Abstract

Ngugi wa Thiong'o's novel, *A Grain of Wheat*, published in English in 1967, revolves around the lives, histories, and meditations of several fictional Gikuyu characters as they encounter the historical realities of Kenya on the eve of independence. I argue that historians and scholars should encounter Ngugi's early novels, particularly *A Grain of Wheat*, as historical meditations rather than literary works or historical sources. Ngugi's novel *A Grain of Wheat*, is circular and tangled as it dwells on trauma to realize new truths at a time when Kenyans were reflecting on and working through their recent violent past. As a historical meditation, this work transcends the standard historical rupture or continuity theses and provides a new, complex, framework for the reader to imagine events and characters that echo Kenyans' lived experiences. As a result, *A Grain of Wheat* invites a global audience into the Gikuyu historical conversation and proposes potential futures of peace for Kenyans.

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