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POSTCOLONIAL MENTALITY AND IMMIGRATION

In Ngugi wa thiong'o A Grain of Wheat and Dave Eggers
What is the What

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to my mother

Acknowledgment

I extol God for giving me health, strength, and patience to accomplish this humble work.

I would like to express my deep gratitude to Miss Kerthiou Omayma for being understanding and patient with me through the years. To all the teachers of the department of English who were faithful in their jobs.

Abstract

This Dissertation examines Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's *A Grain of Wheat*, and Dave Eggers autobiography and novel *What is the what* with a particular focus on the impact of the forced displacement on the cultural heritage, which sent the nations in a loop of despair and hopelessness. The result was an aggravated fragmentation of the community, which shifted the individual psychological stability and alienated them from defining their own identities. The quest for belonging was apparent through both novels and the struggle to keep one's roots alive and adapt to their current situations. It compares both authors views on the struggle they had to endure for or on their lands and the endless violence and the misrepresentation of religion to achieve personal endeavors. Women's role was not highlighted in the novels but through a profound analysis, it showed the major role they had in preserving identity and the issues they had to figure out in the midst of these complexities.

Keywords: Displacement, identity, religion, violence.

المخلص :

هذه المذكرة تدرس رواية نغوي وا ثيونغو "حبة قمح" و الرواية و السيرة الذاتية لدايف ايغرز "ما هو الماذا" مع التركيز بشكل خاص على تأثير على التراث الثقافي الذي أرسل الأمم في حلقة من اليأس و انعدام الامل. مما أدى إلى تفكك عميق للمجتمع و خلخلة الاستقرار النفسي الفردي و ابعدهم عن تحديد هوياتهم. كان البحث عن الانتماء واضحا في كلتا الروايتين و الكفاح من أجل الحفاظ على جذور المرء على قيد الحياة وفي نفس الوقت التكيف مع أوضاعهم الحالية. هذه الدراسة تقارن وجهات نظر المؤلفين حول النضال الذي كان عليهم تحمله من أجل أو على أراضيهم والعنف اللامتناهي وتحريف الدين لتحقيق مساعي شخصية ، لم يتم تسليط الضوء على النساء في الروايات ولكن من خلال تحليل عميق أظهر الدور الرئيسي الذي كان لهن في الحفاظ على الهوية والقضايا التي كان عليهن اكتشافها في خضم هذه التعقيدات

الكلمات المفتاحية: النزوح القسري ، الهوية ، الدين ، العنف

Table of Contents

Abstract	iii
Table of contents	v
I. General Introduction	2
Chapter One: identity in <i>A Grain of wheat</i>	4
I.1.Ngugi Wa Thiong'o in Brief	4
I.2.The Plot of A Grain of Wheat	5
I.3.The Mau Mau	7
I.4.Land and identity	10
I.5.Culture and Identity	12
I.6.Women's Role and Identity	14
I.7.Religion	16
I.8.Violence.	19
Chapter two: identity in <i>What Is the What</i>	21
II.1.The Plot of What Is the What	21
II.2.Land, Setting and identity	22
II.3.Culture	25
II.4.Women and Identity	27
II.5.Third Voice	32
II.6.Violence	34
General Conclusion	37
Works cited	39

General Introduction

Published in 1967, Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's book, *A Grain of Wheat*, reveals the forms in which Post-colonial Kenya continues to be influenced by British institutions and traditions. As native Kenyans seek to establish a new national identity and leadership, this novel discusses the state of post-colonial Kenya and depicts the Christian Church's greed and the ethnic hegemony that missionaries are perpetuating as they introduce European practices and abolish Kenyan cultural traditions.

The work of Ngugi represents the influence of Marxist philosophy and writers like Frantz Fanon, whose theory of neo-colonialism describes many of the problems present in post-colonial Kenya. Ngugi adapts the theory of Fanon concerning neo-colonialism and the surviving structures of colonial governance in *A Grain of Wheat*. Ngugi, on the one hand, presents characters who are essentially the modern bourgeoisie who proceed to mimic the British and compromise the cultural history and ideals in Kenya.

Published in 2006, Dave Egger's book, *What Is the What*, pronounced a novel and an autobiography by its author, in which he reveals the forms of Post-colonial South Sudan struggles to find peace in their region but it's faced only with multiple horrors. To help the reader navigate the complicated history of the area better, Eggers summons multiple historical events and places in the text, in an attempt to tell the world about the atrocities committed in Sudan and trying to prevent them from ever happening again in any part of the world. The opposing forces of the north and elsewhere created alliances, and internal disagreements caused fractures in the order of the society, making it incredibly difficult for civilians who were trapped in the midst of the war to decide who was a friend or foe. Eggers portrays the displacement of the Sudanese and two and a half million people who have perished in Sudan's civil war. The lost boys struggled to survive through the atrocities of war, with their continu-

ous attempt to rediscover their self-identities through their 1000 km trek that would affect their ability to identify everything around them including themselves, or the journey to a very different country with a different mentality and lifestyle.

We are going to discuss both novels under the postcolonial theory and neocolonialism. Colonialism is a mode of appropriating resources and lands from another foreign land through conquering that land and its inhabitants, and forcing that nation under the rule of a governing system created by the colonizer.

In the postcolonial studies, majorly focuses on the 19th and 20th-century colonialism. Post-colonialism is a theoretical method based on the analysis and critique of colonialism's practices. The works are scholarly dealing with colonization in different parts of the world and analyze the response of the colonized subjects would constitute the domain of the postcolonial studies. The postcolonial theory includes contradicted debates, views, and opinions on different types of subjects such as resistance, oppression, slavery, ethnicity; gender, and the Diasporas.

Neo-colonialism is the control of ex-colonies or underdeveloped countries by cultural, economic, and political pressure and the educated elites whose allegiance belongs to the former colonizer. The term was introduced by Kwame Nkrumah in one of his most notable works which are *Neo-colonialism: the last stage of imperialism* (1965). Kwame Nkrumah described the influence of the former imperial nations in the fields of economics, language, culture, and political philosophy on the former colonies.

The two novels *A Grain of wheat* (1976) and *What is the What* (2006), both share some common points such as the oppressive force that brought them out of their lands and the violence and abuse both nations had to endure and witness throughout their lives.

This dissertation aims to demonstrate the impact of the British colonialism on Kenya. Ngugi depicts the fragmentation of the society and its culture and its effect on the communal identity due to the behaviors initiated by the colonizer and the collaboration of the natives, adding to that, the sense of national individuality and communal identity that rose from the calls of freedom as a direct response to that oppressive pattern performed by the colonizers. And the effect of war and displacement on South Sudanese, which both had a major negative contribution to the instability of economic and cultural heritage and their perception of identity. So how did both nations emerge into this mentality, and what affected their identities? And what were the main reasons for the migration and how did it affect their perception and psychological state?

The two novels *A Grain of wheat* (1976) and *What is the What*(2006), share some common points such as the oppressive force that brought them out of their lands, and the violence and abuse both nations had to endure and witness throughout their lives that molded the way they see themselves and everything around them.

Chapter One: Identity in *A Grain of Wheat*

Chapter One: identity in *A Grain of wheat*

Ngugi wa Thiong'o is one of the pioneer authors in African literature. Ngũgĩ was born on January 5, 1938 in Kamiriithu, Kenya; He is a novelist, an essayist, a dramatist, a journalist, an editor, and an academic. He was educated at Kamandura, Manguu, and Kinyogori primary schools; Alliance High School, all in Kenya; Makerere University College (then a campus of London University), Kampala, Uganda; and the University of Leeds, Britain.

Kenya was colonized by the British (1895-1963), Ngugi spent his adolescence witnessing the Mau Mau revolutionary war for independence. His family members were entangled with the Mau Mau as his half-brother was a freedom fighter; which later on resulted in the torturing of his mother. This had a great deal in defining Ngugi's ideologies and guiding his visions towards a nationalistic sentiment and emergence of preserving cultural and lingual heritage in order not to be banished by the colonizers. Ngugi used to write only in his first language Gikuyu to defend his cultural and lingual roots from decaying against the colonial oppression and the cultural war.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o was a fighter and political activist who weaponized himself with the pen. After studying at the University of Leeds and after the publication of his first successful novels (the first one is *Weep Not, Child*, 1964), followed by the second novel, *The River Between* (1965), and *A Grain of Wheat* (1967).

In 1967, Ngũgĩ became a lecturer in English Literature at the University of Nairobi. He taught there until 1977. His novel *Petals of Blood* was published in that year where he openly portrays the life of the neo-colonial Kenya about the Moi dictatorship, in the same year he published the play (*I Will Marry When I Want*) and performed in an open-air theatrical stage by peasants depicting the harsh circumstances the Kenyan society struggles within their daily lives.

The novel and the play resonated in a broader sense and grabbed a lot of attention which led to his imprisonment. Ngũgĩ was arrested and imprisoned without charge at Kamiti

Chapter One: identity in A Grain of wheat

Maximum Security Prison for a year, in which he devoted his time writing on toilet paper his next novel *Devil on the Cross* (1982) which provided him amnesty from an international campaign for his behalf. The Moi dictatorship forced him into exile after shutting him off doing anything, the beginning was in Britain (1982 –1989), and then the U.S. after (1989-2002).

His novel, *Matigari* was published in 1986 and banned from every bookstore in Kenya and made the Moi dictatorship even more infuriated and wanted to terminate him. Ngũgĩ worked with the London-based Committee for the Release of Political Prisoners in Kenya (1982-1998), which placed him as an ambassador of human rights in Kenya. He received twelve PhDs *honoris causa* from Universities spread all over the world and several times he has been running for the Nobel Prize.

He remained in exile for the duration of the Moi Dictatorship 1982-2002. Ngugi continued writing to encourage awareness of the Kenyan political situation and kept stating his anti-colonial ideologies in many novels and most importantly in *A Grain of Wheat*.

I.1. The Plot of A Grain of Wheat

The novel recounts the events of the British colonization followed by Kenya's independence in December 1963 in the village of Thabai. It also does not fail to represent the people's dilemma during their freedom struggle and the urge to break from the oppression of the white man. Ngugi presented a mixture of past and present which elevated the complexity of the novel by taking the reader into journeys by displaying many fragmentations and a distorted order of time to illustrate the situation of Kenyans historical past as they prepare for the Uhuru or the independence.

The primary action starts when Kihika gathered the villagers and motivated them to stand against the colonizers. Kihika was a young man that became the leader of the freedom fighters movement or the Mau Mau. Kihika and the rebels took over a remote police station

Chapter One: identity in A Grain of wheat

and killed the British Thabai district officer named Robson. Kihika was captured and executed, this honored him as an icon of the liberation movement in the eyes of the villagers.

Mugo is an introverted young man who did not believe in the movement and considered it a lost cause. Mugo alienates himself from his community and their struggle and acts as if it does not concern him. After the assassination of Robson, the British raided on the local village and took many men to the detention camp, Mugo was detained as well after defending a pregnant woman being beaten. Mugo was later on praised for his stoicism and seen as a hero, but he lived with a secret. He was the one who betrayed the leader of the Mau Mau, Kihika.

Karanja is a selfish opportunist and collaborator with the British, he worked for John Thompson who was a British administrative secretary at Forest Research Station. In the novel, John is presented as the face of colonialism, as he was fully absorbed in the colonialist and imperialist paternalism. Karanja first worked for the Homeguard and by the emergency state, he became the chief of the village, which was very displeasing to the villagers. Thompson's future was promising because he embraced the ideologies of colonialism and that Africans are primitive and need to be ruled. Thompson had eleven prisoners killed in a phase of violence and blood lust at the camp that Mugo was held at.

Gikonyo and Mumbi were a happily married couple. Both knew Karanja since they were children and swore the Oath to the Mau Mau rebellion. Gikonyo was taken to a detention center for almost seven years. Karanja who has always loved Mumbi takes advantage of her while her husband was away and impregnates her. She confesses to Mugo and he did the same over his betrayal to her brother.

General R and Koina who were old military men ask Mugo to give a speech at Uhuru. General R calls at the traitor in Uhuru to come forward, while everyone was pointed towards

Chapter One: identity in A Grain of wheat

Karanja, Mugo steps forward and confesses his treason and General R gave the order that he must be submitted to a trial to pay for his disloyalty.

I.2. The Mau Mau

Ngugi wrote that every attempt was made by the British people to crack the connection between the Kenyan people and society. White men decided to manipulate the Kenyan people and colonize them culturally and take over their land. Ngugi was his people's fighter against the European invasion of Kenya, which he illustrated in *A Grain of Wheat*. The process of colonization that led to the psychological dominance of the people of Kenya was social, political, and religious exploitation.

As a product of colonial intervention, and Kenyan independence afterward, the novel accounts for the events. It also does not fail to reflect the people's confusion during their freedom struggle, to decide whether they have to stand with their people or with the white man. Kenyans were compelled to adhere to the white law and believed that it was not possible to silence their voices, but on the contrary, Ngugi was the voice of the Kenyans through the struggle and in the novel. So, on the eve of the Kenyan independence war, he gave a portrayed image of what happened, keeping a moment in Kenyan history to free himself from the grips of colonial rule. Therefore, he draws attention to the cause of the revolutionary Mau Mau, their preparation for the revolution, and the betrayal of both their own people and the white colonial British man.

Freedom movements have secretly started as far as the 17th century. Wayaki, who was a fighter even before 1900, which was already mentioned in the introduction of the book along Jomo Kenyatta as a crucial part of the Kenyan institution and history. Wayaki is described as one of the first few men who fought the oppressive rule of the British and stood against them. In 1920, the peasants gathered and used the only weapon they had, they sang and danced to the echoes of freedom, only to be shot down by the gun barrels of their oppres-

Chapter One: identity in A Grain of wheat

sor, the bullets and the blood were meant to silence the peasants and kill the idea itself from recurring into their heads. “The white man had not slept. Young Harry was clamped in chains, narrowly escaping the pit into which Waiyaki was buried alive.” (Ngugi10)

Striking the division and death is one of the main strategies the colonizer uses against revolts, that division would later pull other Kenyan individuals to stand by the colonizer against their own people, that behavior would be the result of seeing that there's hope to fight the colonizer or just an attempt to climb the ladder and acquire social ranking above ordinary peasant instead of being squashed under the weight of it.

Ngugi states, “Wayaki’s blood contained within in it a seed, a grain, which gave birth to a movement whose main strength thereafter sprang from a bond with the soil” (12). This statement is the source of the novel’s title. Ngugi asserts that the community must unite and stand against tyranny and push harder for progress because it would not be accomplished if they were divided.

After Wayaki, Kenyans’s sense of nationalism rose again, with Jomo Kenyatta as their leader. He was the Kenyan hero who was later arrested and imprisoned by the White Government in 1952 and released in 1961. Warui the old man spoke greatly of the warriors and how their imprisonment or death affected the nation. With their arrest, the Kenyans were abused and displaced from their farms and most of them were sold as slaves. The creation of schools and opening rail lines in Kenya to assert the role of the white man as an exploiter and an oppressor is not finished yet, but pretty far from being done with that land.

He defines white missionaries, the white man, and the administrators as the instruments used for colonial exploitation. He defined how the crooked strategies took place in order to take advantage of the land. Mr. Rogers, an agricultural officer, saw the thick forest at Githima and started sending letters to everyone to help him establish a Forestry research sta-

Chapter One: identity in A Grain of wheat

tion, the governor says "science in dark Africa?" (33). denoting how the white saw Kenya and Africa, simply dark.

Another man is Thomas Robson.' Thomas Robson, then a District Officer, held barazas in every ridge, giving people two months within which to demolish the old and build new homes' (145). Apparently, Robson was as an oppressor and a man who displaced the Gikuyu from their lands forcibly. Robson's nickname was "Tom the terror" and he was called a 'Man Eater', to better define his merciless behaviors and referring to him as cannibalistic, the name came from the horror he created in the Kenyan's hearts as he would circle around the forest in his car. The revolutionaries that were caught were obliged to dig their own graves and buried alive in them. Through Robson, Ngugi shows that the colonizer had no humanity towards the Kenyans as Africa was considered dark and primitive, they were classified inferior to the white man whereas they didn't even deserve proper death or a proper burial. Robson was murdered by Kihika, the young Mau Mau fighter.

In the development of Kihika, a fighter who had killed Robson, Rev. Jackson, and teacher Muniu for taking the side of the British, Ngugi elaborates the disapproval of the people of Kenya to colonial rule. Ngugi introduces the movement of the Mau Mau in order to bring the people of Kenya together.

Kihika plays a vital role in the struggle against the white colonizers. He is the ultimate portrait of nationalism and sacrifice. "Kihika signifies inhumane heroism which is necessary for freedom and justice. He is the 'grain of wheat' of the title, who must die for new life to begin" (15). Kihika was idolized and the spoken word of his was filled with exaggeration in a way to show how much the community was affected by his actions of killing Robson and hijacking the police center in Mahee. "People came to know Kihika as the terror of the Whiteman. They said that he could move mountains and compel thunder from heaven" (16). Kihika was tortured in an attempt to make him confess about the secrets of the movement and

Chapter One: identity in A Grain of wheat

was hanged in front his people, again to kill the motive and the idea itself not just the actions. “one Sunday, at Rung’ei Market, not far from where he had once stood calling for blood to rain on and water the tree of freedom.” (17).

Mugo was the man who betrayed Kihika. Kihika revealed to him that he was the one who killed Robson, Mugo was stuck in a dilemma that both the white man would have no mercy on him if they knew that he sheltered the most wanted freedom fighter, the act of Mugo is a great signifier of the division that the colonizer created among the Kenyans and even among brothers, betrayal was submitted through Mugo, of what a man would do for money, and that selfishness and not seeing the common benefit would make it easier to even sell your own blood to the oppressor.” he stood beyond good and evil; he enjoyed the power and authority of his own knowledge: did he not hold the fate of a man’s life in his head?” (199)

I.3. Land and identity

Kenya was colonized by the British in 1895 and did not achieve its independence until 1963. The British colonizers tried to create a gap among Kenyans to reinforce their roots by using religion as a tool to exploit the society and control politics as well. Native Kenyans found themselves in a mix of harsh circumstances because of the ongoing violence and oppression, the emergency state, and the political tension aggravated the mental conditions of the Kenyans from bad to worse.

The British established railroads, schools, and churches to control the Kenyans. It appeared in the novel that the continuous seizure of lands had the worse impact on the native Kenyans because the land had great importance to them and above all of that injustice they were forced into hard labor and oppression under the white men’s authority in their own lands, the British took advantage of everything in every way possible.

Chapter One: identity in *A Grain of wheat*

In *A Grain of Wheat*, the British colonization had great significance in the novel to emphasize the effect of its behavior on the Kenyan traditions and their way of life. The white settler and his abduction of land set a historical reference altogether with the Mau Mau movement and multiple characters to elaborate on the process of creating social and personal identities.

The attachment of Kenyans to the land has been presented through the use of mythical stories to state the belief of Kenyans that land was given to them by God. Ngugi's use of land as a symbol of attachment of the individual and the community is vital in reconstructing the process of decolonization. Ngugi uses the Gikuyu myth of origin continuously about Mumbi and Gikuyu who were their ancestors to initiate a sense of belonging and spiritual connection to the land.

Another myth that was noticeable is the myth of women's rules over the land. "It was many, many years ago. Then women ruled the land of the Agikuyu. Men had no property; they were only there to serve the whims and needs of the women" (14). The underestimation of the Gikuyu seer prognostication of a dangerous stranger that will take their lands, which later was fulfilled brings up another form of myth. "For a time, people ignored the voice of the Gikuyu seer" (13).

In *A Grain of Wheat*, Ngugi constantly tries to reencounter the historical presentation by the British of the movement and perhaps justify the actions of the rebels despite its violence, this is an attempt to reinsure and solidify the identity of the Kenyans. The struggle for the land was presented by the rebellious movement, The Mau Mau. As depicted in the novel the formation of the Mau Mau was due to the seizure of lands. Gikonyo was held for many years in a detention camp and as he gets back he states: "One more scourge which had afflicted the country in this period leaving the anxious faces of mother dry and cracked" (102). A profound meaning was apparent in these words that bring the direct image of drought's effect

Chapter One: identity in A Grain of wheat

on the lands and the people, the British misuse of rivers, and the capitalistic agricultural methods. These practices of the British motivated the liberation cause to spread wider and initiate the sense of nationalism in Kenyans. The narration of the novel states: “Nearly everybody was a member of the Party, but nobody could say with accuracy when the Party was born ...” (11).

Some characters perceive the cause of liberation as their own duty and purpose of life, as Kihika one of the most notable nationalist figures in the novel states: 'is not politics, ...' he said, 'it is life. Is he a man who lets another take away his land and freedom? Has a slave life?' (112). Kihika also states: "whether the land was stolen from Gikuyu, Uvabai or Nandi, it does not belong to the white men" (85). Kihika here is stating his conviction that it is Kenyan land.

Ngugi vividly portrays the scenery of Kenya. It is located on the ridges of Kikuyu, expanding towards Mount Kenya, Kirinyaga, and Girinyaga from the north of Nairobi. The setting is real and carefully framed within a space and a specific time which is the last days before independence. The agent of history is used to describe the independence of Kenya in December 1963 incorporating the details, the experiences of the struggle and treason, and in between and the outcome of the earned independence.

“Thabai was a big village. When built, it had contained several ridges: Thabai, Kamandura, Kihingo, and parts of Weru.” (5) Thabai and Rungei are the fictional locales and the characters as well. Thabai and Rungei are real to a specific Kenyan ethnic groups and their liberation would be pointless without the liberation of the entire Kenyan districts. Ngugi once again uses this pattern to revive the cultural heritage and national consciousness and identities.

I.4. Culture and Identity

Ngugi explores the connection that the individual has with cultural identity and cultural practices of its community, with a particular emphasis on how they contribute to shaping personal identity and to solidify the common relationship practices and the Kikuyu's inherited traditions. In *Decolonising the Mind* (1981), Ngugi stated "to control a people's culture is to control their tools of self-definition in relationship to others" (Ngugi "*Decolonising the Mind*" 16). What he believed the British have been trying to do in the years of colonization in an attempt to erase the Kikuyu tradition and identity.

First, Ngugi exhibits the hospitality of the Kenyans through Mumbi and how she reacts to her friends when they meet on Sundays at the train station to gossip and laugh as Ngugi stated in the novel. "She always came back home, after the train, and with one or two other girls, would cook, or undo their hair" (p.89). Exhibiting hospitality in Mumbi's mother, Wanjiku, he states: "Homes, like Mumbi's, with beautiful girls, were popular with young men and women... Give them food,' she would tell Mumbi" (89).

In addition, the Kikuyu had great value to their traditions and treating elders and compassion and respect that had to be given to them in the representation of great values that strengthen communal identity. Mugo, despite his wrongdoings, had some good in him considering his help to an old woman that lived all alone. "He bought some sugar, maize-flour, and a bundle of fire-wood at one of the Kabui shops" (*A Grain of Wheat*, p.8). Another image is how Mugo greets the old man Githu who sees Mugo as a freedom fighter so he greets him as one. " he stood to attention, lifted his torn hat, and cried out: 'In the name of Blackman's freedom, I salute you" (5).

Traditional Marriage is one of the sacred practices in Kikuyu traditions even though it might be different from one context to the other. Marriage is exhibited through the love of

Chapter One: identity in A Grain of wheat

Gikonyo to Mumbi as rightful and blessed according to the community, which meant her treason with Karanja and despite that having a child while he was locked in detention give all the right to Gikonyo to abandon her for breaking a moral and spiritual bond. “She had betrayed the bond, the secret, between them: or perhaps there had never been any communion between them, ‘nothing could grow between any two people’” (134)

Circumcision is another cultural tradition that enhances cultural identity in the novel. In *A Grain of Wheat*. The circumcision in Kikuyu tradition doesn't involve only the boys but girls as well. The blood of that follows the circumcision of the boys was mixed with soil as a symbol of loyalty to the land and the tribe. Even though the circumcision of females is still controversial till this time, to the Kikuyu it marked the transition of the young girl to a woman the following passage that was set on the eve of Uhuru states it. “Uncircumcised boys and girls delighted the crowd with vigorous Muthuo ... younger men and women did Mucung'wa: older women, in Mithuru, Miengu and layers of beads, danced Ndumo” (233).

I.5. Women's Role and Identity

Women in *A Grain of wheat* had a significant role in the struggle against the British Colonizer. Women such as Wambui, Wanjiku, Mumbi, and others play major roles in the independence of Kenya.

Before elaborating on how women participated in the fight for freedom, I shall first analyze the history of women in Kenya and their power in the past, and how the woman in Kenya was marginalized and exploited by a paternalistic dominating male society.

The story goes back to the time when the white man first set foot on the Kenyan lands” the day the Whiteman came to the country, clutching the book of God in both hands, a magic witness that the Whiteman was a messenger from the Lord. His tongue was coated with sugar; his humility was touching” (30). The white man was told that a woman sat on the

Chapter One: identity in A Grain of wheat

throne and people strived through her rule and nuanced that men were nothing alike versus women. 'Then women ruled the land of the Agikuyu. Men had no property, they were only there to serve the whims and needs of the women.' (30). so eventually men plotted against the women by impregnating the female warrior to take over the rule of the land. "they waited for women to go to war, they plotted a revolt ... Fate did the rest; women were pregnant; the take-over met with little resistance". (30). the end of the rule of the woman has not ended there but after a female leader. The presentation of this leader portrayed how women were objectified and labeled. "She was beautiful. At dances, she swung her round hips this way ... Young and old, they shamelessly hung around her court, and hoped" adding: "they never missed a dance in which she was to appear, many desperately longed to glimpse at her thighs ... men were moved by the power of a woman's naked body". (30).

Elleke Boehmer states:

The enduring patriarchal cast of his ideas cannot be ignored. For it is by singling out female voices, by fixing women beneath the evaluative epithets 'vibrant' and 'beautiful', that Ngugi gives way to that tendency to distance and objectify women which, also in the most recent texts, qualifies his attempt to grant them a leading role in the revolutionary struggle for Kenyan liberation (1995, 2007:143).

Wambui is a brave woman that was a part of the liberation movement. Wambui held the role of a "War Pigeon", taking secret messages to the rebels in the forest and providing them with arms. "The story is told how she once carried a pistol tied to her thighs near the groin" (23). A display of the ultimate common benefit and sacrifice putting in consideration that message deliverers would endure a lot of torture if caught, while she was stopped by police check where she yells at the policeman take advantage of her toothless mouth to have the cop letting her go and not finding the pistol.

Chapter One: identity in A Grain of wheat

Another woman who is a fearless fighter and the first woman that has taken the oath to fight for the movement and atop of that being the most wanted man's girlfriend. "She often quarreled and fought with both men and other girls... not until she ran away to the forest to fight at Kihika's side. She was shot dead in a battle soon after Kihika's death" (138).

Mumbi is a character that showed the exploitation of women and how Karanja took advantage of her while her husband Gikonyo was away in a detention camp for many years, to come back to find his wife raising the child of his enemy. The Gikuyu society blocked her off because of her betrayal and when her husband comes back he blocks her off. Mumbi's struggle for identity shifts up and down as she tries to convey redemption and fix her mistake.

The female characters in the story are consistently the toughest, exercising their own forms of control and succeeding in the battle for independence where men fail. The glowing representation of women in his country by Ngugi indicates that, like Wambui, the author fully believes in the power of women to influence events, especially where men have failed to act or seemed indecisive. Despite their reduced status.

I.6. Religion

Christianity was brought to the indigenous Gikuyu or Kenyans by the missionaries or the white man. Religious tensions are significant issues all over the world, particularly on the African continent. The reasons for the conflict with the missionaries, date back to 1928 in Kenya. To encourage Christianity's new members to give up the cultural practice of female circumcision. Which again was a smart strategy to divide the unity of the people through the power of religion. The missionaries considered it prohibited and would not accept the children from families who were still committed to that cultural practice, the community then was di-

Chapter One: identity in A Grain of wheat

vided between the ones who would renounce the practice and the ones who would not. Eventually making it the reason to create the Independent Gikuyu Churches.

The Kikuyu Greek Orthodox was a key part of the struggle of the restoration of the lost lands to Kenyan peasants. The British colonizer swiftly used the words from the bible to justify their seizure of lands." the hand of the Christian woman whose protecting shadow now bestrode both land and sea." (13).

The reverend Kingori was an inspirational man who inspired the fighters and his people to be patient against the tyranny and the oppression of the colonizer. The reverend puts the Kenyan individuals in a biblical context to assert that they feel connected to their religion.’’ God of Isaac and Jacob and Abraham, who also created Gikuyu and Mumbi, and gave us, your children, this land of Kenya’’. He compares Kenyan people to the enslaved in Egypt, Pharaoh's land. "Oh God of Isaac and Abraham, the journey across the desert is long. We are without water, we are without food, and our enemies follow behind us".(218)

Kihika always carried the bible with him and quoted words from it. His bible remained as a reminder and a signifier of his struggle to the ones who came after him. Kihika had an underlined verse in his bible elaborating his sense of justice and freedom, the freedom he never witnessed. ‘’He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor. For he shall deliver the needy when he cometh; the poor also and he that hath no helper’’ (22). In another context Kihika addresses his sacrifice in reference to the sacrifice of the Christ, he even calls himself a christ “I am Christ ... Everybody who takes the Oath of Unity to change things in Kenya is a Christ.” (83). According to his words, everyone who takes the Oath to become a part of the Mau Mau is Christ; the willingness to sacrifice his own life for the sake of others is not a death in vain.

Chapter One: identity in A Grain of wheat

In the counterpart of the selfless hero image that Kihika created, Mugo who was the betrayer addressed himself as Moses. As the hero who was going to save the Kenyans, in an attempt to ignore his treason, the Kenyans were in desperate need of figure of a hero because they just wanted to be saved miraculously from the tyranny of the oppressor. Kenyata as well was idolized and seen as a hero but Kenyata also betrayed the cause of the peasants and set pillars of neo-colonialism with his elite.

Ngugi continuously used the biblical verses in association with character and his community. This use was probably best to describe the irony that was among them, and an attempt to recall the spiritual rebirth of his nation.

I.7. Code switching

Code Switching is the process of shifting from one language to another in the same conversation. Code switching is a linguistic feature that exists in multilingual speech, according to psychologists and Sociolinguists, it is mostly used in the dialects of ethnic minorities or for example according to our main time used by immigrants to regenerate their sense of belonging and identity to their language and community.

Ngugi is proud of his language and called for African writers to write in their own mother languages, in an attempt to recover the nation's identity and cultural heritage.

In *A Grain of Wheat*, code switching was used many times to solidify the Kenyan cultural heritage. In one expression, he mentioned circumcision which was an important practice to the Gikuyu. ‘younger men and women did Mucung’w’ (201).

Ngugi constantly used the words in his language to establish a sense of belonging to their own language, and in a way giving it an authentic beauty by preserving it.

Chapter One: identity in A Grain of wheat

The word "Uhuru", which meant independence, was infused in so many dialects and contexts as a way to detach from being fully connected to English and renounce it as a primary language. Also, the use of the word 'Shamba' which means the land, the most important things to their culture were mostly not pronounced in English.

Code switching has been infused in another conversation such as the time Mugo is speaking to Githua who had lost his arm because of bullets from the colonizer" Glad to see you going to the shamba early. Uhuru na Kazi" (6). Adding to this his conversation with the old man Warui. "These are days of Uhuru na Kazi" (.5). This shows the deep attachment the Gikuyu had to their culture and language, and that they did not simply want it to perish and disappear under the effect of the colonizer and its language. The Gikuyu also used their traditional means of celebrations and songs fused with English words. "Mwenanyaga...you may protect our hideouts. Mwenanyaga ... a soft cloud over us." (25). Even used a religious context and the word "Ngai" which means God. "Ngai has given Gikuyu a beautiful country, never without food or water or grazing fields."(179)

I.8. Violence

Violence and the oppression towards the Kenyans and stripping them off their lands was the main reason for the formation of the resistance. Both the resistance and the British colonizer conducted violence in a way or another. The British used violence as a tool to control and oppress the Kenyans while the Mau Mau used it as a means to fight the tyranny and regain their freedom.

John Thompson was the representation of tyranny and the oppressive rule of the colonizer in the novel, he was a historian who turned to an abuser and torturer. He tortured anyone who was suspected to be a Mau Mau. Thompson was removed from his possession after inhumanly causing the death of 11 prisoners in the Rira camp where he was overseeing.

Chapter One: identity in A Grain of wheat

Robson, Tom the terror, was another form of violence. Robson captured the men of resistance and made them dig their own graves, Robson even buried some alive. The colonizers could not even spare the old woman's son that was dumb and with very low mental capabilities, he was shot in the back in cold blood for only running away because he remembered his mother.

Kihika was the fighter that assassinated Robson for the cause of freedom. When Kihika was betrayed by Mugo, he faced torture himself and the violence did not stop there but everyone from around the village were brought up to witness his hanging. The colonizer was to not only dispossess people from their lands and kill them, starve them, and force them into labor without compensation but also would hurt their feelings and tighten their chests.

Chapter two: Identity in What Is the What

Chapter two: identity in *What Is the What*

Dave Eggers (born March 12, 1970, Boston, Massachusetts, U.S.), an American author, publisher, and literacy promoter, and human rights activist. Eggers' breakthrough was after publishing his most significant memoir that was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize finalist for Nonfiction. *A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius* (2000) is his memoir of his parents' deaths and his struggle to raise his eight-year-old brother after his parent's passing.

Eggers studied journalism at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign before losing both parents to cancer and obliging him to drop off studying to look after his younger brother. Dave Eggers is the author of many books, including *The Circle*, *What is the What*, *A Hologram for the King*, *The Lifters* and *The Monk of Mokha*,

Eggers is the founder of the independent publisher McSweeney's and the literary magazine *The Believer*. In 2002, he co-founded the 826 Valencia project which constitutes of many workshops for teens in San Francisco's Mission District, who has established himself as a philanthropist and teacher. In 2007, Eggers was awarded the \$250,000 Heinz Award for Arts and Humanities which was all donated to his Valencia project. In 2008, Dave Eggers was awarded the TED Prize, a \$100,000 award for the Once Upon a School in a project advocating the creative engagement with public schools.

II.1. The plot of *What is the What*

This autobiography and novel recount the events in the late '80s of Valentino Achak Deng, six years old is separated from his family during the Second Sudanese Civil War when the Arab militia horsemen (Murahaleen) violently attack his Dinka village in Marial Bay.

The novel opens on Valentino in Atlanta, where he hears a knock on the door, an African-American woman claims that her car is broken and she needs the phone as she rushes into his bedroom he is confronted by a man that was her accomplice named Powder. Valentino

Chapter two: identity in What Is the What

later on is punched in the belly and knocked out by a hit of a gun to the head. He wakes up to the boy he named the TV-Boy because he constantly watched TV.

Valentino starts remembering his past in Sudan among his loved ones and the walk to Ethiopia after being forced to flee Marial bay and leave his family accompanied by hundreds of boys who were named the Lost Boys. He and the boys walked through jungles and burnt villages came across many horrors, famine, and disease and the army that bombed their village and the rebel soldiers. This journey caused many boys to lose their lives in that crossover the river to Ethiopia for a safe refuge.

Back to his present situation after the robbers went away, Achor his companion comes back and calls the police. The police woman showed no interest in helping them, as they went to the hospital to treat his injuries he is kept waiting for almost ten hours. The story again shifts back to Ethiopia where they set them up a camp near the Gilo River. Later on, the Ethiopian army force all those refugees out by shooting them and bombing them, the river itself took many lives of the boys.

Valentino settles in Kakuma camp in Kenya, where he spends 10 years before being able to move to the USA. He became a youth leader and found a girlfriend which herself goes to the USA and she was murdered there. By the time of the 2001 terrorist attack in New York, Valentino was chosen to move to America with hints of doubt and uncertainty.

II.2. Land, Setting, and identity

Valentino Achak Deng's story was set in Atlanta, but just like Ngugi, Dave Eggers adopts the artistic pattern of flashbacks. Combining the past and the future of Valentino to address the present. *What Is the What*, defies many concepts and assumptions of how a literary work must be. Valentino and Eggers developed a masterpiece that defies being placed within a physical border. Valentino's individual sovereignty is initiated by being forced to

Chapter two: identity in *What Is the What*

flee from Marial Bay, and this without doubt creates his sense of alienation or placelessness, the notions of his fragmented identity is apparent through acquiring multiple names in the camps and even his own name ‘Valentino’ which he acquired after being baptized.

Valentino narrates his journey through interior monologues, or as he calls them silent stories. As he narrates his past while being tied on the floor of his bedroom in Atlanta, Valentino recalls the atrocities he's been through which definitely had a dire effect on his identity. In an attempt of giving the effects on his identity a kind of timeline began when the Murahaleen attacked his village in Marial Bay. The beginning of his traumas are visual through his expression of his mother's fear while he addresses the TV-Boy in his silent story, Valentino says: “No child should see this. This is the end of childhood when you see your mother's face slacken, her eyes dead. When she is defeated by simply seeing the threat approaching. When she does not believe she can save you.” (Eggers 83).

Valentino's mother takes on his hand to his aunt's house running for safety but Valentino is far away from being safe. Women and girls were abducted and most men were killed or ran away, the best way of describing that scene when he says: “The horsemen had no use for the grown men. They wanted the women, the boys, the girls, and these they gathered on the soccer field ... They threw each girl onto a saddle and then used a rope to secure them, as they would a rug or a bundle of kindling. (92).

Valentino was separated from his mother after she went and decided to take the leap and run for his life. The Horror Valentino sees as a child in the land of Marial Bay is the first external factor in reshaping his identity into a sole survivor. “I had never gone farther than the river without my father, and now I was alone and far from any path” (95). Valentino keeps moving without a destination for a while before he meets the Lost Boys that joins him for the journey to Ethiopia.

Chapter two: identity in What Is the What

After meeting Dut who was a young man in his twenties that led him and the boys through the savannah and the jungle, Valentino starts revising what occurred there and what he saw in the village and loses himself between denial and acceptance after finding that the boys who were with him all lost their families. He states: “. I pictured all of them torn, punctured, charred. I saw my father falling from a tree, dead before he landed. I heard my mother screaming, trapped in our burning house. (118)

The idea of his mother burning was the outcome of watching his friend Moses standing over his mother’s burned body while ticking her with his foot. Valentino believed that Moses himself was killed by the Murahaleen.

Valentino speaks of another boy who walked with him and the other boys, the boy’s name was Monymhial. The boy chooses to give up walking and stop in the next village they find. After witnessing more than three boys devoured by lions in the night of the jungle or even falling into wells while they ran at night in the jungle. Monymhial lived in a whole for three days and decided to die there, Valentino states: “it is very easy for a boy to die in Sudan” (P.140). For Mbembe’s article “Necropolitics” (2003), he states " The nation no longer cares about her people, so and an individual can choose to die or not to die". But that doesn't mean Valentino has not thought about giving everything up as he lived in constant stress and was alarmed by everything along his way. For Mbembe, choosing not to die will put the individual on the run which most definitely would have many effects on one’s identity

In *the Empire Write Back*, Ashcroft has discussed the imminent relationship between identity and the place, “Rather than conceptualize the identity as a solely psychological aspect of human existence, they emphasize the undeniable contribution environment makes” (*The Empire Writes Back*. P.11). One's identity can be greatly affected when the ties to the place of their roots are cut off, and once an immigrant settles again in a new place the identity formation starts taking its toll again. This is evident in Valentino travels through the savanna and the

Chapter two: identity in What Is the What

crocodile-infested river and running from the gun barrels. Valentino feels nowhere is safe until he settles first in Kakuma camp, and later on, that effect starts again after facing his robbers and the mistreating he received from them. Valentino states in his silent stories: “ You would not add to my suffering if you knew what I had seen”. Here it implies that even though he’s calm and treats death in many situations in his account as something normal but it proves that the effect it had on him is way deep and his way to cope with pain or being mistreated is being silent.

II.3. Culture

In South Sudan, there are several different ethnic groups, each with a long history of traditions and customs. A rich cultural diversity still exists in South Sudan, despite a decadeslong attempt by the northern national government of Sudan to impose the Sharia law on the southern region in the 20th century.

South Sudan's cultural history is very rich but the marginalization of the Sudanese northern government resulted in a huge fracture of their cultural heritage. The damaging of the infrastructure from the civil war made it almost impossible to preserve the culture and build cultural institutions.

The largest ethnic group is the Dinka, followed by the Nuer, who make up around one-fifth of the population. Dinka’s lifestyle was mostly involved around trade and most importantly cattle herding and raising livestock.

Oral history is considered one of the most important means of communication or passing tradition from the elders to the younger generations such as folklore, songs, proverbs, songs, and myths.

The story that follows the title of the book “*What is the What*”, is recounted through Valentino’s father at a diner with his father’s friend Sadiq and some Arab Baggara, he states:

Chapter two: identity in What Is the What

“When God created the earth, he first made us, the monyjang. Yes, first he made the monyjang, the first man, and he made him the tallest and strongest of the people under the sky...”. (59). his father also added: “What is the What?’ the first man asked. And God said to the man, ‘I cannot tell you. Still, you have to choose. You have to choose between the cattle and the What.’”. (59). Valentino explained that his father did not tell the story he’s used to for the sake of the Arab’s feelings. Valentino states: “God had given the What to the Arabs, and this was why the Arabs were inferior. The Dinka were given the cattle first ... God had given the Dinka superior land, fertile and rich ...Arabs lived in the desert, without water or arable soil”. Throughout the novel, it is apparent that "the What" had many meanings from the hope to simply mean the unknown.

Polygamy is one of the most common practices in South Sudan but it was accepted following the man's social status and wealth. “My father was a wealthy man by regional standards ... My father, who had many wives, rejected the new religion on these grounds“. (14) Valentino’s father rejected Christianity mainly because it forbade polygamy. Marriage was not fulfilled until the man paid a Dowry for the girl he wants to marry, the dowry is paid in cattle and the price goes up and down up to the traits of the woman.

Singing was considered more than just words but sometimes a way of appraisal or showing happiness or sadness. Valentino and the lost boys sang in Pinyudo camp in Ethiopia together for the appraisal of John Garang who was the founder of the rebel movement as follows: “A chairman as brave as the buffalo, the lion, and tiger In the land of Sudan, How would Sudan be liberated if not by the mighty power we possess?”. Also apparent when Valentino was asked to guard the forest and got beat down for refusing he says: "I felt victorious and ran off, unable to hold off a song I sang to myself and to the night air.”

II.4. Women and identity

South Sudanese women were most oppressed and lived under a paternalistic and dominating order that can be more or less defined as if they were seen as a commodity. Forced marriage is a very common thing in the south Sudanese community and the girl's worth was measured according to their skills and beauty. The Dowry was paid in cattle ranging from 140 cows to less, in figures ranging from 20.000\$ to 10.000\$. "This girl's uncle-consortium had long known that they had a beauty on their hands, and expected a very high price for her." (224)

The women in *What is the What*, in a way or another are negatively subjectified and stereotyped as a direct result of the western culture and repressed desires and growing in an environment that does not have any tolerance for women.

The first woman I will shed light on is Valentino's mother. Valentino's mother was idolized and described poetically, losing her marked the first trauma in his life as a child. His attachment to his mother was apparent in many scenes, he states: "I am frequently caught watching my mother, and am caught this time, too." (35). another line showed how impressed and how much he idolized his mother he says: "I spend a long moment contemplating her beauty. She is taller than most women ... she is as strong as any man She dresses bravely, always in the most glorious yellows and reds and greens" (35). This shows how much he appreciated his mother's presence even before being washed out of Marial bay by the mu-rahaleen and that his profound wish is to be around his mother. "I often thought I would like nothing better than to live forever under her dress, clinging to her smooth legs, feeling her long fingers resting on the back of my neck" (35).

Valentino's mother was more than just a family member, his mother was his home, where he felt safe, happy, and warm. Around the Pinyudo camp, there lived an indigenous

Chapter two: identity in *What Is the What*

tribe called the Anyuak. An old woman named Ajulo saw Valentino walking around and called upon him. The woman filled his belly and started talking to him reminding him of the mother he lost.” you can come here any time. Come alone and you can eat with me any day ... she touched my cheek as a mother would ...I was no longer able to know how to react to kindness”’. (264). He declares that he misses the shadow of his mother as she suggests that she can adopt him and even though he thinks about it thoroughly he says: ‘the longer I was with this woman Ajulo, the more distant and indistinguishable my vision of my mother would become.’’. (265). Valentino decided that staying with this woman would mean abandoning his hope to return home, to return to his own mother.

Mary Williams is another woman Valentino speaks about in the novel. Mary Williams is an African-American woman that was born in Oakland in the late sixties. Her father was back then a Black Panther captain and imprisoned many times for his involvement with the Black Panthers revolution. Later on, both her parents were caught into a life of drugs and alcohol to be adopted by Jane Fonda. Mary Williams had many voluntary works in Africa and about the time the Lost Boys gained some media attention, she formed the Lost Boys Foundation. Mary had a high sense of morality and it was defined by her actions in embracing the Lost Boys and helping them adapt to their new lives, getting them into college, or finding them a job.

Mary's dedication was towards raising enough money to be able to support the Lost Boys foundation by auctioning the handmade clay cattle that the Sudanese which was the Sudanese hobby. Despite all the work Mary was doing for the sake of the Lost Boys, she was criticized over the management of the foundation she created on her own, the Lost Boys shows a pattern of ingratitude and selfishness infused with a sense of ego probably due to the attention they had by the American media. ‘She was exhausted ... how difficult it was for her, how little gratitude she received for the work she did’ (152).

Chapter two: identity in What Is the What

Mary arranged a trip for the Lost Boys to an Atlanta Hawks Basketball game. First Valentino starts stating the subjectivism that was linked to women. In the Basketball court where cheerleaders would do a dance routine. Valentino described it as confusion, it often seemed like to the Sudanese Boys whenever a woman was in a position of power, sturdiness, and sexuality would threaten the roots of their dominance over women which they saw inferior to them. He sexually objectifies the cheerleader " they performed a hyperactive and very provocative dance". (152). Then the view of the whole group is clarified "We all stared at the gyrating young women, who put forth an image of great power and fierce sexuality" and he states also: "the dancers made me uncomfortable". (152). Even though Mary handled taking 180 of the Boys to the game she was criticized probably just because she was a woman. One of the boys complains over not getting a courtside seating which Valentino and 11 Boys and Manute Bol were at, the sense of selfishness and ego is apparent in his complaints." began complaining loudly, even to Manute, about the unfairness of it all ... What right does she have?"(153). The resentment that came from the Lost Boys was most likely the feeling of inferiority in the presence of powerful women and the how they mirror themselves in front of the other people around them, they wore suits which were donated by churches." Everyone from Sudan, our group's appearance implied, was starving, was poorly built. No suits could be made to give us the illusion of ease and comfort in this world" (153).

Some of the Lost Boys were chosen to go to Hawaii and be extras for a Bruce Willis's movie. After they came back the others in Atlanta started complaining again about Mary. "It was she [Mary], it was rumored, who engineered the selection of those who had gone to Hawaii, and who was she to wield such power?" (156). Asserting that a woman's control had great pressure on their mentality but not because she was not doing her job right, but simply because she is a woman. Mary disbanded the Foundation in 2005, but she would still help other boys in their college inscriptions.

Chapter two: identity in What Is the What

The other women or girls that were mentioned in the novel were the nieces. Despite that, African history highlighted many powerful women which were apparent also in Ngugi's *A Grain of wheat* in the previous chapter. The African cultural heritage was badly reshaped under the pressure of the Arabs and Western male domination, to classifying women and alienating them from the position power in any kind. Valentino took control of his nieces in order to redeem a sense of power and identity, even though they had a social rank above Valentino because they were the nieces of Mr. Kondit, the teacher at the Pinyudo camp Classroom. Valentino described in detail the first encounter with the girls. "hours looking nowhere but at the backs of their heads. I studied their necks and their hair as if the secrets of the world and history were discernible in the twists of their braids". (250). The girls were in a way or another glorified and Valentino was more than grateful just by their presence " should be so blessed, to have these spectacular royal sisters in my class." (251). Adding: " God had separated me from my home and family and had sent me to this wretched place, but now there seemed to be a reason for it all." (251). Valentino doubled his efforts to be noticed by the girls and it took him a while to be asked for lunch by one of them, in what it seemed a hopeless attempt to assert his own existence and importance in the eyes of women and to himself. He was asked to have lunch with them and play hide and seek, which was him and the older three girls involving in sexual experiencing by touching each other. The three of them affected Valentino's establishment of identity in putting him in the powerful dominating role he witnesses through his father and his community in polygamy. This saturates his unconscious desire to be in the image of a Sudanese man.

Tabitha was another woman he could not wield his power on. Tabitha was a strong fearless woman who had come by her end by being murdered by her boyfriend "Duluma sank his knife into Tabitha twenty-two times." (329). Tabitha was murdered because she was a fearless strong woman who would not obey Duluma. The women just like in *A Grain of*

Chapter two: identity in *What Is the What*

wheat are most likely viewed as commodities that can simply be bought under the price of the Dowry. Valentino says: "But here [USA] there has been premarital sex, and there was an assertive young woman who decided to break off a relationship with an angry young Sudanese man" (330). proving that women had no way around the domination of their man as if it was not common having divorces and refusal by a woman itself caused a lot of issues to the Sudanese male. Valentino never blamed Duluma but was kind of justifying it by mentioning that he was a former SPLA fighter and that he's been through many horrors and she should have submitted to his threats because it was common that women are abused." In southern Sudan- too many men abuse their wives; wives are beaten, wives are abandoned" (328). And he mentions a man who murders his wife and daughter in the united states, blaming the cultural and the American environment for these killings and Tabitha for being disobedient, liberated woman. Tabitha confused him and confounded him, he mentions the other girls in the camp as a success. "in the end I would be alone in my success with them." (248).

Even though Valentino in reality supports the rights of women and want to provide people with education and help fight the literacy that himself was into before joining kakuma camp, Women are mostly seen as something emotionless you can control or push away as they did with Mary or simply kill her she does not obey to your commands as Duluma did. Women in most cases were badly portrayed and diminished the power they had, it is uncertain as this is a way to convey a message of the Sudanese treatment to women or simply oppressing women to look inferior to men no matter what they do. All over the novel the domination of women over men is highlighted from the Murahaleen tying girls and putting them over the saddle as they were nothing, to the treatment of the Lost Boys to Mary who was generous to them, or ending Tabitha's life because she would not submit, yet, glorifying the image of the girls that were subservient to Valentino and knowing that in reality, he was quite enchanted to know that Eggers included that part and was proud to mention it in many interviews and gath-

Chapter two: identity in *What Is the What*

erings. Eggers's previous work had no explicit writings but even if it's not clear to Valentino but Eggers deployed to show the repressed and sexually charged behavior of the Sudanese Boy.

II.5. Third voice

What is the What is a remarkable piece of literature. This testimonial novel took around 4 years to be completed, Eggers was obliged to move to South Sudan in order to get a broader image of the story that Valentino Achak Deng would recount to him, in a form of oral history which was very important in the culture of his tribe, the Dinka.

Eggers had to deal with an enormous amount of E-mails and recordings, and spend many hours listening to Deng and trying to make a collaborative and coherent story. Eggers assumed that this work would not take long but it ended up taking 4 years to be done. Eggers and Deng agreed on writing the journey of the lost boy and his companions along the way, the journey that took him 13 years to finally reach the United States, which opened many opportunities for him to start a new life away from his war-torn and fragmented community.

The novel showed that Eggers was not afraid to deviate from the pattern of common pieces of literature, he created a mixture of fiction and non-fiction, an autobiography and a novel.

The collaboration of Eggers and Valentino created a harmonically complex piece of writing, the story is Deng's but the author is Eggers, in the novel both voices can be sensed but assumingly Eggers did not want to appear in the texts but was completely focused on Deng's voice. As Eggers says, "in the book, I knew I had to disappear completely" (*It Was Just Boys Walking*). The collaborative work of the Eggers and Deng can be considered as a "third voice".

Chapter two: identity in *What Is the What*

The main reason for writing this novel was to give the reader the chance to see the truth of horrors that Valentino lived through and not molding the novel into the merely political condition of the Boys or South Sudan. But, to make Valentino's story heard because he was committed to letting people know what happened in his own way of hope and a better vision of the future, his attempt to help his community and gain humanitarian support.

In an attempt to adapt the idea's from literary theorist and philosopher Walter Benjamin's essay "The Task of the Translator", this novel can be considered as a piece of translation and that no writer can do an exact match of the words presented, he says: "Even words with fixed meaning can undergo a maturing process" (Benjamin 73). It highly noted in some words in the novel such as: "Stand still, Dinka! he barked in Arabic" (Eggers 85). The word barked is obviously used as a translation to a Dinka dialect in expressing that one is shouting and later on in Manute Bol' speech he gave at the basketball court and when Dut was mad and every time he was addressed by shouting. This is an attempt to reach a pure image of the words as Benjamin argues: " language brings its individual elements so that together they can supplement one another in their intentions (Benjamin74).

Twitchell notes a remarkable point whereas Eggers would only translate what needs to be translated and his attempt to fully allow the reader to engage with the story of Deng by conveying the main truth as close to his words and applying his writing skills only when it's convenient. Twitchell notes the collaboration and Eggers caution to not change meanings in a simple thing "tiny round window to inspect visitors" (Eggers9). which the word for the tiny hole in the door is a peephole and Eggers is an English native speaker who would not simply miss it out, he instead articulates the voice of Deng himself to enhance the artistic beauty he was pursuing. "a third voice, which we assume bears some relation to Deng's speaking voice but does not reproduce or transcribe it" (Twitchell638).

II.6. Violence

The pattern of violence in *What is the What* begins the moment Valentino was forced out of his village by the Murahaleen. The helicopter that he described as ‘‘ great black crickets in every direction’’ (Eggers71). The helicopter bombed his village and people were shot from a distance started falling. ‘‘The men running to the school began to fall. They fell while facing me’’(71). Valentino’s encounter with death here is his first, not his last. As death will accompany him throughout his journey and finds its place in his head too. ‘‘Thirty had been killed. Twenty men, most of the victims those who had been playing soccer. Eight women and two children, younger than me’’(72).

The day after his first encounter was the day he flees his town and gets separated from his mother and the end of his village. ‘‘The few men who resisted were shot. This was effectively the end of any kind of life in Marial Bai for some time’’(72).

While Valentino was in the Ethiopian camp he witnessed two boys who were ‘‘fighting so viciously over rations that one kicked the other to death’’(12).

Death and violence are a very prominent theme in the novel even if it goes unnoticed. When Moses was telling his story of how he was trapped in Marial Bay after witnessing his mother burned to death in their hut and chased to the ground by the hooves of a horse of the Murahaleen he says: ‘‘ I expected death. I expected a knife or a bullet to end my life.’’ (231).

After Valentino’s friend, Deng, died of eating raw elephant meat and was not even given a proper burial he mentions that boys kept dying. ‘‘ boys died frequently and there was no time to bury the dead. Boys died of malaria, they starved, they died of infections.’’ (136).

Valentino and the children once were assembled by the SPLA rebels only to make them witness the execution of seven men. Valentino was at the age of joining the rebels but he

Chapter two: identity in What Is the What

was not sent to train because the Ethiopian forces conducted a coup against their president. Valentino felt that he was saved from that fate, but he yet didn't know what is to come." I would have been sent to train, Julian, but was saved from that fate when we were forced out of Pinyudo, all forty thousand of us'' (282). Many people were sent out of Ethiopia under fire and had to cross a river that was infested with crocodiles. "I watched the slaughter below. Thousands of boys and men and women and babies were crossing the river, and soldiers were killing them randomly and sometimes with great care." (285).

After that disastrous crossing, Valentino met the boy who'll be his companion in the united states, AchorAchor was lost and confused where to go, they meet two tough-looking boys and decided to run with men, as running was always the best choice in their situations. Not so far they meet the false figure of a mother that affected Valentino's perception of women in a way or another, the Ethiopian woman wore a soldier uniform. "Don't fear me, she said.—I am just a woman! I am a mother trying to help you, boys. Come to me, children! I am your mother! Come to me! " (287). the soldier woman shot both of the unknown boys dead. After running far from there they a woman and her baby. "The baby tried to breastfeed on its mother for a moment before giving up, crying out, tiny hands as fists. The baby's mother had been shot in the waist''(288). as it appeared, death and violence spared no one.

Nature itself was one of the main struggle for the Lost Boys to handle, Valentino lost his childhood friend William K in the desert they had to cross to reach Ethiopia, William K starved to death in the desert. He spoke of William K as if he was his mirror." In the mirror of William K ... My tongue was white; my hipbones were visible through my shorts. My throat felt-lined with wood and grass." Adding: " Boys were walking with their hands on their throats, trying to massage moisture into them." (185). Valentino also worked in the camp of Pinyudo as a burial Boy, his benefits would be an extra shirt.

Chapter two: identity in What Is the What

Violence was not only in the African lands, but violence followed Valentino to America where he was kicked in the belly and robbed, violence followed Tabitha where she was stabbed twenty-three times by her boyfriend. Therefore it is pointed out in both novels that violence is inevitable.

Conclusion

Conclusion

After profound readings of articles, books and reviews. I have aimed to analyze and discuss the effect of the colonizer and the neo-colonization on both nations that are described in the novels. Even though both of the writers had different origins and backgrounds, Ngugi and Eggers sketched scenery of the condition of the postcolonial nations and the inner and exterior forces that shifted the path of their future and fragmented their communities and identities towards the oblivion.

In *A Grain of Wheat*, Ngugi portrays how the British Colonizer exploited their land and attempted to erase their identities through fighting their beliefs and their culture. The destruction of language and religion were both the main goals of the colonizers. In *What is the What*, religion was served as the main reason that the Murahaleen attacked the south in order to apply the laws of Sharia.

In both novels, I have attempted to point out the significant points that both novels had in common, the trauma that resulted from being forced out of their lands and resurrecting their nationalistic identities and belonging to their motherlands. In *A Grain of wheat*, the Mau Mau revolution was presented as the direct response to the disposition of lands and the displacement that came afterward and made it impossible to stay quiet over that aggression and domination. In *What is the What*, the individuals described in the novel show that the alienation began with their journey but their belonging to their lands was never cutoff.

Ngugi and Eggers clearly shared a common point to signify to the reader that violence that both nations had to endure, starting from the fragmentation of the society and the disruption of their psychological stability which affects their sense of individual and communal identity.

Conclusion

Women were pointed out in both novels as a reference to describe how they were perceived by their people and how the state of their lands affected their identities and judgment. In Both novels, women were subjectified and labeled, women were exploited and considered inferior to men and sometimes shown as a commodity that men can do with as they please. The struggle of women had a great deal in both novels but they are still perceived as incompetent and face the discrimination despite their effort.

Through this study I have tried to explore the common point of the novel such as violence, the horrors, and the displacement both nations had to endure, and how that affected their psychological state and awareness of their identities, and how the false exploitation of religion in order to achieve personal benefits or as simply the perception that the external forces had towards themselves as superior to the indigenous Kenyans and South Sudanese. Also, how Ngugi defended his cultural identity and language. This was also made by Eggers's autobiographical work was used to convey the message in a juxtaposition of struggle, hope, and loss of the nations, asserting their own existence and vision for a better future.

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