

dave eggers what is the what

Dave Eggers What Is the What: Exploring the Story Behind the Novel

dave eggers what is the what is a phrase that instantly brings to mind a powerful narrative blending memoir, biography, and fiction. Dave Eggers, the acclaimed American author, crafted this compelling book to shed light on the harrowing journey of Valentino Achak Deng, one of the Lost Boys of Sudan. The novel stands as a fascinating example of creative nonfiction that brings global awareness to a little-known humanitarian crisis through storytelling. If you're curious about the significance of this book, its themes, and the impact it has had, this article dives deep into everything you need to know about Dave Eggers' **What Is the What**.

Understanding Dave Eggers' **What Is the What**

At its core, **What Is the What** is a fictionalized autobiography that recounts the life story of Valentino Achak Deng, a Sudanese refugee who was forced to flee his village during the brutal Second Sudanese Civil War. Dave Eggers worked closely with Deng to narrate his experiences, transforming them into a compelling literary work that reads like a novel but holds true to the realities faced by many displaced people.

Eggers' writing style in **What Is the What** is empathetic and vivid, blending personal anecdotes with broader historical context. This approach allows readers to connect with Valentino's individual struggle as well as the larger issues of war, displacement, and survival that affected thousands of Sudanese children. The book is not just a recounting of events; it's a window into the resilience of the human spirit.

The Title's Meaning: What Is the What?

The title **What Is the What** might seem abstract at first glance, but it holds cultural and symbolic significance. It refers to a mythical figure in the Dinka tribe's folklore, known as the "What," whose story is ambiguous and elusive. This metaphor reflects Valentino's own life – a narrative that is complex, fragmented, and difficult to fully capture.

By choosing this title, Eggers encapsulates the idea that the refugees' stories, like the "What" itself, are often misunderstood, overlooked, or lost in translation. It invites readers to explore the nuances and contradictions in Valentino's journey and, by extension, the experiences of displaced people around the world.

The Lost Boys of Sudan: Context and Background

To appreciate the depth of **What Is the What**, it's essential to understand the historical backdrop against which Valentino's story unfolds. The Lost Boys of Sudan were a group of thousands of young boys who fled their homes in Southern Sudan during the civil war in the 1980s and 1990s. They embarked on perilous journeys across desert and jungle, facing famine, violence, and disease.

The Journey of Survival

Valentino's trek mirrors the collective experience of these boys. Separated from families and villages, many walked hundreds of miles to refugee camps in Ethiopia and Kenya. The novel vividly describes the dangers they encountered: attacks by militias, wild animals, and the harshness of the environment. The Lost Boys' story is a testament to endurance and hope amidst unimaginable hardship.

Refugee Resettlement and Challenges

Eventually, many Lost Boys were resettled in the United States and other countries, including Valentino. However, the transition was far from easy. **What Is the What** explores the difficulties of adapting to a new culture, facing racism, overcoming trauma, and rebuilding one's identity. These themes resonate with the refugee experience worldwide.

Dave Eggers' Writing and the Power of Narrative

One of the reasons **What Is the What** stands out is Eggers' ability to blend journalistic detail with literary artistry. The book transcends a simple biography to become a broader commentary on displacement, identity, and memory.

Collaborative Storytelling

Eggers' collaboration with Valentino Achak Deng is a crucial element in the book's authenticity. The author spent years interviewing Deng, ensuring that the narrative remained true to his voice and experiences. This partnership highlights the importance of ethical storytelling, especially when dealing with sensitive topics like war and trauma.

Blurring Lines Between Fact and Fiction

While based on real events, Eggers employs novelistic techniques to enhance the emotional impact. The use of internal monologue, flashbacks, and detailed descriptions helps readers immerse themselves in Valentino's world. This blend of fact and fiction encourages readers to engage empathetically, rather than just intellectually, with the story.

Themes Explored in *What Is the What*

The novel touches on a variety of themes that make it relevant beyond Valentino's personal narrative.

War and Displacement

The brutal realities of war and its consequences for civilians are central to the story. Readers gain insight into how conflicts uproot communities, disrupt lives, and create long-lasting trauma.

Resilience and Hope

Despite the darkness, the novel is ultimately about survival and the strength of the human spirit. Valentino's perseverance, his will to continue despite loss and hardship, offers an inspiring testament to hope.

Identity and Belonging

The refugee experience often entails a struggle to find a sense of belonging. Valentino grapples with his identity as a Sudanese exile living in America, negotiating the complexities of cultural assimilation and memory.

Memory and Storytelling

The novel also probes the role of memory – how stories are preserved, altered, or forgotten. It raises questions about whose narratives get heard and how history is recorded.

Impact and Reception of **What Is the What**

Since its publication in 2006, **What Is the What** has garnered critical acclaim for both its literary merit and humanitarian message. It has been praised for raising awareness about the Sudanese civil war and the plight of refugees worldwide.

The book has also been incorporated into educational curricula, serving as a valuable resource for discussions on human rights, global conflicts, and empathy-building. Its success has helped amplify Valentino Achak Deng's voice, who has become an advocate for refugee rights.

Related Works and Adaptations

Dave Eggers has written extensively on social issues, and **What Is the What** is often mentioned alongside his other impactful works like **A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius**. There have been talks about adapting the novel into film and stage productions, signaling its ongoing cultural relevance.

Why Read Dave Eggers' **What Is the What**?

If you're wondering whether **What Is the What** deserves a place on your reading list, consider the following:

- **Eye-Opening Perspective:** Gain a deeper understanding of a humanitarian crisis that impacted millions but remains underrepresented in mainstream media.
- **Compelling Storytelling:** Experience a narrative that combines gripping adventure with profound emotional resonance.
- **Thought-Provoking Themes:** Reflect on issues of war, displacement, identity, and the power of memory.
- **Human Connection:** Connect with Valentino's personal story, making global issues feel intimate and urgent.

Reading **What Is the What** is not just about learning history; it's about seeing the world through another's eyes and understanding the complexities behind headlines and statistics.

Exploring the novel opens doors to conversations about compassion, global citizenship, and the ways literature can bring marginalized voices to the

forefront. Dave Eggers' skillful narrative and Valentino Achak Deng's courageous story together create a timeless work that continues to inspire readers worldwide.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the main theme of Dave Eggers' 'What Is the What'?

The main theme of 'What Is the What' is the harrowing journey of survival and resilience experienced by Sudanese Lost Boy Valentino Achak Deng during the Second Sudanese Civil War, highlighting issues of displacement, identity, and the refugee experience.

Is 'What Is the What' a work of fiction or non-fiction?

'What Is the What' is a fictionalized autobiography, often categorized as a novel based on the real-life experiences of Valentino Achak Deng, blending factual events with narrative storytelling.

How does Dave Eggers portray the Lost Boys of Sudan in 'What Is the What'?

Dave Eggers portrays the Lost Boys of Sudan with deep empathy and detail, focusing on their struggles, hopes, and resilience as they flee violence, face displacement, and adapt to new lives, thereby humanizing their often overlooked plight.

Why is 'What Is the What' significant in contemporary literature?

'What Is the What' is significant because it brings global attention to the Sudanese civil war and refugee crisis through a compelling personal story, combining literary artistry with social activism and raising awareness about humanitarian issues.

Has 'What Is the What' been adapted into other media formats?

As of now, 'What Is the What' has not been officially adapted into a major film or television series, but it has inspired various readings, discussions, and educational programs highlighting refugee experiences.

Additional Resources

Dave Eggers *What Is the What: A Profound Exploration of Displacement and Identity*

dave eggers what is the what stands as a compelling literary work that delves deeply into the harrowing experiences of displacement, survival, and identity. Published in 2006, this novel by acclaimed author Dave Eggers offers a fictionalized autobiography of Valentino Achak Deng, one of the Lost Boys of Sudan. The narrative intertwines personal tragedy with broader socio-political contexts, providing readers with an insightful perspective on the Sudanese civil war and its devastating aftermath. This article explores the nuances of Dave Eggers' *What Is the What*, analyzing its thematic depth, narrative style, and cultural significance.

Context and Background of Dave Eggers' *What Is the What*

What Is the What is rooted in real-life events, chronicling the journey of Valentino Achak Deng, who fled war-torn Sudan as a child. The Lost Boys were a group of thousands of displaced children who navigated treacherous terrains to escape conflict during the Second Sudanese Civil War (1983–2005). By adopting a biographical approach, Eggers brings authenticity and emotional resonance to the story, while also addressing broader issues like refugee crises, identity struggles, and the complexities of assimilation.

The book's title itself—*What Is the What*—derives from a Dinka phrase referring to the spiritual essence or the "inner voice" that guides individuals. This concept plays a crucial role in highlighting the protagonist's internal conflict and search for meaning amid chaos.

Narrative Structure and Stylistic Elements

Eggers employs a first-person narrative, giving voice directly to Valentino Achak Deng, which enhances the immediacy and intimacy of the reader's experience. The prose is both lyrical and raw, reflecting the brutality of the events and the resilience of the human spirit. This narrative style effectively bridges the gap between memoir and novel, a blend that has been both praised and critiqued for its approach to storytelling.

In terms of pacing, the novel balances moments of intense action with reflective passages, allowing readers to absorb the psychological and emotional layers of Valentino's journey. Eggers' decision to use a fictionalized autobiography enables a richer exploration of character development, while maintaining fidelity to historical realities.

Thematic Exploration: Displacement and Survival

Central to Dave Eggers' *What Is the What* is the theme of displacement. Valentino's odyssey from Sudan to refugee camps in Ethiopia and Kenya, and eventually to the United States, encapsulates the physical and emotional fragmentation experienced by refugees worldwide. The narrative does not shy away from depicting the harsh realities—starvation, violence, loss, and the constant threat of death—that define this journey.

Survival extends beyond the physical realm; it encompasses the struggle to maintain a sense of self in hostile and unfamiliar environments. The protagonist grapples with cultural dislocation and the trauma of witnessing the destruction of his community. These elements underscore the psychological toll of forced migration, a topic increasingly relevant in global humanitarian discussions.

Identity and Assimilation Challenges

Another key aspect of the novel lies in its exploration of identity formation under duress. As Valentino transitions from a child soldier and refugee to an immigrant in America, he confronts the complexities of assimilation. *What Is the What* scrutinizes the tension between preserving one's cultural heritage and adapting to new societal norms.

Eggers deftly portrays this liminal space through Valentino's experiences with language barriers, racial discrimination, and the struggle to find belonging. The narrative highlights how refugee identities are often fragmented, shaped by past trauma and present challenges, which in turn influences social integration and personal growth.

Critical Reception and Cultural Impact

Dave Eggers' *What Is the What* received widespread acclaim for its poignant storytelling and humanitarian focus. Critics lauded the novel for shedding light on an often-overlooked chapter of history and humanizing statistics about refugees. Its impact extends beyond literature, inspiring discussions on refugee policies, global awareness, and empathy.

However, some debates emerged surrounding the ethics of fictionalizing a real person's life, raising questions about authorial voice and authenticity. Nonetheless, the book remains a significant contribution to contemporary literary nonfiction and refugee narratives.

Comparative Literature: What Is the What Among Refugee Memoirs

When positioned alongside other refugee memoirs and novels, such as Ishmael Beah's *A Long Way Gone* or Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*, *What Is the What* stands out for its narrative hybridity and immersive storytelling. While Beah's work focuses on child soldiers in Sierra Leone and Adichie's on the Nigerian civil war, Eggers' portrayal of Sudanese displacement offers a unique lens on African conflicts and diasporic challenges.

The synthesis of biography and novelistic techniques allows *What Is the What* to reach diverse audiences, fostering greater understanding across cultural and geopolitical divides.

Educational and Humanitarian Uses

Beyond literary circles, Dave Eggers' *What Is the What* has been incorporated into educational curricula to facilitate discourse on human rights, refugee experiences, and global conflicts. Its detailed depiction of survival and resilience serves as a valuable resource for students and educators seeking to contextualize contemporary refugee crises.

Humanitarian organizations have also referenced the novel in awareness campaigns, leveraging its emotive power to advocate for displaced populations and policy reform. The story of Valentino Achak Deng resonates as a testament to endurance and the ongoing need for international solidarity.

Strengths and Limitations of Dave Eggers' *What Is the What*

- **Strengths:** The book's vivid narrative voice and emotional depth create a compelling reading experience. Its blend of fact and fiction invites empathy and deeper engagement with refugee issues. Eggers' meticulous research and narrative craftsmanship bring authenticity and nuance.
- **Limitations:** Some critics argue that the fictionalization may dilute the factual accuracy or overshadow Valentino's own voice. Additionally, the novel's length and episodic style might challenge readers seeking a linear storyline.

Overall, these strengths and limitations contribute to the ongoing dialogue

about the representation of trauma and the ethics of storytelling in nonfiction literature.

As global displacement reaches unprecedented levels, Dave Eggers' *What Is the What* remains a vital narrative that illuminates the human cost behind headlines and statistics. Its exploration of survival, identity, and resilience continues to resonate, offering both a historical account and a timeless reflection on the indomitable human spirit.

[Dave Eggers What Is The What](#)

dave eggers what is the what: What is the What Dave Eggers, 2011-10-27 *What is the What* is Dave Eggers's astonishing novel about one of the world's most brutal civil wars. Valentino Achak Deng is just a boy when conflict separates him from his family and forces him to leave his small Sudanese village, joining thousands of other orphans on their long, long walk to Ethiopia, where they find safety - for a time. Along the way Valentino encounters enemy soldiers, liberation rebels and deadly militias, hyenas and lions, disease and starvation. But there are experiences ahead that will test his spirit in even greater ways than these . . . Truly epic in scope, and told with expansive humanity, deep compassion and unexpected humour, *What is the What* is an eye-opening account of life amid the madness of war and an unforgettable tale of tragedy and triumph. 'If there was ever any doubt that Dave Eggers is one of our most important storytellers, *What Is the What* should put it to rest... [A] strange, beautiful and unforgettable work' *San Francisco Chronicle* 'A remarkable book: harrowing, witty, wretched, delightful; and always compelling, always surprising' *London Review of Books* All of the author's proceeds from this book will go to the Valentino Achak Deng Foundation. Read more at: www.valentinoachakdeng.com.

dave eggers what is the what: The Every Dave Eggers, 2021 The electrifying follow-up to Dave Eggers' New York Times Bestseller *The Circle* When the world's largest search engine / social media company merges with the planet's dominant e-commerce site, it creates the richest and most dangerous-and, oddly enough, most beloved-monopoly ever known: *The Every*. Delaney Wells is an unlikely new hire. A former forest ranger and unwavering tech skeptic, she charms her way into an entry-level job with one goal in mind: to take down the company from within. With her compatriot, the not-at-all-ambitious Wes Kavakian, they look for the company's weaknesses, hoping to free humanity from all-encompassing surveillance and the emoji-driven infantilization of the species. But does anyone want what Delaney is fighting to save? Does humanity truly want to be free? Studded with unforgettable characters and lacerating set-pieces, *The Every* blends satire and terror, while keeping the reader in breathless suspense about the fate of the company - and the human animal. Praise for *The Circle*: 'A gripping and highly unsettling read' *Sunday Times* 'The Circle is 'Brave New World' for our brave new world . . . Fast, witty and troubling' *Washington Post* 'Immensely readable and very timely' *Metro* 'Prescient, important and enjoyable . . . a deft modern synthesis of Swiftian wit with Orwellian prognostication' *Guardian*

dave eggers what is the what: How We Are Hungry Dave Eggers, 2011-10-27 *How We Are Hungry* is a collection of Dave Eggers's short stories that twist and inspire the imagination. Dave Eggers has championed the cause of the short story so magnificently that through his own *McSweeney's* magazine and through its many imitators the form is once again in the ascendant. Yet while celebrating the work of others, Eggers has also proved himself time and again one of the modern masters of the form. This unmissable collection is Egger's first, and showcases his talents in a variety of stories that are short-short, short-long and every length in between; and in stories that are dark, funny, inspiring, daring and endlessly inventive (including the acclaimed 'Up the Mountain

Coming Down Slowly'). In short, in stories that will make you appreciate that Dave Eggers and the short story were made for each other - and, in turn, for you. 'Possibly the most admired and emulated American author of his generation' Independent 'Brilliant, confident floods of language' Sunday Herald 'Intensely pleasurable, striking in its beauty...a triumph of both form and content' Guardian

dave eggers what is the what: *A Heartbreaking Work Of Staggering Genius* Dave Eggers, 2013-02-12 Exhilarating...Profoundly moving, occasionally angry, and often hilarious...A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius is, finally, a finite book of jest, which is why it succeeds so brilliantly (The New York Times Book Review). A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius is the unique, moving memoir of a college senior who, in the space of five weeks, loses both of his parents to cancer and inherits his eight-year-old brother. In his distinctive style unlike any other memoir, Egger's story is an exhilarating debut that manages to be simultaneously hilarious and wildly inventive, as well as a deeply heartfelt story of the love that holds a family together.

dave eggers what is the what: *You Shall Know Our Velocity* Dave Eggers, 2011-12-01 Will and Hand are burdened by \$38,000 and the memory of their friend Jack. Taking a week out of their lives, they decide to travel around the world to give the money away. They can't really say why they're doing it, just that it needs to be done. Perhaps it's something to do with Jack's death - perhaps they'll find the reason later. But as their plans are frustrated, twisted and altered at every step and the natives prove far from grateful to their benefactors, Will and Hand find that the world is an infinitely bigger, more surreal and exhilarating place than they ever realised. In fact, it's somewhere to get lost in ...

dave eggers what is the what: *The Postcolonial World* Jyotsna G. Singh, David D. Kim, 2016-10-04 The Postcolonial World presents an overview of the field and extends critical debate in exciting new directions. It provides an important and timely reappraisal of postcolonialism as an aesthetic, political, and historical movement, and of postcolonial studies as a multidisciplinary, transcultural field. Essays map the terrain of the postcolonial as a global phenomenon at the intersection of several disciplinary inquiries. Framed by an introductory chapter and a concluding essay, the eight sections examine: Affective, Postcolonial Histories Postcolonial Desires Religious Imaginings Postcolonial Geographies and Spatial Practices Human Rights and Postcolonial Conflicts Postcolonial Cultures and Digital Humanities Ecocritical Inquiries in Postcolonial Studies Postcolonialism versus Neoliberalism The Postcolonial World looks afresh at re-emerging conditions of postcoloniality in the twenty-first century and draws on a wide range of representational strategies, cultural practices, material forms, and affective affiliations. The volume is an essential reading for scholars and students of postcolonialism.

dave eggers what is the what: *Metamedia* Alexander Starre, 2015-08-15 Does literature need the book? With electronic texts and reading devices growing increasingly popular, the codex is no longer the default format of fiction. Yet as Alexander Starre shows in *Metamedia*, American literature has rediscovered the book as an artistic medium after the first e-book hype in the late 1990s. By fusing narrative and design, a number of "bibliographic" writers have created reflexive fictions—metamedia—that invite us to read printed formats in new ways. Their work challenges ingrained theories and beliefs about literary communication and its connections to technology and materiality. *Metamedia* explores the book as a medium that matters and introduces innovative critical concepts to better grasp its narrative significance. Combining sustained textual analysis with impulses from the fields of book history, media studies, and systems theory, Starre explains the aesthetics and the cultural work of complex material fictions, such as Mark Z.Danielewski's *House of Leaves* (2000), Chip Kidd's *The Cheese Monkeys* (2001), Salvador Plascencia's *The People of Paper* (2005), Reif Larsen's *The Selected Works of T. S. Spivet* (2009), and Jonathan Safran Foer's *Tree of Codes* (2010). He also broadens his analysis beyond the genre of the novel in an extensive account of the influential literary magazine *McSweeney's Quarterly Concern* and its founder, Dave Eggers. For this millennial generation of writers and publishers, the computer was never a threat to print culture, but a powerful tool to make better books. In careful close readings, Starre puts typefaces,

layouts, and cover designs on the map of literary criticism. At the same time, the book steers clear of bibliophile nostalgia and technological euphoria as it follows writers, designers, and publishers in the process of shaping the surprising history of literary bookmaking after digitization.

dave eggers what is the what: Encyclopedia of Contemporary Writers and Their Work Geoff Hamilton, Brian Jones, 2015-04-22 Presents an alphabetical reference guide detailing the lives and works of authors associated with the English-language fiction of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

dave eggers what is the what: Human Rights Discourse in a Global Network Lena Khor, 2016-05-13 In her innovative study of human rights discourse, Lena Khor takes up the prevailing concern by scholars who charge that the globalization of human rights discourse is becoming yet another form of cultural, legal, and political imperialism imposed from above by an international human rights regime based in the Global North. To counter these charges, she argues for a paradigmatic shift away from human rights as a hegemonic, immutable, and ill-defined entity toward one that recognizes human rights as a social construct comprised of language and of language use. She proposes a new theoretical framework based on a global discourse network of human rights, supporting her model with case studies that examine the words and actions of witnesses to genocide (Paul Rusesabagina) and humanitarian organizations (Doctors Without Borders). She also analyzes the language of texts such as Michael Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost*. Khor's idea of a globally networked structure of human rights discourse enables actors (textual and human) who tap into or are linked into this rapidly globalizing system of networks to increase their power as speaking subjects and, in so doing, to influence the range of acceptable meanings and practices of human rights in the cultural sphere. Khor's book is a unique and important contribution to the study of human rights in the humanities that revitalizes viable notions of agency and liberatory network power in fields that have been dominated by negative visions of human capacity and moral action.

dave eggers what is the what: Interdisciplinary/Multidisciplinary Woolf Ann Martin, Kathryn Holland, 2013-06-01 Edited collection from acclaimed contemporary Woolf scholars, linking inter- and multidisciplinary scholarship to the intellectual and creative projects of Virginia Woolf and her modernist peers.

dave eggers what is the what: Graphic Design, Referenced Armin Vit, Bryony Gomez Palacio, 2009-07-01 *Graphic Design, Referenced* is a visual and informational guide to the most commonly referenced terms, historical moments, landmark projects, and influential practitioners in the field of graphic design. With more than 2,000 design projects illustrating more than 400 entries, it provides an intense overview of the varied elements that make up the graphic design profession through a unique set of chapters: "principles defines the very basic foundation of what constitutes graphic design to establish the language, terms, and concepts that govern what we do and how we do it, covering layout, typography, and printing terms; "knowledge explores the most influential sources through which we learn about graphic design from the educational institutions we attend to the magazines and books we read; "representatives gathers the designers who over the years have proven the most prominent or have steered the course of graphic design in one way or another; and "practice highlights some of the most iconic work produced that not only serve as examples of best practices, but also illustrate its potential lasting legacy. *Graphic Design, Referenced* serves as a comprehensive source of information and inspiration by documenting and chronicling the scope of contemporary graphic design, stemming from the middle of the twentieth century to today.

dave eggers what is the what: Best of Times, Worst of Times Wendy Martin, Cecelia Tichi, 2011-04-04 A collection of short stories depicting and analyzing key issues in America's New Gilded Age, a phrase that embodies the glitz and glamour of one of the wealthiest countries in the world but also suggests the greed, corruption, and inequalities teeming just below the surface.

dave eggers what is the what: The Routledge Companion to Literature and Human Rights Sophia McClennen, Alexandra Schultheis Moore, 2018-02-05 *The Routledge Companion to Literature and Human Rights* provides a comprehensive, transnational, and interdisciplinary map to this emerging field, offering a broad overview of human rights and literature while providing

innovative readings on key topics. The first of its kind, this volume covers essential issues and themes, necessarily crossing disciplines between the social sciences and humanities. Sections cover: subjects, with pieces on subjectivity, humanity, identity, gender, universality, the particular, the body forms, visiting the different ways human rights stories are crafted and formed via the literary, the visual, the performative, and the oral contexts, tracing the development of the literature over time and in relation to specific regions and historical events impacts, considering the power and limits of human rights literature, rhetoric, and visual culture Drawn from many different global contexts, the essays offer an ideal introduction for those approaching the study of literature and human rights for the first time, looking for new insights and interdisciplinary perspectives, or interested in new directions for future scholarship. Contributors: Chris Abani, Jonathan E. Abel, Elizabeth S. Anker, Arturo Arias, Ariella Azoulay, Ralph Bauer, Anna Bernard, Brenda Carr Vellino, Eleni Coundouriotis, James Dawes, Erik Doxtader, Marc D. Falkoff, Keith P. Feldman, Elizabeth Swanson Goldberg, Audrey J. Golden, Mark Goodale, Barbara Harlow, Wendy S. Hesford, Peter Hitchcock, David Holloway, Christine Hong, Madelaine Hron, Meg Jensen, Luz Angélica Kirschner, Susan Maslan, Julie Avril Minich, Alexandra Schultheis Moore, Greg Mullins, Laura T. Murphy, Hanna Musiol, Makau Mutua, Zoe Norridge, David Palumbo-Liu, Crystal Parikh, Katrina M. Powell, Claudia Sadowski-Smith, Mark Sanders, Karen-Magrethe Simonsen, Joseph R. Slaughter, Sharon Sliwinski, Sidonie Smith, Domna Stanton, Sarah G. Waisvisz, Belinda Walzer, Ban Wang, Julia Watson, Gillian Whitlock and Sarah Winter.

dave eggers what is the what: The Digital Banal Zara Dinnen, 2018-01-02 Contemporary culture is haunted by its media. Yet in their ubiquity, digital media have become increasingly banal, making it harder for us to register their novelty or the scope of the social changes they have wrought. What do we learn about our media environment when we look closely at the ways novelists and filmmakers narrate and depict banal use of everyday technologies? How do we encounter our own media use in scenes of waiting for e-mail, watching eBay bids, programming as work, and worrying about numbers of social media likes, friends, and followers? Zara Dinnen analyzes a range of prominent contemporary novels, films, and artworks to contend that we live in the condition of the "digital banal," not noticing the affective and political novelty of our relationship to digital media. Authors like Jennifer Egan, Dave Eggers, Sheila Heti, Jonathan Lethem, Gary Shteyngart, Colson Whitehead, Mark Amerika, Ellen Ullman, and Danica Novgorodoff and films such as *The Social Network* and *Catfish* critique and reveal the ways in which digital labor isolates the individual; how the work of programming has become an operation of power; and the continuation of the "Californian ideology," which has folded the radical into the rote and the imaginary into the mundane. The works of these writers and artists, Dinnen argues, also offer ways of resisting the more troubling aspects of the effects of new technologies, as well as timely methods for seeing the digital banal as a politics of suppression. Bridging the gap between literary studies and media studies, *The Digital Banal* recovers the shrouded disturbances that can help us recognize and antagonize our media environment.

dave eggers what is the what: Life and Work Tim Parks, 2016-01-01 Cover -- Half Title -- Title -- Copyright -- Contents -- Introduction -- Charles Dickens -- Feodor Dostoevsky: Crime or Punishment -- Thomas Hardy -- Anton Chekhov -- James Joyce -- Samuel Beckett -- Georges Simenon -- Muriel Spark -- Philip Roth -- J. M. Coetzee -- Julian Barnes -- Colm Tóibín -- Geoff Dyer -- Peter Stamm -- Graham Swift -- Dave Eggers -- Haruki Murakami -- Peter Matthiessen -- Stieg Larsson -- E. L. James -- Acknowledgments -- Credits -- Index of Names -- A -- B -- C -- D -- E -- F -- G -- H -- I -- J -- K -- L -- M -- N -- O -- P -- R -- S -- T -- U -- V -- W -- Y -- Z

dave eggers what is the what: It Takes a Storyteller to Know a Storyteller Julia Nikiel, 2023-01-23 If it is indeed impossible to think beyond capitalism, then capital has become reality. If global capitalism organizes reality through the stories it weaves, capital is (as strong as) its fictions. If capital is reality and capital is fiction, then reality as such is fiction as well. It is by reading this fiction for both patterns and inconsistencies that contemporary individuals can challenge global capital and unveil its hypocrisies; and it is by fighting fiction with fiction, i.e. projecting new realities

- such as those in the post-millennial novels by William Gibson, Douglas Coupland, and Dave Eggers
- that people can imagine the world anew.

dave eggers what is the what: *History and Hope in American Literature* Benjamin Railton, 2016-11-10 Throughout history, creative writers have often tackled topical subjects as a means to engage and influence public discourse. American authors—those born in the States and those who became naturalized citizens—have consistently found ways to be critical of the more painful pieces of the country's past yet have done so with the patriotic purpose of strengthening the nation's community and future. In *History and Hope in American Literature: Models of Critical Patriotism*, Ben Railton argues that it is only through an in-depth engagement with history—especially its darkest and most agonizing elements—that one can come to a genuine form of patriotism that employs constructive criticism as a tool for civic engagement. The author argues that it is through such critical patriotism that one can imagine and move toward a hopeful, shared future for all Americans. Railton highlights twelve works of American literature that focus on troubling periods in American history, including John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*, David Bradley's *The Chaneysville Incident*, Louise Erdrich's *Love Medicine*, Tony Kushner's *Angels in America*, Junot Díaz's *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, and Dave Eggers's *What Is the What*. From African and Native American histories to the Depression and the AIDS epidemic, Caribbean and Rwandan refugees and immigrants to global climate change, these works help readers confront, understand, and transcend the most sorrowful histories and issues. In so doing, the authors of these books offer hard-won hope that can help point people in the direction of a more perfect union. *History and Hope in American Literature* will be of interest to students and practitioners of American literature and history.

dave eggers what is the what: *Travel and Dislocation in Contemporary American Fiction* Aliko Varvogli, 2012-03-12 This book offers a critical study and analysis of American fiction at the beginning of the twenty-first century. It focuses on novels that 'go outward' literally and metaphorically, and it concentrates on narratives that take place mainly away from the US's geographical borders. Varvogli draws on current theories of travel globalization and post-national studies, and proposes a dynamic model that will enable scholars to approach contemporary American fiction and assess recent changes and continuities. Concentrating on work by Philip Caputo, Dave Eggers, Norman Rush and Russell Banks, the book proposes that American literature's engagement with Africa has shifted and needs to be approached using new methodologies. Novels by Amy Tan, Garrison Keillor, Jonathan Safran Foer and Dave Eggers are examined in the context of travel and globalization, and works by Chang-rae Lee, Ethan Canin, Dinaw Mengestu and Jhumpa Lahiri are used as examples of the changing face of the American immigrant novel, and the changing meaning of national belonging.

dave eggers what is the what: *Sketchbook* Timothy O'Donnell, 2011-09 This book explores influential designers' sketchbooks as a truer reflection of a designer's thought processes, preoccupations, and problem-solving strategies than can be had by simply viewing finished projects. Highly personal and idiosyncratic, sketchbooks offer an arena for unstructured exploration, a space free from all budgetary and client constraints. Visually arresting objects in their own right, this book aims to elevate sketches from mere ephemera to important documents where the reader can glean valuable insight into the creative process, and apply it to their own practices. Featured designers include Ralph Caplan, Nigel Holmes, Chris Bigg, Eva Jiricna, Jason Munn, Gary Baseman, Marian Bantjes, and many others.

dave eggers what is the what: *Virtual Holocaust Memory* Matthew Boswell, Antony Rowland, 2023 The Holocaust was the defining cataclysm of modernity. Now, more than three quarters of a century later, the immersive, interactive technologies of the digital age are dramatically refashioning our memory of that genocide. *Virtual Holocaust Memory* offers the first comprehensive account of a unique historical juncture, as twenty-first century digital culture meets the edge of living Holocaust memory. The book considers a range of projects that are being developed by museums, archives, businesses, and educational organizations in the USA and Europe, including interactive video testimony, Virtual Reality films, Augmented Reality apps, museum installations,

and online exhibitions. Drawing on an original conceptual framework that incorporates connective memory, palimpsestic testimony, and a notion of 'truthfulness' first applied to testimonial writing by the survivor Charlotte Delbo, this groundbreaking book argues that the value of virtual Holocaust memory--that is to say its truthfulness--will ultimately come to rest on the connections that it establishes across a complex set of subject positions. These range from 'new bystanders', who encounter Holocaust memory from a position of relative safety, to the traumatized victims whose extreme physical and psychological experiences made communicating so difficult in the first place.

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