion an I-character in autobiography, we give a degree of permanence and narrative solidity…to otherwise evanescent states of identity feeling (Eakin 2004).

Accordingly, the narrative voice adopted in telling the story in *Dreams in a Time of War* is the first person point of view where the narrator tells his own story. In his *Narrative Discourse* (1972) Genette argues that in autobiographical narratives, two “actants” namely “the narrating ‘I’” and “the narrated ‘I’” who are “juxtaposed” and “interwoven”, but…never completely merged are identifiable (Genette 252 – 253). Genette further posits that the narrating ‘I’ is always older and more experienced in age than the narrated ‘I’. This is the case in *Dreams in a Time of War*. Ngugi the narrator, that is the narrating ‘I’, is much older and much more experienced than the narrated Ngugi. Hence the adult Ngugi in retrospect presents the memory of his earlier experiences to us.

In presenting these experiences, the perspective of the narrating ‘I’, (that is the adult and more experienced Ngugi), had changed over time. The adult Ngugi therefore screened his memory of earlier pleasant and unpleasant experiences before passing them on to us. It is therefore observed that the story of *Dreams in a Time of War* as told by the narrating ‘I’, (that is the adult Ngugi), is not meant to be a story about the narrated ‘I’, (that is the younger Ngugi), at all. In fact, it is obvious that the story is about the adult Ngugi and the study of his
life. Ngugi’s story in *Dreams in a Time of War* is therefore making a statement about why he is what he is today.
CHAPTER FOUR

THEME, CHARACTERISATION, AND DICTION IN WEEP NOT, CHILD AND DREAMS IN A TIME OF WAR

Theme is the main or central idea of a work while character is the personality or representation of human being in a work. Diction refers to the author’s selection of words in presenting the story. It is observed that the thematic undertaking of both Weep Not, Child and Dreams in a Time of War is carried through presentation of characters and diction in both narratives. The major thematic issues dealt with in both narratives and carried through the characters are colonialism, land ownership, land appropriation and land alienation, the Mau Mau, patriotism, rebellion, images of women etc. Although these thematic concerns are the same in both genres, in comparing them it is obvious that they are treated differently in terms of characterisation, diction and incidents. While Weep Not, Child presents these issues through fictional episodes using mainly dialogue in Scene, Dreams in a Time of War presents the issues through factual episodes using mainly Summary and direct narration.

5.1 The Theme of Colonialism

Both Weep Not, Child and Dreams in a Time of War explore the problems created by the arrival of the British settler community and the consolidation of colonialism in Kenya after the First and the Second World Wars. In both genres we see the native Kenyans subjugated and ruled by the British repressive laws. Taking Weep Not, Child first, the colonial representation in Kenya is portrayed mainly through Mr Howlands. He is a product of the First World War who settles as an ex-service man in Kenya. He has been able to annex enough land that enables him to peacefully settle in Kenya after the troubles of the war. Mr Howlands employs many Africans in his farm and remains an affable employer until the failed strike when we begin to see his repressive nature. After the failed strike Mr Howlands was made the District Officer. It was after he was made a District Officer that we see the
other side of him. As a District Officer one of his objectives is to treat the Africans with all
the cruelty they deserve. This is revealed to us through his thoughts.

He stood and walked across the office, wrapped in thought. He now knew maybe
there was no escape. The present that had made him a D.O. reflected a past from
which he had tried to run away. That past had followed him even though he had tried
to avoid politics, government, and anything that might remind him of that
betrayal…There was only one god for him – and that was the farm he had created, the
land he had tamed. And who were this Mau Mau who were now claiming that land,
his god? Ha, ha! He could have laughed at the whole ludicrous idea, but for the fact
that they had forced him into the other life, the life he had tried to avoid. He had been
called upon to take up a temporary appointment as District Officer. He had agreed.
But only because this meant defending his god. If Mau Mau claimed the only thing he
believed in, they would see! Did they want to drive him back to England, the
forgotten land? They were mistaken. Who were black men and Mau Mau
anyway?…Mere savages! A nice word – savages…Yes, he would wring from every
single man the last drop till they had all been reduced to nothingness, till he had won a
victory for his god…He would reduce everything to his will. That was the settlers’
way (Weep 76 – 78)

The above extract is a Summary in Time Duration where the narrator leads as into Mr
Howlands’ mind through stage direction as it normally occurs in drama. The extract is
representative of how the colonial authorities regard blacks. They see blacks as “savages”
hence they must be treated as such. This is a strong word Howlands uses to describe the
African. The word means ‘barbaric’ or ‘uncultured.’ The African is therefore good for
nothing. Indeed, the language used in the extract above reveals various things about the
Europeans. For example, the compound sentence, “There was only one god for him – and that
was the farm he had created, the land he had tamed” tells us that the Europeans are only
concerned about the land. They have no regards for the Africans. That is why Howlands asks
the rhetorical question “And who were this Mau Mau who were now claiming that land, his
god?” This shows that Howlands disregards the blacks and does not expect them to make any
demands at all. It also shows he is bitter and wonders why the blacks should be demanding
more than what they are worthy of. We have also seen the repressive and malicious nature of
the colonial authorities through the language used in the extract above. For example, “Yes, he
would wring from every single man the last drop till they had all been reduced to nothingness, till he had won a victory for his god.” This is a complex sentence made up of one independent clause, “Yes, he would wring from every single man the last drop” and two dependent clauses, “till they had all been reduced to nothingness” and “till he had won a victory for his god.” This sentence mirrors what is in Howlands’ mind and gives a lot of information about what he intends to do in order to hurt and subdue the blacks. Also, the simple declarative sentence, “He would reduce everything to his will”, shows how ruthlessly Howlands intends to suppress the blacks. Finally, another simple declarative sentence, “That was the settlers’ way” gives us more information about the settlers and makes known the fact that the only way the Europeans can subjugate the blacks is to treat them callously. The Europeans would therefore stop at nothing to reduce the black man to “nothingness”. Howlands succeeds in doing this. As the D.O. he makes sure that the native blacks of Kenya are arrested at will, tortured and incarcerated in detention camps. Howlands does this in collaboration with Africans who serve as homeguards and chiefs.

This is another ploy employed by the colonial authorities to help them use Africans to destroy their own kinsmen. It is not surprising therefore that the narrator has this to say:

**Mr Howlands felt a certain gratifying pleasure. The machine he had set in motion was working. The blacks were destroying the blacks. They would destroy themselves to the end. What did it matter with him if the blacks in the forest destroyed a whole village? What indeed did it matter except for the fact that labour would diminish? Let them destroy themselves. Let them fight against each other. The few who remained would be satisfied with the land the white man had preserved for them (Weep 97).**

The beginning of the extract with four short, simple declarative sentences and their quick movement illustrate the thrill Howlands feels each minute he thinks of how successful he has been in pitching blacks against one another. For example, the first declarative sentence, “Mr Howlands felt a certain gratifying pleasure” reveals to us how excited Howlands is when he realises that his strategy of throwing blacks against one another is working. The second
declarative sentence “The machine he had set in motion was working” is what tells us that Howlands’ method is working. The third declarative sentence, “The blacks were destroying the blacks” shows and confirms the fact that Howlands’ strategy is real and this is reiterated in the fourth declarative sentence, “They would destroy themselves to the end.” The next declarative sentence envisages and declares what will finally happen at the end. This thrills Howlands so much that his thoughts plunge us into rhetorical questions, “What did it matter with him if the blacks in the forest destroyed a whole village? What indeed did it matter except for the fact that labour would diminish?” These questions show how insensitive Howlands is to the plight of the black man. His only concern is the labour which would not be readily available. This insensitivity is what drives him to further show his malice through the following imperative sentences: “Let them destroy themselves. Let them fight against each other.” Self-destruction among the black people is the drama that plays in Mr Howlands’s mind, and this is what he believes will reduce the black population so that those who survive would be contented with what the settler gives them. This is revealed through what he says that, “The few who remained would be satisfied with the land the white man had preserved for them” to portray the complexity of the whole issue.

It is therefore obvious that the main strategy of the colonialists, as projected through Howlands, is to set Africans against one another so that the Africans can destroy themselves to the advantage of the colonial authorities. Howlands carries this scheme through Jacobo who has been made a chief. Thus Jacobo arrogates to himself powers that enable him to decide on who should be a victim to the emergency laws during the state of emergency after the strike. Having been attacked by Ngotho during the failed strike, Jacobo bears grudge against Ngotho’s household. He therefore finds every means to intimidate them. This does not go down well with Boro, one of Ngotho’s sons; he therefore murders Jacobo. After Jacobo’s murder, we see again the horrendous nature of Howlands. The whole family of
Ngotho was arrested and taken to a detention camp. Njoroge was taken from school and sent to the detention camp. Howlands takes Njoroge through a very grisly interrogation in order to find out from him as to who killed Jacobo.

Mr Howlands rose and came to Njoroge. He was terrible to look at. He said, “I’ll show you.” He held Njoroge’s private parts with a pair of pincers and started to press tentatively.

“You’ll be castrated like your father.”

Njoroge screamed.

“Tell us. Who really sent you to collect information in Jacobo’s house about…”

Njoroge could not hear: the pain was so bad. And yet the man was speaking. And whenever he asked a question, he pressed harder (Weep 118).

The above extract portrays a dramatic Scene where direct narration in the form of commentary and summary begin the scene, and then plunges into a dramatic dialogue to show the episode as it unfolds. In the beginning part of the episode, the compound sentence, “Mr Howlands rose and came to Njoroge” enables us to follow the stage direction and see Mr Howlands in our minds eyes. This makes it possible for us to find out what he is about to do. Then the declarative sentence, “He was terrible to look at” tells us about Mr Howlands’ animalistic demeanour. The word “terrible” portrays wickedness. The reporting clause, “He said,” draws our attention to exactly what Mr Howlands says to Njoroge, that, “I’ll show you.” This is a simple short declarative sentence which is appropriate for drastic action. It is therefore not surprising seeing what Mr Howlands does to Njoroge by holding his “private parts with a pair of pincers and started to press tentatively.” This is a very awful means to extract information from an individual. Mr Howlands statement, “You’ll be castrated like your father,” is another simple declarative sentence which has the subject as “You” and the predicate as, “will be castrated like your father” to show the action that Howlands intends to undertake. This statement is deliberate and psychological. It is made to frighten Njoroge so that he can give out the information Mr Howlands seeks.
This is how ghastly the colonial authorities maltreat and subjugate the black people as represented through Howlands in *Weep Not, Child*. The colonial authorities thus use not only divide and rule scheme to create acrimony among the blacks so that they, the blacks, could fight and destroy one another, but they also employ suppressive methods in dealing with the blacks.

The same circumstances of colonialism is found in *Dreams in a Time of War* where the colonial authorities subjugate the black people with repressive laws and mistreatment.

The colonial state had already formed a new force drawn from loyalist elements in the population called Home Guards. Now more and more were recruited into the force. Increasingly this force became one of the most brutal instruments of colonial terror...What was it that could make a person turned so brutal towards his own people? (*Dreams* 184 – 185).

The above extract tells us that just like in *Weep Not, child, Dreams in a Time of War* also talks about the Home Guard menace in Kenya and how they have been used by the colonial authorities to make Africans destroy one another. The protagonist, Ngugi, suffers torture in the hands of colonial authorities just like Njoroge. It is obvious that the narrator uses direct factual narration of the event as it occurred. There is therefore extensive use of summary where a lot of information is elided leaving vast gaps to be re-enacted by the reader.

The difference in portraying these same themes of colonialism in the respective genres is that in *Weep Not, Child*, the narrative uses various artistic techniques in portraying the issues to us. For example, it is through Mr Howlands’ interior monologue that his misdeeds, for that matter the Europeans misdeeds, against the Africans are revealed to us. So, through Howlands’ stream of consciousness we know that blacks are destroying each other to the delight of the colonial authorities. Also, through the use of language, we receive a lot of information about the European’s methods of handling the blacks. Furthermore, through the fictional presentation of many detailed eventful and dramatic scenes *Weep Not, Child*
artistically and vividly mirrors the colonial misdeeds and transgressions in Kenya. In *Dreams in a Time of War* the issues concerning colonial misdeeds come to us through narration. The events are brief and summarised such that not enough fictional episodes are created around the happenings since it is factual.

### 5.2 The Theme of Land Ownership, Appropriation, and Alienation

Land ownership, for the native black people in Kenya, is through divine gift from God. As a result, the native Kenyans believe they naturally own the lands. They strongly believe that the land is their ancestral heritage handed to them by the supreme creator. In *Weep Not, Child*, Ngotho and Kiarie are the characters through whom the issues of land is presented. Ngotho narrates to his children the allegorical myth of how the Creator gives the land to the Gikuyu people through Giguyu and Mumbi

There was wind and rain. And there was also thunder and terrible lightning...it was, our elders tell us, all dead except for the thunder...but in this darkness, at the foot of Kerinyaga, a tree rose. At first it was a small tree and grew up finding a way even through the darkness. It wanted to reach the light, and the sun. This tree had life. It went up, up, sending forth the rich warmth of a blossoming tree – you know a holy tree in the dark night of thunder and moaning. This was Mukuyu, God’s tree. Now, you know that at the beginning of things there was only one man (Gikuyu) and only one woman (Mumbi). It was this Mukuyu that he first put them...and the Creator who is also called Murungu took Giguyu and Mumbi from his holy mountain. He took them to the country of ridges near Siriana and there stood them on a big ridge before he finally took them to Mukuruwe wa Ganthanga...But he had shown them all the land – yes, children, God showed Gikuyu and Mumbi all the land and told them: “This land I hand over to you. O man and woman. It’s yours to rule and till in serenity sacrificing. Only to me, your God, under my sacred tree...” I am old now. But I too have asked that question...What happened o Murungu, to the Land which you gave to us? Where, O Creator, went our promised land?” (*Weep* 23 - 24).

In the extract above it is observed that ordinary and simple words are used throughout the narration. Nowhere in the extract do we come across words that demand stopping here and there to check for meaning. This makes simple the story of how the Gikuyu people received the land from the Supreme Being. What is significant about the language used in this extract
is the African story telling mode it assumes. The story is a flashback which moves back into time to recall the myth surrounding the native lands. It is noticed that the story teller, Ngotho, sometimes uses his clear normal voice, sometimes he uses voice modulation to simulate or mimic the various characters in the story and sometime the voice simulation portrays sad tone. For example, when Murungu, the Supreme Being, shows the land to Giguyu and Mumbi, Ngotho’s voice mimics the voice of someone who speaks with majestic air and authority thus, “This land I hand over to you. O man and woman. It’s yours to rule and till in serenity sacrificing. Only to me, your God, under my sacred tree...” This shows that it is the Supreme Being who is speaking. Sometime also Ngotho stops the narration, makes comments, explains certain issues and then continues with the story again. For example, “Now, you know that at the beginning of things there was only one man (Gikuyu) and only one woman (Mumbi)”. This is a typical African mode of telling stories to help convey the dramatic import of the story hence making the listeners imaginatively see the scenes unfold.

Kairie also recounts the history of the land. He tells the gathering which plans ‘the strike’ that all the land belongs to the people – Black people. He reiterates that the black people “had been given it by God.” He further gives an example of every race with its country. He observes that just as Indians have India and Europeans have Europe, so do Africans have, “the land of the black people. Who did not know that all the soil in this part of the country had been given to Gikuyu and Mumbi and their posterity?” (Weep 57). It is therefore clear in Weep Not, Child that the native Kenyans, for that matter, Ngotho and Kiarie, have passionate attachment to their divine birthright which is land. Land ownership therefore defines their life, their breath and their very existence.

In Dreams in a Time of War, we learn from the narrator’s chronicle that land ownership is through family genealogy and it is inherited through ancestral line from generation to
generation. Land ownership is therefore a heritage handed down from God to generations. We can thus see how Ngugi’s grandfather becomes a custodian of large acres of land.

My grandfather was...a big landowner in his own right, and, as the head and trustee of his entire Kamami subclan, he had flexibility over the rights of use of the clan’s extensive patrimony. Unlike my father who had no roots in Limuru, my grandfather, his extended family, and his entire subclan did, owning and controlling acres of cultivated and virgin lands (Dreams 99).

Here the language is direct and factual. It employs brief summary using simple words to convey the facts about land acquisition to us.

But the advent of the First World War changes everything about ownership of land in Kenya.

In Weep Not, Child, Ngotho recounts how the land was cunningly taken away from them.

So the white man came and took the land. But at first not the whole of it. Then came the war. It was the first big war...All of us were taken by force...We made roads and cleared the forest to make it possible for the warring white man to move more quickly. The war ended. We were all tired. We came home worn out but very ready for whatever the British might give us as a reward. But more than this, we wanted to go back to the soil and court it to yield, to create, not to destroy. But Ng’o! The land was gone. My father and many others had been moved from our ancestral land...Boro thought of his father who had fought in the war only to be dispossessed (Weep 25–26).

The brevity of the following sentences, “So the white man came and took the land”, “But at first not the whole of it”, “Then came the war”, “It was the first big war”, “All of us were taken by force”, “The war ended”, “We were all tired” mixed with long sentences in the extract above portrays how quickly the episodes happened, followed by the long protracted suffering the black men go through after their lands have been annexed by the white settlers.

Here, Ngotho, informs us about how the white men came to take possession of the tribe’s land. He further informs us that the land on which Mr Howlands has settled and has his farm, where Ngotho works as a labourer, is actually Ngotho’s ancestral land appropriated from his ancestors by the settlers.
In *Dreams in a Time of War*, we learn of a similar circumstance leading to the native Kenyans losing their land to white settlers after the First World War.

After the First World War, which ended with the Treaty of Versailles of June 1919, white ex-soldiers were rewarded with African lands, some of the lands belonging to the surviving African soldiers, accelerating dispossession, forced labour, and tenancy-at-will on lands now owned by settlers, such tenants otherwise known as squatters. In exchange for the use of the land, the squatters provided cheap labour and sold their harvest to the white landlord at a price determined by him (*Dreams* 17).

Here again the words used in the extract are simple every day vocabulary. But the whole extract is only two sentences loaded with a lot of pauses. This depicts the fact that although the land issues look very simple on the surface, it is plagued with a lot of complexities.

Thus the white settlers steal the people’s lands through dubious deals, pacts and treatise that will benefit their whims and caprices. This exposes how exploitative the settlers are. They capitalize on the generosity of the native Kenyans and fraudulently steal their God-given lands.

The aftermath of the Second World War is similar to that of the First World War where blacks find themselves in the European war. But when they also come back they face the worst. In *Weep Not, Child*, we are told that

Boro thought of his father who had fought in the war only to be dispossessed. He too had gone to war, against Hitler…He had seen things. He had often escaped death narrowly…when the war came to an end, Boro had come home, no longer a boy but a man with experience and ideas, only to find that for him there was to be no employment. There was no land on which he could settle, even if he had been able to do so (*Weep* 26).

Boro and his brother, Mwangi, have also been to the Second World War. Boro painfully lost his brother in the war. He has come back from the war to realise that his livelihood has been taken away. He has no employment, and there is no land on which he can settle, breeds grief and anger in Boro.
Dreams in a Time of War paints the same picture about the appropriation of the Kenyan lands after the Second World War. Through Ngandi we learn that the circumstances do not change for the African Second World War veterans.

It was the same with the Second World War. Jobs for the returning European soldiers; joblessness for the African fighter (Dreams 182)...Then in 1941, even as our men went to fight for them in the big war, European settlers started expelling squatters from their farms...But then, three years after the return of our soldiers from the Second World War, the colonial government decided to expel the residents of Ole Ngurueni (Dreams 127).

Indeed, these prevailing situations are very bad for black Kenyans. They take the appropriation of their land and their further alienation from their own land grudgingly.

Unfortunately, the settler community does not empathize with the black land owners. As far as the white settler is concerned, the African land is a source of escape from a chaotic past to a new beginning. Mr Howlands represents such a settler community in Weep Not, Child. For him, land is everything. He does not believe in God. His only one god is his farm and the land he cultivates. “His life and soul were in the shamba. Everything else with him counted only in so far as it was related to the shamba” (Weep 29).

Like Ngotho, Howlands is also a product of the First World War. But unlike Ngotho, who lost his ancestral land, Howlands after the war has consolation in Gikuyu land.

After years of security at home, he had been suddenly called to arms and he had gone to the war with the fire of youth that imagines war a glory. But after four years of blood and terrible destruction, like many other young men he was utterly disillusioned by the ‘peace’. He had to escape. East Africa was a good place. Here was a big trace of a wild country to conquer (Weep 30).

In the above extract the word ‘escape’ means to break away from something, while ‘disillusioned’ means to be disheartened by something. Mr Howlands is therefore running away from a past he does not want to remember. He finds his solace in African land.
Again, Ngotho and Howlands have the same attachment to the land. The land is their god and life. Each man thinks of leaving the land for his children’s future use. Each man again lost his son in the Second World War. But while Howlands has consolation in his ‘god,’ the appropriated land, Ngotho has psychological trauma in his ‘life’ the alienated ancestral land on which he is now a squatter.

Both men admired this shamba. For Ngotho felt responsible for whatever happened to this land. He owed it to the dead, the living and the unborn of his line, to keep guard over this shamba. Mr Howlands always felt a certain amount of victory whenever he walked through it all. He alone was responsible for taming this unoccupied wilderness (Weep 31).

From the above it is clear that the Second World War makes the African war veterans traumatic after demobilization. This is due to their experiences in the war front and the appropriation of their ancestral land after they have come back home. Thus land features prominently as one of the major themes in both narratives.

It is noticed that although the same thematic concerns are presented from the two genres in the examples above, the fictional-factual dichotomy of presenting the issues in the two lies in their rhetoric. The persuasive language used in the fictional representation of these issue in Weep Not, Child differs from the direct factual representation of the same issues in Dreams in a Time of War. In Weep Not, Child for example, the third person omniscient narrator is used by the narrator. The narrator is therefore able to artistically use expansive descriptions of events, move in and out of the characters’ mind and present to us the thoughts and feelings of these characters. The narrator is also able to take us to different place both specific and abstract since he knows everything. For example, since the omniscient narrator knows everything, he is able to vividly convey to the reader the extraterrestrial means by which the land was given to the Gikuyu people. The narrator thus uses the African story telling mode to take us to the abstract spiritual world where we see the Supreme Being handing the lands to Giguyu and Mumbi, the male and the female gods, before they also handed the lands to the
black people. The same can be said about how the narrator presents Boro’s mood after the Second World War to the reader. He goes into his mind finds out that he suffers psychological trauma after the Second World War due to joblessness. These are fictional depiction of the characters hence bringing out the artistry in Weep Not, Child.

In Dreams in a Time of War, the narration is from the protagonist who gives us brief and specific description of the issues. For example, the narrator gives us specific depiction of how land can be acquired by the native Kenyan. Thus land can either be acquired through inheritance or through purchase. The same can be said about the events after the Second World War where many war veterans become jobless.

5.3 The Theme of the Mau Mau, Patriotism, and Rebellion

The First and the Second World Wars serve as major openings to the appropriation and alienation of Kenyan lands by the white settlers. The appropriation of land from the rightful owners renders them squatters on white settlers’ farms. This therefore breeds a lot of dissatisfaction among the black land owners. The dissatisfaction triggers agitation and rebellion which is geared toward reclaiming the lost lands; and this is what leads to the birth of the Mau Mau insurgency. Consequently, the cause of coming into being of the Mau Mau movement starts off from the fact that the native Kenyans have no lands to cultivate because they have been forcibly removed from their own ancestral lands by the white settlers. Another reason is the anger which breeds among Africans who have just returned from the Second World War because they are jobless.

The Mau Mau insurgent group therefore started as a result of an anti-colonial resistance against the British colonialists, to fight for freedom and the lost heritage. In Weep Not, Child, Boro, Njoroge’s brother, represents one of the strong personalities who believes that there is the need to fight for freedom and reclaim the lost land.
Boro had always told himself that the real reason for his flight to the forest was a desire to fight for freedom (*Weep* 102).

But the aggressive methods the colonial government employs to crush the Mau Mau group and the freedom fighters radicalises most of them. For example, the brutalities of the colonialists cause Boro to believe that adopting counter brutal methods by the blacks is the only way out because he has lost too many of those whom he loved. Boro consequently decides to go a step further by not only fighting for freedom but to kill and enjoy the killing.

“Don’t you believe in anything?”
“Return of the lands?”
“The lost land will come back to us maybe. But I have lost too many of those whom I have loved for land to mean much to me. It would be a cheap victory.”
“And freedom?” the lieutenant continued.
“An illusion. What freedom is there for you and me?”
“Why then do we fight?”
“To kill. Unless you kill, you’ll be killed. So you go on killing and destroying. It is a law of nature. The white man too fights and kills with gas, bombs, and everything.”
“But don’t you think there’s something wrong in fighting and killing unless you are doing so for a great cause like ours?”
“What great cause is ours?”
“Why, Freedom and the return of our lost heritage.”
“Maybe there’s something in that. But for me Freedom is meaningless unless it can bring back a brother I lost. Because it can’t do that, the only thing left to me is to fight, to kill and rejoice at any who falls under my sword. But enough. Chief Jacobo must die…And with him, Howlands. He is a dangerous man”
(*Weep* 102 - 103)

The above Scene brings out the dramatic dialogue between Boro and his lieutenant. The language used in the conversation between the two is full of passion. While the lieutenant resorts to the use of interrogative sentences to probe Boro for more information, Boro resorts to a mixture of abrupt and long-drawn-out sentences to show his emotion in giving answers to his lieutenant. For example, when the lieutenant asks Boro that, “Don’t you believe in anything?”, the latter uses three phrases in responding to the question by saying, “No. Nothing. Excerpt revenge.” “No” and “Nothing” are one-word phrases, while “Excerpt
revenge” is a two-word phrase. The use of these terse phrases in Boro’s answer portrays the fact that he is lost in a preoccupied mood. The answer tells us that Boro has a very strong and bitter emotion about something. So when the lieutenant further probes and asks, “Return of the lands?” Boro comes out of the trance and answers in an expanded speech by saying, “The lost land will come back to us maybe. But I have lost too many of those whom I have loved for land to mean much to me. It would be a cheap victory.” It is from this speech that Boro reveals to us his doubts, and what he is bitter about. The word “maybe” shows his uncertainty about the return of the land. What he is bitter about is the loved ones he had lost. So when the lieutenant further probes and asks him, “And freedom?” he again gives a terse answer in a two-word phrase, “An illusion”, to confirm the fact that he doubts the reality of ever gaining freedom. He therefore reminds the lieutenant that there is no freedom for the two of them. He does this by using the rhetorical question, “What freedom is there for you and me?” to show that they cannot find answers. The lieutenant then shows his frustration and asks, “Why then do we fight?” This is where Boro now tells and explains to us his main intention for fighting. He does this in a long-drawn-out speech by saying that, “To kill. Unless you kill, you’ll be killed. So you go on killing and destroying. It is a law of nature. The white man too fights and kills with gas, bombs, and everything.” Although Boro’s speech here is long, the words and the sentences he uses are short and straight to the point.

The words “fight”, “kill”, “rejoice” and “sword” are all very strong words found in the long speeches Boro makes. This paints a picture of a maniac; and this is what most of the Mau Mau freedom fighters have been forced to become. Again we can imagine how strongly and in a matter-of-fact manner Boro utters these words. This is because just after the long speeches, Boro pauses and interrupts himself with a quick two-letter phrase, “But enough” and then quickly comes out with two verdicts, “Chief Jacobo must die” and “And with him, Howlands.” The declaration in the statement “Chief Jacobo must die”, is a simple declarative
sentence; but it carries a very heavy weight. Boro utters these words simply and ordinarily to show that this is one of his future plans and that he is serious about it. The phrase, “And with him, Howlands” carries the same sense as in the former.

It is therefore not surprising when later in the narrative we hear that Jacobo dies, and Boro says to Mr Howlands that he, Boro, kills Jacobo. We are also not surprised when we witness the dramatic scene in which Boro kills Mr Howlands.

The door opened. Mr Howlands had not bolted the door. He glanced at his watch and then turned around. A pistol was aimed at his head.

“You move – you are dead.”

Mr Howlands looked like a caged animal.

“Put up your hands.”

He obeyed. Where was his habitual guardedness? He had let a moment of reflection unarmed him.

“I killed Jacobo.”

“I know.”

“He betrayed black people. Together you killed many sons of the land. You raped our women. And finally you killed my father. Have you anything to say in your defence?”

Boro’s voice was flat. No colour of hatred, anger or triumph. No sympathy.

“Nothing.”

“Nothing. Now you say nothing. But when you took our ancestral land-”

“This is my land.” Mr Howlands said this as a man would say, This is my woman.

“Your land! Then you white dog, you’ll die on your land”

(Weep 128 - 129).

The above Scene is the dramatic representation of the episode in which Boro assassinates Mr Howlands. The scene begins with stage direction where the third person omniscient narrator gives commentary and summarises the state of affairs in the scene before we are launched into the dramatic dialogue between Boro and Mr Howlands. From the commentary and the summary, we know that Boro points a pistol at Mr Howlands. Boro’s first speech, “You move – you are dead” paints a picture of a Hollywood thriller. These two successive simple declarative sentences of Boro’s statement give clear indication to Mr Howlands as to what will happen to him if he dares take a step. The imperative sentence, “Put up your hands” gives a clear command to Mr Howlands about what is expected of him and he must obey. The
simple declarative sentence, “I killed Jacobo”, is a statement which gives information to Mr Howlands that Boro is the one who kills Jacobo. Howlands reply, “I know”, is also a simple declarative sentence which gives back information to Boro that Mr Howlands is aware that Boro is the one who assassinates Jacobo. After this curt exchange between the two men Boro launches into a long speech. “He betrayed black people. Together you killed many sons of the land. You raped our women. And finally, you killed my father. Have you anything to say in your defence?” As usual of Boro’s speeches, he uses short, simple declarative sentences to make his statements. For example, “He betrayed black people”, “Together you killed many sons of the land”, “You raped our women”, “And finally you killed my father.” All these simple declarative sentences are meant to give Mr Howlands information on why Boro is on this mission to assassinate him. This long speech which ends with the interrogative sentence, “Have you anything to say in your defence?” portrays Boro as very judgemental and revengeful character. Boro accuses Mr Howlands with these words because these are the radical views the freedom fighters hold about the colonial authorities.

In *Dreams in a Time of War*, Ngugi’s bother, Wallace, joined the freedom fighters in the forest just like Njoroge’s brother, Boro. Although Wallace believed in the fight for freedom and reclaiming the lost land, he was not a hard-core insurgent. Wallace ran to the forest because he was caught supplying bullets to the Mau Mau insurgents in the forest.

Good Wallace was a member of the supply wing of the nationalist guerrilla army, the Kenya Land and Freedom Army. He and Uncle Gicini arranged to meet with a friendly source that would supply them with bullets…unaware that their source was an informer…The two of them were going to be taken to the police station…Good Wallace decided to escape (*Dreams* 211 – 213).

From the extract above it noticed that Wallace was member of a guerrilla group. But his function was just to supply bullets. It was only when he was betrayed by an informant that decided to join the freedom fighters in the forest. Throughout the narrative we have not seen Wallace holding any radical views as does Boro in *Weep Not, Child.*
It is therefore clear that the treatment of the Mau Mau insurgency through Boro in *Weep Not, Child*, and the treatment of the same issue through Wallace in *Dreams in a Time of War* is different. Being a work of art, the major tool of *Weep Not, Child* is dialogue. Ngugi therefore brings out the story of the Mau Mau insurgency through vivid dramatic scenes as seen from the conversation between Boro and the lieutenant on one hand, then between Boro and Mr Howland on the other hand in the extracts above. The treatment of the Mau Mau subject is therefore more pronounced and more radical because of the fictional license the author has and can therefore give any role he deems fit to any character. The dialogue is therefore used to bring out the personality and emotional state of Boro in *Weep Not, Child*. This why we have seen him use variety of speech acts.

In *Dreams in a Time of War*, the author uses straight narration and Summary as seen from the extract above. Being an autobiography, there is no room for going beyond what actually happened although there may be a bit of exaggeration.

In a nutshell, the difference between the treatment of the theme of the Mau Mau rebellion zeroes in on the fictional/factual duality of *Weep Not, Child* and *Dreams in a Time of War*. While the one uses dialogue as a means of rendering or ‘showing’ the episodes, the other uses straight narration as a means of ‘telling’ the episodes.

### 5.4 Images of Women

In both *Weep Not, Child* and *Dreams in a Time of War* there is a strong sense of women’s fight for independence and emancipation in the face of intimidating patriarchy. Thus both genres carry a strong voice of women through the characters, Nyokabi, Njoroge’s mother in *Weep Not, Child*, and Ngugi’s mother, Wanjiku, in *Dreams in a Time of War*.

In *Weep Not, Child* it is Njoroge’s mother who nurses the idea that her son should go to school. The decision is solely taken by her and she sees to it that Njoroge goes to the school.
The same circumstance recurs in *Dreams in a Time of War* where Ngugi’s mother decides that he should go to school and she solely funds Ngugi’s education with the funds she raises from her farm produce. Ngugi’s father has no say in his education at all.

Another important thing about women which both narratives portray is how strongly women can stand their grounds to defend their actions when they are convinced that what they stand for is right. For example, in *Weep Not, Child*, it is significant to note that the failure of the strike coupled with its consequences had been foreseen by Nyokabi, in Chapter VI P52-53. This is why she tries to restrain her husband, Ngotho, from taking part in it. She observes that should the strike fail, Ngotho will lose his job with Mr Howlands. She therefore warns her husband not to take part in the strike and she cites convincing reason why Ngotho should not take part. When Ngotho rejects her opinion and says that he is a man and the final decision lies with him, Nyokabi rebuts him in the dialogue below.

“I must be a man in my home.”
“Yes – be a man and lose a job”
“I shall do whatever I like. I have never taken orders from a woman.”
“We shall starve…”
“You starve! This strike is important for black people. We shall get bigger salaries.”
“What’s black people to us when we starve?”
“Shut that mouth. How long do you think I can endure this drudgery, for the sake of a white man and his children?”
“But he is paying you money. What if the strike fails?”
“Don’t woman me!”
“What if the strike fails, tell me that!
(*Weep* 52 – 53).

In the extract above one thing is clear. Ngotho, as a man would not allow a woman to advise him let alone imposing her will on him. This shows how patriarchal the Kenyan society is. Nyokabi stands her ground and rebuts her husband further. Nyokabi does this because she is convinced that what she is saying is the truth. Her incisive arguments in the dialogue bite deeply into Ngotho hence leading to him beating her.
Thus through the presentation of dramatic scene, and the use of different moods in the exchange between Nyokabi and Ngotho above, Ngugi brings out how women strongly resist the patriarchal propensity of men in *Weep Not, Child*. For example, when Ngotho uses the declarative mood, “I must be a man in my own home” to show his patriarchal authority, Nyokabi rebuts him by emphatically stating in the reflective mood, “Yes – be a man and lose a job.” This statement is thought-provoking and defeats Ngotho’s ego. He therefore resorts to a long rumbling speech in a bid to stamp his manly authority in two declarative moods, “I shall do whatever I like. I have never taken orders from a woman” to show that he would not allow a woman to dictate to him. But again, in a calm declarative mood, Nyokabi insists and reminds him, “We shall starve…” This simple statement pushes Ngotho into frenzy and he rumbles again in three declarative moods, “You starve! This strike is important for black people. We shall get bigger salaries” to protest and explain why he wants to be part of the strike. When Nyokabi again thoughtfully uses the interrogative mood to ask Ngotho a probing question, “What’s black people to us when we starve?” he could not take it any longer. He gets angry and, in the anger, uses a mixture of imperative and interrogative moods in his speech to reply Nyokabi by saying, “Shut that mouth. How long do you think I can endure this drudgery, for the sake of a white man and his children?” The imperative mood, “Shut that mouth” is a command which clearly indicates that Ngotho, as a man, least expects Nyokabi, as a woman to be bold enough and be interrogating his decision. The rhetorical question, “How long do you think I can endure this drudgery, for the sake of a white man and his children?” is meant to justify why Ngotho decides to take part in the strike and for that matter does not expect anyone to question this decision. But this does not put Nyokabi off. She reminds Ngotho, “But he is paying you money” and further probes, “What if the strike fails.” This shows Nyokabi’s resolve, but further angers Ngotho who is beginning to feel that his ego is being demeaned by a woman. He therefore, in an exclamatory mood commands
Nyokabi, “Don’t woman me!” But again, Nyokabi further pushes him and pins him to the wall with a counter exclamatory mood, “What if the strike fails!”

Indeed, Nyokabi’s fear about the strike is exactly what happens later in the narrative. The strike fails due to Ngotho’s rush attack on Jacobo. He later loses his job and further evicted from Jacobo’s land.

In *Dreams in a Time of War* women’s show of strong will is portrayed in Wanjiku when she firmly refused to yield to her husband’s demand that the proceeds from her harvest belonged to him. This refusal led to their divorce after Nducu severely beat her.

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, filing 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).

The difference in presenting the issues through the two genres lies in the artistic orientation of the episode in *Weep Not, Child*. The dialogue used by the author is effective. This is to enable us see and experience what goes on between Ngotho and Nyokabi. It shows that patriarchy is deeply rooted in the Kenyan society and that it affects all women although some of the women strongly resist it.

*Dreams in a Time of War* presents the episode to us exactly as the incident occurred. It is therefore brought to us through direct narration and a brief summary. In narrating the event a lot of ellipses occur so we do not have the opportunity to see and experience the effect of the episode.
From the above discussions it can be concluded that the themes found and examined in *Weep Not, Child* and *Dreams in a Time of War* are conveyed through the characters in both narratives.

In sum, the thematic, the linguistic and the semantic difference between the two genres is mainly in terms of fictional material involving different characters and episodes in *Weep Not, Child* as against factual material involving the narrator as a character in *Dreams in a Time of War*. It is also obvious that the rhetoric of *Weep Not, Child* is more expansive and more action-packed than the brief, specific less eventful and direct rhetoric in *Dreams in a Time of War*. 
CONCLUSION

Findings

The objective of this thesis is to do a comparative study of Ngugi wa Thiong’o’s fiction, Weep Not, Child and his autobiography, Dreams in a Time of War, unearth the various issues addressed in both narratives and determine if the two narratives are intertextually linked.

According to T.S. Elliot in his essay “Tradition and the Individual Talent”, there is the need for us to set an artist’s work “for contrast and comparison, among the dead.” Eliot goes on to further state that “what happens when a new work of art is created is something that happens simultaneously to other works of art which preceded it.” What Eliot seeks to say here is that every work of art can be compared and contrasted with any other work since there are always intertextual links. From our examination of Weep Not, Child and Dreams in a Time of War, Eliot’s argument is true about the two narratives.

Comparing the basic similarities in both genres in Chapter One, it is evident that Weep Not, Child and Dreams in a Time of War draw from the same period of the narrator’s childhood. In comparing the raw data in terms of the representation of society, home and the self, it can also be concluded that both genres are intertextually linked. Accordingly, both Weep Not, Child and Dreams in a Time of War represent three racial groups in their respective worlds. That is the Europeans, the Indians and the native black African. The Europeans are subdivided into two groups. They are the settlers, the colonialist and the subjugators from England who constitute the upper class on the one hand, and the subjugated Europeans represented by the Italian prisoners of war on the other hand. The Indians represented the middle class and finally the native black Africans constitute the colonial subjects. It can further be concluded that in terms of representation of home and the self, both genres present corresponding episodes.
Chapter Two looks at the generic differences in terms of narrative technique in both genres. It is observed that the fiction (Weep Not, Child) and the autobiography (Dreams in a Time of War) present the same episodes but differ in their approaches to presenting these episodes. It is clear that Weep Not, Child is a fictional explication of episodes therefore its narrative style is enveloped with extensive use of dialogues and less narration. Since it is a fiction, it shows that it has an unlimited scope hence it employs different narrative techniques. Notable among them is ‘Scene’ where the language of dialogue enables us to see the emotional states of the characters. This makes the events in the story more vivid and dramatic. Dreams in a Time of War on the other hand is a factual explication of episodes as they occurred in the narrator’s life. Its narrative style is therefore enveloped with extensive use of straight narration and description of episodes and less use of dialogue. This makes it not as dramatic as Weep Not, Child. This is understandable because it is an autobiography and its scope is limited to memories as the author recollects them. But since Dreams in a Time of War is a literary autobiography it is able to use literary tools such as dialogue, narrator and point of view in its narration to make the text vivid although this is not as pronounced as what is found in Weep Not, Child. In summary it can be concluded that both Weep Not, Child and Dreams in a Time of War are literary texts which use the same literary tools in presenting similar episodes. But the generic difference between them is that Weep Not, Child, being a work of fiction has more flexible narrative freedom than Dreams in a Time of War which is an autobiography and dwells on history hence employs more memory.

Chapter Three focuses on the autobiographical dimensions of Dreams in a Time of War, and it is obvious that memory, selection, fictive/factual orientation of the text, and narrative voice play very crucial roles in projecting the narrator’s positive image. In terms of memory we see how the narrator’s pleasant memories have positive impact on his personal development whereas the unpleasant memories have traumatic impact on him. The traumatic impact is
what strengthened his resolve to endure adversities in life and this helped him to accomplish
greater feats later in life. In terms of selection, it is obvious that the narrator must have
screened his memory, mainly due to change in perspective. The narrator therefore projected
his positive accomplishments and suppressed his negative deeds. The fictive/factual
dichotomy enables the autobiography to be interesting reading and entertaining since this
aspect is highly hyperbolic. Finally, the narrative voice helps us to differentiate between the
author, the narrating ‘I’ and the narrated ‘I’. In a nutshell, we can conclude that the
autobiographical dimensions of *Dreams in a Time of War*, makes it possible for Ngugi to
project his positive image and immortalise his name for the future generation to learn from
since the story is about the adult narrator and the study of his life. Ngugi’s story in *Dreams in
a Time of War* is therefore making a statement about why he is what he is today in the world.

Thematically, the issues in both *Weep Not, Child* and *Dreams in a Time of War*, are carried
through presentation of characters and the language used. Examples of such thematic issues
examined are colonialism, land, the Mau Mau, and images of women. Therefore, in Chapter
Four of this study, it is obvious that whereas *Weep Not, Child* draws characters from every
area of life and create fictional episodes around them, *Dreams in a Time of War* creates the
episodes around the narrator, Ngugi. It can thus be concluded that the thematic issues dealt
with in *Weep Not, Child* show how these experiences are fictional whereas the thematic
issues dealt with in *Dreams in a Time of War* has to do with facts. The themes, and language
used in *Weep Not, Child* are therefore more fictional and more pronounced than their use in
*Dreams in a Time of War*.

Another significant observation made from the two genres is that in spite of the many years,
that is, the forty-six years, between the writing of *Weep Not, Child* and *Dreams in a Time of
War*, and in spite of the age difference between the ‘two authors’, the memories of all the
pleasing and awful experiences are still replicated in the two works. (‘Two authors’ because
Ngugi was twenty-six years when *Weep Not, Child* was written and he was seventy-two years when *Dreams in a Time of War* was written. Ngugi the author of *Dreams in a Time of War* is therefore more experienced than Ngugi the author of *Weep Not, Child*. Age and experience therefore make them different. It can therefore be concluded that the author of the two genres, Ngugi wa Thiong’o, is drawing our attention to the fact that although time has changed, nothing else has changed in Kenya; even after independence.

**Conclusions**

Having examined both *Weep Not, Child* and *Dreams in a Time of War*, and having done a comparative analysis to draw the point of convergence and divergence between the two genres, this researcher can conclude that there exists interrelationship between fiction and autobiography. This is because everything Ngugi writes about in *Weep Not, Child* which is fiction, corresponds to the ways things actually were in his life as represented in *Dreams in a Time of War* which is autobiography.

Finally, looking at Odoi’s classification of various types of autobiographies, we can conclude that *Dreams in a Time of War* is a literary text. This conclusion is drawn because Ngugi, being a practising novelist, makes “conscious efforts to include the aesthetic ingredients needed in a literary work” (Odoi 2010) in his autobiography. Some of the literary aesthetics used in *Dreams in a Time of War* are Time and its sub-categories, Narrator, and Point of View. The major difference then between *Weep Not, Child* and *Dreams in a Time of War* therefore is that the former is more artistically pronounced because it is fiction and the latter is an autobiography which deals with history and makes use of more memory.
Recommendation

A comparative study of two literary autobiographies to draw their intertextual links is a fertile area to be explored in future research. The researcher therefore recommends that literary autobiographies written by different authors from different backgrounds should be studied to see if there exist intertextual connections in autobiographies.
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