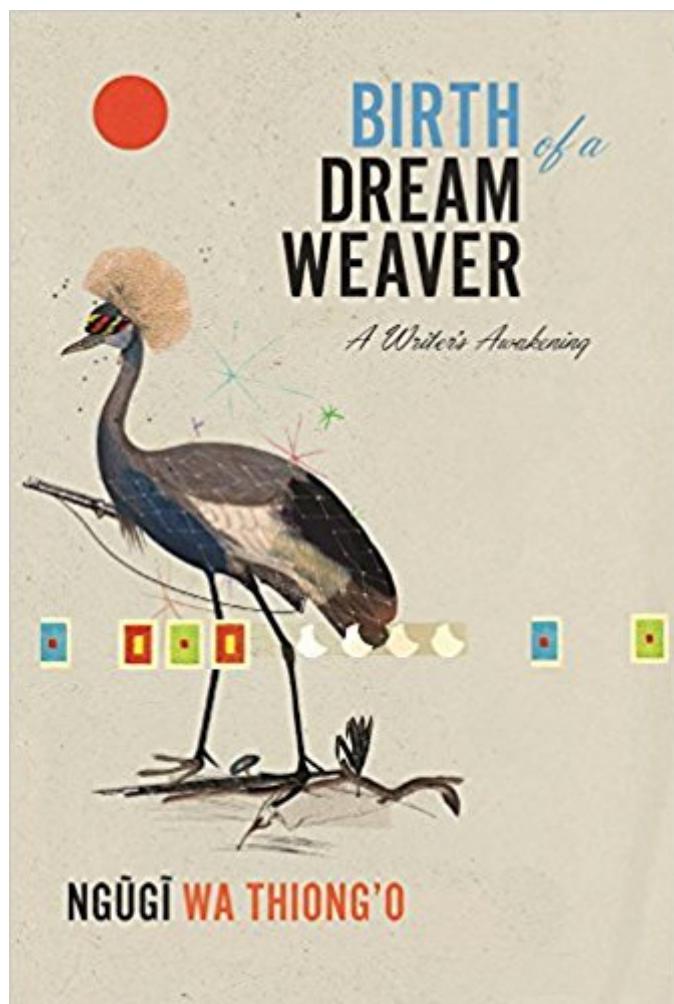


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# Birth Of A Dream Weaver: A Writer's Awakening



## Synopsis

Birth of a Dream Weaver charts the very beginnings of a writer's creative output. In this wonderful memoir, Kenyan writer Ngugi wa Thiong'o recounts the four years he spent in Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda—the threshold years where he found his voice as a playwright, journalist, and novelist, just as Uganda, Kenya, Congo, and other countries were in the final throes of their independence struggles. James Ngugi, as he was known then, is haunted by the emergency period of the previous decade in Kenya, when his friends and relatives were killed during the Mau Mau Rebellion. He is also haunted by the experience of his childhood in a polygamous family and the brave break his mother made from his father's home. Accompanied by these ghosts, Ngugi begins to weave stories from the fibers of memory, history, and a shockingly vibrant and turbulent present. What unfolds in this moving and thought-provoking memoir is both the birth of one of the most important living writers—lauded for his "epic imagination" (Los Angeles Times)—and the death of one of the most violent episodes in global history.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Praise for Birth of a Dream Weaver: One of Oprah.com's "17 Must-Read Books for the New Year" and O Magazine's "10 Titles to Pick up Now." Exquisite in its honesty and truth and resilience, and a necessary chronicle from one of the greatest writers of our time.

—Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, The Guardian, Best Books of 2016. "It's hard to think of another living writer today — Orhan Pamuk, perhaps — who speaks so

inspiringly and convincingly about the value of literature. No serious reader will want to miss this riveting story." The Washington Post "An eloquent, perceptive memoir. . . Evocative, poignant, and thoughtful, Thiong'o's courageous narrative will linger in readers' minds." Publishers Weekly (starred) "A writer's coming-of-age tale featuring an artistic mix of pride and humility." Kirkus Reviews "An autobiographical masterpiece. . . As essential as Achebe's *There Was a Country*, this is a riveting read in African history and literature." Library Journal (starred) "This is a powerful recollection of a turbulent time that produced leaders from Tom Mboya and Jomo Kenyatta to the tyrannical Idi Amin in response to the brutality of a dying colonialism." Booklist "Praise for Ngugi wa Thiong'o's work: "Evocative, poignant, and thoughtful, Thiong'o's courageous narrative will linger in readers' minds." Publishers Weekly (starred) "In his crowded career and his eventful life, Ngugi has enacted, for all to see, the paradigmatic trials and quandaries of a contemporary African writer, caught in sometimes implacable political, social, racial, and linguistic currents." John Updike, *The New Yorker* "Ngugi has dedicated his life to describing, satirising and destabilising the corridors of power; Still living in exile and writing primarily in Gikuyu, Ngugi continues to spin captivating tales." The Guardian "Ngugi has flown over the entire African continent and snuffed out all of the foul stenches rising high into the air: complacency toward despotism, repression of women and ethnic minorities, widespread corruption and undergirding all of these a neocolonial system in which today's lending banks and multinationals have supplanted yesterday's European overlords." The New York Times Book Review

This book is inspiring and informative. It takes the reader behind the scenes of an author and chronicles his artistic awakening and the beginnings of his creative output. At Makerere University College, a famous institution in Kampala, Uganda, Thiong'o found his calling as a writer, a weaver of dreams. His early disappointment when his winning play was not produced at the Kampala National Theatre was followed by many triumphs. His writing output as a student is impressive--novels, short stories, plays, essays, and numerous published journalistic articles. In the background, colonization was ending. He entered Makerere as a colonized person; he left as "a citizen of an independent Kenya."

Excellent memoir by the author who is long overdue for the Nobel prize in literature. He writes about history, colonialism, and his personal coming of age with nuance and inspiration.

arrived as described and on time

This is a heavy, weighty book - and yet utterly fascinating. The blurb says: "Birth of a Dream Weaver charts the very beginnings of a writer's creative output. In this wonderful memoir, Kenyan writer Ngugi wa Thiong'o recounts the four years he spent in Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda - threshold years where he found his voice as a playwright, journalist, and novelist, just as Uganda, Kenya, Congo, and other countries were in the final throes of their independence struggles." Which seems simple enough, but is not. Ngugi wa Thiong'o (mostly referenced as James Ngugi in the book) writes in depth about the politics of the time - from 1959, when he first entered Makerere University College as a subject of a British Crown Colony until 1964, when he left as a citizen of an independent African state - his birth and growth as a writer being deeply affected by and entwined with the struggle of the African countries for independence. The things he describes are at the same time foreign - so much blood! So much oppression - and yet familiar; Malaysia's struggle for independence and the continued impact of British colonialism gives me, as a reader, a certain shared basis of understanding - or so I would like to think. [It would also seem that the Malay Sultanate may have had a larger mitigating impact - influence, maybe - on the amount of power the British were able to exert in Malaya than I had previously realised. Or the white/black relations are more convoluted and strained than I can comprehend.] As a writer, it's fascinating to discover how the events of the nation affects Ngugi's growth as a writer - both directly, in terms of what he feels led to write about, and indirectly, in the rules, restrictions and opportunities given him to write and present his work. Even if you're not a writer, Birth of a Dream Weaver would be a valuable read for those interested in politics, race relations and history. Note: I received an e-arc of this book via Edelweiss in exchange for an honest review.

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