

SELECTING LITERATURE TEXTS FOR KENYAN HIGH SCHOOLS,  
1940 TO 1998: INCLUSIONS AND EXCLUSIONS

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## Abstract

An examination of the numbers, scope, and genres selected for Kenya's English and literature high-school syllabi between 1940 and 1998 reveals four types of excluded literature: the 1950-1960 guerilla war for land and freedom; punitive/pacification expeditions; settler- and travel-literature, and orature. The gaps about the people's resistance to imperialism were partly inspired by Kenyatta's leitmotif to "forget the past", which perpetuated the Mau Mau myth and triggered a state-inspired national amnesia about Kenya's ignored—but not forgotten—independent war heroes. Abetted by pervasive lies, distortions, and omissions, this amnesia permeates Kenya's media, public fora, and educational system.

The dissertation contextualizes and documents Kenya's historiography and nationalism expounded by Kenyatta's government in "development" policies and educational goals. Evidence was gathered through conversations, interviews, and library research and includes orature, personal narratives, fiction, nonfiction, magazines, journals, teachers' manuals, high-school syllabi, national exams, education and development plans and reports, government officials' statements and speeches, administrative notes, reports, laws, and state acts. Accessing official documents—even lists of suggested texts or circulars convening meetings to select texts—was often complicated since many documents were "classified" as secret.

The criteria for selecting texts were often haphazard and partisan, seemingly corresponding to the ideological and political exigencies of neo-colonial Kenya's largely corrupt ruling elite and its imagination of the nation. For instance, a necessarily anonymous high-level educational officer

revealed the existence of a 1980s secret committee—supervised by the Criminal Investigations Department and answerable directly to President—that vetted the final list of suggested texts.

Evidence about Kenya’s high-school English and literature syllabi reveals three patterns: the genres studied were reduced slightly, the number of selected books and texts shrank significantly, and controversial topics were avoided or sanitized. Like the nation, the literature curriculum suffers historical amnesia and social, cultural, and political myopia. Moreover, the insipid recycling of texts decade after decade ignores much new material and many authors. Politically skewed, the pattern of selecting literary texts thus prompts questions about Kenya’s goals for education and their grave epistemological, political, and national implications.

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## Acronyms

AAWORD	Association of African Women for Research and Development
ACTS	African Centre for Technology and Science
EAEP	East African Educational Publishers
EALB	East African Literature Bureau
EAPH	East African Publishing House
ERP	Educational Research and Publications
GSU	General Service Unit
HEB	Heinemann Educational Books
IBEAC	Imperial British East African Company
KADU	Kenya African Democratic Union
KANU	Kenya African National Union
KAR	Kenya African Rifles
KAU	Kenya African Union
KCA	Kikuyu Central Association
KCECC	Kamirithu Community Educational and Cultural Centre
KIE	Kenya Institute of Education
KLFA	Kenya Land and Freedom Army
KLB	Kenya Literature Bureau
KNA	Kenya National Archives
KNEC	Kenya National Examinations Council
KU	Kenyatta University
LTTC	Luo Thrift and Trading Corporation
MinEd	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
NFD	Northern Frontier District
OUP	Oxford University Press
UMA	Ukamba Members Association
UoN	University of Nairobi
RSA	Republic of South Africa

## Introduction

Delving into the subtleties and contradictions of history, conflicts, emotions, perceptions, ideas, and human interactions with each other, nature, and the universe, literature is crucial in any nation's educational system. Along with other subjects, literature can mould students to be inquisitive, creative, critical thinkers and citizens abiding by a basic common set of moral norms. Thus motivated, this dissertation documents and analyses the literature **taught** or deliberately **not taught** in Kenya between 1940 and 1998, a period covering the last two decades of British colonial governance when a violently repressed guerrilla war for land and freedom occurred: a war that eventually led to Britain relinquishing its Kenya Colony. In the process, Britain orchestrated a power transfer that excluded most freedom fighters and the ideals they fought and died for. Half a century of a corrupt neocolonial government, a colonial paradigm persists.

Well internalized and practised, but seldom recognized or challenged, the colonial paradigm continues to influence post-colonial states' administrative, political, economic, cultural, and educational spaces.<sup>1</sup> At independence, many countries inherited and slightly adapted colonial

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<sup>1</sup> British control over the Kenyan army officially ended on 1 December 1966 when Joseph Ndolo and his deputy, Jackson Mulinge replaced Brigadier Hardy. Nevertheless, when a British officer recommended major changes in his military, Kenyatta appointed Major-General Penfold, a British officer as independent Kenya's **Chief of General Staff** from 1966 to 1969! Another British M15 officer became secretary of the newly formed Permanent Cabinet Security Committee on Defence and Internal Security, with full access to Kenyan special branch files while Britain continued training Kenyatta's bodyguard and General Service Unit (Hornsby 2013:181). The colonial paradigm continued operating through notions and practices of "law and order" and "development and progress". Various Kenyan parliamentary motions and debates have attempted to address aspects of the colonial paradigm: e.g., "repeal of oppressive statutes" (*Kenya National Assembly Official Record (Hansard)* 15 May 1996: pp 806–229); "Swahili for the National Assembly" (*Kenya National Assembly Official Record (Hansard)* Dec 14, 1964 - May 12, 1965, pages 1459–1485. Also see the section, Section B: Kenyatta's Leitmotif to "Forget the Past!": Motives and Ramifying Repercussions, p. 31.

institutions, procedures, laws, and regulations that still influence their mostly conservative national discourses. In Kenya, the colonial paradigm inherited at independence in 1963 included the educational system, curricula, and syllabi, with few **fundamental** changes. This dissertation therefore examines the texts **selected** and **deselected** for the English syllabi for the Kenyan high-school curricula to comprehend how the colonial paradigm has impacted the gamut, magnitude, causes, affects, and significance of education and development in neocolonial Kenya.

## **Section A: Study Questions and Rationale**

The dissertation examines texts from orature, fiction, non-fiction, life-writing and academic research to reveal to what extent key aspects of Kenya's history are systematically omitted, cloaked by a long induced, unquestioned amnesia, while schools and educational institutions teach a sanitized national history and literature.<sup>2</sup> Since the deselected texts are numerous, I focus on Kenyan literature to *(i)* emphasize the patterns of deselection and *(ii)* cite examples of other literature to demonstrate the existence of vast alternatives to the texts selected from 1940 to 1998. The dissertation therefore explores the selected and alternative texts for the Kenyan high schools' English and literature syllabi to:

- identify and document the numbers, scope, and genre of selected texts;
- examine if systematic patterns of inclusions and exclusions exist and identify the possible criteria behind these patterns;
- investigate the extent to which the patterns of inclusions and exclusions conformed to the official national goals for education, or were shaped by the post-independence elite's political and ideological exigencies; and
- examine significant samples of each genre to evaluate the literary and political justifications for such inclusions and exclusions and the consequent intellectual and epistemological implications for the students.

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<sup>2</sup> Though the English and literature syllabi were only unified under English in 1985, this dissertation always uses the term, *English and literature syllabi*.

Focusing on the Kenyan high-school English and literature syllabi, the dissertation also questions the totalizing logic of nationalism that Kenyatta's government expounded and imposed through policies such as the official goals for education, which guide the selection of texts for high-school curricula and national examinations.

By evaluating the texts selected for the Kenyan high schools' English and literature syllabi, this study explores significant gaps in Kenyan schools' curricula concerning Kenyan (i) historiography; (ii) literature; and (iii) the textual representations of Kenya's guerrilla war for land and freedom.<sup>3</sup> To fill these gaps, the thesis necessarily engages with interrelated discourses about identity, education, nationhood and development in Kenya, discourses within which the terms and notions of "our" identity—*nation, culture, education, democracy, self, place, home, and tradition* (local or foreign)—are casually used in (i) official documents, (ii) narratives, (iii) literary discussions and commentary, (iv) fieldwork, and, (v) reportedly, during the selection of high-school literature texts.<sup>4</sup> Employed in everyday conversation, these contested terms appear frequently and frivolously with their meanings assumed to be clear, well understood, and self-explanatory. For example, teachers, lay persons, and MinEd officials readily refer to *our nation, our culture, and our tradition* when discussing Kenya's national goals of education while simultaneously manifesting ignorance—when questioned—about the goal's origin, rationale, and relevance to contemporary Kenya.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Kenya's guerrilla war for land and freedom remains a taboo subject in the schools' curricula and most public spaces, despite the improved freedom of speech and association that began with the advent of multi-party politics

<sup>4</sup> Myths about "*our nation, our culture, our tradition, our national peace and unity*" imploded soon after the euphoria of independence when, on 24 February 1965, freedom fighter Pio Gama Pinto was assassinated and, later, with the 1966 mini election that removed Kubai and Odinga from the government for complaining about many injustices and demanding that stolen lands be returned to the landless (Odinga 1966).

<sup>5</sup> author's field research

Whenever I sought to understand the origin, rationale, and relevance of Kenya's national goals of education during my field research, teachers and MinEd officials routinely referred me to the annual policy manuals in which the national educational goals and their relevance to the curricula were *supposedly* clearly expressed and well understood by any reader. The manuals seem to merely rehash the national goals of education outlined in the 1964 Ominde report.<sup>6</sup> Education, however, goes beyond MinEd's vague definition of education as the *inculcation of ideals, values, behaviour, and basic skills* (Hare and Portelli 2003 and 2005). Moreover, in examining these goals, this dissertation considers whether their implementation reflects a wider, continental phenomenon: neocolonial education and its close links to underdevelopment.

Aware of the highly contested meanings terms like *our nation, our culture, and our tradition* imply across cultures, time, and space, I evoke Anderson's and Brennan's insightful treatment of "imagined communities" to interrogate the assumptions about their homogeneity, uniformity, and shifting meanings (Anderson 1983 and Brennan 1997:48). In the imaginary constructs called nations, the dominant power often influences the direction of the national discourse by erasing, changing, exaggerating, or distorting events (Anderson 1983:142–3). Recalling Anderson and Hobsbawn, Ranger (1996:271–81) illustrates how cultural and political fictions relate to the imaginary constructs called nations, while Brennan discusses national literatures as the basis of European—not just emergent Third World—nationhood and nationalisms. He highlights how nationalisms "depend for their existence on an apparatus of cultural fictions in which imaginative literature plays a decisive role" (ibid.).

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<sup>6</sup> Professor S. Ominde (1964 and 1965) headed independent Kenya's first educational commission that produced the report, *Kenya Education Commission Report, Parts 1 and 2*, henceforth simply referred to as the Ominde report. Successive educational commissions have rehashed Ominde's goals of education: Gachathi (1976); Mackay (1981); Wanjigi (1983); Kamunge (1988); Ndegwa (1991); *Master Plan on Education and Training, 1997–2010*, the Koech Commission of Inquiry into the Education System of Kenya (1998); Kenya (1965), *Sessional Paper #10 of 1965*; Bessey (1972); and the MinFin (1974), *Development Plan (Third) for the Periods 1974–1978 & 1989–93*.

In this context, this dissertation examines an aspect of the nationalism that emerged from the Kenyan state through specific cultural fictions and stated national educational goals, goals that evoke a narrow neocolonial nationalism as well as Foucault's and Gramsci's hegemonic concept of power. The dissertation, however, does not debate the widely discussed theories of nations, nationalisms and post-colonialism.

## **Section B: Kenya's School Curricula and Society's Memory: Literature Review and Theory**

This thesis proceeds from an understanding of memory, remembering and forgetting the past as acts of interpretation, acts of "construction" rather than acts of "mere reproduction" (Bartlett 1964:205). Social memory or amnesia and the many ways people remember, forget, and record history have been widely theorized in academic fields closely related to literary criticism, e.g., anthropology, linguistics, psychology, and cultural studies (Bartlett 1964). While not discussing these theories in depth, the thesis draws upon them and views memory (collective or private) not as passive and objective lived experience, but "as an active, ongoing process of ordering the past", a process of "selecting, structuring, and imposing meaning on the past rather than the mere reproduction of inherent historical truths" (Brundage 2000:5). Since Halbwach's concept of "collective memory" in the 1920s, memory is studied as "inextricably bound up with group identity" and not necessarily the "expression of the autonomous individual psyche" (Assman 1995:126).

Collective "cultural memory ... comprises that body of reusable texts, images and rituals specific to each society in each epoch, whose cultivation serves to stabilize and convey that society's self-image" (Assman 1995:130). Indeed, groups sometimes base their "awareness of unity and particularity" on "this collective knowledge of the past" Assman (1995:133). Like

Barthes' myth, a group's social memory is about "pressing concerns of identity", "purifying, justifying", and giving them "a clarity which is not of [an] explanation but that of a statement of fact" (Brundage 2000:4; Barthes 1972:173).

Scholars of social memory and performance emphasize the importance of performance in conveying and sustaining images in orature (Connerton 1989; Thelen 1989:1117–29). For Nyairo (2005:32), *kayamba* is among "the structures and sites through which social memory is carried and maintained", while Werbner (1998) distinguishes the general public's social memory from official or state discourses of remembrance and memorialization. Connerton's idea about the enhanced performativity of commemorative ceremonies upon which social memory complements that of Thelen and The Group.

Thelen and The Group hold that society's control of memory—the management of what is remembered, how the remembrance happens, and what is forgotten, ignored, or wilfully erased—is useful "for maintaining and legitimating political power", e.g., Kenyatta's "forget the past" and "we all fought for *Uhuru* [freedom, independence]" and the texts consistently selected (or rejected) and read (or ignored) for the Kenyan high-school English and literature syllabi (Nyairo 2006:31).

On social memory, Thelen (1989:1124–25) suggests interrogating the "similarities and differences between memories constructed by marginalized groups—and within marginalized forms—and memories that belong to the larger, officially recognized enterprises"<sup>7</sup> but does not "designate certain versions as erroneous or ... others as more factual and correct". He sees the main function of social memory as establishing shared memories and past experiences to "bind communities in the present" (ibid.).

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<sup>7</sup> e.g., praise songs for Presidents Kenyatta, Moi, and Kibaki accompanying Kenya's national days

Though some scholars—notably historians—frequently refer to faulty memory, exaggeration, and embellishment to discount the significance of orature and life-writing as credible sources, others differ.<sup>8</sup> Clough (1998:8) affirms that “many of the most valuable accounts to historians have not been political memoirs but the painful *personal stories* [*italics added*] of survivors of the front lines and the camps” as in Elie and Marion Wiesel’s *Night* (1960) or Primo Levi’s *Survival in Auschwitz: The Nazi Assault on Humanity* (1961).

Using key forms of social history—“biographies, autobiographies, historical fictions, historical movies, [guidebooks], mass media, [and] ‘private remembrance’ (letters, photographs, and diaries)”—the Popular Memory Group (The Group) theorizes how people record, remember, and forget their history (Nyairo 2006:31). Indeed, constructing citizen, gender, class, culture, and nationalism involves “a strategic use of positive essentialism in a scrupulously visible political interest”—the ever-shifting or unstable concepts and experiences that show how difference and power are articulated within such constructs (Spivak 1988a:13).<sup>9</sup> Under these pressures, what is Kenya’s collective memory of the armed rebellion? How have Kenyans remembered this crucial period of their history in the educational system? As a partial answer, I adopt in this dissertation the Group’s notion of social memory and forms of remembrance largely because the categories the Group suggests fit many of the texts that were systematically deselected from Kenyan high-school English and literature syllabi.

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<sup>8</sup> Olney (1973 and 1980); Friedlander (1979); The Popular Memory Group (1982); Parkin (1987); Connerton (1989); Rushdie (1991); Barbour (1992); Terdiman (1993); Goodwin (1993); Caruth (1995); Antze and Lambek (1996); Schacter (1996); Walder (2000). Werbner and Ranger, eds. (1996); Clough (1998); Soyinka (1999)

<sup>9</sup> Gendering is the daily production and construction of social roles and expectations for women and men. Hence, feminine and masculine roles vary in time and space and are learned behaviour, not biological or fixed. In this vein, the present dissertation benefits from some studies about gender, feminism, post-colonialism and literature: Moraga and Anzaldúa (1981); Mies, M. (1986) and Mies, von Werlof, and Bennholdt-Thompson (1988); Mohanty, Russo, and Torres (1991). I am also much indebted to V. Bromley, Ana Ning, B. Himani, P. Stamp, and Ato Sekyi-Otu for their insights and discussions.

In the Kenyan context, distortion, suppression, patriarchy, and successive repressive regimes have affected the national educational goals and practices. For instance, colonial education in Kenya was instrumental in the construction of modern Kenya, a construction rooted in deliberately undervaluing most things Kenyan or African—the people and their culture, art, dances, religions, history, education, orature, literature, and even domestic animals—thereby producing a society of “bodiless heads and headless bodies” (Thiong’o 1981:2), the form of neocolonial alienation Hogan (2000:21) calls “reactionary traditionalism”.

Reactionary traditionalism occurs when a colonized citizen internalizes the master’s perspective and recognizes her relation to it—an internalization and recognition that leads to manifold alienation (Hogan 2000:12). Maan (2007:412) elaborates Hogan’s idea of the “insidious nature of colonization [that] begins with the appropriation of [the] master’s language, culture, [and] identity”, an appropriation (internalization) resulting from the colonized “alienation from one’s original language, culture, [and] identity”.<sup>10</sup> Appropriating and internalizing the master’s language then leads to the “recognition of oneself as ‘other’ through the master’s gaze” (Maan 2007:412).<sup>11</sup> The “master’s gaze” is manifest in independent Kenya’s education and schoolroom practice, for example, by promoting English while demoting and demeaning Kenyan languages and orature—an issue hardly addressed in Kenya’s national goals of education.

Kenya’s national goals of education were set in the spirit of the early 1960s Africa, a hopeful, euphoric time when many Africans gained flag independence and illusory self-rule from European

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<sup>10</sup> These ideas and some of the text *also* appear in Nyairo (2006:31).

<sup>11</sup> To achieve that recognition requires *first* an internalization of the master’s perspective; a recognition leading to multi-fold alienation—the inability to return to a pre-colonized state of being—a “reactionary traditionalism” (Maan 2007:412).

colonizers.<sup>12</sup> In this context, Kenyatta urged people to use *harambee* to develop local communities, especially in building local roads, schools, commercial, and health centres.<sup>13</sup> *Harambee* model of community mobilization and mutual help benefitted people greatly, but with time, corruption greatly subverted its usefulness when KANU operatives co-opted it to coerce people to support projects they did not support.

Within the euphoria, the struggles for independence against European colonialism in Africa have occasionally been presented as a conflict of values and interests between colonized Africans and the European colonialists—an undifferentiated homogenous African (black) versus an equally homogenous European (white).<sup>14</sup> Oversimplifying Kenya’s struggle for independence, Kenyatta—leading Kenya’s ruling elite and decision makers in his first independent government—declared that “we all fought for *uhuru*,” thus reducing that struggle to the polarities of colonialists versus colonized, black versus white. In so doing, Kenyatta and his cabinet and other high government officials—many former colonial collaborators—deliberately obscured (*i*) the brutality some of these leaders meted to freedom fighters, including severe beatings, maiming and confiscating the fighters’ land and property, and now acting with impunity as the independent Kenyan leaders,

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<sup>12</sup> Following Ghana’s independence in 1957, many African countries gained self-rule from their European colonizers in the 1960s: Nigeria, Democratic Republic of the Congo (formerly Zaire and before that, the Congo Free State), the Republic of Congo, Mali, Somali Republic, Cote d’Ivoire (formerly Ivory Coast), Benin (formerly Dahomey) and Senegal (1960); Tanzania (1961); Uganda (1962); Kenya (1963); and Zambia and Malawi (1964). Lusophone Africa—Portuguese-speaking African countries (Países Africanos de Língua Oficial Portuguesa - PALOP)—gained independence in 1974/5: Guinea-Bissau (1974) and Mozambique, Cape-Verde, Sao Tome & Principe and Angola (1975).

<sup>13</sup> *Harambee* means “pull together”, “self-help”, or “work together to jointly solve a single problem for mutual benefit”. The concept and practice of *harambee* was common among diverse Kenyans before Kenyatta popularized the term. For the Kamba, it was *nzangule* (contributing cash, animals or items for sale towards a specific goal) and *mwethia* whereby men and women got their agemates and friends together to help, say, in thatching a house, cultivating, harvesting, or doing work that required many hands to complete speedily. Similarly, the Masai have *ematonyok*; the Somali *Iska wax(h) uu khabso*; the Luo, *konyir kende*; the Kisii *omochango*; the Gikuyu *ngwatio*, *kunyitanira*, *kwirera* and *gwikuria*; the Meru: *tugwatanire*, *tutethanie*, *tutetheke twinthe amwe!*

<sup>14</sup> For example, Kenya’s ruling elite’s ideology, which was embodied in Kenyatta’s repeated calls in his public addresses, later became commonly used phrases by politicians. Riding a wave of populism largely constructed and encouraged by Britain and Kenya’s colonial government, the charismatic Kenyatta became independent Kenya’s prime minister and, later, first president.

(ii) the failure to redress land inequities (i.e., land stolen by loyalists and collaborators from Mau Mau fighters, the handover of settlers' farms to politicians, and the absence of land reform), (iii) tribalism as a continuing tool for manipulative rule, and (iv) the failure to recognize, reward, and compensate the true heroes of the struggle: the guerrilla fighters and supportive underground structure of civilians and lowly officials. In short, Kenyatta's rallying cry for *harambee* fused his frequent call to "forget the past" and false affirmation that "we all fought for *uhuru*" to revise and rewrite Kenya's history and the popular memory of the struggle for independence and eschew and deny the issues of class, exploitation, and the rapidly growing corruption throughout the new administration.

Marginalizing Kenyan freedom fighters and other nationalists in his government, Kenyatta's version of a "usable past" included appropriating the colonial and derogatory term—*Mau Mau*<sup>15</sup>—to describe Kenya's liberation struggle and guerrilla war, allowing him to brand the *Mau Mau* "a disease which had been eradicated and must never be remembered again" (Kenyatta 1968:189). In his re-making of independent Kenya, Kenyatta's other "pasts" intrude occasionally on his carefully woven "usable past." These intrusions are reflected in the selected and deselected texts for the high-school literature syllabi and demonstrate how "the past is never dead. It's not even past" (Faulkner 1951:535).<sup>16</sup>

Though few studies exist about the selection of literature texts for Kenyan high-school curricula,<sup>17</sup> the bulk of educational and curricular studies compare Kenyan to other educational systems while others discuss vocational training, educational funding, expanding higher education,

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<sup>15</sup> The term *Mau Mau* is still used in Kenya and internationally.

<sup>16</sup> Faulkner's *Go Down, Moses* (1942) and *Requiem for a Nun* (1951) demonstrate how the repeated confusion of facts and fiction firm up and perpetuate racial stereotypes.

<sup>17</sup> Ravenscroft (1964); Thiong'o, Owuor-Anyumba, and lo Liyong (1968); Ochieng (1969); p'Bitek (1972). Since my initial research for this dissertation, many studies in the area have occurred. Especially insightful is Omolewa's analysis of examinations as an adaptation strategy in Nigeria (Omolewa 2006).

high-school administration, and education for economic development.<sup>18</sup> Studies about English and literature tend to focus on the teaching of the English language and grammar the same way MinEd views literary studies, i.e., principally as a tool for teaching the English language. In a canonization that ignores and marginalizes the rich diversity of Kenyan literature,<sup>19</sup> Kenyan literary studies are predominantly limited to a few writers—Isak Dinesen, Elspeth Huxley, Beryl Makham, Ngugi wa Thiong’o and Meja Mwangi.<sup>20</sup>

Starting in the mid-1970s, however, under cultural studies, Kenyan orature became a wider area of research.<sup>21</sup> Most literary studies survey themes, genres, and writing styles while few concern high-school curricula or the selection of school texts,<sup>22</sup> a lacuna the present study addresses by engaging the discourse about Kenya’s national historiography as defined and practised through the goals of education and the texts selected for the high-school English and literature syllabi. For instance, while Kenyatta’s *Facing Mount Kenya*<sup>23</sup> presents an aspect of the nation’s “usable past”, his later exhortations to “forget the past” encouraged a collective amnesia that figures strongly in

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<sup>18</sup> K’Olewe (1996); Hazlewood (1989); Agonafer (1994); Collier and Lal (1980); Obura (1991 and 1993); Hughes and Mwiria (1988); Eshiwani (1983, 1985 and 1993); Kaggia (1975); Kinyanjui, J. (1988); Kinoti (1986); Bogonko (1992); Indire (1972); Ominde (1974); Sifuna (1975); Kay (1975); Heyer, Ileri and Moris (1971); Cowan (1970); Mickelwait et al. (1976); Okelo (1976); Sharma, R.R. (1975); Mbuyi, D. (1982); and Abungu, M. (1986); Makau, B.M (1985).

<sup>19</sup> Robson (1979); Githii (1980); Killam (1981); Cook and Okenimkpe (1983); Thiong’o and Bjorkman (1989); Tsabedze, C. (1994); Cantalupo (1995); Parker and Starkey (1995); Indangasi (1997); Ndigirigi (1998); Ogude (1999); Brown (1999); Sicherman (1971, 1989, 1990 and 1995); Slaymaker (1999); Williams, P. (1999); Rao (1999); Onyeberechi (1999); Lovesey (2000); Gikandi (2000); Nazareth (2000).

<sup>20</sup> Beginning with *Petals of Blood* (1977), Ngugi wa Thiong’o’s works offer a profound critique of neocolonialism in Kenya.

<sup>21</sup> Kidula (1998); Wako (2002); Hofmeyr, Nyairo and Ogude (2003); Nyairo (2005); Mwangi, E. (2004); Samper (2004); Ogola (2005); Wekesa (2004); and Nyairo and Ogude (2003).

<sup>22</sup> Warner (1954); *Kenya Hansard* (1975b); Gachukia and Akivaga (1978); Kibera, Gakunga and Blackburn (1980); Mugo and Were (1982); Goodson (1983); Goodson and Ball (1984); Treffgarne, ed. (1984); Lillis (1985 and 1986); Nandwa and Bukenya (1983); Kabira and Mutahi (1988); Kazemek (1995); Sicherman (1998); and Amoko (2001). Relevant curricula studies include Indire (1972); Sifuna (1975); Kay (1975); Gachukia and Akivaga (1978); Kibera, Gakunga and Blackburn (1980); Mugo and Were, eds. (1982); Goodson (1983); Goodson and Ball (1984); Treffgarne, ed. (1984); Lillis (1985 and 1986); Nandwa and Bukenya (1986); Kabira and Mutahi (1988); Kazemek (1995); Sicherman (1998); and Amoko (2001).

<sup>23</sup> Kenyatta (1965[1938]).

Kenya's historiography—informing national plans and goals—including for education and in the public domain (Ogot 1978:30–33).<sup>24</sup> But what constitutes valid knowledge and the usable past?

While considering the “metropolitan assumptions about what constitutes valid school knowledge and valid means of transmitting and assessing such knowledge”, Lillis (1985:80)<sup>25</sup> commended Kenya's Africanization of the literature curriculum for looking beyond “mere curriculum changes” to the wider Kenyan value system. Still, he interrogates “the institutional and decision-making contexts” that produce the curricula and the school system and argues that the literature curriculum failed because “its radicalism threatened the status quo [and] even ... the stability of the state”. Nevertheless, scant attention has been paid to how Kenyan literary studies relate to Kenya's national goals of education and whether the goals are relevant to Kenyan citizenry.<sup>26</sup> Not only has the entire period of the guerrilla war been largely suppressed or grossly distorted, but the schools only marginally present orature though it thrives everywhere in the country and beyond, adapting to people's changing circumstances and our ever-changing globalized world.

Orature encompasses people's value systems and moral codes concerning ethics, beliefs, religion and thought. Orature is a people's ever-changing, living lore about themselves and how they relate to each other, nature, and their environment. This lore is embedded in the people's history, literature, myths, performances, and dramatic arts. Using an immediate audience, drama

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<sup>24</sup> In Kenya, occasional educational editorials and supplements in Kenya's daily and weekly newspapers —*The Nation*, *The Standard* and *Weekly Review*—often contain educational, curricular, and literary articles. See Kabira (1986) and King'ei (1992).

<sup>25</sup> The curricular assumptions hinged on the prevailing views of knowledge whereby ‘blocks of knowledge’—concepts and axioms—were easily transferable from one learning milieu to another. This “doctrine of transferability” does not recognize diverse epistemological practices (Lillis [1985] citing Phenix [1964], Hirst and Peters, eds. [1967]).

<sup>26</sup> Killam (1984); Kanitz (1987); C. Kurtz (1998). My survey of 516 dissertations written in American universities between 1990 and 1996 about Kenya showed only 18 in literary studies and two in women studies.

is a common, popular genre that proliferates in Kenyan languages throughout the country and relies heavily on orature. In urban centres (e.g., Nairobi), impromptu street drama in Kiswahili and Sheng routinely satirizes and recreates Kenyan life.<sup>27</sup> As a tool and site of intervention in people's lives, orature flourishes everywhere in diverse languages, producing abundant texts that academia typically ignores. Erroneously, some scholars have viewed orature as merely an African tradition confined to anthropology or fixed in both time and space in rural enclaves.<sup>28</sup> Though most Africans still live in rural areas, urban populations are fast growing along with their orature. Though Kenyan cultural scholars have begun to address urban orature,<sup>29</sup> those charged with selecting texts for Kenyan high schools still ignore, exclude, or consign orature to rural spaces and largely omit or distort the guerrilla period, depriving schools of rich and diverse sources.<sup>30</sup>

## Section C: Methodology

Material for the study was gathered over time, with interviews conducted intermittently between 1994 and 1998 and between 2006 and 2010. The orature component draws from earlier fieldwork in the mid-1980s in Ukambani (Kenya) (Kieti 1988 and 1989; Kieti and Coughlin 1990). Besides documents, books, articles, and songs, I reviewed Kenya's national education reports,

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<sup>27</sup> Drawing largely from Kiswahili and originating in Nairobi, *Sheng* is a highly popular pidgin that innovatively borrows words and vocabulary from different Kenyan languages—Dholuo, Kikuyu, Kamba, Kimeru, Ekigusii, Luhya, English. Kiswahili is spoken in Central, East and Southern Africa (Zaire, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Tanzania, Uganda, Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Southern Somali and Mozambique). *Impromptu drama* refers to small groups of actors and street preachers performing in Nairobi's streets and city parks, especially during lunchtime.

<sup>28</sup> Though often an unconscious preference, most oral literature scholars, including my co-author and I, collect and analyse data mainly from rural, rather than urban areas (Kieti and Coughlin 1990); Niane, D.T. 1965[1960]; Barra (1965[1960]); Clark-Bekederemo (1964 and 1977); Mwangi R. (1970); Finnegan (1970); Jackson, K. A., Jr. (1972); Ogutu and Roscoe (1974); Kavyu (1977); Christon (1978); Knappert (1979a and 1979b); Toweett (1979); Farrell (1980); Rassner (1980); Kipury (1983); Kabira (1983); Shariff (1983); Campbell and Eastman (1984); Odaga (1984); Kabira and Adagala (1994[1985]); Nandwa and Bukenya (1986); Kabira and Mutahi (1988); Chesaina (1991); Miruka (1994); and Osotsi (1995).

<sup>29</sup> Kidula (1998); Wako (2002); Hofmeyer, Nyairo and Ogude (2003); Nyairo (2005); Mwangi, E. (2004); Mungai and Samper (2006); Ogola (2005); Wekesa (2004); and Nyairo and Ogude (2003, 2007).

<sup>30</sup> Okepwhe (1992); Finnegan (1970); Firoze Hassanali Somjee (1996)

development plans, high school syllabi, English and literature manuals for teachers' colleges, and the national examination papers for English and literature between 1940 and 1998.

My readings include fiction, personal narratives, court proceedings, administrative notes and reports, critiques of Kenya's literature, liberation struggle, and guerrilla war. I also interviewed diverse Kenyans about the criteria for selecting texts for the high-school English and literature syllabi: journalists, booksellers, educationists, librarians, publishers, *wananchi*,<sup>31</sup> Kenyan freedom fighters,<sup>32</sup> English and literature teachers and students, some members of the text-selection committee for English, and officials from the National Museums and Archives,<sup>33</sup> the Ministry of Culture, MinEd, and its associated organizations.<sup>34</sup> In total, I conducted 68 interviews with Kamba *ngũi* singers, guerrilla fighters<sup>35</sup> (disparagingly called Mau Mau<sup>36</sup>) educational journalists, English

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<sup>31</sup> *Wananchi* in Swahili means the earth's people, or the people of the land, citizens, referring usually to the ordinary citizen/worker and, in this case, also to people with little or no formal education.

<sup>32</sup> Only freedom fighters from Ukambani were interviewed. Most scholarship about Kenya's liberation struggle and guerrilla war has been confined to Kikuyu and belongs to what Clough (1998) calls *Mau Mau* scholarship. Little research exists about Kenya's liberation struggle and guerrilla war among Kenya's diverse linguistic groups.

<sup>33</sup> specifically, the Kenya National Archives, the National Museum, and the Railway Museum.

<sup>34</sup> The institutions associated with MinEd that deal with the English and literature syllabi and were contacted for this research include the Kenya Institute of Education (KIE); the Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC), the Jomo Kenyatta Foundation (JKF), the Kenya Literature Bureau (KLB), the Kenya Publishers' Association (KPA), and the Departments of English and Literature of Nairobi University, Kenyatta University and those of a few high schools, e.g., Iiani Secondary School, Machakos and Alliance High school, Nairobi.

<sup>35</sup> During my field interviews, most people who lived through the liberation war or were guerrillas or otherwise assisted them refused to talk about the topic; answered in monosyllables and quickly changed the subject or said they didn't remember or know. The Kenyans inducted into the liberation movement and bound so tightly by the oath of allegiance that, more than sixty years later, the initiates still rarely discuss the topic. Nevertheless, I managed to conduct robust interviews with a few ex-fighters and members.

<sup>36</sup> In Kenya, diverse resistance to foreign rule culminated in the Land and Freedom Army launching a guerrilla war against the colonialists. Both the guerrillas and the war itself were disparagingly dubbed the *Mau Mau* by the British, the Kenya Colony, and later, by independent Kenyan governments. The term *Mau Mau* had "unfortunately gained worldwide recognition" (J. M. Kariuki (1963:24). Kariuki's seminal book *'Mau Mau' Detainee: The Account by a Kenyan African of his Experiences in Detention Camps: 1953–1960* italicises *Mau Mau* to mitigate the effect of the referents that it signals. To honour Kariuki and fellow martyred freedom fighters and heroes who continue to be disrespected and side-lined in Kenya today, this dissertation uses *struggle for independence, anticolonial and liberation or guerrilla war* instead of *Mau Mau, the uprising or the revolt* except where that term is used by cited texts and I present such texts as in the original sources. During my research in Kenya, anything associated with the loaded term *Mau Mau*—freedom fighters, independence struggle heroes, Kenyan guerrilla war—was anathema to public discourse, and in national spaces—schools, museums, historical monuments and even during national ceremonies that purportedly celebrate Kenya's independence—Jamhuri, Madaraka and Kenyatta Day. One of Kenya's foremost

teachers and other educationists, including civil servants, plus roughly 80 students in 20 high schools in Mombasa, Nairobi, Kiambu, Machakos, and Kitui Districts.<sup>37</sup> In those schools, I also interviewed—depending on availability—a selection of students to ascertain their familiarity with African and other international authors and poets.

During fieldwork, I frequently encountered obstacles. For example, MinEd officials often declared that official data had been classified as confidential or alleged that it did not exist or was unavailable. Even mundane documents like the lists of books considered for selection were allegedly classified information. Most of the teachers I interviewed felt excluded from the text-selection process and resented MinEd's blatant and repeated disregard of their opinions about crucial pedagogical and administrative issues like syllabi changes, student placements, text selections, examination procedures, training, placement, and transfer of teachers. They felt that this neglect disrupted their teaching and preparations for the annual national examinations. Similarly, many civil servants were irked that their work was constantly interfered with "from above" and only agreed to talk to me anonymously. Fearful of being victimized for talking about education and how the set books for literature are selected, they believed that, if their names were published, the authorities would discipline them for insolence by explaining—without permission—what, how, and why children are taught (or not taught) certain literature in Kenya. They feared being interdicted, sacked, and probably deprived of their pensions. To protect these individuals, I have kept their identities anonymous.

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freedom fighters, Dedan Kimathi, remains buried in an unknown grave in Kamiti prison, as are thousands of other Kenyans in the commonwealth war memorials and cemeteries throughout Kenya and elsewhere! (See note 196). The *Mau Mau* ban was only lifted 40 years after independence, in 2003 ("Ban on Mau Mau Finally Lifted," in Kenya's *Daily Nation*, 30 August 2003; *The Guardian*, 1 September 2003 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2003/sep/01/2>).

<sup>37</sup> The secondary and high schools include: Iiani; Barazani; Joana Chase; Kambu; Ngoto; Machakos Boys; Kathiiani; Machakos Girls; Alliance Boys; Alliance Girls; Jamhuri; Upper Hill; Kenya High; State House; Nairobi; Nairobi Girls; Starehe; St Josephs; Coast Girls; and Allidina Visram.

Other sources include the Kenya National Archives (The National Archives and the Railway Museum in Nairobi), MinEd and its affiliates, and 68 interviews with current and retired teachers of English or literature, journalists, and Kenyan educationists. It was difficult to acquire official documents like lists of literature textbooks distributed for KIE panels or the circulars convening the panels' meetings to select books since MinEd considered these documents classified. The interviews and literature reviews also indicated that censorship and self-censorship constrained government officers whose duty it was to choose the texts for the English and literature syllabi. Many interviewees attributed self-censorship (by them and others) to the wider environment of censorship and repression that the Kenyan state has historically practised, a censorship and repression also reflected in Kenya's national educational system and goals and the selection of high-school literature. This study's methodology combines historical, literary, and cultural analyses of diverse narratives to explore Kenyan literature and the educational system. Besides interviews, it draws on my previous research about Kenyan orature and women in development since the oral issues I investigated are linked in time, space, and history to the issues studied here. Orality cannot be separated from the writing of a dissertation because we neither write nor speak in a vacuum.

I grew up listening to folklore (oral narratives, songs, riddles, puns, numbering) from my mother, grandmother, father, brothers, sisters, and numerous relatives from my parents' large extended families. In my first four years of school, I listened to folklore from other children during *story telling time*, my favourite lesson. The student who told the best story earned the biggest applause. I always wondered why we did not write tests about this lesson as we did in other subjects. I no longer wonder. Noticing the absence of oral folklore in my curricula as a student and, later, teacher stirred me to investigate why. As a teacher, feminist, human rights activist, and

pedagogical theorist from a neocolonial country, my hope is for Kenya’s educational system to improve. My work is therefore an attempt to influence educational policy-making in Kenya.

To compare and analyse the texts included or excluded in the high-school literature syllabi, I examine two broad, fluid, and often overlapping categories: historical and popular literature.<sup>38</sup>

**Historical literature:** fiction, nonfiction, life-writing—biographies, memoirs, autobiographies, travelogues or travel adventures, journalistic observations, reports, and key forms of social history and “private remembrance”—letters, photographs, and diaries. **Popular literature:** romantic fiction, detective (mystery) fiction, orature, science fiction, children’s literature, magazines, music, film, guidebooks, and mass media. Though mainly classified as popular literature, **orature** overlaps both categories: historical and popular. For the analysis, the concept of exclusion is widened to include material that was not just “excluded,” but *banned*, *censored* and even, *forbidden*, i.e., *exclu-censored*, a phenomenon that occurred in independent Kenya and other colonialized spaces and was not confined to the selection of texts for the literature syllabi or the educational system.<sup>39</sup>

MinEd’s officials have systematically excluded:

- most national and international literature about the early resistance and political organization against foreign domination in Kenya, Africa and in other continents;
- early written Kenyan fiction, life-writing, and travel- and settler-literature;
- orature; and
- romantic and detective literature.

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<sup>38</sup> Life-writing and orature are usually deemed outside the scope of literary studies except in a few universities that now offer specialized courses on women, aboriginals and other “minority studies”.

<sup>39</sup> Exclu-censored was suggested by Prof. Micere Mugo in a private e-mail (5 March 2019). M. Mugo is a renowned Kenyan literary critic and professor, writer, teacher, and human-rights activist currently in the African-American Studies Department, Syracuse University.

MinEd and related organizations have viewed colonial writings as non-Kenyan and, for political and religious reasons, looked sceptically upon the rich literature in Kiswahili (some with translations) and that by Kenyan minorities, e.g., Kenyan Indians, Kenyans of Arabic or Somali origin, non-Christians.<sup>40</sup> Except a few texts in Kiswahili language classes, much of this literature has been systematically excluded from the syllabi.

While acknowledging all the excluded categories—historical and popular including orature—the present investigation focuses on two broad categories to be discussed in detail herein, historical and popular literature, thus excluding romantic and detective literature. Even then, the remaining categories of Kenyan *historical* and *popular* literature are immense. Thus, to give the study a manageable size and focus, only a fraction of the texts from neglected and excluded genres is sampled for this dissertation, namely:

- the lies, distortions, and omissions about the guerrilla war (the Mau Mau myth) and the government's single story of independence versus the excluded literature about oppression and the actual civil war;
- early Kenyan travel, settler, and Christian literature; and
- excluded and exclu-censored popular oral literature.

For a close reading of the sampled orature texts, I use Karin Barber, Fabian, and other popular culture scholars' understanding about how texts work as texts (Barber 1997a and 1997b). Their approach reveals how a text's "stylistic conventions—genres, rules of composition, modes of address"—help us analyse "the texts and the imagined publics they address" Fabian (1998:3, 21 and 34). Analysing how "texts transform one's thoughts, emotions, and experiences into creations" that can be shared or communicated, Fabian visualizes popular culture as exposing texts' stylistic conventions: "we know pretty well what we catch with the concept of popular culture, but what do we miss?" Examining cultural productions, Bakhtin perceived the act of living as participating

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<sup>40</sup> See the interview on p. 94 explaining how the Kenya Colony administrator, Hobley, perceived Kiswahili and Islam.

in dialogue; with meaning emerging through dialogue at whatever level dialogue happens. While considering the literary value of selected samples of oral literature, I also point out how it reveals and discusses the historical pressures affecting the local community.

Adopting Bakhtin's theory of dialogism, the dissertation examines texts as "pluralistic discourses of culture and society" that allow multiple interpretations of voices, events, and characters (Bakhtin 1988:125–56). Aware of the limitations of drawing general conclusions from few texts, the dissertation restricts its comments to Kenyan historiography and the statist narratives about the nation as practised through the national goals of education and, specifically, the texts selected for Kenyan high-school curricula as reflected in the English and literature syllabi.

To examine the evolution in the numbers and genre of texts selected for the English and literature syllabi, I list and categorize the texts selected for Kenyan high schools between 1940 and 1998. Focusing on themes, authors, categories, and geographic zones, I also analyse examination questions and contrast the selected texts to samples from the vast array of alternative deselected texts to see whether the inclusions and exclusions reveal patterns guided by cultural, gender, political, or other criteria. I present quantitative and qualitative analyses of the texts selected and deselected for high-school English and literature syllabi between 1940 and 1998 to confirm or not the exclusion of certain categories of critical and fictional Kenyan (and other) popular literature and historical texts, including orature.

From the *(i)* pattern of systematic exclusions, *(ii)* excluded literature, *(iii)* key government officials' statements and speeches, *(iv)* state acts and laws that imply censorship, *(v)* diverse personal interviews confirming the criteria used in text selection, and *(vi)* MinEd's text-selection process and patterns of questions for national examinations administered by the Kenya National

Examinations Council (KNEC), I ascertain whether, in fact, those patterns conformed to or contradicted the official national goals for education.<sup>41</sup>

To determine whether the selection process and the selected texts corresponded to the political and ideological exigencies of independent Kenya's ruling elite and its imagination of a nation, I document and contextualize the national amnesia in independent Kenya's historiography, linking it to the pervasiveness of the *Mau Mau* myth in the vast scholarly work on the topic and, more specifically, in Kenya's educational system. The *Mau Mau* myth and the punitive and pacification expeditions helped shape independent Kenyan state's political-economy, education, and other systems.<sup>42</sup> To understand this myth within the structures of colonial and neocolonial ideologies, I use personal interviews, autobiographies, historical fictions, life-writing, non-fictional accounts, letters, reports, official communications, journalistic writings and popular literature by colonial

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<sup>41</sup> Though this dissertation does not discuss the yearly selection of new students for national schools, I note that after independence, attendance in national schools was drawn nationally from across the country, according to the student's academic performance. After the 1982 attempted military coup, President Moi decreed that 85% of high-school attendance be drawn from the province a school is in and merely 15% from elsewhere—an exact inversion of prior percentages. This decree is among several unilateral decisions that intensified tribalism and nativism and exacerbated the polarization of Kenyans still extant today. Before this edict, schools attempted to unify Kenyans by requiring most high-school students to move from their home villages, districts, and provinces to other provinces and, thus, exposed them to diverse Kenyan cultures and languages throughout the nation. Except urban schools, most Kenyan schools are situated in linguistic and, hence, tribal zones, with mostly a single language and culture.

<sup>42</sup> Pacification and punitive incidents (usually massacres) often helped European imperialists to grab local land, forcefully confine colonized populations within a fraction of their former lands, restrict their movement, neutralize local resistance to forced labour, and impose hut and cattle taxes. In Kenya Colony, state and crown lands were often alienated for national projects such as constructing roads, railways, administrative buildings, settling new European immigrants, and creating national parks and reserves. Land alienations in Kenya exacerbated tribal and ethnic animosities still felt today. "Punitive incidents" continued during the guerrilla war for freedom and after independence. For instance, land and property belonging to freedom fighters were confiscated and given to loyalists. Elsewhere, under King Leopold II (the Congo's de facto owner), some ten million Congolese were killed sometimes through punitive expeditions that slaughtered whole villages. The hands or feet of slow or disgruntled people were routinely chopped off and babies abandoned to die while their parents did forced labour. For sport, Belgian colonialists shot holes in Congolese' ears, later using the skulls to decorate flower gardens—grotesque excesses documented in Hochschild's *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa* and depicted in Conrad's novel, *Heart of Darkness*. Meanwhile, the Germans and the British were busy exterminating the Herero and the Namaqua in Namibia and the Ndebele in Zimbabwe (Drechsler and Zöllner 1980; Shaller 2008). In 1905, the Germans crushed an "uprising" in Tanzania killing a quarter million people and depopulating an entire region (Ilfie 1967; Kimambo 1991). In Canada and the United States of America, Native American Indians suffered similar pacification exercises (Hochschild 1999:46–51 and 77; Mamdani 2001; Cocker 1989; Sunseri 2000; Levene 2005).

adventurers, administrators, and Kenyans. Through the memories about the struggles for land, freedom, and independence, I examine the reasons advanced for the causes of and the responses to Kenya's liberation struggle and guerrilla war. Through the school syllabi, I examine how, by commission or omission, the selected texts can and do propagate the *Mau Mau* myth especially via the questions **not** asked during national examinations.

Finally, the study examines the history and the socio-economic base of the new Kenyan elite to reveal whether historical amnesia was or not imperative to prevent challenges to its dominance of the state. Toward that end, I present specific evidence of state censorship involving departments charged with vetting and selecting literature for school syllabi.

## **Section D: Organization of the Study**

Chapter 2 examines the evolving historical and political contexts influencing educational policies and practice during the period under study (1940 to 1998).

Chapter 3 details and analyses the selected and deselected texts categorized as historical or popular, including orature, and identifies the patterns of inclusion or exclusion for high-school literature.

Chapter 4 considers the exclusion of the literature about the resistance and political organization that culminated in the 1950s guerrilla war for national independence, which Britain disparagingly called the *Mau Mau*. It also examines the *Mau Mau* myth and the story of Kenya's independence by examining texts related to early resistance, political mobilization, punitive and pacification expeditions, and the national liberation war. The chapter therefore also examines mythmaking, censorship, silencing, and repression by police or military operations—all tactics used by the colonial government and reinvented under Kenyatta's rule and aided by his "forgive and forget" mantra for independent Kenya.

Chapter 5 cites the politics of otherization and enumerates texts that point to the idea of the nation as a site of difference. Specifically, the chapter examines early Kenyan written texts: i.e., travel, settler and other narratives that are both historical and popular literature.

Chapter 6 examines excluded popular literature, focussing on orature, and analysing four Kamba *myalĩ* (singular, *mwalĩ*) to illustrate their thematic concerns, portability and versatility and the devises *myalĩ* use to express cultural identity and nationalism. The *myalĩ* explored here demonstrate the potential that excluded literature has for historical grounding and for the “Kenyan identity” the country’s educational system officially aims to achieve.

Chapter 7 presents conclusions and recommendations.

## **Historical and Political Contexts Influencing Educational Policies, 1940-1998**

Haunted by fear that too much information and knowledge might facilitate rebellion, the colonial government's educational policy was blatantly racist and mainly driven by the demand for low-level technical, clerical, and bureaucratic skills for government, farms, factories, and diverse services. Information for the native was thus controlled, censored, and given in small doses. In neocolonial Kenya, educational policy needed to train people at all skill levels, but inconvenient information and ideas were suppressed and censored to shield corrupt politicians, businesspeople, and an autocratic government. Schools dared not teach pupils how to think critically, especially about politics. Neocolonial Kenya distorted or blotted out the War for Land and Freedom to impede progressive and critical discussion about the local and global impact of imperialism, class, and social conflicts.

### **Section A: Colonialization, Punitive Expeditions, and the War for Land and Freedom**

After early exploratory and religious missions in Africa, the British East African Protectorate commissioned the Imperial British East African Company (IBEAC) in 1888 to stake out crown land and plan to build roads, railways, and other infrastructure to facilitate their expanding expropriation and control of vast tracts, often by looting, murdering and expelling the local inhabitants who owned the land and who resisted losing it to the newcomers. The Imperial British East African Company and the new East African Protectorate government (known locally as the

Crown) then imposed highly resented measures to succeed in their mission, including hut-, head-, and poll-taxes, obligatory cattle sales (destocking), strict mobility controls on Africans, and mandatory and unpaid *corvée* labour to terrace land and construct and maintain roads and railways.<sup>43</sup> To be thorough, the takeover also limited the education of Africans, controlled information, and restricted critical thought and communication.

Colonial education sought to Christianize and “civilize” its pupils, setting them apart from the rest of the society, inspiring resentments and divisions that helped to impede Kenyans’ ability to organize and resist the colonialists, and providing a fertile source of indoctrinated Africans to become administrative lackeys, police, and soldiers obedient to the government. Indeed, the British colonial governments’ appointments for local administration were rarely based on merit or technical qualifications, but mostly on personal loyalty to senior colonial administrators in Africa. Deliberately ignoring the locally recognized leaders, colonial administrators appointed chiefs and interpreters as the crown’s representatives, usually men with little moral authority, respect and no social standing or leadership qualities in the local community. The British “did not want leaders in whom the people had confidence, but men who could be used for their purposes. When chiefs and headmen were selected, men whom the British found in positions of leadership were frequently by-passed, and others installed over them” (Odinga 1966:20–21). To illustrate, Odinga cites a ridiculous episode in Sakwa location where the colonial government undermined and ignored the recognized leadership and, instead, appointed a village joker to be their chief, messenger, and interpreter. He was assigned personal armed guards and wielded power, often capriciously. Such episodes were replicated throughout the country and in other British colonies like Uganda where,

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<sup>43</sup> About *hut-, head-, and poll-taxes*, see pages 179 and 217; about *destocking*, see pages 215, 227, 227, and 202 and footnotes 482, 487, and 488; about *forced, unpaid labour*, see pages 116, 129, 134, 207, 212, and 240 and footnotes 42 and 416; and about *roads and railways*, pages 117 and 208 and footnote 417.

by appointing local chiefs, “British colonial rule successfully shifted the loyalty of the local elites from the Buganda Kingdom to the British” (Kuang 2010:7). This patron-clientelism ensured a functioning authoritative rule by promising and providing financial security to the appointees in return for loyalty.<sup>44</sup>

Owing their loyalty and power entirely to the colonial government, such functionaries fervidly defended the government and, for their loyalty, were rewarded financially and in kind. Knowing how much those they ruled abhorred them, these minions lorded it over society and zealously defended the government’s ideology and practices, e.g., preaching about the empire on which the sun never set, and how Kenyan “natives” were unable to rule themselves. Under British orders, they hunted down, flogged, tortured, and extra-judiciously executed Kenyan freedom fighters during the Emergency<sup>45</sup> as documented by J.M. Kariuki (1963), Odinga (1966), and Kaggia (1975), whose texts, among many others, have been excluded from the high-school English and history courses.

Instead, the creed of colonial education demeaned, negated, ridiculed, and rejected most things African: food, clothes, jewellery, language, religion, dances, music, gods, belief systems, popular grains (sorghum and various millets), and domestic animals—chickens, goats and cows—all were abhorred as *shenzi*.<sup>46</sup> Being a *musomi* was then associated not merely with acquiring knowledge, an education, or literacy, but also with the school one attended. Missions ran most schools, creating Lillis’ “high status” schools, a prototype of which is Ngugi wa Thiong’o’s alma mater, Alliance High School (AHS) (Lillis 1985:82).<sup>47</sup> Founded by The Alliance of Protestant Churches in 1926,

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<sup>44</sup> Kuang (2010:6–8, and chapters 3, 4 and 5) mentions global patron-client systems in Italy, Latin America, France and British colonies: Egypt, Nigeria, Fiji and in East Asia.

<sup>45</sup> For example, see the *kaguniras* (J.M. Kariuki 1963:78) or the *mnyambala* in the *myali*.

<sup>46</sup> In Kiswahili, *shenzi* means stupid or foolish.

<sup>47</sup> In various books, Thiong’o (1972, 1986 and 1993) discusses his own experiences in Alliance High School, formerly a whites-only school and in neocolonial Kenya, a school for children of the elite.

AHS was the first Kenyan school to offer higher-secondary education to Africans.<sup>48</sup> Alongside older and established “high-status” schools, it generated and greatly influenced the political and educational assumptions about what constituted valid knowledge and education.<sup>49</sup> Indeed, twelve of independent Kenya’s first seventeen cabinet ministers (all men) were AHS alumni.<sup>50</sup>

As a manipulative tool for governance, the colonial Kenyan government divided Kenyans by enhancing perceived negative characteristics of distinct linguistic groups—increasing suspicions and distrust amongst groups (tribes) and playing people against each other, e.g., the stereotypes that Kikuyus are thieves; Luos are strutting show-offs; Kambas, dancing sex-fiends; and the Swahili, conniving liars. Indeed, one legacy of this colonial ruling practice is the bitter tribalism that persists in Kenya today, which independent Kenyan leaders continue to promote and use strategically during elections to win and retain power.<sup>51</sup> Kenya’s ruling elite ignores class and other divisions and, instead, presents Kenyan’s struggles against local or foreign oppression as a conflict of values and interests between an undifferentiated homogenous African (black) versus an equally undifferentiated homogenous European (white). However, diverse texts, selected or unselected for the school syllabi, reveal deeper conflicts and contradictions between and amongst Kenyans—settlers, administrators, Asians, and Africans—the latter especially after Britain amassed a huge war machine and created the Home Guards to crush Kenya’s freedom fighters.

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<sup>48</sup> The churches in the alliance were The Church of Scotland Mission (later the Presbyterian Church of East Africa [PCEA]), Church of the Province of Kenya (CPK), African Inland Church (AIC), and the Methodist Church.

<sup>49</sup> In *Biggles, Mau Mau and I*, Squadron-Leader James Bigglesworth, DSO DFC MC of the Biggles series is the tough brave, happy Englishman whose long selfless service went back to the founders of the empire” (Thiong’o 1993:136–41). Ngugi first met Bigglesworth in Alliance Boys High School.

<sup>50</sup> interview with teachers of literature and other courses in Alliance High School, 1998

<sup>51</sup> Echoing other leaders, Kenya’s Justice Minister Mutula Kilonzo, and police spokesperson, Eric Kiraithe, dismissed a report by UN Special Rapporteur, Philip Alston (2010) as “an attempt to recolonize Kenya”. The report detailed extrajudicial killings during one of Kenya’s worst tribal fighting (2007–2008) after a stolen election. Kenyan leaders alleged the report aimed at “destabilizing the country” by “trying to divide the coalition government” and depicted it as “a baseless fabrication devoid of even an iota of fact” (*The Standard* 1/06/2009).

## Resistance, Censorship, and Thought Control

In response to the conquest and oppression, the local populations staged frequent, but localized, rebellions. To retaliate and maintain control, the British launched many brutal and homicidal punitive or pacification expeditions,<sup>52</sup> which often burnt and massacred entire villages. In their heyday, colonial administrators routinely organized pacification and punitive expeditions to punish errant natives (read resisting), acquire food, and occasionally—when bored—commit atrocities to entertain themselves and, later, brag.<sup>53</sup> The colonial government’s final punitive expeditions occurred during the 1950s to hunt down the Kenyan liberation guerrillas and their supporters. Though little studied inside Kenya, pacification exercises or expeditions have occurred in various forms around the globe as a tool of colonialism and imperialism; and, to justify their atrocities, the perpetrators often dehumanized and demonized their victims.<sup>54</sup>

Once the guerrilla war for land and freedom commenced, Britain—through its surrogate government in Nairobi—sought to broaden its alliances and control by increasingly appointing and empowering a class of conservative loyalists, collaborators, and homeguards. Britain and its proxy Nairobi government prosecuted Kenyatta as the alleged leader of the *Mau Mau*, the label the British used to malign, obfuscate, demonize, and dehumanize Kenya’s anti-colonial freedom fighters and specifically the 1950s guerrilla fighters and their movement, which the British

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<sup>52</sup> See the sections entitled “Section A: Punitive and Pacification Expeditions and Counter-Insurgency Narratives” (p. 111), “Section B: Media and Government Reports” (p. 124), “Section C: Liberation War Narratives” (p. 138).

<sup>53</sup> For example, see Meinertzhagen’s gleeful description of a particularly gory expedition (p. 118).

<sup>54</sup> How societies conceptualize others as the less human enemy-other has been discussed widely. Julia Kristeva called it abjection—when a group “casts off a familiar yet foreign part of the self and projects into this severed part those unwanted or undesirable traits associated with vulnerability”—a splitting process that is both trauma and response to trauma (Murer 2009:109–30. See also Evelyn Reed 1975; Kristeva, J. 1982; Ahnaf 2006; Brabeck and Ainslie 2008). For example, worldwide, different bands of people—defined by language or, earlier, by totems—often equated the humans outside their groups to animals and, hence, steeled their warriors for occasional tribal raids and wars (See *asa* and *ambalû* in Chapter 6, p. 234). For example, the Kamba referred to their nearest neighbours—the Maasai—as the *akavi*, meaning the non-people, the enemy.

declared illegal and banned in 1950.<sup>55</sup> By contrast, the anti-colonial fighters initially called themselves “the movement” or “movement for unity”. After the ban, the more militant leaders in the movement split off as the Kenya Land and Freedom Army (KLFA) and went underground. So, the government’s military manoeuvres, punitive expeditions, the round-up and forced transfer of citizens into “protected” villages, and torture intensified.<sup>56</sup>

Integral to the colonial project, these expeditions were guarded by secrecy, silencing, censorship, repression, and myth-making.<sup>57</sup> Still, resistance spread and began to be organized across many tribal groups and culminated in the anti-colonial guerrilla war.<sup>58</sup> The pacification and punitive expeditions continued in neocolonial Kenya and throughout British East Africa under different names and new forms and have inspired a massive literature that few Kenyans are aware of since most of it is excluded from television, newspapers, magazines, other public fora, and the primary, secondary and tertiary educational syllabi.<sup>59</sup>

Later, when the British were about to hand over power and most began to flee, they tried to protect the colonial government and its officials and subordinates from international opprobrium and specific criminal charges for oppression, torture, and widescale massacres. Thus, the British destroyed or spirited away and locked up much of the evidence and analyses in the British National Archives. For example, when Kenya’s foremost liberation hero, Dedan Kimathi, founded Kenya’s first national archive in Nyandarua forest in 1953, he diligently documented meetings and daily observations as “concrete evidence that we fought and died for this land” (Kinyatti 1986b: xvii). In 1955, after a Kenya Land and Freedom Army (KLFA) mole betrayed the archive, the colonial government captured, translated, indexed, and collated the documents into 14 volumes. Filed under “Kimathi Papers,” [they] were sent to London’s Public Records Office and a copy [was] deposited in Kenya’s national archives. None of these documents have been made public to date. These texts and many others dealing with Mau Mau are

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<sup>55</sup> See note 36.

<sup>56</sup> See the section, “Section A: Punitive and Pacification Expeditions and Counter-Insurgency Narratives” pp. 111-124.

<sup>57</sup> For details, see the section, “Section B: Media and Government Reports” (p. 124).

<sup>58</sup> See “Section C: Liberation War Narratives” (p. 140).

<sup>59</sup> Pre-independent Kenya (and Uganda) were variously known as British East Africa, the Colony and Protectorate of Kenya, and the Kenya Colony. The British protectorate between 1865 and 1919 became a colony in 1920, politically empowering the landed largely British settlers who now needed assurance that the new government would not strip their land and properties away or deport them. In 1962, Tom Mboya urged settlers to become Kenyans otherwise they would exist in independent Kenya only as “aliens” (Mboya addressing settlers in Eldoret, 1962).

“classified materials” in our own national archives; and, under a joint British-Kenya agreement, they will only be made public in 2013 (Kinyatti 1986a: vii, xvii).<sup>60</sup>

The Kimathi papers are just a few of the “thousands of documents on Mau Mau freedom fighters, a part of our material culture, [that] should come back [from the] UK National Archives.”<sup>61</sup> While researching “the success of Britain’s civilizing mission in the detention camps of Kenya,” Elkins discovered documentary evidence that a “vast system of detention camps” reportedly held “eighty thousand detainees” and that “some 1.5 million Kikuyu who were believed to have taken the Mau Mau oath” [were] sought by the colonial government.<sup>62</sup> Elkins (2005: xi-xii) found few records since “countless documents pertaining to the detention camps were either missing from Britain’s Public Records Office and the Kenya National Archives or [were] still classified as confidential fifty years after the Mau Mau war”. The colonial administrators destroyed many files just before handing over the government in 1963. Indeed, upon taking power as the new Minister for Home Affairs, Odinga discovered that

a precaution taken by the British before moving out, was the destruction, or perhaps just the removal, of records of their administration, especially of the vital Emergency period. There were blank spaces on shelves and empty drawers in the ministries where files had been removed. I found it amusing that I could nowhere trace the file on myself: I must have had a dossier? My friends in Nairobi told me that

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<sup>60</sup> These hidden files became part of a 2011 legal case that five Kenyans – Ndiku Mutwiwa Mutua, Paulo Nzili, Wambugu wa Nyingi, Jane Muthoni Mara, and Susan Ngondi brought against the British government for having suffered immense torture and abuse from British forces during the Mau Mau period in Kenya Colony. At first, Britain denied any knowledge of such activities or information. In April 2011, Lord Howell—then Foreign Office minister—told parliament his department would “regularise the position of some 2,000 boxes of files it currently holds, mainly from the 1950s and 1960s, which were created by former British administrations overseas”. Reportedly, he intends “to make as much of this material as possible available to the wider public” (*The Guardian*, 5 April 2011).

<sup>61</sup> George Muoria, a senior archivist at Kenya National Archives (Koigi 2006).

<sup>62</sup> The oaths to fight the British originated in Kikuyuland; and the Kikuyu suffered more than other tribes from British bombs and village relocations. Nevertheless, the common belief by many “Mau Mau” scholars that the war was exclusively or almost exclusively Kikuyu is false. Nairobi and the surrounding Kikuyuland attracted many workers from all over the colony looking to better their lives. My own father, John Kieti Ndolo, among other non-Kikuyu took the oath while working in Nairobi, and the oathing spread further afield from Nairobi and Kikuyuland to other parts of Kenya. Indeed, my father, became the secretary for the Land and Freedom Army in my locality in Ukambani. He and several of his colleagues, friends and relatives, were arrested on 20 October 1952 in Mbitini location, Machakos district. After the arrest and the long walk to Mbooni, my father and others were severely beaten to reveal what they knew about Mau Mau, though they never talked. Nearly dead, my father was hospitalized for three months and later jailed. His older brother, my uncle Munyao Ndolo, died fighting in the forest.

they had seen the chimneys of the Central Government building smoking for weeks before our government moved in; the record of the past was being burnt (Odinga 1966:241).<sup>63</sup>

Thus, due to destruction, secret archives, and censorship, the literature and historical material about the punitive and pacification expeditions, the century-long resistance, and the eventual guerrilla war for land and freedom were excluded or barely mentioned from the colonial and, later, the postcolonial high-school literature and history syllabi (discussed in chapter 4).

## **Section B: Kenyatta’s Leitmotif to “Forget the Past!”: Motives and Ramifying Repercussions**

Four months before national independence, on 12 August 1963, Kenyatta gave his “forget the past” speech to assure hundreds of white settlers in Nakuru that their lands, properties, and businesses were safe and that, under his soon-to-be independent government, they could continue their comfortable lives:

Let me tell you Jomo Kenyatta has no intention of retaliation or looking backwards. We are going to forget the past and look forward to the future... We are all human beings and as such we are bound to make mistakes. If I have done a mistake to you, it is for you to forgive me, and if you have done something wrong to me, it is for me to forgive you. The Africans cannot say the Europeans have done all the wrong. You have something to forget just as I have.<sup>64</sup>

Later, to hasten development (*maendeleo*<sup>65</sup>), independent Kenya’s first president, Jomo Kenyatta encouraged British and foreign investors to continue their business peacefully, repeatedly called

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<sup>63</sup> As Kenyatta’s Home Affairs Minister in 1963, Odinga managed administration, prisons, and immigration. Just before Odinga took over, Governor Malcolm Macdonald, had reserved defence, internal security, and police as part of the Prime Minister’s functions. For the Home Affairs Ministry to properly control immigration, Odinga needed his portfolio to include defence, internal security, and police. Thus, Odinga’s newly formed Home Affairs Ministry had been “deliberately severely limited” by removing defence, internal security, and police from its functions. The ministry’s “work had previously fallen under the Ministry of African Affairs, which was previously known as the Department of Native Administration headed by the chief Native Commissioner in the days when the natives were regarded as a separate policy, distinct from national policy” (Odinga 1966:240).

<sup>64</sup> Malcolm Macdonald (1963), p. 4; *East African Standard*, 13 August 1963

<sup>65</sup> *Maendeleo*, the popular Kiswahili word for development or progress, encompasses all the forms, appearances and perceptions of Kenyan people as advancing, “moving forward” as a collective. At the time, *maendeleo* meant building infrastructure, i.e., roads, more hospitals, schools, teacher training colleges, enrolling more children in schools, improving agriculture and food supplies, and living better than as a British colony. For individuals, *maendeleo*

on Kenyans to participate in national building by “forgetting the past”, and to focus on creating a prosperous and peaceful new nation—this after a long, bloody civil war for land and freedom.

Indeed, Kenyatta inherited and preserved intact the vast colonial governing machinery including the provincial administration and the armed forces that had quashed the independence struggle, slaughtered KLFA activists, and kept the masses in line.<sup>66</sup> After neutering the official opposition, Kenyatta’s new government amended the independence constitution seven times in the first three years by rushing through parliament bills to empower the presidency, e.g., the Republic amendment (1964) that gave the president enormous executive powers ostensibly to “enable him to provide wise and strong government needed at this time”, or the Preventive Detention Act (1966) that diluted the Bill of Rights by allowing the president to detain individuals without trial “in the interest of public security” (Bethwell Ogot et al. 1995:94). After 1969, KANU (Kenya African National Union) became *de facto* the only political party in Kenya.<sup>67</sup> Formerly known as KAU (Kenya African Union—formed in 1944 and banned in 1953—it was a broad organization uniting Kenyans from different tribes. Though independence opened doors to new political organizations with regional offices throughout the new nation (e.g., Kenya Democratic party (KADU) and Kenya People’s Party (KPP), Kenyatta was not interested in opposition, especially KADU’s devolution agenda. Kenyatta neutralized KADU, banned KPP, and gradually turned

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meant going to school (being educated), working away from home to earn money, building a permanent house, and lifting the family and community up from poverty into prosperity. Inadvertently, *maendeleo* also implied the civilizing mission promoted under colonialism and imperialism, i.e., assuming their more “civilized and refined” versions while minimizing or abandoning traditional things and practices like food, religion, language, music, dances, etc.

<sup>66</sup> See Hola massacre, note 305.

<sup>67</sup> On 9 June 1982, under President Daniel Arap Moi, a constitutional amendment (section 2(A) transformed Kenya from a *de facto* one-party state to a *de jure* one-party state by allowing only KANU members to serve in the national assembly. Soon afterwards, a KANU disciplinary committee was formed to deal with misconduct, i.e., “undermining” the KANU leader, the head of state, the country’s constitution, the KANU government, and the KANU party’s activities. The committee capriciously withdrew “the protection rights and privileges” of offenders (Kahl 2006:192). The KANU disciplinary committee was disbanded in 1987. Finally, in response to intense popular pressure, parliament repealed section 2(A) in December 1991.

Kenya into a centralised one-party state. High-profile assassinations of members of his government—Pio Gama Pinto (1965), Tom Mboya (1969), J.M Kariuki (1975)—also occurred during his regime.

Meanwhile, “forget the past”<sup>68</sup> rapidly became Kenyatta’s government’s leitmotif, which was quickly reflected in his government’s land, development and education policies and, specifically, in the “willing buyer, willing seller” land policy, which the ex-freedom fighters Kaggia, J.M Kariuki, and others vehemently opposed because they preferred to confiscate the settlers’ huge farms and allow the African former owners to return to their lands. The ex-fighters were so adamantly against Kenyatta’s land policy that, when Kinyatti interviewed some of them about what and how former homeguards and loyalists should have been punished after independence, they responded, “they should all have been killed, detained, or expelled from Kenya.... How are we expected to forgive—leave alone forget—such traitors?” (1987:128). For the leaders of the independence regime, however, destroying documentary evidence and locking up of yet more in the British National Archives was convenient, very convenient. The ex-fighters’ question remains today.

At independence, the British loyalist chiefs and homeguards and other collaborators who had *opposed* and *fought* against independence became the preponderant majority in Kenyatta’s government (Odinga 1966:253–315). But the new ruling elite and subordinate leaders were haunted by their history. With few exceptions, they had served the colonial government as chiefs, administrators, police, soldiers, the Kikuyu Guard, local homeguards, interpreters, clerks and

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<sup>68</sup> “Forget the past” is highlighted in Kenyatta’s second book: *Suffering Without Bitterness: The Founding of the Kenya Nation* (1968:147). A revisionist memory about Kenyatta’s speech where “forget the past” is elided and “Let us forgive, but we will never forget” is emphasized can be found in Kenyan parliamentary debates and in a few books: *Kenya National Assembly Official Record (Hansard)* Jun 9 - Jul 30, 1981: 501; *Kenya Gazette*, 13 June 1990: 2; *Kenya National Assembly Official Record (Hansard)* 13 Mar 2008:157; Veena Malhotra (1990: xvi); D.N. Ndegwa (2006:593); Peter Worseley (2008: 123); A. Rice (2010: Part 5); E. Huxley (2011: Part IV, Chap 4).

common spies—oppressors and expropriators who, after independence, perceived any reminder of their past as a grave challenge to the legitimacy of their rule and possessions. Corrupt and exploitative, numerous members of the new elite, therefore, faced a dire political exigency to suppress knowledge and discussion of their previous roles under Kenya Colony.

Their leader was, however, Kenyatta, who in a sensationalized trial had been prosecuted and convicted for supposedly being the *Mau Mau* leader though he reportedly never took their oath<sup>69</sup> and, on numerous occasions, disassociated himself from the guerrillas and, soon after becoming Kenya's president, sent troops to slaughter the guerrillas who rejected his policies and remained in the forests.<sup>70</sup> The trial had succeeded, however, in distorting many people's understanding of the structure and history of the struggle for independence and solidifying Kenyatta's role as (i) the compromise freedom hero for Africans clamouring for independence and, by the time he left detention, (ii) the anointed protector of future British economic interests in Kenya. Kenyatta's repeated calls for Kenyans to "forget the past" were immensely convenient for British interests and for the new government's leaders. Kenyatta's leitmotif became a defining feature and ideology of his ruling strategy, inspiring national planning, administrative practices, educational policies, and the people's culture, and eventually permeated all aspects of Kenyans' lives, and left huge gaps in the "sanitized" primary and secondary educational syllabi. Hence, the government suppressed politically sensitive materials by distorting and largely omitting the inconvenient history of Kenya's struggle for independence.

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<sup>69</sup> See p. 139.

<sup>70</sup> Montagu Slater (1955), *The Trial of Jomo Kenyatta*. London: Secker & Warburg; David Throup (1985), "The Origins of Mau Mau, *African Affairs*, 84:399–433; Rawson Macharia (1991), *The Truth about the Trial of Jomo Kenyatta*, Nairobi: Longman; John Lonsdale (2000), "Kenyatta's Trials: Making and Breaking an African Nationalist," in *The Moral World of the Law*, ed. Peter Coss (2000), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

As had the colonialists, Kenya's independent government hijacked and misrepresented the Mau Mau narrative and strove to make the country abhor and forget this history by omitting or distorting it in national discourse (both public and private), including in the educational system. The repeated calls to "forget the past" became semi-official practice imposing (i) a national amnesia about the colonial and neocolonial pacification exercises, which were a little-known or discussed brutal and often homicidal tool for governance, and about the liberation struggle and the guerrilla war for land and freedom, and (ii) the censorship and repression of critical thought that became generalised in independent Kenya's national and individual identity, including in education. And, by the late 1990s, nearly four decades after independence, this colonial paradigm was so well internalized that, though often unrecognized, its continuing administrative, political, economic, psychological, cultural, educational, emotional, and moral influence ran deep.

For the populace, Kenyatta's call became a tremulous mantra that silenced tongues and, if dangerous words were heard, turned nervous eyes fearfully askance, a habit gradually woven into independent Kenya's narrative about the nation and shaping modern Kenya's socio-political economic culture, education, and historiography. Long encouraged and reinforced by Kenyatta's "forget the past", self-censorship reinforces the overt silencing by the colonial government's banning of the Mau Mau in 1952, a ban that neocolonial Kenya only lifted half a century later in September 2003. During that interval, the taboo about discussing the Mau Mau went beyond mere censorship to become a generalised official and unofficial stigma upon the heroes the nation should be proud of. Theatre, plays, and books or publications or orature (e.g., Ngugi's later books in Gikuyu) that expressed the people's desire for profound socioeconomic changes were all banned and censored, for example, Maitu Njugira (*Mother Sing For Me*) and Gikuyu books by Gakara and

Ngugi attesting to the transformative performance of power in these texts and cultural productions, especially as related to language and the social, economic, and political tensions in Kenya.

Part of the national narrative thus comprised an oppressive, heavy, and guarded absence of public discourse about diverse Kenyans' struggles against domination and colonization that spanned decades up to and including the 1950s' liberation struggle and guerrilla war for land and freedom. The independent Kenyan government even continued the British colonial practice of banning activities and publications they deemed immoral, revolutionary, or just politically awkward. Such materials were systematically excluded and sometimes banned from public discourse, including in schools where the textbooks selected for the school syllabi omitted, sanitized, and grossly rewrote Kenyans' long, diverse, and heroic resistance.<sup>71</sup>

“Forget the past” was also central in framing Kenya's national goals of education that guide the curricula and other educational policies for selecting textbooks and setting the national examinations.<sup>72</sup> High-school textbooks were and still are selected if they are deemed to “fulfil the

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<sup>71</sup> “The index of banned books in colonial Kenya, running in 1962 to four pages of small type and including blanket orders against some 32 organisations, was quickly repealed by Kenyatta's government” (Read 1967:40). In May 1967, however, the Kenyatta government resumed the practise by banning *The Reds and the Blacks*,

the controversial book by a former American ambassador in Nairobi, William Attwood.... The Government invoked a power (similar to that in other Commonwealth African countries) dating originally from a colonial law of 1930. The import of any publication may be forbidden, with a penalty of up to three years' imprisonment for breaking the ban, if it appears necessary to the relevant Minister “in the interests of public order, health or morals, the security of Kenya, the administration of justice or the maintenance of the authority and impartiality of the judiciary”. No reasons need be given, and the merits of the ban cannot be questioned in the courts (Read 1967:37).

In 1991, Kenya cancelled the licence for an allegedly “dangerous” play based on George Orwell's *Animal Farm* just days before it was to launch (Henry 13/2/1991). Book banning continued. In January 1994, the government banned *Kenya: Return to Reason* by Kenneth Matiba; and, in a night raid of the publisher's premises, 200 policemen seized 15,000 copies of the book (*Independent* 15/1/1994).

<sup>72</sup> Kenyatta's 1930s and 1940s Pan-African and non-tribal speeches for freedom and independence impressed and encouraged many young Kenyans to join the fight for freedom and “follow Kenyatta,” e.g., Kaggia (1975:37–38); Kariuki, J.M. (1963); Gatheru (1964); Barnett and Njama (1966); Waciuma (1969); Itote (1967). For example, Gatheru's chapter, “The African Messiah”, is dedicated to Kenyatta (Gatheru 1964:107). By 1948, however, Kenyatta's liberalism and class position—positions he later displayed as president—had so distanced him from the young militant freedom fighters that a few tried to assassinate him (J.M. Kariuki 1963:46–48, 51; Kaggia 1967:48; and Barnett and Njama 1966: 211).

national goals of education”, goals that do not interrogate Kenya’s history as a nation shaped by a pattern of historical and political censorship. Texts containing counter-discourses to statist narratives about the nation’s history are elided.<sup>73</sup>

The selection or the exclusion and deselection of texts in the school curricula—purposely blind to Kenya’s history of struggle and repression, oblivious to significant minority groups in Kenya, insensitive to gender issues, and deaf to social criticism<sup>74</sup>—is facilitated by Kenya’s elite in the MinEd and elsewhere in the ruling structure. But acculturation and ideological formation of this elite has colonial roots that changed but little and slowly with independence. The new Kenyan nation inherited the colonial three-tiered educational system—European, Asian, and African—and standardized the European system<sup>75</sup> and literary tradition—a tradition the University of London entrenched in its overseas African Cambridge Examination extensions. Thus, the Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate continued to highly influence Kenya’s educational curricula, pedagogy, assessments, and even the East African Examinations Council.<sup>76</sup> The East African Examinations Council’s inheritance of the Cambridge examination’s strategies and standards had dire implications for teaching, learning styles, the future school curricula, and imbedded assumptions about valid knowledge.<sup>77</sup> The new Kenyan state touted education and educational certification as

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<sup>73</sup> I adopt Terdiman’s (1993) use of counter-discourses as a discursive resource. Kenya’s neocolonial government has routinely banned books while the colonial government banned “tribal drinks, dances, songs” as well, e.g., the Kamba *wathi* or the Kikuyu *muthirigu* (see Chapter 3) and exiled “troublemakers” among them artists like *ngũĩ* while the missionary schools presented the Bible and other “moral” books as the main texts. Censorship happens elsewhere too, e.g., though the United States of America’s constitution guarantees the freedom of expression and association, many school districts routinely ban books. For example, between 1961 and 1982, Salinger’s *The Catcher in the Rye* (1961) was the most censored book in USA high schools and libraries (Steinle 2000 and Seed 2003).

<sup>74</sup> For extensive examples, see Chapters 4, 5 and 6.

<sup>75</sup> European schools received the most state funding per student, had the best physical facilities, teachers, and teaching material, followed by the Asian, then the African schools.

<sup>76</sup> After World War II, the University of London opened overseas extensions (branches) in Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania.

<sup>77</sup> See, for instance, the experiments with new math in the School Mathematics of East Africa (SMEA) (Lillis 1985; Indire and Sifuna 1974, Eshiwani 1983).

important markers for personal, social, and national development. These markers became the distinguishing features between *asomi* (the literate, Christian, and presumably civilized citizens) and the “fools” (the “refusers” of Christianity). Thus, the elite—the educated people in academia, government administration, private sector, etc.—continue to ignore, disqualify, and invalidate the knowledge and voices of non-*asomi* and are unsympathetic to their plight and protests.

At independence, that elite—most of whom became national leaders—was principally composed of (i) the politically powerful early Christians and government functionaries whose clout emanated from associating and cooperating with the colonial government, and (ii) the *asomi* versus the *ndia*, literally the *fools*, aka *alei*. The elite—that had mostly received colonial education—perceived and defined the illiterate as backward, heathen, uneducated, unschooled, native, and *mshamba* (of the farm, rural folk).<sup>78</sup> Civil servants and politicians leading the newly independent Kenyan government were nearly all “educated” people trained in colonial schools. More specifically, the *asomi* charged with educational planning mapped out educational curricula that embraced the polarity between them and the non-*asomi*, a polarity embedded in the educational system and in other national institutions and structures. This bipolarity continues to influence the selection of texts for high schools by minimizing the importance of socially critical literature, including orature, which is ubiquitous in rural and urban Kenya.

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<sup>78</sup> *Asomi*, *alei*, *ndia*, and *ashamba* are concepts I grew up hearing and living in Ukambani regarding our (we, as Kenyans) collective, bright future. The literate, variously known as the *asomi* (Kikamba), *athomi* (Kikuyu) *wasomi* (Kiswahili) and equivalent terms in other Kenyan languages refer to people who acquired colonial education, i.e., often mission-classroom education and/or, later, Cambridge-granted certificates. Inherent in the concept of “*asomi*” or “the educated” is its opposite, the “uneducated”, i.e., those without formal education, people perceived as “know nothings” since the only validated educational space has been the school classroom. (Herein, I use *literate* rather than the more encompassing term, *educated*.) The *asomi* elite considered the *alei* to be uneducated, non-Christian, ungodly, and often rural, which meant backward as opposed to the “enlightened” city folks. By contrast, Christians were perceived as “holy” and spiritually and morally worthier than the *alei*. The *asomi* assumed national leadership at independence; and their progeny and associates still dominate Kenyan politics and decision making. The *asomi* have perpetuated polarities amongst Kenyans, for example, between the *asomi* (the literate, the knowers) versus the *alei* (the illiterate, ignorant, non-Christian know-nothings) and between urbanites versus rural folk. Rarely do questions arise about whether literacy leads to education, or what being educated **really** signifies.

By contrast, when choosing **local** leaders, Kenyatta's and later governments continued the colonial government's pattern of appointing lackeys as chiefs and subchiefs while **excluding** capable, well-recognized and qualified local leaders.<sup>79</sup> Whereas, under the British, African officers, police, chiefs, sub-chiefs, and other middle-level subordinates gradually became rich, powerful, and arrogant, *after* Kenya's independence, they wielded immense economic, political, and social clout as the local government's "leaders" and representatives. In this, J.M. Kariuki (1963:214) was prescient in warning future African leaders that they are not elected to merely "satisfy their ambitions" or to "strut about in fine clothes and huge Cadillacs as ambassadors and ministers, but to create a new Kenya" which would require "responsible leadership, hard work, unity and honesty.... Selfish power seekers will have to go". Also important, Kenya's freedom fighters—some with little or no formal education—were maligned and, for decades, have not been involved in national planning policies in sharp contrast, for example, with Mozambique, which has long had a government ministry to represent and assist the revolution's now aging combatants (*o Ministério para os Assuntos dos Antigos Combatentes*).<sup>80</sup>

"Forgetting the past" focused mainly on the 1950–1960 British Gulag involving a viciously suppressed civil war that slaughtered and maimed thousands, wiped out villages, divided families, and devastated people financially, culturally, emotionally, and psychologically, and hugely

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<sup>79</sup> For example, when I was a teenager, the local people despised our appointed chief (Mueke) who was haughty, constantly harassed them, and did terrible things with impunity like insulting and beating people.

<sup>80</sup> During Kenyans' struggle for independence, countless freedom fighters were hanged while believing—often erroneously—that the fighters who survived would care for their children and families as had been agreed at the initial conception of the Land and Freedom struggle and blood oaths. On 21 October 1952, many fighters from Mbitini Location where I was born and raised were arrested and soon thereafter, hanged—e.g., Mbwika Mutava (assistant chief for Matooni); Nguma Muinde; Kimilu Kilonzo; Kisui Nzive; Mwandu Mutava; Masika Yanzi; Kioko Nthanga; and from Kisau location, Machakos—Paul Muithi and Kaviti. Years later, many of their children could not finish school for lack of school fees. *Source*: interview in April 1998 with John Kieti Ndolo, headmaster and founder of Kwangiti, Muthingiini and Ivingoni primary schools. I was personally in school with some of these children who, for lack of school fees, could not finish their education.

intensified poverty.<sup>81</sup> The government's leitmotif to "forget the past" also allowed the politicians and government to ignore the depth and intensity of these wounds and impoverishment as they consolidated power and enriched themselves.<sup>82</sup>

"Forget the past" has become a common refrain that let individual thieves and brutes avoid rebuke and punishment, unlike in traditional communities where family, clan, or interclan courts of elders judged and punished offenders and, if possible, reconciled the parties, including their families or clans, to restore equilibrium and proper behaviour in the community (Kinyanjui 2009:7). However, for egregious and, especially, repetitive offenses, the elders ostracized or ordered executed miscreants who had become incorrigibly disruptive and dangerous and, hence, undesirable for the community. Kenyatta's "forget-the-past" ideology was, thus, an abrupt break from those traditions, a break with grave and ramifying social, political, and economic implications still felt today where traditional justice systems have been eroded. Today, many of the corroded morals throughout Kenya have a basis in "forgetting the past".

With this break in traditional practice and mores, Kenyatta's "forget-the-past" ideology and the pressures to restrict critical political thought gradually permeated Kenyans' national psyche, culture, administration, and daily practice and bred grave social and economic problems, of which the restriction of the high-school English and literature syllabi—the focus of this thesis—is just one manifestation. "Forget the past" and "move on" are common themes—in various fora—at institutional and personal levels, e.g., (i) criminal, unethical and immoral acts are routinely

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<sup>81</sup> The British Gulag in Kenya refers to the unacknowledged and often undocumented incarcerations, floggings, torture, and murders of Kenyans resisting British colonialism and the mass evictions of local Kenyans from their ancestral lands that were appropriated as "state land" or for the settlement of British settlers. Among others, Elkins (2005a) and Anderson (2005) discuss the British Gulag during colonial Kenya's Emergency period.

<sup>82</sup> Since independence in 1963, the ruling party has been the Kenya African National Union (KANU). While Kenya has been often depicted as an "African showpiece of stability", that economic and political stability has been a charade for most Kenyans who, since independence, have known extremely difficult times and two brutal dictatorships (Tarmakin 1978:297; Legum 1972:126).

“forgiven”, as it is already “past” in the mistaken belief that individuals, families, or communities must focus on “moving on”, and (ii) since independence, KANU politicians, senior state officials and leaders of parastatals and non-governmental institutions frequently plunder, embezzle, or loot public monies and property with impunity. When discovered or identified, they are either transferred to other institutions to repeat their crimes there or, if prosecuted, rarely convicted. Social media, numerous publications, and my own experiences and observations confirm how churches, public and private organizations, and families frequently prefer to cover up inconvenient truths, silence discussion, and “forget the past” about lying, stealing, rape, and heinous crimes and abuses by siblings, parents, close relatives, friends, and bosses, all to keep up appearances and maintain a false show of peace and unity—a misguided effort that inspires impunity and more brazen offences.

The ideology—the mantra—of forgetting the past and not punishing dishonest, cruel, and thieving leaders has thus seeped down and corroded many in our corporations, associations, churches, clubs, schools, and our most basic unit, the family. Kenyans are now inured to the numerous scandals and scams whose perpetrators are “forgiven” and the events, quickly “forgotten.”<sup>83</sup> The results of numerous commissions of inquests and investigations into these

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<sup>83</sup> Examples of looting public property and resources in Kenya are legion, but the 1990s Goldenberg scandal and the 2000s Anglo Leasing scams stand out. In the Goldenberg case, the Kenyan treasury subsidized fictitious exports of gold and diamonds (Kenya does not mine these) by “paying the company Goldenberg International 35% more than their foreign currency earnings”, earnings that were themselves fictitious. The Goldenberg International thus received a value far beyond the legal, standard arrangements; overseen by then Kenya’s vice president and finance minister—George Saitoti—a massive scam and looting of Kenya’s treasury that involved then President Moi, his sons, and high personnel in Moi’s government. The Goldenberg International scandal cost Kenya about 10% of its annual GDP, sending Kenya into a long recession (Kenya 2005). The Goldenberg International owner—Kamleshni Pattni—was prosecuted but never convicted. Subsequently, in President Kibaki’s government, Prof. Saitoti became the Minister for Interior in charge of security. The Anglo Leasing Finance is another of many phantom entities, including some highly placed Kenyans and UK companies, used to defraud the Kenyan taxpayer through non-delivery of goods and services and massive overpricing (BBC 2003 and 2004; Pallister 2004; and *The Economist*, 11/8/2005). In other scams,

felonies are regularly ignored, including those in the educational system, a system in crisis, despite repeated official denials.<sup>84</sup>

Daily, Kenyan traditional or social media report numerous incidents of corruption, robbery, rape, and murder. Impunity reigns and many crimes go unreported or unpunished. Why? Kenya's forget-the-past cultural environment (initially inspired by Kenyatta) and the now extensive corruption by police, leaders (even pastors), and common citizens have gravely undermined the rule of law. And unscrupulous and ineffective law enforcement breeds a sense of impunity among both the police and would-be lawbreakers, which—in the context of low education, massive unemployment, grinding poverty, and direct and indirect socioeconomic pressures—encourages crime. When crimes occur, relatives intimidate and coerce the victims to keep quiet and “go on with their lives” for fear of shaming themselves and their families. They are also sceptical of Kenya's notoriously corrupt police and the sense of entitlement of the powerful. Often, when a crime is reported and the police happen to arrest a criminal, it is just to squeeze him or her to get

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- the director of Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI), Davy Koech and senior officials stand “accused of swindling the Kenya Medical Research Institute (Kemri) of Sh420 million” covered up by a lack of proper auditing (*Business Daily* 10/1/2010);
  - Kenya Pipeline Company's (KPC) Managing Director, George Okungu, allegedly illegally released Sh7.6 billion worth of oil products from KPC's depot to Triton Oil Company though the High Court halted his prosecution in 2020 (AfriCOG 2009; *Nation* 7/2/2020);
  - Kenya Re's MD Johnson Githaka allegedly disposed of assets ahead of the firm's privatisation (*The Standard Newspaper*, 24/3/2009);
  - In 2009, embezzlement and mismanagement at National Cereals and Produce Board were among the reasons 10 million Kenyans faced starvation (Miruka 2009); and
  - The ex-director-general of the National Museums of Kenya, Mohammed Isahakia, was “charged with stealing 11.4 million shillings (\$145,000) between 1997 and 1999” (*CNN* 24/1/2002).

<sup>84</sup> Educational commissions whose results are ignored include: the *Report of the Presidential Commission of Inquiry into the Cult of Devil Worship in Kenya* (Kenya Presidential Commission 1995); the report of the Task Force Investigating the Violence at St. Kizito Secondary School (1991); the Kipkulei *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Harmonisation of Terms and Conditions of the Civil Service*. (1999); the Koech Commission of Inquiry into the Education System of Kenya (1998); and the following reports by non-educational commissions: Kenya National Assembly. *Report of the Select Committee on the Disappearance and Murder of the Late Member for Nyandarua North, the Hon. JM Kariuki, MP* (1975a); *Report of the Judicial Commission Appointed to Inquire into Tribal Clashes in Kenya* (Kenya 1999); *The Report of the Judicial Commission of Inquiry into the Goldenberg Affair* (Bosire 2005); the Constitution of Kenya Review Commission. *The People's Choice: The Main Report of the Constitution of Kenya Review Commission* (2002); Githongo 1999a and 1999b); *Kenya Daily Nation* 2000; Aduda 2000; Abagi 2000a and 2000b; Kiragu 2000; Kipyegon 2000; Mugumo Munene and Mugo Njeru 2003; and Kamau 2005).

a bribe for prompt release. Mostly, only poor miscreants are prosecuted and jailed. Moreover, Kenya’s misogynistic society has spawned unequal norms and, among some, a rape culture that normalizes sexual violence against women and often excuses it, especially on radio, television or social media (USAID 2020:60–61).

And women bear the burden. In neocolonial Kenya, “forgetting the past” often enables educational administrators to ignore the frequent rapes of schoolgirls by teachers (TUNZA 2020:8). Only 10% of cases are reported to the Teachers Service Commission; and, then, many of the alleged rapists are just retired while 30% are **merely transferred** to another school while the victims, especially if pregnant, dropped out of school, were ostracized by their family and community, and some committed suicide (Kiema-Ngunnzi 2014:24).<sup>85</sup> For women, factories and industrial farms are often where predators and violence lurk, and assailants are rarely punished (ILRF 2002). Fearing dismissal, “95% of all women who had suffered workplace sexual abuse were afraid to report” it (ILRF 2002:1). “Forget the past” and police corruption have also bred a widespread sense of impunity among mini-bus (*matatu*) touts and *boda-boda* motorcycle taxis, who abuse and attack bus passengers and automobile drivers, especially if women (Musukuma 1996:4 -11; KNBS 2014:293-94; Ahmed 2020; Kiambati 2021).

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<sup>85</sup> Violence is endemic in Kenyan educational institutions where rape, frequent riots, fires, accidents, examination-cheating and state-engineered tribal clashes are common. Male teachers and other authority figures—chiefs, police, ministers, and relatives—routinely assault students, especially girls (Musukuma 1996:8–12; C. Kariuki 2006; Atemi 2000). For example, when nineteen girls died and seventy-two were raped at St. Kizito Mixed School on July 14, 1991, the headmaster observed that the boys had “not intended to hurt” the girls, but “only wanted to rape [them]” (Musukuma 1996:4–11). Fifteen girls were raped in a Nyeri school on March 28, 2006 (C. Kariuki 2006). Approximately 10,000 Kenyan girls are forced to drop out of school annually due to rules about pregnancies (Hallam 1994). Sexual violence and coercion in school signify a deep, tabooed, and rarely mentioned systemic problem (Otto 2007:2). Often, retaliation and more violence for speaking out limit girls’ recourse to law or redress (Kaiser 2003). Ninety students were burnt to death in their dormitories in Bombolulu and Kyanguli (*Kenya Daily Nation* Feb 1993; Dec. 17–18, 1996; March 25, 1998; June 10, 2000; and March 26, 2001; *Kenya Human Rights Commission* 1998:30–38). This violence is not, however, limited to Kenya. For example, in Senegal, teachers, youth clubs, and cults were responsible for raping 60% of the 15-year-old schoolgirls (Hallam 1994:30–39).

In summary, the “forget the past” mantra helped to shield the new political elite in neo-colonial Kenya from denunciations, political backlash, and, perhaps, revolt, but to do so, it spread into political and civil life and censored educational content, specifically, the historical and literature syllabi examined in the following chapters.

## What Was Taught Between 1940 and 1998

The curriculum and the whole life and activity of the school and community must have a religious basis. Native tongue [will be used] in the schools for the first three years and, as far as possible, beyond that. At the end of the third year, a European language is to be introduced.... Emphasis is to be placed upon religious education, not only as a subject of instruction, but as the basis of character development.<sup>86</sup>

This chapter details and categorizes the texts selected and taught for the literature syllabi, grounding the selections and deselections in Kenya Colony and Britain's civilizing mission to develop an economically profitable colony, and after 1963, a neocolonial state afraid to confront its own immediate history while incorporating substantive colonial administrative and educational elements in its new state. After 1963, Kenya advanced development plans and national education goals to guide the nation's school system purportedly to advance all Kenyans. At independence, the new Kenyan nation inherited an educational system deeply circumscribed by colonial policies and practices.

Developing and civilizing the native through Western education and Christianity were intrinsic in the British Empire's grand mission to control and maintain an economically viable colony. Reinforced by an elaborate and powerful epistemological infrastructure to intellectually and psychologically enlist natives, the imperial project proved a powerful tool for enculturation.

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<sup>86</sup> cited by Davis (1927:485) from the report on the International Conference at Le Zoute, Belgium, organized between 14 and 20 September, 1926, by the International Missionary Council for over 200 missionaries in Africa working with missionary societies, boards responsible for missionary policy, public health, and experts in Native African education and American Negro education, e.g., Dr. T. J. Jones, Dr. A. Phelps-Stokes (of the Phelps-Stokes Fund), Dr. J. H. Dillard, President of the Jeannes and Slater Boards, Mr. James and government officials like Sir Frederick Lugard.

Despite Kenya's independence, the imperial project continued on a small scale through the "soft power" focused narrowly on art, literature, and the school curricula (Said 1978 and Nye 2004).<sup>87</sup>

In Kenya, European and Asian schools taught literature while the Native educational curricula focused on technical skills. Though native schools only taught literature incidentally, the *Holy Bible* and abridged pamphlets of religious and moral texts were widely read for general education and civilization: Bunyan's *Pilgrim Progress* (1853 [1679]) and *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners* (1666) were among the first texts missionaries translated into various Kenyan languages and distributed freely to the few literate, newly converted Christians.<sup>88</sup> As partners in British empire-building—witting or not—Christian mission schools and churches popularized the Bible and related texts that implicitly advanced imperial ideas and impugned nearly everything native or colonized: native food, songs, dances, poetry, clothing, jewellery, housing, religion, governance structures, and most cultural practices and belief systems. Increasing social, economic, and political repression of the natives and unprecedented land-grabbing intensified clashes between Africans and the missions at a time when mission schools and libraries were expanding. For instance, the missions' and schools' opposition to circumcision and polygamy in central Kenya spurred Africans to create their own separatist schools and churches.<sup>89</sup>

Alliance High School and other high-status schools were for Europeans only and, after independence, remained what Heyneman (1971) calls "equivalent" in institutional ethos, with assumptions and definitions of validity defined by what was valid for the United Kingdom deemed

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<sup>87</sup> *Orientalism* was Europe's "silent Other", while Nye's "soft power" is the attractive power America has by virtue of its democracy, its promise of individual freedom, opportunity, and its widely popular culture, which, he argued, was as significant a diplomatic resource as hard power—and often more useful. See "Ambivalent Anti-Americanism," by John Kane (2006:48) in *The Rise of Anti-Americanism* by Brendon O'Connor and Martin Griffiths.

<sup>88</sup> interviews with teachers and MinEd officials. The *asomi* would read to family and friends, sharing the evening with the ancient story-telling moment.

<sup>89</sup> Barnett and Njama (1966:38, 77, 89, 103–4); Rosberg and Nottingham (1966:105–35) and Kaggia (1975)

equally valid for Kenya.<sup>90</sup> Heyneman's model (1971) is useful in examining the moulding of the values and standards of independent Kenya's elite as manifested in the debates about curriculum and literature where Alliance Boys High School and other high-status schools trained Kenya's emergent elite who

remain the leaders of opinion and are recognized as such by many sectors of the educational system. They are perceived as models integrated into the system and are crucial for the diffusion of certain "modern innovations". Enormously strengthened in this role by the implications of educational aid programs, these schools received the best available teaching force when British aid teachers were concentrated in specific schools where they picked and legitimized the innovations they liked. Consequently, the overall Kenyan value system supports the elitist model of these schools (Lillis 1985:83).

Since the newly independent Kenya "lacked a critical mass of African educationists who could play influential roles as agents of curriculum change," British expatriate educationists continued to oversee British educational aid programs and school curricula, dominating curriculum change processes "as teachers, course writers, project developers, disseminators, and [school] inspectors" (Lillis 1985:80–81). Sharing assumptions "about curriculum and operating as networks of constraint on other influences, the expatriates functioned as "filters for metropolitan knowledge, values, attitudes, and assumptions." As "the vehicle by which the curriculum package was imported from England and informally adopted," the expatriate educationists "effectively blocked most channels of adaptation to ... local situations" (Lillis 1985:86 and 88). For the English and literature syllabi, the English literary tradition continued to be valued over others after MinEd standardized the formerly Europeans-only schools' curricula.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> *Equivalent* is here used as defined by Heynemann, who discusses equivalent and converted schools in former British colonies (Lillis 1985:82). He argues that equivalent pattern curricula were designed to be the same in status and content as those of Britain, with pupils learning the same subjects, sitting for identical examinations, and sometimes competing for the same places in European institutions of higher learning. Converted schools followed a curriculum defined and based on the perceived needs of the general society. The status differential between equivalent and converted schools has implications for curriculum innovation and transfer of knowledge (Lillis 1985:82-83).

<sup>91</sup> In contrast, Tanzania's 1967 Arusha Declaration became the basis for curricula and other changes in the civil service under Nyerere (Bogonko 1992).

The curricular and literary traditions inherited from the Europeans-only schools included (i) the annual Cambridge examinations; (ii) the text-selection process for the syllabi with a focus on Anglo tradition, history and literature—the Leavisite “Great Tradition” and (iii) an emphasis on the centrality and universality of English literature. Meanwhile, formerly African schools remained basic and technical—brick-making, carpentry, needlework, and housekeeping.

## **Section A: Texts Selected for National Examinations, 1940–1998: What was Taught?<sup>92</sup>**

To determine the texts to be used for high school literature and English syllabi, MinEd works closely with teachers and other experts from local universities and Kenya’s educational institutions—KIE, KNEC, KLB to develop and approve a list of texts from diverse literary genres. In conjunction with the provincial and district educational offices, MinEd sends the final list of selected texts to the English and Literature departments of Kenya’s high schools. From MinEd’s final list, teachers pick the texts they will teach in their schools for the national examinations. Schools may choose different texts for the different sections of the exam while students write the exams based on the books their school chose, namely, the texts they had been studying for two years for the national examinations.

Since much literature exists and continues to grow locally and internationally, one expects this fact to be reflected in the texts selected for Kenyan high schools. A survey of Kenyan literature reveals abundant and widely varied texts in all genres of written and unwritten texts in the geographical area that was part of British East Africa, namely, the Kenya Colony and Protectorate that later became today’s Republic of Kenya, a variety that testifies to the country’s rich literary history and diversity. The diversity of themes from pre-colonial East Africa to contemporary

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<sup>92</sup> Appendix 2 lists the texts used for national examinations between 1940 and 1998.

Kenya is not reflected in the texts taught and tested in Kenyan high-school English and literature syllabi.<sup>93</sup>

Herein, selected texts refer to books and excerpts MinED designates for reading for fun, learning the English language, and acquainting students with local and other literature. *Set books* include novels, plays, poetry, short-stories and, since 1982, oral literature. Set books are selected and read in class through the school year(s) in preparation for the annual national examinations, alongside various excerpts from fiction and non-fiction texts, e.g., essays, letters, reports, passages, poems, speeches, songs, riddles, and stories. The excerpts are for the English-grammar papers like comprehension and composition. Besides set books, other recommended texts are called *readers*, which, unlike set books, are optional reading.

Due to reticent cooperation by MinED and associated organs, the annual national examination papers I obtained for 1940–1998 had significant gaps: a few years are missing, and some years are missing one or another paper, most seriously during the years after independence. Nevertheless, the trends in the types, numbers, and diversity of texts selected were dramatic. The colonial period 1940–1963 concentrated almost exclusively on Anglo-European texts and a few American texts. After independence, the syllabi remained largely Anglo-European with Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* added in 1964 and eight more texts by Africans were selected in 1965. By 1968, more varied European, African, American texts were selected, alongside a few Anglo-European texts that were a permanent fixture of the syllabi. The 1970s and early 1980s saw the largest number of diverse texts selected for literature in independent Kenya, briefly exposing Kenyan high-school students to a wide range of international literature (Table 3). This shift partly coincided with the small intellectual space facilitated by the UoN's Great Literature Debate spearheaded in 1968 by Ngugi,

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<sup>93</sup> See Appendix 1 and Kurtz (1998).

Anyumba, and Taban.<sup>94</sup> The debate set off a series of private and public debates and conferences discussing the meaning and application of Africanizing curricula to teach relevant material in neocolonial African schools and colleges.

In the late 1980s, the text-selection process even included a secret committee supervised at Nyati house (Kenya's Criminal Investigations Department headquarters) that conducted a final political vetting of the suggested texts.<sup>95</sup> From the syllabi, the selection process systematically purged and deselected texts implying social criticism or mobilization, thus selectively sanitizing some Kenyan histories. Excluded texts include the varied literature capturing the long history of resistance and political organization by diverse Kenyans against foreign invasions, colonial rule, brutal pacification and punitive expeditions to quell rebellions by natives and reinforce a system of capricious and exploitative administration that supplanted and undermined most traditional leadership systems.

In British East Africa, the texts selected for the English and literature syllabi were predominantly European, mostly canonical English literature, herein, called the Anglo-European (Appendix I).<sup>96</sup> After independence, the Anglo-Europeans texts began to diminish. In a literary landscape roiled by Eurocentrism, Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958) was the first text by an

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<sup>94</sup> See discussion of the memo "On the Abolition of the English Department" as well as footnote 184 about this debate.

<sup>95</sup> My informants did not say when the Special Branch began vetting set-books. Until 1945, Special Branch was part of the Criminal Investigations Department (CID), the intelligence gathering unit of the Kenya Police that became crucial during Kenya's guerrilla liberation war (Alao 2006:52). In 1963, the CID became independent from the police (but continued operating under the police department). A 1969 Presidential charter formalized its operations, while another Presidential charter (1986) transformed the Special Branch into the Directorate of Security Intelligence (DSI) while retaining the Special Branch's structures and organization. In 1998, Kenya's parliament adopted the National Security Intelligence Act, which established the National Security Intelligence Service (NSIS) in January 1999, changing the directorate's name and moving its notorious Nyati House offices to new premises near the Windsor Golf and Country Hotel, and mandating it to report on threats to the security of the state. Under the 1992 constitution, the agency's title changed to the current National Intelligence Service (NIS) (Institute for Security Studies, n.d.).

<sup>96</sup> Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Goldsmith, Sheridan, Coleridge, Defoe, Heyerdahl, H.R. Haggard, Buchan, Monsarrat, Shelley, Keats, Chaucer, Pope, Spenser, Milton, Dickens, Conrad, J. Joyce, G. Eliot, Hardy, T.S. Eliot, Lyly, Johnson, Kipling, Webster, Shaw, and Bronte.

African to be selected in 1964.<sup>97</sup> Achebe's and other texts dealing with the social, moral, and economic upheavals of diverse imperial experiences of colonization, resistance, and decolonization were selected, and some became repeatedly selected texts from Africa, the African Diaspora and the rest of the world (Table 3 and *Appendix 1. Examination Titles, Dates, and Texts on 286*).

A sprinkling of texts was also added from Africa and elsewhere—Europe, India, and the Americas: Nadine Gordimer's *A World of Strangers*, Forster's *A Passage to India* (1980), Miller's *The Crucible* (1996), Bertolt Brecht's *Galileo* (1961), Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath* (1939), Jonson's *Volpone* (1962), Bolt's *A Man for All Seasons: A Play in Two Acts* (1962), and Bridie's *Tobias and the Angel* (1961).<sup>98</sup>

With time, specific set books were repeatedly selected texts, e.g., Gogol's *The Government Inspector* (1968), which in the early 2000s was still the single most taught text in independent Kenya (selected for 12 different exam years), followed by Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958) and Amadi's *The Concubine* (1966) (9 years each); Ruganda's *The Burdens* (1972), Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* (1968) (8 years); Thiong'o's *The River Between* (1965), Abraham's *Mine Boy* (1946), Achebe's *No Longer at Ease* (1960), Bhattachariya's *So Many Hungers* (1964), and Anand's *Coolie* (1952) (7 years each); Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* (1968), Soyinka's *Kongi's Harvest* (1967), and *The Road* (1965) (6 years each); Wollman and Spencer's *Modern Poems for the Commonwealth* (1966), Hardy's *The Life and Death of the Mayor of Casterbridge: A Story of a Man of Character* (1962), La Guma's *In the Fog of Season's End* (1972) and *A Walk in the Night* (1962); Imbuga's *Betrayal in the City* (2005), Soyinka's *The Lion and the Jewel* (1963), and Okot

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<sup>97</sup> for the English Literature Alternative (ii) paper (212/1) in the School Certificate and GCE examination

<sup>98</sup> Gordimer joined the largely male writers dominating the selected texts in 1968, followed by Flora Nwapa, Grace Ogot, and Mariama Bâ.

p'Bitek's *Song of Lawino* (1966) and *Song of Ocol* (1967) (5 years each) (Table 1 and Table 2).<sup>99</sup>

During this period, the Anglo-European texts continued to be selected alongside African texts plus a few from other regions.

Table 1. Set Books, 1970 to 1979

Author and Title	Year
V.S. Naipaul, <i>A House for Mr. Biswas</i> ; P. Abrahams, <i>A Wreath for Udomo</i> ; Camara Laye, <i>The Radiance of the King</i>	1970
M. Beti, <i>Mission to Kala</i> ; Soyinka, <i>The Trials of Brother Jero</i> ; Elliot, T.S., <i>Murder in the Cathedral</i> ; G. Orwell, <i>Animal Farm</i> ; and W. Somerset Maugham: <i>The Moon and the Sixth Pence</i>	1971
Gogol, <i>The Government Inspector</i> and <i>Dead Souls</i> ; Turgenev, <i>Fathers and Sons</i> ; A. Camus, <i>The Plague</i> ; Amadi, <i>The Concubine</i> , Armah, <i>The Beautiful Ones are Not Yet Born</i> ; F. Oyono, <i>The Old Man and the Medal</i> ; Nwankwo, <i>Danda</i> ; Okot p'Bitek, <i>Song of Lawino</i> and <i>Song of Ocol</i>	1973
Capek Brothers, <i>The Insect Play</i> ; Richard Hughes, <i>A High Wind in Jamaica</i> ; B. Brecht, <i>The Good Woman of Setzuan</i> ; A. Camus. <i>The Outsider</i> ; Cook and Rubadiri, <i>Poems from East Africa</i> ; B. Brecht, <i>Mother Courage and Her Children</i>	1974 to 1979

<sup>99</sup> Others include Ijimere, *The Imprisonment of Obatala* and *Everyman*; Paton, *Cry the Beloved Country*; Abraham, *Mine Boy*; Soyinka, *Kongi Harvest*; Thiong'o, *The River Between*; Mphahlele, *Down Second Avenue*; Laye, *The African Child*; Wollman and Spencer, *Modern Poems for the Commonwealth*; Achebe, *No Longer at Ease*; Fielding, *Joseph Andrews*; and Tennyson, *The Coming of Arthur* and *The Holy Grail* (Appendix 5).

Table 2. Set Books, 1980 to 1985

Author and Title	Year
F. Nwapa, <i>Efuru</i> ; Joe de Graft, <i>Muntu</i> ; Naipaul, <i>Miguel Street</i>	1980 -1981
M. Anand, <i>Coolie</i> ; Bhattachariya, <i>So Many Hungers</i> ; Rabindranath Tagore, <i>Binodini</i> ; V.S. Reid, <i>New Day</i> ; Grace Ogot, <i>Land Without Thunder</i> ; George Lamming, <i>In the Castle of My Skin</i> ; Lonne Elder III, <i>Ceremonies in Dark Old Men</i> ; Alejo Carpentier, <i>Explosion in a Cathedral</i> ; Miller, A., <i>Death of a Salesman</i> ; O. Rotimi, <i>The Gods are Not to Blame</i>	1982
Richard Wright, <i>Native Son</i> ; Alejo Carpentier, <i>The Lost Steps</i> ; G. Greene, <i>The Honorary Consul</i> ; Brecht, <i>The Caucasian Chalk Circle</i>	1983
Mariama Bâ, <i>So Long a Letter</i>	1984
Kamala Markandaya, <i>Nectar in a Sieve</i> ; James Baldwin, <i>Blues for Mr. Charlie</i> ; Gabriel Garcia Marques, <i>One Hundred Years of Solitude</i> ; Anton Chekhov, <i>Lady with Lapdog and Other Stories</i> ; Athol Fugard et al., <i>Sizwe Bansi is Dead</i>	1985

The explosion of diverse texts chosen from diverse geographic zones in neocolonial Kenya was short-lived, lasting roughly between 1963 to the mid-1980s when the 8-4-4 education system was introduced. Shorter than the earlier system by a year, 8-4-4 also had *one less annual examination* and, hence, required fewer texts to be taught. Whereas previously students wrote a national examination in Form IV and again in Form VI, 8-4-4 offered only one national examination in Form IV before joining tertiary institutions.

Table 3. Analysis of frequently selected texts between 1940–65, 1966–77, 1978–88 and 1989–98\*

	1940–65	1966–77	1978–88	1989–98	Region**	Author	Books, Plays or Poems
1940 to 1965	a				AngloEur	Moles, T.W. & Arthur R. Moon, eds.	<i>An Anthology of Longer Poems</i> (42, 45, 48, 53, 54, 55)
	a				AngloEur	Conrad, Joseph	<i>The Rover</i> (45, 46, 51, 52, 60, 61)
	a				AngloEur	George Eliot	<i>Silas Marner</i> (40, 45x2, 52, 53) 59, 60, 61, 63, 64)
	a				AngloEur	Goldsmith: <i>Essays</i> (43);	<i>She Stoops to Conquer</i> (50, 51, 52, 58, 59, 62, 72)
	a	b	c		AngloEur	Shakespeare, William	<i>Julius Caesar</i> (51, 55, 56, 57, 60, 61, 65, 67, 71, 72, 81, 82, 83, 84)
	a				AngloEur	Shakespeare, William	<i>Macbeth</i> (48, 49, 54, 55x3, 58, 59, 62, 64x2, 63x2, 79, 81)
	a				AngloEur	Sheridan, Richard	<i>The Rivals</i> (40, 45, 51, 52, 56, 57, 60, 61)
	a				AngloEur	Wordsworth, William	diverse poems (40, 46, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62)
1966 to 1977		b			Afr	Abrahams, Peter	<i>Mine Boy</i> (65, 73, 75, 76, 77, 97, 98)
		b			Afr	Amadi, Elechi	<i>The Concubine</i> (73, 74, 75, 80, 81, 93, 94, 95, 96)
		b			Other	Bolt, Robert:	<i>A Man for All Seasons</i> (69, 71, 76, 81)
		b	c	d	Other	Gogol, Nikolai	<i>The Government Inspector</i> (73, 74, 75, 80, 81, 84, 85, 86, 87, 96, 97, 98)
		b			AngloEur	Maugham, W. Somerset	<i>The Moon and the Sixpence</i> (74, 75, 76)
		b			Afr	Okot p'Bitek	<i>Horn of My Love and Sons of Sango</i> (83)
		b			Afr	Soyinka, Wole	<i>The Lion and the Jewel</i> (71, 75, 76, 77, 78)
		b			Afr	Thiong'o, Ngugi	<i>The River Between</i> (65, 71, 76, 77, 78, 82, 83);
	b			Afr	Wollman and Spencer	<i>Modern Poems for the Commonwealth</i> (65, 71, 74, 75, 76)	
1978 to 1988			c		AngloEur	Dickens, Charles	<i>Hard Times</i> (68, 85, 86, 87, 88)
			c		AngloEur	Forster, E. M.	<i>A Passage to India</i> (67, 68, 70, 78, 79)
			c		AngloEur	Hardy, Thomas	<i>The Mayor of Casterbridge</i> (45, 61, 62, 68, 70, 79, 87, 88)
			c		Afr	Achebe, Chinua	<i>No Longer at Ease</i> (65, 73, 74, 81, 82, 83, 84)
			c		Afr	Armah, Ayi Kwei	<i>The Healers</i> (81, 84, 85, 87, 88)
			c		Afr	Ba, Mariama	<i>So Long a Letter</i> (84x2, 85, 86, 87)
			c		Afr	Cook and Rubadiri	<i>Poems from East Africa</i> (77, 78, 85, 86, 87)
			c		Afr	Fugard, Athol	<i>Sizwe Bansi is Dead</i> (85, 86, 88)
			c		Afr	Fugard, Athol	<i>The Blood Knot</i> (76, 78, 82, 84)
			c		Afr	Graft, Joseph C. de	<i>Muntu</i> (81, 82, 83, 85)
			c		Afr	Imbuga, Francis	<i>Man of Kafira</i> (85, 86, 87)
			c		Afr	Mwangi, Meja	<i>A Carcase for Hounds</i> (84, 85, 86, 87)
		c		Afr	Ogot, Grace	<i>Land Without Thunder</i> (82, 83, 84X2)	

1940-65	1966-77	1978-88	1989-98	Region**	Author	Books, Plays or Poems
		c		Afr	Ruganda, John	<i>The Burdens</i> (77, 78, 84, 85, 86, 87, 98)
		c		Afr	Ruganda, John	<i>The Floods</i> (84, 85, 86, 88)
		c		Afr	Soyinka, Wole	<i>Kongi's Harvest</i> (65, 72, 73, 82, 83, 84)
		c		Afr	Soyinka, Wole	<i>The Road</i> (78, 79, 81, 85, 86, 88)
		c		Afr	Thiong'o, Ngugi	<i>A Grain of Wheat</i> (70, 78, 85, 87)
		c		Other	Anand, Mulk Raj	<i>Coolie</i> (82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87x2, 88)
		c		Other	Baldwin, James:	<i>Blues for Mr. Charlie</i> (85, 86, 88)
		c		Other	Bhattachariya, Bhabani	<i>So Many Hungers</i> (82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87x2, 88)
		c		Other	Brecht, Bertolt	<i>The Caucasian Chalk Circle</i> (83, 84, 85, 86)
		c		Other	Checkov, Anton	<i>Lady with Lapdog and Other Stories</i> (85, 86, 87, 88)
		c		Other	Elder III, Lonnie	<i>Ceremonies in Dark Old Men</i> (82, 83, 84)
		c		Other	Guma, Alex la	<i>A Walk in the Night</i> (82, 83, 85, 86, 87)
		c		Other	Lamming, George	<i>In the Castle of My Skin</i> (82, 83, 84, 85)
		c		Other	Markandaya, Kamala	<i>Nectar in a Sieve</i> (85, 86, 87x2, 88)
		c		Other	Marques, Gabriel Garcia	<i>One Hundred Years of Solitude</i> (85, 86, 87, 88)
		c		Other	Miller, Arthur	<i>Death of a Salesman</i> (82, 83, 84)
		c		Other	Tagore, Rabindranath	<i>Binodini</i> (82, 83, 84)
		c		Other	Wright, Richard	<i>Native Son</i> (83, 84, 85, 87, 88)
		c		Other	Wright, Richard	<i>Native Son</i> (83, 84, 85, 87, 88)
			d	Afr	Achebe, Chinua	<i>Things Fall Apart</i> (64, 76, 77, 78, 80, 89, 90, 91, 92)
			d	Afr	Grandsaigne, J.T. & S. Nnamonu	<i>African Short Stories: An Anthology</i> (92, 93, 94, 95)
			d	Afr	Imbuga, Francis	<i>Betrayal in the City</i> (80, 81, 89, 90, 91)
			d	AngloEur	Shakespeare, William	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> (73, 74, 92, 93, 94, 95)

\* *Inclusion criteria:* For each of the four periods between 1940 to 1998, that were selected at least a quarter of the years in that period.

\*\* AngloEur = texts focusing on England or Europe; Afr = texts from Africa and its diaspora; Other = texts focusing on other regions.

Between 1940 and 1984, the 7-4-2-3 educational system involved 13 years through high school; and, afterwards with the new 8-4-4 system, 12 years.

*Table 4. Years of 7-4-2-3 and 8-4-4 educational systems*

<b>School level</b>	<b>7-4-2-3 system</b>	<b>8-4-4 system</b>
Primary	7	8
Lower secondary	4	
Upper secondary	2	
High school		4
<b>Total years through high school</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>12</b>
University or technical institute	3	4
<b>Total years through university</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>

The selection of Afro-canon or the frequently taught texts continued until 1985 when a new educational system (the 8-4-4) was introduced by a hasty presidential decree and implemented by then Minister of Education, Oloo Aringo, before the targeted pilot tests could be done.<sup>100</sup> The new educational system fundamentally changed the structure and teaching of Kenyan high-school English and literature syllabi. Specifically, the new 8-4-4 educational system (i) integrated literature into the English syllabus; (ii) eliminated literature as a separate subject, and (iii) shortened the number of years for high school. During both the prior 7-4-2-3 and the new 8-4-4 educational systems, few Kenyan texts were selected for the high-school English and literature syllabi. Though the 8-4-4 system started in 1985, the first final exam (KCSE) under this system was written in 1989. That year, the selected Kenyan texts included seven novels, three plays, six short-story collections, and three poetry collections.<sup>101</sup> In the national examinations, novels, plays,

<sup>100</sup> In 1985, Kenya's 8-4-4 system of education began: eight years in primary school, four in secondary school, and four in the university (except for specialized or courses requiring more time like medicine). The previous 7-4-2-3 system involved seven years for primary school, four for secondary school, two for high school, and three or more for a university or higher-education course.

<sup>101</sup> **Novels:** Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *The River Between* (1965) and *A Grain of Wheat* (1965); Meja Mwangi's *Kill Me Quick* (1973) and *A Carcase for Hounds* (1974); Grace Ogot's *Land Without Thunder* (1968); Margaret Ogola's *The*

and short stories are specifically designated set books, whereas essays, passages, poems, and short stories are just excerpts picked arbitrarily from diverse sources.

As the list of selected texts illustrates (Appendix 1), the 8-4-4 system narrowed the scope, number, and geographical diversity of the selected texts.<sup>102</sup> The fall in the number of selected texts that were taught was, eventually, so drastic that the temporary broadening of the gamut of texts chosen between 1966 and 1985 was completely undone when, by 1998, only two novels, one play, and a few short stories and poems were taught between Form I and Form IV. Why such a precipitous drop? Unavailability of texts is not the reason.

**Table 5. Average number of texts taught, 1940 to 1998\***

Exam level	Years through secondary school	1940–65	1966–79	1980–88	1989–98
Form IV	11	8.1	9.8	8.0	n.a.
Form VI	13	34.4	15.4	13.8	n.a.
8-4-4 KCSE	12	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	2.8

*Note:* For the number of years in school required by each system, see note 100.

\*This includes only the set books—novels, plays and anthologies of short stories and poems—taught for the national examinations, but excludes excerpts for comprehension or oral literature papers.

From 1940 to 1965, the literature selected each year comprised mostly Anglo and European classics. Between 1966 and 1977, the data is incomplete, but 1978 to 1985 saw brief period of literary diversification including more African texts. Afterwards, the changes were stark. From

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*River and its Source* (1994); Leonard Kibera’s *Voices in the Dark* (1970); **Plays:** Ngugi wa Thiong’o and Micere Mugo’s *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi* (1976); Francis Imbuga’s *Betrayal in the City* (2005) and *Man of Kafira* (1984); **Short Stories:** Leonard Kibera and Sam Kahiga’s *Potent Ash*; KIE (Kenya Institute of Education) *Chameleon’s Second Delivery* (1985a), *The Stranger and Other Stories* (1989), and *The Winner and Other Stories* (1990); J.T. de Grandsaigne and S. Nnamonu’s *African Short Stories in English: An Anthology* (1985); Ian Gordon’s *Looking for a Rain God and other Short Stories from Africa* (1995); and scattered poems in **Poems:** Wollman and Spencer’s anthology *Modern Poems for the Commonwealth*, (1967), Howard Sergeant’s (1971) *Commonwealth Poems of Today*, and Blackburn, Horsfall, Wanjala, and Nganga’s *Attachments to the Sun* (1978).

<sup>102</sup> Teachers may decide to include additional materials not on the list; and students may read extra texts, depending on their time management. With such unpredictabilities across numerous schools, the number of set-books and other texts does not equal the number students read and are tested on, though it does suggest the gamut of the genres and regional focuses represented in the syllabi.

1986 to 1998, the selected non-African international literature **dwindled**, year by year, to **one** in 1998 (by N. Gogol) when merely two novels and two plays (all except one by African authors) plus excerpts of stories, poems, etc. were designated for the final exam in English. A visual comparison of the selected texts for 1978 and 1998 is shockingly revelatory (Table 6).

Table 6. Comparison of selected texts for Literature in English, 1978 (EACE and EAACE) and 1998 (KSCE)

1978: 32 texts + excerpts of short stories, poems, etc.	1998: 4 texts + excerpts of short stories, poems, etc.
<p><b>Form IV (=11<sup>th</sup> grade):</b> East African Certificate of Education (EACE) and School Certificate Examination  <b>208/1 LIE Nov/Dec Paper 1</b>            Section A                J. Ruganda: <i>The Burdens</i>                James Ngugi: <i>The River Between</i>                James Bridie: <i>Tobias and the Angel</i>                Meja Mwangi: <i>Kill Me Quick</i>            Section B                W. Shakespeare: <i>Merchant of Venice</i>                Chinua Achebe: <i>Things Fall Apart</i>                George Orwell: <i>Animal Farm</i>                W. Soyinka: <i>The Lion and the Jewel</i>                Poem: <i>A Freedom Song</i>, In: <i>Poems from East Africa</i> by Cook and Rubadiri, eds.  <i>Note: Paper 2 is missing.</i></p> <p><b>Form VI (=13<sup>th</sup> grade):</b> East African Advanced Certificate of Education (EAACE)  <b>P310/1 S319/1, Paper 1 (Prose and Poetry), Nov/Dec</b>            Section I                “The Aims of Liberal Studies in the Sixth Form.” Introductory Lecture to conference on the subject of general studies in the sixth form organized by Hinmarch at the Institute of Education, Makerere University, January 2–4, 1963.            Section II: Passage by Janis Mwosa            Section III: Kamara Das: “My Grandmother’s House” A. D. Amateshe: “Drowned in the Murmuring Crowd”</p> <p><b>P310/2 S319/2, Paper 2 (Plays), Nov/Dec</b>            Section A: Shakespeare: <i>Richard III</i>                        Shakespeare: <i>Anthony and Cleopatra</i>            Section B: Sophocles: <i>Theban Plays</i>                        Webster: <i>The Duchess of Malfi</i>                        Moliere: <i>The Imaginary Invalid</i>            Section C: T.S. Eliot: <i>Murder in the Cathedral</i>                        G.B. Shaw: <i>Saint Joan</i>                        S. Beckett: <i>Waiting for Godot</i>            Section D: W. Soyinka: <i>The Road</i>                        A. Miller: <i>The Crucible</i>                        A. Fugard: <i>The Blood Knot</i></p> <p><b>P310/2 319/3, Paper 3 (Novels and Short Stories), Nov/Dec</b>            Section A: J. Swift: <i>Gulliver’s Travels</i> (Parts 1 &amp; 2)                        C. Dickens: <i>Great Expectations</i>                        Thomas Hardy: <i>Tess of the D’Urbervilles</i>            Section B: E. M. Forster: <i>A Passage to India</i>                        D. H. Lawrence: <i>Sons and Lovers</i>                        W. Golding: <i>Lord of the Flies</i>            Section C: A. Camus: <i>The Outsider</i>                        F. Kafka: <i>The Metamorphosis and Other Stories</i></p>	<p><b>Form III (=11<sup>th</sup> grade):</b>  <b>Novel:</b> Margaret Ogolla: <i>The River and Its Source</i> (Focus Books)  <b>Play:</b> John Ruganda: <i>The Burdens</i> (OUP)  <b>Short Stories:</b> <i>Looking for a Rain God and Other Short Stories from Africa</i> (MacMillan, Kenya)</p> <p><b>Form IV (=12<sup>th</sup> grade):</b>  <b>The Novel:</b> Peter Abrahams: <i>Mine Boy</i> (Focus Books)  <b>Play:</b> N. Gogol: <i>The Government Inspector</i> (OUP)  <b>Short Stories:</b> <i>Looking for a Rain God and Other Short stories from Africa</i> (MacMillan, Kenya)</p>

Camara Laye: <i>The Radiance of the King</i> Section D: Alex la Guma: <i>In the Fog of the Season's End</i> Ngugi: <i>A Grain of Wheat</i> Peter Abrahams: <i>A Wreath for Udomo</i>	
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To analyse the text selection for the high-school English and literature syllabi, the next section explores the interconnectedness of Kenya's neocolonialism, European orientalist curiosity about Africa, and the civilizing and evangelizing rhetoric in shaping and defining Kenyan leaders who, in turn, decided the country's national goals of education guiding the high-school English, literature and other syllabi.

From Spencer to Conrad, a rationale for imperialism runs through the Anglo-European texts that exalt the Anglo Christian feudal tradition and high culture—literature, traditions, language, and culture—while remaining silent, ambivalent or collaborative about this tradition's social hierarchical and Eurocentric racial doctrines.<sup>103</sup> The texts by Shakespeare, Defoe, Stevenson, Heyerdahl, H.R. Haggard, Buchan and Huxley that are also called universal often feature the colonized (Africans and non-Western) as noble, good, bad or barbarian savages.<sup>104</sup> In their view, the good, strong, courageous, and reasonably intelligent African assisted the European occupation and settlement. The bad, lazy, ugly, scowling African resisted colonization and dared fight for his rights, land, and freedom. The good, well-colonized African was also ever-smiling, fun-loving, self-effacing, and likable in contrast to the scowling, sneaky, scheming barbarian who is given to uncouth tendencies such as rape, buffoonery, boozing, cannibalism, ritual murder, and black-magic. While the good collaborationist native is glorified and rewarded for his loyalty, the

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<sup>103</sup> Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe* (2012[1719]), Stevenson, *The Treasure Island* (2008[1883]) and *Kidnapped* (1886); Heyerdahl, *The Kon-Tiki Expedition by Raft Across the South Seas* (1950); H.R. Haggard, *King Solomon Mines* (1885); *She* (1887a) and *Allan Quartermain* (1887b); John Buchan, *Prester John* (1983[1910]) and *The Thirty-Nine Steps* (2009[1915]); Monsarrat, *The Tribe That Lost Its Head* (1956) and *Richer Than All His Tribe* (1969); and later, Karen Blixen, *Out of Africa and Shadows on the Grass* (1985[1937]); and Elspeth Huxley, *Flame Trees of Thika: Memories of an African Childhood* (1959).

<sup>104</sup> See, for example, *The Tempest* in Shakespeare and Harrison (1968).

resisting native is maligned, demonized, and punished.<sup>105</sup> The resisting native went to the Mt. Kenya forests as a guerrilla after 1952 and was better known by his maligned title, the “*Mau Mau*” (Chapter 4). The Anglo-European literature’s silence, ambivalence, inherent racism, and collaboration with Eurocentrism produced and continue to nurture the recurring image of colonized people as savages.<sup>106</sup>

In popular literature, the colonized savage is embodied in different literary figures that historically reappeared in diverse texts, e.g., Caliban, whose evolving figure in English literature alongside the colonial enterprise in Africa, Ngugi juxtaposes in Shakespeare’s *Tempest* (1968 [1612]), Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* (2012[1719]),<sup>107</sup> Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* (1999 [1902]), and Coetzee’s *Foe* (1987). Before Europe embarked on its colonial mission, Shakespeare’s Caliban had a garbled voice and language; successive Calibans gradually lost their voice and language till in Coetzee’s *Foe*, Caliban’s tongue was pulled out—a loss Ngugi sees as coinciding with Europe’s occupation of most of the world, which turned Africa into “a playground for Western hunters of treasure and pleasure” (Thiong’o 1993:132–35).

Throughout the period that Anglo-European literature dominated the curricula, many alternative texts—including orature—thrived despite the colonial government’s persistent suppression and bans on specific genres.<sup>108</sup> Early texts written in Sesotho (Sesuto), Yoruba,

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<sup>105</sup> Outside literature, Ngugi notes how the same schema operates in the Western media where African regimes that tried national self-reliance (Ghana, Egypt, and Tanzania) are described as “simplistic, unrealistic, doctrinaire and authoritarian” while regimes that “mortgaged their countries to Euro-American imperialism” (Kenya, Côte d’Ivoire) become shining examples of development and economic growth (Thiong’o 1986:93).

<sup>106</sup> This includes even sensitive writers like Conrad, Blake, Whitman, Brecht, Sartre, and Hemingway.

<sup>107</sup> Full title: *The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe of York, Mariner: Who Lived Eight and Twenty Years, All Alone in an Uninhabited Island on the Coast of America, Near the Mouth of the Great River of Oroonoke; Having been Cast on Shore by Shipwreck, wherein All the Men Perished but Himself. With an Account about How He was at Last as Strangely Deliver’d by Pirates. Written by Himself.*

<sup>108</sup> The banning of *wathi* and *muthiriku* is discussed in the next chapter.

Kikerewe, Kiswahili, and other African languages are little known in academia today.<sup>109</sup> For example, Olaudah Equiano’s and other slave narratives countered the colonial images in Anglo texts by exposing the horrors of slavery while presenting a different African perspective—a world of dances, music, and nations.<sup>110</sup> Years of colonialism and two world wars also accompanied African writing that moved from bemoaning a robbed glorious past to challenging imperialism and asserting growing aspirations and nationalisms.<sup>111</sup> Later works hinted at independence and explored the various clashes with Christianity, Islam and European occupation and education.<sup>112</sup> Numerous texts explore the complexities of colonialism and neocolonialism, and especially the corrupt and morally bankrupt African leaderships that, in the 1960s, deeply betrayed the formerly colonized people’s high hopes at independence.<sup>113</sup>

By contrast, canonical English texts and “readers” used in the native schools like the *Bible*, texts by Defoe, Stevenson, Haggard, and Bunyan highlight the supposedly inherent heathen and barbaric natives’ beliefs, religions, gods, and rites. Recently converted natives eagerly embraced

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<sup>109</sup> Euphrase Kezilahabi’s *Rosa Mistika* (1971), *Kichwamaji* (1974; “Waterhead”), *Dunia Uwanja wa Fujo* (1975; “The World Is a Chaotic Place”), and *Kichomi* (1974; “Stabbing Pain”), Thomas Mofolo’s *Moeti oa Bochabela (The Traveller to the East)* (1934[1907]), *Pitseng* (1910), and *Chaka: An Historical Romance* (1931); Fagunwa’s *Forest of a Thousand Daemons: A Hunter’s Saga; being a translation of “Ogboju ode ninu igbo irunmale”* (trans. Wole Soyinka) (1968[1938]); and Aniceti Kitereza’s and Gabriel Ruhumbika’s *Mr. Myombekere and his Wife Bugonoka, Their Son Ntulanalwo and Daughter Bulihwali: The Story of an Ancient African Community* (2002[1945]) translated from Kikerewe into Kiswahili in 1980 and into English in 2002 (see debate about Kiswahili in Chapter 2).

<sup>110</sup> Olaudah Equiano’s *The Interesting Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa, the African, Written by Himself* (1789) or Félix Couchoro’s *L’Esclave (The Slave)* (2007[1929])

<sup>111</sup> Bakary Diallo, *Force Bonté* (1985[1926]); Sol T. Plaatje, *Mhudi: An Epic of South African Native Life a Hundred Years Ago* (1930); Parmenas Githendu Mockerie, *An African Speaks for His People* (1934); Ousmane Socé, *Karim* (1945[1935]); Paul Hazoume, *Dogucimi: The First Dahomean Novel* (1990[1937]); Jomo Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya* (1965[1938]); Mareka Gecaga, *Home Life in Kikuyu-Land, or Kariuki and Muthoni* (1949); Camara Laye, *L’Enfant Noir (The African Child)* (1959[1953]); Bernard Dadie, *Climbié* (1956); Aké Loba, *Kocoumbo, L’Etudiant Noir (Kocoumbo, The Black Student)* (1980[1956]); Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* (1958); Cheik Hamidou Kane, *L’Aventure Ambigüe (Ambiguous Adventure)* (1982[1963])

<sup>112</sup> Ahmadou Kourouma, *The Suns of Independence* (1981[1968]); Mongo Beti, *Mission to Kala* (1964) and *The Poor Christ of Bomba* (1971); Okot P’ Bitek, *Song of Lawino* (1966) and *Song of Ocol* (1967); Thiong’o, Ngugi wa, *The River Between* (1965) and *A Grain of Wheat* (1967)

<sup>113</sup> oral texts like *myalĩ* #1 and 3 in next chapter or Okot p’ Bitek’s *Lak Tar Miyo Kinyero Wi Lobo (If Your Teeth are White, Laugh!)* 1953; *Wer pa Lawino (Song of Lawino)* (1966) *Song of Ocol* (1967); *Two Songs: Song of Prisoner & Song of Malaya* (1088[1971]); Thiong’o’s works from *Petals of Blood* (1977) to *Murogi wa Kagoogo* (2006)

Christ and the new religion fully and distanced themselves from their old lives by immersing themselves in education and culture *à la Robinson Crusoe's* Friday. The missions encouraged early African converts to emulate pioneer Christian missionaries, religious figures, and other supposedly exemplary European travellers and adventurers.<sup>114</sup>

As in other British colonies, Kenyan civil servants practised development as “a series of urgent administrative interventions to contain and restrain the natives” (Berman 1990:275–76).<sup>115</sup> For British colonial officers, making the colony economically viable and civilizing the native through western education and religion (Christianity) were priorities. The recruitment procedures for colonial service and the social and educational background of the civil servants prepared education officers for the civilizing mission. Within Macaulay’s educational system, the texts selected for the English and literature syllabi formed part of those efforts. Indeed, at the time, alternative local literature was, by definition, not feasible since orature was not even classified as literature, a term encompassing only written texts (Macaulay 1835).

After independence, Anglo-European literature continued to be selected since the Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate dominated the processes for high-school curricula, assessment and text-selection till around 1966. Though token African texts were selected, the main diet consisted of “world literature classics”. The English and literature syllabi examinations were divided into a format that rigidly circumscribed the selection of texts:

- **Drama:** Section A—Shakespeare; Section B—18<sup>th</sup> century and earlier; Section C—20<sup>th</sup> century plays; Section D—19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century plays: rest of the world.
- **Prose:** Section A—English novels before 1900; Section B—20<sup>th</sup> century English novels; Section C—novels in translation; Section D—prose works written in English.

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<sup>114</sup> *e.g.*, James Hannington, John Speke, Rudolf, Ludwig Krapf, David Livingstone, Mr. Wakefield, Sir William McKinnon, Carl Peters, David Hill (China), King Khama (Basutoland, current Botswana), and William Roome, *Apolo, The Apostle to the Pygmies* (1934)

<sup>115</sup> See also Leys (1974) and Nyong’o (1992).

After the East African Examinations Council (EAEC) was set up in 1968, the format of the examinations was changed to permit a wider national and international choice of texts while lessening the focus on Anglo-European classics. However, the council's training programs, marking schemes, course material, text selection, the setting and marking of examinations, and certification continued to be modelled after the Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicates. With minor changes, Anglo-European literature continued to dominate the texts selected for the English and literature syllabi in the early 1960s.

Rubadiri (1967:9) summarizes the colonial curriculum for English and literature as “a pot[ted] plant able to grow in its own confined boundary but failing to take root and nourishment from mother earth itself.”<sup>116</sup> Rubadiri saw the English and literature curricula in Makerere as existing in a “comfortable paternalism” that cushioned and prevented the all-European staff and African students from noticing—let alone challenging—an implicit ideology with profound effects (Sicherman 1998:137).

Though independent Kenya's stated educational policy was to standardize and Africanize education, the inheritance and standardization of pre-independence European-only schools constrained the state to adopt the earlier schools' administrative, academic, and curricular traditions, e.g., the procedures for selecting annual examination texts for the various curricula, including the English and literature syllabi. MinEd's selection process for texts for the high school syllabi sharply limits the number of texts and the gamut of literature read in schools. Over the years, the literature text-selection now excludes most orature and writers from Kenya, Africa, and

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<sup>116</sup> Started in 1922, Makerere became the University of East Africa in 1963, offering courses leading to general degrees of the University of London. In 1970, the University of East Africa split into University of Nairobi (Kenya), University of Dar es Salaam (Tanzania) and Makerere (Uganda). As the only university, Makerere trained many future African leaders, including presidents Obote (Uganda), Nyerere (Tanzania), Mkapa (Tanzania), and Kibaki (Kenya).

the rest of the world. Even when Anglo-European literature dominated the syllabi in colonial and, later, neocolonial Kenya, much alternative, but deselected, orature and written literature existed in and outside Kenya, and continued growing.<sup>117</sup>

## Section B: Civilizing and Developing Kenya: Educating the Native

Enlightenment, social Darwinism, and scientific racism framed the policies for education and development designed to civilize and develop the land and the natives in colonial Africa. The 1847 Privy Council’s memorandum on education advocated manual labour to treat laziness (Colonial Office 1847). Before the colonial government took control of today’s Kenya from the Imperial British East India Company in 1895, diverse missionaries had established schools—mostly to convert locals to Christianity and train catechists (Sheffield, J. 1971:7). Even the few missionaries and government officials who doubted the civilizing mission believed Africans to be racially inferior “lazy scoundrels”<sup>118</sup> needing help to purge their inherent paganism, barbarism, and savagery (Mies 1986:99).<sup>119</sup> Hence, missionaries and future educators shared Sir Charles Eliot’s defence of the British Empire’s civilizing mission: “we are not destroying any old or interesting

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<sup>117</sup> I surveyed 20 schools in Mombasa, Nairobi, Kiambu, Machakos and Kitui Districts – talking to the English teachers and, in each school, interviewing a selection of usually four students, depending on availability. Typically, the students knew only one or two internationally renowned writers from Africa and elsewhere; and very few knew three or more. Among the students who knew about Yusuf Dawood or Marjorie Oludhe-Macgoye, the vast majority did not consider them “real” Kenyans. To maintain consistency, I used the following list of renowned and some award-winning authors during the interviews:

- **Africa:** Naquib Mahfouz (1988 Nobel), Wole Soyinka (1986 Nobel), Nadine Gordimer (1991 Nobel), Nuruddin Farah (1998 Neudstadt International Prize for Literature), Antjie Krog, JM Coetzee (2003 Nobel), Ben Okri (1991 Booker), Sindiwe Magona, André Brink, Mia Couto, MG Vassanji, Nawal El Saadawi, Sonallah Ibrahim, Farida Karodia, Tayeb Salih and David Rubadiri
- **Elsewhere:** Anita Desai; Margaret Atwood (2000 Booker); Derek Walcott (1992 Nobel), Toni Morrison (1993 Nobel), Maya Angelou, Sara Suleri, Rohinton Mistry, Bharati Mukherjee, Salman Cook, and V.S. Naipaul (2001 Nobel), Eduardo Galeano (1998 Cuban Casas de las Americas Prizes), Michael Ondaatje (1992 Booker), Pablo Neruda (1971 Nobel), Gabriel Garcia Marquez (1982 Nobel), Octavio Paz (1990 Nobel); Jose Maria Arguedas, Carlos Fuentes, Leo Tolstoy, Mikhail Alexandrovich Sholokhov (1965 Nobel), Fyodor Dostoevsky, Franz Kafka.

<sup>118</sup> Sifuna (1992:162)

<sup>119</sup> See also Bogonko (1992: 46); Curtin (1964: 261); Sifuna (1992: 164); Young (1994:33); and Freund (1984:86).

system, but simply introducing order into blank, uninteresting, brutal barbarism” (Eliot 1905:230).<sup>120</sup>

As a tool for colonial governance, mission education polarized and weakened Africans’ ability to resist colonization through the double-sided process of “saving” native souls while simultaneously undermining, demeaning, and invalidating all things native—languages, identities, social structures, ideology, religion or education.<sup>121</sup> The change from savagery to “civilization” was understood to be slow and gradual, as envisioned in John Ainsworth and Charles Hobley’s 1909 memorandum about native policy as summarized by Sorrenson (1963:2): “[When] dealing with African savage tribes, we are dealing with a people who are practically at the genesis of things. And we cannot expect to lift them in a few years from this present state to that of a highly civilized European people. The evolution of races must necessarily take centuries to accomplish satisfactorily.”<sup>122</sup>

Belief in the slow social progress of Africans shaped the educational and other administrative systems that independent Kenya inherited in 1963. Ruling natives who were deemed lower down the evolutionary line, British empire-builders in Kenya and elsewhere required “law and order”—the cornerstone of colonial administration. Indeed, “law and order” was so crucial an ideology it was part of the general school curricula, implemented by colonial administrators, themselves products of the “law and order” curricula in England.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Sir Charles Eliot was East African Protectorate’s Commissioner between 1900 and 1904.

<sup>121</sup> Missionaries expected their followers to shun their non-Christian relatives and encouraged them to distrust other religions, including other Christian denominations. See *mwalĩ* # 6, *Mbaitu! ukai muyonee!! Mbaitu! Come see for yourself!* (*Mbaitu* means my people, people from my place/clan/land/totem).

<sup>122</sup> John Ainsworth and Charles Hobley were early influential British administrators and Kenyan experts.

<sup>123</sup> As Kenya colony’s Minister of Law and Order discovered, maintaining law or order required more than the military, the judiciary, and jails. He was confronted by an unchartered supernatural world beyond the notion and praxis of law and order by the expansive colonial administrative machine, a world of ancestor worship, witchcraft, oaths, magic—a world rife with the fear of damnation, the supernatural, and witchcraft and *majini* (djins, malevolent

The men who became colonial administrators were hired through a “highly selective and intensive indoctrination” and “could be trusted to act in ways acceptable to the central authorities” (Berman 1990:97). Initially, colonial officers were recruited locally and mostly from members of the Imperial British East African Company. Later, the British Colonial Office recruited them,<sup>124</sup> blaming poor education for the administrators’ incompetence and unreliability in dealing with both Africans and European settlers. For example, in 1910, Governor Percy Girouard complained to the Colonial Office that, except for one provincial commissioner, “all lack the social qualifications necessary for the handling of a white community”. He then demanded men “not only of ability but of social position and good education” (Mungeam 1966:216).

Uneducated or less well-educated officers were considered “unnecessarily arrogant, high handed, and brutal in dealing with Africans” (Berman 1990:99–100). Concluding that “the time is past when we should recruit our staff from so-called pioneers and cowpunchers,”<sup>125</sup> Girouard pushed for colonial Kenya’s administration to be increasingly homogenous as the Colonial Office began recruiting educated men who possessed a common background of belief and experience that

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spirits)—a world that, from the colonialists’ perspective, necessitated diverse ordinances to maintain law and order. Hence, the 1909 Witchcraft Ordinance and its amendments in 1917 and 1925 criminalized witchcraft and authorized the deportation or exile of suspected witches using the 1923 Deportation Ordinance and punished government officers for not reporting witchcraft. A myriad of Native Ordinances also contained clauses about witchcraft, e.g., the Native Liquor Ordinance, 1921; Passes Regulations, 1900; Liquor, 1921; Courts, 1903; Porters, 1902; Labour, 1903 (*Kenya Gazette*, 13 May 1925: pp. 385–86, PRO/S16428/14; *Kenya Gazette*, 7 September 1921 vol. 23, no. 788, p. 777; and *The Official Gazette*, 1 January 1903, East African Protectorate. During Kenya’s liberation guerrilla war for independence, the administration resorted to propaganda to keep law and order by alleging an exaggerated barbaric black-magic world of Africans and using campaigns to “cleanse” both witches and suspected *Mau Mau* (*Source*: three Ukambani interviewees, anonymity requested). Also see the discussion on page 129.

<sup>124</sup> Local recruits ranged from drifters, adventurers, and IBEAC officials who were mostly middle-class and low-class British, often uneducated or with little education. Their behaviour was presumed to interrupt the colonial state’s intervention to control the disruptive effects of the contradictory social forces in a colony without directly contesting the dominance of capital in the economic sphere”. Known for “unreliability, drunkenness and bellicosity, early IBEAC officials, prompted the British Colonial office to end local recruitment, take over and deliberately control the recruitment and training of administrators in 1905, [and] ... rais[e] the qualifications to a university degree, a regular commission in the armed forces, professional qualifications in law, or at least 1,500 marks in the Civil Service examination by 1907. Berman (1990:124, note #76). See also Munro (1975:35–36) and Mungeam (1966:49–50). Berman explains Low’s idea of the 19<sup>th</sup> century “settled view” of the administrative elite in India, which had been shocked by the 1857–58 mutiny (Berman 1990:108).

<sup>125</sup> PRO/CO 533/74, secret despatch, 26 May 1910, Girouard to Seely.

would facilitate communication and lead them to act consistently and predictably. Berman describes the “men capable of dealing easily with the white settlers” and able to maintain “orderly control over the Africans” while simultaneously extracting, “without continuous resort to force, the land, labour, and surplus product on which the colonial enterprise rested” (Berman 1990:97). Girouard’s suitable candidates for the colonies introduced into British East Africa a new colonial administrator: the public school and Oxbridge-trained gentleman amateur “all-rounder.”<sup>126</sup> Notably, an “all-rounder” is the model student projected in Kenya’s national goals of education and in the objectives of syllabi for teaching English and literature. Public schools indoctrinated the sons of the bourgeoisie and the professional middle class in the dominant class ideology of how to rule to achieve the type of “remote control process” desired for the colonial service; a “fellowship of an order that binds men together as perhaps nothing else, and holds them by a bond invisible but unbreakable at whatever distance duty may call them from the place where it was forged” (Weinberg 1967:97).

For the English and literature courses, the Oxbridge gentleman studied the classics and other “impractical” subjects, which emphasized learning as merely an amateur. Supposedly, “a first-class honours degree in [the] ‘Greats’ (classical philosophy and literature) fitted a man for high achievements in almost any career” (Furse 1962:259).<sup>127</sup> The “‘Greats’ were the best training for African administration since ‘a man who has read the Greats can tackle anything’” (Berman 1990:101). These men became Kenya’s colonial administrators in charge of school curricula in

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<sup>126</sup> Studies about the recruitment of British colonial officers abound, e.g., Moses (1914); Heady and Stokes (1962); Sisson (1959); Musgrove (1963); Heussler (1963); Weinberg (1967); Fry (1969); Rothblatt (1969); Parris (1969); Spangenberg (1971); Armstrong (1972); Stedman-Jones (1976).

<sup>127</sup> Note from Sir Ralph Furse to Sir Vincent Glenday during a 1936 Kenyan tour. Furse controlled Colonial Office’s recruitment from 1919 to 1948. An Eton and Galliol graduate and a World War I cavalry officer, Furse typifies the man the colonial administration sought: a man who openly and unashamedly advocated the “aristocratic” ideology of rule by the British dominant class.

British East Africa that emphasized (i) the spiritual value of hard manual work, (ii) rejection of African traditions and traditional leaders, (iii) subservience to authorities (the Crown), and (iv) justice in the afterlife as taught by both evangelical and older Christian churches—sentiments strongly reinforced by the period’s pseudo-scientific racism.

Having learned from the political unrest in India and ascribing it to the lower classes, anti-academics, and a lack of industrial training in the school curricula, London’s Colonial Office emphasized industrial education as suitable for Africans’ needs and necessary to counter the self-conceit and insolence that a literary education might induce. In 1890, the Christian Missionary Society’s centre at Keswick adopted the Tuskegee and Hampton<sup>128</sup> Institutes’ models of industrial training for native schools’ curriculum to train artisans in carpentry, masonry, blacksmithing, and bricklaying.<sup>129</sup> Colonial educational, administrative, and socioeconomic policies and practices influenced education and language policies while the search for economic profit underlay the entire colonial enterprise and, for African schools, limited or obliterated the space for discussing literary texts.

The Church Missionary Society (CMS) and the Church of Scotland Mission’s 1909 joint committee addressed curricula, and later became the Missionary Board of Education representing the protectorate’s Protestant missions and providing a forum for addressing common problems in language, school texts, methods, and discipline. Historically, the board coincided with the

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<sup>128</sup> The historically black Hampton Institute (now research University) & Tuskegee Institute were founded on April 1, 1868 & July 4, 1881, respectively. Hampton and Tuskegee Institutes were early schools for freed slaves in USA’s deep south. Hampton graduate, Booker T. Washington of “separate but equal” fame, started Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, a practical work-based educational institute that emphasized character, morality, and success through hard work. Washington’s *Up from Slavery* (1901) advocated economic improvement before political and civil rights for blacks.

influential 1909 Fraser Education Commission on Native and Immigrant Education<sup>130</sup> in Kenya, which specifically recommended (i) Christian instruction, (ii) segregated education for Africans, Asians, and Europeans (and later Arabs) and (iii) an industrial apprenticeship scheme with indentured African workers instead of costly Indian artisans.<sup>131</sup> The first policy statement on education in Kenya was published in 1909 as the Fraser Education Commission on Native and Immigrant Education or simply, the Fraser Report.

After World War I, the colonial government gave incentives to attract more European settlers. Since few settlers could afford to send their children back to England for secondary education, the government encouraged the growth of European-Only high schools modelled on British public schools for European children, e.g., the 1924 white boys' boarding school near Kabete where Europeans and Indians sat the Cambridge University Local Examinations.<sup>132</sup> Indian schools had inferior facilities and the pupils were allowed to sit *only* the Ordinary Level exams in keeping with *The 1925 Memorandum*, which states that “education should be adapted to the mentality, aptitudes, occupations, and traditions of the various peoples, adapting them where necessary to changed circumstances and progressive ideas as an agent of natural growth and evolution” (Permanent Advisory Committee on Education 1925).

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<sup>130</sup> Fraser, formerly based in Bombay, was commissioned to recommend a native educational structure in British East Africa to develop an industrial, not a literary, education. Around 1895, Britain shipped in thousands of Indian indentured labourers to build the British East African railway line and work on the sugarcane plantations in Natal, South Africa.

<sup>131</sup> The new immigrants were Indians, who constructed the railway line, and Europeans, some from South Africa, who were taking advantage of the 1900 white settlement project. In 1911, the board took over, opening new schools for Europeans and Asians and improving others.

<sup>132</sup> The Prince of Wales School, today the Nairobi School.

The segregated education system emphasized vocational subjects like technical training taught in the vernacular<sup>133</sup> for Africans while reserving literary education for Europeans, Asians and honorary whites among black Kenyans, e.g., children of the chiefs and other loyalists.<sup>134</sup>

Educational plans required character training, rural improvement, and secondary education for girls. The character training for girls borrowed from Victorian ideas and morals about women's proper role that restricted them to the private domestic sphere (van Allen 1972:166; Rogers 1980:22). Contemporary thinkers promoted Victorian images and views of women—and men—that sometimes coincided with similar African views. Thus, Victorian and African patriarchy bolstered the tendency to send ONLY boys to schools at first; a tendency that forms part of modern Kenyan identity and sexism.

Late Victorian middle-class society confined high-class women to the home under the protection of their men who insulated them from public life. When native girls eventually joined schools, the dominant image of the ideal woman was partly Victorian—fragile, subdued, modest, coy, reserved, and intellectually inferior—who preferred a strong, domineering, patriarchal, kind-hearted man for protection against the evil world (Staudt 1987:196).

Though containing the natives was an implicit goal in the educational curriculum, this was part of Britain's larger debate about the Native Question,<sup>135</sup> which saw the government appoint various education commissions to address funding, inspection, and the administration of schools.

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<sup>133</sup> When I went to nursery and primary schools, vernacular meant local African languages versus English; with the African languages understood to have less social status than English, which was perceived to be literary, formal, codified, and institutional. Vernacular has this meaning in this dissertation. African languages are still referred to as dialects, see page 178.

<sup>134</sup> See the 1919 and 1925 Education Commission reports, known as the Phelps-Stokes report (Stokes and Vischer 1925).

<sup>135</sup> See John Stuart Mill's *Negro Question* (1850).

In 1923, the Colonial Office formed an Advisory Committee on Native Education in the Tropical Dependencies in British Territories to administer funds, inspect and improve schools, and facilitate education to “correct an alien and literary bias in education and counteract the growth of an embittered African nationalism like that of India’s Congress Party” (Roberts 1986:186). The 1923 Conference of Mission Societies in Britain and Ireland formulated a general native-education policy in Africa while the Elliot Commission examined the organization and facilities for higher education. In 1927, the Colonial Development and Welfare Funds partly funded the opening of university colleges in Africa—Ibadan (Nigeria), the Gordon Memorial College (Sudan), Achimota (Ghana), Makerere (Uganda) and, in 1953, the University College at Salisbury Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe).

In 1929, a Directors of Education Conference in Dar es Salaam agreed to centre East Africa’s higher education in Makerere College, Kampala, to teach medicine, agriculture, elementary engineering, surveying, and teacher education. Protesting the high expenditure on European teachers by 1935, Sir Alan Pim’s *Report on the Financial Position and System of Taxation in Kenya (1936)* recommended training native teachers, hence beginning a general education programme leading to the Cambridge School Certificate, though most Africans still received only basic skills in technical subjects, just sufficient to enable them to work on farms and in businesses or as junior colonial administrators.<sup>136</sup>

The training of government officials responded partly to the colonial British system of indirect rule and adaptation, the administrative and educational approach that aimed to educate African

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<sup>136</sup> handicraft, agriculture, carpentry, tailoring, masonry, shoemaking, road construction, and simple hygiene. This rudimentary- and technical-skills-based-education ill-equipped Africans to run their newly independent governments since they needed—but had not been taught—modern economic and managerial skills as most rarely went beyond four years of education.

civil servants to run a British model administration adapted to African conditions.<sup>137</sup> Secondary education was limited to filling the needs of government service; and the curriculum was guided by the need to contain agitation (Lugard 1922:65).<sup>138</sup>

While the European and Indian schools had the same curriculum between standard three and five, the Indians received special English lessons in the first two years.<sup>139</sup> African schools remained largely under Christian missionaries and had a curriculum focused on religion and industrial and technical training.<sup>140</sup> Nevertheless, in the 1920s, the importance attached to schooling, personal advancement, and the growing ideological and political conflicts between Africans and Europeans over land, civil rights, and more and better education forced Africans to start their own independent schools (later called the African Local Authority) to challenge the missionaries' domination of education.<sup>141</sup> Catholics' and Protestants' fierce competition for space and followers spurred divisions and a race to build schools, often as near as possible to those of rival groups. Missions

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<sup>137</sup> The education model in colonial Kenya was the Indian system. Highly influenced by Macaulay's idea of education, it was designed to "form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect" (Thomas Babington Macaulay, *Minute on Indian Education*, 2nd of February 1835, p. 8).

<sup>138</sup> A British soldier, administrator, and colonial authority, Lugard popularized indirect rule in Nigeria and elsewhere, arguing that Africans were better off ruled through their own traditional systems and customs.

<sup>139</sup> Providing multiracial education, CMS Buxton in Mombasa (named after Sir Thomas Forwell Buxton, the CMS secretary in London) got a small government grant and recruited Asian, Arab, and African children. By 1910, the school was getting more students until the mission made Bible lessons compulsory for all pupils. This led to threats to remove Muslims and students of other religions.

<sup>140</sup> Gradually, Africans demanded literary education (though not about African knowledge). For example, in 1908, the Maseno schoolboys refused to do manual labour and demanded more reading and writing in their curriculum (Anderson 1970:113). Programmes and practices in schools systematically made African students ashamed of their traditions, culture, literature, and history—a legacy of education in Kenya today. Similar educational programmes were given to the First Nations in Canada and USA (Napier and Majhanovich 2013; Woolford 2015; Stonebanks 2008)

<sup>141</sup> Growing unrest and conflicts between Africans and missions over the control of education and cultural practices (circumcision, polygamy, etc.) produced local independent school movements and churches in the 1920s—notably the Kikuyu Independent Schools Association (KISA) and its Independent Pentecostal Church, and the Kikuyu Karing'a ("pure") Educational Association (KKEA) related to the African Orthodox Church. Separatist churches quoted the Bible to reject the earlier blind acceptance of European missionaries' arbitrary biblical interpretations: "The Old Testament refers to polygamous marriages without condemnation and nowhere forbids female circumcision" (Barnett and Njama 1966:38, 37–40, 76–79 and 102–106). See also J.M. Kariuki (1963:27–49); Anderson and Sheer (1972:112–129); Rosberg and Nottingham (1966:25–31); Bogonko (1983:1–32 and 1984:19–38).

encouraged pupils to distrust different Christian groups as well as other religions, e.g., Muslims, Hindus, and ancestor keepers (including family and relatives). Believing that Christian Africans became more civilized only if removed from their pagan environment, missions created boarding schools. The 1922 Department of Education's grants-in-aid system for mission schools and the Advisory Committee on Native Education in British Tropical Africa's *Memorandum on British Education Policy in Tropical Africa* (1925) encouraged cooperation between government and missions.

Though it was initially difficult to interest natives in schools, gradually many enrolled to acquire the missionaries' education (i.e., religion, language, and schooling) that had become a path to, at least, some economic and political power.<sup>142</sup> The changing economic system, the gradual breakdown of tribal systems, and the government's need for clerks and employees drove more Africans to school and, after school, rewarded them with responsibilities and material benefits.<sup>143</sup> Missionaries used the intensified desire for education to demand that African pupils adopt Christianity and abandon "heathen" traditions, beliefs, customs and practices.

The Kenya Education Ordinance of 1931—a more comprehensive educational policy—created separate advisory councils on European, Indian, Arab, and African education. The committee consisted of the provincial commissioner and representatives from the local native councils.<sup>144</sup> The District Education Board's Ordinance of 1934 established district education boards to run the schools.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> Missionaries also enticed pupils with cloth, food, sweets, mirrors, and printed sheets. Others were enchanted by the stories of foreign lands.

<sup>143</sup> The *asomi* discussed earlier on pages 37 and 38 and in footnote 78.

<sup>144</sup> African representatives were educated by missionaries and opposed anything heathen or pagan (i.e., African), including local folklore, the dominant African literature.

<sup>145</sup> handle grants, fees, scholarships, salaries, maintain a register of schools, and lease plots for school development.

In 1936, a joint conference with governmental and independent schools' representatives at Jeanes School (Kabete) discussed the level that English was to be given as a subject of instruction. Independent schools wanted English lessons to begin at Standard 2; the government preferred it to begin in Standard 4. A compromise to start English in Standard 3 was reached.<sup>146</sup> Independent schools agreed to follow a syllabus like the official one, become members of the District Education Board, and be supervised by the Department of Education. Education and curricula remained unchanged in Kenyan colonial schools till just before the end of World War II when the Colonial Development and Welfare Act (1945) shifted from the traditional policy of colonial self-sufficiency and started to increase the aid for colonies, as demonstrated by the Colonial Office's 1948 *Education for Citizenship*. It stated that mere literacy was insufficient in a rapidly changing world and that education must develop a sense of public responsibility. Supposedly, democracy was to be practised, not just taught in classrooms. The 1948 *Report on Asian and European Education in East Africa: An Inquiry into Indian Education in East Africa* (Kazimi 1948) and the 1949 *Report of the Select Committee on Indian Education* (Kenya and Hartwell 1949) addressed weaknesses in Asian education, especially unsuitable textbooks, scarce opportunities for higher studies, and the lack of technical education.

Meanwhile, African schools expanded rapidly, but their quality fell due to poor administration and supervision. The 1949 Beecher Commission Report recommended (i) strict supervision, (ii) expansion of teacher training, (iii) the importance of practical education for Africans, (iv) the need for government and voluntary agencies to teach Christian principles, and (v) the restructuring education by introducing a 4-4-4 system to replace the 6-2-4 system.<sup>147</sup> Beecher's ten-year

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<sup>146</sup> Rural Kenyan schools like I attended continue to do this today, whereas urban schools use English as the language of instruction from pre-school.

<sup>147</sup> The numbers 4-4-4 denote the number of years in school for each stage of the system, i.e., primary, secondary, and tertiary.

development programme advocated providing, within ten years, half the school-age population a six-year primary course, and changing from the vernaculars in primary schools to English in secondary schools (Beecher Commission 1949).<sup>148</sup> Thus, for native Kenyans, “the local languages are taught through primary school and then abruptly dropped for English in secondary school.” Their local languages are left underdeveloped, and, for English, people had “no early foundation to build from. So, you have half-constructed houses of knowledge. Using a different metaphor, you have half-baked, and imperfectly bilingual, individuals.”<sup>149</sup> “In Uganda, Kiswahili lost its status as one of the regional vernaculars and was eventually phased out of the school system altogether” (Mazrui and Mazrui 1996b). However, Uganda introduced Kiswahili as a compulsory subject in primary schools in 2003 (Njogu 2003: 79). Although UNESCO emphasized the significance of mother-tongue instruction in 1953, “English ... [became] compulsory in the primary school-leaving examination” (Ladefoged, Glick and Cripser 1973:93). The Beecher Report also advocated teaching agriculture in primary schools; and it remained the basis for government policy on African education throughout the 1950s during Kenya’s liberation war.

Endorsing the Beecher report, the 1952 Binns Commission termed teaching in Kiswahili, “a diversion of limited funds” and claimed that it “impeded the learning of both vernacular and English” (Binns 1952; Nuffield Foundation and the Colonial Office 1953). The commission recommended preserving selected tribal vernaculars and eliminating Kiswahili “except where it was the local language” (Bogonko 1990:45). “The 1955 Dow East Africa Commission also supported” focussing on the English language, “reflecting a wider shift in British colonial policy

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<sup>148</sup> The 1949 Beecher Commission report to the Advisory Council of African Education recommended a Ten-Year Plan for African Education where “out of every 100 students who entered school, 75% would leave after four years, and out of the 25% who continued, 75% more would leave after two years.” Hence, roughly 6% of enrolled Africans would pass the Kenya African Preliminary Examination (KAPE), the lowest examination for which the colonial government issued a certificate at the time (Barnett and Njama 1966:77).

<sup>149</sup> Modupe Olaogun, correspondence on 28 May 2021.

in the last decade of the empire”, a shift that points to Britain creating a class of post-colonial rulers who would defend British interests as enshrined in the *Sessional Paper No. 77 of 1957* (Powell 2002:235 and Kenya 1957). Thus, “the purpose of the development programme of 1957–1960 was to maintain European standards, raise Asian standards, and create African standards as a way of reducing the imbalances in education programmes” (Kenya 1957 and Eshiwani 1986:8).

The first four years of primary school—where most Africans terminated their education—were taught in the local languages (vernacular), and the upper primary school, in English. Championed under what was called the New Primary Approach, the English medium programme was introduced in Asian schools in 1957 and, in African schools, in 1961. Though Kiswahili was introduced later, English remains the medium of instruction in urban government schools.<sup>150</sup> Still faced with racially segregated schools and curricula, the political party agitating for independence—Kenya African National Union (KANU)—and the colonial government sought the World Bank’s help in evaluating Kenya’s education and economic development in 1962. The bank’s analysis (i) affirmed education as critical for economic development, (ii) identified education as the main agent for urgently supplying high-level African manpower for independent Kenya, and (iii) emphasized education’s ability to create a sense of service and national unity (World Bank 1962:11).

Commissioned by the Political and Economic Planning (a think tank) and the Institute of Race Relations, the Hunter (1963) report stressed the country’s need to balance between maintaining academic standards, expanding secondary education, and reorganizing the curriculum. The report recommended “Africanizing” the curriculum and the teaching staff to meet the need for

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<sup>150</sup> In East Africa, Kenya lags in promoting Kiswahili nationally. In 2001, Uganda included Kiswahili in the syllabus from primary school to university while Tanzania’s Arusha Declaration under Mwalimu Nyerere introduced policies for Kiswahili to be the language of instruction in schools and for administration.

developing secondary education. The curriculum for literature was shelved and subsumed under the general plan to Africanize the curriculum.

## **Section C: Kenya National Goals of Education and the High-School Curricula**

In the 1960s, the newly decolonized African governments viewed education as the panacea for development; and, within the context of that continental discourse,<sup>151</sup> independent Kenya's educational curricular debates occurred. Those debates emphasized education's role as the magic tool to spur development by enhancing the country's political, socioeconomic, nation-building, and self-identity spheres.<sup>152</sup> Implicit in the interrelated concepts of education, identity, and development were the institutional forms and underlying values of the Western industrial nations' belief that schools could accelerate development by producing knowledge, skills, and values useful in creating and maintaining a nation.<sup>153</sup>

Soliciting international help for educational planning, African governments persuaded the United Nations Environmental, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) to help organize regional conferences to discuss African educational and developmental strategies.

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<sup>151</sup> See footnote 12.

<sup>152</sup> Financial help from the African-American Students Foundation allowed Thomas Mboya's Airlift Africa project (1959) to fly 81 Kenyan students to Class I accredited colleges across the United States (among them, one Barack Obama). Britain's colonial government opposed the project, alleging that Uganda's Makerere College was good enough, thus prompting the U.S. State Department to turn down Mboya's initial requests for financial assistance. However, in 1960, Mboya received financial help from the newly elected President John F. Kennedy, enabling Airlift Africa to grant about 330 scholarships to students from Uganda, Tanganyika, Northern Rhodesia, Southern Rhodesia, and Nyasaland (Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Malawi) to study in the USA (Odari 2011).

<sup>153</sup> Independence lumped together under one nation of people who previously shared little or nothing besides a geographical region and a colonizer. The colonial government encouraged disunity by deliberately sowing discord among linguistically different peoples.

The first meeting in Addis Ababa stressed Africa's need for more and better education, emphasizing academic reform, partly by including African history and culture in the curricula. National priorities included (i) the desire to supply the high-level manpower required by the emerging nations and (ii) the massive finances needed to achieve this. Detailed planning for liberal arts and social science subjects (e.g., literature) was not high on the agenda (UNESCO 1961). Subsequent meetings for African ministers of education examined staffing, teaching, curriculum, adult literacy, educational funding and planning, and the organization and financing of scientific research and technical training in Africa to improve the economy through industrialization.<sup>154</sup> All meetings emphasized the role of education in the economic and social (not political) progress of rural areas and a vaguely worded "need to Africanize" the curriculum.<sup>155</sup> In strategizing about funding African education, the conferences focused on the specific disciplines deemed crucial for manpower training and expanding secondary schools and, hence, only vaguely alluded to the English and literature syllabi.

Trusting education to (i) provide skilled and knowledgeable manpower and (ii) inculcate values essential for maintaining productivity and unity, independent Kenya rapidly expanded higher education as an essential key to national unity and development. The new government also mandated its first education commission to study and advise it about formulating and implementing appropriate national educational policies for (i) training manpower for economic development and other national activities, (ii) expressing "the aspirations and cultural values of an independent African country", (iii) contributing to national unity, and (iv) respecting "the

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<sup>154</sup> The meetings were held in Paris (1962), Tananarive, Madagascar (1962), Kinshasa (1963), Abidjan (1964), Lagos (1964) and Tehran (1965). The Tehran Conference further emphasized the need for cooperation between the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and UNESCO. OAU was formed in May 1963.

<sup>155</sup> The emphasis on non-political education echoes colonial debates about African education and continues to be part of Kenyan education system and society "leave politics to politicians" and such pronouncements.

educational needs and capacities of children” (Ominde 1964 and 1965). The Ominde report outlined nine educational objectives that were later adopted as Kenya’s national goals of education for all school curricula, including high-school English and literature (Ominde 1965: Appendix 5).

Noting the country’s priority to Africanize its modern workforce—especially managerial positions—the Ominde report recommended recruiting Africans with merely a primary-school education as an initial fast solution in obtaining skilled African manpower. Constrained for time, the report noted that detailed curricula for specific subjects like English or literature would require “exhaustive research and experimentation involving a searching review of textbooks and other educational aids”. Hence, modifications for non-priority curricula that “remain on the agenda of educational reform as necessary changes cannot be done overnight but are rather to be effected by ... continued adaptation” (Ominde 1964:39). Thus, discussions about topics till then excluded from the school curricula—namely, Kenyan history and oral literature—were indefinitely postponed.

While the Ominde report recommended teaching in English as “the preferred medium of instruction in schools from early primary education” and compulsory teaching of Kiswahili “in primary school as a unifying force and a means for wider communication,” teaching in rural schools continued using vernaculars for the first three years of school as had been planned in 1926 (Ominde 1964:39).<sup>156</sup> The report also recommended (i) a suitable curriculum that “would emphasize knowledge and appreciation of Kenya’s history and culture ... related to the land and people of Kenya, ... to foster a sense of nationhood [by] reflecting the national goals of education” and (ii) “the formation of a body to examine and modify specific subjects in the curricula according

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<sup>156</sup> Part of the decisions taken during The Christian Mission in Africa’s International Conference in Le Zoute, Belgium, September 14 20, 1926. This conference was the third after two earlier commissions—the 1920 1921 African Education Commission (its report *Education in Africa*), and the 1924 *Education in East Africa*. Interestingly, the Belgium conference also discussed land tenure, forced labour and taxation.

to the needs of the new nation,” plus an organ that would “reflect the needs of an independent African country” (Ominde 1964:39). The new body would “detail curricular changes in specific syllabus—history, geography, agriculture, English, general science, art and craft, needlework, and domestic science” (Ominde 1964:57–60).<sup>157</sup> Accordingly, the Kenya Institute of Education (KIE) opened in 1964.<sup>158</sup> For the new nation entering the modern world, Kenya’s decision makers—based on their assumptions about modernization—sanctioned and legitimized appearances of modernity as well as the “Kenyanization” and “Africanization” of programmes. For curricular changes, MinEd formally adopted modern math as the latest and best development in the United Kingdom’s curriculum.

Besides the Ominde report, other policy documents that discussed curricula include: The Republican Constitution of Kenya, the Kenya African National Union (KANU) Manifesto (1963), *Sessional Paper #10 of 1965: African Socialism and its Application to Planning in Kenya* (Kenya 1965), education commissions reports, and the five-year development plans. *Sessional Paper #10 of 1965* was touted as crucial for Kenya’s future socioeconomic and political developmental policies (Kenya 1965). Claiming (strangely) that “the sharp class divisions in Europe had no parallel in African society nor in African socialism,” the paper emphasized rapid economic growth as the solution for most difficulties facing Kenya as it changed “from an economic dependence on agriculture to a more balanced growth ... [and] from a development of natural resources for others to a development of human and natural resources for the benefit of the people of Kenya” (Kenya

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<sup>157</sup> The report discussed language policy, but not the teaching of English and literature.

<sup>158</sup> KIE’s main functions were to develop curricular for specific subjects, coordinate teacher training, explore possibilities of consolidating training centres, and oversee the Africanization of the curricula and teaching staff. “KICD is the Successor of the Kenya Institute of Education (KIE) which was established in 1968 by Education Act, Cap 211, of the laws of Kenya, and its legal status defined in the 1976 KIE Order, issued through Legal Notice No. 105 of 1976, as provided for by the Act. Amendments to this Order are made by Legal Notice No. 144 of 1980, and Legal Notice No. 126 of 1984.” *Source*: <https://kicd.ac.ke/about-us/background-history>

1965:1 and 3). Subsequent reports on education cited the national goals outlined in the Ominde report but only discussed the high-school English and literature syllabi in general terms.<sup>159</sup>

A decade after independence saw few curricular changes. The government's 1972 *Curriculum Development Mission for Curricula* called for "more rural-oriented syllabi that would **include African folklore** [*emphasis added*], social studies, science and agriculture, home and community studies, and crafts" after concluding that the Kenyan school curriculum "was inadequate and irrelevant, [often neglecting] practical and creative subjects" (Bessey 1972:96–97). How African folklore would be incorporated into social arts was not discussed, but the report suggested a need to shift the high-school curricula's focus from examinations to courses with socioeconomic and developmental relevance because "the main curricula[r] objective for all secondary schools [is] to give students the opportunity to be adaptable and responsible" (Bessey 1972:97). The report recommended setting up a unit to (i) solicit proposals for changes in the curricula and syllabi, (ii) determine the best method to plan and execute the selected proposals, (iii) organize selected proposals, (iv) conduct research, and (v) prepare and publish materials related to curricula.<sup>160</sup> Like the Bessey report, the *1970–1974 Development Plan* also envisaged a massive expansion of education at all levels (Kenya 1970). Educational reports on curricula did not address the high-school English and literature curriculum: Gachathi (1976); Mackay (1981); Wanjigi (1983); Kamunge (1988); Ndegwa (1991); and the *Master Plan on Education and Training, 1997–2010* by the Koech Commission of Inquiry into the Education System of Kenya (1998).<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> The official documents studied include MinEd (1986) and KIE (1985) reports and the biannual KNEC syllabi.

<sup>160</sup> The unit set was KIE's Curriculum Development Unit (CDU).

<sup>161</sup> The Koech commission addressed the 8-4-4 educational system.

With the expanding education, the curricula's content and relevance in newly independent African countries were not sufficiently addressed at independence.<sup>162</sup> Though, in Kenya, the reasons given for not addressing the curricula were invariably “more urgent problems,” the lack of interest and the lingering delay in addressing the issues are no longer excusable (Beshir 1974:30). Lillis (1985:82) argues that the root cause was the “lack of a clear curriculum-policy dimension among the African independence movement”. Newly independent governments like Kenya focused on constructing new schools, turning over private schools to the government, implementing the standard curricula in previously segregated schools, training teachers, and providing equal access and opportunity to Africans. Africanizing the curricula was mere rhetoric, and the “indigenization phase of curriculum” failed to happen even after establishing KIE to oversee curricular changes as suggested by Ominde (Eshiwani 1993:170).

Curricular problems continued, and teachers and students grew dissatisfied with the largely irrelevant curricula while “experts at the Kenya Institute of Education resorted to imported curriculum packages [*sic*] because their human and financial resources were too limited” (Eshiwani 1993:160). After independence, curricula in East Africa have borrowed heavily from colonial curricula with but superficial changes. For example, contrary to expectations, at an East African conference (Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya) held in 1964 in Dar es Salaam by expatriate secondary-school teachers to prepare a new “O” level mathematics syllabus based on the British School Mathematics Project (SMP),<sup>163</sup> the Kenyan representatives—KIE and educational experts—simply adapted the British SMP and called it the School Mathematics of East Africa (SMEA) (Eshiwani 1993:169).

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<sup>162</sup> Beshir (1974); Uchendu (1979); Jansen (1989); Lillis (1985); Brock-Utne (1995)

<sup>163</sup> “O” Level refers to “ordinary level” or middle school national examinations. “A” level refers to the “Advanced Level”.

While not absolving the government, Indire (1972) and Eshiwani (1993) largely attribute the problems in the secondary-school curriculum to the British educational model that Kenya and other Commonwealth countries inherited. However, Indire called Kenya's secondary school curriculum, "elitist; the instructional methods, formal; [and] the content, irrelevant and inappropriate.... [The] curriculum emphasizes passing examinations at the expense of the acquisition of knowledge and skills and the development of attitudes appropriate for effective living" (Indire 1972 cited by Brock-Utne 1995:181). Moreover, after defining its national educational goals and those for specific syllabi, Kenya merely made superficial changes to the curricula while giving the literature curriculum scant attention. In later decades, Kenya's educational and curricular planning continued to largely ignore text selection and the role of language (including local languages) in the high-school syllabi.

## **Section D: Objectives, Goals, and Syllabi for Teaching English, Literature and History**

The objectives and modes of teaching high-school English, literature, and history are specified in numerous guides, regulations, syllabuses, and teaching-handbooks published by MinEd, KIE and KNEC.

### **English and Literature**

The English curriculum is divided into English **language, literature, and etiquette**. The English language portion comprises listening and speaking, grammar and vocabulary, reading, writing and literature.<sup>164</sup> One objective for "listening and speaking" is to "correct common

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<sup>164</sup> Each component has specific objectives, though this dissertation only provides details about the literature component of English.

mistakes in English” including those due to “the influence of other languages”.<sup>165</sup> The guidelines stress “the importance of English as an international language and a service subject” (Ominde 1965:30). MinEd aims to ensure “that English is taught properly” by emphasizing oral skills, critical reading, expanding vocabulary, language use, reading, and grammar (Kenya 1965:26).

For language courses, MinEd’s basic objective is to “acquire communication skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing” (Ominde 1965:34). Attaining fluency in English was a specific goal for the English course, which was deemed to be “best achieved by exposing the student to many different types of material in English” (MinEd 1975:8). MinEd also teaches literature as “part and parcel of language learning, because it helps a person to appreciate his cultural values as well as those of others and enhances his ability to communicate in English fluently”.<sup>166</sup> As an integral part of the English curriculum in the 8-4-4 system, literature is a significant tool for acquiring English, with specific and general guidelines for the works assigned for written and oral literature. Besides helping students acquire English, the general objectives for literature aim for a student to be able to:

- “listen and speak intelligently in English in different situations;
- demonstrate acceptable habits both in spoken and written communication;
- identify and appreciate his cultural foundations as expressed in both oral and written literature;
- understand and appreciate the literature of the peoples of East Africa, Africa, and the rest of the world;
- relate literature to his everyday experience; and
- appreciate the importance of English as a tool of fostering understanding among peoples” (Ominde 1965:18; MinEd and KIE 1985:3).

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<sup>165</sup> Mother-tongue interference is one of the categories for grading high-school English and literature during the annual national examinations.

<sup>166</sup> MinEd and KIE (1985:1). Senior MinEd officers stressed the significance of literature as a tool for acquiring language (various interviews with KIE, KNEC, and MinEd officials). The 8-4-4 syllabus has a more elaborate section about oral literature than the earlier education system.

For literature, the detailed goals include “additional specifications for oral literature fieldwork as MinEd attaches much importance to oral literature” (MinEd 1986:30). Written literature includes poems, plays, novels, and short stories, while oral literature is “narratives, poems (sung and recited), proverbs, riddles, tongue twisters, and children’s games” (MinEd and KIE 1985:11; MinEd 1986:31). Literature aims to expose the learner to “a wider variety of written texts to develop further literary appreciation and critical analysis” and assisting the “learner to develop basic literary skills such as analysis, appreciating theme, plot, characterization, language use, rhythm, imagery and style”.<sup>167</sup> MinEd recommends “various books of poems, collections or anthologies from time to time” (MinEd and KIE 1985:10–12).

Learners are expected to (i) “appreciate and apply, where necessary, certain technical terms often used in criticism of novels and short stories such as narrative techniques, flashback, character and caricature, irony and satire” and to “study, analyse and appreciate” a variety of poems from the recommended texts for meaning, style, language use, personification, imagery, creation of atmosphere, alliteration, tone, form, rhythm, assonance, and other literary devices (MinEd and KIE 1985:12). However, students are cautioned that “the poem set for examination at the end of form four need not be taken from any of the recommended poetry books” (MinEd and KIE 1985:11). Novels and short stories “should aim at more in-depth appreciation and critical analysis of plot, character, themes, [and] patterns of images or symbols than the mere knowledge of the story.”

For oral literature, MinEd emphasizes developing the “learner’s ability to analyse the literary value of the narrative and [its] dramatic techniques and to create the atmosphere and tone for field research” (MinEd and KIE 1985:11, 15, 18–19). A detailed fieldwork research appendix suggests place, time, and dates for collecting, transcribing, and translating material from original languages

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<sup>167</sup> Two novels per term are supposed to be read.

to English, analysing data, and submitting finished projects to KNEC.<sup>168</sup> MinEd suggests analysing theme, characterization, language use, and style, besides requiring the learner to do “at least three projects covering at least three forms of oral literature during the first two years of secondary education” (MinEd and KIE 1985:11).

As for etiquette, the last portion of the English and literature syllabi, is considered “integral to the curriculum because the fundamental aim of education is to develop an all-round human being who, while gaining mental competence, cultivates consideration for, sympathy with, and respect for other members of his society. Since these qualities must be expressed in his language, the syllabus therefore stresses that students acquire acceptable habits in their language” (MinEd and KIE 1985:2). Proper etiquette is achievable if the learner cultivates “good manners and is encouraged to emulate good habits, which will be reflected in his manner of speech and vocabulary. Owing to the peculiar cultural background of the learner, his familiarity with words and phrases of common courtesy and politeness such as *Thank you, Sir, Madam, Mr., Mrs., Excuse me, May I, Please,* and *You’re welcome* is of vital importance and should be maintained” (MinEd and KIE 1985:16; KNEC 1988:24–25).

## History

The discourse around Kenya’s historiography as a nation as defined or practised through the national goals of education and the selection of texts for high-school English, literature, and history syllabi is significant for modern Kenya. Sections 15.0 and 19.0 of the history syllabus aim to teach

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<sup>168</sup> In the mid-1980s, high-school-literature students did oral literature projects over two years; and these were submitted to the Kenya National Examination (KNEC) for grading. Lacking professionals to grade these projects within the allocated time, KNEC finally awarded the students grades for their projects. Though the scandal of the unmarked/ungraded student projects is still a public secret, the oral literature projects were henceforth abandoned. In the 1990s, the Kenya Oral Literature Association (KOLA), of which I was secretary, tried—in vain—to get this material from KNEC.

political philosophies and “developments in Kenya since Independence” (KNEC 1997:189–91).

In *Political Development and the Struggle for Independence in Kenya 1919–1963*, Section 5.0

aims to teach the origins, activities, and development of:

- “early political and social movements;
- independent churches and schools;
- political organization after 1945;
- nationalist and trade-union movements;
- the constitutional and political changes leading to independence; and
- the roles played by leading Kenyan personalities in the 20th century.”

Section 19.0 aims to teach (i) the origin and development of national philosophies, (ii) the contributions of *Sessional Paper #10 of 1965* to development planning, (iii) political developments and constitutional amendments since independence, (iv) Kenya’s strategies for economic development; and (v) the cultural developments in Kenya since independence (Kenya 1965).

The syllabi cite “Political Organization after 1945” as including only: (i) Kenya African Union (KAU), (ii) District Associations, (iii) Kenya African National Union (KANU), and (iv) Kenya African Democratic Union. Notably, the period between 1952 and 1963, when the KLFA waged a guerrilla war against British colonialism is **omitted** while the constitutional changes that are discussed only refer to those just before and after independence (1960–63). Similarly, the only biographies of Kenyan leaders included are Jomo Kenyatta, Tom Mboya, and Ronald Ngara (all KANU members), which **omits all** contemporary opposition politics, political parties, and politicians (e.g., the Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU), Odinga, Kaggia, Pinto, Kimathi, and pre-independence leaders; Me Ketalili, Koitalel, Muindi Mbingu, Waiyaki, Mary Muthoni Njanjiru) and the issues with which they were involved. Nor do the syllabi include any biographies about KLFA leaders or fighters. When a fighter like J. M. Kariuki is mentioned, it is in passing and merely presents a photo accompanied by dismissive, derisive commentary while explaining how radicalism hurt KANU:

Radicalism once more developed within KANU and started causing the government problems. The radicals launched scathing attacks on the government from the back benches in parliament and from the University of Nairobi. In parliament, the radicals' attacks on the government were led by J.M. Kariuki. He was a populist MP from Nyandarua North who regarded himself as a man of the people. He advocated for people's rights to free medical services, education and land. He became very popular with peasants and students (Wycliffe Oboka et al. 2005:139).

## **Section E: Curricular Rhetoric and the National Educational Goals**

Kenya's goals of education and the objectives for literature or other curricula echo the British Empire's views of the colonial subject expressed by Eliot, Ainsworth, Hopley, and others, views that widely shaped colonial rule and education in British East Africa. The tenets of these imperial views were widespread and have persisted in educational and other neocolonial Kenyan national documents, including the national constitution. In education, remnants of these views manifest themselves in the text selection for high-school English and literature syllabi.

Overall, Kenya's national goals of education and the objectives for teaching high school echo aspects of colonial native policies for education, development, Christianity, and language. Education still emphasizes the development of an individual's character and the need for unity to create a specific type of citizen for the nation. Whereas the colonial administration's ideology was expressed in an elaborate code of etiquette and ritual that emphasized good manners and discouraged public expressions of hostility or disagreement among the administrators, the aspirations for good manners for Africans began with their command of English, the language of a gentleman. Administrators were supposedly gentlemen whose gentlemanly ideal—i.e., a self-assured air of command combined naturally with social poise and good manners. Etiquette remains part of the English and literature syllabi in Kenya.

My investigation about the etiquette section of the English and literature syllabi elicited different responses. Some interviewees stated they had not even noticed it; others dismissed and minimized it as “meaning nothing” and suggested I “ignore it”; and yet others liked it. A former

MinEd Director of Education, however, explained that the etiquette section and the social science syllabi (called “social ethics”) were imposed by a prior Director of Education and simply persisted thereafter.<sup>169</sup> The former director recalled many battles with MinEd officials who, fearing repercussions and political backlash, dared not remove sections that had long been part of the curricula or even carry-overs from the colonial syllabi.

Christianity permeates Kenya’s educational system. With few exceptions during my interviews about text selection, MinEd and other educational officials described Kenya as a Christian country following Christian principles and variously opined that the texts selected for English and literature syllabi needed to reflect this.

*Kenya is a Christian country, so unchristian poems (or other material) are really unacceptable. [Similarly], anti-government, anti-president or too critical materials are not acceptable; [and] literature texts for the English curriculum are selected with the unwritten understanding that Kenya is a Christian country [italics added].*<sup>170</sup>

These quotations are from two senior MinEd members of the selection committee, who requested anonymity. Members of the selection committee also indicated that what they deselected was further vetted by a “**higher vetting committee**” answerable directly to the president. About this, they could or would not divulge much, including its members’ names.

During the tenure of one MinEd assistant education director I interviewed, some churches objected to *Mission to Kala*’s “obscene language”—the same charge that churches had levelled in their petition to remove Achebe’s *A Man of the People* from the syllabus. The director explained that, in 1982, one high school—Moi Forces Academy<sup>171</sup>—was accused of fostering Ngugi’s cronies at a time when President Moi attacked Ngugi for being a millionaire from the sale of his

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<sup>169</sup> interview with a former MinEd director and an assistant who both requested anonymity

<sup>170</sup> interviewee with KIE official, anonymity requested. Other interviewees shared this view.

<sup>171</sup> One of the numerous educational institutions named after former Kenyan dictator, Daniel Arap Moi, Kenyan president from 1978–2002.

books during one presidential address. This address spurred MinEd to immediately call its permanent secretary, demanding to know why he had not been given the syllabus before it was formalized (normally, the syllabus is **never given** to the **minister**). The harassed permanent secretary urgently called the Director of Education, demanding to know why forbidden books by Ngugi were still in the syllabus. After frantically looking for and failing to locate his assistant director (my interviewee), the director reportedly sped off to hide in his rural home, leaving the assistant director to face Moi's wrath alone (Moi had demanded an immediate audience with the Director of Education). The assistant director explained:

Throughout the night, I wrote a synopsis for every text taught in the high-school English and literature syllabus, stating the objective[s] and rationale for [its] inclusion. From 9 [a.m.] to 1 p.m. That Wednesday, I was at State House waiting for Moi. Finally, he came in and I showed him the synopses of the texts, explaining why each was selected. Moi was actually pretty good about it; and he said he had no problem with the texts and was satisfied with my explanation. He said he had been given the wrong impression. I was aghast as I had expected the worst for myself, especially because, [on] the day of Moi's outburst, the director had written a letter to me and copied it to the Permanent Secretary before going into hiding. The letter was entitled "You were not working".<sup>172</sup>

The assistant director confided, "Sometimes, the criteria for including texts are haphazard and political." For example, in 1989–90, *The Chameleon's Second Delivery*<sup>173</sup> "was withdrawn in the middle of the year because of other reasons than literary [*sic*] .... It was perhaps because of Ngugi's story. I'm not sure. [On another occasion], in 1977, [the] selections from *Poems from East Africa* excluded Jared Angira's and Richard Nturu's poems as they were perceived to be too political".<sup>174</sup> He further explained that, in 1983, oral literature became part of national examinations, but the books KNEC prescribed for this component were not taught. Though local small publishers (e.g., Phoenix) had offered to publish the needed material, "the government refused these services".

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<sup>172</sup> interview with the former assistant director for education

<sup>173</sup> KIE (1985a)

<sup>174</sup> interview with the former assistant director for education

When the Ominde report was written, chunks of colonial educational objectives—e.g., the sections on national unity, character, development, progress, and etiquette—seem to have been copied and pasted into Kenya’s education goals and subsequently incorporated whenever the syllabi are rewritten. For instance, part of the required qualities for colonial administrators spelled out in the confidential Colonial Office’s *Appointments Handbook* are echoed in the section on etiquette (Newbolt 1948). The required qualities complement the unwritten code of manners that prescribed the administrators’ proper relations with equals, superiors, and inferiors.<sup>175</sup> The *Appointments Handbook* avers that:

a man’s natural qualities derive partly from inheritance and home environment, and partly from school. If he comes from stock that has proved its worth, generation by generation, in the professions or in public service, if he has been reared in the faith that duty and chivalry are of more account than ambition and self-seeking, if his education has broadened his mind in that faith and taught him the meaning of that responsibility, then he has many of the qualities for which you are looking. The truth of this is incontestable (Heussler 1963:76).

Though ostensibly a liberal document, Ominde’s report just states vaguely worded phrases about the basic role of education, phrases that are recycled in successive curricular guides, for example: “Education is a function of the Kenya nation; it must foster a sense of nationhood and promote national unity; [and] education in Kenya must serve the people of Kenya and the needs of Kenya without discrimination” (Ominde 1964:25). The rationale for compiling oral literatures of different Kenyan communities was to foster “self-realization and self-confidence as genuine members of an African society” (Nandwa and Bukenya 1986:5). In turn, the collected material was to be used to “cultivate and enhance the creation of unity and nationhood” and “to negate the distorting influence that continues to adversely affect our people” (Kabira and Mutahi 1988:3). Besides the elaborate, rhetorical notes about oral literature fieldwork, how *fostering self-*

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<sup>175</sup> In 1948, a Kenyan provincial commissioner could still write that “good manners are really the basis of good race relations” (Berman 1990:97).

*realization* and *cultivating unity* were to be judged, accomplished, and measured was not defined; and, in 1998, orature was still marginalized in the curricula.

The language and ideas in the Ominde report often echo colonial education and administrative reports, e.g., about self- or group-identity. Kenyan colonial administrators were specifically trained to see themselves as a brotherhood with strong reliance upon the loyalty of individual officers. As stipulated in a 1929 official handbook for administrative cadets, each should see himself as “no longer an isolated individual but [as] a member of an organization to which he owes all the loyalty and alliance that he can command”. Thus, future administrators were educated and trained to have an *esprit de corps* for ruling and administering a British colony. Ominde’s report attributes a similar spirit—albeit less clearly defined—among Kenyan learners. The purpose of training and educating was stated as merely to help to mould a patriotic independent Kenyan citizen, a process that was silent about gendering, nationalism, and lived realities of these citizens.<sup>176</sup>

Education is key to these constructions. For example, to construct the modern Kenyan citizen, colonial education began with “the deliberate undervaluing of Kenyan people’s culture, art, dances, religions, history, geography, education and literature” (Thiong’o 1981:16). Ngugi explains two aspects of colonial alienation (part of which is education), involving

an active (or passive) distancing of oneself from the reality around; and an active (or passive) identification with that which is most external to one’s environment. It starts with a deliberate disassociation of the language of conceptualization, of thinking, of formal education, of mental development, from the language of daily interaction in the home and in the community. It is like separating the mind from the body so that they are occupying two unrelated linguistic spheres in the same person. On a larger social scale, it is like producing a society of bodiless heads and headless bodies (Thiong’o 1981:28).

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<sup>176</sup> Gendering is the daily process of socially producing or constructing roles and expectations for women and men in societies. Hence, feminine and masculine social roles and behaviour are not biological or fixed but vary in time and space as they are learnt behaviour. Much has been written about gender and its closely related themes: feminism, equity, post-colonialism (Moraga and Anzaldua 1981; Mohanty, Russo and Torres 1991).

The Ominde report is also notable for what it omits. While repeatedly invoking an undefined “national unity,” the report suggests the future application of education to the religious, social, and cultural aspects of independent Kenyans. Simultaneously, it maintains a studied silence about education’s role in political development:

Education must promote social equality and remove divisions of race, tribe, and religion. It must pay especial [*sic*] attention to training in social obligation and responsibility. ... Schools must respect the cultural traditions of the peoples of Kenya, both as expressed in social institutions and relationships. ... Education must foster respect for [the] human personality (Ominde 1964:25).

The emphatically non-political tone of Ominde’s report is not accidental. It was part of colonial debates and policies about the role of African education, debates, and policies that continue to be part of the Kenyan educational system, including in selecting the textbooks for the English and literature syllabi. Indeed, Kenya settlers denounced missionary schools when they gave Africans an education deemed to exceed mere reading and writing since, they thought, education for Africans should not aim to produce literate discontented Africans bent on attacking the colonial regime, but instead, people happily working as artisans or as workers on settlers’ farms. Thus, the non-political emphasis by Ominde’s report (and Kenya’s goals of education) has a corollary in the training of successful colonial administrators to be neutral, above politics, and disinterested. Thus, an administrator was

required to hold impartially the balance between interests that may be conflicting, but are probably complementary, to reconcile the differences and harmonize the views of different races and communities [and,] above all, to avoid accentuating real or apparent divergences by proclaiming himself to be a partisan or champion of any one section.<sup>177</sup>

The gentleman “all-rounder”—preferably an Oxbridge-trained “right man” for the colonies—had passed competitive examinations introduced in the 1920s to increase his reliability and

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<sup>177</sup> Qualities emphasized in the official handbook *Life and Duties of an Administrative Officer in Kenya Colony* (Kenya 1929).

competence on the ground. Toward this end, the reforms in Britain's Home Civil Service were preceded by those in the Indian Civil Service in the 1850s.<sup>178</sup> The model Indian district officer was the "all-rounder" of the British education system. Both the Indian Civil Service and the Home Civil Service (starting in the 1870s) held open, competitive examinations for recruitment that

did not involve attracting the ill-bred and the ill-balanced middle class into the Indian Service. ... Like the English cabinet and the English aristocracy, the Indian civil service was to be open to gentlemen who had inherited breeding and culture, and to those of the middle class who made themselves gentlemen by acquiring the same breeding and culture (Moses 1914:61).

Consciously avoiding "the brilliant or markedly intellectual student, the introspective man who might question received ideas," the Colonial Office finally selected a man of "modest intellectual achievement, athletic prowess, a taste for outdoor life" and, implicitly, an unquestioned acceptance of the "aristocratic ethos of rule and the ideals of imperialism" (Berman 1990:100). Fearing that undesirable candidates might be selected through the examinations, officials and politicians manipulated the selections by ensuring that the "exams gave preference to the right public-school and Oxbridge men". The selection and training created "a unified higher-state administrative cadre of the dominant class in Britain, sometimes sharing or not sharing aristocratic or bourgeois origin, a common background, ideology and culture" (Berman 1990:98). Higher positions in "the armed forces, the established church, politics and major sectors of capitalist enterprise like the banking and finance capital of the City of London" were filled by members of this cadre whose training emphasized being non-political (Berman 1990:98).

Ominde's report also discussed language, a component of the high-school English and literature syllabi, which, in the debates about Kenyan educational curricula, has focused on English and Kiswahili though Kenya has over 50 languages. Through colonization, Kenya experienced a

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<sup>178</sup> Parris notes that the term *civil servant* was apparently first used in India to differentiate civilian officials from the military officials of the East India Company (Moses 1914:39).

“linguistic rationalization based around English and one national language” (Powell 2002:25). Hence, the English-medium programme initiated before independence was transformed into the New Primary Approach (NPA) project in Nairobi.<sup>179</sup> Financed and largely operated by Ford Foundation personnel and using books published by Oxford University Press (OUP), this approach aimed “for effective use of English as the language of instruction,” but it “began to fail in the 1970s” (Eshiwani 1993:162). Similar to the British in East Africa who treated both Kiswahili and Islam suspiciously, the Ominde Commission thought English would produce national unity and progress faster than other languages.<sup>180</sup> In 1919, the colonial coast Provincial Commissioner, Hobley, linked Kiswahili with the “spirit of Islamization” and opposed it as a *lingua franca*, arguing that Kiswahili “would be unfit to reach the innermost thoughts of those undergoing conversion to Christianity” (East African Protectorate Education Commission 1919:55).

Rooted in Arabic and various Bantu languages, Kiswahili is widely spoken by coastal Kenyans, many of whom are Muslims. English, on the other hand, was introduced as the vehicle for Christian, capitalist, and secular values. Though fascinated by Kiswahili, British administrators like Hobley feared it would spread ideas incompatible with Christianity as depicted in Said’s concept of orientalism (Said 1978). Interestingly, in India and Malaya where Islam had large followings, the British were more pragmatic, e.g., honouring an agreement forbidding Christian proselytization in areas (in Malaya) nominally under sultanic rule (Asmah 1996:513–33 cited by Powell (2002:266).

While early British East African missionaries used Kiswahili, other local languages, and English, suspicions about the links between Kiswahili and Islam gradually led missionaries to

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<sup>179</sup> The New Primary Approach aimed at involving the pupils in discovering general principles for themselves and actively participating in group activities with the teacher as guide.

<sup>180</sup> See the reference to Binns (1952) on p. 75.

promote other local languages rather than Kiswahili.<sup>181</sup> Meanwhile, settlers resisted teaching English to natives while the colonial officials chose Kiswahili for commercial and administrative purposes. Kiswahili, a common language for labourers from different linguistic groups, had spread outside the educational system as a language of religion and early trade along the coast and limited parts of the inland among commercial communities.<sup>182</sup> Colonial officers saw Kiswahili as an intermediary language able to help them to create centralized command structures and other chains of loyalty. Now, however, to protest linguistic colonial and neocolonial authoritarianism, Kenya's renowned writer Ngugi wa Thiong'o writes in Kikuyu.

Kenyatta concluded his first parliamentary speech in Kiswahili in 1964 and declared it the national language in 1969. In 1974, he decreed that "the basis of any independent government is a national language, and we can no longer continue aping our former colonizers" (Crystal 2012:124). Though opposed by Attorney-General Njonjo, KANU's parliamentarians promptly backed Kenyatta's prioritization of Kiswahili; and Kenya's Information Minister, Robert Matano, threatened to fire bureaucrats not proficient in Kiswahili (Mazrui and Mazrui 1996a). In 1979, Moi restored English for parliamentary debate. Kenyan politicians promote the national language as a symbol of unity whereas the bureaucrats support English as the language of education and international aid while minimizing and discouraging other Kenyan languages.

Since 1963, local Kenyan languages continued to be the teaching medium for pre-school and the first three years of primary education in rural schools, a policy adopted in the 1926 European Conference on African Education in Le Zoute, Belgium and still stands though many educational commissions and handbooks erroneously present it as changing. After third grade, the learning of

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<sup>181</sup> The Binns Commission thought [that] promoting Kiswahili [was] a diversion of limited funds (Binns 1952).

<sup>182</sup> See Mazrui and Mazrui (1998).

local native languages and linguistic art forms is dropped from the syllabus, and classes are taught in English, or sometimes, Kiswahili, or both. While the basic objective for the English language syllabus is to “acquire communication skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing”, the educational documents omit any mention of how Kenyan schools have often used insults, degradation, and physical punishments to coerce students to learn English and not speak, study, and appreciate their native languages (Ominde 1964:34).

As one of Kenya’s (and international) languages and a necessary tool giving access to new and developing technologies in our globalized world, English must be taught. However, teaching and learning English need not be a process to squash local languages and debase the speakers of other Kenya languages and their cultures—inhibiting the flowering of those culture’s authors and artists—often cruelly. In rural areas, once English takes over in the fourth year, the teachers enforce this rule with the use of a “monitor”, a small wooden disk or object.<sup>183</sup> In the morning, a student receives the “monitor” to pass on to any student discovered speaking their mother tongue instead of English. That mother-tongue speaker (the new monitor-holder) would then sneak around hunting for the next victim as the cycle continues. Each day, the last student in possession of the monitor is publicly humiliated and punished, e.g., made to kneel during the parade or walk along their class’s line telling each classmate “I am a fool” or “I’m a donkey”. They might also have to walk with these words written in chalk on their forehead or get the number of strokes of the cane according to the teacher’s whim. These humiliations and cane strokes, the general practice up to at least 1998, must surely scar many students physically and psychologically. Culturally, these institutionalized cruelties amount to cultural genocide quite like the abusive rules and practices

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<sup>183</sup> A *monitor* is a small (wooden) disk or object circulated daily in a class, the bearer of which is caned at the end of the day. While the government has recently prohibited caning in schools, it still happens, and the monitor survives. I have not researched how the caning policy has been implemented.

that segregated boarding schools imposed on the children of the Indigenous Americans and the Aboriginal People in the United States of America and Canada to undermine or break the transmission of their diverse cultural heritages.

Ominde proposed immediate research to prepare a detailed recommendation for English, literature, and history among other subjects. Ominde's report appears, however, to have been shelved; and the high-school English and literature curriculum continued with few changes. Significant attempts to change the English and literature curriculum happened in the mid-1970s, not so much by MinEd, but due to what has come to be regionally known as "the great Nairobi literature debate of 1968" when professors Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Henry-Owuor Anyumba, and Taban Lo Liyong of UoN's English department wrote a memo entitled "*On the Abolition of the English Department*".<sup>184</sup> *Abolition*, said to have "swept through East Africa like wildfire" (p'Bitek 1972:7) called for the abolition of the English Department as then constituted, i.e., to shift the centrality of English literature to African and other literatures. Opposing UoN English department's proposed plans that continued to hold English Literature as the centre with other literature "for comparative purposes", Ngugi and colleagues questioned the "underlying assumption" about "the English tradition and the emergence of the modern West [as] the central root of Kenya's and Africa's consciousness and cultural heritage" (Thiong'o 1986:89).

*Abolition* recommended (i) renaming the department "the literature department," (ii) making African literature the core course, (iii) diversifying the literature taught in the department, and (iv) demanding "nothing less than a total inversion of colonial literary values" (Lillis 1986:65). *Abolition* proposed a curriculum based on the understanding that "knowing oneself and one's

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<sup>184</sup> Henceforth, this memo is herein simply referred to as *Abolition*. Papers discussing the crucial 1974 conference on "The Teaching of African Literature in Kenyan Schools are presented in Gachukia and Akivaga (1978). *Abolition* is appended to Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Homecoming* (1972).

environment [first] was the proper basis of [learning about] the world” (Thiong’o 1993:9). MinEd incorporated the concept in its later handbooks in a shortened phrase “from the known to the unknown:”

We reject the primacy of English literature and culture. The aim, in short, should be to orient ourselves towards placing Kenya, East Africa, and then Africa in the centre. All other things are to be considered in their relevance to our situation and their contribution towards understanding ourselves (Thiong’o 1992[1986]):94).

Through *Abolition*, UoN’s literature department “attempted to redefine the nation” as the cultural nationalism in the university extended quickly to the country’s secondary schools (Sicherman 1998:129). “Ngugi and others believed that culture mediated by education and literature could help “coalesce an amalgam of people into a nation” (Gachukia and Akivaga 1978:ii). Publicizing the debate, Ochieng observed that university curricular reforms would “have little impact” as long as primary school children learned “meaningless European nursery rhymes,” and secondary school students continued to write examinations set and marked in Cambridge, England (Ochieng 1969:6–7).

*Abolition* sparked debates that raged on in various fora through 1969, peaking in the international 1974 Conference about *The Teaching of African Literature in Kenyan Schools* jointly organized in Nairobi School by MinEd’s Inspectorate of English and UoN’s Literature Department (Thiong’o 1986:96–102). Renowned local academic participants included Kimani Gecau, Ngugi wa Thiong’o, Eddah Gachukia, Taban Lo Liyong, Owuor Anyumba, Okot p’Bitek, Gacheche Waruinge, Kichamu Akivaga, and Micere Mugo. Other conference attendees included

two hundred teachers of Literature and English; the staff of the departments of literature and of the faculties of education [UoN and KU]; delegates from departments of literatures of Dar Es Salaam, Makerere, and Malawi universities; representatives of the Inspectorate of English [MinEd and KIE]; observers from the [MinEd] in Tanzania and Uganda; representatives from the then East African Community; East African Examination Council; [EALB]; trade union delegates from the Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT); and four publishers: Jomo Kenyatta Foundation, [EALB, EAPH and OUP]; delegates from the University of West Indies at Mona, Jamaica, the University of Ife, Nigeria and from Auckland University, New Zealand (Thiong’o 1986:96).

The conference's working committee addressed colonial Kenya's education as "an instrument of colonial policy designed to educate [Kenyans] into accepting their role as the colonized" (Thiong'o 1986:96)<sup>185</sup>. Hence, as the education inherited at independence, it continued to "alienate Kenyan children from their own experience [and] identity in an independent African country" (ibid.). Concluding that the language and literature syllabi were "irrelevant to the needs of the country" as they were organized such that "a Kenyan child knows himself through London and New York", the conference recommended a complete overhaul "at all levels of our education system and particularly in schools" (Thiong'o 1986:97). More than being irrelevant, the literature taught is often psychologically and nationally harmful. The call to Africanize high-school English and literature syllabi extended also to the institutions, structures, and personnel that determined the philosophy, policy, and content of school curricula (ibid)... "moving from the known to the unknown", with African literature taking a central role in the syllabus, along with other geographical zones and people with whom Africa shares identities, cultural phenomenon, like Caribbeans and African-Americans, as well as people with whom Africa shares a history of oppression and struggle like Indians, Malaysians Vietnamese, among others.<sup>186</sup>

The conference and the nationalist literary debates gradually influenced some university graduates sufficiently to join MinEd and its associated bodies and make slight changes in the literature syllabus. More diverse texts were selected in high schools between 1975 and 1985.<sup>187</sup> The conference critics argued that it "contained abundant seeds of failure," specifically an adherence by a dominant faction to the "extreme position" of the Abolitionists along with partial

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<sup>185</sup> The elected working committee produced a detailed 73-page report entitled *Teaching of Literature in Kenya Secondary Schools—Recommendations of the Working Committee* (Thiong'o 1986:97)

<sup>186</sup> The EAEC rejected the conference's proposed syllabus revisions, which would also have included oral literature (See p. 102).

<sup>187</sup> See Table 6.

ignorance about the current syllabus and the needs of the schools (Walmsley 1979:42–43 cited by Sicherman 1985:136). For instance, the conference claimed that “Almost all books used in our schools are written by foreign authors; out of 57 texts of drama studied at EAACE level in our schools between 1968 and 1972 only one was African” (Thiong’o 1992[1986]:100 cited by Mazrui 1996:66). The above statement about “foreign authors” and “only one African text” taught is an exaggeration and misconception about who qualifies as “African” because texts by Africans selected in that period include: Gordimer, *A World of Strangers*; Ijimere, *The Imprisonment of Obatala and Everyman*; Paton, *Cry the Beloved Country*; Abraham, *Mine Boy*; Soyinka, *Kongi’s Harvest* and *The Trials of Brother Jero*; Thiong’o, *The River Between*; Mphahlele, *Down Second Avenue*; Laye, *The African Child*; and Beti, *Mission to Kala*.

The conference brought a few changes in the high-school English and literature curriculum though most of those changes were largely reversed from 1985 onwards. The proposals have been faulted for having been hastily put together, resulting in a “badly designed curriculum” (Lillis 1985:87; Walmsley 1979:36–58). A more radical pedagogical handbook resulting from a 1980 follow-up conference was not published. More significantly, however, the movement to change the literature curriculum initiated by Ngugi and others failed because the movement’s radicalism threatened the dominant ideology espoused by the government, which resisted attempts “to change the curriculum and cultural status quo” (Lillis 1985).

The 1980s brought a wave of unprecedented political repression and persecution particularly to Kenyan artists, teachers, activists, writers, and publishers, forcing those “delving into the earlier forbidden areas of our culture and history to watch out” (Gikandi 1987:71). The political repression filtered into the English and literature syllabi as, increasingly, it became difficult to implement curricular decisions in a country where presidential addresses became fiats that overwrote MinEd’s

decisions as happened with sudden shift from the 7-4-2-3 primary, secondary (lower and upper), and tertiary school system to an 8-4-4 system. Indeed, the editors of the suppressed 1980 conference's handbook wrote about people "doomed to remain parrots" who ignored their history at a time when President Moi was calling on Kenyans to "sing like parrots" like the pompous character in *Matigari*, the Professor of Parrotology insists: "sing like parrots on issues I have mentioned. You ought to sing the song I sing. If I put a full stop, you should also put a full stop. This is how the country will move forward. The day you become a big person, you will have the liberty to sing your own song and everybody else will sing it" (Thiong'o 1992[1986]).

The 1980s witnessed other presidential and ministerial decrees that directly affected the selection of texts for the English and literature courses. For instance, objecting to cultural nationalists and the "Africanization" of the high-school literature syllabus in Kenya, President Moi, one day, praised Shakespeare as "a literary genius of universal acclaim" and promptly directed that Shakespeare's works be accorded "a permanent place in the country's education".<sup>188</sup>

Soon, Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* was restored in the syllabus and, every year, a Shakespearean text is in the syllabus. Being neither a critic nor student of literature, Moi issued the directive neither because of his appreciation of Shakespeare's genius, nor due to his adherence to a "universalist" ethos inclining him to assess cultural products in terms not bound by nation or ethnicity. Unlike Kenyatta's *Facing Mount Kenya* (1965[1938]), which appreciates and evaluates Kikuyu traditions and the assault on them by the encroaching education and Christianity, Daniel arap Moi's *Kenya African Nationalism: Nyayo Philosophy and Principles* (1966) explicitly embraces Christianity as a fundamental basis of his nationalist ideology. Moi's book also advocates a nationalism that accommodates "external" influences, especially those from the West,

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<sup>188</sup> Mazrui (1996:64) quoting the *Daily Nation* [Nairobi] 26 July 1989. Moi's public address to the Queen of England on her visit to Kenya on 25 July 1989 was an apparent attempt to gratify her.

though his government eventually “developed a rhetoric to suggest that its policies were compatible with international thinking in development economics” (Savage and Taylor 1991).<sup>189</sup>

The East African Examinations Council rejected the 1974 conference's proposed syllabus ostensibly because it “offered a badly designed curriculum and lacked assessment strategies”. The cause for this rejection seemed to be the inclusion of oral literature, which the council “considered of dubious value” (Lillis 1985:87; Walmsley 1979:36–58).

Revisiting “the great Nairobi Literature debate” after eighteen years, Ngugi evaluates the debate’s quest for relevance to have been “challenges as to where people stand in the big social issues of the day” (Thiong’o 1986: 106). He poses crucial questions: “In the era of imperialism, where do we really stand? In a society built on a structure of inequality, where do we stand? Can we remain neutral, cocooned in our libraries and scholarly disciplines, muttering to ourselves ‘I am only a surgeon; I am a scientist; I am an economist, or I am simply a critic, teacher lecturer?’” (ibid). Ngugi cites Brecht’s poem to the “Students of the ‘Workers’ and ‘Peasants’ Faculty” to emphasize the futility of ignoring these questions:

Your science will be valueless, you’ll find  
And learning will be sterile, if inviting,  
unless you pledge your intellect to fighting  
Against all enemies of mankind (Thiong’o 1986: 105)

Despite the emphasis on English as the language of instruction, many of the stated objectives for English and literature cannot be met. The 8-4-4 system requires students to take nine

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<sup>189</sup> After Daniel Moi became president after Kenyatta’s death in 1978, Moi soon claimed his leadership was “Nyayoism” as he was going to “*kufuata nyayo*” (“follow in the footsteps”) of Jomo Kenyatta. Thus, Moi chose to continue Kenyatta’s administration along with some of the colonial systems Kenyatta had kept.

compulsory subjects, an exceedingly onerous load that only allows time for students to read to pass examinations rather than cultivating “the habit of reading for enjoyment” The 8-4-4 system also removed what used to be the Advanced or “A” level part of high school where a compulsory subject called the General Paper (GP) required all high students (in both arts and sciences) to read broadly. In 1992, teachers and students seemed to agree that high-school students “detest reading”.<sup>190</sup> In practice, literature—unlike English—is rarely taught in 8-4-4 classrooms and students often work alone. For the English course, six periods are usually allocated per week:<sup>191</sup> four for English and two for literature. The predominant form of teaching is cramming and the nearly exclusive focus on a text’s “message” threatens to reduce “literature to mere slogans” (Ikiddeh 1978:132).

In summary, the texts selected for high-school English and literature syllabi since Kenya’s independence had, by 1998, drastically narrowed in scope, number, and geographical diversity, with the sharpest cuts occurring after the 8-4-4 system was instituted (**Table 5**). The next three chapters investigate alternative texts by analysing samples of texts from the consistently deselected literary genres: historical and popular literature, including orature.

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<sup>190</sup> 53 interviews in 1998 with teachers and their students at Alliance High School, Iiani Secondary School, Joana Chase Secondary School, Barazani Secondary School, and Kambu High School

<sup>191</sup> A period is between 45 and 60 minutes.

## **The *Mau Mau* Myth and the Single Story of Kenya's Independence**

*"The past is never dead. It's not even past" (Faulkner 1951:146).*

*"The single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story" (Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie 2009).*

The liberation guerrilla war for independence between 1950 to 1960 was epic. Since arriving in Kenya, Britain had violently suppressed uprisings and employed divide-and-rule tactics to confuse and subjugate the natives. After the guerrilla war started, Britain used lies and quislings to twist reality by labelling good people, practices, and customs as bad and vice versa, thus negating and inverting traditional values. The war was fought at military, political, propagandistic, and psychological levels, pitting families, tribes, races, genders, and classes against each other. Most significantly, the guerrilla war and Britain's psycho-political tactics divided families politically, religiously, and culturally, causing deep psychological, emotional, and economic problems that reverberate today. Aided militarily by Great Britain, Kenya colony's government renamed this war *Mau Mau* and terrorized and uprooted whole villages, causing starvation and illnesses that killed thousands, all in a misguided and unsuccessful attempt to quickly crush the rebels and their support network. Though the rebels' wide-scale mobilization, obdurate resistance, and long war were largely responsible for Britain handing over the colony to Kenyans, independent Kenyan governments [and especially the first President Jomo Kenyatta] perpetuated the colonialists'

propaganda and myths about the alleged savagery and immorality of the guerrilla fighters and belittled their national and historical importance. Thus evolved the modern Mau Mau myth.

Now, more than half a century after independence, to understand the liberation war's significance in shaping today's Kenyan state, the chapter examines the colonial government and British official and unofficial views of the war through their media and local reports, views that shaped the mythologization of *Mau Mau* into a single story that is contradicted by the freedom fighters' personal narratives about the same liberation struggle. Kenya's sanitized high-school history and literature syllabi avoid mentioning the war, as they do earlier punitive and pacification expeditions. Modern Kenya's culture of repression, impunity, and silence has historical roots in this war.

Created by the British, colonial, and neocolonial Kenyan states, the single story of Kenya's independence and the *Mau Mau* myth comprise a story of historical events interspersed with fictions, half-truths, and bureaucratic lingo to mystify and obfuscate the actual events that led to Britain ceding power to a small favoured political class, a class of politicians closely linked to the colonial state that, after independence, would represent and prioritize British and Western economic interests in Kenya. It is a single story that has—consciously or unconsciously—become incorporated into the Kenyan body politic, including in policymaking, e.g., in the educational goals and education system. The single story of Kenya's struggle for independence is a statist narrative that, besides empowering the state, thwarts criticism, opposition, and divergent political perspectives through substituting complex and contradictory histories with simplistic ones that shut out historical enquiry and erase competing narratives. The history of Kenya's liberation struggle was thus obfuscated and distorted to glorify the post-independence politicians, many of

whom had fought **against** independence. This story denies and vilifies the struggle's true leaders and the thousands of Kenya's unknown heroes who fought, suffered, and died for independence.

When Kenyans' long liberation struggle morphed into a guerrilla war in the late 1940s and early 1950s, Britain resorted to extraordinary measures to quash it and propagate a single story of the struggle.<sup>192</sup> As part of Britain's mythmaking to quash the struggle, the colonial government uprooted, jailed, exiled, detained, tortured, and hanged thousands of Kenyans, created homeguards, demolished and burnt down villages, imported the latest fighter jets, created the *Mau Mau*<sup>193</sup> and hired counter-terrorists to hunt down the nationalists it maligned as the *Mau Mau*. Kenya's colonial government also forced local people to dig deep trenches and construct fences in and around Mount Kenya to isolate and cut off the guerrilla fighters from supplies and support. The homeguards—part of the *Mau Mau* hunters from among the African population—continued Britain's *Mau Mau* myth after independence since, as an integral part of Kenyatta's new government, they became yet more empowered.

Propagandistically, British, colonial, and neocolonial Kenyan states described both the guerrilla war and the freedom fighters as the *Mau Mau*. The *Mau Mau* myth and the single story of Kenya's independence are two sides of a coin, which, more than half a century later, still dominate the scholarship about Kenya's historiography in Kenyan schools and shape how Kenyans remember their history.<sup>194</sup> Since it would have been blatantly inconsistent to *discuss* the early resistance to

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<sup>192</sup> Said's "series of crude, essentialized caricatures of the Islamic world" *Orientalism* and Chimamanda Adichie's "The Danger of a Single Story" (2009) aptly capture what and how Kenya's liberation struggle has been framed, presented, and received and, hence, how it is known or unknown locally and internationally ([www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda\\_adichie\\_the\\_danger\\_of\\_a\\_single\\_story.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story.html); TED (Technology, Entertainment, Design: Ideas Worth Spreading). J.W. Scott (1989) also discusses how a single story can frame narratives.

<sup>193</sup> See footnote 4 on the *Mau Mau*.

<sup>194</sup> Elderly participants in the liberation war and Kenya's Emergency are fast dying off along with their knowledge and information about that war. Though rare, their small personal libraries containing irreplaceable, untapped information are also disappearing. Moreover, many detainees' official personal files were destroyed at independence,

occupation and the spread of colonial rule in Kenya while *failing* to discuss the national liberation war, it was politically expedient to suppress that **entire** history except for a few superficial and sanitized references in the high-school syllabus. This blackout of two decades of history is apparent in the literature and history syllabi in Kenyan schools where that entire history was simplified and reduced to a **single story** of Kenya's independence struggle, a story that perpetuated and continues to feed the *Mau Mau* myth and its fictions while negating the fighters' contribution in wresting independence from the occupying British and their Kenyan minions.

After independence in 1963, Kenyatta and most of the ruling party-KANU's politicians would repeat the mantra, "forget the past", in their public addresses and in the media. Conveniently, the effect was to cover up the dubious and sinister roles that most of them had had under colonialism (especially the homeguards and colonial chiefs). If widely known, the true history would have dangerously undermined the legitimacy of their rule in the period *before* and *immediately after* independence because many in the new governing elite had closely cooperated with and benefited from the colonial regime. Consequently, in neocolonial Kenyan public fora and the educational system, the entire historical period covering the national liberation war—approximately between 1945 and 1965—is misrepresented, partly blotted out, omitted, tabooed, and shrouded in mystery, innuendo, silence, and state-imposed amnesia.

The revolutionary period is NOT the only forgotten or misrepresented history in Kenya's collective memory. The gory details of the pacification expeditions were often covered up.<sup>195</sup> as is the story of the many Kenyan and other African soldiers, KAR draftees who died fighting for Britain in Europe, Asia, and Africa during the First and Second World Wars; some, still buried in

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and many others were burnt or shipped off by the British and classified as historically secret documents. For example, the Kimathi and other papers held in the British public records office were scheduled for release only after fifty years in 2013 by which time most of the heroes and heroines of Kenya's liberation movement were dead or old and sickly.

<sup>195</sup> See the section, "Kenyatta's Leitmotif to 'Forget the Past!': Motives and Repercussions, starting on p. 31.

unmarked graves though, a short distance away, white soldiers have well-tended, marked graves.<sup>196</sup> Forgetting Kenya's revolutionary heroes set the precedent whereby Kenyans routinely forgive and forget historical ills as illustrated by numerous assassinations, myriad scandals and scams involving state property and, or embezzlement or misuse of people's taxes by Kenyan leaders.<sup>197</sup> Thus, the amnesia about the long liberation struggle and guerrilla war has been deliberate and sustained; and, during the research for this thesis, holidays or museum displays commemorating that struggle were non-existent.

In the educational system, the single story and the *Mau Mau* myth are manifested through MinEd's assumptions about what comprises "valid" Kenyan history or knowledge: assumptions that, in turn, partly constitute the basis for discrimination and invalidation of the "other"—texts, people, etc.—during the text selection. The silences and distortions around Kenya's historiography—especially colonial pacification expeditions and the liberation guerrilla war—leave gaps in the discourse about colonial and neocolonial Kenyan states. For instance, texts perceived to be "foreign," "non-Christian", or "anti-government" have been routinely ignored and de-selected from the literature syllabi. A text is deselected if it portrays a Kenyan history that differs from that in the single story of Kenya's independence and the *Mau Mau* myth. As exemplified in the schools' curricula, repression, exclu-censorship, and conservative nationalism

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<sup>196</sup> In April 2021, Britain apologized for "historical failures by which 'pervasive racism' underpinned a failure to properly commemorate personnel from the colonies" (<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/commonwealth-war-graves-new-memorials-to-honour-black-and-asian-soldiers-at-last-b9lqg7wjx>). The apology follows the findings of a special committee to investigate the inequalities the Imperial War Graves Commission (IWGC) practised when commemorating the British Empire's dead during the First and Second World Wars (<https://www.cwgc.org/non-commemoration-report/>). Appointed in 2019 by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC), the commission "found that at least 116,000 such casualties and, perhaps, as many as 350,000 were not commemorated by name and some were not commemorated at all. A further 45,000 to 54,000 others were commemorated unequally" (Thomas 2021). See the documentary about Kenyan black colonial soldiers' unmarked, bush-covered graves set off in a parcel adjacent to the well-manicured grave site for white soldiers in Taveta, Kenya (Yammy 2019a and 2019b; Booth 2021; and Ramaswamy 2019).

<sup>197</sup> See footnote 51.

also produce hegemonic nationalist imaginaries in modern Kenya's historiography. This and the next two chapters examine these themes and the alternative literature texts excluded from Kenyan schools.

Familiarity with the excluded literature in neocolonial countries like Kenya is needed to conceptualize neocolonial Kenya today, a dysfunctional society and nation wherein the divisive politics of identity often degenerate into violence. Kenyan leaders led the country to a catastrophic tribal bloodbath during the 2007 presidential election (that could be easily repeated in succeeding elections).<sup>198</sup> Besides systemically looting state coffers and ruining economic, educational, medical, and other infrastructures, Kenya's post-independence leaders are highly implicated in the ignoble and deplorable state of the nation today, including the psychological, educational, and social aspects.<sup>199</sup> What Kenyan youth learn in schools about their literature, history, and identity is a good place to start a national self-examination to address the country's crises, including its profound identity and moral crisis originating partly with the *Mau Mau* myth and the single story of independence.

To discuss the *Mau Mau* myth and Kenya's single story of independence, I sample diverse narratives about Kenyans' 1950s guerrilla liberation struggle for land and freedom using:

- **Media reports;**
- **Government documents:** official reports, letters, memos between Nairobi and London's Colonial office;
- **Other narratives:** biographies, autobiographies, and other narratives by both officials and others in colonial Kenya; and
- **Kenya's sanitized high-school history and literature syllabi.**

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<sup>198</sup> Many Kenyans believed that president Kibaki stole Kenya's December 2007 presidential election. As soon as he was announced the winner, massive looting, house burning and vicious physical attacks on many "otherized" Kenyans throughout the country began, especially in Kenya's Rift Valley and Central provinces. Some 1,500 people were killed and over 3,000 uprooted, becoming internal refugees; and most were not adequately compensated or relocated.

<sup>199</sup> In 2021, Transparency International's *Corruption Perceptions Index* rated Kenya number 128 out of 180 countries "on a scale of 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean)". ([www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2021](http://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2021)).

The Mau Mau myth is contrasted with:

- **the punitive and pacification expeditions**, which reveal links with Kenyans' 1950s guerrilla-liberation struggle for land and freedom.
- **freedom fighters' personal narratives**—songs, biographies, autobiographies, interviews, feature articles, legends; and
- **counter-insurgency** and other **narratives** by diverse recent *Mau Mau* scholars.

## **Section A: Punitive and Pacification Expeditions and Counter-Insurgency Narratives**

As during the struggle for land and freedom in the 1940s and 50s, the early British East African punitive and pacification expeditions were deliberately misnamed, sanitized, misrepresented, and “forgotten”.<sup>200</sup> Kenyatta’s dictum of “forgiving and forgetting the past” recalls and may partly have been inspired by these earlier British East African pacification expeditions that, during the 1950s, helped incite Kenya’s liberation war for land and freedom. In a dialectical relationship key to the concepts of nation-building and development in neo-colonies like Kenya, many Africans willingly participated in and aided imperialism, including in those pacification and punitive expeditions. In independent Kenya, the state’s pacification episodes replicated the colonial pattern of instigating and using ethnic rivalry as a tool for governing, hence revealing the continuum of the “episodes” now called ethnic clashes or cattle rustling.

Pacification was part of the colonial project against resisting natives and, after independence, against the regime’s perceived opponents. This dissertation treats the *Mau Mau* as the *last* colonial punitive expedition and the *first* for neocolonial Kenya. Conquering and maintaining control of the Kenyan colony may not have been possible without punitive expeditions. During the liberation war against the British in the 1940s, 1950s, and early 1960s, pacification raids intensified. The

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<sup>200</sup> While Achebe introduced the theme in African literature in 1958, punitive and pacification expeditions are still rarely part of literary or African history studies.

pacifications and their aftermath—specifically the creation of a loyalist native group—played a key role in the power transition from colonial to independent Kenya. At independence, for most Kenyans the concept of nationhood in Kenya differed significantly from the official concept where the new Kenyan state derived from a new sort of pacification— the “forgetting of the past” and the silencing of anti-neocolonial voices. In education, this pacification involved the deselection of texts for the high-school literature and English syllabi and the misclassification of a wide section of Kenyan literature as non-Kenyan.

The deliberately nicknamed, sanitized, misrepresented, and “forgotten” early British East African punitive expeditions form part of the national amnesia promoted through Kenyatta’s “forgive and forget the past,” referring specifically to Kenya’s 1950s liberation war for land and freedom. With different titles, scales, and volumes, punitive and pacification expeditions continue in independent Kenya in different forms and under different masters. Achebe introduces pacification as a theme in African history, literature and fiction in a poignant scene:

In the many years in which he had toiled to bring civilization to different parts of Africa, he had learnt ... things. One of them was that a District Commissioner must never attend to such undignified details as cutting down a hanged man from the tree. Such attention would give the natives a poor opinion of him. In the book which he planned to write, he would stress that point.... The story of this man who had killed a messenger and hanged himself would make interesting reading.... He had already chosen the title of the book, after much thought: *The Pacification of the Primitive Tribes of the Lower Niger* (Achebe 1958).

Achebe’s scene above recreates the recurring scenes of the initial interactions between Africans and imperialists, and between and among Africans in the new colonies. Herein, this interaction is personified in a British administrator—the district commissioner; Africans violently resisting imperialism, and the African-imperialists lapdogs. At the end of Achebe’s seminal book, the title of the commissioner’s imagined book signifies the discourse and social relations between the colonizing and the colonized. In diverse colonies, variations of the above scene played out regularly as effective colonial administration required and often employed “pacification” and

“punitive” expeditions as effective methods of ruling unfriendly, resisting natives like Okonkwo, albeit on a larger scale and with more intensity. These expeditions hastened the “falling apart from the African centre”; a falling apart symbolized not just by clan members like Ogbuefi Ugonna, a titled man (like Okonkwo), who cuts his titles’ anklet when he joins the Christian converts (TFA chapter 20), or Nwoye and the messengers abandoning their families to become Christians and attend mission schools, but also by multiple acts of resistance, e.g., militant resistance or Achebe’s act of writing in English, the imperial centre’s language. The case of Nneka, however, is a positive falling apart when she joins the Christians after her four sets of twins are thrown away in the evil forest.

The underlying aberrations revealed in *Things Fall Apart* prefigure the actions of neocolonial African leaders personified by the head messenger (and similar characters) who, empowered and emboldened by “the white man whose power you know too well” breaks and stops the meeting of those questioning colonial authority. A colonial stooge, his actions so enrage Okonkwo that he beheads the head messenger while the Umuofians let other messengers escape. Okonkwo’s plaintive last words foretell doom for rebelling Africans: “Umuofia would not go to war; they had broken into tumult instead of action” (Achebe 1958:144–45).

Okonkwo’s dangling body excites the voyeur in the District Commissioner, the selective “student of primitive customs,” who—ignoring the grieving Obierika—orders the chief messenger to “take down and bring the body and all these people to the court” (ibid.). As Obierika mourns “one of the greatest men in Umuofia driven to kill himself, and now to be buried like a dog,” a kowtowing messenger orders Obierika to “shut up!” while his colleague salutes the commissioner, busy contemplating this new, exciting anthropological material for his book (Achebe 1958:147–48).

Outside the imaginary book, actual pacification expeditions were a frequent, terrifying part of colonialism everywhere. In British East Africa, they involved savage beatings, maiming, killing, arresting, jailing, or exiling suspected ringleaders and other resisting natives, burning houses and crops, and confiscating livestock—goats, hens, cows, sheep—and food stocks. Despite their frequency and intensity, punitive expeditions are little known or discussed in public fora or in Kenyan schools. As part of the colonial package, punitive expeditions foreground the neo-colony's historiography and policies for education and development.

Colonial Kenya's government and the media misrepresented the punitive expeditions, a practice carried into neocolonial Kenya and fortified by Kenyatta's independence mantra: "forget the past". Whenever punitive expeditions occurred, spurious reasons were given. For instance, when IBEAC's Lugard established a fortified depot in Dagoretti (Chief Waiyaki wa Hinga's territory) in 1890, he left George Wilson in charge. "For reasons that even then were not wholly clear, the Kikuyu turned against Wilson." Waiyaki was deported to the coast for allegedly trying to assassinate a company official, one Purkiss, in his room (MacDonald 1897:115). Concern in the narrative is only for the British officials like Purkiss, who was "besieged for six days" after Waiyaki's death.<sup>201</sup> Waiyaki had gone to Fort Smith to complain about a major punitive expedition against his people, the *waguruguru* section of the Kikuyu. The reasons for the expedition are not mentioned. For the natives and Waiyaki, the reasons were clear: they did not want the IBEAC to occupy their land. The British version of Waiyaki's death is equally obfuscated. Allegedly, "Waiyaki died, it is said, by his own hand, at Kibwezi, on the way to his exile" (Rosberg and

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<sup>201</sup> letters of Francis George Hall to his father cited in Rosberg and Nottingham (1966:14)

Nottingham (1966:14). Alternative sources state that Waiyaki was buried alive in Kibwezi and, later, Gray Leakey buried alive to avenge Waiyaki's cruel death.<sup>202</sup>

The Dagoretti pacification expedition killed 90 people, including the leader, Waiyaki, while a 1904 punitive expedition against the Kikuyu and Embu tribes killed 797 Kikuyu and 250 Embu, besides “capturing over 11,000 stock [*sic*] at the cost of three men killed and 33 wounded”.<sup>203</sup> The 1904 expedition was taken against the natives “for frequently murdering friendly natives”, and it comprised of “5 officers, 135 rifles, 60 police, and 300 Maasai levies”.

After the British appointed and imposed Mumias as Nyanza's Paramount Chief, the people's Uyoma chiefs rejected and rose against Mumias. “Soldiers were sent in to pacify the area. There was shooting at Kisii in 1907 when the people objected to the British sending *askaris*<sup>204</sup> to commandeer flour and seized the containers from the soldiers and threw them away; and trouble arose again the year after in South Nyanza” (Odinga 1966:20). Many other expeditions occurred, and in all, when protesting locals were killed, they were unidentified individually, portrayed as unwanted filth and officially counted only as a body belonging to a specific tribe, like “797 Kikuyu and 250 Embu” above.

On 14 March 1922, police in Nairobi—joined by settlers relaxing in the nearby Norfolk Hotel—killed 58 Africans protesting the exiling of KCA leader Harry Thuku. The Somali, Boran, Orma, Galla, and Turkana resisted the colonial encroachment so intensely that Kenya's northeastern

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<sup>202</sup> That Waiyaki was buried alive in Kibwezi on the way to Fort Jesus is a contentious story. During my oral literature interviews in 1989 and 1990, John Kieti Ndolo, Mbavu, Kavunda, Keli, Waki, and Makula all independently maintained this version of the story. Written accounts include Wachanga (1975:43) and Agnes Leakey Hofmeyr (1990). Agnes is the daughter of Gray Leakey, who was allegedly buried alive on Mount Kenya as a human sacrifice to the *Mau Mau* gods. Since colonial days, Waiyaki's murder or other events related to punitive expeditions are often misrepresented in official documents. Also, in Fort Jesus, Lamu, Kismayu, and other coastal areas of intense tourist activity, the displays and explanations omit the history about Kenyans jailed, detained, and tortured for resisting the forced-labour conscriptions, theft of their land, and other colonial impositions.

<sup>203</sup> Rosberg and Nottingham (1966:15–16) and Meinertzhagen (1983[1957]:75) as referenced by Odinga

<sup>204</sup> armed soldiers accompanying a village chief or other government administrator in punitive visits to villagers

region—called the North Frontier District (NFD)—was placed under martial law and legally closed. Independent Kenya inherited the animosity against the North Frontier District, which inspired the state to require Kenyan Somalis to carry a special identity card in the early 1980s. In 1984, government officers allegedly butchered over 300 Kenyan Somalis—the Wagalla massacre—at an airstrip. Thousands more went missing (Baregu 2011:158).

The numerous and varied punitive expeditions against diverse Kenyans fighting for their land defined the relationship between the natives and colonialists who claimed huge chunks of land they identified and labelled “unoccupied lands”. “European] settlement is facilitated by the fact that there are gaps where there is no native population.” (Baregu 2011:158). However, the necessity, frequency, and intensity of punitive expeditions illustrate that the land had, in fact, been occupied whether by the nomadic, or the sedentary pastoralists whose land-use system differed greatly from the colonialists’ notion of title deeds for individual land ownership. Thus, to enforce removals from ancestral lands, pacification expeditions became prevalent throughout the colony since many natives resisted dislocations from ancestral lands or opposed colonial impositions such as hut-, poll-, and head-taxes and practices like forced labour, villagization, or recruitment for the Kenya African Rifles (KAR) to fight “difficult or unfriendly” Africans and, later, for the World Wars I and II.<sup>205</sup> Africans expelled from their lands to make way for European settlement, for roads, railway, bridges, or other colonial constructions became landless. Besides the official notes, personal narratives by diverse colonialists attest to the frequency and brutality of pacification or punitive expeditions.

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<sup>205</sup> Kenya National Archives documents: (KNA): [Coast], 5/336 Giriama Affars 1915–16; KNA: Dundas report on the Giriama Rising. KNA: ELGM/75/336; KNA: TTA/6, Political Records 1909–34; KNA: DC/MKS 10A/1/1; Machakos Land File, 1903 and 1912. East African Protectorate, May 15, 1912.

Life-stories by former British East African administrators, missionaries, armed forces officers, diverse government officers, settlers and travellers often give useful details of specific pacification expeditions in Kenya.<sup>206</sup> While Rosberg and Nottingham (1966:7–16) summarize some of the massacres, they gloss over the number of villages destroyed or people killed. Nor are the massacres of natives and related histories part of Kenya’s history or literature classes, despite their frequency throughout the country. Between 1890 and 1920, punitive expeditions were sent against the Sakwa, Seme, Uyoma, Vugusu, Gusii Taita, Giriama, Kamba, and Kalenjins. Five expeditions were organized against the Nandi for sabotaging the construction of the Mombasa-Uganda railway line and against the Kipsigis for land and cattle clashes with the Boer settlers in the Uasin Gishu plateau. Indeed, the “largest punitive expedition ever assembled in Kenya was mounted against them.”<sup>207</sup>

A typical expedition involved travelling at night, surrounding a village, breaking down doors, beating fleeing people, shooting resisters or slicing them with pangas, stealing cattle, goats, sheep, and chickens, and torching the huts, one by one, as people wailed from afar. Hall and other British colonial administrators, like Achebe’s fictional District Commissioner, oversaw administration, education, and punitive expeditions. For them, a punitive expedition was just another amusing hunting adventure.<sup>208</sup> Recalling one expedition, Hall explained how much they anticipated the fun:

We lit up a kraal ... and made a mess of all their villages. As the other column was working along about two miles off, the natives had a warm time, but they wouldn’t stand, so I had *no chance of trying my war-rockets*. Major Smith with his one arm carried a shotgun and bagged a brace in the first kraal, but I

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<sup>206</sup> Col. Richard Meinertzhagen (1960 and 1983[1957]); Brigadier-General Trevor Ternan (1930); Robert Foran (1936 and 1962); Lt. Colonel H Moyse-Bartlett (1930 and 1956); W. Lloyd-Jones (1925 and 1926); Kenneth Cecil Gandar Dower (1944); E.V. Jenkins (1911); J. S. Ross (1944); W. D. Draffan and T. C. C. Lewis (1954); C. J. M. Watts (1950); and Norman Leys (1924:128–30 and 1931). Rosberg and Nottingham (1966:7–16)

<sup>207</sup> Rosberg and Nottingham (1966:8); Meinertzhagen (1983[1957]:196–265); Moyse-Bartlett (1956:197–211); Hobley (1929:82–6); Lloyd-Jones (1925 and 1926:107–12); Ternan (1930:284–94)

<sup>208</sup> For sport, the Belgians shot holes in Congolese ears with rifles and used the skulls to decorate flower gardens, excesses noted in Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* and Hochschild (1999:49).

*had no fun for a long time. We brought in 1,100 goats and loads of grain, but we didn't manage to do much execution as the brutes wouldn't stand [italics added].*<sup>209</sup>

In 1899, in another “pacification episode” comprising “500 friendly natives and 150 rifles,” Hall again missed out on the fun as “the natives had, as usual, deserted their village and bolted with their livestock” (Rosberg and Nottingham 1966:15). Scouring the forests, they hardly saw people “and when we did, they were at very long ranges, so we *did not have much fun*, but after fourteen days we destroyed a tremendous number of villages in the disaffected districts, altogether capturing 10,000 goats and a few cattle.”<sup>210</sup> Though Hall estimates the “casualties to reach 90 dead in one encounter and with heavy confiscations of goats and cattle,”<sup>211</sup> Rosberg and Nottingham (1966:15 and 356) suggest the numbers were “in the hundreds, explaining that, at this time, the word village seems to have been used to describe a single-family homestead rather than a complex of such homesteads”. Colonel Richard Meinertzhagen oversaw several punitive expeditions against different Kenyans, some of which he recounts in his autobiography. When Kikuyu warriors killed a policeman in 1902, Meinertzhagen ([1957] 1983:90) undertook a punitive expedition to the village:

the Wakikuyu were dancing round bonfires in all their war-paint. A really ... weird sight. The alarm was given by a native who tried to break through our ... thin cordon. He refused to stop when challenged and was shot down. There was then a rush from the village into the surrounding bush, and we killed about 17 niggers. Two policemen and one of my men were killed. I narrowly escaped a spear which whizzed past my head. *Then the fun began.* We at once burned the village and captured the sheep and goats. After that we systematically cleared the valley in which the village was situated, burned all the huts, and killed a few more niggers.

Meinertzhagen's column reportedly killed “796 Kikuyu and captured 782 cattle and 2,150 sheep and goats” in ten days between February and March 1904 (Meinertzhagen [1957] 1983:146). When

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<sup>209</sup> letters of Francis Hall II (1892-1895:162-64) cited in Rosberg and Nottingham (1966:14–15). See also Hall and Sullivan (2006).

<sup>210</sup> letters of Francis Hall (1896–1901:71) cited in Rosberg and Nottingham (1966:15).

<sup>211</sup> letters of Francis Hall (1896–1901:78)

a white Boer settler was killed over land claims, Meinertzhagen had the entire village killed, except for children to “teach the offending village such a lesson as will be long remembered among the Wakikuyu”.

Though the war drums were sounding throughout the night we reached the village without incident and surrounded it. By the light of fires, we could see savages dancing in the village, and our guides assured me that they were dancing round the mutilated body of the white man. The no-survivors order was carried out (Meinertzhagen 1957:78).

In the attack, “numerous Africans were slaughtered, and enormous amounts of livestock and land seized” (Meinertzhagen ([1957] 1983:78). An expedition against the Embu killed, “about 796 niggers in the first attack, and about 250 in the second, besides capturing almost 5,000 cattle and sheep.” The casualty report was then “*rewritten* to reduce the number of dead” (Meinertzhagen [1957] 1983:78 *italics added*). After the boundaries for the Nandi reserve in 1905 were drawn to make way for the railroad and the Nandi refused to move from their Tinderet ancestral land, Meinertzhagen led an expedition that forced the “rotten race of savages” out and killed the leader, Laibon Koitalel Samoei, his family of 22, and another 1,600 Nandis,<sup>212</sup> while “seizing thousands of cattle and sheep, evict[ing] the survivors and annex[ing] the land” (Meinertzhagen ([1957] 1983:95).

In 1890, under chief Mwangeka, the Taita and other *mijikenda* people from Kenya’s coastal province resisted the persistent demands for porters for the Uganda road. In response, the British slaughtered hundreds.<sup>213</sup> In 1896, in today’s Western and Nyanza provinces, pacification

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<sup>212</sup> “In April 2006, the Koitalel Samoei clan sued the British Government for Samoei’s killing and renewed its demand for the return of his head gear, shoes, bracelets, and his head. On October 19, 1907, one of Captain Richard Meinertzhagen’s punitive expedition beheaded and took Samoei’s head as proof of his death—a common practice then with difficult cases. Recently, scholars Kipkoech Muge and Kipnyango Seroney “recovered and returned a walking stick and baton—traditional symbols of power of the Nandi leader—from Meinertzhagen’s descendants in London” (Koigi 2006). The Kalenjin disrupted the construction of the Kenya-Uganda railway line so frequently that the original route was abandoned, and a roundabout route chosen.

<sup>213</sup> *Mijikenda* means nine villages, referring to nine Kenyan coastal linguistic groups: the Jabana, Chonyi, Giriama, Duruma, Digo, Rabai, Ribe, Pokomo and the Kambe.

expeditions killed 200 Luo of the Kager clan and captured thousands of cattle, sheep and goats in Sakwa, Seme, and Uyoma (Rosberg and Nottingham 1966:10). In 1908, the KAR soldiers “burned huts, destroyed standing crops, and captured all livestock within their reach,” massacring “over 100 Gusii warriors.”<sup>214</sup> In 1913, under a renowned woman leader—Me Katilili—the Giriama killed a policeman and attacked the District Commissioner. Consequently, “over 400 Giriama were killed and hundreds of homesteads burnt” (Rosberg and Nottingham 1966:12).

Between 1895 and 1908, large expeditions were launched against the Vugusu and the Pokot (Kitosh) around Mt. Elgon.<sup>215</sup> Since Elijah Masinde’s *Dini ya Msambwa* features prominently in the accounts, the resistance by Masinde’s followers—e.g., refusing to pay taxes and work for free—is explained away as the acts of a madman.<sup>216</sup> Both colonial and later neocolonial regimes jailed, detained and certified Masinde as a madman, mostly because he used the Bible to counter oppressive laws and practices. Mushrooming religious sects that broke away from Christian missions—*Dini ya Msambwa* led by Masinde among the Luhya and Pokot; Ruben Kihiko’s *Dini ya Jesu Kristo* (of the man in red) and Kaggia’s *Watu wa Mungu*—became major forms of resistance that also provoked punitive expeditions.

Kenya’s pacification expeditions are also recounted in early travel, settler, and administrative narratives, especially in the personal letters to relatives back home. The expeditions are often presented as an aside or in a way to confirm a stereotype of the native. Frequently involving a big force, these expeditions were executed with the help of “friendly” natives against “otherized” natives, like the DC’s messengers in *Things Fall Apart* or Hall’s friendly natives. Thus, the Kenya African Rifles (KAR) brought Africans together for WW1 and WWII by recruiting and training

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<sup>214</sup> Foran (1936:177–78) and (1962:26–29)

<sup>215</sup> in today’s Rift Valley and the western provinces of Kenya

<sup>216</sup> Stoneham (1953:103–30); Rosberg and Nottingham (1966:10); Moyse-Bartlett (1956:208); Hobley (1929:82–86); Lloyd-Jones (1926:109–12); Ternan (1930:284–94); Foran (1962:27)

soldiers from different ethnic and linguistic groups to fight those resisting taxes, forced labour, or the annexation of their land for diverse Crown use. For example, Hall's pacification episodes against the Kikuyu in Fort Hall and Kiambu in 1894 included "100 Swahilis with Snider rifles, 120 Maasai, and 65 friendly Kikuyu" (Rosberg and Nottingham (1966:14)).<sup>217</sup>

Pacification episodes form a big part of various Kenyan narratives, particularly the life-writing by ex-military officers, administrators and settlers: Bulpett, *John Boyes, King of the Wa-Kikuyu* (1911); Jenkins, *A History of the 4th Bn, The King's African Rifles, formerly known as The Uganda Rifles* (1911); Lloyd-Jones, *K.A.R., being an Unofficial History of the Origins and Activities of the King's African Rifles* (1926); Norman Leys, *Kenya* (1924) and *A Last Chance in Kenya* (1931); Hopley, *Kenya From Chartered Company to Crown Colony* (1929); Ternan, *Some Experiences of an Old Bromsgrovian* (1930); Foran, *A Cuckoo in Kenya: The Reminiscences of a Pioneer Police Officer in British East Africa* (1936) and *The Kenya Police, 1887–1960* (1962); Meinertzhagen, *Kenya Diary (1902–1906)* (1957) and *Army Diary (1899–1926)* (1960); Moyses-Bartlett, Lt. Col. H., *The Kings African Rifles: A Study in the Military History of East and Central Africa, 1890–1945* (1956); Ross, *First Third: History of the First Third Battalion King's African Rifles in Abyssinia, Somaliland and Eritrea* (1944); Stoneham, *Mau Mau* (1953); Draffan and Lewis, *A War Journal of the Fifth (Kenya) Battalion: The King's African Rifles* (1954); Watts, *Short History of the 6th (T.T.) Battalion: The King's African Rifles* (1950); Chilver, *History of East Africa*, vol II (1965); Grahame, *Jambo Effendi: Seven Years With the King's African Rifles* (1966); Nunnely, *Tales from the King's African Rifles* (1998); Parsons, *African Rank-and-File: Social Implications of Colonial Military Service in the King's African Rifles 1902–1964* (1999); and Cocker, *Richard Meinertzhagen: Soldier, Scientist and Spy* (1989).

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<sup>217</sup> Kikuyu, Swahili and Maasai are Kenyan linguistic groups. Fort Hall was formerly the Mbirri military post that was renamed after Francis George Hall, the first administrator. Today, it is Thika town in Murang'a District.

The above accounts of the war reflect divergent opinions, depending on the side the writer took during the war. Edgerton describes Britain's mass murder against a rebellion called *Mau Mau*, in which British troops "abandoned moral values [and] ... killed and tortured civilians with impunity". One officer recollects interviewing three enemy suspects:

One of them, a tall coal-black bastard, kept grinning at me, real insolent. I slapped him hard, but he kept on grinning at me, so I kicked him in the balls as hard as I could. ... When he finally got up on his feet, he grinned at me again and I snapped. I really did. I stuck my revolver right in his grinning mouth. ... And I pulled the trigger. His brains went all over the side of the police station. The other two (suspects) were standing there looking blank. ... [S]o, I shot them both. ... When the sub-inspector drove up, I told him the (suspects) tried to escape. He didn't believe me but all he said was "bury them and see the wall is cleaned up" (Edgerton 1989:156).

Seeing only a senseless, unwarranted war, Kenyan settlers' polemics condemn "an evil malignant growth, a dark, tribal, septic focus" (Leigh 1954:217). The settlers' views about the liberation war renamed the *Mau Mau* include: R.O. Hennings, *African Morning* (1951); C. Wilson, *Before the Dawn in Kenya* (1953); Ione Leigh, *In the Shadows of the Mau Mau* (1954); J.F. Lipscomb, *White Africans* (1955) and *We Built a Country* (1956); Stoneham *Mau Mau* (1953), *Kenya Mystery* (1954) and *Out of Barbarism* (1955); W.B. Thomas, *The Touch of Pitch: A Story of Mau Mau* (1956); M. Harding, *Mask of Friendship* (1956); N. Sheraton, *African Terror* (1957); Margery Perham, *Lugard: The Years of Authority, 1898–1945: The Second Part of the Life of Frederick Dealtry Lugard, later Lord Lugard of Abinger, Volumes 1 and 2* (1959); Huxley, *A Thing to Love* (1953) and *With Forks and Hope* (1964a); Ralph Furse, *Aucuparius: Recollections of a Recruiting Officer* (1962); Stedman-Jones, *Outcast London* (1976).

Pacification expeditions are important to the conceptualization of nationhood in Kenya because independent Kenya was conceived and executed as part of a pacification effort where Kenya's liberation history was obfuscated and reinvented in a still ongoing pacification effort manifested in the omissions and exclusions of texts from Kenya's high-school English and literature syllabi. Texts about events leading up to Kenya's guerrilla liberation war for land and freedom and about

the activities associated with it—e.g., the extraordinary force the British employed and the intensified massive punitive expeditions that killed thousands of Kenyans—are *never* selected for the national examinations. During the emergency (1952-1960), thousands of people were jailed or simply “disappeared”, and their lands and wives were seized. Instead of explaining the government’s decree to seize the freedom fighters’ lands and properties, the colonial collaborators—the chiefs and their askaris—often lied, saying that the arrested men had died in detention or had betrayed their families.<sup>218</sup> In November 1953, the colonial government passed the Forfeiture of Lands Ordinance<sup>219</sup> which allowed the governor to seize and confiscate lands and properties owned by a person who was convicted of a crime. For participating in and being members of an outlawed organization, all freedom fighters were, by definition, criminals. *Mau Mau* stories about returning home to penury are common in oral and written texts, capturing the hostility freedom fighters often faced after their harrowing experiences in detention camps, prisons, and the pipeline:<sup>220</sup> Ngugi wa Thiong’o, *The Return* (1965); Ngunjiri, *The Return* (1969); Kibera and Kahiga, *Potent Ash* (1968) and Kibera, *Voices in the Dark* (1970). For instance, several Kamba *myalĩ* (e.g., *Silingi*) recount stories of men who returned home around 1960 from detention only to have their wives and children chase them out of the house, the family having been turned

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<sup>218</sup> The confiscation of freedom fighters’ property and land would typically be explained to the families as a punishment for something the fighter had allegedly done, though that was usually a false accusation.

<sup>219</sup> *Kenya Gazette* 55(55), 24 Nov. 1953, special issue, pages 1145–51

<sup>220</sup> The “Pipeline” was a screening and cleansing system intended to rehabilitate the *Mau Mau* detainees from the “psychopathology contracted from the ‘*Mau Mau*’ oath and the disease of ‘tortured minds’”. The ethno-psychiatrist, Dr. J. C. Carothers, and the Kikuyu elder and ethnographer, L.S.B. Leakey, designed the pipeline, believing the contaminated would “vomit the poison of *Mau Mau*” and, after confessions, cure mass contagion with good Christian stewardship (Elkins 2005:107). The rehabilitation identified and racially colour-coded detainees, classifying them into three categories based on their supposed degree of contagion: **black**: the most unrepentant, irredeemable terrorist; **grey**: while quite infected, not unredeemable; **white**: no longer infected or those who had “successfully” been rehabilitated through the pipeline. Women were identified as needing special cleansing for their crucial role in the community in mothering and nurturing children and as potential fighters. Seeing mothers as the source of future resistance fighters, the regime brutalized and tormented women detainees, e.g., by pulling out their toenails, shoving bottles with hot water or chilli up their vaginas, etc.—*Source*: my many interviews with Joyce Mutungi, my neighbour at home whose toes had been pulled out. (See also Foreword to Kariuki’s book, Josiah Kariuki, “*Mau Mau*” *Detainee: The Account by a Kenya African of His Experience in Detention Camps, 1953-1960*), p. xiv).

against them by jealous neighbours and relatives or, often, by loyalist and homeguards propaganda who benefited financially and socially from these lies.

The atrocities the British East Africa officialdom committed during the pacification and punitive expeditions, including those during the guerrilla war for freedom, have been omitted, misnamed or “officially forgotten”. Massacres of natives were often reported as “unrest,” “hostilities,” “subversion,” “neutralization,” “minor battles,” “uprising or rising,” or as a “pacification incident” or simply as an “episode”. Actual numbers of dead were rarely divulged. Instead, they were dismissed as “a few dead,” “some unavoidable deaths,” “accidental deaths” or, sometimes, “several hundred dead”.<sup>221</sup> In summary, the striking feature of the pacification and punitive expeditions in colonial and neocolonial Kenyan historiography is their omission, misrepresentation, and relabelling, which continues in neocolonial public fora and the educational curricula.

Colonial Kenyan fiction and life-writing are as diverse as the writers and their interests, e.g., letters, memoirs, travelogues, biographies, and adventure narratives. Similarly, the first life-writing accounts by black Kenyans were diverse, ranging from the accounts of the newly converted Christians to those of fighters in the anti-colonial struggle. Inspired by the general political awareness throughout Africa, the resistance narratives (like fiction) reflect the optimism for a decolonized Africa. However, independence often failed to bring Africans their much-anticipated freedom and prosperity. As in Kenya, new governments often strengthened or left intact existing economic links, administrative structures, and the histories or literature allowed to be taught in schools.

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<sup>221</sup> Pacification expeditions in Kenya are reported in diverse archives in Britain and Kenya: KNA: TTA/6, Political Records 1909–34; KNA: [Coast], 5/336, “*Report on the Giriama Rising*” 25 October 1914; KNA: [Coast], 5/336 Giriama Affairs 1915–16; KNA: ELGM/75/336: Dundas report on the Giriama Rising.

## Section B: Media and Government Reports about the War

### Media Reports

When the natives of Great Britain’s vast empire—India, Malaysia, Palestine, Nigeria, Ghana, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Kenya, among many—started diverse fights to free themselves from colonial rule, Britain used varied strategies and tactics in its wars against freedom fighters. First, it refused to recognize them as freedom fighters, renaming them variously as savages, insurgents, terrorists, gangsters, or communists. Besides war artillery, Britain used booklets, pamphlets, newspapers, and radio to depict and characterize freedom fighters as crazed heathens with no political, social, or economic motivations, maniacs who purportedly unprovoked, committed horrific acts against British and local obedient agents of the crown, hence, justifying extreme force to preserve law and order. The propaganda demonizing and dismissing freedom fighters in publications and other media organized many British citizens at home to sympathize with the distant fights to maintain law and order.

“Law and order” thus became a catchphrase worldwide to justify extreme violence and massacres of people rebelling against oppression, including the theft of their land, minerals and other resources by marauding European “discoverers” in the Americas, Asia, India, China, Vietnam, Philippines, Malaysia, or Africa.<sup>222</sup> The pattern of massacring rebelling or non-conforming natives, destroying evidence, renaming horrific events, and silencing discussions about the massacre has a long history in colonies and is a story new generations need to know.<sup>223</sup>

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<sup>222</sup> For example, According to Alden, the 1622 Virginia massacre killed 350 settlers, caused a famine and epidemic that claimed another five or six hundred more, and hastened the demise of the Virginia Company of London. The massacre “brought a ruthless counterattack against the Indians, in which scores of settlers and hundreds of Indians perished, and also brought a shift in English policy (Vaughan 1978:57).

<sup>223</sup> On 31 May 1921, the *Tulsa Tribune* headline screamed “To Lynch a Negro Tonight” and “Nab Negro for Attacking Girl in an Elevator.” Dick Rowland, a young black man arrested and “charged with attempting to assault a 17-year-old white girl,” (an unsubstantiated claim; the charges against Rowland were later dropped). Outside the

In Kenya, this silencing included burning documents, confidentially archiving damning colonial government's records in Britain, and hiding them from the public for half a century before their release.<sup>224</sup>

To counter the liberation struggle and guerrilla war, Britain and the colonial Kenyan government responded with a racially tainted smear campaign that unleashed a media frenzy of myth-making propaganda that renamed revolutionary warriors the *Mau Mau* and proceeded to over-dramatize what they termed as terrorist, barbaric, and savage *Mau Mau* murders (read native) of innocent, orderly, and hard-working white settlers (read civilized). For example, this imagery was promulgated in the anonymous pamphlet, *The Mau Mau*, with a forward by Granville Roberts, then Public Relations Officer for Kenya, as well as in the pronouncements by settlers to “line them up against a wall” or “string them up” and in the many articles (The Leader-Post 9/4/1953:1). Sensational articles pitting the barbarian *Mau Mau* against the white defenders of law and order detailed gory murders in contemporary Kenyan, British, American, and some European weeklies, dailies, and journals: *The Age*; *The Sun*; *Hartford Courant*; *Deseret News & Telegram*; *Vancouver*

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courthouse where Rowland was held, a mob of more than 300 angry whites grew at night. Two dozen or more Black men—including many World War I veterans—drove to the courthouse with guns but left after the police chief assured them Rowland was safe. The night mob expanded to more than 2,000, including around 75 Black men heading home when a white man grabbed a Black veteran's pistol. A shot was fired that set off a massacre of black Tulsans over the next 14 hours. Black businesses, establishments and homes were looted, burned down and Black residents expunged. Private planes (about four from the Sinclair Oil Company) buzzed across the sky, tracking and shooting Black Tulsans and dropping alcohol-filled bombs on their houses and businesses. By noon on June 1, Greenwood Avenue (nicknamed Black Wall Street by Booker T. Washington), Archer, Cincinnati, Frankfort, Detroit, Elgin, Streets and others with Black businesses and homes—totalling 35 square blocks—were a smouldering ruin that left 8,000 Black Tulsans suddenly homeless, 4,000 in internment centres and about 300 dead. The exact number remains unknown as most victims were buried in mass graves [Oklahoma Historical Society]. The Oklahoma's governor blocked efforts to help dying and dead black residents, for example, by refusing the Universal Negro Improvement Association's plan to dispatch 50 Black Cross nurses to Tulsa and the National Guard's plan to donate 100 tents. After the massacre, the *Tulsa Tribune*'s editorial pages declared that “Tulsa has resolved that the crime carnival ends here and will be buried with the ashes of the ‘niggertown’ that is gone.” Blacks who survived the pogrom fled or were run out of town. Afterwards, pictures or newspapers about the massacre were widely destroyed; and, to protect their families, Blacks suppressed any discussion of the event. *Source*: 100 Years After the Tulsa Massacre, What Does Justice Look Like? *New York Times*, 25 May 2021).

<sup>224</sup> Kimathi papers and others documenting the Mau Mau are “classified materials” in Kenya's own national archives; and, under a joint British Kenya agreement, they will only be made public in 2013 (Kinyatti 1986a: vii, xvii).

*Sun*; *Montreal Gazette*; *New York Times*; *Milwaukee Sentinel*; *Miami News*; *Christian Science Monitor*; *Chicago Tribune*; *Sydney Morning Herald*; *Ottawa Citizen*; *Los Angeles Times*; *Indian Express*; *St. Petersburg Times*; *Time*, *Newsweek*, *New York Times*, *The Glasgow Herald*; *the Sunday Times*; *The Nation*; *The Daily Telegraph*; *Saturday Review*; *Le Monde Diplomatique* and *Monthly Review*. These publications often carried long, screaming, and exaggerated articles about the *Mau Mau*, a practice that continued from 1952 for the next decade and beyond.<sup>225</sup>

When the victims were settlers or loyalists, the media and other publications used sympathetic language or showed gory pictures of mutilated bodies—supposedly by the *Mau Mau*—e.g., Chief Waruhiu or the collaborator, Chief Luka of Lari, in the massacre on March 26, 1953. When reported, freedom fighters murdered by security forces were labelled *Mau Mau* terrorists, *Mau Mau* gangsters, *Mau Mau* rebels, or *Mau Mau* tribesmen.<sup>226</sup> Often, however, murdered freedom

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<sup>225</sup> “Kenya: Black & red magic,” *Time*, Monday, 1/9/1952; “East Africa tribe takes death oath: Commons told Kenya Society swore to kill European farmers,” *The Hartford Courant*, 17/10/1952, p. 23; “*Mau Mau* society stalks East Africa: Searchlight on African darkness,” *Christian Science Monitor*, 18/10/1952; “Kenya: *Mau Mau* terror,” *Newsweek*, October 1952; “*Mau Mau* shoot Africa’s Churchill,” *Daily Mail*, 8/10/1952; “Kenya: SOS,” *Time*, 27/10/1952; “A Small-scale African Hitler,” *The Daily Telegraph*, November 1952; “Kenya: The Meow-Meows,” *Time*, 3 11/1952; C. Drake. “The terror that walks by day,” *The Nation*, November 1952; “Kenya: The ladies & the pangas,” *Time*, 12/1/1953; “Kenya: Frontier war,” *Time*, February 1953; “The night visitors,” *Newsweek*, February 1953; “Africa: In Kenya, Bloodshed,” *Time*, 6/4/1953; “Kenya: Challenge, then shoot,” *Time*, 13/4/1953; “*Mau Mau* kills six in a night of terror,” *Deseret News and Telegram* (Salt Lake City), 14/4/1953; “British troops preparing showdown with *Mau Mau*,” *The Montreal Gazette*, 8/5/1953:2; “Kenya: Mow them down,” *Time*, 25/5/1953; F. Friedenber (1953); “17 *Mau Mau* to die in tribal killings: Others face trial—Kenya bars summary justice in dealing with anti-White terrorists,” *The New York Times*, 14/5/1953; “*Mau Mau* renews attacks on tribe; Seven home guardsmen killed as terrorists burn posts—Many hostages seized,” *The New York Times*, 22/6/1953; “The *Mau Mau* terror,” *The Nation*, October 1953; “*Mau Mau* lose brigadier: “Batu” killed in battle,” *The Glasgow Herald*, 8/2/1954; “The darkening war,” *Time*, March 1954; “*Mau Mau* oaths behind Kenya terror,” *The Age*, 23/4/1954, p. 2; “*Mau Mau* round-up due: 5,000 soldiers plus policemen begin operation today,” *The New York Times*, 24/4/1954; “*Mau Mau* strife dominates Kenya; After 4 years of emergency terrorist movement still disturbs colony’s life,” *The New York Times*, 12/6/1955; “*Mau Mau* kills six in a night of terror,” *Deseret News and Telegram*, April 14, 1953: 2; “*Mau Mau* terrorist leader hanged,” *The Gazette*, Tuesday, 19/2/1957, p. 3; H. Alpert. “SR goes to the movies: Kenya violence: A review of Ruark’s *Something of Value*,” *Saturday Review*, May 1957; “Into Africa’s depths,” *Newsweek*, May 1957. See also Foreman. 1997. “*Mau Mau*’s American career, 1952-57,” and Slocum. 2005. *Terrorism, Media, Liberation*.

<sup>226</sup> “119 *Mau Mau* terrorists killed, 40 injured in 4 days,” *The Milwaukee Sentinel*, 22/2/1954, p. 2; “Kenya troops kill 24 *Mau Mau* terrorists: Campaign on Malaya pattern,” *The Glasgow Herald*, 2/4/1953, p. 7; “21 *Mau Mau* rebels killed,” *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, 8/4/1953, p. 1; “Action against *Mau Mau* kills six in a night of terror,” *Deseret News and Telegram*: Salt Lake City, 14/4/1953, p. 2; “Kenya settlers have to kill *Mau Maus*,” *The Herald, Rock Hill*,

fighters were only reported as an aside, sometimes as merely “killed or injured terrorists”.<sup>227</sup> For instance, in the following five newspaper stories, the high number of freedom fighters killed was reported off the cuff: Mau Mau general gives up, *The Vancouver Sun* March 8, 1954:3 (“55 terrorists killed”); Mau Mau may attend peace talks, *The Leader Post, Regina*, Friday March 19, 1954:53 (“a record 145 terrorists killed in a week”); New warning to Mau Mau! “Your casualties will increase,” *The Glasgow Herald*, Tuesday, June 8, 1954:7 (“435 gangsters killed and 490 captured”); Kenya position worse: Fear of deterioration to open rebellion, official steps defended, *Glasgow Herald*, Wednesday, November 26 1952: 5 (15 killed, 29 wounded); British round up Mau Mau suspects, *The Victoria Advocate (Victoria Texas)* Wednesday Afternoon, March 25, 1953:1 (“British-led troops and police arrested 2,487 suspected Mau Mau terrorists, 6 tribesmen were killed and 6 were wounded”). Alternative views were few, e.g., Bailey (1993:260) refers to Mbiyu Koinange’s pamphlet *The People of Kenya Speak for Themselves*, and Muoria’s articles cite the biased coverage of Mau Mau activities by the British press, which prompted prominent Kenyans in London “to call a press conference to correct the negative image of Kenya” (Barber 2006:288–90).

The Mau Mau media frenzy spawned an interest in the topic that has continued unabated **outside** Kenya as demonstrated by the vast Mau Mau scholarship.<sup>228</sup> Reports on massacred Kenyan civilians were often muted or inaccurate—if reported at all, e.g., in the massacres by

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8/7/1953, p. 11, and in *The Victoria Advocate*, 24/7/1953, p. 4; “80 Mau Mau die: Fierce Kenya battles still raging,” *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 22/2/1954, p. 1; “66 more Mau Mau killed,” *The New York Times*, 2/3/1954; “Mau Mau ear’s cut off,” *The Vancouver Sun* 8/3/1954, p. 3.

<sup>227</sup> British troops preparing showdown with Mau Mau, *The Montreal Gazette*, 8/5/1953, p. 2.

<sup>228</sup> Every decade churns out many *Mau Mau* related fiction (including films and videos) and academic articles and books plus some reprints, e.g., in 2004, Routledge reprinted Leakey’s 1952 *Mau Mau and the Kikuyu*. Others include Peter Hewitt, *Kenya Cowboy: A Police Officer’s Account of the Mau Mau Emergency* (2008[1999]); Meja Mwangi (2005), *The Mzungu Boy* (2005[1990]); Caroline Elkin’s *Imperial Reckoning: The Untold Story of Britain’s Gulag in Kenya* (2005a); Sheldon Arensen’s *The Secret Oath*; Anderson’s *Histories of the Hanged* (2005); Maina Wa Kinyatti, *Mau Mau: A Revolution Betrayed* (2009a); Carina Ray, *Mau Mau: The Empire Ghost Returns* (2009).

security forces in Lari, Kiruara, and Murang'a or the media excitement about gunned down "terrorist leaders".<sup>229</sup> From the time the emergency was declared, Kenya became Said's Oriental stage playing out European Enlightenment fantasies in which local Kenyans became the *Mau Mau* (Barber 2006:237–38).<sup>230</sup> The media largely forgot Kenya's liberation war for land and freedom and, instead, focused on saving innocent white victims from "irrational" black hatred that purportedly lacked economic or historic roots.<sup>231</sup>

Native deaths were ignored or deliberately misreported in the news as merely dead *Mau Mau* suspects, terrorists, or gangsters—except when government troops, police, or other forces were killed.<sup>232</sup>

Playing out in the international popular culture and media, the guerrilla war for land and freedom gradually became part of the popular imagination through its representative texts as the *Mau Mau*, the phenomenon that also captured "the American imagination for five years" (R. Weisberg 1976:15 cited by Foreman 1997:78). In most of the articles cited above, the British,

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<sup>229</sup> The Lari massacre by colonial forces to avenge the killing of their appointed chief Luka and his family by Kenyan freedom fighters is a good example of how facts were obfuscated to minimize the successes of the guerrilla fighters and to cover up government massacres of the innocent. The media only reported the villagers killed by the guerrilla fighters but **not** the murder of villagers by government forces, e.g., "Mau Mau band massacres 100," *The Miami News*, 26/3/1953; "Fanatics slay 100 persons in Mau raid," *Deseret News: Salt Lake Telegram: City*, 27/3/1953, p. 28; "100 Butchered by Mau Mau Terrorists in Africa," *The Milwaukee Journal*, 27/3/1953, p. 3; "Police fire on crowd: 15 die," *East African Standard*, 26/11/1952. "Under-reported stories include the Murangá and Kiruara political murders," e.g., "Colonial forces: Nab 227 in a drive to quell dreaded Mau Mau," *The Telegraph*, 31/10/1952, p. 1; "21 Die in riots in East Africa Mau Mau area: Bloodiest weekend ends with police hunting terrorists Nab 227 in a drive to quell dreaded Mau Mau," *The Telegraph*, 31/10/1952 *Toledo Blade*, 24/11/1952, p. 5; "Kenya Seizes 4,000 Mau Mau Nab 227 in a drive to quell dreaded Mau Mau," *The Telegraph*, 31/10/1952 *The Montreal Gazette*, 5/1/1953, p. 1; "British round up Mau Mau suspects Nab 227 in a drive to quell dreaded Mau Mau," *The Telegraph*, 31/10/1952; *The Victoria Advocate* (Victoria, Texas), 23/5/1953, p. 1; "Kenya troops kill 24 Mau Mau terrorists: Campaign on Malaya pattern."

<sup>230</sup> The *Journal of American Scientific Affiliation* (JASA) was among the few that attempted to conduct sober debates about this issue.

<sup>231</sup> For example, Leakey (1954:127–37) explained the war away as "Mau Mau religion and hysteria" in *Defeating Mau Mau*.

<sup>232</sup> Parallels to the slanted reporting about the *Mau Mau* in major international magazines, newspapers, and cable networks are the silences and the impersonal reports about the hundreds of Iraqis killed versus the details and empathy accompanying reports of kidnapped or dead USA and allied troops; or the number of Palestinians versus Israelis killed in their long conflict (CNN, BBC, *Time*, *Newsweek*, *New York Times*, *the Guardian*, *Daily Mail*).

Europeans and Americans projected their own local fears and desires into their accounts of the *Mau Mau* and manifested racist fears rekindled by the African savagery in the reportedly repulsive oath-takings involving mutilated animals, humans, and blood. Far fewer accounts focused sympathetically on the positive aspects of oaths and the people's efforts for freedom from oppressive and exploitative colonial practices like forced labour, land-grabbing, and inferior segregated facilities and services or their utter absence for black and brown Kenyans.

Oath-taking and other practices in this uncharted supernatural world<sup>233</sup> are not unique to Kenya though the colonial government implied such during the so-called *Mau Mau* war. Though ancestor worship, witchcraft, oaths and magic are common among disparate people of African, European, Asian, Australian, and American cultures, the colonial government associated this world negatively with African cultures while ignoring its positive aspects in a way similar to how the mission churches and schools relegated things African to a substandard category they pejoratively called *shenzi*. Thus, in Kenya, British colonialism pitted Christianity against the *shenzi* religions and targeted local languages (devalued in schools), foods, gods, religion, clothes, domestic animals, and educational systems—all became *shenzi*.

Throughout Kenya, many families—even those who are simultaneously traditionalists and Christians or Muslims—still respect, memorialise, and worship their ancestors. Ancestor worship includes conversations with the ancestors to demonstrate gratitude and seek advice, approval, and helpful intercession during tough times. These practices helped maintain intergenerational moral values and discipline, but, for the churches, they comprised the worship of idols, and were condemned as sinful and satanic, along with initiation rites though, in fact, these rites were crucial educational forums that reinforced beliefs, moral systems, and communal discipline. Thus, what

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<sup>233</sup> See note 123.

is called “ancestor worship” was a vital and longstanding normative practice guaranteeing moral and social continuity and unity in the community’s viewpoints and actions.<sup>234</sup>

The guerrilla fighters used well-known, longstanding beliefs and moral techniques to impose and maintain strict discipline, unity, and secrecy, methods the colonial forces greatly feared as they bound people together and, hence, had to be undermined or destroyed. To counter the guerrillas’ oaths, the colonial government, newspapers, and many churches demonized the fighters and tried to use Christian preaching and “traditional cleansing” to neutralize the oaths’ efficacy. In cooperation with the government, the churches often committed cultural genocide by negating and undermining traditional authority and moral structures—e.g., by requiring their newly converted members to burn their beautiful elaborately beaded clothes and, during the emergency, to denounce the *Mau Mau* and report where they were hiding even if they were family members or other relatives. These governmental and Christian tactics divided families and whole communities and weakened the resistance. Hence, the *Mau Mau* myth included visualization of the *Mau Mau* oaths as barbarism and a disease.: Such divisions persist in many Kenyan villages today.

This myth has been sustained by fantastic fictions—novels, movies, and other texts—that continue to sprout today<sup>235</sup> and have been repeated so often locally and internationally they

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<sup>234</sup> The Kamba used and continue to use *kithitu*, *muma* and *kuinga Mbisu* (oathing systems) as the final and most trusted and revered arbiter between disputing or fighting parties. The oathing may include soil or animal meat and blood. For instance, if person A steals a piece of land or some property that belongs to B and denies the theft, B will seek payment or the return of the stolen goods from A and his family. If A still categorically denies the theft, but B still believes he is guilty, B will inform A that he and his family want to *kuinga kithitu* or *muma*, i.e., administer an oath. This involves B getting permission to *kuinga kithitu* from the local government authorities, like the local chief. The colonial Kenyan governments started issuing permissions for this because, if the *kithitu* has been declared, the belief is that not only will A be affected, but also all his blood relatives and their animals. Few families would allow a *kithitu* to happen since they believe their cows, goats, children, and adults will soon begin to die. If a *kithitu* has been done, later, whenever any cats, dogs, chickens, cows, goats or A’s family members die, people deem this as proof of the curse’s efficacy. The social pressure builds up rapidly and becomes more powerful than an arrest warrant or even jail.

<sup>235</sup> for instance, in diverse texts, including books and movies: Elspeth Huxley, *A Thing to Love* (1953); Robert Ruark, *Something of Value* (1955, the movie, 1957); and *Uhuru* (1962). Among the movies are: *Mau Mau*, (1955);

gradually became the only well-known historical versions of Kenya's resistance and guerrilla war. Reproduced in academia and the media since 1952 and rarely challenged, these fictions are rehashed by Kenyan and other media and in Kenya's school syllabi. For example, when announcing the release of the official Mau Mau report by Corfield (1960), the *Times* concluded that no other movement matched Kenya's *Mau Mau* "for sheer grisliness" amongst "all the colonial revolts that have convulsed Asia and Africa since World War II". In support, it alleged that the *Mau Mau* were cannibals, but maintained a studious silence about the abuses and atrocities that led to the Kenyan guerrilla war for land and freedom: "In seven years of terror beginning in the autumn of 1952, 95 Europeans, 29 Asians and 12,423 Africans were slain by methods ranging from merciful garrotting to having their heads bashed in and their brains removed, dried and ritually eaten" (*Time Magazine* 13 June 1960).<sup>236</sup>

### **British and Kenya Colonial Government Reports**

The Kenya Colony's official authority about Kenya's guerrilla war and liberation struggle is F.D. Corfield's *Historical Survey of the Origins and Growth of Mau Mau* (Corfield 1960), resulting from a government mandated study to examine how the Mau Mau originated and developed.

Corfield was appointed in 1957 "by the Kenya government, with a title of Government Commissioner (History of Mau Mau), to carry out an enquiry into the origins of the Mau Mau movement" (Corfield 1960:1). He was to examine and report "the circumstances which permitted

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*Simba* (1955); *Safari* (1955); *Africa Addio* (1966); *The Kitchen Toto* (1987); *Enough Is Enough* (2004); *Reke Tumanwo* (2005); *The Oath* (2005) and *Africa Addio* (1984); BBC's 52-minute documentary, *Mau Mau*, Part II of *The Black Man's Land Trilogy* (1978) BBC.

<sup>236</sup> Estimates of the number of colonialists killed through the Emergency Period (1952-1960) ranges between 32 and 95, compared to the official statistic of 11,000 Kenyans killed, cited by diverse sources (J.M. Kariuki 1963:xiii; Elkins 2005:xvi; Lapping 1989:501; and Anderson 2005). In truth, the number of the murdered Africans remains unknown since the colonial government destroyed and secreted away files and written information. Nevertheless, the true number of Africans killed directly or indirectly by counter-insurgency tactics is likely to be, at least, a hundred thousand people (Elkins 2005:xvi).

the movement to develop so rapidly without the full knowledge of the Government...and any deficiencies which made themselves apparent in the Government Machine” (ibid.). Besides the Corfield report, other departmental reports, letters, and officers’ observations as well as non-governmental publications exist about that period of guerrilla war.<sup>237</sup> Official documents tended to portray the guerrilla fighters as desperate, mentally sick, and extremely dangerous individuals:

Mau Mau was a dangerous obsession based not on intellect, but on feeling and emotion which has [*sic*] been worked on over many years, ... which, whether real or imagined, they ... genuinely believe. To overcome this obsession mere argument and persuasion is not enough, and an attack must be made on feelings and emotions.<sup>238</sup>

British intelligence believed that naked women (prostitutes) participated in the ceremony, usually with a ram’s penis or donkey’s testicles placed in their vaginas or anuses. According to British intelligence, from the fifth oath onwards, “putrefied flesh, including human brains and menstrual blood, was reportedly eaten.”<sup>239</sup>

The official view was mostly based on the repulsion European Christians felt toward the oathing ceremonies and the grotesque atrocities allegedly committed by freedom fighters:

the gang, frenzied by the thought of blood, slashed around with their *simis* (a Kikuyu sword), and fired their guns. One old man, slower than the rest, was caught and hamstrung. He fell at the feet of his pursuers, covering his face with his arms to protect it from the slicing swords, but a mouse in a mechanical mincing machine would have had a better chance of survival. One terrorist hacked off a foot, and another sliced off his testicles to use later in an oathing ceremony. A third gouged out his eyes ... and put them in his pocket for the same purpose. When they had finished, most of the gang came by to cut and stab the twitching corpse. They then licked the blood off their *simis* and moved off into the night, having first set fire to all the huts they could see. (Kitson (1960:119)

Or,

*Mau Mau* leaders deliberately reduced their victims to a state where a man who took the *Mau Mau* oath was cut off from all hope, outside [the] *Mau Mau*, in this world or the next.... [L]eadership forced its recruits, voluntary or involuntary, to seal their oaths by digging up corpses and eating their putrefied

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<sup>237</sup> L.S.B. Leakey, *Defeating Mau Mau* (1954); Askwith, *The Story of Kenya’s Progress* (1953); J.C. Carothers, *The Psychology of Mau Mau* (1954); and the Rehabilitation Advisory Committee, *Report on the Sociological Causes Underlying Mau Mau with some Proposals on the Means of Ending It* (1954).

<sup>238</sup> Department of Community Development and Rehabilitation (1954:2). *Annual Report 1953*, cited in Rosberg and Nottingham (1966:335)

<sup>239</sup> CO 822/800, Special Branch Reports (1954)

flesh, copulating with sheep, dogs, or adolescent girls, and by drinking the famed “Kaberichia cocktail,” a mixture of semen and menstrual blood.... The full physical details of the ceremonies performed to produce these concoctions *can hardly be printed in a public document*. It is sufficient to record that, for one of the more notorious concoctions, known as the “Kaberichia cocktail,” semen produced in public was mixed in a bowl with menstrual blood (Corfield 1960:167–68 *italics added*).

Thus maligned, the freedom fighters became to Europeans a “psychosis,” “a depraved, psychotic atavistic reversion to primitivism, ...[and] a nasty hooliganism needing psychiatric interpretation” (Carothers 1954; Corfield 1960). Europeans could neither fathom the unrest and hostility against them, nor the murderous intentions of the freedom fighters and the appeal of a secret movement cemented by allegedly savage, bestial oaths. More confounding yet, these fighters were led by what Europeans previously deemed the most progressive tribe—the Kikuyu.

The myth drew from cognitive stereotypes and images of the African-other that most Westerners in and outside Kenya—local British officials and politicians, settlers, journalists, and scholars—seemed to believe. For example, the Mau Mau oaths were to the Secretary for the Colonies, Oliver Lyttleton, “the most bestial, filthy and nauseating incantation which perverted minds can ever have brewed” (Lyttleton 1962:394). The missionaries saw similar forces of darkness immortalized by the ghosts that had begun to haunt Lyttleton in his office and everywhere: “I can recall no instance when I have felt the forces of evil to be so near or so strong. As I wrote memoranda or instruction, I would suddenly see a shadow fall across the page—the horned shadow of the Devil himself” (Lyttleton 1962: 394–95). For many Christians, including the local newly converted ones, the macabre stories that abound about the Mau Mau violated Christian and tribal ethics and literacy itself.

The *Mau Mau* myth was useful as both propaganda and ideology.<sup>240</sup> Britain and the colonial government exaggerated and misrepresented the allegiance and oath-taking ceremonies for *Mau Mau* membership as backward, bloody, heinous, and immoral.<sup>241</sup> This propaganda was used to condemn the liberation movement and helped reduce the public perception of the war to only one of its aspects: the oaths that bound fighters together.<sup>242</sup> Such distortions and exaggerations engendered the *Mau Mau* myth, demonized Kenyans' resistance to colonization, justified extreme measures for quashing the resistance (e.g., extra-judicial killings and the creation of emergency villages), and, even today, greatly shape public opinion about the liberation movement.

To contain the “Mau Mau”, the British—through their sycophantic, philandering, and thieving loyalists—cut off support to the freedom fighters by burning down thousands of houses without warning, forcing those villagers into Emergency Villages, stealing and confiscating their property, and requiring forced labour. “By the end of 1955, 1,050,899 Kikuyu had been herded into 804 villages with a total of some 230,000 huts” (Adhiambo and Lonsdale 2003:207). “Just as they herded the suspect Chinese population (into fortified villages in Malaya”,<sup>243</sup> the British in Kenya forced “captive villagers to dig a fifty-mile-long ditch around the Mau Mau’s main forest redoubt, separating the rebels from their source of food.”<sup>244</sup> Kenya’s emergency villages were characterized by “wanton destruction and illegal appropriation of property, together with the perverted atmosphere of retribution and seeming loyalist glee” (Adhiambo and Lonsdale 2003:207).

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<sup>240</sup> Perhaps the best description of this is by Berman (1990), p. 354 onwards.

<sup>241</sup> For examples, see the section, British and Kenya Colonial Government on p. 132.

<sup>242</sup> especially in the official documents summarized in Corfield (1960)

<sup>243</sup> Kantowicz (2000:256); and KNA/VQ/16/103 Central Province Annual Report (1956); Potter (1953) DC GRSS 3/13/37/8, H.S. Potter, memo: ‘Return of Kikuyu, Embu and Meru ex-Convicts and Mau Mau Suspects to their Reserves, 12 August 1953.

<sup>244</sup> The number of emergency villages seems to have been above 800 since, according to Kantowicz (2000:256), the Kikuyu alone—not counting other tribes—were herded into about “824 strategic villages”.

Adhiambo and Lonsdale reveal that these villages were, in fact, concentration camps that became death traps for children and the elderly due to famine, malnutrition, and disease.<sup>245</sup>

Though an immense *Mau Mau* scholarship thrives in Britain, Europe and America, in Kenya, sustained scholarship on the subject is recent due to the state-imposed public silence about the subject that grew perversely into self-censorship of the fighters even in their private spaces. Except Maina wa Kinyatti (1986a, 1986b and 1990), Mukaru Ng'ang'a (1977a, 1977b and 1980), and Tabitha Kanogo (1987) who conducted original research about the 1950s' Kenyan liberation war,<sup>246</sup> Kenya's renowned historians and academics (e.g., Ogot, Were, and Ochieng) tentatively skirted the subject in keeping with the post-independence taboo on discussing *Mau Mau*. For example, Ogot quickly alludes to the "Mau Mau rebellion" in his article (1974), "Kenya under the British, 1895 to 1963," but **omits** mentioning the guerrilla war, the massacres by government soldiers, the detention camps, the "Pipeline", the torture of prisoners, and the violent and brutal transfer of citizens to "protected villages". For Ogot, "what is important to remember is that the shock of 'Mau Mau' had created the right atmosphere in that the Imperial Power was now willing to talk with the African leaders.... [During] these dialogues, power shifted from the Europeans to the Africans" (B.A. Ogot 1974:285). Ogot's essay based on songs he collected as a young teacher in Nyeri in the 1950s— "*Politics, Culture and Music in Central Kenya: A study of Mau Mau hymns 1951–1956*,"<sup>247</sup> concludes that, though Mau Mau ideology was nationalist in the hymns, the demand for the return of land **was Kikuyu, NOT national** (my emphasis),<sup>248</sup> as were its moral religious fervour and its past heroes like Waiyaki and Mugo wa Kibiru. Hence, his hymns "cannot

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<sup>245</sup> See also Thiong'o (1981), Waciuna (1969), and Likimani (1985)

<sup>246</sup> For that, Kinyatti was jailed and later had to flee the country, as did Ng'ang'a.

<sup>247</sup> *Kenya Historical Review* 5:2 (1977): 275-86.

<sup>248</sup> Neocolonial Kenya government habitually denies the Kenya Land and Freedom Army's national appeal.

be regarded as the national freedom songs which every Kenyan youth can sing with pride and conviction” (p. 286).<sup>249</sup> Similarly, B.A. Ogot and W.R. Ochieng’s (1995) *Decolonization and Independence in Kenya 1940–93: Kenya Under Kenyatta* relied largely on prior *Mau Mau* research by others, not his original research.

At least up to 1995, B.A. Ogot and W.R. Ochieng’ avoided all but oblique summary mentions of the guerrilla war. Profound original work was, however, done by J.M. Kariuki (1963), O. Odinga (1966), Gakaara wa Wanjaũ (1983), Maina wa Kinyatti (1986a, 1986b and 1990); Mukaru Ng’ang’a (1977a, 1977b and 1980); Tabitha Kanogo (1987).<sup>250</sup> Most accounts by Kenyans about this period comprise the fighters’ personal narratives, e.g., J.M. Kariuki (1963), Njama (1966), Kaggia (1975), Gakaara Wanjau (1988), and Ngugi wa Thiong’o (1965, 1977). Ogot only began to engage more profoundly with the struggle of the Land and Freedom Army years after establishment of the multi-party system in 1992.

Mau Mau scholarship rarely questions “facts” about *the other*. for instance, “Kikuyu thuggery”—a term alluding to the *Mau Mau*—that originated from the colonial divide-and-rule tactic that pitted tribes against each other. For that, the colonialists assigned negative characteristics to different linguistic groups, thus stereotyping and marking them as dangerous people that other groups should fear or hate, or positive characteristics to some groups to make

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<sup>249</sup> See further discussion of the essay in Atieno, E S. and J. Lonsdale (2003:114).

<sup>250</sup> Kariuki (1963) “*Mau Mau*” *Detainee*: the account by a Kenya African of his experiences in detention camps between 1953 and 1960; Barnett and Njama (1966) *Mau Mau from Within: Autobiography and Analysis of Kenya's Peasant Revolt* (1966); Kinyatti’s work on the Kenya guerrilla war saw him detained in June 1982 and his manuscripts seized at Kenyatta University where he taught history. His books include *Kimathi's Letters: A Profile of Patriotic Courage* (1986b); *Thunder from the Mountains: Poems and Songs from the Mau Mau* (1990); *Kenya's Freedom Struggle: The Dedan Kimathi Papers* (2009b); *Mau Mau: A Revolution Betrayed* (1991). Other historians who studied the subject include Kanogo (1987), Mukaru Ng’ang’a (1977a, 1977b and 1980) and a younger generation of scholars, Simatei (1999) and Maloba (1993) (N.B., The research for the present thesis goes up to 1998. Since then, others have conducted new research and some older historians have revisited the topic: E. S. Atieno Odhiambo and John Lonsdale (2003) and Ochieng’ (2002). The title of Ochieng’s chapter 13, “Thunder from the Islands: Mau Mau in Western Kenya” (Ochieng’ 2002) echoes Kinyatti’s *Thunder from the Mountain: Mau Mau Patriotic Songs* (1980).

them feel superior to the “dangerous ones”. In Kenya for instance, the Kikuyu came to be associated with stealing, thuggery, and the “terrorism” that the British—fearing loss of their conquered land and ill-gotten wealth—attributed to the freedom fighters to justify crushing the 1950s’ armed resistance. The Kamba, on the other hand, were associated with honesty and loyalty, and thus many attained leadership positions in the armed forces. Other tribes—including outside Kenya like the Bagisu of Uganda—were also demonized. Some Kenyans deem the Bagisu cannibals who eat non-Bagisu people!

After the state of emergency was declared in 1952, *Kikuyu* no longer referred simply to the people whose original language was Kikuyu. The government expanded the meaning of “Kikuyu” beyond language to geography to include all those with ancestors around Mount Kenya, hence including the Meru, Embu and Tharaka. With Kikuyu thus defined, it was easier to expel such people from Nairobi (and later from other parts of the colony) back to their rural “homes”.<sup>251</sup> This was a precursor to cleansing of the Kikuyu (and now other linguistic groups) from locations where, for convenience, they can be defined as “foreigners”.<sup>252</sup> The logic of Miguda’s statement that “prior to the Declaration of Emergency, the Luo and other groups living in the African locations of Nairobi were faced with thuggery, theft and terrorism organized by various Kikuyu gangs” is easier to understand in the context of Kenya’s armed guerrilla war for freedom and the efforts to crush the resistance, including by propagandistically labelling it as “Kikuyu thuggery”<sup>253</sup> or Mau Mau (Odhiambo and Lonsdale 2003).<sup>254</sup> The ploy by the British government to malign the

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<sup>251</sup> The unified, wider “Kikuyu” group endured most of the massacres and horrors unleashed by the colonial state under the guise of repressing the Mau Mau.

<sup>252</sup> In personal narratives (examined later in this chapter), the freedom fighters repeatedly stress how their people were brutally uprooted from their traditional homes and transported to and dumped in rural Kikuyuland. See, for example, Kariuki (1963); R. Mugo Gatheru (1964), Barnett and Njama (1966).

<sup>253</sup> Edith Miguda (2003:181)

<sup>254</sup> See also Mboya (1963) and Kaggia (1975).

resistance has a long history in Kenya and still contributes to horrible stereotypes, tribal hatred, and mass murders of otherized Kenyans in diverse parts of the country.

In an account depicting the freedom fighters (Mau Mau) as liars and undisciplined, blood thirsty, irrational thugs, the elderly Mzee Gilbert Okila of Usonga describes the Mau Mau detainees (presumably Kikuyu) butchering Onimbo, a Luo, after he refused to ferry them from the island on his fishing boat in a failed attempt to escape:

Like lightning, one Mau Mau struck him with a panga several times until he died. As he groaned into stillness, the vicious Mau Mau drank his blood. This ritual over, the Mau Mau opened Onimbo's belly, dislodged his liver, cut it into little bits and after eating the pieces ordered Asura and Jariyo to eat the rest. All this was done without any human feeling on the part of the Mau Mau. The macabre job having been done, Onimbo's remains were carefully hidden in the bush (W. Ochieng' 2002:190).

These fighters' behaviour sharply contradicts the observations and behaviour reported by detainees like Kariuki and Gakaara on Mageta island.<sup>255</sup> Okila's story may have been embellished to fit the government's image of the Mau Mau, which, at that time, some Luo may have believed due to the barrage of anti-Mau Mau propaganda over the radio and in pamphlets that demonized the freedom fighters and pitted the Kikuyu against the Luo (and other tribes). In reality, the Luo and the Kikuyu collaborated to fight their common enemy, as exemplified in Odinga's autobiography and by Ochieng's story of Yimbo's first Mau Mau activist, Richard Aduong'a, who, around 1951, took the oath and began to attend clandestine meetings in Nairobi:<sup>256</sup>

After the initiation, Aduong'a was trained ... to use small firearms, ... ambush and ... send secret messages. He was given the native police uniforms that he used at night, in company of others to gain entry into places where they could steal or rob owners of goods required by the *Mau Mau* fighters in the forest. He was also given a pistol (Ochieng' 2002: 187–88).

Arrested one night in 1954 with a pistol and six rounds of live ammunition, Aduong'a and others were taken to Nanyuki for months of interrogation and colour-coded according to crime and

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<sup>255</sup> The autobiographies of freedom fighters—e.g., Kariuki's *Mau Mau Detainee...* (1963) and Gakaara Wanjaũ's *Mau Mau Author in Detention* (1988)—tell different versions of their stay in the Mageta Island

<sup>256</sup> The Luo-Kikuyu alliances to fight the common enemy—British imperialism—were demonstrated by their mutual support for KAU and for the East African Association (Ochieng' 2002:183).

punishment.<sup>257</sup> Aduong'a was saved from detention by his white boss who argued for his release, saying that "Aduong'a is a good man who had been misled by his Gikuyu colleagues". Aduong'a was repatriated to Yimbo and ordered to be peaceful for the next five years (Ochieng' 2002:187–88).

## Section C: Liberation War Narratives

The year Kenya attained independence (1963), Josiah Mwangi Kariuki published his personal account, *'Mau Mau' Detainee: The Account by a Kenya African of His Experiences in Detention Camps, 1953–1960*.<sup>258</sup> A fierce freedom fighter and a first-generation independent Kenyan politician, Kariuki discusses his experiences in a series of detention camps through the pipeline including the terrible injustices and indignities he experienced or witnessed. J.M. Kariuki's autobiography *'Mau Mau' Detainee: The Account by a Kenyan African of his Experiences in Detention Camps: 1953–1960* collects, documents, and analyses his and his fellow detainees' struggles in the pipeline.<sup>259</sup> Kariuki went through four detention camps and, finally, a rehabilitation centre in Athi River. He engaged in complex communication systems with fellow detainees in those detention camps to share written and oral "news". Kariuki's organizing skills and the participation of the detainees testify to the freedom fighters' tenacity despite the camp's brutal disciplinary systems. Kariuki also continued organizing in detention by writing letters to the prison's authorities and editing and documenting narratives, songs, and oral camp speeches. His book differs starkly from the colonial official narrative about Kenya's guerrilla liberation struggle and the single story of Kenya's independence.

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<sup>257</sup> Red meant the gallows; yellow, detention. Aduong'a got yellow. As the emergency dragged on, possession of arms and live ammunition became an automatic death sentence.

<sup>258</sup> In 1965, Joel Maina translated J. M. Kariuki's book (1965) into Kiswahili: *Mau Mau kizuizini: Kisa cha Miaka Saba Ndani ya Kambi za Kuhamishwa Katika Kenya* (Nairobi: EAPH, 156p). Kariuki's wishes only partly came true as just a few fighters told their stories while other others were politically and economically side-lined or assassinated. Kariuki was brutally assassinated and mutilated on 2 March 1975 by what is widely believed to have been state agents. Nobody was ever punished for his death.

Kenyatta opposed the Mau Mau repeatedly and vehemently, both during the war and later as President of Kenya. Having been long a prisoner in the “Pipeline”, J.M. Kariuki (1963:22) emphasizes “that in all the statements and confessions made in my hearing by thousands of detainees in fourteen camps the name of Kenyatta was never once mentioned as being involved in an oath”. Though sceptical, Corfield (1960:103) reports that “Kenyatta said that his Union was dead against the movement and had in fact been working against it. His vice-president and general secretary had been touring the country with a view to denouncing this unlawful association”. Moreover, after independence, the guerrilla Field Marshalls Musa and Baimungi negotiated with Kenyatta but rejected his land and military programme and returned to the forest to fight.<sup>260</sup>

*Mau Mau Detainee* should have been a central text in the literature and history syllabi and widely read outside classrooms in the new nation because, in it, Kariuki shares his vision of national goals, nation-building, national unity, and individual development—key issues in Kenya’s national goals of education. *Mau Mau Detainee* and similar texts also give insights into the fighting and the fighters, e.g., women’s role in the struggle spying on the British and homeguards, sending messages, supplying food and arms to the forest fighters, and tending to the injured and dying.

Kariuki details how women sometimes “appeared to enjoy chores they detested, e.g., the prostitutes in garrison towns who traded sex for two rounds of ammunition passed down the tenuous supply lines to the fighters” and how “forest fighters making [their] own guns and bombs from bicycle frames, water piping, door bolts, and rubber” were sometimes killed in accidental explosions. Kariuki rejects the term “passive wing” as the colonial government’s name for “hundreds or thousands of ... [very] unpassive [sic] sympathizers who organized the arms and ammunition” (Kariuki 1963:34). Saddened by the events surrounding Kimathi’s capture and

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<sup>260</sup> See footnote 287.

consequent execution, Kariuki declares that “none of us can accept the bias and inaccuracies in the life of Dedan Kimathi, the greatest hero of us all, given in Ian Henderson’s book, *The Hunt for Kimathi*” (1963:35). Never having been in the forest himself, Kariuki further wishes that the “true story of the glorious fight of the armies in the Aberdares and Mount Kenya forests will be written soon by someone who was” (ibid). *Mau Mau Detainee* discusses the history leading up to the creation of the new Kenyan nation from a perspective that, in essential aspects, diverges from the single story of independence and the Mau Mau myth and, by implication, challenges the legitimacy of the new leadership. Unsurprisingly, *Mau Mau Detainee* is rarely discussed in Kenya’s schools and virtually unknown to the public.

Kariuki’s sentiments are echoed by fellow detainees, e.g., Gakaara wa Wanjaũ, *Mau Mau Author in Detention 1952–1962* (1988[1983]);<sup>261</sup> Donald Barnett and Karaari Njama, *Mau Mau From Within* (1966); and Bildad Kaggia, *Roots of Freedom 1921–1963: The Autobiography of Bildad Kaggia* (1975). These texts record how ordinary people lost their lands to the colonial government and how British troops and their Kenyan minions killed, tortured, extracted false confessions and denunciations, and detained civilians suspected of connections with the guerrilla war, often arresting people on spurious or vague charges. Though tortured, Kariuki affirms that “never once did I tell the whole truth as now here”. His “screeners laboriously wrote out my false confessions” (J.M. Kariuki 1963:61).

Charges for being involved with the Mau Mau were often vague and might be about events that happened long before civilians were arrested (J.M. Kariuki 1963:61). For instance, Gakaara wa Wanjaũ (1988:24) was prosecuted for seeking to “instil hatred against white people” and having “a spirit of disobedience against the authority of the government” by publishing a Kiswahili book,

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<sup>261</sup> Gakaara Wanjaũ’s prison memoirs (1984 Noma Award) were written between 1952 and 1962; first published in 1983 in Kikuyu (Nairobi: HEB) *Mwaandiki wa Mau Mau Ithaamirioini* and in English in 1988.

*Roho ya Kiume na Bidii kwa Mwafrika [The Spirit of Manhood and Perseverance for the African]* (1948) and a Kikuyu book, *Creed of the Agikuyu* (1952). Later, Gakaara wrote an autobiography about his detention, plus a collection of resistance songs.<sup>262</sup> Though he was among the early anti-colonial (and, hence, controversial) Kenyan publishers, his books and diverse writings are still unknown in Kenyan schools.

Equally unfamiliar in Kenyan schools are colonial Kenya's African-owned printing houses, their struggles, the texts they published, and their contribution to Kenya's independence. For instance, in 1946, the Luo Thrift and Trading Corporation (LTTC) started a press to continue printing the *Nyanza Times* paper that Orinda Okun and James Omoga had started but abandoned due to high printing costs (Odinga 1966:79–80). Both the *Nyanza Times* and the *Ramogi* newspaper started by Achieng Oneko popularized and framed the LTTC in national terms through its Luo Union aimed at uniting not only the Luo, but “our people throughout East Africa” (Odinga 1966:87). Odinga travelled throughout East Africa recruiting LTTC and Luo Union members. To unite people, the Luo Union “raised funds for classrooms and books for children, sent students to study abroad on scholarships, and organized traditional dances” (Odinga 1966:87). Later, the LTTC's press in Nairobi began printing diverse pamphlets in Kenyan languages as “our contribution to the cause of African Independence”.<sup>263</sup> The Luo Thrift and Trading Corporation made no monetary profit from publishing these vernacular pamphlets (Odinga 1966:82).

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<sup>262</sup> Gakaara Wanjaũ's prison diary, *Mwandiki wa Mau Mau Ithamirio-ini* (1983) was translated by Ngigi Njoroge as *Mau Mau Author in Detention* (1988). See also Wanjaũ's *Nyimbo Cia Mau Mau (Mau Mau Songs)* (1989).

<sup>263</sup> Other vernacular pamphlets included the *Mumenyereri wa Maundu Mega ma Ugikuyu* ('*The Guardian of the good things of Kikuyu*'), '*What should we do, our people?*' (1945), '*The Home Coming of Our Great Hero, Jomo Kenyatta*' (1946), and '*Kenyatta is Our Reconciler*' (1947) (edited by Henry Muoria); *Mwiyathia* (Kikamba) and *Uhuru Wa'Afrika* (edited by Paul Ngei); *Mulinavosi* (Maragoli); *Radioposta* (Kiswahili) published by W.W.W. Awori, and *Mwalimu* (published by Francis Khamisi). Other writers of the time—Mwaniki, Mbugua Njama, Mathenge Wachira, Zablon Oti, and Mwaniki Mugweru—often wrote pamphlets at first and, later, some like Gakaara authored books. V.G. Patel, who sold his printing equipment to Muoria, was jailed for printing *Mumenyereri*. Describing the divergent politics of the papers, Odinga deemed Paul Ngei's *Uhuru Wa'Afrika* the most radical and hard-hitting (Odinga 1966:82).

Nevertheless, as Muoria and other writers demonstrate, the pamphlets sensitized their readers and listeners,<sup>264</sup> especially among the Kikuyu, the Maasai, and Kalenjins from whom the settlers had stolen huge tracks of land.

Muoria's many pamphlets illustrated how colonialists enslaved Africans (e.g., *Our Mother is Soil*) and stressed the significance of education and unity in solving the big issues of land and dignity.<sup>265</sup> Mwaniki Mugweru's *Kamuingi Koyaga Ndiri (A Group of People Lifts the Heavy Mortar)* (1945), Mathenge Wachira's *Mahoya ma Gikuyu na Muumbi (The Prayers of Gikuyu and Muumbi)* (1952) and Njama's *Mahoya ma Waiyaki (The Prayers of Waiyaki)* (1952) attacked the Kikuyu "Christians with enough land and livestock", who tried to stop those "who had nothing from demanding back their property from those who took it from them" Odhiambo and Lonsdale (2003:103, 110, 112).<sup>266</sup> Wachira's *Prayers* appealed for God to intervene on behalf of the Kikuyu as he did for the Children of Israel to return their stolen lands. Muoria's political reporting—especially about the Olenguruone land disputes between the Kikuyu and the government—brought threats of imprisonment or deportation "if he continued writing in a manner that might bring ill feeling between Agikuyu and Europeans". He promised to "try to see that such news are [*sic*] not

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<sup>264</sup> Continuing the oral tradition, literate workers surreptitiously read the pamphlets in the evenings to illiterate comrades. See Muoria's biography, *I, the Gikuyu and the White Fury* (1994).

<sup>265</sup> Muoria's pamphlets include: *Muturire wa Kiriū (What It Takes to Live Sociably Today)*; *Tungika Atia Iiia Wiitu (What Can We Do For Our Own Sake)* 1945; *Guka kwa Njama Iitu Nene Kenyatta (The Arrival of Our Great Hero Kenyatta)* 1946; *Nyina Witu ni Tiri, Ithe Witu ni Uugi (Our Mother is the Soil, Our Father is Wisdom)* 1948; *Njamba Imwe cia Tene cia Ugi wa Miciria (Some Ancient Great Thinkers)* 1948; *Uhotani Witu Ti wa Hinya wa Mbara No Niwa Kihoto (Our Victory Does Not Depend on Force of Arms but on Reason)* 1948; *Muoyo Ni Mbara ya Ciiko Utorie, Kana Utoorio (Life is War by Action, to Win or Lose)* 1949; *Nyimbo Cia Kwarahura Ruriri (Songs to Awake the Tribe)* 1951.

<sup>266</sup> After the declaration of emergency, the colonial government deported, en masse, people agglomerated arbitrarily under the title Kikuyu, confiscated their shops and houses, and distributed them among loyalist government functionaries. In 1954, freedom fighters murdered Ambrose Ofafa, the Luo Union treasurer in Nairobi and a Nairobi City Council member, prompting Odinga to travel to Nairobi to diffuse the inter-tribal tensions the government was fanning among the Luo against the Kikuyu and ostensibly wanting to "arm the Luos to defend themselves" (Odinga (1966:132); Odhiambo and Lonsdale (2003:112).

printed” and instructed his wife, Ruth, and family to “stick to the truth and leave [out] all news that would cause ill feeling”.<sup>267</sup>

Reporting made Muoria “unpopular with both white officials and African Tribal chiefs”; and he chose to “sail as close to the wind as possible” to write and contribute to the growing opposition against British imperialism (Muoria 1994:69 and 74 cited by Barber 2006:297). A court reporter, Muoria’s wife, Ruth, creatively retold the daily court occurrences in a manner that allowed her to “show resistance”, e.g., her version of the story about the magic snake that helped a selfless sister triumph over her worldly brother. According to the intelligence and security director, Mr Passfield, Ruth was acting like a secret agent turned textual analyst; and he concluded that “the brother represents the European, the Sister, the African, and the snake, God.”<sup>268</sup>

While Gakaara and Muoria usually wrote in Kikuyu and spoke of Kikuyuland, the content of their writings expressed nationalistic aspirations for freedom, equality, and an equitable society. Christiana Pugliese cites Gakaara’s use of rhetorical questions in *Mageria no mo mahota* to “expose the European lies” and to “open the eyes of those who do not know where to stand,” for example, “the Europeans say that this land did not belong to us, then we ask ourselves, where are the real owners living nowadays?”<sup>269</sup>

The personal accounts written after independence by other fighters include Mugo Gatheru’s *Child of Two Worlds* (1964), Pan African Press, ed., *Independent Kenya’s First Martyr, Socialist and Freedom Fighter: Biography* (1966); Waruhiu Itote, *A “Mau Mau” General* (1967); and

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<sup>267</sup> Muoria’s letter to Ruth dated December 15, 1947, cited in Barber (2006:297). Also see Kanogo (1987:168, note 31), Leo (1984), and Wasserman (1976).

<sup>268</sup> letter of June 23, 1948, by C. Passfield (director of intelligence and security) to Chief Native Commissioner P. Wyn Harris entitled “One who is despised by people is not despised by God” with an attached clipping from *Mumenyereri* June 23, 1948, MMA/108 Intelligence and Security, Press cuttings, Miscellaneous, KNA, cited in Barber (2006:312).

<sup>269</sup> “Complimentary or Contending Nationhoods? Kikuyu Pamphlets and Songs 1945–1952,” in Odhiambo and Lonsdale (2003:109–10).

Charity Waciuma, *Daughter of Mumbi* (1969), which explore the multiple problems of squatter families and how the emergency affected everyday life throughout the country. Waciuma recalls the traumatic effects of the forced villagization on the populace when the only sources of food—people’s farms—were neglected because of the strictly enforced curfews. Women would be given only a few hours to trek to their plots, farm, and collect a little food. And much of that harvest, the homeguards and chiefs stole. The remainder was too little to satisfy everyone. The result? Mass famine, malnutrition, illness, and death. Families were always on the move in *Child of Two Worlds*. Gatheru’s family moved from Londiani to Chepsion farm while other family members returned to Kikuyuland. The frequent moves put tremendous strains on parents who were often gradually separated. Through Mugo, we glimpse racially divided Nairobi city and African life in the colonial era and the discrimination in job training, e.g., Mugo at the Medical Research Laboratory in Nairobi; the dehumanization and degradation of African housing and lavatories; the lack of nursery schools, playgrounds and cinemas for African children; the dirty or muddy roads as against the beautiful, clean restaurants, hotels, and bars restricted for “Europeans Only;” the prohibition against Africans buying any alcohol except the Nairobi Corporation’s African beer (Gatheru 1964:67–77); daily life in Nairobi’s African quarters; and the drafting of Kenyans to fight for Britain in Burma, where he lost his uncle, and in North Africa, two friends. Besides the fictional accounts, the real-life narratives about detainees show how the declaration of the emergency transformed their lives.

As the war progressed with time, the government launched a vigorous campaign to get the fighters to surrender by air-dropping propaganda in the cities and forests and singling out the “Kikuyu”.<sup>270</sup> For instance, leaflets dropped by plane in Nairobi on 24 April 1954 ordered “all

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<sup>270</sup> See note 304 about detention camps.

members of the Kikuyu, Embu and Meru tribes to immediately leave their houses with their hands up and surrender to soldiers on the streets, and the rest to stay indoors” (Friedman 2006:8).<sup>271</sup> Leaflets dated 18 January 1955 in English, Kikuyu, and Swahili urged Mau Mau members to surrender and “save your soul now” and “no punishment” for surrendering terrorists (Friedman 2006:12).<sup>272</sup> Leaflets dated January 1955 distributed over the Aberdare Forest declared a two-week ceasefire and offered an amnesty for *Mau Mau* who surrendered and a British safe-conduct pass, with an expiry date of 10 July 1955.<sup>273</sup>

The barrage of British propaganda leaflets filled with lies about the freedom fighters forced them to make “intimate connections between the sexual discipline of circumcision, the moral discipline of oath-taking, and the vocal discipline of careful speech” (Odhiambo and Lonsdale 2003:86). The resistance fighters countered with more oaths (the *Platoon* and the *Batuni*) and printed notices warning those already sworn to “listen and curb your tongue seven times before you say a word”.<sup>274</sup>

Countering the government’s outlandish exaggerations about Mau Mau oaths—use of women’s menstrual blood, bestial intercourse with animals, and the eating of embryos of unborn children—Kariuki explains the significance of the oath of unity for the movement—*Ndemwa Itatu* (the three cuts)—“the unity that is mocked with the name of ‘*Mau Mau*’” (J.M. Kariuki 1963:53–54). Citing similarities in blood-oathing elsewhere in and outside Kikuyuland, Njama and Kariuki explain the logic and necessity of the oath of unity for the underground movement at a time of great cultural,

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<sup>271</sup> Though, during the emergency, *Kikuyu* meant the Meru, Embu and Kikuyu people, a strong anti-Kikuyu sentiment persists in Kenya and as do the so-called tribal clashes.

<sup>272</sup> Friedman’s book (2006:12) displays both sides of the leaflet, printed by The Government Printer (Nairobi) for the Department of Information of Kenya, and signed by General Sir George Erskine, Commander-in-Chief, and Sir Evelyn Baring, Governor.

<sup>273</sup> The leaflet in red text measures 172mm x 219mm and contains twelve numbered statements ... [regarding] the uprising and the treatment of those who return to the government (See attached photos in Appendix 6, p. 337).

<sup>274</sup> a local teacher, Peter Munene, quoted in Odhiambo and Lonsdale (2003:86)

moral, political, and social upheaval. Kariuki emphasizes that the human blood used was a drop coming from a small cut on his hand—**not** menstrual blood—and neither was there “bestial intercourse with animals nor the eating of the embryos of unborn children” (J.M. Kariuki 1963:33).

A synthesis of earlier traditional initiation ceremonies, the oath was symbolic and excluded the non-oathed from conversations and strategic planning. The oaths’ coded language created unity, self-discipline, and a sense of service among members in a situation where rumours, gossip, and capricious treatment by government enforcers, especially the loyalists and collaborators, were rife. Kariuki concludes that “the act of eating this meat with the blood of each one of you [the oathing ceremony] on it shows that you are now united one to the other and with us” (J.M. Kariuki 1963:27). The freedom fighters saw the oaths and the movement as a moral and cultural project to rebuild social and political systems severely damaged by the highly centralized, authoritarian structure of the British Empire.<sup>275</sup> Oaths imposed sexual, vocal, and moral discipline that J. M. Kariuki and Njama detail in their autobiographies (J. M. Kariuki 1963:23–68; Njama and Barnett 1966: 51–72).

Ultimately, the state’s propaganda succeeded in branding the freedom fighters the *Mau Mau*, a code for blood-thirsty murderers, thugs, ruffians, spies, gangsters, thieves, barbarians, and bandits with no political agenda or reason to rebel. In addition to newspapers, newsletters and pamphlets, radios were distributed for villagers to listen to pro-government propaganda broadcasts, e.g., *The True News*. Only the lack of evidence foiled the colonial government’s attempts to tie Kenya’s guerrilla war with the communists.<sup>276</sup>

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<sup>275</sup> In an excellent analysis entitled “Background to Revolt”, Barnett and Njama (1966:25–72) explain how colonial laws and practices gradually destroyed traditional societies and set the stage for the guerrilla war for land and freedom, which the government officials failed to understand.

<sup>276</sup> After World War II, a top secret British black propaganda unit—The Information Research Department (IRD)—was set-up to counter Communist threats (Lashmar and Oliver, *Britain’s Secret Propaganda War 1948–1977*

The 1970s saw a proliferation of freedom fighters' biographical narratives, e.g., Waruhiu Itote, *Mau Mau in Action* (1985); Kiboi Muriithi, *War in the Forest: A Personal Story of J. Kiboi Muriithi* (1971); Joram Wamweya, *Freedom Fighter* (1971); Karigo Muchai and Don Barnett, *The Hard Core* (1973); Ngugi Kabiro, *Man in the Middle: The Story of Ngugi Kabiro* (1973); Mohammed Mathu and Don Barnett, *The Urban Guerrilla: The Story of Mohammed Mathu* (1974); Kahinga Wachanga, *The Swords of Kirinyaga* (1975); Kenneth Watene, *Dedan Kimathi* (1975a); Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Micere Mugo, *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi* (1976); Gucu G. Gikoyo, *We Fought for Freedom: Tulipigania Uhuru* (1979); Oginga Odinga, *Not Yet Uhuru* (1967). Numerous fictional narratives about the guerrilla war also exist.

These narratives include orature, government documents, fiction by settlers and their sympathizers, and texts by diverse interested parties. Examples of such orature are given in the next chapter while written fictional narratives about the guerrillas include most works of Ngugi wa Thiong'o,<sup>277</sup> Meja Mwangi, Mwangi Ruheni, Samuel Kahiga, Leonard Kibera, Jared Angira, Jonathan Kariara, Charles Mang'ua, Kenneth Watene, and David Mulwa. Among the autobiographies, biographies, and fictional narratives dealing with Kenya's guerrilla war, only Thiong'o and Mugo's *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi* and Mwangi's *Carcase for Hounds* have been selected for Kenya's high-school syllabus in 1982/83).

Ngugi's novels, plays, short stories, and critical essays analyse neocolonialism in Kenya, specifically the betrayal and disillusionment the ordinary Kenyan experiences, and the Kenyan leaders' greed and incompetence. Though Ngugi's works could help chart the course of higher learning in Kenya, his books have been marginalized except his two earliest texts, *The River*

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(1998); Carruthers, *Winning Hearts and Minds: British Governments, the Media and Colonial Counterinsurgency, 1944–1960* (1995); and Elkins (2005a).

<sup>277</sup> *Weep Not, Child* (1964); *A Grain of Wheat* (1967); *Secret Lives: A Collection of Short Stories* (1975); *Petals of Blood* (1977) and others

*Between* and *A Grain of Wheat* which have been frequently selected for Kenyan high-school curricula. Besides helping Africanize the department of English at UoN in the 1960s, Ngugi also promoted orature, drama, and Kenya's unofficial history by dramatizing the guerrilla war for freedom through his plays at the Kamirithu centre: *Maitu Njugira (Mother Sing for Me)* and *Ngahiika Ndeenda (I will Marry When I Want)*.<sup>278</sup>

Ngugi's *The River Between* and *A Grain of Wheat* examine the cultural conflict ushered in by colonialism—the land grabbing, early waged labour, anti-colonial struggles, Christian missionaries, and their schools. Besides the play co-authored with Micere Mugo, *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi* cited above, Ngugi's more radical texts from *Petals of Blood* to *Murugi wa Kagoogo (Wizard of the Crow)*—texts dealing with resistance, struggle for independence and neocolonial Kenya—have rarely been selected for the high-school curricula. For example, though Ngugi's earlier books were selected, this never happened after his contributions to the Great Nairobi Literature Debate and, later, once he began to write in Gikuyu, For example, *Matigari*

was first published in Kenya in October 1986. Soon after, reports reached President Moi that peasants in Central Kenya were talking about a man called Matigari who was going round the country demanding truth and justice. Moi ordered the man's immediate arrest. The police reported that Matigari was only a character in a book. Still in February 1987, *Matigari* was 'arrested' and removed from all the bookshops in Nairobi and from the publisher's warehouse. Which reminds me that my previous novel in Gikuyu, *Devil On the Cross*, had met a similar fate at Kamiti Maximum Security Prison in 1978. But that was only written on toilet paper, and it was later returned to me as harmless. Well, Matigari seems to be made of sterner stuff (Thiong'o 1993: 157).

In January 1994, the government also banned *Kenya: Return to Reason* by Kenneth Matiba. 200 policemen raided the publisher's premises (Colorprint), at night and seized 15,000 copies of the book, negatives and plates (*Independent* 15/1/1994; UPI, 15/1/1994).

Counter texts on the big screen include *The Oath* (2005) and *The Black Man's Land Trilogy* (1973); and three widely used documentaries in university-level African studies courses taught

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<sup>278</sup> See the paragraph about Kamirithu on page 194.

*outside* Kenya: *White Man’s Country*; *Kenyatta*; and *Mau Mau*.<sup>279</sup> Nevertheless, failure to challenge the *Mau Mau* myth in Kenya—especially in the education system—has ensured that, today, five generations of Kenyans know little or nothing about the thousands who resisted, fought, were tortured, brutalized, butchered, dispossessed, and exiled to decolonize Kenya. The school syllabi and the national goals of education perpetuate the single story of Kenya’s independence and the *Mau Mau* myth. Kenyatta’s “forget the past” talk was not new thinking. It was consistent with British East Africa officialdom’s historical handling of pacification and punitive expeditions. While little discussed in academia, these expeditions were a standard feature for colonizing Africa. Indeed, the social, psychological, economic, and political tensions in neocolonial Kenyan fiction often draw from events related to this historiography.<sup>280</sup>

## **Section D: The Single Story and Kenya’s Sanitized High-School History Syllabus**

Sections 15.27 and 19.2 of the Kenyan high-school history syllabus examine Kenyan political leaders, constitutional changes, national philosophies, political organizations, and the emergence of Kenyan schools. The lives and contributions of Kenyan leaders—e.g., Jomo Kenyatta, Daniel Toroitich arap Moi, Jaramogi Oginga Odinga, Tom Mboya and Ronald Gideon Ngala—are highlighted along with the three national philosophies: *Harambee*, African Socialism<sup>281</sup> and Nyayoism. The topic—political organization, developments, and the struggle for independence in Kenya between 1919 and 1963—is divided into:

- *Early political organizations in Kenya up to 1939*

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<sup>279</sup> The trilogy aired on PBS in 1978 in the UK.

<sup>280</sup> See the works of Ngugi wa Thiong’o, Meja Mwangi, Oginga Odinga, Bildad Kaggia, Mugo Gatheru, Muthoni Likimani, Charity Waciuma, Mwangi Ruheni, Samuel Kahiga, Leonard Kibera, Jared Angira, Jonathan Kariara, Francis Imbuga, Margaret Ogolla, Charles Mang’ua, Marjorie Oludhe, Godwin Wachira, Kenneth Watene and David Mulwa.

<sup>281</sup> announced in *Sessional Paper no. 10 of 1965* (Kenya 1965:163, 170, 177, 187 and 196)

- *Emergence of Independent Churches and Schools*
- *Political Organizations and Movements after 1945*
- *Trade Union Movement*
- *The Role of Women in the Struggle for Independence*
- *Constitutional Changes Leading to Independence* (Kenya 1965: 110, 113, 121, 124 and 127).

Above, the “Emergence of Independent Churches and Schools” is inserted between “Early Political Organizations in Kenya up to 1939” and “Political Organizations and Movements after 1945” though no reason is advanced for why political organizations are listed only up to 1939 and after 1945, leaving a six-year gap. Worse yet, before 2003 while the Mau Mau was officially unbanned in Kenya, this section of the curricula **omitted** any mention of the liberation war or the *wiyathi* movement.<sup>282</sup> Even after 2003, the section “*After 1945*” only makes brief generalisations about the *Mau Mau* while virtually skipping the two decades between 1945 and 1965 when political activities intensely shaped the modern Kenyan nation, its politics, and its developmental and educational policies.

Since the guerrilla war was the biggest and most tumultuous political event of the time, its absence from the curricula is striking (Furedi 1989:152). Though the section for 1945 to 1965 mentions the soldiers returning from World War II, it does not explain how, after 1945, they helped organize the armed struggle. Young Kenyan soldiers who had fought for Britain in Burma and Ceylon returned home to disappointment and bitterness because of the differential treatment accorded them. Their white counterparts—the British soldiers with whom they had fought side-by-side abroad—were awarded huge tracks of land while the African soldiers and native landowners were ordered to return to the socio-economic and politically segregated life of the Kenya Colony, which had confiscated most of the fertile land for the Crown, turning most of the

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<sup>282</sup> *Wiyathi* means self-instructing or self-guiding, i.e., self-governing.

former owners landless into destitute squatters. The Kenyan soldiers' disappointment and the general landlessness and poverty of the squatters in the colony sowed the seeds for the liberation movement and consequent war.<sup>283</sup>

As for the English and literature text selection between 1940 and 1998, no mention is made of the texts by and about guerrilla fighters who later organized and led the liberation war (e.g., the Kenya Land and Freedom Army's *Freedom Charter* of 1953);<sup>284</sup> Waruhiu Itote (General China)'s *Mau Mau General* (1967); Bildad Kaggia's *Roots of Freedom 1921–1963: The Autobiography of Bildad Kaggia* (1975); or Gakaara Wanjaũ's prison diary, *Mwandiki wa Mau Mau Ithamiriio-ini* (1983), trans. *Mau Mau Author in Detention* (1988). Though omitted from the Kenyan literature and history syllabi, the lives of those fighters tell a story of Kenya's independence starkly different from the single story and the *Mau Mau* myth.<sup>285</sup>

The history curriculum mentions the Lancaster constitutional conferences but is silent about the sharp differences within the Kenyan delegation that went to the UK about representing Kenya's freedom fighters (many still in the forests then). Though the guerrilla fighters were excluded from direct negotiations for independence in Britain, they held lengthy talks with the local government in Kenya for a ceasefire and they wanted some of their demands included in the Lancaster agreements. The guerrillas' ideology and demands are "articulated in a document Kimathi published in October 1953 [which] consists of 79 articles" (Kinyatti (1983:116). Named "The Mau Mau Charter", copies "were sent to the Colonial Office in London, the Indian Government, the Government of Egypt, the United Nations, Mbiyu Koinange in London, Fenner Brockway, the

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<sup>283</sup> For example, forced recruitment to do state jobs like road construction, the *kipande* system, and the maltreatment of returning World War veterans who had fought side-by-side with white Britons in Burma but, back home, put into racial boxes again, and not well compensated like their British colleagues who got huge tracks of land (*Africa Confidential* 15, 18, September 6, 1974, p. 4).

<sup>284</sup> cited by Kinyatti (1991:32-33)

<sup>285</sup> as described later in this chapter under personal narratives

Chairman of the Pan African Congress in London, President Eisenhower of the United States, the French Government, George Padmore and Kwame Nkrumah” (ibid).

The extracts from the Mau Mau Charter that Kinyatti cites reflect the forest fighters’ demands in their negotiation with the colonial Kenya government regarding the Lancaster negotiations:

- We reject to be called terrorists when demanding our people's rights.
- Our real fight is not against the white colour but is against the system carried on by the white rulers.
- Fighting for our stolen land and our independence is not a crime but a revolutionary duty.
- Nothing is more precious than independence and freedom. Only when we achieve our independence can our people have genuine peace.
- We reject a foreign Attorney-General in Kenya for he deals with appearances more than righteousness.
- We reject to be called Mau Mau. We are Kenya Land Freedom Army (KLFA).
- We reject colonization in Kenya for being in that state we turned into slaves and beggars.
- Our people will chase the foreign exploiters, wipe out the traitors and establish an independent Government of the Kenyan people (Kinyatti (1983:116-117).

These demands by the freedom fighters were a condition for calling off the armed struggle and disarming. Nevertheless, though excluded from the negotiations for independence from Britain, the guerrilla fighters urged—unsuccessfully—the Kenyan delegates for the negotiations to discuss:

- land redistribution;
- war reparations;
- unconditional dismantling of the colonial military and political machineries; and
- recognition of the guerrilla army as a national army.

General Bamuingi (the People’s General) understood that, so far, independence had only “benefited the ‘barren’ of the land”, i.e., Kenyans who had sat on the fence and collaborators who had fought on the side of the colonial government against the freedom fighters and independence (Maina 2004:109). Among prominent freedom fighters were men who had fought for Britain in Cairo, Aleppo, Ethiopia, and Burma during World War II and returned to the colony whereas their

white British counterparts with whom they had fought side-by-side were rewarded land.<sup>286</sup> Had the KLFA's representatives been part of the negotiations, neocolonial Kenya may well have had a different social and economic path after independence. In retrospect, something similar to South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) might have also been useful to break the silence, reveal truths, reconcile people, and gain reparations for institutional abuses and brutality (TRC 1998: volumes 1–5; TRC 2003: vol. 7; TRC 2002: vol. 6).

As part of the deal to leave the forests and surrender their arms after independence, the freedom fighters demanded that (1) as skilled fighters, they be incorporated into independent Kenya's armed forces, and (2) be awarded fertile land free of charge since they had been fighting for land. Like the colonial government before it, Kenyatta's negotiators rejected the freedom fighters' demands; and Kenyatta announced "*Hakuna cha bure [there is nothing for free]*", meaning that all land must be paid for. When discussions broke down, some freedom fighters disarmed, but, after failing to reach a consensus with Kenyatta about their role in the newly independent Kenya, Field Marshalls Musa and Bamuingi, among others, refused to surrender their arms and, instead, returned to the Meru forests in 1963 (Kinyatti 1991:50). In January 1964, the new Kenyatta government ambushed and routed them in Meru forest, killing Field Marshall Bamuingi Marete, General Chui, and M. Kiugu and parading their bodies in Meru Township for three days, "as the last chiefs of *Mau Mau* terrorists" (Kinyatti 1986a:122).<sup>287</sup>

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<sup>286</sup> interviews (1986): Waki, Nguli, Kawive, Kasiva, Ngumbi, Joyce, Kivati, Kieti, Keli, Nzioka, Mbulwa, Nzovi and earlier with Mbavu, Manthi, Kisenge, Mwilu; the documentary *The First Betrayal* by John Allan Namu aired on 13 December 2013. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B\\_N5vgg8eD4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B_N5vgg8eD4)

<sup>287</sup> On Monday, 27 January 1964, the popular newspaper, *Taiifa Leo (The Daily Nation)*, headlined the shooting dead of "terrorists" Field Marshall Bamuingi, General Chui, and M. Kiungu, the leaders of those who defied the "Father of the Nation", President Jomo Kenyatta's order to leave the forest by January 12<sup>th</sup>, 1964. Referring to these gallant fighters and Kenyan heroes as "terrorists" immediately after independence, Kenyatta's administration set the tone about how freedom fighters would be seen and treated, as well as who would, henceforth, be regarded as national heroes.

The freedom fighters' narratives—oral and life-writing—indicate that most had been unaware of or excluded from the independence discussions and celebrations. During that time, thousands were still in the forests around Mt. Kenya and elsewhere or in jails, concentration camps, and the pipeline.<sup>288</sup> For those who survived the pipeline, most arrived home only to find their families broken and their lands confiscated and given to homeguards and other minions of the colonial and, later, neocolonial Kenyan state. Though grievous, Kenya's land issue has never been satisfactorily addressed. Ignoring it was a key objective of Kenyatta's constant calls to "forget the past". Toward that end, the single story about independence and the *Mau Mau* myth continues as a useful statist narrative.

What is presented as the single story of Kenya's independence in the Kenyan public and school syllabi, and what nourishes this story? This dissertation identifies two key aspects: Britain's elaborately scripted *Mau Mau* myth, and the depiction of Kenyatta as the leader of the freedom struggle and people's representative.

On October 20, 1952, Kenya Governor, Sir Evelyn Baring, signed an order declaring a State of Emergency in Kenya Colony. At midnight, the government launched Operation Jock Stock—the first of its many round-up operations to harass, arrest and detain Africans suspected to be Mau Mau members or sympathizers and to clear the capital, Nairobi, of malefactors. Prior to the declaration of a State of Emergency, the governor had assembled three battalions of the Kings African Rifles while Britain ordered three additional battalions from Tanganyika, Uganda, and Mauritius to respond effectively to the settlers' increasing fears of the freedom fighters' random attacks on isolated settlers' farms—and specifically after the October 9, 1952 murder of Senior Chief Waruhiu, a pro-colonial collaborator and anti-Mau Mau Kikuyu leader that the guerrilla

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<sup>288</sup> See note 259.

fighters referred to as a “Black European” (Kinyatti 1983:106).<sup>289</sup> For the emergency, a cruiser, H.M.S. Kenya was dispatched to Mombasa’s Kilindini Harbour while the Lancashire fusiliers—Britain’s 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion—was ordered from its station in Egypt to Nairobi. In addition, the all-white Kenya Regiment and the Kenya Police Reserve were put on alert. The British assumed that these massive ground and air forces would clamp down and quickly annihilate the Mau Mau. Those predictions were terribly wrong.<sup>290</sup>

Operation Jock Stock closed the KCA and KAU offices, arrested their leaders as well as the leaders of trade unions, independent schools and churches, and the publishers and editors of vernacular publications. Soon, truckloads of Lancashire fusiliers were patrolling Nairobi with fixed bayonets. Reports of the numbers of people arrested differ, but the first day (20 October 1952) reportedly netted around 183 KCA and KAU members and, the next, another 100. Daily, till the emergency ended, hundreds or even thousands (the exact number is unknown) of Kenyans were arrested, jailed, detained, displaced, tortured, or murdered for suspected or real participation in the liberation movement.

As the emergency took root, the freedom fighters ambushed and murdered Senior Chief Nderi in Nyeri and some of his followers. On October 28, freedom fighters killed farmer Eric Bowker in his bathtub, along with two of his African servants. Days later, numerous Kikuyu men and women assembled at Fort Hall and defied a policeman’s order to disperse. Police opened fire killing 25 and wounding many. The white officer who gave the order to shoot claimed to do so in “self-

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<sup>289</sup> Other collaborators similarly assassinated include Chief Nderi wa Wangombe (22 October 1952 in Nyeri); Tom Mbotela (26 November 1952 in Nairobi) and Ambrose Ofafa (27 November 1953 in Nairobi). The colonial government honoured Ofafa and Mbotela by naming new residential housing projects after them in Nairobi’s Eastlands.

<sup>290</sup> The war went on till around 1965 when the newly independent Kenyan government brutally routed out the remaining rebels in and around Mt. Kenya, after General Ba Muingi and his followers disagreed with Kenyatta about the way forward for Kenya and returned to the forest since the government offered them nothing.

defence,” and, hence, no action was taken against him, nor was an inquest done. As the emergency continued, this became a pattern throughout Kenya.<sup>291</sup>

During the emergency, ruthlessly imposed, arbitrary restrictions became common, with black Kenyans being shot on sight in prohibited zones of Mau Mau activity. The death penalty was extended to other offences, e.g., possessing a single cartridge (for Africans), administering a Mau Mau oath, or heading a Mau Mau cell. For white Kenyans, a six-month jail became the penalty for losing their guns, regardless of the circumstances of the loss. Settlers walked and slept with guns nearby.

As part of the single story of independence and the *Mau Mau* myth, neocolonial Kenya annually celebrates the events of October 20, 1952—a significant day for freedom fighters and their families—as Kenyatta Day. By naming it a national holiday bearing his name, Jomo Kenyatta hijacked October 20, 1952, and the historical events surrounding this day. In truth, he was just one of many people arrested that day for military activities that he had passionately opposed as demonstrated by his speeches cited later in this chapter. Still, the day is named after him.<sup>292</sup>

On Kenyatta Day and other independence-related national holidays, Kenya’s airwaves, newspapers, and other mass media stream praise songs and poetry, repeatedly trumpeting Kenyatta’s heroism, from his arrest, trial, detention, and triumphant return from prison as the founding father of a happy, peaceful, and prosperous nation that he led first as prime minister and,

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<sup>291</sup> Numerous accounts discuss the extra-judicial killings of innocent civilians throughout Kenya during the emergency or the children, elderly and others who died from the forced famine occasioned by the refusal to allow farming (Elkins 2005).

<sup>292</sup> October 20 was celebrated as *Kenyatta Day* for 46 years in independent Kenya. Praise songs, poetry and political speeches about Kenyatta dominated the narrative while Kenya’s real revolutionary heroes, who were arrested that day and later many maimed or killed, were hardly mentioned. After multi-parties were permitted in 2009, October 20 was renamed Heroes’ Day (*Mashujaa Day*). *Shujaa* in Kiswahili means hero (plural *mashujaa*).

later, as President for Life.<sup>293</sup> The praise songs are virtually synonymous with Kenyatta, for example, *Kenya Nchi Yetu* below:

<b>Kiswahili</b>	<b>English</b>
<i>Kenya! Kenya! Kenya!</i>	<i>Kenya! Kenya! Kenya!</i>
<i>Taifa letu Kenya,</i>	<i>Kenya, Our nation</i>
<i>Kenya! Kenya! Kenya!</i>	<i>Kenya! Kenya! Kenya!</i>
<i>nchi Yetu!</i>	<i>our country!</i>
<i>kwa nguvu na raha</i>	<i>as hard as possible, merrily</i>
<i>Hio ni hakikisho la rais wetu</i>	<i>that is the promise of our president</i>
<i>Zamani tulikuwa ati namba four</i>	<i>before, we were number four</i>
<i>Sasa about-turn tuko namba one</i>	<i>Now, about-turn we are number one</i>
<i>Kenya! Kenya! Kenya!</i>	<i>Kenya! Kenya! Kenya!</i>
<i>Taifa letu Kenya,</i>	<i>Kenya, Our nation</i>
<i>Kenya! Kenya! Kenya!</i>	<i>Kenya! Kenya! Kenya!</i>
<i>nchi Yetu!</i>	<i>our country!</i>

Other song titles include:

- Kenyatta Alifungwa Ngerezani [Kiswahili]      Kenyatta was locked up in jail
- Mugathe Jomo Kenyatta [Kikamba]      Praise Jomo Kenyatta
- Tuthi Katundu Twone Kinyaata [Kikuyu]      Let's go to Gatundu and see Kenyatta

Kenyatta promoted a praise-song culture in prose and poetry adulating him (and later, Moi), obliterating the roles of other freedom fighters, and thus promoting a single story about Kenya's freedom fighters and independence.

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<sup>293</sup> The term "founding father" has been misapplied in the case of Kenya where guerrilla fighters and their ardent supporters, e.g., Dedan Kimathi, Pio Gama Pinto, Odinga and others have not been associated with the nation they helped create. Kenyatta, the man referred to as Kenya's founding father was in fact a liberal who was never part of the guerrilla freedom struggle, and who was first selected to argue the Young Kikuyu Association's land issues in England because he could read, write and speak English.

Annually in neocolonial Kenya, the mass media rehashes this single story during Kenyatta Day (20 October), as well as during other designated national holidays dedicated to Kenya’s struggle for independence—1 June, **Madaraka Day**, and 12 December, **Jamhuri Day**. The single story always exclusively begins “from Uhuru in 1963 onwards.”<sup>294</sup> During these celebrations, the thousands of Kenyans arrested the same day are barely mentioned, including the people who became the face of that day for being tried and sentenced in Kapenguria with Jomo Kenyatta—Bildad Kaggia, Achieng’ Oneko, Fred Kubai, Paul Ngei and Kung’u Karumba—the people known more famously as the Kapenguria six.<sup>295</sup> Two of the Kapenguria-six—Bildad Kaggia and Fred Kubai, but not Kenyatta—were among the actual leaders of the movement fighting for land and African unity, leaders who alongside less known but historically important personalities<sup>296</sup> were recruiting fighters, organizing food and medicine for the forest fighters as well as overseeing logistics for the guerrilla war (Kaggia 1975; Kariuki 1963). The Kapenguria trial was coyly silent about Kenyatta denouncing the Mau Mau although “there is no room for doubt that [the Kiambu speech on 24 August 1952] was at once made available to the highest authorities” as confirmed by a letter from the colonial government’s Minister of Law and Order in Nairobi to the colonial office in London. Describing Kenyatta’s speech in Kiambu on August 24, 1952, the minister reported:

Last Sunday, Jomo Kenyatta himself publicly condemned Mau Mau at a meeting of 30,000 Kikuyu, all of whom held up their hands at his request to signify that they approved his denunciation of Mau Mau. If this resistance movement gathers strength, then I think we shall succeed in rolling back the Mau Mau movement before too long. For the time being, it looks as if the thugs, who are the militant element in Mau Mau, have got their heads down (Cooper 1993:47).<sup>297</sup>

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<sup>294</sup> *Madaraka* means independence; and *jamhuri*, self-governing.

<sup>295</sup> *Kapenguria Trial, Verbatim Transcript, Supreme Court Archives, Nairobi*. The six were tried and convicted in Kapenguria, a town in West Pokot District of the Rift Valley Province. See also Slater (1955) and annual holiday supplements from *Baraza*, *The Daily Nation*, *The Kenya Times* and *The East African Standard* on 12 December 1963 and 1 June 1963.

<sup>296</sup> Kubai and Kaggia’s colleagues at Kiburi House and elsewhere at the forefront of the liberation war, people successive Kenyan governments have conveniently forgotten.

<sup>297</sup> The meeting on 24 August 1952 where Kenyatta denounced the Mau Mau is discussed later in this section.

The threat had been well organized. Bildad Kaggia and Fred Kubai, two Kapenguria trial suspects directly involved with others in organizing the guerrilla war, had operated mainly from Kiburi House, a building whose name “during the days of the independence struggle spelled dread and fear for the colonial authorities”.<sup>298</sup> The only building “owned by an African in the whole of the business centre of Nairobi”,<sup>299</sup> Kiburi House facilitated the publishing of most vernacular newspapers;<sup>300</sup> housed labour and trade unions; and enabled organizers of the movement for unity to plan and administer the oaths to unite fighters.

Since the 1952 Emergency, all the permutations of the *Mau Mau* history in Kenya have aimed at legitimating the single story of Kenya’s struggle for independence that fronted Kenyatta as the leader of the freedom struggle. It is, however, important to mention Kenyatta’s role in and position on Kenya’s freedom fighters before the emergency, a role the colonial government downplayed during the publicized Kapenguria trial and later when negotiating Kenya’s independence in Lancaster.

Barely three months before he was arrested for supposedly “managing the *Mau Mau*”<sup>301</sup> Kenyatta—a charismatic speaker and KAU’s spokesperson—“held a series of meetings throughout Kenya where he condemned the Mau Mau” and warned against using unconstitutional means to demand freedom (Cooper 1993: 46). During these now famous and widely cited KAU meetings, Kenyatta simultaneously distanced himself from, maligned and, indeed, sometimes criminalized Kenya’s freedom fighters.<sup>302</sup> During a speech in Nyeri on July 26, 1952, Kenyatta

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<sup>298</sup> Bildad Kaggia in a 1971 interview with *Drum Magazine* cited by Cooper (1993:40).

<sup>299</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>300</sup> *Inoororia Gikuyu, Wiyathi, and Africa Mpya*, all discussed later in the thesis

<sup>301</sup> the mass arrests of 20 October 1952 during Operation Jock Stock

<sup>302</sup> Kenyatta’s speeches in this period have been cited in newspapers, official documents, and scholarly works. In this section, I use Kenyatta’s speeches cited in *Kenya, The National Epic* (Cooper, 1993).

denounced the *Mau Mau* and lawlessness, urging people to peacefully seek national unity and independence:

I want you to know the purpose of KAU.... KAU speaks in daylight. He who calls us the *Mau Mau* is not truthful. We do not know this thing *Mau Mau*.... KAU is a good union, and we don't want divided people. I think *Mau Mau* is a new word. Elders do not know it. KAU is not a fighting union that uses fists and force. If any of you here think that force is good, I do not agree with you.... I do not want people to accuse us falsely that we steal and that we are *Mau Mau*. ... I pray to you that we join hands for freedom, and freedom means abolishing criminality. ... Whatever grievances we have, let us air them here in the open. The criminal does not want freedom. ... He wants to line his own pocket. ... When this Royal Commission comes, let us show it that we are a good peaceful people and not thieves and robbers.<sup>303</sup>

During a meeting in Kiambu on 24 August 1952, Kenyatta criminalized and pathologized Kenya's freedom fighters to clarify the aim of the meeting and thereby declared that

[this] meeting is of the Kikuyu elders and leaders, who have decided to address a public meeting and see what the disease in Kikuyuland is, and how this disease can be cured. We are being harmed by a thing which some people seem to call *Mau Mau*... *Mau Mau* has spoiled the country. Let *Mau Mau* perish forever. All people should search for *Mau Mau* and kill it. We want the government to give us freedom to rule our own country so we may live in happiness in this country, which we were given by God. We do not want to oust the European from this country. But what we demand is to be treated like the white races (Cooper 1993:47).

Later in the speech, Kenyatta asked those who—like him—were against the *Mau Mau* “to raise their hands. Response was immediate and unanimous.” Kenyatta then “went on to talk about the objects of KAU and to disclaim any association between the union and *Mau Mau* activities” (Cooper 1993:47). In his 1938 book, however, Kenyatta “compared the treatment of Africans in Kenya to [that of the] Jews in Germany” and spoke about “British fascism in the colonies” (Clough 1998:45). Nevertheless, his attitude towards Kenya's freedom fighters in 1952 differs little from that of the colonialists as reflected in his speeches and the Corfield report.

In Kenya's media, public and private schools, Kenyatta's praise songs are in sharp contrast to the reticence and silence about the fate of hundreds of thousands of freedom fighters in the

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<sup>303</sup> KAU meeting in Nyeri on July 26, 1952 (Cooper 1993: 46–47).

detention camps, jails, and pipeline. Some of Kenya's detention camps preceded the liberation war. For instance, on 28 January 1935, Kenya's colonial Secretary, A. de V. Wade, declared two detention camps in Kilifi District at Mile 40 at Kipini road in Malindi; and, on 4 February 1935, he set up the Kibarani detention camp.<sup>304</sup> The liberation war for independence added more detention camps, e.g., the Hola and Kalole Mau Mau camps in Tana River District.<sup>305</sup> Whereas the war is often portrayed as centred in Central Kenya, between 1953 and 1958, the biggest Mau Mau detention camp was in Manyani in Taita-Taveta, and the second largest in Lake Victoria's Mageta, Sayusi and Oyamo islands in Yimbo—Western Kenya (W. Ochieng 2002:181). Kenya's single story of independence is part of the obfuscation of the real events of that liberation, the taboo about discussing this history in Kenya, and the exclusion of texts about this struggle in schools—the conveniently programmed ignorance. Emboldening and validating the *Mau Mau* myth in neocolonial Kenya and in schools, the single story overshadows and minimizes the liberation struggle, its leaders and participants, and the long history of struggle that preceded it.<sup>306</sup>

Yet, despite the silence, amnesia, and the peddling of this single story about Kenya's liberation war, other “pasts” constantly intrude on Kenyatta's carefully woven usable past, intrusions that illustrate the many variants of the single story, as well as how “the past is never

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<sup>304</sup> Government notices #95 and #96 in *The Official Gazette of the Colony and Protectorate of Kenya*, [published under the authority of the Governor of the Colony and Protectorate of Kenya] Vol XXXVII, No. 6, Nairobi, February 5, 1935, page 101. More camps include Taveta, Maragoli, Wamumu, and Nanyuki.

<sup>305</sup> On 3 March 1959 at Hola detention camp, goaded on by the camp warden, Sullivan, police and administrators flogged eleven “Mau Mau” detainees to death using sticks, shovels, and clubs for protesting the illegal detention, bad food, the inhumane treatment at this camp, and the illogical demands by the prison wardens. According to *Drum* August 1966, a typical Hola “assignment was to dig four cubic metres of earth within three hours or suffer a severe beating... Two hundred men were divided equally into two groups and one group was ordered to take up shovels. They were led to a spot and ordered to dig four cubic metres of soil; the men protested and sat down.... Three hundred policemen and warders” surrounded and beat them “so mercilessly that some died on the spot and others in hospital” (Bailey, Cooper and Bundeh 1993:86-87). To cover up the massacre, the men were said to have died of drinking poisoned water (“Inquest on Mau Mau Detainees.” *East Africa and Rhodesia*, Volume 35, March 26, 1959, page 893). But the massacre reached England's parliament during an election year and received much attention.

<sup>306</sup> Kaggia, Kubai, Pinto, Kimathi, Bamuingi, and other forgotten heroes of this historic struggle.

dead, or even past”.<sup>307</sup> The other “pasts” by freedom fighters and diverse people<sup>308</sup> abound in deselected texts for the high school literature syllabi.

As part of the *Mau Mau myth*, the single story of Kenya’s independence suggests that: (i) Kenyans’ struggle for land and freedom was waged almost exclusively by the Kikuyu people; (ii) Kenyan liberation fighters’ supposed leader—Jomo Kenyatta—was tried and sentenced, paid a heavy personal price to liberate Kenya, and, hence, embodied the freedom struggle for independence; and (iii) Kenya’s freedom fighters—who the colonial government preferred to call the *Mau Mau*—were crazed savage terrorists who, in colonial Kenya, deserved to be annihilated and, in neocolonial Kenya, relegated to the background historically, socially, economically, and politically.

The *Mau Mau* myth is encapsulated in the **views of British officials** in Kenya and England that saw the fighters as deranged *terrorists*. Officialdom then promoted its views through texts providing the theoretical and practical basis for crushing the freedom fighters and their civilian activists, e.g., L.S.B. Leakey,<sup>309</sup> *Mau Mau and the Kikuyu* (1952), *Defeating Mau Mau* (1954); Askwith, *The Story of Kenya’s Progress* (1953); J.C. Carothers, *The Psychology of Mau Mau* (1954); Rehabilitation Advisory Committee, *Report on the Sociological Causes Underlying Mau Mau with some Proposals on the means of Ending It* (1954) and Corfield, *Historical Survey of the Origins and Growth of the Mau Mau* (1960).<sup>310</sup> These texts became the ultimate authorities on

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<sup>307</sup> Faulkner’s *Go Down, Moses* (1942) and *Requiem for a Nun* (1951) demonstrate how repeated confusion of facts and fiction solidify and perpetuate stereotypes.

<sup>308</sup> oral artists, writers, British, colonial and neocolonial Kenyan governments, settlers, politicians, former loyalists, collaborators, former *Mau Mau* hunters, visitors, and the ever-increasing-number of *Mau Mau* scholars

<sup>309</sup> “the world’s topmost authority on Kikuyu manners and morals and official interpreter at the trial of Mau Mau Chieftain Jomo Kenyatta” (*Times Magazine*, 1 Nov. 1954)

<sup>310</sup> Corfield (1960), a career colonial administrator and one-time Khartoum Governor, wrote the 322-page government report.

Kenya's liberation struggle and, half a century after the events, are faithfully cited as the key texts about Kenya's freedom struggle.<sup>311</sup>

Missing from this single story are narratives about the struggle by the guerrillas in the forests and the prisoners in jails and detention camps and about what was happening to their lands, families, and businesses while the Leyttelton Plan was being implemented and the Lancaster constitutional conferences were occurring. Kimathi sent the 1953 KLFA Charter to the governments of Britain, India, Egypt, France, America, and Russia and to prominent Pan-Africanists, e.g., Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah, George Padmore, W.E.B. Dubois, and Fenner Brockway (Kitson 1960:119). KLFA's charter espoused self-government and the eventual creation of the Kenya Parliament and demanded that Britain remove its armed forces from Kenya (Kinyatti 1991:33). Few narratives exist about Musa Amalemba and other collaborators that formulated part of the Leyttelton plan, and the participants in the Lancaster constitutional conferences who—except Jaramogi Oginga Odinga—were *asomi* moderate nationalists like Jomo Kenyatta and the settlers.<sup>312</sup> Odinga, J.M. Kariuki, Bildad Kaggia and others who demanded justice for poor Kenyans and the guerrilla fighters were soon ousted from Kenyatta's government through various machinations or under the pretext they were communists.<sup>313</sup>

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<sup>311</sup> Recent Mau Mau scholarship continues to use these texts as the authorities on the guerrilla war for freedom in Kenya.

<sup>312</sup> The few existing state narratives project Amalemba and collaborators sympathetically without mentioning what their actions meant for the freedom fighters. The Lancaster conference *asomi* attendees included: James Gichuru, Dr. Gikonyo Kiano, Tom Mboya, Taiita arap Toweett, Ronald Ngala, Moinga Chokwe, Ole Tipis, Captain Briggs, Michael Blundell, and Bruce Mackenzie. Odinga (1966:195–225) discusses at length the disputes and concessions at the Lancaster conferences in his aptly titled book, *Not Yet Uhuru*. See also Barnett and Njama (1966) and Thuku (1970).

<sup>313</sup> Odinga and Kaggia faced illegal rules to prevent them from contesting in elections. J.M. Kariuki was assassinated on 2 March 1975.

## **Section E: Kenya’s Culture of Repression, Impunity, and Silence: Historical Roots and Consequences**

The single story of independence grew out of and furthered a culture of repression, deceitfulness, kleptocracy, crass impunity, and moral bankruptcy rife in modern Kenyan leadership—values, attitudes, and behaviour that have now seeped into the education system and much of the population. This cultural degradation has deep historical roots in the various forms of conquest, division, and domination starting with the earliest colonial invasions and conquest followed by the massive arrival of settlers, the forced displacement of native peoples, and rule by deceit and divide-and-rule tactics that boomeranged initially by encouraging Africans to use deception and lies to protect themselves against the rulers. Habitual lying then gradually trickled down, corrupting family behaviour and unity.

Sporadic local rebellions and protests throughout the colony preceded the Kenya Land and Freedom Army’s armed struggle against which the British launched campaigns of malignment, repression, torture, division, and further displacements. The costs of the internal rebellion aggravated by the complexities of global post-war geopolitics forced Britain to negotiate—through the Lancaster constitutional conferences—for an independence that it orchestrated to ensure that the revolutionary fighters and leaders would have little, if any, influence on the results.

Britain and the colonial Kenyan state’s manipulation of the Lancaster conferences resulted in a government filled with chiefs, homeguards, and other allies of the British, many of whom had fought against the revolution, stolen lands, and committed other atrocities. Kenyatta, himself, had denounced the “Mau Mau terrorists” while pleading with Kenyans to “forget the past”. His position forgave the large numbers of prior oppressors who had supported the British and later joined the new government. The new elite—many of whom, unlike the freedom fighters, had stood aside, condemned the Mau Mau resistance or directly collaborated with the colonial oppressors—thus

had urgent reasons to obfuscate or bury the past. Perfecting the guarantees of impunity and the methods for repression inherited from the settler government, the new ruling elite entrenched itself in power, banned opposition parties, and eliminated opponents, starting with the KLFA's surviving generals who were still in the Mt. Kenya's forests.<sup>314</sup> Subsequently, corruption, lying, demagoguery, kleptocracy, and impunity became moral norms, norms that gradually filtered into the populace.<sup>315</sup>

The exclusionary behaviour manifest during the Lancaster conferences spilled over to other governing processes after independence, e.g., into the educational system and curricula, including the selection of texts for Kenyan high schools' syllabi. While the new state used education for national development ostensibly to mould responsible citizens and leaders, Kenya's serial five-year development plans make no discernible link between the role of knowledge production and character formation. Kenya's development plans (including the national goals of education) do not mention or discuss the 1948–1961 period, thus obfuscating Kenya's history. For example, while the history syllabus mentions the major changes in Kenya's political scene following the return from India, Burma, Ceylon, and Malaysia of hundreds of native soldiers defending the British crown in foreign lands, it is silent about the role these soldiers played in the movement leading up to the liberation war that hastened independence.

After independence, successive Kenyan neocolonial governments ignored the plight of these villagers though Odinga, Kaggia, J.M. Kariuki, and a few others raised the issue in the first neocolonial government. Ten years after independence, MP Muthua mocked "the so-called 'Ten

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<sup>314</sup> See note 287.

<sup>315</sup> For example, in a survey of low- and middle-level corruption in Kenya, the World Bank (2010:15) found that 79% of "firms expected to pay informal payments to public officials (to get things done)," 29% "expected to give gifts to get an operating license," 32% "expected to give gifts in meetings with tax officials," 71% "expected to give gifts to secure a government contract," and 38% identified "corruption as a major constraint".

Great Years of Independence” during a parliamentary debate to approve the Development Plan 1974/78. Muthua wondered

why there were people still living in the Mau Mau Villages. I have not seen in the present Development Plan any provision [*sic*] plan of the government to give these landless people some land to live on. It is the duty of the Minister for Lands and Settlements to see to it that these people, *who fought and shed their blood for the freedom which we are now proud of*, are given some land to live on instead of living in the emergency villages ... forever (Kenya National Assembly 1975b:1595 *italics added*).

Significantly, as an ideology, the myth allowed Britain to create for the newly independent Kenya an alternative leadership comprising mostly collaborators, homeguards, and others allied with the colonial government, many of whom believed (like the colonialists) that Africans were not fully ready to rule themselves (Odinga 1966, Kariuki 1963, Kaggia 1975, Anderson 2005, Elkins 2005). Such people had opposed the freedom fighters and the notion of independence, hunted down the *Mau Mau*, and been handsomely rewarded with lands and properties, many of which had been confiscated from jailed, detained, or dead guerrilla freedom fighters. By contrast, the revolutionaries were mostly marginalized and excluded from participating in (i) the transitional phase when Britain began negotiating to hand over political power to Kenyans, and (ii) the newly formed independent government. The few freedom fighters in the Kenyatta government—Kaggia, Odinga, J.M. Kariuki—were humiliated and gradually forced out of the new government for demanding—among other things—that the government start a programme to return confiscated lands and properties to their rightful owners, namely, the freedom fighters and other dispossessed people (J.M. Kariuki was assassinated on 2 March 1975).

Instead of initiating a programme to return the land that settlers appropriated during the 1800s or that which the colonial government confiscated in the late 1950s to reward homeguards and other collaborators for hunting down guerrilla fighters, the Kenyatta government just ignored the issue. Instead, Kenyatta and his ministers and administrators got busy acquiring lands and

properties from the fleeing settlers whose land and properties Britain overpaid them for and for which Kenyatta and his men paid ridiculously cheap prices. Indeed, *Forbes* magazine's list of 40 African billionaires showed Uhuru Kenyatta as the 26<sup>th</sup> wealthiest and Kenya's richest person. That was neither an accident, nor based on merit. As the son of Jomo Kenyatta (Kenya's first president), Uhuru inherited some of the largest land holdings in Kenya. Reportedly, Uhuru owns at least 500,000 acres of prime land spread across the country, mostly land acquired by his father in the 1960s and 1970s when the British colonial government and the World Bank funded a settlement transfer fund scheme that let government officials and wealthy Kenyans acquire land at throwaway prices from the British who were fleeing the country. Uhuru and his family also own Brookside Dairies, Kenya's largest dairy company, as well as stakes in [the] popular television station K24 and a commercial bank in Nairobi, among other interests.<sup>316</sup>

The long history of colonial oppression and attempts at cultural genocide are compounded by (i) the single story of Kenya's independence and the obliteration of the history of the real freedom fighters' contributions and their final military suppression by Kenyatta, (ii) the failure to examine and condemn the crimes that many in the new government had committed as supporters of colonial rule, (iii) the continued encouragement of tribalism to abet divide-and-rule tactics, and (iv) the subsequent culture of impunity for thieving and raping politicians. The result? Five decades of moral degeneration prevalent now in Kenya's education and other government sectors and, to a lesser extent, among individuals and within families! Socially and politically, this culture produced arrogant, strutting leaders who blatantly lie, steal, rape, solicit, or offer bribes, and debate by lying, slandering opponents, and using other sophistic arguments. Immoral leaders became role models, and their values eventually became commonplace, the new normal in sharp contrast to traditional

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<sup>316</sup>Nsehe (2012) and *Nairobi Wire* (14 April 2013). Also see discussions about land in Kenya by J.M. Kariuki (1963), Odinga (1966), and Kaggia (1975).

societies' stringent insistence that adults be honest and never lie, especially in public.<sup>317</sup> The current culture of immorality creates huge uncertainties and compels people and institutions to take measures to protect themselves in interpersonal and business transactions, measures that have costs and grave economic implications, besides seriously impeding the development of political, cultural, and educational institutions.

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<sup>317</sup> When I was growing up in Ukambani, lying, talking, and acting disrespectfully and immorally in public was deemed childish and, for an adult, inexcusable. Common statements included “how and why did he (or she) lie like a child?” and “why did he (or she) do that when they are adults?”

## **Early Kenyan Travel, Settler and Other Narratives — Excluded Literature —**

This chapter analyses samples of travel, discovery, adventure, and settler narratives that the thesis defined as Kenyan though, as of 1998, MinEd’s text selection committee did not. The national goals of education and Kenyatta’s “forget the past” underly MinEd’s assumptions about what comprises valid Kenyan texts and knowledge. Those assumptions discriminate against and invalidate the “other”—due to ethnicity, race, or political opinions—during the selection, de-selection, and misclassification of Kenyan literature. Such discrimination leads to flagrant silence and omission of aspects of Kenya’s history in the high-school curricula. The stereotyping of “the other” is relevant because, in historical and literary texts, the use of stereotypes points to how cultural identity is made or reconstructed and works through differences by defining “self” versus “other”. Such stereotypes shape the social meaning and identity emphasized by Kenya’s goals for education. The travel, settler and other narratives examined in this chapter were excluded from the syllabi and not even deemed Kenyan and, hence, point to the contested nature of the idea of the nation.<sup>318</sup>

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<sup>318</sup> While discussing what is Kenyan, note that the country, Kenya, did not exist until before British colonization.

## Section A: Exclusion of Settler and Travel Literature from School Syllabi: What is Kenyan?

Till now, the texts selected for Kenya's high-school English and literature syllabi have mostly been fiction. However, pre-colonial, British East African, colonial and neocolonial Kenyan literature, all contribute to a rich Kenyan literary tradition and historiography long overlooked due to how literature is perceived by the authorities tasked with selecting teaching material for schools taught, and the narrow scope and numbers selected.<sup>319</sup> This chapter suggests that life-writing by travellers, settlers, and colonial officers—the autobiographical genre by colonial Kenyans and others, hitherto excluded from the syllabi—comprises a rich literary and historical source herein treated as part of Kenya's literary tradition. Hence, the texts examined highlight a rarely discussed topic in Kenya's historiography—colonial literature—which this thesis considers crucial to the conceptualization of the Kenyan nation. The chapter stresses the need to embrace a wider notion of what constitutes Kenyan to then begin to incorporate historical texts in the educational system for a fuller historical perspective of the country and state.

Ever since European adventurers and explorers began searching for fame and riches in lands they labelled “new,” they hijacked the notion of “discovery” and used it as a privileged epistemological tool to claim superior knowledge over the natives, animals, land, rivers, trees, and mountains in any of these *new lands*.<sup>320</sup> Exploration and discovery figure in early European popular culture and fiction, e.g., in the European legend of Prester John (Presbyter John), which inspired classic Western literary texts and stirred the imaginations of generations of European

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<sup>319</sup> interviews with officials in the MinEd, Kenya National Examination Council, and Kenya Institute of Education

<sup>320</sup> Often, they “properly” renamed the landscape, fauna, flora and, sometimes, the natives, themselves. For example, *Kenya* was not a word in any Kenyan language, but merely a corruption of the Kamba word *kinyaa* (the place of ostriches) and the Kikuyu word *Kere-Nyaga*, variously described as: 1) the mountain of mystery; 2) the abode of the gods; and 3) that which possesses brightness (Kenyatta [1938]1965:5, 132, 225). The British renamed the highest mountain in their colony as *Kenya* and, later, the country too. The British also loosely used the term *Kikuyu* to describe the Embu, Meeru, Kikuyu, and Ambere people.

adventurers and fortune seekers.<sup>321</sup> Advancing the Kiplingesque duties of the higher race, *Prester John*'s hero teaches British youth about its responsibilities while simultaneously advertising the empire's glamour and vast worldly riches.

It was an experience for which I shall ever be grateful, for it turned me from a rash boy into a serious man. I knew then the meaning of the white man's duty (Buchan 1983[1910]: Kindle location 2990-91).

*Prester John* exemplifies the concretization in the Western mind (ala Bush, Blair, and Iraq) of Said's Orient and presents ideas that formed an integral part of the global colonial project. The Prester John legend is a useful backdrop for colonial travel narratives, including in British East Africa, the subject of the House of Commons' annual debates about the Colonial Office. After World War I, recurring crises made British East Africa central to Imperial affairs.<sup>322</sup> Unlike in its southern or western African colonies (e.g., Rhodesia, Bechuanaland, Nigeria, Ghana), the London Colonial Office directly controlled British East Africa where the settlers and administrators were mainly aristocrats and mostly Oxbridge. When Europeans set out to explore, discover, and colonize Africa, the internalized medieval fantasies about the Orient were inherent to the colonial enterprise that produced logical colonial binaries valorised in the colonies: civilization vs. savagery, enlightenment vs. darkness, Christianity vs. paganism (or heathenism), modernity vs.

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<sup>321</sup> Active between the 12<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, this legend inspired texts like those by Buchan (1983[1910]); Umberto Eco (2000), and Tad Williams (1988, 1990 and 1993). Apparently, more than 100 variants of the Prester John legend exist in European languages with the basic story line about a Christian King, Prester John, whose kingdom was somewhere in the East. The Hebrew variant reported in Meir Bar-Ilan (1995) is summarized herein: Once, a great, generous, and virtuous Christian king, Prester John, ruled over 72 countries in a marvellous Christian nation where the patriarch of St. Thomas lived. A nation lost amongst Muslims, pagans, and the many strange beasts of the East, Prester's kingdom bordered the Earthly Paradise and contained the Gates of Alexander and the Fountain of Youth. As a descendant of one of the Three Magi, King Prester wrote letters to Popes in Rome, proclaiming his Christianity. European imagination and orature moved Prester John from Central Asia, where the West's encounter with the Mongols had placed him "around the blurry frontiers of 'India', till Portuguese explorers planted him in an appropriately powerful kingdom in Ethiopia. In 1441, Ethiopian delegates to the Council of Florence protested that they had never called their king, Zara Yaqob, that is, 'Prester John'. 'No matter,' the council prelates declared. *Prester John* was what Europe wanted to call the Ethiopian King, and Prester John is what Europe called him" (Silverberg 1972:4).

<sup>322</sup> controversies related to forced labour in 1919, the Indian Crisis of 1923, and the debates during the 1920s and 1930s over the union of British East African and southern colonies

backwardness, and education vs. superstition (or barbarism). The very acquisition of British East Africa illustrates this phase of European “discovery”.

In 1885, Zanzibar’s Sultan Seyyid Barghash described his dominion to Bismarck as the area covering today’s Tanzania plus the entire Kenyan coastline: “an uninterrupted line along the seacoast from the town of Warsheikh on the north to Tong Bay on the south, where the Portuguese possessions begin.” In the interior, “my jurisdiction extends to Kaffra-el-Ugigi and as far as the Great Lakes. My governors are stationed as far as Meschaga, Usagara, Ukumi, Zoguwwa, and Megura”.<sup>323</sup> In 1886, the International Commission examining his claim agreed that the Zanzibar territory comprised “the islands of Zanzibar, Pemba, Mafia; a *ten-mile strip* along the coast from the Rovuma River to the Tana River; the towns of Kismayu, Brava, Merka, and Mogadiscio with the territory within a radius of ten miles; and the town of Warsheikh with territory within *a radius of five miles*” [italics inserted].<sup>324</sup> The commission concluded, however, that “the hinterland of this coastal strip was now free to be occupied without the Sultan’s consent” (Singh 1965:878–79).<sup>325</sup> Consequently, Great Britain occupied Kenya’s hinterland while Germany occupied that of Tanganyika, and British East Africa was born.

## **Section B: Kenyan Travel, Settler, and Christian Literature**

British East Africa is immortalized in fiction, letters, memoirs, autobiographies, biographies, papers, and official reports written by early explorers, adventurers, tourists, businessmen, officials and administrators, military men, missionaries, settlers, and diverse professionals and visitors. Their varied literature was a major forum for exchanging colonial ideals and images—exhibiting,

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<sup>323</sup> *The East African Red Book, 1030–31* (*East African Standard*, Nairobi, 1930:27), quoted in Singh (1965:878).

<sup>324</sup> The commissioners came from Germany, Great Britain, and France (Singh 1965:878).

<sup>325</sup> free for all colonialists/settlers, but not the original occupants

for the most part, Said’s oriental figure.<sup>326</sup> Early Kenyan narratives also include personal guides to nature, wild animals, plants, mountain climbing, trekking, “interesting people”,<sup>327</sup> and pioneer Christian texts by missionaries exploring, saving lives, and establishing churches and elementary schools. Following mission teachings, Christians—including newly converted Africans—wrote their personal narratives about Christians, Christianity, and nation-building.<sup>328</sup>

East Africa’s life-writing comprises many texts now considered classic travel, hunting, and exploration adventures (travelogues) that are unknown in Kenyan schools: J.L. Krapf, *Travels, Researches and Missionary Labours During an Eighteen Years’ Residence in Eastern Africa* (1860); Joseph Thomson, *Through Maasailand: To the Central African Lakes and Back* (1885); Henry M. Stanley, *How I Found Livingstone; Travels, Adventures and Discoveries in Central Africa; Including Four Months Residence with Dr. Livingstone by Henry M Stanley, Travelling Correspondent of the “New York Herald”* (1872), *Through the Dark Continent; or, The Sources of the Nile Around the Great Lakes of Equatorial Africa and Down the Livingstone River to the Atlantic Ocean* (1878); *In Darkest Africa; or The Quest, Rescue and Retreat of Emin, Governor of Equatoria* (1890); W.A. Chanler, *Through Jungle and Desert: Travels in Eastern Africa* (1896); *The Autobiography of Sir Henry Morton Stanley* (1909) and *The Exploration Diaries of H. M. Stanley*, Richard Stanley, edited by Alan Neame (1961); May French-Sheldon, *Sultan to Sultan: Adventures Among the Masai and Other Tribes of East Africa* (1892); Ritter von Ludwig Hohnel,

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<sup>326</sup> Oriental images played a significant part in the colonial “uprisings” and “pacification episodes and expeditions” in British East Africa that culminated in the *Mau Mau* (Chapter 4).

<sup>327</sup> Since the present thesis discusses the historical selection of texts for schools, it does not examine the categories of personal guides to nature, wild animals, plants, mountain climbing, trekking, interesting people, and Christian narratives.

<sup>328</sup> E.N. Wanyoike, *An African Pastor: The Life and Work of the Rev. Wanyoike Kamawe, 1888–1970* (1974); Obadiah Kariuki, *A Bishop Facing Mount Kenya: An Autobiography, 1902-1978* (1985); Festo Olang, *Festo Olang’: An Autobiography* (1991); Henry Okullu, *Church and Politics in East Africa* (1974), *Church and Marriage in East Africa; Church and State in Nation Building and Human Development* (1984); and *Quest for Justice: An Autobiography of John Henry Okullu* (1997).

*Discovery of Lakes Rudolf and Stefanie* (1894); Grogan, Sharp and MacCormick, *From the Cape to Cairo: the first traverse of Africa from South to North* (1900); H. Patterson, *The Man-Eaters Of Tsavo and Other East African Adventures* (1999[1907]); Winston Churchill, *My African Journey* (1908); W. S. Rainsford, *The Land of the Lion* (1908); Theodore Roosevelt, *African Game Trails: An Account of the African Wanderings of an American Hunter-Naturalist* (1910); and Perham, Lugard, *The Years of Adventure, 1858–1898* (1956).

Though mostly unknown in Kenyan schools, some of these books have inspired popular Academy Award-winning movies.<sup>329</sup> The safari-movie storylines explore hunting adventurers, self-indulgences, entourages of African porters and attendants, and the wanton killing of big game animals for sport—themes popularised in films based on classic Kenyan travel, hunting and adventure texts of the same title or offshoots of the original text, e.g., *The Ghost and the Darkness*, 1996); Karen Blixen, *Out of Africa* (1937, movie, 1985); Joy Adamson, *Born Free* (1960, a sequel, *Living Free* 1972, a documentary, *Christian the Lion* (1972) and *Born Free: A New Adventure* (1996); E. Hemingway, *The Snows of Kilimanjaro* (1936, movie 1952, and a French film 2011); Elspeth Joscelyn Grant Huxley, *The Flame Trees of Thika: Memories of an African Childhood* (1959, movie, 1981);<sup>330</sup> James Fox, *White Mischief: The Murder Of Lord Erroll* (1983, movie 1987)<sup>331</sup> and Kuki Gallman, *I Dreamt of Africa* (1986, movie 2000); George Adamson, *My Pride and Joy: An Autobiography* (1987, the movie *To Walk With Lions* 1999). Also, J. H. Patterson, *The Man-Eaters of Tsavo* (1907) has been adapted as a 1950s monochrome British film, a 3-D

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<sup>329</sup> Meryl Streep won the Oscar for her role as Karen Blixen in *Out of Africa*, a film that won twenty-eight awards including seven Academy Awards. *Born Free* won seven awards, including two Academy Awards. Besides winning many accolades, some of these movies spin off additional movies, series, and documentaries.

<sup>330</sup> The movie is entitled *The Flame Trees of Thika*.

<sup>331</sup> The film, *White Mischief*, explores the hedonism of colonial Kenya's Happy Valley, revolving around the still unsolved murder of aristocrat Josslyn Hay, Earl of Erroll, 1941. A British television drama about the same murder, *Happy Valley*, premiered on 6 September 1987. David Reid is the author; and Richard Devenish, the director.

film *Bwana Devil* (1952), and a colour version. Africa and the lost world genre began with a movie (1937) of the same title by H.R. Haggard, *King Solomon Mines* (1885) while *Stanley and Livingstone* (1939) uses diverse Stanley texts to explore his travels and adventures.<sup>332</sup> Among other movies not based on classic safari texts about Kenya and Africa are *Mau Mau*;<sup>333</sup> *Sanders of the River* (1934, Nigeria and British imperialism); *Mugambo* (1953, East Africa, big hunting and colonial fun); *Hatari* (1962, expatriates hunting and catching East African wild animals to sell); *The Wilby Conspiracy*, (1972, apartheid South Africa); *Rise and Fall of Idi Amin*, (1981, Idi Amin, Ugandan dictator, 1971–1979);<sup>334</sup> *Nowhere in Africa* (2001, colonial Kenya and Nazism); *White Maasai* (2005 Corinne Hofmann’s autobiographical novel of the same title, about Corrine’s love for a Maasai man); and *Constant Gardener* (2005, John le Carré novel of the same title about corrupt neocolonial African officials and corporate social responsibility).

The African travel, discovery, adventure, and diverse colonial narratives vividly describe an exotic haven for European settlers and adventurers—landscapes of unsurpassed natural beauty, abundant wildlife, wide uninhabited spaces, temperate climate, and recreational or arduous expeditions.

I speak of Africa and Golden joys, wandering through lonely lands; the joy of hunting the mighty and the terrible lords of the wilderness ... in these greatest of the world’s great hunting-grounds; swamps, ... lakes like seas; skies that burn above deserts where the iron desolation is shrouded from view by the mockery of the mirage; mighty rivers rushing out of the heart of the continent through the sadness of endless marshes (Roosevelt 1910:vii).

These attractions, however, belie the dangers within “forests of gorgeous beauty where death broods in the dark and silent depths” (ibid.). The beauty and danger appealed to adventurers and

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<sup>332</sup> movie shot in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda

<sup>333</sup> For movies about the Mau Mau, see note 235.

<sup>334</sup> Uganda’s president from 1971 to 1979, Idi Amin Dada Oumee (aka Idi Amin) was a dictator known as “The Butcher of Uganda”. From 1947 to 1959, he served in the King’s African Rifles in Kenya as a cook, a sergeant and, eventually, a lieutenant and, there, was renown as a brutal torturer.

monied idlers. In many texts, the descriptions of the land beckon the willing and able to a taste of Showalter's exotic spatial other: the "yearning ... [to] escape from society rigidly structured ... [by] gender, class, and race [and go] to a mythologized place elsewhere" where men can be "freed from their Victorian constraints" (Showalter 1990:81). For the amateur or seasoned hunter, Africa offered endless big game, gesturing to an idyllic world.<sup>335</sup> In recreating this mythologized open space, the African travel, discovery, adventure (travelogues) and diverse colonial narratives wilfully gloss over that which may shatter the myth of the "sanguine expectations" about these supposedly empty lands. "No previous period in the history of African inland discovery could have justified more sanguine expectations than the present moment, when this *terra incognita* is being explored from the N, S, and E" (Royal Geographical Society 1856:156:74).<sup>336</sup>

In the travelogue narratives, human presence in pre-colonial British East Africa is minimized, deleted, or comfortably merged with the wildlife, e.g., Roosevelt's varied people of "the dark-skinned races that live in the land, [races that are] war-like, fisherfolk, cattle owning nomads," and tillers of the soil—and live in "thatched huts shaped like beehives; ape-like naked savages, who dwell in the woods and prey on creatures" (Roosevelt 1910:viii). Hence, in Henry Stanley's *Darkest Africa*'s impenetrable jungles, one occasionally ran into or imagined meeting the "isolated tribes", "bands of half-human, half-wild people, and isolated tribes, speaking incomprehensible dialects."<sup>337</sup> The presence of African porters and servants accompanying early travellers is

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<sup>335</sup> When the Kenya-Uganda railway line reached Port Florence (Kisumu, Kenya) in 1901, British newspapers graphically advertised the beauty and splendour of the British East African highlands—a scenery travellers enjoyed aboard the Lunatic Express (the train in Charles Miller's *Lunatic Express* [1971]). In a 1903 British cartoon, the Nairobi railway station is a pond "full of crocodiles and hippos" while, on dry land, "lions pull passengers out of a coach as hyenas and snakes await their turn to feast" (*Source*: Nairobi's Railway Museum).

<sup>336</sup> The theme of great religious and business expectations associated with empty lands in Africa or America was a popular subject of the epoch (Anonymous 1802: 217–27 of *The Edinburgh Review*; Anonymous 1825:21 in *The Religious Intelligencer* 10(2); Anonymous. 1828:313 in *The Christian Spectator* 2(6); Irving 1835: 457–462).

<sup>337</sup> Stanley (1890). Indeed, themes of wild, half-humans "Tarzans" permeate European fiction and philosophy—Hegel, Trevor-Roper or Edgar Rice Burroughs.

assumed, minimized, or elided in most narratives. When referred to, the native presence is evoked to demonstrate the traveller's bravado or other accomplishments as described by the self-described discoverer of Lake Chala: May French-Sheldon.<sup>338</sup>

Despite her Swiss maid and an entourage of more than 100 African porters, French-Sheldon described herself during numerous interviews as “A Lone White Woman in Savage Africa” (Boisseau 1995b:118). During a private tour in 1891, organized at “my own expense exclusively, with my own selected corps of fifty porters and the resident English officer, Mr. Anstruther for company,” French-Sheldon averted her porters' revolt in a dramatic, Wild-West episode. Spotting the beginning of a mutiny, she hesitated only momentarily before immediately demanding obedience from “these mutinous, half-savage men”. Pausing as a vulture flew overhead,

I drew my pistols and sent a bullet whizzing after it and brought it surely down to the astonishment of the revolting men. With both pistols cocked [and] ... inspired with fearlessness and strength, I started through the centre of the rebellious throng, pointing first one, then the other pistol in quick succession at the heads of the men, threatening, and fully prepared, determined, and justified to shoot the first dissenter.... With unflinching, angry eyes fixed upon them, I exclaimed,... “Every man who is not on his feet with his load on his head, when I have counted three, I will shoot!” They knew I would and knew I had been empowered to do so by the Sultan of Zanzibar (French-Sheldon 1892:174–75).

Fiction, travelogues, and settlers' and other colonial life-histories popularized British East Africa as an exotic, sometimes dangerous, haven for Europeans: E. Huxley, *White Man's Country: Lord Delamere and the Making of Kenya* [2 vols.] (1935); E. Hemingway, *Green Hills of Africa* ([1935]1992) and *The Snows of Kilimanjaro* ([1936]1995); Karen Blixen (Isak Dinesen), *Out of*

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<sup>338</sup> In *Sultan to Sultan: Adventures Among the Masai and Other Tribes of East Africa* (1892), the “first woman explorer of Africa—writer and amateur ethnologist, popular lecturer, feminist role model, and would-be colonizer, May French-Sheldon (1847–1936)” —illustrates colonial ideologies' construction of popular images, the development of the twentieth century public discourse about feminism, and the Anglo-American images of feminists in the colonial organization of knowledge. Being a woman traveller, however, did not change the colonial relationships (Boisseau 1995a:116). See also Boisseau (1995b).

*Africa and Shadows on the Grass* ([1937]1985); and Beryl Markham, *West with the Night* ([1942]1983).<sup>339</sup>

Early missionary narratives capture the dangers of surviving in the African bush and the obstacles to saving souls and converting “heathens” to Christianity. Permeating these texts were themes about the supposedly benevolent nature of the British Empire and the thrills and perils of the contemporary British class that savoured Africa’s wilderness.<sup>340</sup> For example, Churchill expresses Britain’s role to uplift the native through its agents and colonial government in Nairobi: “the British Government has it in its hands to shape the development and destiny of these countries and their varied peoples with an authority and from an elevation far superior to that with which Cabinets can cope with the giant tangles at home” (Churchill 1908:64–65).

Underlying Britain’s supposed magnanimity, however, was another motive rarely linked with the Kiplingesque role of the higher race: rapacious greed for the colonies’ natural resources, carefully disguised as **trade**. Sir Harry Johnston extolls the possibilities for trade in Uganda where “ivory of the very best quality, plenty of land, [and] leagues of forests for the shelter of animals [exist] ... in countless swarms” (Johnston 1902:89).<sup>341</sup> The land and animals would, however, only be profitable under Crown management and “determinedly enforce[d] game regulations” to ensure proper control of the natives’ interference (Johnston 1902:89–94).<sup>342</sup> Crown management regulations applied equally to animals and people in their communities, particularly by designating native reserves and game parks. Trade and commerce as the main reasons for European colonization of Africa feature in many texts: W.W.A. Fitzgerald, *Travels in the Coastlands of*

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<sup>339</sup> plus the pioneer settlers, Grogan, Delamere, and Leakey

<sup>340</sup> A few narratives also expressed the discontent of individual desires and plans, e.g., R. Oliver, *Sir Harry Johnston and the Scramble for Africa* (1957:52-88).

<sup>341</sup> Sir Harry Johnston’s illustrated *The Uganda Protectorate* enthuses about the enormous commercial possibilities in Kenya and Uganda.

<sup>342</sup> Those days, Uganda stretched far into present-day Kenya’s Rift Valley.

*British East Africa and the Islands of Zanzibar and Pemba: Their Agricultural Resources and General Characteristics* (1898); F.D. Lugard, *The Rise of Our East African Empire* (2 Vols.) (1893) and *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa* (1922); Harry Johnston, *British Central Africa* (1897), *The Uganda Protectorate* (1902) and *The Story of My Life* (1923); Charles Eliot, *The East Africa Protectorate* (1905); Lord Cranworth (Baron Bertram Francis Gordon Cranworth), *A Colony in the Making: Sport and Profit in British East Africa* (1912) and *Kenya Chronicles* (1939); Llewelyn Powy, *Black Laughter* (1924); F.P. Crozier, *Five Years Hard* (1932); A.H. Hardinge, *A Diplomatist in the East* (1928); C. W. Hobley, *Kenya From Chartered Company to Crown Colony* (1929) and F.J. Jackson, *Early Days in East Africa* (1930). These among other official texts (e.g., reports) illustrate highly personalized accounts, which reveal how the authors' personal beliefs and views permeated officialdom.<sup>343</sup>

In Africa, successful trade and commerce came at a huge local cost. Colonial Kenyan state's move to demarcate and safeguard vast tracts of land for animals in national and private parks forced Kenyans off their lands. With few options to pay the hut-, poll-, and head-taxes, people—at first, principally men—were uprooted and pushed to earn a living in the peripheries of growing urban centres, the beginning of the now ghastly slums around towns as described in the texts tackling social, economic and spatial tensions in Kenya: Thomas Akare, *The Slums* (1981); Meja Mwangi, *Kill Me Quick* (1973); *Carcase for Hounds* (1974); *Taste of Death* (1975); *Going Down River Road* (1976); *The Cockroach Dance* (1979); Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Petals of Blood* (1977); *Caitani Mutharabaini (Devil on the Cross)* (1982) and *Matigari* (1992[1986]); Thiong'o and Mĩriĩ, *Ngaahika Ndenda: Ithaako ria Ngerekano. (I Will Marry When I Want)* (1980); Charles Mang'ua, *Son of Woman* (1971); *A Tail in the Mouth* (1972); *Son of Woman in Mombasa* (1986); Mwangi

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<sup>343</sup> Personalized accounts are partly personal and partly formal as compared to personal accounts or life-writing.

Ruheni, *What a Life!* (1972); *The Future Leaders* (1973); *What a Husband!* (1974); *The Minister's Daughter* (1965a); *The Mystery Smugglers* (1975b), and *The Love Root* (1976). The disproportional allocation of land for native reserves, settlers, game parks, and urban centres in colonial Kenya triggered tensions among Kenyan communities that reverberate today.<sup>344</sup>

Pre-colonial Kenyan land was communally owned, with each community allocating land use without deeding it to individuals, unlike what the colonial government began to do.<sup>345</sup> In the early 1900s, the state's white-settlement project encouraged European immigrants, and especially English noblemen, attracting them with huge, free parcels of rich agricultural land. Among the first to benefit was Sir Hugh Cholmondeley (Lord Delamere), Kenyan settlers' symbolic father who in 1903 acquired, first, 100,000 acres and, later, another 60,000 acres in the Rift Valley (Olson and Shadle 1996:296; Huxley 1935). The white-settlement project did not stop only at settling English noblemen in Kenya. The same year Lord Delamere acquired such vast lands, the British Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain offered Theodore Herzl, a self-appointed Jewish state-negotiator, part of the Kenyan highlands to the Zionist movement as a Jewish homeland under British protection (Irfan 2000:23).

Between 1905 and 1946, ... the Zionists tried without success to negotiate with various governments which had acquired colonies overseas regarding Jewish settlement projects in North Africa, Mesopotamia, Brazil, Mexico, Canada, Texas, British Guiana, Surinam and Australia. The failure of these projects was attributed to the outbreak of the two World Wars and the Zionists' demand for a large Jewish colony within a colony, cultural and political autonomy, a large measure of autonomy in local government, as well as the power to control immigration (Githiumu 1983:136–37).

The Kenyan project also collapsed due to “the hatred and antisemitism by some of the British settlers” and the increasing probability that the Zionists would win their battle for a homeland in Palestine, a dream fulfilled in 1948 at an immense and ongoing cost to Palestinians (Githiumu

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<sup>344</sup> Among many issues neocolonial Kenyan governments have refused to address is returning misappropriated land to its owners, a main cause of the 1950s guerrilla war.

<sup>345</sup> Akare (1981), Meja Mwangi (1973, 1974, 1975 and 1979); Mang'ua (1971 and 1972); Ruheni (1972, 1973, 1974, 1975a and 1975b)

1983:137).

Land was, however, declared Crown land and leased to the European settlers, at first for a period of 99 years that was later extended to 999 years following the 1915 Crown Lands Ordinance.<sup>346</sup> Signed on 8 September 1919 by H.T. Martin—then acting land officer—the conditions for the sale of the land restricted who could legally bid and purchase to “European British subjects (or their accredited agents). Non-British subjects will require the consent in writing of His Excellency the Governor. The lease shall be for 999 years and shall commence from the 1<sup>st</sup> day of January 1920; and the rent shall be payable from that date.”<sup>347</sup> As more settlers arrived in East Africa, the need for land conservation grew along with increasing restrictions on land use by Africans, especially for hunting. Gradually, the “hunt became not only a symbol of European dominance but also the determinant of class within that dominance” (MacKenzie 1987:41).

To satisfy the needs for land and labour by the stream of arriving new settlers and to set aside land for a national park system, the colonial government kept enacting laws and by-laws about land, labour, native-reserves, and national parks that pushed Africans off into the ever-shrinking reserves<sup>348</sup>, reducing them “to the status of squatters or an agrarian labouring class” (Youe 1986:163). For instance, the Resident Native Labour Ordinance (1918) required contracts to specify the number of days contractual labourers (often squatters) owed their landlords.<sup>349</sup> Between

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<sup>346</sup> *Kenya Gazette*, November 5, 1919, General Notice # 1164, p. 832.

<sup>347</sup> *Kenya Gazette* (1919:832). The Crown Lands Ordinance (1915) and the long leases are widely discussed: Boahen (1990:174); Lesthaeghe (1989:47) and Vandenberg (2006:95). As recent as 1975, the Idi Amin government in Uganda enacted The Land Reform Decree (LRD) that “abolished on paper all private rights to land and converted ... holdings to 99-year leases. In the case of charitable and religious institutions, freehold land was converted to 199-year leases” (Kisamba-Mugerwa 1991b:3).

<sup>348</sup> e.g., the 1902 Crown Lands Ordinance and the National Parks Ordinance (1945) that turned all “unoccupied” lands into crown lands and created huge parks; Kenya Colony’s “first game ranger was appointed in 1901 and an official Game Department created in 1906.” *Impact International*, vol. 30. News & Media, 2000, p. 28.

<sup>349</sup> captured in the *myali* “no kikuu” and “*nthi ya Kenya ndikola athungu*”

1900 and 1946—a period also known as the “Era of Big Game Hunting”<sup>350</sup> in East Africa—Kenya’s national parks were established: first the Nairobi National Park at the edge of the capital in 1946; then the Amboseli Park in 1947; the Tsavo in 1948, and the Mt Kenya in 1949 (MacKenzie 1997[1988]:48). By the time the guerrilla war started in 1950s, parks “covered more than 24,000 square miles”, i.e., 6.2m hectares or 10.7% of the entire country.<sup>351</sup> Though Africans had lived and hunted in these areas for generations, they were not allowed to hunt in the parks.<sup>352</sup>

The early settlers’ narratives chronicled the nobleman’s idea of British East Africa, the white settler’s paradise of Lord Delamere’s creation (Huxley 1935:78 and Kennedy 1987:44–49). Britain and the colonial government considered the Kenya colony as largely “an area of settlement for gentlemen only.” Hence, unlike in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), the Kenya colonial government routinely deported indigent Europeans to prevent the creation of a poor white class (Berman 1990:130).<sup>353</sup> Despite efforts to prevent the influx of poor whites, many settlers were, in fact, poor or middle class, not aristocratic. Settler narratives and Kenyan folklore capture the evolving contradictions in the settlers’ paradise (see examples of *myali* in Chapter 6) as do Huxley, Blixen, and other colonial writers. For example, Huxley’s early life-writing revolves around the white highlands and the settlers while her later works included murder-series and fiction. Some early pioneers aimed for a new, honest life; others were drunkards and libertines yearning for a free life they could afford neither in Kenya nor back “home”. Lord Delamere’s plans did not consider the reactions of the black majority on whose land the White country was to be constructed. Doubts

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<sup>350</sup> Hall and Tucker (2004:143)

<sup>351</sup> Gunther (1953) quoted in “Land and population: Colonial interests in Kenya” by Irfan (2000). By 1991, the parks had shrunk to 4.4m hectares as much of the better farmlands was excised from the parks and attributed mainly to ranchers or farmers. Still, in 1991, the parks comprised “7.6% of the total area of the country.... The largest proportion of these protected areas (74%) are ... in arid and semi-arid regions” (WCMC and IUCN 1991:126). Prior to 1951, therefore, a far higher percentage of the parks comprised arable lands mostly prohibited to African farmers.

<sup>352</sup> numerous interviewees from Ukambani

<sup>353</sup> Also see Dilley (1966[1937]:12) and Cross (1969:83).

about the viability of a White country in Kenya were voiced only later during the guerrilla war for liberation. For example, Meinertzhagen (1983[1957]:211) questioned whether, “in a hundred years’ time, [when] there may be 50,000 white settlers with flourishing farms and 5,000,000 discontented and envious natives, can the white man hold out against [such] numbers without terrific slaughter?”<sup>354</sup>

The settlers’ later narratives describe the pains of domesticating their land and controlling the natives, who, as mere servants, remained peripheral, especially in the plush, exclusive “Europeans Only” clubs (Blundell 1963). Reworked themes of early adventure and settler narratives continue to resurface in fiction and life-histories, e.g., in Gallman’s *I Dreamt of Africa* (1986); Marciano’s *Rules of the Wild* (1998);<sup>355</sup> Juanita Carberry and Nicola Tyrer’s *Child of Happy Valley: A Memoir* (1999);<sup>356</sup> and Jane Goodhall and Dale Peterson’s *Africa in My Blood: An Autobiography in Letters, The Early Years, 1934–1966* (2000). Though set in the Kenya of the 1980s, Gallman’s story and Marciano’s fiction have few African characters. Marciano highlights the adventures of the shallow, narcissistic young expatriates and second- and third-generation Kenyan settlers cloistered in affluent and still mostly white Nairobi suburbs like Karen.<sup>357</sup> With the comforts of inherited trust funds, international pay packages, and cheap black Kenyan labour, the new generation of adventurers idle away recreating their ancestors’ Happy Valley (Berman and Lonsdale 1992). Like their ancestors, the beautiful and faithful women—Esme, Janice, and presumably Kandisky’s wife—love an unattainable man though they are married or attached to

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<sup>354</sup> Despite his services to the crown with pacification expeditions, Meinertzhagen was expelled from the colony in 1906.

<sup>355</sup> and Gallman’s *Night of the Lions* (1999) and *African Nights* (2000); Thesiger, *The Life of My Choice* (1980) and *My Kenya Days* (1994); B. Hofmeyr, *Poems of Trial and Triumph* (1983) and the rekindled interest in Kenya’s pioneer ladies—Blixen, Huxley and Markham.

<sup>356</sup> The book is now part of UK Audiobooks ([www.audiobooks.com](http://www.audiobooks.com)) narrated by Briony Sykes.

<sup>357</sup> Karen, the setting for *Out of Africa*, is a former whites-only suburb in Nairobi where Karen Blixen lived. It is now named after her.

others.<sup>358</sup> The political undertones of colonialism, race, gender, and violence amidst Africa's beautiful scenery in Huxley, Hemingway, Blixen, and Markham are reminiscent of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. Besides the scenery, Marciano's *Rules of the Wild* evokes Africa's modern genocidal horrors in Somalia, Rwanda, and Sudan.

Born into the "Happy Valley Set" in 1925, Juanita Carberry depicts a life that dramatizes the exotic African wild, the Happy Valley's wild excesses, child abuse, and the pathos of a gifted, angry, lonely child amidst the fascinating wildlife and insects (termites, locusts). Carberry's childhood anecdotes include people she knew intimately: Blixen, Huxley, Markham, Fox, and some characters in *Out of Africa*, *The Flame Trees of Thika*, *West with the Night*, and *White Mischief*. Juanita's real friends and family are the wild animals and the Africans on her eccentric father's farm.<sup>359</sup> Juanita's English nannies and black servants keep her mother's death a secret for three years as she stays busy with the land, its natural beauty, exotic flora and fauna, breath-taking views, fascinating wildlife, and nurturing natives. Though the ultimate "witness" of the Earl of Errol's murder (allegedly, Lord Broughton confessed the murder only to her), she never testified because, as a child, she was not allowed to testify. The self-made Juanita is eventually a world-class swimmer and navy officer, defying her parents and governess and defending her "true" lineage when her father insinuates that she is not his daughter.

With little variation, early settlers' narratives indulge in the leisurely lifestyle of Kenyan lords while the native remains the peripheral, shadowy figure, the ubiquitous black house servant—houseboy, gardener, chef, handyman, tea or coffee picker, milker or technical assistant—including

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<sup>358</sup> for example, in Marciano's *Rules of the Wild* (1998), Huxley, *The African Poison Murders* (1989[1938]), and E. Hemingway, *Green Hills of Africa* (1992[1935])

<sup>359</sup> Apparently, her Irish nobleman father sold his inheritance to travel, landing in the 1920s Kenyan Happy Valley and marrying Juanita's fun-loving and impulsive mother.

in the plush exclusive clubs that, at the time, bore “Europeans Only” signs.<sup>360</sup> In the Happy Valley heyday, wealthy settlers had dozens of servants, some with a single responsibility, like cleaning and polishing shoes, watering and pruning specific flowers, or carrying a favourite shawl or shotgun as done for Karen Blixen (1985[1937]).<sup>361</sup> These nameless servants are collectively referred to as savages, natives, niggers, or boys.<sup>362</sup> Sometimes, the “boys” are John, James (or other English given name) or a botched African name such as Jirogi for Njoroge, Mwogi for Mwangi, M’Cola for Mukola, and Kamante, Kawirondo and Wakambo for Kamande, Kavirondo, and Wakamba.<sup>363</sup> The shadowy black figure is transformed when, in different languages, it is at the centre of the colonial discourse, e.g., in the Kamba *myali* in Chapter 6. In contrast to that shadowy figure are the imposing white figures of Madame, Bwana Kubwa, and Bwana Ndogo, settler, farmer, police officer, administrator, missionary.<sup>364</sup>

The white figure—man, woman and child—specifically the “Happy Valley” European type, is largely and comfortably insulated from the natives’ poverty and misery. This European figure—demonstrated in various texts<sup>365</sup>—is emotionally and mentally attached to “their” personal land. The travelogues and settler narratives stereoscopically look at home and abroad through Said’s and Mbembe’s binary categories, “home” and “abroad” (England and Empire), which, for Said, only conceal the real linkages and continuities between what should no longer be discrete fields.

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<sup>360</sup> Colonial policies encouraged and forced men to work outside the home and confined women and children to the reserves (Chapter 3). Families were legally separated by requiring permits and passes for Africans to travel outside their homes or workstations.

<sup>361</sup> Also see the *mwalĩ* “Shillings are finishing people” (p. 202).

<sup>362</sup> Hemingway’s “M’Bulus” (Hemingway 1935:61); Hall’s and Meinertzhagen’s “Gikuyu savages” (letters of Francis Hall from 1896 to 1901), and Meinertzhagen’s *Kenya Diary 1902-1906* (1957) and *Army Diary (1899-1926)* (1962).

<sup>363</sup> Huxley (1938:45 and 50), Blixen (1985[1937]:2 and 56)

<sup>364</sup> The title, *Bwana Ndogo* (young master), applied only to boys without a corresponding girl’s title.

<sup>365</sup> e.g., Hemingway, *Green Hills of Africa* (1992[1935]), *The Snows of Kilimanjaro* and *The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber* (1936); Huxley, *The African Poison Murders* (1989[1938]), *The Mottled Lizard* (1962); and *Nine Faces of Kenya: Portrait of a Nation* (1991). (NB, the European landowner in Huxley and similar texts in Kenya has more legitimacy to the land than the natives who had used the same land for eons before).

For Mbembe, the “conviviality [and the] dynamics of domesticity and familiarity inscribe the dominant and the dominated in the same epistemological field.”<sup>366</sup> The idea of home shaped how colonial problems get resolved in the narratives as well as the colonial meanings they generate, meanings that are exported back “home” to the metropole for consumption and refashioning. I share Mbembe’s idea of Afropolitanism about neocolonial Africa (e.g., Kenya) as spaces battling with itself and the world at all levels—economic, political, semiotic, psychic, and social, i.e., “as being part of the world rather than being apart” (Balakrishnan 2016:29).

In both the fiction and life-writings, the predominant themes include inventing, colonizing, expanding, and experiencing the empire while exoticizing, evangelizing and *developing* the native. The desire and need to hold, own, and develop land led the Europeans in Kenya to acquire “empty and wild lands” that were said to be occupied almost exclusively by wildlife. The “empty land” narrative created several settler sub-genres in Kenya: (i) the anthropological “native other,” (ii) his European expert (ii) European self-sacrifice in taming and developing these allegedly wild lands, and (iii) the European leisure travel, sightseeing, big game hunting, and personal adventures. After “identifying” these “empty” lands, colonial administrators referred to them as “Crown Lands,”<sup>367</sup> and passed government regulations for their “legal” use. For example, (a) African land was grabbed to build government infrastructure—highways, railroads, and buildings;<sup>368</sup> (b) 99-year-long land-occupancy-certificates were offered to attract willing settlers;<sup>369</sup> (c) the commissioner and governor were empowered to grant or lease crown land to incoming settlers on “such terms and conditions as he sees fit;”<sup>370</sup> and (d) land with 99-year leases could be sold while land in the

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<sup>366</sup> Said (1993), Olaniyan (1992:47–55), and Mbembe (1992:14)

<sup>367</sup> All territorial public land outside the Sultan’s 10-mile (16 kilometre) strip at the coast came under Her Majesty’s control in the name of Crown lands. Land for leasing was in towns; freehold land was rural.

<sup>368</sup> the Indian Land Acquisition Act (1894). Till then, Kikuyu district had only ten settlers.

<sup>369</sup> British East African Lands regulation Act (1897)

<sup>370</sup> the East African Lands Order (1901)

Kikuyu district could be surveyed from 1904,<sup>371</sup> the same year as an “agreement” with the Maasai set aside the first African reserve,<sup>372</sup> which was soon followed by “agreements” with the Nandi, the Agikuyu, and the Kavirondo (Nyanza Luo and Luyia) African Reserves in 1905. The document known as the Elgin pledge (1908)<sup>373</sup> reserved these lands only for whites as confirmed by the Kenya Highlands Order. Disputes about the Maasai land agreements led Britain to pass the Crownlands Amendment Ordinance in 1915, which:

- made all Kenyan land Crown land;
- legalized moving the Maasai from Laikipia reserve;
- provided land registration for settlers;
- assured settlers of white leases of up to 999 years for agricultural land and 99 years for town land; and
- authorized white settlers to own over 5,000 acres of arable land (crop growing) or 7,000 acres for ranching (livestock keeping).

In Kenya’s highlands, businessmen loved the conducive climate, the bountiful land, and the free, native labour. Journalistic observations and other settler narrative sub-genres abound with jungle tales of surviving the “African bush” and developing the colony and its people. Pioneer settlers may have arrived in Kenya aiming to develop, among other things, the native, but these aims were fraught with blatant contradictions as many also believed the African native to be “fundamentally inferior” to them in “mental development and ethical possibilities” (Oliver, Newmann and Pearson 1968:6 and 11). Among Kenya’s early settlers were Colonel Ewart Grogan et al (1900:355), who knew that, “on principle, the native never tells the truth”, and Stanley (1890:217), whose native savage is “totally ignorant of the principles which govern the conduct of Christian man to man” and who “only respects force, power, and boldness”. In 1908, Colonel

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<sup>371</sup> the Crown Lands Ordinance (1902)

<sup>372</sup> The second Maasai agreement was signed in 1911.

<sup>373</sup> The British colonial secretary, Lord Elgin, discouraged Indians from buying land in the White Highlands.

Grogan and four friends flogged two rickshaw “boys” outside Nairobi’s Magistrate’s court “so hard and for so long that they lost consciousness and eventually one died while the other recovered in hospital after three months. Grogan’s murder charge was reduced to common assault, and he got only two months with hard labour” (Stanley 1935:148).

Colonel Grogan and his friends’ behaviour was widespread, making African farm labourers virtual slaves to their white bosses and motivating numerous job.<sup>374</sup> According to retired police officer Sad Singh, “desertion became such a big problem that over half of Kenya’s police force was employed in arresting deserters” (Bailey, Cooper and Bundeh 1993:20).<sup>375</sup> Singh cites the case of one settler who, suspecting “his Kikuyu of stealing a few pounds of maize meal, caught him, flogged him till he fainted, then left him to die.” The settler then summoned the dead man’s five-month pregnant wife. Tying her to a carpenter’s bench, “he flogged her till she miscarried there and then.” Her friends took her back to her home district where she, too, died. The courts sentenced the settler to two years’ hard labour. Another settler boasted how, “five minutes after I start working with these Kikuyu, I am raving like a Dutchman. I *sjambokked* the niggers until my arm ached (Bailey, Cooper and Bundeh 1993:20).” Settler narratives that abound in orature and written texts recall incidents of Grogan’s type of arrogant, cruel behaviour.<sup>376</sup> A shared racial ideology formed the backdrop to Kenyan education and the White highlands’ “Happy Valley”.<sup>377</sup> Grogan could not imagine a “more desperate happening than introducing English to the natives” who were destined to work on farms (Gorman 1974a:417).

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<sup>374</sup> See instances of desertions prompted by laws and severe punishments captured in *myali* and other oral literature, See footnote 416

<sup>375</sup> The writers of this text display a strong pro-Kenyan government bias, for example, in Bailey’s introduction.

<sup>376</sup> See for instance, the *myali* in chapter 6.

<sup>377</sup> Naivasha and the Aberdare mountains in the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s in colonial Kenya while the elite social group called the “Happy Valley set” comprised privileged British colonials and philanderers who became infamous for drinking, drug use, and promiscuousness in Fox’s *White Mischief* (1982).

A subgenre of the settler narrative is the anthropological narrative in which the settler “knew” his native. The “native other” narrative was produced not only by settlers, but other colonial “experts” studying and interpreting colonized linguistic groups: Huntingford, *The Nandi of Kenya: Tribal Control in a Pastoral Society* (1953); C.W. Hobley, *Ethnology of A-Kamba and Other East African Tribes* (1910); G. R. Sandford, *An Administrative and Political History of the Masai Reserve* (1919); G. Lindblom, *The Akamba in British East Africa* (1920); W.S. Routledge and K. Routledge, *With a Pre-Historic People: The Kikuyu of British East Africa* (1910); C. Cagnolo, *The Akikuyu: Their Customs, Traditions and Folklore* (1933); L.S.B. Leakey, *Mau Mau and the Kikuyu* (1952); A.H.J. Prins, *The Coastal Tribes of the Northeastern Bantu (Pokomo, Nyika, Teita)* (1952); Huntingford, *The Southern Nilo-Hamites* (1953); J. Middleton, *The Kikuyu and Kamba of Kenya* (1965[1953]); H.E. Lambert, *Kikuyu Social and Political Institutions* (1956); and I. M. Lewis, *Peoples of the Horn of Africa: Somali, Afar, and Saho* (1988[1955]). Tribal treatises stereotype and attribute “known” qualities to diverse tribes and groups of people, a theme that often resurfaces in fiction, life-histories, and the colonial and neocolonial Kenyan literary tradition. Indeed, the stereotypes that abound today about the country’s diverse peoples constitute part of the problematic of neocolonial Kenyan “nation-building” and self-identity.<sup>378</sup>

As an exotic haven of early travelogues and settler narratives, Kenya is a recurring trope in Hollywood and the modern international tourist industry that continues to present Kenya as mostly inhabited by rare birds, plants, wild game, spectacular scenery, and the Maasai (increasingly non-Maasai people in Maasai attire).<sup>379</sup> Contemporary mass-media, especially the Internet, reproduce

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<sup>378</sup> The Kikuyu were much studied after the 1952 emergency declaration against the liberation guerrilla war for land and freedom (Chapter 4).

<sup>379</sup> Long before colonial Kenya established national parks and reserves, the nomadic pastoralist Maasai lived in what was later, divided into Kenya and Tanzania. For the country’s big tourist industry, neocolonial Kenya has produced the Maasai as an aesthetic component of the ultimate jungle safari experience, an extension of the noble

the internationally recognizable Kenyan image popularized for travel adventurers, armchair travellers, tourists, and the leisure and big-game-hunting industry.<sup>380</sup> The image is immortalized in the *National Geographic*'s spectacular footage of wildebeests crossing the river Mara and lions or cheetahs chasing, seizing and devouring prey in the Maasai Mara and other game parks.<sup>381</sup> The African image the geographer Whittlesey described in 1955 persists: "a vague composite picture of stampeding herds, of big game, of densely populated jungle through which flow rivers Nile, Congo, Zambesi..., a world inhabited by pygmies and also by the tallest men on earth" (Haynes 1958:94). Adventure travel and tourist industry have produced significant contemporary Kenyan literature, spawning its own narrative that I here call the Maasai narrative—a subgenre of earlier travelogues and pioneer missionaries and settlers.<sup>382</sup> The Maasai narrative is also a theme for

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savage of earlier travel narratives, savages whose land early settlers claimed using phony Maasai land pacts and agreements mentioned earlier and discussed in Chapter 6 under *Ngilimiti*. For long, the Maasai resisted colonial and neocolonial cultural imperialism. Currently, despite viewing the Maasai as backward, Kenya's booming tourist industry and many Kenyans readily appropriate Maasai attire, ornaments, make-up, and coiffure as that of the "authentically native" Kenyan (See online advertisements).

<sup>380</sup> The image of Kenya as an international safari haven is replicated in numerous tourist books by, for example, Kenya's Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife; the *National Geographic*; *Msafiri* (Kenya Airway's in-flight magazine); online and other advertisements by airline, tour, and travel companies. Common lines include: "Safari *Kenya: The Mystical Experience* ... Kenya is the premier safari country, a land of contrasts—arid deserts, rich savannahs, snow-capped Mount Kenya, the Great Rift Valley, lakes and palm-fringed sandy beaches... and the widest array of game species in Africa, making it the ultimate travel destination" (2005–2006 online *Standard Daily* newspaper eastandard.net), or "Kenya is the heart of African safari country, housing the most diverse collection of wild animals on the continent... some of the world's most spectacular wildlife parks, beaches, coral reefs, mountain capes and ancient Swahili cities....game parks...Masai Mara..." (www.tourism.go.ke, www.kenya.travelmall.com/guide.html, magicalkenya.com, www.tourism.go.ke, magicalkenya.com).

<sup>381</sup> Twenty-four tribal reserves were gazetted in 1926. Today, Maasailand straddles modern Kenya and Tanzania and is part of the Southern Maasai Reserve where thousands of Maasai were forcefully relocated after they were ejected from their territory in Entorror (in today's Rift Valley and Laikipia) and corralled in a human zoo following the 1904 and 1911 "agreements", which, with British lawyers, they contested unsuccessfully in 1913 in the British East African High Court (Sandford 1919). When the national parks and reserves were established, Maasai land was sliced off to form Maasai Mara, a hive of tourist activity in modern Kenya. The 1904 and 1911 "agreements" allowed the colonial government to steal about 50% to 70% of Maasai land. Later, the government broke the 1904 "agreement" (Sandford 1919). See also Waller (1976) and Tignor (1976).

<sup>382</sup> J.L. Krapf, *Travels, Researches and Missionary Labours During an Eighteen Years' Residence in Eastern Africa* (1860); Joseph Thomson, *Through Maasailand: To the Central African Lakes and Back* (1885); May French-Sheldon, *Sultan to Sultan: Adventures Among the Masai and Other Tribes of East Africa* (1892); H. Patterson, *The Man-Eaters of Tsavo and Other East African Adventures* (1907); Winston Churchill, *My African Journey* (1908); W. S. Rainsford, *The Land of the Lion* (1908); Theodore Roosevelt, *African Game Trails: An Account of the African Wanderings of an American Hunter-Naturalist* (1910); Basil Williams, ed. *Makers of the Nineteenth Century: Cecil Rhodes* (1921); and Perham, *Lugard: The Years of Adventure, 1858–1898* (1956).

international movies.<sup>383</sup> While the recent Maasai narrative is mostly auto-biographical,<sup>384</sup> it is partly integral to the colonial concept of land use, land tenure, and land ownership, which clashed with that of most Kenyan nomadic and sedentary pastoralists. The existence of so many land treaties and agreements with the Maasai and Kalenjin confirms land was an ongoing sore point for colonizers that motivated many pacification expeditions.

From the earliest travelogues to colonial narratives, the themes of land, home, and country abound, albeit from opposing points of view, e.g., developing the native including stemming the barbarian killings such as those that Speke witnesses: “the cruel execution for Mutesa’s wives” for the most trivial of reasons. They were “raising their wailing cries of ‘O my lord, O my master’ as they passed him” on the way to their unjust deaths. Speke concludes that “the flow of human blood must have been such a common sight as to render the Baganda singularly callous” (Speke 1863:87). And this was for the Baganda, a tribe deemed more advanced than others because of its superior social and political organizations like kingdoms. Speke reports Mutesa’s cruel murders while Buchan ([1910]1983) glosses over and is complicit about the Zulu uprising in *Prester John*. Indeed, the brutality that the Queen of England’s representatives unleashed periodically and disguised as “uprisings,” “incidents” or “pacification expeditions” is rarely a subject in travelogues, missionary, or settler narratives. Though revelatory, these narratives are virtually unknown in Kenyan school texts and rarely discussed critically outside the classrooms.

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<sup>383</sup> For example, the German-language film shot in Kenya—*Die Weisse Massai (The White Maasai)*—is based on a true love story about a Swiss-German woman Corrine Hofmann and her love, marriage, and eventual break-up from Lemalian, a Samburu, not a Maasai (*The Daily Nation*, Nairobi, September 25, 2005).

<sup>384</sup> Fisher Beckwith and Angela Carol, *Maasai* (1990); Tepilit Ole Saitoti, *The Worlds of a Maasai Warrior: An Autobiography* (1988); Cheryl Mason, *White Mischief: The True Story of the Woman Who Married a Kenyan Tribesman* (1995); and Justin Cartwright, *Masai Dreaming* (1995). Post-1998 texts: Joseph Lemasolai-Lekuton and Herman Viola, *Facing the Lion: Growing Up Maasai on the African Savanna* (2003); Elizabeth L. Gilbert, *Broken Spears: A Maasai Journey* (2003).

## **Orature** *Excluded & Exclu-Censored*

### **Section A: Orature: History and Context in Kenya**

Coined by Pio Zirimu and Austin Bukonya of Makerere University, the term *orature* highlights the non-literary aspects of an oral performance. Each presentation is fluid and dynamic. The audience participates, changing the presentation, reception, and interpretation of a text or narrative and its literary elements, e.g., plot, theme, and order (Thiong'o 1998). Zirimu stressed orature's social production, unlike a novel, which, for instance, is often produced privately by an isolated, lone individual for a faceless audience and private consumption. With few exceptions, the authors of myths, songs, legends, and ancient stories passed on orally from generation to generation are unknown. Mugo summarizes the term as "creative imaginative art of composition that relies on the verbal art for communication and ... culminates in performance" (Mugo 1991:40). Though orature is still the prevalent literary form in Africa and the Third World, it is largely neglected in the educational system and in academia internationally, except in Sweden, Finland, and a few other places.<sup>385</sup>

Given the vastness of Kenyan orature from numerous tribes, this dissertation seeks merely to exemplify its literary and historical value by analysing a sample of *myali*. Despite *myali*'s moral, cultural, and historical richness and relevance for reaffirming the people's dignity and morality,

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<sup>385</sup> In Karelia, a vast northern European region partly covering Sweden, Finland, and Russia, *Kalevala* is a national epic and a significant work of Finnish literature.

*myalĩ* and similar Kenyan orature from other communities are not selected for high-school English and literature syllabi. *Myalĩ* also combat the widespread immorality in the current political system.

Throughout history, humans have struggled for survival, security, and basic needs, including cooperating with or fighting other humans. As they struggle, people develop ceremonies and rites of passages to mark dramatic and historical moments—death, birth, growing up, marriage, war, victory, a bountiful harvest, or a successful hunt—moments depicted in different forms of orature thereby “making orature and theatre crucial in society” (Thiong’o 1981:36). In Kenyan schools, orature has been deemed a historical curiosity and, at best, peripheral despite being the largest body of local literature and embodying values, attitudes, and worldviews that form a crucial part of independent Kenya’s identity.<sup>386</sup>

As evidenced in surviving texts, pre-colonial and non-writing peoples dramatized their lives through painting, sculpting, acting, and orature albeit in ever-changing forms and structures. For instance, ancient African word-keepers memorized histories and epics for generations, constantly incorporating new elements into the narratives to accommodate changing circumstances or structural forms as exemplified by Ozidi’s grandmother, Oreame, who fuses narrative elements—fiction, facts, drama, poetry, magic, ritual song, and audience participation—to instruct Ozidi, the epic hero.<sup>387</sup> Outside Africa, similar epics include the Mesopotamian Gilgamesh, the Greek Iliad and Odyssey, the European Beowulf, the Persian Shahnama, the Finnish Kalevala, and the Indian Mahabharata and Ramayana. Besides the South and West African griot tradition, other forms of orature perform and shape histories since people memorized the texts for their progeny to know

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<sup>386</sup> In multilingual Kenya, the modalities of how to research, translate, analyse, and disseminate orature through the school system must be worked out as well.

<sup>387</sup> S.P. Belcher, *Epic Traditions of Africa* (1999); J.P. Clark-Bekederemo, *Ozidi: A Play* (1966) and *The Ozidi Saga* (1977).

the past.<sup>388</sup> Though “written literature in Arabic, Fulfulde, Swahili, Hausa, and Amharic predate[s] the arrival of Europeans”, I know of no pre-colonial written records about Kamba orature—the focus in this chapter (Johnson et al. 1984: xiv).

In the territory that later became Kenya, pre-colonial orature included expressive forms (e.g., songs and dances) that recreate and encapsule the essence of these societies. The significance of these cultural forms is discernible through the colonial and neocolonial administrations’ persistent efforts to restrict, outlaw, ban, and censor them and prosecute the artists.<sup>389</sup> In the 1930s, colonial Kenyan courts severely penalized singers and banned various songs and dances, e.g., the “powerful, emotive and political[ly] subversive”<sup>390</sup> *Muthirigu*<sup>391</sup> and *Kanyegenyuri*<sup>392</sup> (Kikuyu) and the Kamba *wathi* celebrations performed at different times during the year.<sup>393</sup> Restricting and banning songs, dance, and other cultural forms and sites has continued for political reasons in some parts of neocolonial Africa, e.g., Ngugi’s arrest and jailing and the destruction of the Kamirithu

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<sup>388</sup> Milman Parry and his student Albert Lord’s analysis about how oral poets compose, learn, and transmit their epics through formula is useful (Lord 1960).

<sup>389</sup> Dancing and singing that violated the colonialists’ idea of law and order—including the missionaries’ Victorian morality—were contained or proscribed (A.A. Mazrui 1977:124).

<sup>390</sup> Rosberg and Nottingham (1966:123)

<sup>391</sup> The song *Muthirigu* song first appeared in 1929 and was banned in January 1930 with fines and imprisonment for anyone caught doing it (Thiong’o 1993:44–45, 89; Murray-Brown 1972; John Spencer 1985:77; and Sicherman (1995 and 1998), though, secretly, it continued to be sung.

<sup>392</sup> Soon after Harry Thuku was arrested and locked up in Nairobi Central Police Station, “a crowd of seven or eight thousand assembled, including around two hundred women. Mary Nyanjiru, who had witnessed Thuku’s arrest, was in the crowd.” The men who had met the Europeans to demand Thuku’s release returned to tell the crowd to disperse and go home. This infuriated the women. “The women sang ... and exposed their buttocks or genitals” to taunt the cowardly men who had failed to lead. The song proclaimed: “When Harry Thuku left, that is the time I started scratching my buttocks!” In front of the crowd, “Nyanjiru raised her skirt and challenged the men to take her dress and give her their trousers as they were too cowardly to act”. When the women rushed the prison door, a slaughter ensued as the white settlers on the veranda of the Norfolk Hotel and the police opened fire killing Nyanjiru and many others. *Kanyegenyuri*, a Kikuyu political song, commemorates the women’s actions that day (Sheldon 2019:86).

*Kanyegenyuri* “was very beautiful, very well constructed, with very strong, colourful and erotic images describing the arrest of Harry Thuku and the demands for his release. It was mostly sung and danced by women, and it became so powerful a statement of protest that it was banned by the colonial authorities. There was another called *Muthirigu*. Again, a powerful combination of song, poetry, and dance, mostly by young men” (Thiong’o 1993:89).

<sup>393</sup> interviews with diverse *wathi* participants in Ukambani

Community Educational and Cultural Centre (KCECC)<sup>394</sup> or the relentless persecution of one of Africa's prominent artists, the Nigerian Fela Anikulapo Kuti, which led, in 1977, to the burning down of the Kalakuta Republic, the commune he founded after his album *Zombie* satirizing the repressive Nigerian military state became an international hit: "Zombie no go turn unless you tell am to turn / Zombie no go think unless you tell am to think" (Akyeampong and Gates 2012: 445). During their attack on Fela Kuti's studio, an army of soldiers beat many people savagely and reportedly raped the female dancers. Fela's elderly mother, Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti—a renowned government critic, activist, feminist, and educationist—"then nearly seventy-seven years old", was "pulled by the hair" and thrown out of the window suffering injuries that later proved fatal (Johnson-Odim and Mba 1997:169). The assault against this renowned and widely respected female activist<sup>395</sup> illustrated how women are perceived and often treated in Africa (including in orature as we will see later through *myalĩ* in this chapter), especially when they exceed their expected roles of homemaking, displaying loyalty publicly, and respecting and being deferent to the men around them.<sup>396</sup>

In Kenya's Kamirithu—one of the colony's emergency villages<sup>397</sup> during Kenya's guerrilla war for freedom—a literacy forum later evolved into the Kamirithu Community Educational and Cultural Centre where Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Ngũgĩ wa Mĩriĩ, alongside villagers, wrote and produced *Ngahiika Ndeenda (I will Marry When I Want)* in Kikuyu, provoking the wrath of those intolerant to any criticism of the government of Daniel Arap Moi. Consequently, the centre was burnt down and Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Micere Mugo, Ngũgĩ wa Mĩriĩ, and many others, including

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<sup>394</sup> See comments about Kamirithu on p. 148.

<sup>395</sup> While much is written about Fela Kuti, a good summary is in Akyeampong and Gates' *Dictionary of African Biography* (2012).

<sup>396</sup> Recently, much has been written about Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti: Cheryl Johnson-Odim and Nina Emma Mba (1997); Trevor Schoonmaker (2004); Onajin, Alaba, Ofoego & Obioma (2015).

<sup>397</sup> See footnote 243.

university students, fled into exile.<sup>398</sup> As for the Kamba, the physical and social spaces associated with *wathi*—the *kituto* and *ithembeo*—were physically violated and their social roles reassigned.<sup>399</sup> Pre-colonial Kamba’s most significant social event was *wathi*—a huge party where all able-bodied people gathered to sing, dance, relax, and socialize at the *kîtuto* or *kînyaka*, a specially cleared space between villages. At *wathi*, people also exchanged news and listened to political and social commentary imbedded in songs, including *myalĩ*. Young people sometimes met future partners at the *wathi*, which were organized by *nthele* selected by elders.<sup>400</sup> Notably, those permitted to sing a new *mwalĩ* at the *wathi* were often men, though women sometimes assisted the main composer.<sup>401</sup>

*Wathi* happened during the dry season and was forbidden during planting, weeding, and harvesting times. Sometimes, different villages competed in drumming (using drums like the *mukanda*, *ngoma* and *mbeve*) and dancing at the *wathi*, where *myalĩ* were introduced and sung **only** during dance interludes and, afterwards, any time during everyday events.<sup>402</sup> Despite their importance to the Kamba, *wathi* and *myalĩ* are little studied. The words and concepts of *wathi* and

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<sup>398</sup> Thiong’o, *Decolonizing the Mind*, Maitu Njugira (*Mother Sing for Me*) and Caitani Mutharabaini (*The Devil on the Cross*)

<sup>399</sup> **Ithembeo** (pl. of **kithembeo**) is a place of worship, often under huge sacred trees like *muambwa*, *kikuyu* and *kiumo* that have sprawling roots and become huge with age. In the part of Ukambani where I was born, the colonial government permanently destroyed **ithembeo** and **ituto/innyaka** by building churches or schools respectively on top of these sites. As a child, I attended Kyumbe Primary School, built right next to Kyumbe African Inland Church (AIC). The church was built on top of the local *kithembeo*, worship area where the sacred tree once stood. Neighbouring schools and churches were constructed on similarly destroyed Kamba cultural or religious structures or sites. Besides churches and schools, new social spaces included *ndunyu*, the open-air markets where people bartered and sold goods and government offices and open meeting spaces, e.g., the chief’s *baraza*.

<sup>400</sup> As the group with the best health and physical strength, *nthele* were young men (normally unmarried or recently married) who would be appointed to oversee many social functions and serve as the elders’ disciplinary and military arm. Notably, though the young men had many female agemates, young women and girls were not allowed to be part of the *nthele*.

<sup>401</sup> When I asked male and female interviewees why women were not allowed to create or sing *myalĩ*, the first response was often that, “Oh, that is just how it was” followed by “women had their *kilumi* where they created their songs and danced”.

<sup>402</sup> **Mwalĩ** (*n., pl. myalĩ*) is a poetic song that advises, counsels, congratulates, castigates, informs about and comments on contemporary events. **Myalĩ** are not accompanied by dancing or musical instruments. A **mwalĩ** composer is a *ngũi* who often has an assistant, **mbasa**. The social significance of **mwalĩ** was that it censored errant behaviour by naming miscreants to oblige them to improve their behaviour, a practice forgotten in modern Kenya with serious social implications.

*myalĩ* have been often conflated as the latter are a subset of the former. I define *wathi* (n., pl., *mbathi*) as (i) a single song, (ii) song lyrics, (iii) a song type, and (iv) the single most significant social, cultural, and political event for pre-colonial Kamba. Indeed, few Kamba scholars<sup>403</sup> and even fewer non-Kamba scholars have studied *wathi* or *myalĩ* extensively. Some have translated *wathi* to mean merely singing and song,<sup>404</sup> and some have made contradictory claims about the lack of individual Kamba composers while simultaneously affirming their existence, e.g., “*mwalĩ* composition is an art of every Mukamba, and the most popular *myalĩ* are composed by retired *ngũi*” (Stiglmayr 1978:34). I do not know what “retired *ngũi*” means here since the concept of retirement is recent and was **not** part of Kamba socio-economic organization. Ueda (1979 and 1981) thought that *wathi* empowered great hunters to cure diseases. These misconceptions concern cultural appropriation and misunderstanding or misinterpretation of concepts unknown to other cultures and languages, i.e., non-Kamba speakers interpreting Kamba terms and concepts. On different occasions, the colonial government banned *wathi*, the *ngũi*, and certain *dances* and *songs* especially because the *ngũi* composed songs that unified people around a common issue of interest or protest. Rehashed in the *wathi*, the songs had the power to mobilize and inform people in a way that threatened the defined law and order.

Despite the colonial ban, *muthirigu* and *wathi* continued to circulate underground. For instance, Rosberg and Nottingham cited “*muthirigu* as the anthem of resistance that Jomo Kenyatta, Kenya’s first Prime Minister, and the Scots Governor-General, Malcolm Macdonald, danced to in Kenyatta’s home” in May 1964 (Rosberg and Nottingham 1966:123). Elsewhere in Africa, songs and dances are routinely banned for “political reasons”, e.g., the “highly eroticised,

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<sup>403</sup> Mbiti (1964, 1967, 1969a, 1969b); Kavyu (1972, 1977 and 1986); Were, Akong’a, and Maundu (1986) and Kieti and Coughlin (1990).

<sup>404</sup> Chanler (1896); Tate, H. (1904); Hobley (1910:53 and 73); Lindblom (1920 and 1934); Kennedy, Edgerton, and Goldschmidt (1982)

commercialised Congolese [Kinshasa] dance step, the *dombolo*” (White 1999:156). White notes how “popular ways of speaking about the moral crisis in the Congo” have moved from emphasizing “democratisation” to “dollarisation” and now “dombolisation” (White 1999:156).

With over 50 linguistic groups in Kenya,<sup>405</sup> each with its own orature, only a tiny fraction of Kenyan orature is explored here, namely, *mwalĩ*, a type of song/poetry from one Kenyan community, the Kamba, presented during a *wathi* event. The selected *myalĩ* are but a small sample of a vast and diverse oral tradition, rich in history, moral lessons, and social criticism. Though based on a small selection, the following exposition is necessarily long and detailed to reveal the richness and the ongoing relevance of this tradition, a tradition that has been omitted, excluded, and exclu-censored from classrooms in Kenyan public schools. I closely read four Kamba *myalĩ* that dramatize shared experiences and memories to highlight key issues underlying the characterization of the texts as significant Kenyan literature. *Myalĩ* provide a space to examine gender, class, race, and competing nationalisms from colonial to neocolonial Kenya.<sup>406</sup> *Myalĩ* also engage in the discourse about Kenya’s historiography in ways that signify the need to explore diverse orature for the educational curricula in neocolonial Kenya’s national project to reaffirm people’s self-identity and build the nation.

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<sup>405</sup> Western Kenya’s Abaluhya (Luhya) linguistic group, for instance, comprises eighteen related Bantu-speakers: Banyala (Busia); Banyala ba ndombi (Kakamega); Bukusu; Dakho; Hayo; Isukha; Kabras; Kisa; Marachi; Maragoli; Marama; Nyole; Samia; Songa; Tadjoni; Tiriki; Tsotso; and the Wanga. Luhya—short for Abaluhya—means “people of the same hearth” (*Online Encyclopaedia Britannica*). *Britannica* also cites a group—Holo—that my informant, Shadrack Bulimo, editor of [www.abeingo.org](http://www.abeingo.org)—the online portal of the Luhya—had never heard of. Bulimo also cited non-Kenyan linguistic groups that are lexically related to some Luhya though they do not call themselves Luhya: the Haya of northern Tanzania and Uganda’s Gweru (*abagwelu* or *abagwe*), Nyole or Nyuli (related to the Nyole), Gisu (also known as Masaaba—related to Bukusu and Samia); Banyankole and Basoga, related to the dominant Abakhekhe clan in Samia (Kenya) and the Baganda and Abagusii (*Kisii Leaseland of Kenya*), related to the Maragoli. *Source*: [www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/351000/Luhya](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/351000/Luhya).

<sup>406</sup> The Kamba *myalĩ* examined here do not pretend to represent Kenyan orature. Work in Kenyan orature has been on-going, and volumes of orature now exist in print; texts rarely included in Kenyan schools: G. Barra (1960); J. Mbiti (1967, 1969a and 1969b); R. Mwangi (1970); B. Onyango-Ogutu and A.A. Roscoe (1974); O. p’Bitek (1974); T. Towett (1979); E.F. Makila (1982); N. Kipury (1983); Kabira , Odoul, Nzomo (1983), Kabira and Mutahi (1988); A.B. Odaga (1984); Campbell and Eastman (1984); W. Kabira and K. Adagala (1994[1985]); Jane Nandwa (1976); J. Nandwa and A. Bukenya (1983); Kieti and Coughlin (1990); Kyalo Mativo (1995).

## Section B: *Myalĩ*: A Tool for Ridicule, Affirmation, Social Integration, and Political Resistance

The lyrics of the highly coded Kamba poem, *mwalĩ*, illustrate the significance and power of orature to negotiate space and time.<sup>407</sup> *Mwalĩ* (plural *myalĩ*) is neither accompanied by musical instruments nor danced to. Like other song types, *myalĩ* are mobile. Indeed, “all forms of sound [music] is inherently mobile—a mobility seemingly related to the recuperative musical practices of populations in diverse diaspora” (Connell and Gibson 2003:45 cited by Nyairo 2005a:6). Nyairo discusses how technology—initially the gramophone, later cable television, and yet later the Internet—have revolutionized recording technologies and turned “music into a highly portable cultural artifact” that swiftly links communities internationally. Cable television and the Internet’s highly portable formats have also helped develop the quality and quantity of music production, distribution, and consumption.<sup>408</sup> Besides the politics of production, musical lyrics “can be reconstructed” as crucial “markers of cultural exchange, as evidence of the continual association of peoples and regions, however unequal or skewed [their] relations” (Nyairo 2004).

Apart from appealing to a large, diversified audience, songs like *myalĩ* can act as alternative sites for contesting and subverting repressive practices and institutions. The versatility and easy memorability of songs make them one of “the most protean, adaptable and transferable of the arts” (Barber 1997:1). Central to popular discourse, songs feed off other literary and popular culture genres, which supply them with idioms and currency. I focus on *myalĩ* lyrics to identify and illustrate how *myalĩ* use memory to shape the present through a configuration of the past and

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<sup>407</sup> See Kieti and Coughlin (1990) for more about *myalĩ*, *wathi*, *mbano* (narratives), *nthimo* (proverbs), *ndae* (riddles) and *mbathi* (songs in general) including: *wathi wa mũvingũsyo* (song of knocking) and *mbathi sya kivalo*, i.e., songs accompanied by dance and, often, instruments, e.g., *kyaa*, *ngũtha*, *mbalya*, *kĩlĩ*, *mbeni*, *kĩlumĩ* and *ngulukulu*; and songs unaccompanied by instruments *nzai*, *kĩthakyo*, *mũsya*, *kĩlamũ*, *mũkungo*, *kĩlũũ*, *kĩleve*, *mawese* and *mbalũ*.

<sup>408</sup> e.g., compact discs (CDs) and digital Internet formats like MP3s (Nyairo 2004:384)

present. While audience participation differs in diverse genres, constructing and determining meaning remains fundamental to participants in a performed art like a *mwalĩ*. Hence, understanding music as a text hinges on decoding it since musical texts (e.g., *myalĩ*) easily become a site of constantly negotiated meaning (Agawu 2001:3). Through *myalĩ* lyrics, I attempt to “validate oral sources by demonstrating that orature constitutes messages that can credibly further the study of social and historical phenomenon” (Vansina 1985:194). Besides inviting interpretations for both the message and its symbolic associations, messages are also “characterized by a double subjectivity, that of the sender(s) and that of the message’s receiver(s)” (Vansina 1985:194). Reading *myalĩ* historically, culturally, and sociologically as “expressive acts,”<sup>409</sup> I also use Bakhtin’s theory of dialogism to read *myalĩ* as pluralistic discourse communicating via the *ngũi*, the *mbasa*, the texts’ personae, and audience(s) (Bakhtin 1988:125–56). Through diverse language-use, *myalĩ* examine social relations emerging from different practices and processes, from pre-colonial to neocolonial Kenya.

Popular forms—narratives, music, rhythm, songs—embody a community’s traditions and history. Closely woven into events, moments, and experiences, popular songs—e.g., *myalĩ*—become mnemonic, enabling people to remember events, times, and places. Through structural and formal conventions, popular forms like *myalĩ* articulate and document a community’s history, highlighting events, themes, and concerns that, in the community’s experiences, shape and clarify cultural, economic, social, and political issues. Popular forms are thus a site of memory. Reading a few Kamba *myalĩ* reveals that *myalĩ*’s memory is predicated on a desire to reinstate authentic tradition and culture through a romanticization of aspects of that Kamba (Kenyan) culture. At the same time, the desire for the authentic is constantly tempered by moments of disjuncture that point

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<sup>409</sup> Karin Barber (1987:2)

to a different future, e.g., “development” or other moments of unavoidable engagement with modernity.

How *mwali* functions in a particular economic, social, and political sphere to provide the metaphors and idioms that articulate the experiences is demonstrated in the following *myali* that also demonstrate the complex, often contradictory forces that define the Kamba specifically and the Kenyan nation generally. In selecting the *myali*, I have tried to pick those that cover a period with few texts written by native Kenyans. The four *myali* examined below include two circumcision songs (*ngakali*, a *myali* subclass):<sup>410</sup>

- **two *myali*:** *Silingi syiumina andu* (Shillings have finished/are finishing people); and *Nthi ya Kenya ndikola athungu iia na iia ii* (The country Kenya will never forget/be forgotten by Athungu oh! my! oh! no!);<sup>411</sup> and
- **two *ngakali*:** *Aiĩĩĩĩ, Nimukulya nthũke ya ambalũ?* (Hey, I ask you! The Ambalũ age-group!) and *Mwaakya Iiii Lili Asa niwambaika ii* [henceforth called *Asa*] (Let it be known that my father has “cut” [initiated] me, iii!)

These *myali* chronicle events spanning the first encounters with British colonialism till after World War II, a period among the Kamba—and in Kenyan history—when taxes,<sup>412</sup> the money economy, forced labour, coerced recruitment into the army and for “voluntary” state jobs, and migration to work away from home had become an unwelcome but permanent part of life.<sup>413</sup> Both *myali* remember the past to affirm the present, a remembrance invoking the desire to reinstate an earlier authentic lifestyle, a desire resting on unrecoverable past moments that could only be yearned for. The *ngũi* implies that the Kamba’s future depends, perhaps, on new, different relations

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<sup>410</sup> **Ngakali** (also **kakali**) (*n., sing. & pl.*) is an initiation song, a *mwali* sub-genre.

<sup>411</sup> *Musungu/muthungu*, pl. *asungu/athungu*, refers to the men from abroad, far away, across (meaning across many waters), who wander from place to place and whose skin is white. Henceforth, this *mwali* is called *Athungu*.

<sup>412</sup> hut, poll, and head taxes

<sup>413</sup> I determined the historic period through referents in the song—e.g., *kipande* (identity certificate), the *ngilimiti* “voluntary” government work, and the “soldier’s wife” whose husband is away fighting for the crown (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> World War)—and from the time the singers whom I interviewed thought they heard the song for the first time.

with former foes (*akavi*) and formerly unknown peoples and places, e.g., Nanyuki, Nyeri, Thika,<sup>414</sup> Abyssinia (modern-day Ethiopia), Burma, and Ceylon. While a sense of otherness pervades the inter-ethnic existence for the *ngũi* and his co-workers in distant workplaces in and outside the country (especially in *Silingi* and *Athungu*, the *ngũi* seems to suggest that the way forward for the Kamba may lie in what Hall refers to as a “new cultural politics which engages rather than suppresses difference” (Hall 1996:446).

### General Myali

#### *Shillings are Finishing People (Silingi Syiumina Andu)*<sup>415</sup>

In a theme recurring in other *myali*, *Silingi Syiumina Andu* (henceforth *Silingi*) starts off by invoking one of the most oppressive colonial symbols in Ukambani: *ngilimiti*.<sup>416</sup> In Kikamba, *silingi syiumina andu syoovotesyaa* has multiple meanings, both literal and analogous. *Silingi* engages all the recent and ongoing social, political, economic, and moral issues. The *silingi* (the shilling, i.e., money) is introduced as necessary but is very destructive. It is mostly needed for paying taxes and buying a few things but also for “finishing, destroying or losing” people. *Silingi*

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<sup>414</sup> towns in central Kenya

<sup>415</sup> or “Shillings Have Finished”

<sup>416</sup> *Ngilimiti*—the Kamba rendition of *agreements*—refers to the state-imposed forced labour that the colonial government labelled “voluntary agreements”. By 1908, the colony’s political economy required firmer control of native labour to meet the needs of the expanding settler estate production, public works, and railways. The immense pressure to extract African labour created the frequent problem of Africans deserting “work”. In response, the state increased African taxes and “provided coercive pressure to assist settlers recruit and retain labourers through vaguely worded circulars to local administrators to ‘encourage’ Africans to work for private employers” (Berman 1990:63). The 1906 Masters and Servants Ordinance was amended in 1910 and 1912 to (1) penalize African labourers for deserting work—among other labour “offences”—and to (2) allow the administration to “ask” able-bodied natives for six days a quarter of unpaid “communal” labour on roads and other state projects such as head portage and public and railway works. A 1920 Native Authorities Amendment Ordinance empowered chiefs and headmen to order “compulsory labour” of up to 60 days a year at wages below that of “voluntary” state workers. “Encouraging” or “asking” Africans to work, in fact, meant the chiefs—the state’s control instruments—arresting young *illiterate* men *en masse* and forcing their fingers to mark (sign) a page of a written paper (“agreement”) to “volunteer” to work for weeks or months (Berman 1990:63–66). Only later would the beleaguered youths realize they had been duped to sign a so-called “voluntary agreement” or *ngilimiti* in Kikamba. In the local idiom, *ngilimiti* came to characterize these forced, unpaid, or unpleasant chores. The *ngũi* worked in the road and public works projects in Nyeri (see Norman Leys and A.C. Hollis’ evidence in the *Native Labour Commission, 1912-13: Evidence and Report*).

elaborates how the shilling has accomplished this destruction—taking people away from their homes, forcing adults to work or do *ngilimiti* in faraway places, and generally interrupting people’s lives, leisure, and ability to fulfil their responsibilities to their families and society. To get to these faraway workplaces, people make a novel journey in a new contraption, the train, the symbol of progress, modernity, and development.<sup>417</sup> Indeed, the train symbolized much more. As perceived by the pre-colonial Kamba, the train also symbolizes power and authority necessarily across race, class, and gender and properly belonging to the male domain as only men are “encouraged” to leave their homes in the “reserves” to work far away and earn money. Despite its novelty and mobility, the train journey meant getting further away from home.<sup>418</sup> The train was a symbol of modern success for very few in the colony, and its journeys became the source of individual, racial and class tensions—with the three coach-types defined by the comfort, cost, and the race of a ticket holder.<sup>419</sup> For the *ngũi* and his co-workers who were “herded into the train’s trailers like cows,” the sitting and sleeping hierarchy of a train journey does not even apply since, like any other cargo, they travel in a trailer, “holding basins, *ilemba*<sup>420</sup> and *sululu*”—their job-related instruments and *ngilimiti* gear.<sup>421</sup>

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<sup>417</sup> In 1903, the Uganda railway line from the coastal town of Mombasa reached Port Florence, today’s Kisumu, the lake city in western Kenya. Built principally to transport goods from the interior to the coastal port of Mombasa and out of the colony, the railway line increased colonial needs for African labour. To be viable and well maintained, the railway line needed to create a viable economy. At the time, the settler community was beginning commercial plantation agriculture, which massively alienated African lands and needed abundant and cheap labour for the plantations. Thus, the railway line for Africans translated into land loss, abandonment of rural homes, ancestors and worship, increased taxes, and forced labour.

<sup>418</sup> Colonization and motorized mobility—cars, trains, bicycles, scooters, airplanes—and their attendant individual and communal tensions are topics of many writers, e.g., Armah (1981[1968]) and White (1993).

<sup>419</sup> Seats in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> class coaches recline and double as beds while 3<sup>rd</sup> class coaches have hard, fixed seats. When trains first came, few Africans earned enough to afford the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> class couches and thus travelled bunched in the often-overcrowded 3<sup>rd</sup> class.

<sup>420</sup> A head turban, a cloth to wrap around the head, similar to the type Sikhs use.

<sup>421</sup> a very heavy metal rod used for digging hard surfaces

For the *ngũi* and his workmates who journeyed to diverse places for various jobs, the train was a source and mediator of alienation and torture.<sup>422</sup> Their assignments included digging out slabs for making ballast and breaking the ballast while watched by capricious and malevolent overseers in quarries and on settlers' farms and sleeping in groups in confined spaces for men used to a *thome*.<sup>423</sup> The motif of the journey in *Silingi* and *Athungu* is a counter-discourse to the journeys of return to an earlier Kamba "traditional life," which are sometimes advocated. Now, any such returns are only possible within contemporary experiences; militating colonial experiences that challenge the very idea of "authentic/traditional" Kamba. *Ngilimiti* and the *kipande* ID book,<sup>424</sup> the other oppressive symbol of colonialism, illustrate the inter-clan, inter-ethnic, interracial, and class dynamics between the colonized, the colonial state, the settler economy, and the emerging labour system.

The history we confront in *Silingi* comes "with its insistence on emotional meaning and depth" as evidenced in the everyday details gleaned from *Silingi*'s rhetorical questions: "Will the crown of Kanyanga and *makovo* (boots) descend, arresting chickens along with goats!?"<sup>425</sup> The trespass fine was a confounding experience for the Akamba fined for "merely passing by, without as much as taking a leaf from a piece of land."<sup>426</sup> Tribal askaris assisted the chiefs to enforce numerous

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<sup>422</sup> The *Lunatic Express* took tourists along the scenic Kenyan islands. See Note #335

<sup>423</sup> The *thome* was the man's space in the home, normally an open space with a small, covered area where he ate, drank, met his friends, and held counsel.

<sup>424</sup> *Kipande* is the Kiswahili and Kikamba word for an identification card or paper. The 1915 Registration of Native's Ordinance required all male Africans aged 15 years and over to register before an administrative officer who took his fingerprints and issued a registration certificate the *kipande* whose copies were sent to the Chief Registrar of Natives in Nairobi. The *kipande* contained personal data, record of employment, type of work done, wages paid, rations received and the dated signature of the last employer. Outside one's home, one carried the *kipande* always, often in a metal cylinder hung around the neck. Employers had to sign Africans entering or leaving employment in the *kipande* (Berman 1990:147). No one could be employed without a *kipande*.

<sup>425</sup> *Kanyanga*— here meaning a *fine for trespassing*—is the Kiswahili term for *step*. The word means the fines one paid for passing through private land—a new concept to many passers-by whose mentality and experience limited them to communal land. *Makovo* means boots, but here also implies the law enforcing government officers.

<sup>426</sup> interviews with Kavunda, Mbulwa, John Kieti Ndolo, Keli and Ngumbi

inhuman rules like harassing, arresting, and beating people for non-payment of taxes and impounding their chickens, goats, and food, which had to be “rescued,” i.e., bailed out with cash. “Arresting chickens and goats to top it all!” and finding the cents to “rescue” them. *Silingi* and other *myalĩ* use codenames to describe the local administration to register their disgust with the administration *kilauni*, *ngovia* (crown), and its local representatives—the chief and his tribal police who, though supposedly Kamba, behave more like animal-people: *avakasi*, *mbiti* (hyena), *ndei* (vultures), puff adders *mambo leo*, *makulumi* (types of snakes).

As the custodians of lineage among the Kamba, men are now estranged from their duties at home, including the siring of future generations, since the women and children are left alone. “Silently calling counsel with [his] head,” the *ngũi* only hopes for the first possible opportunity to desert the *ngilimiti* and return home. And, despite the heavy penalty for deserting work,<sup>427</sup> the *ngũi* deserts after arriving at the place of work only to “be shown the ballast and an impenetrable stone to break”. “I deserted that job in anger—I, Vavu, son of Muindi, unlike Singi, who had such a wonderful job!”<sup>428</sup> Asserting that “these type of jobs only belong to fools and are not jobs you, yourself, look for,” the *ngũi* assails the new Kamba collaborating class—part of the new ruling class being formed, a class of self-centred, overly ambitious, and power-seeking groups and individuals, all clamouring “to accumulate wealth and power contrary to traditional egalitarian, redistributive and conciliar institutions” (Berman 1990:211). The new jobs for the collaborating class of informers, messengers and, later, homeguards during the liberation war have wreaked havoc and untold suffering on families, especially families whose members had been exiled or

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<sup>427</sup> The 1906 Masters and Servants Ordinance was changed in 1910 to extend the maximum penalties for labour offences—including desertion—to a fine of five pounds or up to six months imprisonment. Moreover, the Kenya police could arrest and prosecute without a specific complaint from an employer (Berman 1990:146 and 191).

<sup>428</sup> Singi was a friend who worked in a settler’s house and whose only job comprised tending the memsab’s flower bushes, pruning, watering, and pulling out the weeds! This passage alludes, more broadly, to contented workers with jobs much easier than digging and other manual labour.

deported from their homes for imagined or trumped-up charges, e.g., after being accused of witchcraft, as discussed later in the *mwalĩ*, *No Kikuu*.<sup>429</sup>

The new class of leaders—the chiefs, sub-chiefs, and their retainers, headmen, and *avakasi* (overseers)—welcomed the colonial administration, sought and acquired the power their newly created official posts were guaranteed by the 1902 Village Headman Ordinance. Answerable only to colonial authorities for whom they “interpret messages”<sup>430</sup>, this new class of “leaders”—unlike traditionally selected leaders—adopted an arrogant style of ruling and lacked humility, wisdom, fairness, and a sense of justice. In the *mwalĩ*, the new leaders’ persona was the overseer who, though clearly wrong, engaged in an altercation with Kioko wa Musau (Kioko, son of Musau), reminiscent of *Oliver Twist*’s “more, please:”

It is now midday!

We have eaten nothing since dawn!

We are famished!

You may not know it, but we are famished.

Do you think we have become hyenas?

Are you calling people animals?

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<sup>429</sup> See note 123 about witchcraft ordinances.

<sup>430</sup> The four years of formal education in missionary school gave some functionaries sufficient Kiswahili and English to translate from Kikamba (or other local languages in different parts of Kenya) for their bosses. Other functionaries had no formal schooling. Often, though, interpreters inserted their own words and ideas in their interpretations which may have nothing or little to do with the message they were supposed to be interpreting, noted in the various *mwalĩ*.

The overseer replies with a few slashes of his *kiboko*,<sup>431</sup> a hard stiff-leather whip, and adds a rhetorical question—“am I your food?”—placing himself within the growing class of collaborators responsible for the *ngilimiti*. By the 1930s, the *kilauni* (crown, i.e., the colonial administration), had amended the Native Authorities Ordinance to increase the chiefs’ authority to make life in the reserves extremely difficult. These state agents became increasingly authoritarian, enthusiastically imposing unpopular laws and contracts for the King’s African Rifles (KAR), recruiting forced labourers, and collecting poll-, head-, and hut-taxes plus fines.<sup>432</sup> Rebellious villagers were forced to transport the “bank” (*vengi*), a large steel safe containing the coins paid for taxes. During the voyage, porters were often crushed to death whenever the safe fell. Africans were forced into the labour system through an ideological rationalization of the “necessity of coercion” as a way of dealing with Africans.<sup>433</sup>

Before mentioning Kioko’s hunger-driven outburst, the *ngũi* graphically describes the workplace which, besides the constant dangers from the terrain and wildlife, is also depressing and far from home, “beyond Nyeri,<sup>434</sup> deep in the forest, jungle” where “puffadders, *mambo leo*, and *makulumi* regularly hunt *nthwaia*”.<sup>435</sup> Here, the *ngũi* and others “pick up the ballast stones under commands and strokes”. Lack of rest or leisure time drives the *ngũi* to “wear my beard like a

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<sup>431</sup> A *kiboko* is a short, stiff-leather whip made from rhino or hippo hide. Like the South African *sjambok*, the *kiboko* was a ubiquitous accessory for settlers, headmen, overseers, police, and askaris to discipline errant or “lazy” natives. It accompanied men of authority wherever they went. While flogging was rarely official, it happened often and viciously, with or without provocation (interview with John Kieti Ndolo and Keli Ndolo, June 1994. Also see footnote 449 about criminalizing the desertion of work).

<sup>432</sup> The multi-battalion British colonial regiment for military and internal security—The King’s African Rifles (KAR)—existed between 1902 and the early 1960s. KAR’s lower ranks comprised Africans from all over British East and Southern Africa, some of whom fought in India and Europe.

<sup>433</sup> Three suppositions guided this ideology, namely, that “native labour 1) is naturally recalcitrant and, therefore, requires authoritarian treatment; 2) ... lacks initiative and, therefore, requires very detailed directives and instructions; and 3) ... can, within certain limits, be improved”, which, in some ways, legitimizes, “the ‘civilizing’ function of authoritarian methods” (Barnett 1974:200–201).

<sup>434</sup> a town in central Kenya, the centre of Kenya’s liberation struggle in the 1950s

<sup>435</sup> *Mambo leo* and *makulumi* are different snakes. *Nthwaia* is a type of deer.

*mukavilondo*”.<sup>436</sup> The dust turns his hair red down to the beard “as if with *mbuu*<sup>437</sup> or dye. I looked like a White Man!” Besides the physical dangers, the workplace is a constant health hazard due to the dust the workers eat and breathe, the beatings they endure, and their lack of protective gear except the *kilemba* on which the basin of ballast rests. For example, the *ngũi* complains that “a huge stone held by a *mukavilondo* ... crushed my finger! Oh, giving fingers!” And not just any stone, “it’s the eight-foot-long stones!”

Much later, the *ngũi* contemplated deserting again so as not to “add myself another month [of work] only to die after I leave”. He has individual and communal duties to do for the women and children and his *ithangona* duties.<sup>438</sup> *Ngilimiti* thus threatens the Kamba social system based on close family units and respect for age groups, ancestors, and gods.

The “overseer” in the jungle beyond Nyeri is as vicious as the *mambo leo* and *makulumi*, “puffadders this big!”<sup>439</sup> This image of the overseer is bolstered when the *kilauni* (the crown)<sup>440</sup> allowed chiefs and headmen (*avakasi*) to order “compulsory labour” of up to 60 days a year at wages below that of “voluntary” state workers, especially for “head portorage and [the] railway” plus the African obligation to supply 24 days a year (six days per quarter) of unpaid “communal labour” for local projects, practices reminiscent of European and Chinese whereby feudal serfs were, in exchange for tiny plots and general protection, obliged to work for free on their lords’ unoccupied lands (Berman 1990:146). Since exemption from compulsory labour was based on proof of wage employment, shillings “have taken Kingi wa Ndivo (Ndivo’s son, King) to Nanyuki”

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<sup>436</sup> a man from the Kavirondo gulf in Western Kenya, a term often applied to Luos

<sup>437</sup> a type of red ochre often used by the Maasai men on their hair

<sup>438</sup> the numerous “treatment” and medical and herbal “fortifications” for the home and family that a head of family performs for the wellbeing of his family, home, animals, and neighbours. Treatment also encompassed *kithangona* (n, pl. *ithangona*) that are cleansing ceremonies for all kinds of ills.

<sup>439</sup> a gesture indicating a torso the size of a grown man

<sup>440</sup> i.e., the colonial administration

in search of wage labour.<sup>441</sup> Soon after earning enough money, many deserted the work and went home to relax awaiting the next tax requirement: “at the end of this moon (month), to ‘be released’, leaving work for home”. Continual desertions prompted “punitive sanctions under which the infringement of labour laws is rated as a crime and the heaviest penalties can be imposed for minor acts of disobedience” (Berman 1990:146).<sup>442</sup> The provincial administration and the Kenya Police enforced and periodically extended laws in Ukambani and elsewhere in Kenya.<sup>443</sup> For instance, the Emergency Regulations, amendment no. 4, 1953, allowed European farmers to report suspicious labourers to the local authorities for removal, and also allowed the introduction of transit camps through which labourers were released. With this regulation, squatter contracts could be capriciously terminated in a way previously prohibited by law (Elkins 2001:44 and Kenya 1953). These and other suppressive measures eventually inspired the Kenya guerrilla liberation struggle against Britain.

*Silingi* explores *ngilimiti* and the *kipande* as Kenyan historical practices when African commodity production was successfully competing with settler production, especially for maize and cattle and, hence, a series of laws were enacted to control African activities, labour, movement and, most importantly, African commodity production.<sup>444</sup> *Silingi* demonstrates how Kamba peasants were not simply victims of colonization, but their production was restricted to guarantee an adequate supply of labour for settler estates or the colonial state. In *Silingi*, the Kamba collective

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<sup>441</sup> “By threatening people with this type of work, the administration could increase the supply of labour to settler farms.” Berman explains that the labour circular, tax increases, and the compulsory labour ordinance constituted a combined effort to obtain labour for the settlers’ farms, resulting in the provincial administration “directly and explicitly a recruiter of labour for private employers in the colony” (Berman 1990:146, and 191, note 56 citing Tignor (1976:172).

<sup>442</sup> See also Aaronovitch and Aaronovitch, *Crisis in Kenya* (1947).

<sup>443</sup> Thiong’o (1964 and 1967); Meja Mwangi (1974); Mwangi Ruheni (1972 and 1973); Rosberg and Nottingham (1966: chapters v - viii, pp 105 - 219); Barnett and Njama (1966: Part 1, pp 23–148); Odinga (1966: chapters 4–7, pp 61–140); Berman (1990: chapters 2-7, pp 49–346); Kitching (1980:240–45); Tignor (1976:140–72); Clayton and Savage (1974:112-27 and 130–97); Bailey, Cooper and Bundeh (1993)

<sup>444</sup> See Berman (1990:49–69) and Kitching (1980: chapters I, II 44 and X).

agency forced the state to keep renewing, amending, and adding rules to negotiate their relationship. Despite collaborators and other sell-outs, the Kamba countered colonial orders and practices by constantly discovering ways to resist successive oppressive laws. By figuratively exploring colonial practices, the mechanics of colonialism, and various types of local resistance, *Myali* dismantles the dichotomies of ruled/ruler and colonized/colonizer assumed in many colonial studies. For instance, while colonial labour records and lore logically describe the induction of natives into the labour system and the issuance of the required identity document (the *kipande*),<sup>445</sup> *Silingi* uses a small accident involving the *ngũi* and a Luo man to parody the registration process and the bitter tribalism encouraged by the colonialists and, at the same time, to criticize how the *kipande* affected people's lives.<sup>446</sup>

That small accident occurred during the *ngilimiti* when “a huge stone held by a *mukavilondo*” crushed the *ngũi*'s fingers. Psychological pain overtakes the physical pain at the thought of the *ngũi*'s inability to use his fingers to sign when required: “crushed my finger. Oh, giving fingers!”<sup>447</sup> From this, a drama ensues:

That whole day I stayed, unable to lift anything. In the morning of the next dawn, I was called off the counting line and told: “you are not sick, go pick up your *sululu*. If work has defeated you, you'd better go home.” I replied, “I can't do that, I better be released immediately”. They asked for my *kipande*.<sup>448</sup>

While the injury renders the *ngũi* “unable to lift anything,” he is “called off the counting line” and accused of faking sickness to avoid work. After handing in his *kipande* as requested, “it was

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<sup>445</sup> Kiswahili for identity card

<sup>446</sup> A 1915 Registration of Natives Ordinance required all male Africans from the age of fifteen onwards to register at an administrative office and receive a registration certificate, the *kipande*, the only legal document that allowed men to move outside their homes and reserves without being arrested.

<sup>447</sup> Hurting a finger was especially serious because, to obtain a registration card (*kipande*) or make any agreement, one had to “give a finger and fingers,” meaning to sign with the thumb (being illiterate), and also to have the fingerprints taken by an administrative officer. So, the man laments this serious injury that could get him in trouble, as he could be suspected of hurting himself deliberately to avoid signing.

<sup>448</sup> identification paper

punched,” i.e., the current employer signs and punches a hole in the *kipande* to signify to the *ngũi*’s next employer that the *ngũi* was legally released from his last contract (*ngilimiti*) and was not a job-deserter.<sup>449</sup> Punching the *kipande* clears the *ngũi* from future charges of deserting work and keeps him from being arrested as a vagabond if found outside his reserve.<sup>450</sup>

All the *kipande* and work are endured to earn money, *silingi* (shillings), which are revered and had quickly gained status as a sign of prosperity. The *ngũi* comments on the central space in Kamba life now occupied by *silingi* and gradually recounts how the shilling achieved its fame, sending men from their clans, children, cattle, wives, lives, and leisure to forced wage-labour to earn enough to pay ever increasing taxes or risk beatings, jail, more *ngilimiti*, or an impossibly high fine. Part of the Registration of Natives Ordinance augmented the number of *avakasi*—native law enforcers called overseers—a growing and increasingly powerful and despised class of natives, the animal-people referred to by the *ngũi*.<sup>451</sup>

Men—not women (except prostitutes, who are reviled and dismissed)—begin to earn the *silingi* through forced or voluntary labour. Even though the way money was obtained is reviled, money gradually became the new sign of prosperity and an object of reverence among colonial Kamba. For example, the *ngũi*’s friend could buy his girlfriend *miio*,<sup>452</sup> whereas, with his meagre *ngilimiti* salary, the *ngũi* could not. However, earning *silingi* violates all known ideas of security and leisure.

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<sup>449</sup> The 1915 Registration of Natives Ordinance created the *kipande* and criminalized deserting work. Africans were flogged, fined, or imprisoned for failing to carry or for losing or destroying a *kipande* while employers were penalized for failing to 1) demand the *kipande* when hiring, 2) file the particulars of African labourers with the Registrar or 3) sign off a worker after a contract ended—what the *ngũi* refers to as ‘punching’ the *kipande*.

<sup>450</sup> See the penalties for deserting work in two previous notes about the 1906 Masters and Servants Ordinance and its 1910 and 1912 amendments.

<sup>451</sup> The Native Authority Amendment Ordinance, passed in 1920, strengthened the chiefs’ powers granted by the 1912 Native Authorities Ordinance. The increasingly authoritarian and detested chiefs made life extremely difficult in Kenyan reserves by enforcing unpopular laws such as those for forced labour and for recruiting young men for the King’s African Rifles (henceforth, KAR).

<sup>452</sup> **Miio** refers to all the beauty adornments for a young girl, including her head gear, earrings, arm-rings, anklets and beaded skirts. The root word is **muio**, *n. 1.* a burden. *2. n. pl.*, **miio**, a heavy load, e.g., a big bag, a pile of firewood or grass. *3. n. pl.*, kitchen or house utensil, kitchenware.

Obtained through both forced labour or, sometimes, voluntary employment, money had changed people forever and taken men from the villages to hitherto unknown places—Nanyuki, Nyeri, and Thika<sup>453</sup>—and others far off, as strange as Abyssinia (Ethiopia), Burma (India, now Mumbai) and Ceylon.

*Silingi* poignantly confronts definitive moments of disruption of Kamba life and modernity's violent entry via forced labour, flogging for the slightest mistake, low wages, and ever-increasing head-, poll-, and hut-taxes to raise the native's cost of living and his need for cash to force him to work for a wage (Ndalilah 2012:282–83; Clayton and Savage 1974:28). Natives were forced to enter the labour market and do ill-paid contract jobs to earn money because:

taxation is the only possible method of compelling the native to leave his reserve for the purpose of seeking work. Only in this way can the cost of living be increased for the native.... It is on this that the supply of labour and the price of labour depend. To raise the rate of wages would not increase but would diminish the supply of labour. A rise in the rate of wages would enable the hut and poll tax of a family, subtribe or tribe to be earned by fewer external workers.<sup>454</sup>

For non-payment of taxes, men risk jail, beatings, and unknown fates. To earn money to pay taxes, men must do *ngilimiti* and other jobs, abandon their farms and the production of their own food and cattle, risk famine and become yet more dependent on the money economy.

*Silingi* warns that the force of modernity, embodied in the *silingi* will erase most cultural practices and origins. Reluctantly, the *ngũi* acknowledges the power of *silingi* (money) while, at the same time, he parodies its baffling aspects. For instance, the narrator's friend, Singi—unlike the narrator, Vavu, son of Muindi— “had such a wonderful job ... tending rose bushes, mere flowers, not golden or anything like that. Yes, many different colours and smelling nice. But *just* flowers!” For this easy job, Singi earns more than the slaving narrator and, thus, could easily afford

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<sup>453</sup> towns in central Kenya

<sup>454</sup> Barnett and Njama (1966:32), quoting the *East African Standard*, 4 February 1913.

*ndiitya* and other *miio* for his girlfriend without resorting to selling animals (wealth) to do so.<sup>455</sup> “Oh yes, Singi!” Money continues to baffle many; and the narrator struggles to understand why an employer would pay someone so much just to tend roses while the *ngũi*, himself, receives so little for his *ngilimiti* work. Therefore, in its examinations of money, *Silingi* is a literary parody.

Though the *ngũi* and others work and earn desperately needed money, they are grossly underpaid. The money is never sufficient. This makes a total mockery of their job, a “type of job [that] is only given to a fool”. The *ngũi* reveals why he thinks this about his job. Arriving at Sagana after his *kipande* has been punched—and presumably after he has been paid for the days he worked—all the *ngũi* got for his work is one cent, a single cent. Impoverished and hungry, he “arrived at the Sagana market [and] found bananas and maize ears on display.”<sup>456</sup> Though the Kikuyu woman selling the maize had plenty to “spread out like bananas,” she takes one look at the *ngũi* and rejects his cent, which the *ngũi* sort of understands, after scrutinizing himself, with a “beard like a *mukavilondo* ... and hair that looked like it had dye (*mbuu*).<sup>457</sup>

The confrontation of a “working” man (i.e., wage earner) and the market woman parodies money, its uses, and what it did to human relations, as well as the spaces for money exchange, e.g., the markets (*ndunyu*).<sup>458</sup> When the *ngũi* produces a single cent to purchase an ear of maize, the market woman is so incensed at the devaluation of her wares that she almost assaults him, a reaction that reverses normal relations whereby a woman would never hit a man, let alone a stranger in a public place. Disgusted by his looks and his attempt to buy a maize ear with just a cent, she lurches at him. “I just missed a slap from that Kikuyu!” She then rebuffs the nearby

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<sup>455</sup> buying a lover *ndiitya*, layers of beads for wearing and decoration, was the ultimate gift at the time of this *mwali*.

<sup>456</sup> Thika is renowned for growing bananas.

<sup>457</sup> a type of red ochre the *Maasai* men often use to decorate their hair

<sup>458</sup> Created by the administration to accustom people to using money, *ndunyu* were markets with fixed, open-spaces for villagers to buy, sell, or exchange goods on specific weekdays. Notably, *ndunyu* were situated on crown land, i.e., land the government had confiscated from people and allocated to itself.

women who plead with her, “Give him a maize ear. He is a human being like you. ... Take the cent since he has no more cents.” Instead, she hurls it at the man. This so demoralizes him that “when he takes the rejected cent, he is overcome by anger and hunger!” and proceeds to the train to flop down and sleep and request “not to be woken up”.

Before the advent of the shilling, a hungry man would be easily fed, but the woman’s concern for money, her status, and self-respect are parodied as much as the *ngũi*’s penury. Ironically, she had rejected him partly because of his looks, the result of his “work” to earn the cent.

The *ngũi*’s choice of words in describing his hunger, anger, desire, and those of the market woman robs the situation of its gravity and turns it into a comical drama that is heightened when he puts his “returned cent” in his pocket and, “almost overcome by anger and hunger,” returns to the train “whose trailer was chug! chug! chug! chugging!”<sup>459</sup> Here, he climbs up the *itaa*<sup>460</sup> and, enduring his hunger valiantly, “gives instructions not to be woken up from there”. Thus, by giving orders like a boss, he momentarily overturns his lowly, diminished status as a man and *ngũi* who only has an *itaa* to sleep in and lacks enough money to sate his hunger. Mentally at least, the *ngũi* recovers a bit of his dignity by this momentarily imagined position of being the boss. The drama is also a space for the then-novel stereotyping of the “other” implicit in the roles of the Kikuyu market woman, the Indian, the Luo, and the *musungu*.<sup>461</sup>

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<sup>459</sup> the sound made by a stationary steam-engine train

<sup>460</sup> The Kamba store maize and other grains in an *utaa*, a horizontal wooden storage space, near the roof of a hut. Sometimes, one could use an *utaa* as a bed, but it is very uncomfortable. To sleep in the *utaa* signifies being lowly and badly off.

<sup>461</sup> *Musungu* simply refers to a white man whose colour, the *ngũi* assumes, comes from being covered with dust. However, references to other peoples re-enact the myths and stereotypes of diverse linguistic groups that were part of the colonial project. In British East Africa, “the Kikuyu were regarded as intelligent and industrious, but unstable and untrustworthy; the Luo as straight-forward and stolid; the Kamba as loyal and good-natured; the Maasai as aloof ‘noble savages’, the Giriama (in the Coast Province) as backward and apathetic” (Berman 1990:206).

Besides parodying situations and events, *myalĩ* often become a form of literary parody because their structural formation depends on invoking other *myalĩ* and other literary devices including sayings and proverbs. For instance, *Silingi* makes crucial references to two other *myalĩ*—*Mbaitu! ukai muyonee!* (*Mbaitu! Come see for yourself!*) and *No kikuu ta andu a Ngelani* (*It's as we agreed at Ngelani*) that are examined in the next section. At the same time, this *mwalĩ* refers to different historical events that involve Ngelani as a site of resistance and defiance and a source of strength and affirmation for the Akamba, e.g., the destocking episodes discussed later in this chapter,<sup>462</sup> the earlier witchcraft trials, and the Mau Mau de-oathing ceremonies. To contextualize oathing and witchcraft, however, one needs to understand them within the entire colonial project.<sup>463</sup>

Besides embodying multiple references in their parody, *myalĩ* also use language creatively to examine, interpret, and make sense of situations, e.g., through names and naming. *Myalĩ* extensively use names, naming, and renaming to seek or assert identity or to ridicule, satirize, or scorn undesirable events, shame and remind people of unacceptable behaviour, or commend positive aspects.<sup>464</sup> As often happened in the colonial context, in the face of adversity, English titles and names are assumed, localized, and inserted into a local language, gradually becoming part of the local idiom. Used symbolically and as codes, the names are robbed of their power and incorporated into Kamba. Sometimes, their use is also inverted. In *Silingi*, we are informed about how “*silingi* have taken Kingi wa Ndivo (Kingi son of Ndivo)<sup>465</sup> to Nanyuki” aboard the train, the *ngilimiti*, to a place he had never been before. While Kingi and others travel in a shameful, degrading manner, “herded into the train’s trailers like cows,” the group asserts its identity and

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<sup>462</sup> See note 488.

<sup>463</sup> See note 123 and the discussion on pages 129 and 131.

<sup>464</sup> Among the Kamba, names are usually given according to events or circumstances surrounding a birth, though naming and renaming by age-groups, peers or other groups continue.

<sup>465</sup> *Kingi* means king.

limited power by taking over the highest title in the British social hierarchy—King—and bestowing it on the *ngũi* in their midst, their respected man of words. The *ngũi* (now Kingi), in turn, also supports his co-workers by asserting himself and his societal role by quickly adopting and using his newly given name and “cutting” a *mwalĩ* about the *ngilimiti* they are forced into.

In legendary and customary reference to the *ngũi*, those travelling with this *ngũi* rename him Kingi in a gesture that defies the daily humiliations. Kingi and his group endure *ngilimiti* and assert their group identity and cultural practice by insisting on restoring, however momentarily, the respect and dignity due to a renowned *ngũi*, their humiliated but esteemed member of society.<sup>466</sup> Kingi and his group thus invert the daily insults of *ngilimiti* by interpreting their sense of “otherness” through investing the *ngũi* with the name, King, the occupying power’s highest title.

At the end of the first version of *Silingi*, endearing names for beloved girlfriends include “*Vengi! Meli! Langi!*” and “*Kathambi*,”<sup>467</sup> codes that the *ngũi* uses in a private moment when missing his lover(s). This illustrates Thelen’s sense of social memory as “beginning when something in the present stimulates association” (Thelen 1989:1120). The names express flattery, praise, and adoration and shower the beloved with love, longing, and future promises. As the *ngũi* recalls the heartache of missing his lover(s) and other things from home, he consciously turns his recollection into a general Kamba-shared memory that his “people” will relate to wherever they are. Thus, using a private recollection, the *ngũi* addresses his co-workers using referents that reverberate with the Akamba of that period. While his promises to the sweethearts he left behind

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<sup>466</sup> Traditionally, *ngũi* were highly esteemed for their superb use of language, acute observation of details, and for being the society’ mouthpiece. In normal circumstances, a *ngũi* received special treatment, bordering on fear as people indeed feared being “cut” or “sung” by the *ngũi* negative for infamous reasons.

<sup>467</sup> *Vengi! Meli! Langi!* and *Kathambi* translated as the Bank, Mary (mother of Jesus) or Ship, Colour and the Small One That Bathes a Lot, the Little Bather, or the Little Goddess. The root verb *thamba*, means to bathe, to wash oneself. In this context, added meanings are to shine, to radiate or to glow with freshness or cleanliness. One of the Kamba gods is also known as Muthambi.

hint at better times in the future, the *ngũi* also doubts that “normalcy” will ever return. This is captured even in their names. The first three—*Vengi*, *Meli*, *Langi*—allude to an established, but alien, pattern of living that clashes with what had long been normal for the *ngũi* at home in Mwala. Lamenting the distance from his home to the *ngilimiti* job (“if this job was being done at Mwala”), he complains how digging and breaking the ballast stones have made him “very thin”. His hair has “grown like grass”. “With my beard, I looked like a huge hairy ugly Indian!”<sup>468</sup> Early contact with Indians and the nature of that relationship are implied by the derogatory term, *imulindi*, which could mean fat, ugly, lazy, and ill-mannered, instead of simply *muindi*, an Indian.

The *vengi* (bank) was the human procession forced to carry “the bank”, i.e., money, mostly coins, collected from taxes and then packed in long metal boxes ported on men’s heads to the nearest administrative office. Several *myalĩ* describe the horror of the *vengi*, a heavy metal box containing coins collected from the hut-, poll-, and head-taxes forcibly extracted from people. To spur the porters along, guards frequently whipped their legs and bodies. Occasionally, porters were crushed to death or gravely injured by the weighty boxes. Substitute porters were herded closely behind to step in and immediately take the position of a dead, dying, or injured porter. People detested the *vengi* due to those deaths, the brutality used to extract taxes, and the distant and repugnant jobs they had to accept to earn money to pay the taxes. Transporting the *vengi* to the administrative headquarters is a recurring theme in *myalĩ* of the time. *Vengi* also became a common nickname for a hard-to-get girl, invoking the image of an object of unfulfilled desire, repulsion, and admiration. *Meli* (Mary, Mother of Jesus) referred to the ongoing Christianization, which met with hostility from many, but growing acceptance by natives disgruntled with some of their

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<sup>468</sup> At the time, Kamba men shaved their heads clean or left little patterns of hair but pulled off all their beard with a *ngose*.

traditions. *Meli* also means a ship, here recalling the main way the colonials and the new order arrived. *Langi* means colour, but also paint, and refers to a beautiful, clear or light-skinned girl.

In Kamba idiom, *ngilimiti* came to refer to a fool, a slave driver, or an impatient and inhumane person with little regard for others. Soon after its introduction, money (*silingi*) dominated people's lives and gradually became an object of both desire and contempt. Endearing girlfriends, boyfriends, wives, friends, and beloved babies were named after money and the different denominations of the currencies, especially the coins that people used more than paper money. *Masendi* or *sendi* (cents), *kalwela* (cent), *king'otole* or *ing'otole* (10 cents), *silingi* (shilling), *kilovoo* (shilling), *kilovia* (money), *mbesa* (money), all became names. Describing people's stature also drew upon the monetary units, e.g., (*ka*) *sumuni* (50 cents) for a short person or *ndululu* or *katululu* (a cent) to describe small people who were left behind when the *ngũi* and others were forced into *ngilimiti*.

While the *ngũi* uses names like *Vengi* to express his private feelings and memory, he also consciously evokes shared or public memories suggested by these names. After composing and jointly singing a *mwalĩ* with his assistant (*mbasa*), the two would release the *mwalĩ* to the public at the *kinyaka* (or *kituto*) (Werbner 1998). Once released, the *mwalĩ* becomes public; and people constantly sing it. It thus becomes a mnemonic device for its listeners, triggering diverse private, common, and individual memories. The memories sometimes link, directly and indirectly, to past events, creating associations that invoke new trajectories of meaning, e.g., associations of perceived dissonance between the past and the present. In this way, *mwalĩ* embody textualized memory and, hence, act as stores for remembrances and memory. And the (re)enacted memory goes beyond the current *mwalĩ* to encapsulate other socioeconomic and political contexts of the moments the *mwalĩ* was first sung ("cut") and the audiences engaged with it. Repeated singing of

the *mwalĩ* evokes many nuances of space, time, and events (Nyairo and Ogude 2003:7 and Nyairo 2004:60).

*Myalĩ* are dialogic. Once sung publicly, *myalĩ* can be and are reworked into other versions. *Silingi* was sung by three different people on various occasions, each time with a new ending.<sup>469</sup> In the reworked versions, events are rearranged or dismantled and, sometimes, memories shift or get realigned. The ending for the first *Silingi* leaves the *ngũi* “homeward bound” with the happy prospects of reuniting with his lover(s) “*Vengi! Meli! Langi! na Kathambi!*” In an effortless shift, the next stanza takes us back to a time before *ngilimiti*, the time of the *ngũi*’s grandfather’s youth, the time of *nzele* and *iw’ulu*.<sup>470</sup> The grandfather recounts how people then “danced naked, stark, stark naked in the middle of the day! Without a stitch on!” Juxtaposing contemporary societal practices with those easy, free days of the grandfather’s childhood two generations earlier, the intrigued *ngũi* ushers us into the social economics of the different Kamba times through his queries and comments. “Did wives and *athoni*”<sup>471</sup> also participate?” The *ngũi*’s question-and answer conversation with his grandfather transports us to a different time when a girl was “the very favourite child” and given “the fattest young he-goat plus a young she-goat to sell and buy *ndiitya* ... *mio*”.<sup>472</sup> A girl is precious, requiring much money to decorate well so her father will fetch many cows and goats (wealth) for such a beautiful, well-fed girl.

Under normal circumstances, *athoni* exhibited such great respect and distance for each other that they avoided meeting face to face. If someone saw his or her mother- or father-in-law approaching on the same path, he jumped away in time to avoid any contact. Now, for people and

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<sup>469</sup> I have here only included the last stanzas, the endings, for discussion here.

<sup>470</sup> earlier, vigorous dance types

<sup>471</sup> *Muthoni*, pl. *athoni*, is the mother- or father-in-law, specifically the parents of a bride, and their relatives.

<sup>472</sup> For a description of *mio*, see note 452.

their in-laws to “dance vigorously, ass up in the air, hands waving up and grabbing the soil,” indicates a momentary abandonment of the usual restrictions that gives the *wathi* a carnival air.<sup>473</sup>

I would laugh loudly, and wonder: Oh my! Oh, my people! Dear grandpa! These girls of a long time ago, were they married or did they drown in River Thwake? Oh, these females, *iiii!*<sup>474</sup>

Marvelling at the girls’ criteria for selecting husbands back then is also an exploration of the now gone, idyllic moments of his grandfather’s golden years. The *ngũi*’s nostalgic return to the past offers idioms and metaphors for living out the present while revealing a desire to relive “authentic” Kamba tradition. The search for the “authentic” is hindered by the disjunctures and dislocations that accompany this nostalgic return to a past, disjunctures arising from an inescapable engagement with the present and the specific terms of entry into the present moment. Since the past is linked to the present, reading *myalĩ* as a site of memory is also a way to explore how Akamba remember the past.

Besides the obvious plurality that governs the reworking of *myalĩ*, the shift also gestures to the underlying trope of destruction defining *myalĩ*, a destruction inherent in the dismantling and rearrangement of the original *mwalĩ* and, sometimes, of memories and associations based, when demanded, on fresh consciousness. Confronting pain and trauma requires exploring the relevance and function of the disjuncture and dislocation. The way *myalĩ* exploit and put the past in the present endears them to changing audiences, as demonstrated by current singers, e.g., Kakai Kilonzo, Muema Brothers.<sup>475</sup> Hence, *myalĩ* explore social relations and how people confront *ngilimiti* and new laws, orders, and realities.

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<sup>473</sup> The *ngũi*’s memories or the *wathi* are partly prompted by its banning in *Ukambani*.

<sup>474</sup> a pun on the double meaning of *twa* (to be married or to drown)

<sup>475</sup> a Kenyan musical band

In the next stanza, the *ngũi* introduces the subject of the next *mwalĩ*, the world wars, and the Africans' role in fighting for the empire. The *ngũi* meets a woman "at Thika, a woman from Kya Nzavi, wife of a 'crown' fighter,<sup>476</sup> who kindly asked me if I was sick because I looked like a baboon due to the hair ... [that this] Kikuyu girl [had] earlier despised me for!" Indeed, "when she told me that, I was suddenly so overcome by nostalgia for home, I became sad, depressed, and filled with self-pity." As they "drink the news together," the *ngũi* is urgently called, and the "train turned around so we could be returned where we had come from!" Thus, the woman's loss of her husband in the war and his curtailed freedom of choice of work are brought to fore.

Though the train has been turned against his wish, the *ngũi* will go and work for a month, then he will desert to return home to see his beloved. Thus, the narrative of resistance is inherent in the *ngilimiti* as men continue deserting, knowing well the harsh punishments dealt out to deserters.<sup>477</sup> To avoid these punishments and be able to prove his legal status, the *ngũi* gets his ID punched, dated, and signed by his current legal employer. Any law enforcer meeting the *ngũi* will know he is not a deserter or a vagabond. *Myalĩ* thus become mnemonic tools, signalling to the listeners diverse personal and collective memories linked to common public events and associations. In the following stanza, the *mwalĩ* ends with the English words, "cut off". While singing in Kikamba, the *ngũi* nonetheless chooses to end with English, a gesture that alludes to modernity and a tiny measure of social development. The mere fact of speaking the master's language, English, elevates the speaker's social status while the language itself signifies cosmopolitanism and modernity. Indeed, some modern Kenyans declare proudly that their children speak neither Kiswahili nor any other Kenyan language, not even their mother-tongue. Others know some Kenyan languages but

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<sup>476</sup> a soldier's wife

<sup>477</sup> See footnote 431 on the *sjambok*, *kiboko*, and floggings.

proudly speak only English in public and rarely—oh, so rarely!—their own languages.<sup>478</sup> Though typically beyond their narrow objectives and consciousness, such families thereby partake in a wider process: an auto-cultural genocide.

*Myalĩ* address issues that make them a textualized memory among the Kamba as they re-enact and store the people’s memories and their socio-political contexts in time and space. The actions of the new Kamba emerging class—the new generation of the elite, e.g., chiefs, clerks, overseers (*avakasi*), headmen, tribal askaris—among them colonial sycophants—are mocked and condemned. Their often, culturally suicidal behaviour is re-enacted and juxtaposed against that which is expected of Kamba adults and elders. The dialogic structure of *myalĩ* confirms tradition as “a growing, changing topography rather than a pristine object preservable that can be transported wholesale into the present” (Nyairo 2005b:50). In the two *myalĩ*, the experience of modernity revolves around the crucial images of employment (job), money (*silingi*), Christian education, the train—representing more than a new mode of transport but new technology, and the anxiety over traditional values that have been too quickly replaced or overtaken by a money economy. Not all changes are good, as the new ruling class individuals assume attitudes and behaviours for which, earlier, they would have been flogged, ostracized, or exiled.

***The Country, Kenya, Will Never Forget Athungu,<sup>479</sup> Oh! My! Oh! No! (Nthi ya Kenya ndikola athungu iia na iia ii)***

The opening for *Nthi ya Kenya ndikola athungu iia na iia ii* (henceforth *Athungu*) sets the stage for an aborted homecoming by the *ngũi*, who is just one of the many soldiers of the native King’s

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<sup>478</sup> I have not researched this topic but base my statements on personal observations about local “educated” (read *asomi*) people’s attitudes to food, languages, and most things local (or *shenzi*) in colonial Kenya.

<sup>479</sup> *Athungu* or *asungu*, the plural of *muthungu* or *musungu* means white people. Characteristic of *myalĩ*’s frequent use multiple entendre, here the phrase *nthi ya Kenya ndikola athungu* has ambiguous multiple meanings: (1) *Athungu* (white people) will never forget the country, Kenya; (2) Kenya (the country, the people) will never forget the white

African Rifles (KAR) who returned from the Second World War. *Athungu* recreates a traditional Kamba homestead through a dialogue between a prodigal son and his parents, a dialogue that (re)asserts the traditional role of a son in his home. He expects a welcome home and, as tradition demands, at least a goat to be slaughtered in his honour though, given the list of things he has done, he deserves a bull or two. But he gets nothing, not even a chicken! He describes his hostile reception and alienation back home. “I *vingusya*<sup>480</sup> [knock, or request entry into a house by saying ‘open up’] at home [our place], and I *vingusya* the entire length of Ukambani, and I find none to let me in.” In his home, house, district, and country, the *ngũi* gets no welcome instead of a big welcome befitting a man of his experience, having just finished a long odyssey while fighting for the empire in British East Africa, Ethiopia, Burma, and Ceylon. Everyone is too busy to notice him as “all is very quiet and still; and nobody notices/minds me. People, children, and women have all slept.” The lack of a reception to welcome for a brave soldier is contrasted with the Soldier’s Scheme with loans and farms awarded to the Englishmen the *ngũi* had fought side by side with.

*Athungu* invoke the memory of the war zone as the point of inspiration for confronting a hostile, dubious future.<sup>481</sup> “I, Kyuma, young man, finding no sleeping place, will head to Kikuyuland.” For a young man to find no sleeping place, peace is unusual since, normally, youths have bright futures. But that is denied the *ngũi* and other native KAR members newly returned from fighting

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people, i.e., Kenyans will never forget the traumatic experience of colonialism and imperialism; (3) colonialism will remain in memories as synonymous with white people; and (4) the entire world will never forget colonialism i.e., the impact of imperialism on colonized people. The word *nthi* in Machakos district, or *nzi* in Kitui district, has diverse meanings (a) a country, a nation; (b) the floor, the ground; (c) the world, the universe, planet earth; and (d) figuratively, to understand, learn a lesson, or grasp the meaning of something, as in the saying, *nekwiw’a nthi!* (that person will learn a hard lesson through suffering) or in the question, *nowiw’aa nthi?* (don’t you understand? Or, don’t you hear what I’m saying?).

<sup>480</sup> People’s houses were closed from the inside with *ivingi* (singular *kivingi*), short poles fixed horizontally one on top of the other, to secure the entrance. To say *kuingusya* is a signal to request admission into the house or homestead by removing the *ivingi* to allow entry to the house.

<sup>481</sup> Though Kyuma is from Ukambani, he has heard of and wants to join fellow soldiers gathering in Mount Kenya’s forest to fight for land and freedom.

for the crown. But “I visit home, our place, knock around all doors ... and find nowhere to sleep”. Disappointed and frustrated, the *ngũĩ* begins to view the cold welcome at home as his own aborted romance, a reflection of human experience in gory wars:

I would also want to mention/recall the great suffering endured in Ceylon

Remembering the war in Burma, its associated problems and [the] suffering in Burma

Sleeping under shrubs like cows with swarms of mosquitoes and torrential rain

Memories of awful stench from the numerous Japanese corpses

The only viable solution for the beleaguered *ngũĩ* is to “head to Kikuyuland” to join his friend going into the forests to organize and fight for liberation. As a *ngũĩ*, his immediate desire is to portray these conflicting thoughts in a *mwalĩ*. The desire to change their fate and reassert themselves traditionally, politically, and economically supersedes any fears or doubts about this precarious and costly venture to reclaim their manhood and to “establish their place in the Kenyan socio-cultural imaginary” (Nyairo and Ogude 2005:237). Kenyans from different linguistic backgrounds had united to fight for the crown in Africa and beyond. The need has now arisen for the same soldiers to unite again to fight for their own survival and independence. Spearheaded by men like the *ngũĩ* who had learned and gauged their capabilities while fighting outside the country, many Kenyan ex-soldiers were now streaming to Kikuyuland.<sup>482</sup>

In keeping with traditional good manners, however, the *ngũĩ* first pays tribute to his compatriots, friends from Ukambani with whom he had fought. The old Kamba praise-poetry captures these

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<sup>482</sup> In November 1938, the KTWA and NKCA joined the KCA in a joint protest to the Secretary of State against compulsory destocking. The Defence Regulations of 1939 provided the enhanced coercive powers needed to deal with internal security—read: the continued evidence of increased cooperation among African Associations. Under the pretext that the KCA was secretly contacting Italian agents, the colonial government proscribed the KCA, the UMA, and the Taita Hills Association while reporting “very little doubt (and very little actual proof) that they [the associations] were in communications with the Italian Consulate and were indulging in fifth column activities.” In May 1940, 22 leaders of the three associations were arrested and detained till the end of World War II (Berman 1990: 244).

men's bravery and heroism in various war zones outside Ukambani, heroism preceded by a long Kamba military tradition.<sup>483</sup> The tribute starts off commending the heroes' birthplaces for producing such notable sons—Kangundo, Kilungu, Mwala, Kitui, Mbitini—and acknowledging the sacrifices that fighting entailed:

<b>English</b>	<b>Kikamba</b>
Mutua my good friend, son of Nthembwa	Mutua munyanyaa mwanaa wa Nthembwa
Philip Muindi, son of Mutiso	Philip Muindi, mwanaa wa Mutiso
Matee son of Nganga of Matiliku, Mbitini	Matee wa Nganga Matiliku Mbitini
Wilson Kitheka, my beloved brother! [or my mother's little son] and Elijah Maliti	Wilison Kitheka kaia kee Elia Maliti
JKM, my mother's son	JKM, mwana wa mwaitu
Chawino Pangondo from Rhodesia and Nyasaland... [now Zimbabwe and Malawi]	Chawino Pangondo of Rhodesia and Nyasaland

The *ngũĩ*'s homage to his friends is a call to refresh the memories of the Second World War's horrors that they suffered and survived, beginning in Turkana (northern Kenya), through Ethiopia, Ceylon, and Burma. Intimately calling out his friends re-establishes a mutually shared history—both past and present—and deeply felt relationships. He pays tribute to his good friend Mutua by mentioning Mutua's mother Nthembwa.<sup>484</sup> JKM is more than a friend; he is as close as his own

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<sup>483</sup> Many Kamba joined or were recruited into the Kenya Police and the King's African Rifles.

<sup>484</sup> Kamba children rarely bear their mother's names.

mother's son.<sup>485</sup> Wilson Kitheka is even closer; he's like his own mother's *younger* child.<sup>486</sup> The diminutive form *kaia* indicates that the *ngũi* feels as protective of Kitheka as he would be of a helpless younger brother. Implicitly, the *ngũi* is forging a future struggle with his trusted co-fighters—a different sort of fight that includes many others, not just his friends from Ukambani—Mutua, Philip Muindi, Matee wa Nganga, Wilson Kitheka, Elia Maliti, and JKM. The *ngũi* also calls on Chawino Pangodo, a friend from the wider British colonies of Rhodesia and Nyasaland (now Zimbabwe and Malawi). This call challenges all colonized Africans—especially those experienced in fighting for the British Crown far from their homes—to look inwards and deal with their battles at home and together jointly as Africans, battles that had been neglected as they journeyed far away to fight other people's enemies.

The *ngũi* calls on the courageous men he fought with to affirm a powerful bond not affected by their unwelcome homecomings. His call enacts the autonomy and assertion which, though only part of their identity, also proves their greatness despite the scandalous homecoming reception. He urges his listeners to heed his voice and words—a distinct voice of status and integrity—which he directs at both real and imaginary enemies, provoking and challenging them to verbal and physical combat. The voice directed at the colonial government mocks and disdains its authority and usurped power by invoking a proverb that, itself, embodies a narrative of conflict among the Kamba, “*No kikuu ta andu a Ngelani*” (*It's as we agreed at Ngelani*). The saying originated from a greeting that solicited the response *No Kikuu* (it's still as we decided; it is still the old agreement)

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<sup>485</sup> In the often polygamous Kamba homes, brotherhood or sisterhood are distinguished through the terms *mwanaa-ia* or *mwanaamwaitu* (my brother who is my mother's child, and with whom we may or may not share a father) and *mwiitu waia/mwiitu wa mwaitu* (my sister who is also my mother's child, and with whom we may or may not share a father) versus *mwanaa asa* (my brother, with whom I share a father, not a mother) or *mwiitu wa asa* (my sister, with whom I share a father, but not a mother). Curiously, no terms exist to emphasize that you and your brother or sister have the same mother **and** father.

<sup>486</sup> precolonial Kamba children were brought up to care for and protect their younger siblings.

to signal that the respondent supported the resistance to the government's 1938 mandatory destocking programme in Machakos.<sup>487</sup>

Mutua, my friend, son of Nthembwa, where have you been keeping so quiet? Philip Muindi, son of Mutiso, remember Ceylon? The thick forest under which we slept? Kyuma, where we "ate Christmas"? [celebrated Christmas]. Better remember *no kikuu ta andu a ngelani*.

Ostensibly, destocking programmes would make the reserves economically self-sufficient by combating the increasing soil erosion, partly caused by the government's land-grabbing policies that restricted the land available for grazing or farming. Suspicious of anything planned by the government, the Kamba liken government's plans to *Akavi* [the Maasai], the Kamba's perpetual enemies and cattle poachers, who are "no in-laws! [and] have never brought me celebratory beer!" i.e., no comradeship is expected from the state, nor is there any friendship or plans for such. Friendships are sealed with a drink, a toss. The reference to inlawship is said tongue-in-cheek, as the raids between the Kamba and the *Akavi* included a mutual *kutava*, i.e., "scooping" of young girls along with the cattle, girls who, though born in Maasailand, later grew up and married in Ukambani or vice versa.

The saying that symbolizes the Kamba's rejection of forced destocking ("*No kikuu ta andu a Ngelani*") was prompted by the colonial states' by-then-well-recognized trick of isolating individuals (sometimes paying them peanuts) and using them against the group. The saying demonstrates the people's awareness of how this divide-and-rule policy worked at a personal level,

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<sup>487</sup> "Between April and August 1938, some 22,500 Kamba cattle were sold at auction at prices between a quarter and a half of the current market price, of which some 7,000 went to Liebig's [Meat Factory], 9,000 to settlers for breeding or fattening, and no less than 50 to A.N. Bailward, the District Commissioner of Machakos" (Berman 1990:242), Munro (1975:227) and (KNA: 1938). Colonial administrators attributed a "cattle complex" to the Kamba, the Maasai, and other pastoralists, a complex—the administrators believed—that made the pastoralists refuse to sell their cattle because of over-emphasizing their quantity instead of quality (Herskovits 1926). Explaining Africans' economic and socio-religious attitudes to cattle, Mtetwa (1978) concludes that the "cattle complex" was a myth and a capitalist market strategy to obtain African cattle at lower than market-prices. Hence, the reluctance by the Kamba—among others—to sell their cattle.

An enormous literature focuses on destocking and "developing" pastoralists in Kenya (Herskovits 1926; Kenya Land Commission (1934); Tignor (1971), Spencer (1972); Collett (1987). See the next two notes 488 and 489.

and the *no kikuu* response was instituted to avoid the divide-and-rule trap.<sup>488</sup> This response also enunciates Kamba nationalism, militancy, and recognition that embracing unity is a superior strategy for communal survival. “After waiting a year for the crown letter!” refers to the letter-writing campaign that began throughout the colony with people sending petitions to England after their pleas had been repeatedly ignored by the colonial government. Usually, it took more than a year to get a response from England, hence, the reference.<sup>489</sup> The Kamba’s petition to the Secretary of State in London stated the general feeling expressed in the proverb, *no kikuu*, against “the policy of compelling even the poorest among us to contribute to the profits of a wealthy concern is not understood by us” (Berman 1990:243). In the final line, the *ngũi* threatens to migrate to Kikuyuland “if the destocking problem is not solved”. Kamba-Kikuyu unity against colonialism is hinted at here in a trope developed in *Athungu*.<sup>490</sup> The *ngũi* also laughs at the “eaten heads” of the Kamba colonial sycophants who thought they were more British than the whitest *musungu* or *muthungu*.<sup>491</sup>

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<sup>488</sup> In 1937, Kenya’s veterinary department invited Rhodesian Liebig’s company to open a meat and canning plant in Athi River (Rhodesia is today’s Zimbabwe). Making little profit at the current cattle market prices, Liebig’s threatened to close the plant unless cheaper cattle were found—a feat the government achieved by imposing a destocking programme in Machakos in December 1937. Accordingly, cattle had to be sold “in public auctions at prices [at] which Liebig’s could buy” (Berman 1990:242). Under the leadership of Samuel Muindi Mbingu, Elija Kavulu, and Isaac Mwalonzi, the Kamba dramatically rejected both the destocking and terracing programmes as well as the government’s demands for more land. Preparing to meet with the government and anticipating the same divide-and-rule tactics used in similar past meetings, the Kamba unanimously agreed that singly or in a group, anyone questioned about the destocking programme would furnish the same response: “*no kikuu*”, meaning, “it is as the group decided” (literally, “it is simply the old agreement”). On 28 July 1938, over 2,000 Kamba trekked 40 miles from Machakos to Nairobi to petition the governor, Sir Robert Brooke-Popham. They camped near Nairobi’s golf course, ignoring sanitary and other government officials till the governor addressed them on August 19, 1938—after initially refusing to see them. The birth of two children as the Kamba awaited the “crown to descend on them” led to the rhetorical question “What will the children eat”. Under the deportation ordinance act, Muindi was arrested on 4 October 1938 and detained in Lamu (Munro 1975:221; Newman 1974:7–11; Njama and Barnett 1966:39; Rosberg and Nottingham 1966:164–74).

<sup>489</sup> Mbingu used *Muigwithania* and *The East African Standard* to state the Kamba case, co-signing a petition, dated 2 May 1938, to the secretary of state (Kenyatta received a copy in London and publicised the issue in the *Manchester Guardian* for the next four months (Rosberg and Nottingham 1966:169).

<sup>490</sup> Apparently, these developments “led the scared government to excise two Kamba districts from the central province on August 1, 1953” (Rosberg and Nottingham 1966:174).

<sup>491</sup> See analogous critiques in *Mimic Men* by V.S. Naipal (2012) and *Black Skin, White Masks* by Franz Fanon (2008).

While the memory of the war zone started as a discourse of the personal and the ordinary as the *ngũi* remembers his friends, it becomes a discourse articulating national(ist) aspirations. The material conditions that produced *Athungu* and the saying *no kikuu* represent a key moment among the Akamba to join forces for a common good. The *ngũi* appropriates this moment to express his war and post-war experiences that valorised cattle, e.g., the pain, anger, dejection, near-despair, and, simultaneously, his determination to seize and translate the moment into a communal struggle for land and freedom from an intransigent government as demonstrated in a series of similar measures that produced *no kikuu*, which easily resonated with the Akamba and other linguistic groups. The experiences, the emotions, and the continuing controversy around *no kikuu* inspired a broader movement for national freedom. As Fabian maintains, however, the freedom generated by the text does not exist in a permanent state; it can only be “contestatory and discontinuous or precarious” (Fabian 1998:20).

In the final stanza, the *ngũi* calls on parents to support the youth’s struggle for freedom, including by “going to Kikuyuland,” which implies a struggle wider than for just a place to sleep in Ukambani: “Woman, parent (who gave birth), stop worrying. Once you gave birth, you gave birth!” There is no going back. Alongside this call to parents is an appeal to “JKM, my mother’s son, remember Ceylon!” *To remember Ceylon* signifies remembering the horror and killings of war and, more significantly, understanding what the *ngũi* and others fought for. Given the reception he received at home, he might as well not have gone to fight. While *Athungu* and *Silingi* articulate the distinguishing markers of the Kamba, they also create space for a re-reading of the wider Kenyan and African landscape by referring to the march to Kikuyuland that promised a future home for the “homeless” *ngũi* and by remembering Chawino Pangondo of Nyasaland.

The repetitive chorus—the country Kenya will never forget *athungu/Athungu* will never forget the country Kenya, oh, my! oh, no!”—serves diverse purposes. Besides focusing on the issue at hand—a struggle that could degenerate into a war—the chorus satirizes and warns collaborators that the colonial system they rely on is not sustainable because, soon, British rule may become history, a subject of the past, albeit never forgotten. Like other struggles and wars, it will pass. About that, the *ngũi* has no doubt. The chorus also repeatedly invokes memory to fortify group spirit with friends in the struggle and prepare for a volatile future. While linking one stanza to the next, the rhythmic and melodic chorus becomes key to defining resistance and victory.

Much as *myalĩ* invoke the lost traditional Kamba ways, their conceptualization of the Kamba past is not entirely centred on pre-colonial Kamba. Through its content and its referents, *myalĩ* are a site of memory. As we have seen, a *mwalĩ* can encapsule an era and harness past emotions and ideals into a single textualized form in the present. Both *Silingi* and *Athungu* tackle aspects of the violent confrontation and seductive conveniences of modernity that create a perpetual tension between the hold of tradition and the growing attraction to Westernization. In looking at *myalĩ* as public memory and remembrance, one notes that remembrance is sometimes necessitated by contingencies in the present, sometimes straightforward contingencies such as a *ngũi*'s desire to both share and record history from his perspective and experiences, for future generations as part of the living history. However, today's market forces and technology largely affect how history is recorded and shared in *myalĩ* and other songs far beyond ethnic and national confines. No longer confined to rural areas, *myalĩ* and other songs are now part of an international million-dollar music industry that uses cassettes, CDs, DVDs, cable TV, and the market to distribute and sell songs to distant countries. The music industry and new technology form and shape audiences nationally, regionally, and often beyond.

*Silingi* and *Athungu* examine such early colonial themes as men separated from their ancestral homes by the job market and other lures of urban life, the advent of modern urbanization, the devaluation of African traditions and people, the valorisation of the money economy, and the emerging class of local despots—themes repeated throughout Africa in other forms of orature and in written literature: Bakary Diallo, *Force Bonté (A Great Deal of Good)* (1926); Félix Couchoro, *L'Esclave (The Slave)* (2007[1929]); Sol T. Plaatje, *Mhudi: An Epic of South African Native Life a Hundred Years Ago* (1930); Ousmane Socé, *Karim* (1945[1935]); Paul Hazoume, *Doguicimi: The First Dahomean Novel* (1938); Camara Laye, *L'Enfant Noir (The African Child)* (1959[1953]); Bernard Dadie, *Climbié* (1971[1956]); Aké Loba, *Kocoumbo, L'Etudiant noir (Kocoumbo, the Black Student)* (1980[1956]); Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* (1958); Cheik Hamidou Kane, *L'Aventure Ambigüe (Ambiguous Adventure)* (1982[1963]); Ahmadou Kourouma, *The Suns of Independence* (1981[1968]); Mongo Beti, *Mission to Kala* (1964[1957]) and *The Poor Christ of Bomba* (1971). British East African writers include Okot P'Bitek, *Song of Lawino* (1966) and *Song of Ocol* (1967); Ngugi wa Thiong'o,<sup>492</sup> *The River Between* (1965) and *A Grain of Wheat* (1967).

From pre-colonial times to now, *myalĩ* have documented political crises, demanded justice, freedom, and independence, and protested political assassinations, ethnic cleansing, and immoral behaviour. Both *myalĩ* and written fiction have focused on Kenyan Christian denominations, *asomi*, and urbanites removed from their “authentic” homes, traditions, education, and history.

As a public memory device, *myalĩ* tap into the Kenyan socio-political climate to create an informative moment through the *ngũi*'s critical reflections on the trauma, pain, and multiple humiliations of colonialism. *Myalĩ*'s form and structure display aptly the economies of language

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<sup>492</sup> At that time, Ngugi wa Thiong'o still used the name James Ngugi.

as does the culture of transgression (e.g., John Lewis’ “good trouble”) that popularizes *myalĩ* by situating them historically and making them memorable.

### **Circumcision Songs (*Ngakali*)**

*Ngakali* is a *mwalĩ* sub-category of songs for initiation ceremonies (*nzaiko*). Though basically initiation songs, *ngakali* songs provide the spaces for popular discourse about adulthood, leadership qualities, survival skills, individual eccentricities, foibles, and expected adult Kamba behaviour. Among many Africans, adulthood is associated with notions of womanhood, manhood, self-reliance, dignity, good character, discernment, and fairness plus the accompanying initiation rites that intensively prepare youths for transition and passage to new sexual, social, and political responsibilities. Symbolically, the rites transmute the initiates from childhood to maturity and adulthood. However, dramatic human interactions—including colonization—combined with new forms of religion, technology, urbanization, knowing (e.g., analysing), and knowledge to transform many of the rites of passage. Self-reliance, loyalty, dignity, discernment, fairness, and other aspects of good character inculcated during initiation rites and captured in orature are “antithetical to the dependency complex” (Mazrui 1977:124). The Sartrean “nervous condition” or Fanon’s and Césaire’s examinations of the “inferiority complex” that many Africans developed under colonialism and honed through neocolonialism are also manifest in the education system (Sartre [1963]1967:20; Fanon 2008:18; Césaire 2015:43).<sup>493</sup> This theme is also developed in the novel, *Nervous Conditions* by Dangarembga [1988] 1997.

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<sup>493</sup> The inferiority complex that compounded into a Fanonian nervous condition among many neocolonial Kenyan leaders promotes and thrusts into the national social and political sphere many backward and undesirable values—anti-human, anti-development qualities like stealing, lying, bribing, sycophancy, sexism, racism, and arrogance that in turn create a nation state where kleptocracy, corruption, and impunity are the norm. This inspires the continuous efforts to suppress, rewrite, and sanitize Kenyan history, especially about the role of the Kenya Land and Freedom Army in liberating Kenya from Britain.

As Kamba commemorative symbolism, *ngakali* songs re-create images of the past in a way that has not been extensively studied because orature is peripheral in Kenyan education. Here, I draw on interviews, commentary, folklore, and books to understand how commemorative symbolism functions. *Ngakali* is crucially linked to the notion of *kuima* (becoming an adult), growing up, maturing into a reliable person. *Kuima* is related to notions of self-reliance, full womanhood, manhood, and proper individual and societal behaviour among the Kamba's age-grading that marked one's space in society. The initiations associated with *ngakali* imply self-reliance and the transition to adulthood.

As commemorative songs conveyed and sustained by performance, *ngakali* displays many images of remembered knowledge of Kamba life and are a carrier of Connerton's "social memory" (Connerton 1989:xx). To initiate youths to useful, productive, and responsible adulthood, the Akamba traditionally perform two or, in some areas, three stages of *nzaiko*—*nzaiko nini* (*small nzaiko*), *nzaiko nene* (*major nzaiko*), and *kuatha mbusya* (*target a rhino*).<sup>494</sup> Two *ngakali* are examined here: *Aĩĩĩĩ, Nimukulya nthuke ya ambalũ?* (Hey, I ask you! The Ambalũ age-group!) and *Mwaakya Iiii Lili Asa niwambaika ii* (Let it be known that my father has "cut" [initiated] me, iii!).

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<sup>494</sup> **Nzaiko**, *n.* the initiation ceremonies (**nzaiko nene**, **nzaiko nini** and **Kuatha Mbusya**) teaching young boys and girls the diverse aspects of adulthood, e.g., sex, family care, hunting, farming, and other survival methods. Originating from **aika**, *v.t.* **1.** to circumcise, to cut off the foreskin of a boy's penis or parts of a girl's clitoris and outer lips of the vagina. **2.** initiate boys and girls into responsible adulthood by preparing them sexually, physically, spiritually, and emotionally. **Nzaiko nini** *n. Lit.* "the small or minor *nzaiko*," the cutting off part of boys' foreskin or, for girls, part of the clitoris and the outer vaginal lips in preparation for sexual life and endurance of pain later in life. **Nzaiko nene** *n. Lit.* "the big or the major *nzaiko*," the period when the boys and girls who have successfully gone through **nzaiko nini** are isolated in their recovery huts to cure the cuts and learn more skills and techniques needed by young adults. The third *nzaiko*—*kuatha mbusya*—is not mandatory, but in it initiates deemed to be misfits were killed by the group and reported as *ngany'a nunaiwe ni mbusya* "so and so was eaten by the rhino" (Kieti and Coughlin, draft dictionary).

*Hey, I ask you! The ambalû age-group!*<sup>495</sup> (*Aiiiii, Nimukulya nthuke ya ambalû?*)<sup>496</sup>

Both *Ambalû* and *Asa* celebrate and welcome the newly initiated adult Kamba man or woman, inviting blessings for them through the customary gesture of new names signifying aspired conditions—greatness, successful births, many healthy children, good fortune, and general wellbeing. The two *ngakali* are initiation songs ushering into adulthood a group of initiates. Emphasis is laid on moral, social, and economic education as the basis of character development and leadership, the qualities that help the entire community to survive.

*Ambalû* begins with a call to Kamba warriors to be fearless when attacking enemies *akavi* (Maasai):

Aiii, you of the *ambalû* age-group. I have not asked who is that walking aimlessly? Of course, it is Mûtw'etumo who killed a Maasai who was worse than Ilia Nzioka.

While *Ambalû* re-enacts the legendary Kamba/Maasai fixation with wealth in cattle, this call to warriors touches on a topic of great significance to Kamba and other African communities: the warrior tradition, which was deeply embedded in most pre-colonial African cultures. In Ukambani, the *nzaiko* conferred manhood—a prerequisite for a warrior who must “never fear penetrating the shield”. Thus, while concepts of self-defence, security, and the rights and duties of a warrior differed, the idea of a warrior captures significant elements of Kamba, African, or indeed human organization and symbolism, the “links which the warrior tradition has with the idea of adulthood, the concept of manhood” or womanhood that is “concretized through initiation from childhood” (Mazrui 1977:75–76). The idea of adulthood is fundamental to the Kamba, the adult being identified as a member of society who can and does earn his or her own living, maintains a

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<sup>495</sup> henceforth shortened to *ambalû*

<sup>496</sup> Here, *ambalû* refers to the age-group of *ambalû*, i.e., those initiated when the song-type *mbalu* was at its height.

homestead, and behaves in a way that is considered proper, mature, and acceptable.<sup>497</sup> Most African languages differ in how they handle the distinction between children, young adults, adults, and elders. In *ambalû*, the new Kamba warriors mock each other and the enemy, enacting how their perpetual rivals, the *akavi*, act when raided.

A Kamba boy became a man first, through *nzaiko nini* and *nzaiko nene*, and then could become a warrior when the elders judged him capable of being one. This was after doing the basic but necessary manly chores: building his own hut, guarding cattle, preparing land for cultivation, marrying a wife, and protecting the clan through words and fights. To echo Mazrui, a fundamental “element of self-reliance was embedded in the concept of warrior” because of its “link with the concept of adulthood”. Among the Kamba, *nzaiko*—which encompasses the most crucial aspects of initiation into adulthood—carried implications of this presumed stage of self-reliance for men and women though only Kamba men (like other African communities) fought the territorial battles outside of Kamba territories. After *nzaiko nini*, the young adult girls and boys—the initiates—are secluded in their own lodges, with girls in one, boys in another; and their parents and their generation are forbidden access to the lodge. The initiates are separated by groups to stress their “oneness” and to express the solidarity of the new adults. For the new adult boys and girls, virtues like endurance, arduous work, honesty, humility, and helping those in need—especially vulnerable children and the aging—are stressed. For the society’s happiness, self-worth and preservation, acting maturely, talking and respecting other members of the society, and appropriately greeting, talking and interacting with people were highly esteemed attributes. Laziness, cowardice, or behaviours like stealing, bullying, and lying are condemned since the culture explicitly recognizes that an offender’s behaviour affects the group. Hence, an adult’s behaviour was not merely an

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<sup>497</sup> Indeed, a few elders were despised for their behaviour, for example, those who aged ‘squatting’, that is, badly, *kukua masunzumele*. In Ukambani, such people did not deserve and were not called adults, *mundu muima*.

individual responsibility or activity because it was linked to the initiates' group, which had the power to punish anyone who betrayed it, or even kill serious transgressors, e.g., rapists and murderers. For women, *nzaiko* turned girls into adult women with the heavy responsibilities of giving birth, tending to the little people (babies), her house, her land, and maintaining a home.

*Ambalû* calls on the *aume*, *munduume*—i.e., “a real man”—to refer to newly initiated adult men from which future warriors will be selected.<sup>498</sup> In the future warriors, principles of valour, bravery, and humility are inculcated because *aume* must be both adults and fighters. In *nzaiko*, *aume* implies sexual virility, good character, and wise humility, which, traditionally, are the true signs of manhood. Re-enacted in *nzaiko* and expressed in *ngakali*, these qualities are in sharp contrast to the arrogance, thieving, and ostentatious accumulation now so common among Kenyan and other African leaders as denounced in diverse literature. For example, for Akare (1981:61 and 86), the current Kenyan cabinet ministers are no more than “gangsters operating on the common man” in open exploitation. Akare extends his critical sweep continentally where “the whole of Africa has nothing but corrupt cowards”. Seemingly, however, Akare’s examination of the past echoes with disjuncture and gestures to agency, offering idioms and metaphors for living out the present: “It was not like this during the white man’s time.... Corruption and tribalism have taken root everywhere... Uhuru to a black man must mean something else” (Akare 1981:38, 96). Achebe’s *A Man of the People* (1966), Thiong’o’s *Petals of Blood* (1977); Mugo’s *A Self-Help Campaign* (1975); Wambakha’s *The Closed Road to Wapi* (1978), and Nyasani and Oyugi’s *The Club on the Hill* (1983), all explore key symbols of manhood, womanhood, and adulthood that *ngakali* re-enacts.

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<sup>498</sup> The Nandi of northern Kenya have age-grades, each with a name of its own, and all operating on a recurring 15-year cycle where those of “fighting age” hand over to the grade next below it.

In re-enacting the symbols of manhood and adulthood, *ambalû* praises outstanding Kamba warriors and leaders—Mutw’etumo and Ilia Nzioka—and pays homage to legendary, magician and leader, Mwatu Wa Ngoma. Physically fit and agile, Mwatu understood the signs of the times and consulted prophets and *athiani* before battles. A great orator, he inspired his soldiers to sacrifice their lives to protect women and children and retrieve stolen livestock, the mark and symbol of wealth.<sup>499</sup> Mwatu’s humility allowed him to work alongside his warriors to make bows, *ivai* (poison for arrows), and arrows instead of behaving like a stinking he-goat. Cowardice is a womanly act while strength, physical fitness, agility, decisiveness, and other aspects of courage proven in battles are admired, especially if the leader is also humble. Bullies are despised. By naming Kamba heroes, the song dramatizes an ongoing Kamba history of resistance while, at the same time, castigating undesirables like cowards and murderers such as Kyende and Mûito, who killed a Kamba girl instead of the enemy *akavi* (“hold arrows and hide like women”).

Orature provides a crucial set of resources and forums for discussing ideas, refined and popularized for communal understanding, i.e., for “flows of communication” into public opinion (Habermas 1996:360). *Ngakali* demonstrates how popular literary texts interpret social, political, and religious situations. Living in a semi-arid or dry land full of wildlife, the Kamba endured floods, epidemics, famine, and frequent attacks from rival groups, mostly by the *akavi* (the Maasai).<sup>500</sup> Thus, the Kamba highly esteemed proven leaders with multiple leadership qualities—intelligence, humility, kindness, courage, a sense of justice, and good oratory skills—since disasters (natural or manmade) were always expected and often considered the act of fate, gods, ancestors, malicious individuals, or evil spirits. Thus, strong, reliable community leaders were

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<sup>499</sup> Historically, the Maasai and Kamba each claimed to be the original owner of cattle. They fought endless battles, raiding for cattle and capturing women and girl-children.

<sup>500</sup> Often, famine resulted from drought, disease, and locusts.

crucial in preparing people mentally and psychologically to survive and thrive in the volatile circumstances of their daily lives. Faced with an inevitable catastrophe, people searched their souls, sought out wisdom from diverse sources—elders, prophets, rainmakers, *andu awe*,<sup>501</sup> seers, gods, ancestors, and, when *akavi* attacked, the *athiani* (scouts)—and made necessary adjustments.

Since life is full of dangers and pain, excessive display of emotion is discouraged. The circumcision ceremonies trained people to endure. Initiates had to muster all their courage to accept and undergo excruciating pain with emotional restraint. Done with no anaesthesia, *nzaiko nini* (circumcision) is very painful.<sup>502</sup> Enduring this pain is part of “growing up” (Mbiti 1969a; Makila 1982). Recognizing the importance of psychologically preparing the initiates to face the knife bravely, *ngakali* songs encourage and create a group spirit among the initiates. Those who faced the knife courageously—with a dry face, a closed mouth, and no writhing—were praised highly and called upon to inspire courage in future candidates and became legends by being incorporated into future *ngakali* songs. Symbolically, the new age-group of the *ambalû* is tough and strong like *akavi*. Some, like Kyende and Muito, cry from fear and pain or, worse, soil the *mwaiki*’s hands or his leather-handled knife with feces or urine, and shame themselves, their parents, their *avwikii* (“covers” or assistants), and their age-group. They pay hefty material fines, are mocked for life, and, due to their embarrassing performances, join the *ngakali* of the next age-group, in this case the *Ambalû* age-group.

Sung before and after the initiates had been “cut” (*kwaikwa*), the *ngakali* also contain sexual lessons for the new adults to prepare them for an active sexual life. Powerful images caution youths, and especially the boys becoming men, about their responsibility to exercise patience,

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<sup>501</sup> *mundu mue/andu awe*: a wise person, also called a medicine person

<sup>502</sup> See note 494 on *nzaiko*.

humility, and self-control in their actions, including sex for themselves and their wives, and not just think of themselves like a he-goat or hungry vulture:

The vultures, the vultures in the forest, the greed!

They grabbed and pulled the meat in their vulture way.

Sex is not just a matter of “throwing arrows” or “tearing the shield”. Future men, leaders, husbands must learn to leave behind childish, impetuous, and selfish behaviour, “grabbing and cutting meat” as they are now looked upon and depended on for wisdom and the protection of their age-group from “stones, laughter, and mockery”. The future of the entire group (and the tribe) depends on their military, social, and sexual behaviour. Thus, *ngakali* cautions young men and women about marriage, family life, and the confusion youthful excitement and sensual desire can cause. Older people know that youthful sexual excitement is short-lived whereas commitment to the community is crucial. Marriage is a commitment and a youth’s duty to his or her community. While sex may seem like a casual pastime, the initiates learn the centrality of sex in procreation since children are paramount to the Kamba and childlessness is a tragedy for a family and the community.<sup>503</sup> The responsibility to provide and care for children resulting from reckless sex is important for the continuation of the community. *Ngakali* thus articulates gender roles and communicate the roles and duties of man, wife, and children.

In the second version of this *ngakali*, the *myali*’s capacity to give multiple meanings to a word is demonstrated. Sometimes, a name, word, or concept is used to give multiple meanings, for instance, through the word “vultures” here. *The vultures, the vultures in the forest—the greed!—grabbed and pulled the meat in their vulture way!* refers to ominous predictions for the Kamba.

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<sup>503</sup> See Alembi’s discussion about the Abanyole, the Dahlin, and the Mberengwa in Zimbabwe (Alembi 2002; Dahlin 2001).

Can they unite against this “vulture invasion? At one level, “vultures” comments simultaneously on bad sexual behaviour and rapacious colonialism.

A notable addition, “the guns and forced labour,” alludes to the Kamba’s contact with guns and the vagaries of the new order. Though initially about a peaceful, safe topic—initiation—“people carrying guns on their shoulders and getting ... the paths that they take swept for them” refers to the insidious, impending disruption of orderly communal life. *Ambalû* encourages succeeding generations to forge on despite all obstacles. In this *mwali* [*ambalû*], the Kamba traditional society is a site of constant struggle, conflict, and war. Capricious climate, a hostile environment, dangerous wildlife, and periodic threats from *akavi* continually test a youth’s courage.

***Let it be known that my father has “cut” [initiated] me, ii! (Mwaakya Iiii Lili Asa niwambaika ii)***

Initiates thank their fathers or guardians for successfully bringing them into adulthood, putting them beyond *aimu*, and no longer leaving them home like children. They are now deemed and charged with the responsibility to go out into the world and be men and women. Being prepared for marriage, the young people hope for big houses, full of children and happiness, since children were important for a family’s and the community’s economic and financial security. So, *the house is big [and] inside I found the mother in a big house full of children* is the hope for the lives of all the initiates. This initiation ceremony for the *agemates* happened everywhere in Ukambani before the intense influence of Islam, Christianity, and formal education (light shone at *ngei* and the other *musyamo*).<sup>504</sup> As the initiates were welcomed home from their long journey from the initiation, they were also being prepared psychologically and physically for the difficulties ahead in their lives as adults.

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<sup>504</sup> Their entire world was quite limited.

After *nzaiko nini* and *nzaiko nene*, the initiates lived alone with their tutors in temporary forest huts for about three weeks to allow their wounds to heal before going home. A long, welcome-home ceremony awaited the initiates, who were welcomed symbolically and physically after their “long journey” from childhood to adulthood and into their homes as new people with added responsibilities. The ceremony lasted long due to the numerous symbolic obstacles laid across the way, e.g., domestic utensils, firewood, gourds, and other household goods. The initiates must wait till each obstacle is named, described, sung about, and removed before they proceed to the next item and so on till they “clear” all the obstacles to “get” home. Thus impeded, a journey of a kilometre could take hours or nearly a day.

You say ãã lîlî I’ve been blocked with firewood!

Yes, some dry and others not so dry x2

You say ãã lîlî I’ve been blocked with firewood!

You say ãã lîlî I’ve been blocked with a rope!...

You say ãã lîlî I’ve been blocked with a gourd!...

You say ãã lîlî I’ve been blocked with a pot!

You say ãã lîlî I’ve been blocked with a *muo*!...

You say ãã lîlî I’ve been blocked with a *nthungi*!...

You say ãã lîlî I’ve been blocked with a *kivingi*!

You say ãã lîlî I’ve been blocked with a maize!...

You say ãã lîlî I’ve been blocked with pigeon peas!

You say ãã lîlî I’ve been blocked with a *ndakai*!<sup>505</sup>

You say ãã, one of the hare/rabbit, iii

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<sup>505</sup> i.e., mud, earth, referring to land for ploughing, grazing, planting, and dancing

The physical “obstructions” put in the way of the initiate symbolize the complications that an adult faces in life; and onlookers occasionally suggested solutions. An adult must face and solve obstacles, calmly and surely. Food obstacles illustrate the different crops Kamba plant, their characteristics including maturity time, ways of harvesting, and preservation methods (cassava, cowpeas, beans, pigeon peas, maize, millet, etc.). Failure to take care of food crops could lead to hunger and “postpone the dawn”. One planted a diversity of plants including year-round crops so that, depending on the rain, a wise farmer would be guaranteed at least some harvest. One needed to learn how to tend and grow a variety of crops to safeguard against drought and how to manage the environment and land to preserve it for future generations. Land was sacred and, for the community to survive, had to be tended to carefully.

Psychologically and physically, the initiates were being prepared for the challenges and arduous work associated with adulthood. The obstructions also refer to the malevolent aspect of nature and the elements responsible for a series of great famines that had previously devastated the Kamba. The symbolic devices that *ngakali* songs employ to depict adulthood, manhood, womanhood as shaped by their history and nature sometimes appear to be both a fact- and symbol-based commemoration. Numerous written texts explore this theme through the ideas of Christianity, education, the new initiation into manhood, and the new measure of the individual initiate’s worth.

The texts exploring the new ways of initiating youths into adulthood are also a metaphor for the tribulations of besieged communities, displaced characters, and fragmented individuals that populate the neocolonial world. This is illustrated in Ngugi’s short story, “A Meeting in the Dark,” where the highly educated John cannot marry Wamuhu, the uneducated village belle he loves, has made pregnant, and secretly wishes to marry. John’s high education and apparently civilized

manners mask the inferiority he feels toward his traditionally initiated agemates who seem to exude the very confidence John lacks. His education does not make him man enough to face his father and his girlfriend or to take risks. Consequently, he ends his and Wamuhu's pathetic relationship when his bottled-up emotions find release in strangling Wamuhu and killing their unborn child. Education and Christianity break up many families, inhibit rational thinking, and produce confused youth with neither a Christian nor a traditional personal moral base. The theme of educated, but insecure youths—unsure of their identity, people, culture, and place in history—is explored in Thiong'o's *The River Between* (1965) and Were and Verhagen's *The Boy in Between* (1969); Kibera's *Voices in the Dark* (1970); Hinga's *Sincerity Divorced* (1971); Mugot's *Black Night of Quiloa* (1971); ole Kulet's *Is It Possible?* (1971) and *To Become a Man* (1972); Mang'ua's *Son of Woman* (1971); Watene's *Sunset on the Manyatta* (1974b); Mulwa's *Master and Servant* (1987[1979]); Owino's *A Man of Two Faces* (1979); Kahiga's *A Girl from Abroad* (1974) and *When the Stars are Scattered* (1979); Karamagi's *Bulemu the Bastard* (1980); Mudida's *The Bottle of Friends* (1980); Wamwere's *A Woman Reborn* (1980); Ogot's *The Graduate* (1980); Githagui's *Don't Worry My Son* (1981); Wambakha's *At the Crossroads* (1983); Gicheru's *The Double-Cross* (1983); Kitololo's *Shortcut to Hell* (1983); Tacca's *The Silent Rebel* (1984).

*Myalĩ*'s meaning lies beyond the lyrics. For instance, *myalĩ* allow an interpretation of places, events, and people through an interaction of various voices that sometimes confer to and about one another or with voices outside the text, i.e., to other contemporary discourses to capture human drama. *Myalĩ* invoke and transport their audiences to both familiar and new spaces while moulding the audience's identity.<sup>506</sup> *Myalĩ*, therefore, generate multiple and layered meanings, as part of the

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<sup>506</sup> Barber (1997a:347–262) identifies physical and imagined audiences.

politics of their production and consumption.<sup>507</sup> Like other popular songs, *myalĩ* are steeped in and draw upon contemporary environment and politics. Their structure and content permit us a glimpse of the day-to-day dynamics of ruling (among both the ruled and the rulers) that allows us a more nuanced interpretation of the nation from precolonial to neocolonial Kenya. *Myalĩ* do this by providing a panorama of experiences that disrupt the ruler/ruled or other binaries advanced in current colonization and post-colonization theories. The *myalĩ* cited here illustrate that while colonial and neocolonial states deliberately interfere with and reshape the social and economic structures of production and exchange, the state is not always coordinated or rationalized. Nor are the dichotomies of the ruled/ruler, colonized/colonial, and other such binaries always coherent or determinate. Thus, *myalĩ* and other popular forms explore the crucial and on-going gaps between the state's aspirations, goals, and achievements and the consequences for the specific communities.

*Myalĩ* and other songs are significant in Ukambani because people sing and dance in happiness and in sadness, e.g., singing or humming while working and doing chores—looking after livestock, working the fields, fetching water, going to the market, washing clothes. Among the *myalĩ*'s many functions are teaching, socializing, entertaining, praising, castigating, extolling, and instilling courage. *Ngakali* also teaches responsible social, sexual, political, and adult behaviour. Socialization continues from infancy through each of the different growth cycles. For example, *ngakali* teaches what society deems good, acceptable behaviour and instil pride in being members of the tribe and of a clan, each with its specific totems. Unacceptable traits or behaviour are discouraged, e.g., stealing, lying, cruelty, and insensitivity. For example, Kavano Mungili (the man in the above story) was severely punished and prohibited meat for several rainy seasons because

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<sup>507</sup> In pre-colonial Kenya, a *mwalĩ* was often first unveiled and launched at the *wathi* and, thus, released to the public. *Wathi* was pre-colonial Kamba's institutional cultural structure where people met to sing, dance, and socialize in a space called the *kituto* or *kinyaka*. The colonial government soon banned *wathi*. The *myalĩ* composer is an *ngũi* (narrator) and he has an assistant, his *mbasa*. For more about *mwalĩ*, *ngakali* and *wathi*, see Kieti and Coughlin (1990).

he had cut off part of a sheep's tail though the animal was still alive and then roasted and ate it. When asked, he proved his insensitivity by responding "but it is going to be killed and eaten today, so I only started a bit earlier". Such traditional values and aesthetics are antithetical to the unbridled greed and immorality by most of Kenya's leadership and the contemporary national tensions they inspire.

To find how to curb corruption in Kenya requires an understanding of its historical basis and origins. For instance, Transparency International's *Kenya Bribery Index 2008* concluded that Kenya's "Local Government category ('Other Local Authorities' and 'Ministry of Local Government') matched that of the police in first place with four bribes per ... [client] (per year), with the Provincial Administration the only other entry with a frequency above two" bribes/client per year (Transparency International 2008).<sup>508</sup> *Myali* abhor and condemn external disruptions like taxes and the occupying foreign power as well as internal disruptions like individual immorality, corruption, and treachery. The overseer—the one who should supervise and care for workers—starves, beats, and asks Kioko, "am I your food?" Kioko censures his inhumanity and crookedness: "Do you call people animals? Don't you know that we have eaten nothing since dawn?" Questions the overseer deems insolent. For his audacity, Kioko is fired and he, his family and society suffered.

*Myali* and other forms of orature configure and reconfigure precolonial Kamba histories as they did before the first white man was spotted in Ukambani with "a green twig high over his head".<sup>509</sup> That memorable, peaceful, and benign event would drastically change life forever for most

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<sup>508</sup> See also Mwai (2007) and the *Standard Newspaper* 24/3/2009

<sup>509</sup> The first white man spotted in Machakos came "with a green twig held high above his head" to indicate peace (*Mwali* 4). Naively, the Kamba welcomed him in their midst, showed him a spot to build himself a house, and treated him like a neighbour. Too late, the Kamba realized the peaceful gesture from the pale stranger was a ruse to disarm them. The stranger stole their land. Njama recounts a similar story of the first *chomba* (white man) in Kigumo forest near his grandfather's land (Karari's Hill) (Barnett and Njama 1966:86).

Africans, including the Kamba. *Myalĩ*'s discourse of return confronts the defining moments of disruption in Kamba traditional life with the entry of modernity through the main colonial pillars: trade, Christianity, and formal Western education. *Myalĩ* elliptically explore the daily challenges the Kamba face, including the onset of colonialism, unrelentingly challenging the assault on pre-colonial Kamba ceremonial systems and culture. For example, in "The Country, Kenya, Will Never Forget *Athungu*", the KAR draftees who fought for a "crown" did not know why they were killing people whose fault they did not understand. Nor did they think it just that, after many Africans perished in Burma and elsewhere, the survivors of the two World Wars returned to unrecognizable and unwelcoming homes.

Deemed good fighters loyal to the Queen, many Kamba men—not women—joined Britain to fight its enemies during the two world wars. These men travelled near and far—Tanzania, Egypt, Tunisia, and Burma, India—to fight the crown's enemies like the Japanese. According to the *ngũi*, he only miraculously survived to tell, through his *mwaliĩ*, the story of the hopelessness and "stench" of war and rotting corpses floating in the sea and of the bravery, wounds, and death of the Kamba and other Africans fighting side-by-side with British soldiers against Hitler and in faraway lands (Burma, India) whose people were as much the victims of the war as the *ngũi*.

In the community, *myalĩ* both ridicule and redeem; they mock transgressors and other erring members to reintegrate, not ostracise them, recognizing that despite their errors, they remain members of the community—similar to what Bakhtin noted about folk humour's capacity to: "deny, revive and renew" simultaneously as "bare negation is completely alien to folk culture" (Bakhtin Mikhail, *Rabelais and His World* (p.11). Thus, *Myalĩ* **named** and **shamed** corrupt elders who dared lie, steal, mislead the youth, or otherwise act irresponsibly. But *myalĩ* also criticized people and events outside Ukambani that affected the Kamba. Like the Kamba's *myalĩ*, the

Kikuyu's *muthirigu* was a type of song-dance that critiqued society, government officers, missionaries, and their African allies during the 1929 female-circumcision conflict in Kenya. Both *myalĩ* and *muthirigu* helped to discipline miscreants and maintain social cohesion. *Myalĩ* also sought peaceful solutions to disputes and other social issues.

In the *myalĩ* analysed herein, women feature as subjects, but not the creators of the genre. Even before the world wars, Kamba men went to war, and rarely, if at all, did women join them. So, during the wars and afterwards, men were deemed more suited to the new economy than women, though Kamba women worked hard in their homes and farms to ensure food security, took care of their animals, and built and repaired houses by removing and rethatching roofs. Pre-colonial Kamba women created *myalĩ*—often jointly with other men and women—but were rarely *ngũii*.

The genres examined in this and the previous chapter suggest the need to include them in the syllabi as part of a process to recognize and expand the notion of Kenya's history and literature.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

### **Section A: Conclusions**

Education can challenge and equip students with historical, cultural, politico-economic understanding of themselves and their society while allowing them to critically engage in the dynamics of their received moral norms, value systems and relations with and towards others in the world and the universe. A nation's literature, history and other syllabi must necessarily be sufficiently flexible to adapt to a fast-developing, techno-globalized world. The literature taught or deliberately not taught in Kenya between 1940 and 1998 demonstrated a continuum of the colonial paradigm inherited at independence, a paradigmatic continuum that implied: 1) few fundamental changes in the discriminatory educational policies regarding national languages and the distorted syllabi for history and literature; 2) little changed laws in the judiciary e.g., detention laws and human rights abuses; 3) few changes in the administration regarding policing, corporal and other punishments; and 4) an ongoing valorisation of Christianity over other religions. Consequently, the literature curricula exclude and deselect many texts from pre-colonial, British East African, colonial, and neocolonial Kenyan literature though they are part of Kenya's rich literary tradition and historiography. The fall in the number of selected texts that were taught was, eventually, so drastic that the temporary broadening of the gamut of texts chosen between 1966 and 1985 was completely undone when, by 1998, only two novels, one play, and a few short stories and poems were taught between Form I and Form IV.

The syllabi's obfuscation and silence about crucial aspects of Kenyan history are only *two manifestations* of wider efforts at historical denialism and falsification—especially of the country's independence struggles and the ensuing flag independence—largely to protect the new elite from criticism of its compromised past. The literature syllabi's sharp reduction in focus and numbers also developed as independent Kenya's ruling elite felt an intense political and ideological imperative to malign the real revolutionary leaders, blot out their contributions, and encourage Kenyans to “forget the past” to deflect and discourage challenges to the ruling group's credibility. The government suppressed and distorted history, stifled criticism, stymied national debate, dismantled presses, jailed critics and writers, banned books, thwarted efforts to investigate and punish criminal politicians, and, assassinated the most menacing and popular opposition leaders and activists: starting with the three freedom fighters—Field Marshall Bamuingi, General Chui and M. Kiugu immediately after independence, followed soon after by Pio Gama Pinto (1965), Tom Mboya (1969), and J.M. Kariuki (1975).

Kenyatta's rallying cry for *harambee* fused his frequent call to “forget the past” and the false affirmation that “we all fought for *Uhuru*” to rewrite Kenya's history and the popular memory of the independence struggle to eschew and deny class, exploitation, and the rapidly growing corruption throughout his administration. His “forget the past” mantra proved a poison blinding Kenyans and subverting their moral fibre even within families. The repercussions of this ideology and the accompanying repression have been grave for the country's intellectual, political, economic, social, and moral development, especially in education, publishing, and the arts. For instance, “political meetings” or plays were denied licenses, ordered stopped, or were stormed and shut down by the police, as when they demolished and burnt down Kamirithu Theatre in Limuru.

All this occurred while the leaders' impunity, corruption, and ostentatious wealth grew as J. M. Kariuki had presciently forewarned (p. 38). Kenyan leaders' style of discussion and debate—demagoguery, lies, *ad hominem* attacks, and other sophistries—has filtered down to the populace, leading to a frequent and significant lack of logical and critical thought in Kenyan public discourse. Sophistry has become the norm and, for many, so too, fear and self-censorship. All this gravely hinders the discussion and understanding of scientific, socio-economic, and political issues and the search for realistic solutions. Thus, the omissions and narrowing of the high-school English and Literature syllabi documented herein are merely *one symptom* of wider political, intellectual, and psychological problems with deep historical roots that gravely hamper the nation's ability to analyse objectively its resources and constraints and map out and execute adequate developmental and educational policies.

Between 1940 and 1998, the texts selected for Kenyan high schools' English and literature syllabi narrowed drastically in both the numbers and their political and geographical diversity. Whereas, on average between 1940 and 1984, high-school finalists in English and literature had read at least a novel or two, a play, and excerpts from books, poems, and other materials **each** year, the finalists in 1998 had read merely four main texts over **four** years—a dramatic decline! The selection process—never very inclusive—also eliminated most literature in the 8-4-4 system. In both the 8-4-4 and the earlier 7-4-2-3 systems, local and international literature, including orature, literature by travellers, settlers, and diverse Kenyans about Kenya's guerrilla war for independence have been deselected. Similarly, non-fictional writings by commentators, researchers, and colonial officers were also left out. Notably, in selecting texts for the English and literature syllabus, texts linked to Islam or Arabic have—like Kenya's coastal peoples—been targeted for exclusion, a

practice with a long history in Kenya. Indeed, it was to the coast where some *ngũi* were exiled for fomenting trouble for composing *myalĩ*.

Like other orature, the *myalĩ* discussed herein mirror society, challenging through humour diverse forms of oppression by using history, fiction, personal and social circumstances to combat the oppressive aspects of the political system. *Myalĩ*'s moral, cultural, and historical relevance is to reaffirm a people's dignity and morality. *Myalĩ* and similar orature from other Kenyan communities belong in high-school syllabi.

The plummeting quantity and drastically narrowing national and international focus of the selected texts manifests social, political, and cultural myopia, historical amnesia, and the outdated, non-innovative recycling of many texts year after year, hardly contributing toward the touted goals of education. The literature and history syllabi also distort—nay, obliterate—the history of Kenya's revolutionary struggle, e.g., by never teaching the autobiography of even one fighter. The course outline for history simply **skips** the entire decade of underground and guerrilla warfare and the colonial military assault aided by numerous collaborators, many of whom later became key members of the post-independence government.

Besides omitting the fighters' autobiographies other writings, and orature, the history syllabi exclude other works about the resistance and glosses over the events just before 1952, the guerrilla war, and the transition to independence in 1963. While the syllabi discuss major changes in Kenya's political scene following the return from India, Burma, Ceylon, and Malaysia of hundreds of native soldiers who defended the British crown in foreign lands, it is silent about how these soldiers created and joined the KLF movement and army, leading up to the guerrilla war that hastened independence. The syllabi thus promote a single story about Kenya's independence—including the *Mau Mau* myth and its fictions negating Kenya's freedom fighters' role in the

country's independence—and aggrandize the roles of Jomo Kenyatta, the Kenya African Union, and the Kenya African National Union.

While Kenya is an internationally renowned tourist destination, the literature aimed at Kenya's annual torrent of tourists studiously avoids mentioning facts and spaces related to the liberation struggle or earlier resistance, for example, by sanitizing the histories about Fort Jesus and other sites formerly used as torture chambers, jails, and detention camps for resisting natives. During the war for land and freedom, the peoples the colonial government designated as “the Kikuyu” during the emergency were dehumanized, demonized, and referred to as demented wild animals, rendering them easier to hate and kill as Mau Mau terrorists (not freedom fighters). The legacy of this demonization was alive throughout the period under study in colonial and neocolonial Kenya and remains an urgent national threat. This demonization is part of the moral and socio-political basis for the targeted ethnic violence that erupted after the disputed 2007 elections and reportedly killed over 1,200, injured thousands, displaced over 300,000, and destroyed thousands of businesses and homes between December 2007 and February 2008. Machete-wielding, gasoline-throwing, ethnic-cleansing mobs engaged in “spontaneous, organized, and retaliatory” violence against perceived enemy “tribes” including people who for generations had been neighbours (OHCHR 2008 and KTPJ 2010).

The school literature and history curricula focus only on the constitutional changes *after* independence and single out a few leaders while avoiding discussions that offer counter-discourses to statist narratives about the nation's history. Such alternative narratives have been systematically banned, silenced, and deselected from Kenyan high-school curricula. For example, the syllabi are silent about (*i*) the political and financial manipulations and resulting compromises that occurred during the 1960–1963 Lancaster conferences negotiating the new Kenyan constitution, which

tragically impaired the democratic project underway in Kenya and East Africa,<sup>510</sup> (ii) the earlier controversial political activities and figures (e.g., Me Ketalili, Waiyaki, Wangu wa Makeri, Koitalel, Muindi Mbingu) and, finally, (iii) Kenya's actual independence heroes who fought or were the underground logistical helpers and political organizers during the liberation struggle and guerrilla war of the 1950s and 1960s, many of whom were still in jails and detention camps across the country while Kenya's flag independence was negotiated. Other distortions also occur. For example, during the national holidays dedicated to Kenya's struggle for independence—1 June (*Madaraka* [independence] Day); 20 October (Kenyatta Day) and 12 December (*Jamhuri* [self-governance] Day)—Kenya's mass media propagates the single story of independence by inundating the airwaves with Kenyatta praise songs and poetry while omitting mentioning the underground resistance, the guerrilla war, and its actual heroes, e.g., Dedan Kimathi. Even when companies, government bureaucracy, the teachers' corps, and families deal with horrendous crimes by members, the cover-up continues in various disguises.

In a country fraught with competing factions in the fight for freedom, “forgetting the past” might have been useful had it been combined with a truth and reconciliation commission or something similar, to sincerely recognize, investigate past misdeeds and compensate victims for past injustices, including some redistribution of lands confiscated from freedom fighters during Kenya's guerilla war for independence; men and women who barely survived the detention centres and the “Pipeline” only to return scorned and shunned by relatives and friends. Most found their homes, land, cattle, and, sometimes, wives and children taken over or dispersed.

For now, however, “forget the past” lives on, and the nation pays the moral, social, and economic price.

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<sup>510</sup> for example, the exclusions and inclusions of those selected to travel to England to participate in the constitutional talks in Lancaster, UK (Odinga 1966:194–97, 220–22)

## Section B: Recommendations

Alongside other national policies, the national goals of education derive from a national identity and historiography confounded by silences, omissions, exclusivity, and official amnesia which—in education—is manifested in de-selecting literature texts and reading and engaging with the texts in ways that focus on some questions and avoided others during the annual national examinations. But diverse oral and written texts that speak to the creation and historical evolution of the Kenyan nation are crucial for the English and Literature syllabi. For too long, these texts have been left out of the education system, some of which ought to be **required readings** for all high school syllabi in the arts and sciences, for example, Odinga’s *Not Yet Uhuru*, J.M Kariuki’s *Mau Mau Detainee*, Kaggia’s *Roots of Freedom 1921–1963: The Autobiography of Bildad Kaggia* and Barnett and Njama’s *Mau Mau from Within*. Kinyatti, Ngugi, Gakaara, Munyori. Such texts would introduce Kenya’s anti-colonial and anti-imperial struggles to students, including the liberation war for freedom and the fighters to students to clarify the Kenya Land and Freedom Army’s (KFLA’s) motives, visions, and goals for the nation and demystify hitherto tabooed subjects like detention camps and what it means to sacrifice for a country.

The inclusion of excluded historical texts could also encompass visual and physical aspects of the liberation war, e.g., national liberation monuments like the Mau Mau villages, or the numerous detention camps scattered throughout Kenya where freedom fighters were held, tortured, maimed, and killed. Long overdue is a national Kenyan Museum of Revolution—ala Cuba, Mexico, China, Mozambique, Spain, Vietnam—with MinED-organized visits for schools as part of Kenya’s national goals of education. Such a museum would be a befitting tribute to the known and unknown gallant fighters who endured detention camps and the “Pipeline”. Important dates and events

during the struggle for freedom need to be identified and memorialized, e.g., 5 February 1954—the day KLFA’s Charter was launched in the forests and KLFA declared independence for Kenya because, by then, it had total control of the forest areas and some reserves in Central Kenya. Upper primary and high-school curricula could include visits to hitherto unrecognized historical sites—Kiburi House, the Mau Mau detention and pipeline camps, torture centres, museums and the sites of strategic meetings, key battles, forced villagization, and the mass burial of murdered people. Our children need to know!

More indigenous oral histories, technologies and literature from the country’s diverse peoples need to be included in the school syllabi to help promote their role in enhancing national literary and cultural expression as part of Kenya’s cultural heritage.

MinEd should redefine travel and settler literature as Kenyan, thereby recognizing and embracing a wider notion of what is Kenyan and, hence, allowing a wider text-selection for the high-school English and Literature syllabi. The rich Kiswahili literature of Kenya’s coastal peoples should also be included in the literature syllabus to begin to recognize and embrace a wider notion of what constitutes Kenya’s history and literature.

Future research might also consider the social, political, and literary aspects of the questions asked in the national examinations.

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# Appendices

## **Appendix 1. Examination Titles, Dates, and Texts**

### **Explanatory Note**

These examinations are divided into two, three, or four papers. For example, the **English** (or **English literature**) examination and, after the Great Nairobi Literature Debate 1968–69, the examination for **literature in English** have various papers—(1) novels, (2) plays, (3) poems, etc.—and, since 1982, (4) oral literature.

The data below is incomplete since some examinations, sub-sections or specific pages were occasionally missing from KNEC's and MinEd's files.

### **University of Cambridge, Local Examinations**

#### **A. Local Examinations School Certificate**

##### **1940**

##### **2 English Literature Alternative (1), (2 Dec)**

Section A: Shakespeare: *As You Like It*

Section B: Sheridan: *The Rivals*

Section C: *Golden Treasury of Longer Poems*; Coleridge: *Christabel*; Wordsworth, *Michael*

Section D: George Eliot: *Silas Marner*

Section E: H. G. Wells: *Mr. Polly*

Section F: (English Diaries)

Section G: (Readings from the scientists)

##### **1942**

##### **2 English Literature Alternative (1), (1 Dec)**

Section A: Shakespeare: *The Tempest* and *King Henry IV* (Part 1)

Section B: Daviot: *Richard of Bordeaux*

Section C: *An Anthology of Longer Poems*

Section D: R. L. Stevenson: *Kidnapped*

Section E: Hardy: *The Trumpet-Major*

Section F: Kinglake: *Eothen*

Section G: New and old essays

##### **1943**

##### **2 English Literature Alternative (1), (1 Dec)**

Section A: Shakespeare: *Henry V* and *Hamlet*

Section B: Sheridan: *School for Scandal*

Section C: *An Anthology for Modern Verse*

Section D: Scott: *Quentin Durward*

Section E: H. G. Wells: *Kipps*  
Section F: Goldsmith: *Essays*  
Section G: Hudson: *Far Away and Long Ago*

## 1945

### 2 English Literature Alternative (I), (3 Dec)

Section A: Shakespeare: *Twelfth Night*  
Section B: Sheridan: *The Rivals*  
Section C: *Anthology of Longer Poems*  
Section D: George Eliot: *Silas Marner*  
Section E: Hardy: *The Mayor of Casterbridge*  
Section F: R. L. Stevenson: *An Inland Voyage and Travels with a Donkey*  
Section G: Boswell: *A Shorter Life*

## 1945

### 3 English Literature Alternative (II), (3 Dec)

Section A (Drama)  
Shakespeare: *Twelfth Night*  
Shakespeare: *Anthony & Cleopatra*  
Sheridan: *The Rivals*  
Section B (Verse)  
“Goblin Market,” “Sohrab and Rustum,” “The Hound and Heaven”  
“The Old Vicarage, Grantchester”  
Tennyson  
Section C (Fiction)  
Scott: *The Fortunes of Nigel*  
Dickens: *A Tale of Two Cities*  
Hardy: *The Mayor of Casterbridge*  
Conrad: *The Rover*  
Section D (Other Prose)  
Boswell: *Life*  
R. L. Stevenson: *An Inland Voyage and Travels with a Donkey*  
A.G. Street. *Farmer’s Glory*

## 1946

### 2 English Literature Alternative (I), (2 Dec)

Section A: Shakespeare: *As You Like It*  
Section B: Galsworthy: *Strife*  
Section C: *The Golden Treasury* (Book IV): Keats, Wordsworth, Shelley  
Section D: Scott: *The Fortunes of Nigel*  
Section E: Conrad: *The Rover*  
Section F: (Eight Essayists - Steele to Stevenson): Addison, Goldsmith, Dr. Johnson, David Hume, Lamb, Stevenson, Steele and Hazlitt  
Section G: Kinglake: *Eothen*

## 1948

**2 English Literature Alternative (I), (29 Nov)**

- Section A: Shakespeare: *Macbeth*
- Section B: Drinkwater: *Abraham Lincoln*
- Section C: Stevenson: *Kidnapped*
- Section D: *An Anthology of Longer Poems*
- Section E: Conrad: *Youth and Gaspar Ruiz*
- Section F: *The Coverley Papers*
- Section G: Street: *Father's Glory*

**1949**

**2 English Literature Alternative (I), (28 Nov)**

- Section A: Shakespeare: *Macbeth* and Drinkwater: *Abraham Lincoln*
- Section B: Stevenson: *Kidnapped*, Conrad: *Youth and Gaspar Ruiz*, Street: *Father's Glory*

**1950**

**3 English Literature Alternative (1), (27 Nov)**

- Section A: Shakespeare: *Richard II*, Goldsmith: *She Stoops to Conquer* and *The Book of Narrative Poetry*
- Section B: Kipling: *Kim*, Dickens: *Great Expectations* and Adrian Bell: *Apple Acre*

**B. Local Examinations: Oversea Junior**

**1944**

**3 English Literature A, (4 Dec)**

- A: Shakespeare: *Richard II*
- B: *Ballads and Narrative Poems* (pp 49–176): “Robin Hood and the Widow’s Three Sons,” “The Execution of Montrose,” “The Day Dream,” “Lepanto,” and “The High Tide on the Coast of Lincolnshire”
- C: Shackleton: *South*
- D. Dwight: *The First Virginians* (basic English)
- E. Conan Doyle: *Rodney Stone* (simplified text)

**C. Local Examinations Syndicate: Oversea School Certificate**

**1951**

**3 English Literature A Mon (26 Nov)**

- Section A
  - Chaucer: The Prologue to the Canterbury Tales
  - Shakespeare: Julius Caesar
  - Goldsmith: *She Stoops to Conquer*
  - Sheridan: *The Rivals*
  - Coleridge, Samuel Taylor: *The Ancient Mariner*
  - Sir Thomas Malory: *Morte d’Arthur*
  - English (Narrative Poems): “The home of Michael and Isabel,” “Osseo,” “The race between Atalanta and Milanion,” “Sir Bedivere,” “The Albatross”
  - Michael Ryan
- Section B

Dickens: *Great Expectations*, Kipling: *Kim* and Conrad: *The Rover*  
(Junior modern essays)

**1952**

**3 English Literature A (1 Dec)**

Section A

Chaucer: *The Prologue to the Canterbury Tales*

Shakespeare: *Henry V*

Goldsmith: *She Stoops to Conquer*

Sheridan: *The Rivals*

Galsworthy: *The Silver Box*

Section B

C.S. Forester: *The Gun*

George Eliot: *Silas Marner*

Conrad: *The Rover*

(Junior Modern Essays)

**1953**

**3 English Literature A (30 Nov)**

Section A

Chaucer: *The Nun's Priest Tale*

Shakespeare: *As You Like It*

G. B. Shaw: *Arms and the Man*

*Anthology of Longer Poems*: "The Gazelles," "The Gates of Damascus," "The Eve of St. Agnes," "Deserted Village," "Resolution and Independence" and "Hyperion"

Section B

Buchan: *The Thirty-Nine Steps*

C.S. Forester: *The Gun*

George Eliot: *Silas Marner*

Joseph Addison, Sir Richard Steele, Eustace Budgell: *Coverley Papers from the Spectator*

**1954**

**3 English Literature (24 Nov)**

Section A

Chaucer: *The Nun's Priest Tale*

Shakespeare: *Macbeth*

G. B. Shaw: *Arms and the Man*

*An Anthology of Longer Poems*: "The Old Vicarage," "Grantchester," "The Gates of Damascus," "Michael," "The Prisoner of Chillon," "Hyperion" and "The Eve of St. Agnes"

Kinglake: *Eothen*

Section B

John Buchan: *The Thirty-Nine Steps*

H. M. Tomlinson: *Gallions Reach*

W. H. Hudson: *Far Away and Long Ago*

*De Coverley Papers*

**1955**

**3 English Literature A (23 Nov)**

Section A

Chaucer: The Prologue

Shakespeare: Macbeth

Oscar Wilde: The Importance of Being Ernest

An Anthology of Longer Poems

Kinglake: Eothen

**1956**

**English Literature Alternative (ii) (21 Nov)**

Part I: Shakespeare: *Julius Caesar*

Part II

Chaucer: The Nun's Priest Tale

Tennyson: Selected Poems (World's Classics OUP)

Sheridan: The Rivals

Galsworthy: Escape

Part III

Dickens: The Tale of Two Cities and Heyerdahl: The Kon-Tiki Expedition

**1957**

**6 English Literature Alternative (ii) A (20 Nov)**

Part I: Shakespeare: *Julius Caesar*

Part II

Chaucer: The Pardoner's Tale

Tennyson: Selected Poems (World's Classics OUP)

Sheridan: The Rivals

Shaw: Arms and the Man

Part III

Dickens: Great Expectations

H.G. Wells: Short Stories (First Series)

Heyerdahl: The Kon-Tiki Expedition

**1958**

**212/1 English Literature Alternative (ii) A (24 Nov)**

Part I: Shakespeare: *Macbeth*

Part II

Chaucer: *The Knight's Tale*

Tennyson: *Selected Poems* (World's Classics OUP)

Goldsmith: *She Stoops to Conquer*

Shaw: *Arms and the Man*

Part III

Dickens: *Great Expectations*  
H.G. Wells: *Short Stories* (Series 1)  
Melville: *Moby Dick*

**D.Local Examinations Syndicate: Oversea Higher School Certificate**

**1955**

**14 English 1 Composition (Mon 21 Nov)**

T.H. Huxley: *Lay Sermons* (1870) adapted  
Sir Hendry Knyvett: *The Defence of the Realme* (1596)  
Wlater De la Mare: “Night”  
James Elroy Flecker: “A Ship, and Isle, a Sickle Moon”

**1955**

**15 English Paper II A (Mon 28 Nov)**

Paper II(a) (Shakespeare)

Section A

Macbeth  
Twelfth Night  
Tempest  
King John  
Julius Caesar

**1955**

**17 English Paper IV (a) 1579–1700 (23 Nov)**

Paper IV(a) (Literature, 1579–1700)  
Thomas Deloney: *Thomas of Reading*  
Thomas Nashe: *The Unfortunate Traveller*  
Bacon: *The New Atlantis*  
Browne: *Religio Medici*  
Metaphysical Lyrics and Poems  
A Century of Lyrics  
Dryden: *All Our Love*  
(Poets: John Bunyan, Thomas Dekker, Robert Greene, John Lyly, Sir John Denham and Izaak Walton)

**1955**

**18 English Paper IV (b) 1780–1832 C (23 Nov)**

Paper IV(b) (Literature, 1780–1832)  
Coleridge, Byron, Keats, Shelley  
The Confessions of an English Opium Eater  
J. Austen: *Pride and Prejudice*  
Southey: *Life of Nelson*  
Songs of Innocence,

George Crabbe: Tales of the Hall  
Ann Ward Radcliffe, The Mysteries of Udolpho  
John Dryden, *A Song for St. Cecilia's Day*, (1687) or Fanny Burney: *Cecilia: Memoirs of an Heiress*  
Sir Walter Scott: *Red Gauntlet*,  
Erasmus Darwin: The Loves of the Plants  
Rousseau, Godwin, Kant, Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton

**1955**

**21 English Paper IV(e) 1900–1940 C (23 Nov)**

Paper IV(e) (Literature, 1900–1940)

Section A

Arnold Bennett: *Clayhanger*  
Hardy (poems)  
H. G. Wells: *Tono-Bungay*  
Shaw: Androcles and the Lion  
E. M. Forster: Aspects of the Novel  
Joyce: A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man  
T. S. Eliot: The Waste Land  
A Modern Symposium

Section B (mixed genres)

**1955**

**85 Subsidiary English A (28 Nov)**

Section I: Shakespeare: *Macbeth* and *Twelfth Night*

Section II

Chaucer: The Prologue  
Milton: Comus and Some Shorter Poems (Ed. Tillyard), pp 60–70

Section III

Bacon: The New Atlantis  
Bacon: A Century of Lyrics (Ed. D.C. Whimster)

Section IV

Keats: Lamia, the Eve of St Agnes, Odes  
Shelley: Selections (Ed. Thompson)  
Jane Austen; *Pride and Prejudice*

Section V

Arnold Bennett: *Clayhanger*  
Hardy: Selected Poems  
G.B. Shaw: Androcles and the Lion

**E. Local Examinations Syndicate: School Certificate and GCE**

**1959**

**212/1, English Literature Alternative (ii) A (23 Nov)**

Part I: Shakespeare: *Macbeth*

Part II

Chaucer: *The Knight's Tale* (In the modern trans. by Nevill Coghill)

Tennyson: *Selected Poems* (World's Classics, OUP)

Goldsmith: *She Stoops to Conquer*

Galsworthy: *Justice*

Part III

Trollope: *The Warden*

Arthur Grimble: *A Pattern of Islands*

Melville: *Moby Dick*

Paper 2 is missing.

**1960**

**212/1, English Literature Alternative (ii) A (21 Nov)**

Part I: Shakespeare: *Henry V*

Part II

Chaucer: *The Canon's Yeoman's Tale* (in modern trans. by Nevill Coghill)

*A Pageant of Longer Poems*

Gray: *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*

Wordsworth: *Lines Written above Tintern Abbey*

Sheridan: *The Rivals*

Galsworthy: *Justice*

Part III

Trollope: *The Warden*; Grimble: *A Pattern of Islands*; and Conrad: *The Rover*

Paper 2 is missing.

**1961**

**212/1, English Literature Alternative (ii) A (22 Nov)**

Part I: Shakespeare: *Henry V*

Part II

Chaucer: *The Clerk's Tale*, Sheridan: *The Rivals* and Bridie: *Mr. Gillie*

Part III

Hardy: *The Mayor of Casterbridge* and Conrad: *The Rover*

Paper 2 is missing.

**1962**

**1962 212/1 English Literature Alternative (ii) A (21 Nov)**

Part I: Shakespeare: *Twelfth Night*

Part II

Goldsmith: *She Stoops to Conquer*

Bridie: *Mr. Gillie*

Browning: *Balaustion's Adventure*

(*A Pageant of Longer Poems*)

Shelley: *Ode to the West Wind*; Keats: *Ode to a Nightingale*

Campbell: *Tristram da Cunha*

Part III

Hardy: *The Mayor of Casterbridge*

Durrell: *My Family and Other Animals*  
Charlotte Bronte: *Jane Eyre*  
Paper 2 is missing.

**1963**

**212/1, English Literature Alternative (ii) A (20 Nov.)**

Part I: Shakespeare: *Twelfth Night*  
Parts II & III missing

**1964 or 1967**

Wells: *The History of Mr. Polly*  
Fleming: *News from Tartary*  
Achebe: *Things Fall Apart*  
(page 7 missing.)  
Section B (p. 12 missing.)  
Shakespeare: *The Merchant of Venice*  
Bridie: *Jonah and the Whale*  
Obey: *Noah*  
Steinbeck: *The Pearl*  
Sherman: *Old Mali and the Boy*  
Shute: *No Highway*  
Durrell: *White Eagles over Serbia*  
Paper 2 is missing.

**1964**

**212/1, English Literature Alternative (ii) A (23 Nov)**

Part I: Shakespeare: *Macbeth*  
Part II  
Tennyson: *The Coming of Arthur*  
Tennyson: *The Holy Grail*  
Tennyson: *The Passing of Arthur*  
*The Golden Treasury of Longer Poems*  
Sheridan: *The School for Scandal*  
Drinkwater: *Abraham Lincoln*  
Part III  
Hardy: *Far from the Madding Crowd*  
Wells: *The History of Mr. Polly*  
Fleming: *News from Tartary*  
Paper 2 is missing.

**1964 (pages 3 and 7 missing)**

**212/1, English Literature Alternative (ii) A (23 Nov)**

Part I: Shakespeare: *Macbeth*  
Dryden: *All Our Love*  
Fielding: *Joseph Andrews*

Yeats: *Sailing to Byzantium*  
Part II  
Section A: Chaucer: *The Clerk's Tale*  
Section B  
Milton: *Samson Agonistes*  
Dryden: *All Our Love*  
Fielding Joseph Andrews  
W.B. Yeats: *Selected Poems* (ed. Jeffares)  
Joyce: *The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*  
Paper 2 is missing.

### 1965

#### 212/1 English Literature Alternative (ii) A (22 Nov)

Part I: Shakespeare: *As You Like It*  
pp 4 and following missing! but original printing shows:  
Part II  
Tennyson: *The Coming of Arthur*  
Tennyson: *The Holy Grail*  
Sheridan: *The School for Scandal*  
Part III  
Hemingway: *The Old Man and the Sea*  
Dickens: *A Tale of two Cities*  
Fleming: *News from Tartary*  
Paper 2 is missing.

### 1967

#### 212/1 English Literature Alternative (ii) A (21 Nov)

Part I: Shakespeare: *Julius Caesar*  
Part II  
Tennyson: *The Coming of Arthur and The Holy Grail*  
Sheridan: *The School for Scandal*  
Part III  
Hemingway: *The Old Man and the Sea*  
Dickens: *A Tale of two Cities*  
Fleming: *News from Tartary*  
Paper 2 is missing.

## F. Local Examinations Syndicate: Higher School Certificate

### 1958

#### 217/1 800/1 (19 Nov) composition and comment (passages)

Section A: G.M. Trevelyan, *A Layman's Love of Letters*  
Fulke Greville, *Life of Sir Philip Sydney*, c. 1610.  
Section B: Poetry: Two poems, early 19<sup>th</sup> C and early 20<sup>th</sup> C  
Paper 2 is missing.

**1958: 217/3 802/1 English (25 Nov) Paper III**

Chaucer: The Knight's Tale  
Spencer: The Faerie Queen (Book i)  
Milton: Paradise Lost (Books ix and x)

**1958 217/4, 803/1 English 21 Nov: Paper IV(a) Literature 1579–1700**

Marlowe: Tamburlaine, Part 1  
Thomas Dekker: The Shoemaker's Holiday  
Winny, J.: The Elizabethan Voyages  
W. T. Young: Poetry of the Age of Shakespeare  
John Bunyan, Grace Abounding  
Dryden: Poetry and Prose

**1958 217/5, 804/1 (21 Nov) Paper IV (b): English 1780–1832**

Poetry of:

Wordsworth; 2. Shelley; 3. Keats;  
Blake: Songs of Innocence and Experience  
Thomas Love Peacock: *Crotchet Castle*  
Jane Austen: Mansfield Park  
Lord Byron: English Bards and Scotch Reviewers  
Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Christabel*  
George Crabbe, *The Borough*  
Walter Scott, *The Antiquary*  
William Hazlitt: The Spirit of the Age  
Charles Lamb, *Essays of Elia*

*The Edinburgh Review*: Contributors: Hazlitt, Scott, Macaulay ... favouring the Whigs in parliament. Francis Jeffrey, Editor between 1802 and 1829 was CRITICAL of William Wordsworth and Samuel Coleridge. An article written by Henry Brougham that attacked the work of Lord Byron resulted in the writer replying with the poem *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*.

Paper 6 missing

**1958 217/7 806/1 (21 Nov) Paper IV(d) (Literature Since 1900)**

Vita Sackville-West, *The Edwardians*  
J. Conrad: *Lord Jim*  
Aldous Huxley: *Proper Studies*  
Reginald Pound: Biography of Arnold Bennet  
C.D Lewis: Selected Poems  
J. B. Priestley: I have been here before  
J. B. Priestley: Time and the Conways  
D.H. Lawrence: Selected Poetry and Prose  
Shaw: Major Barbara  
Housman: Last Poems  
E.M. Forster (general statement about life)

**1958 861/1 Subsidiary English (26 Nov)**

Section I

Shakespeare: Othello and The Winter's Tale

Section II

Chaucer: The Knight's Tale

Milton: Samson Agonistes

Section III

Bunyan: Grace Abounding

Dekker: The Shoemaker's Holiday

Section IV

Keats: Selected Letters and Poems (ed. Walsh)

Blake: Songs of Innocence and Experience

J. Austen: Mansfield Park

Section V

Conrad: *Lord Jim*

C. Day Lewis: *Selected Poems* (Penguin)

G.B. Shaw: Major Barbara

**1959**

**217/1 Composition and Comment**

Section A: Passages

E.M. Forster, Two Cheers for Democracy

John Earle, *Micro-Cosmographie* (1628)

Section B: Poetry: A.E. Housman, William Wordsworth

**1959 217/2, 801/1; English (25 Nov.) Paper 2: Shakespeare**

Antony and Cleopatra

Othello

Love's Labour's Lost

The Tempest

Henry IV, Part 1

**1959 217/3, 802/1; (24 Nov.) English Paper III (C)**

Chaucer: The Squire's Tale

Spencer: The Faerie Queene

Milton: Samson Agonistes

**1959 217/4, 803/1 English 20 Nov Paper IV(a) (Literature 1550–1660)**

Section I: Plays

John Lyly: *Campaspe*

Johnson: Every Man in his Humour

Webster, The Duchess of Malfi

Section II Poetry

Shakespeare: *Sonnets* and Herbert

Section III Prose

Sidney: Apology of Poetry

Winny, J: The Elizabethan Voyages

Walton: *Lives*  
Section IV: General

**1959 217/5, 804/1 (20 Nov) Paper IV (b) Literature 1780–1832**

Wordsworth and Coleridge: *Lyrical Ballads*  
Shelley: Selections  
Keats: Selected Letters and Poems  
Hazlitt: Selected Essays  
Thomas Love Peacock: *Crotchet Castle*  
Austen: *Mansfield Park*  
Cowper; Blake; Burns; Crabbe; Clare; Byron  
Fanny Burney; Lamb; De Quincey; Landor; Scott; Mrs Radcliffe

**1959 217/6, 805/1 English 20 Nov Paper IV (c) Literature of the Victorian Age**

Section I: Poetry

Tennyson  
James Joyce, *Ulysses*  
Matthew Arnold, *The Future*  
Emily Bronte, poems  
Hopkins

Section II

Dickens  
George Eliot  
Meredith  
Trollope

Section III

Carlyle  
John Stuart Mill  
Matthew Arnold  
William Morris  
Shaw

**1959 217/7, 806/1 English 20 Nov Paper IV (d) English since 1900**

Vita Sackville-West, *The Edwardians*  
Aldous Huxley: *Proper Studies*  
J. Conrad: *Lord Jim*  
Reginald Pound: Biography of Arnold Bennett  
C. Day Lewis: *Selected Poems*  
J. B. Priestley: I have been here before  
J. B. Priestley: Time and the Conways  
D.H. Lawrence: Selected Poetry and Prose  
Shaw: Major Barbara

**1959 805/1 English IV (c) (20 Nov) Literature of the Victorian Age**

Section I: Tennyson: *Ulysses*, Arnold: *The Future*, E. Bronte  
Section II: Hopkins, Dickens, G. Eliot, Meredith, Trollope

Section III: Carlyle, John Stuart Mill, Matthew Arnold, William Morris, Shaw

**1959 861/1 Subsidiary English (25 Nov)**

Section I

Shakespeare: *Othello* and *The Tempest*

Section II

Chaucer: *The Squire's Tale*

Milton: *Samson Agonistes*

Section III

Winnicott: *The Elizabethan Voyages*

Dekker: *The Shoemaker's Holiday*

Section IV

Keats: *Selected Letters and Poems*

Hazlitt: *Selected Essays*

J. Austen: *Mansfield Park*

Section V

Conrad: *Lord Jim*

C. Day Lewis: *Selected Poems*

G.B. Shaw: *Major Barbara*

**1960**

**217/1 Composition and Comment**

Section A: Poems

A. E. Housman, *Last Poems*

Section B missing

**1960**

**217/2 801/1 (23 Nov) Paper III (Shakespeare)**

King Lear

Julius Caesar

The Tempest

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Henry IV, Part 1

**1960**

**217/3 802/1 English (22 Nov) Paper III**

Chaucer: *The Squire's Tale*

Spencer: *Minor Poems*

Milton: *Samson Agonistes*

**1960**

**217/4, 803/1 English 18 Nov Paper IV(a) Literature 1550–1660**

Section I: Plays

Lyly: *Compaspé*

Johnson: *Every Man in his Humour*

Webster: *The Duchess of Malfi*  
Section II: Poetry  
Shakespeare: *Sonnets*  
(Cavalier poets) *English Verse*, Vol II  
Section III: Prose  
Sidney: *Apology for Poetry*  
Greene, Robert: *Pandosto*  
John Lyly: *Euphues*  
Walton: *Lives*  
Section IV: General

**1960**

**217/5, 804/1 (18 Nov) Paper IV (b): English 1780–1832**

Lyrical Ballads

Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Keats, Hazlitt, Cobbett  
J. Austen: *Pride and Prejudice*  
Beppo, Waverley, Lalla Rookh, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, *The Task*, *Confessions of an English Opium Eater*, and *Nightmare Abbey*

**1960**

**217/6 805/1 English IV (c) (18 Nov) Literature of the Victorian Age**

Section I: Tennyson; Arnold; E. Bronte, Hopkins  
Section II: Dickens, G. Eliot, Meredith, Trollope  
Section III: Carlyle, John Stuart Mill, Matthew Arnold, William Morris, Shaw

**1961**

**217/1 801/1 (20 Nov) Composition and Comment**

Section A (passages)

Virginia Woolf, *Granite and Rainbow*  
Ben Jonson, *Discoveries*  
C.S. Lewis, *De Descriptione Temporum*

Section B (poetry)

Yvonne Ffrench, *Daybreak in the Tropics*  
William Plomer, *The Scorpion*

**1961: 17/2 801/1 (27 Nov) Paper II (Shakespeare)**

King Lear  
Julius Caesar  
*A Midsummer Night's Dream*  
Henry IV, Part II  
*Measure for Measure*

**1961: 217/3 802/1 English (24 Nov) Paper III**

Section I: Chaucer: *The Pardoner's Prologue and Tale*  
Section II: Milton: *Comus and Some Shorter Poems* (Tillyard, ed.)  
Section III: Dryden: *Absalom and Achitophel* Part I

**1961: 217/4, 803/1 English IV (a) (22 Nov) Paper IV (a) (Literature 1550–1660)**

Section (i): Plays

Lyly: *Midas*

William Shakespeare: *Edward III*

Webster: *The Duchess of Malfi*

Section (ii): Poetry

Spencer: *Minor Poems*

Sidney: *Silver Poets of the Sixteenth Century*

Davies, Raleigh, Marvell

Section (iii): Prose

Greene: *Pandosto*

John Lyly: *Euphues*

Bacon: *Piers Penniless*

Section IV General (Shakespeare, and Cavalier Poets)

**1961: 217/5, 804/1 (22 Nov) Paper IV (b) (Literature, 1780–1832)**

Wordsworth, Keats

Byron: *Satirical and Critical Poems*

Crabbe: *Selections*

Charles Lamb, *Essays of Elia*

J. Austen: *Pride and Prejudice*

*The Triumph of Life; Tiriel*

Walter Scott: *The Heart of Midlothian*

*Nightmare Abbey, Kubla Khan, Tam O'Shanter, and Caleb Williams*

**1961: 217/6 805/1 English IV (c) (22 Nov) Paper IV (c) (Literature of the Victorian Age)**

Section I: Browning, Arnold, Rossetti Hopkins

Section II: Dickens, G. Eliot, Hardy, Thackeray

Section III: Ruskin, John Stuart Mill, Matthew Arnold, Butler, G.B. Shaw

**1961: 217/7, 806/1 English 26 Nov) Paper IV (d): Literature since 1900**

Wells: *Tono-Bungay*

Conrad: *Lord Jim*

Orwell: *Selected Writings*

Eliot: *Four Quarters*

O'Casey: *Juno the Paycock*

Wilfred Owen: *Collected Poems*

Shaw: *Pygmalion*

**1961: 861/1 Subsidiary English (27 Nov)**

Section I: Shakespeare

*King Lear* and *A Midsummer's Night's Dream*

Section II

Chaucer: *The Pardoner's Prologue and Tale*

Milton: *Comus and Some Shorter poems*

Section III

Greene, Robert: *Pandosto* (from *The Descent of Euphues*)

Johnson: *Every Man in his Humour*

Section IV

Keats: Poems of 1820

Charles Lamb: *Essays of Elia*

J. Austen: *Pride and Prejudice*

Section V

H.G. Wells: *Tono-Bungay*

D. H. Lawrence: *Selected Poetry and Prose*

G.B. Shaw: *Pygmalion*

**1962**

**217/1, 800/1; Composition and Comment**

Section A: passages

G.H. Vallins: *The Best English*

Sir Walter Raleigh: *The History of the World*

Lionel Trilling: *The Liberal Imagination*

Section B: Poetry

James Elroy Flecker: *War Song of the Saracens*

Thomas Love Peacock: *The War Song of Dinas Vawr*

**1962: 217/2, 801/2; English (26 Nov.) Paper 2: Shakespeare**

*Henry IV* Part II

*The Winter's Tale*

*Macbeth*

*Measure for Measure*

*Troilus and Cressida*

Paper 3 missing

**1962: 217/4, 803/4 English 4 (21 Nov) Paper 4 (Literature 1550–1660)**

Section I: Plays

John Lyly: *Midas*

William Shakespeare: *Edward III*

Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, *The Maid's Tragedy* (1622)

Section II: Poetry

Spenser: *Minor Poems and Amoretti*

Davies: *Orchestra*

Marvell (poems)

Section III: Prose

Nashe: *Pierce Penilesse*

Winny, J.: *Elizabethan Prose Translation*

Bacon

Section IV: General

Play by Marlowe, Johnson, Webster or Middleton

Elizabethan fiction

Donne ... revolutionary

**1962: 217/5, 804/5 (21 Nov) Paper 5 (c) (Literature, 1780–1832)**

Wordsworth, Keats, Crabbe (general)  
William Blake, *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*  
Charles Lamb, *Essays of Elia*  
Peacock: *Headlong Hall*  
J. Austen: *Emma*  
Percy Bysshe Shelley, *Adonais*  
Lord Byron: *The Vision of Judgement*  
Walter Scott, *The Antiquary*  
Robert Burns, *The Jolly Beggars*  
Samuel Taylor Coleridge: *Kubla Khan*  
Thomas Campbell: *The Pleasures of Hope*  
Thomas Moore: *Irish Melodies*  
Paper 6 missing

**1962 217/7, 806/7 English 21 Nov Paper 7 Literature since 1900**

D.H. Lawrence: *Sons and Lovers*  
L.P. Hartley, *The Go Between*  
Shaw: *A Prose Anthology*  
Osbert Sitwell: *The Scarlet Tree*  
W. H. Audens: *Poems Selected by Himself*  
Wilfred Owen (1893–1918)  
J. B. Priestley: *An Inspector Calls*  
Eliot: *The Family Reunion*

**1963**

**106/1 General Paper**

**1963: 217/2, 801/2; English (25 Nov) Paper 2: Shakespeare<sup>512</sup>**

*Macbeth*  
*Troilus and Cressida*  
*As You Like It*  
*The Winter's Tale*  
*Richard II*

**1963: 217/3 802/3 English Paper 3 (c) (22 Nov), Paper 3**

Chaucer: *The Franklin's Tale*  
Milton: *Paradise Lost* Books I and II  
Dryden: *Absalom and Achitophel*, Part I

**1963: 217/4, 803/4 English 4 (c) 20 Nov., Paper 4 (the period 1550–1660)**

Section (i): Drama  
Christopher Marlowe, *Edward II*

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<sup>512</sup> Paper 1 is missing.

Francis Beaumont (English), *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (1607)  
 Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, *The Maid's Tragedy* (1622)

Section (ii): Poetry  
 Edmund Spenser: *The Faerie Queen* (1589) (Book vi)  
 Sir Walter Raleigh,  
 Philip Sidney, *Astrophel and Stella* (1591)  
 Herbert, George: *Selected Poems*

Section (iii): Prose  
 Winny, J., *Elizabethan Prose Translation*  
 Haklyut: *Voyages and Documents*  
 Francis Bacon: *New Atlantis*

Section (iv): General  
 Elizabethan pamphleteers  
 Christopher Marlowe, *Hero and Leander* (1598)  
 Thomas Kyd, *The Spanish Tragedy* (1615)  
 John Lyly: Euphues (and his England)  
 King James' Bible  
 Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning*  
 Webster, *The Duchess of Malfi*

**1963: 217/5, 804/5 (20 Nov) Paper 5 (c) (Literature, 1780–1832)**

Wordsworth: *Prelude*  
 William Blake, *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*  
 Keats: *Selected Letters and Poetry*  
 Shelley: *Selected Poetry and Prose*  
 William Hazlitt (1778–1830) *Selected Essays*  
 Peacock: *Headlong Hall*  
 J. Austen: *Emma*  
*The Village*  
 Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Christabel*  
 Blake, *Poetical Sketches*  
 John Dryden, *A Song for St. Cecilia's Day*, (1687) or Fanny Burney: *Cecilia: Memoirs of an Heiress*  
 Charles Lamb, *Essays of Elia*  
 Moliere, *Don Juan*  
 Walter Scott, *The Heart of Midlothian*

**1963 217/6, 805/6; English 6 (c) (20 Nov) Paper 6: (Literature of the Victorian Age)**

Section I: Hardy, Browning "Fra Lippo Lippi," Tennyson, Swinburne  
 Section II: Dickens, Emily Bronte, Charlotte Bronte, George Eliot, Trollope  
 Section III: Carlyle, Darwin, Macaulay, Newman, Wilde

**1963 217/7, 806/7 English 20 Nov Paper 7: Literature since 1900**

Lawrence: *Sons and Lovers*  
 Hartley: *The Go Between*  
 Shaw: *A Prose Anthology*

Grave: *Goodbye to All That*  
W. H. Audens: *Poems selected by Himself*  
Eliot: *The Family Reunion*  
Yeats: *Selected Poems*  
J. B. Priestley: *An Inspector Calls*

**1963 861/1 Subsidiary English Literature A (25 Nov) English Literature: Subsidiary Subject**

Part I

Tomlinson: *The Sea and the Jungle*  
Cowper: *The Task*

Part II: Keith Douglas: "Time Eating"

Part III

Chaucer: *The Prologue* and *The Franklin's Tale*  
Shakespeare: *Macbeth* and *The Winter's Tale*

Part IV

Milton: *Paradise Lost*, Books I and II  
Spenser: *The Faerie Queene* Book VI  
Herbert: *Selected Poems* (ed. Brown)  
J. Winny (ed.): *Elizabethan Prose Translation*  
Sir Thomas North (Trans): *Lives of the Noble Greeks and Romans*  
Philemon Holland (Trans): *Livy's Roman History*  
Keats: *Selected Letters and Poems*  
Hazlitt: *Selected Essays* (ed. Sampson)  
Jane Austen (two novels)  
Tennyson, poems  
Dickens (two novels)  
Wilde (plays)  
G.B. Shaw: *A Prose Anthology* (Ed. Burton)  
Aldous Huxley: *Selected Essays*  
T.S. Eliot: *The Family Reunion*  
L.P. Hartley (two novels)  
Auden: *Poems Selected by Himself* ("The Watchers," "One Evening," "The Capital,"  
"Another June," "Surgical Ward," "Miranda's Song" and "A Permanent Way")

**G. Local Examinations Syndicate: Higher School Certificate and GCE (Oversea Centres)**

**1964**

**217/2, 801/2 English Paper 2 A (26 Nov); Paper 2 Shakespeare: Section A<sup>513</sup>**

Hamlet  
Coriolanus  
Much Ado About Nothing  
As You Like It  
Richard II

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<sup>513</sup> Paper 1 is missing.

**217/3, 802/3 English Paper 3 C (25 Nov) Paper 3; Sections I to IV**

Chaucer: *The Franklin's Tale*  
Milton: *Paradise Lost*, Books I and II  
Pope: *The Rape of the Lock*  
Paper 4 missing.

**217/5, 804/5 English Paper 5 C (23 Nov) Paper 5: (Literature 1780–1832)**

Wordsworth: *The Prelude*  
Coleridge: *Poetry and Prose*  
Keats: *Poems of 1820*  
Hazlitt: *Selected Essays*  
Austen: *Persuasion*  
Scott: *The Antiquary*  
Shelley: *Selected Poetry and Prose*  
Coleridge: *The Ancient Mariner*  
Burke, Edmund: *Reflections on the French Revolution*  
Lord Byron: *Childe Harold, Confessions of an English Opium Eater*  
Thomas Love Peacock: *The Four Ages of Poetry*  
W. Blake: *Songs of Innocence and Experience*

**217/6, 805/6; English 6 C (23 Nov) Paper 6: (Literature of the Victorian Age)**

Section I: Tennyson, Hardy, Swinburne  
Section II: Dickens, Eliot, Trollope  
Section III: Carlyle, Dr. Johnson Macaulay, Newman, Shaw

**217/7, 806/7 English Paper 7 C (23 Nov) Paper 7: Literature since 1900**

Section II

Lawrence: *St. Mawr*  
Lawrence: *The Virgin and the Gipsy*  
Conrad: *Lord Jim*  
Huxley: Selected essays  
Graves: *Goodbye to all That*  
Eliot: Selected poems  
Shaw: *The Devil's Disciple*

Section II

Chaucer: *The Franklin's Tale*  
Milton: *Paradise Lost*, Books I and II  
Dryden: *Absalom and Achitophel*, Part I

**861/1 Subsidiary English A (26 Nov) Paper 1: Subsidiary Subject**

Part I: Bertrand Russell: *Unpopular Essays*; Walter de La Mare, *Goliath*  
Part II: L. Untermeyer: *Portrait of a Machine*  
Part III  
Chaucer: *The Prologue* and *The Franklin's Tale*  
Shakespeare: *Hamlet* and *As You Like It*  
Part IV

Milton: *Paradise Lost* Books I and II  
Spenser: *The Faerie Queene* Book VI  
Herbert: *Selected Poems* (Ed. Brown)  
Winny (ed.): Elizabethan Voyages  
Keats: Selected Letters and Poems  
Hazlitt: *Selected Essays* (Ed. Sampson)  
Tennyson: *Selected Poems* (Ed. Blunden)  
Dickens, J. Austen, Shaw, Conrad  
Aldous Huxley: *Selected Essays*  
T.S. Eliot: Selected Poems

**1965**

**Paper 1 missing**

**1965: 217/2, 801/2 English Paper 2 A (25 Nov) Paper 2 Shakespeare:**

Section A and B:

Hamlet  
Coriolanus  
Much Ado About Nothing  
Henry V  
The Tempest

**1965: 217/3, 802/3 English Paper 3 C (24 Nov) Paper 3 (Chaucer and Other Major Authors)**

Part I

Chaucer: The Clerk's Tale  
Milton: Samson Agonistes  
Pope: The Rape of the Lock  
Fielding: Joseph Andrews  
Coole Park and Ballylee (1931)  
Joyce: A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man

Part II Section A Chaucer, *The Clerk's Tale*

Section B

Milton: Samson Agonistes  
Pope: The Rape of the Lock  
Fielding: Joseph Andrews

Section C

W. B. Yeats, Selected Poems (Ed. Jeffares)  
Joyce: A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man

**1965: 217/7, 806/7 English Paper 7 C (22 Nov) Paper 7: (Literature since 1900)**

Section A

D.H. Lawrence: St. Mawr  
D.H. Lawrence: The Virgin and the Gipsy  
Conrad: Lord Jim  
Huxley: Selected Essays  
George Bourne: Change in the Village

Shaw: The Devil's Disciple  
Eliot: Selected Poems  
Whiting: Marching Song and Saint's Day  
(page 4 belongs here)  
Ijimere: The Imprisonment of Obatala and Everyman  
Paton: Cry the Beloved Country  
Abrahams: Mine Boy  
Soyinka: Kongi's Harvest  
Section B  
Shakespeare: *Julius Caesar*  
Ngugi: The River Between  
Mphahlele: Down Second Avenue  
Laye: The African Child  
Achebe: No Longer at Ease  
Wollman and Spencer: Modern Poems for the Commonwealth  
Section C: Keith Douglas: "Time Eating"

**1966 Paper 1 missing**

**1966: 217/2, 801/2 English Paper 2 A (24 Nov) Paper 2: Shakespeare**

Sections A and B

*Othello*  
*Anthony and Cleopatra*  
*Love's Labour's Lost*  
*The Tempest*  
*Henry V*

**1966: 217/3, 802/3 English Paper 3 C (23 Nov) Paper 3 (Chaucer and other major authors)**

**Part I**

Chaucer: *The Clerk's Tale*  
Milton: *Samson Agonistes*  
Shakespeare: *Anthony and Cleopatra*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *The Tempest* and *Henry V*

**1967 Papers 1 and 2 missing**

**217/3, 802/3 English Paper 3 C (22 Nov); Paper 3: Chaucer and other major authors**

Part I, Sections B and C

Chaucer: The Canon's Yeoman's Tale  
Milton: Paradise Lost  
Dryden: All Our Love  
Johnson: Selections  
Hardy: Last Words to a Dumb Friend  
Forster: A Passage to India  
Furbank (ed.) Selected Poems of Thomas Hardy

**1968**

**Paper 1 missing**

**1968 801/2 916/2 English Paper 2 A (21 Nov) Literature in English (East Africa)**

Paper 2: Plays

Section A: Shakespeare

*Henry IV* Part 1,

*Othello*

*Anthony and Cleopatra*

Section B

Marlowe: *Dr Faustus*

Johnson: *Volpone*

Congreve: *Love for Love*

Section C

Sean O'Casey: *Juno and the Paycock: A Tragedy in Three Acts* (1932)

Shaw: *The Apple Cart*

Wesker: *Roots*

Section D

Miller: *The Crucible*

Brecht: *Galileo* (In Translation)

Sophocles: *Antigone* (In Translation)

**1968**

**801/3 917/3 English Paper 3 B (22 Nov) Literature in English (East Africa)**

Paper 3 Novels and Short Stories

Section A

Dickens: *Hard Times*

Hardy: *The Mayor of Casterbridge*

Conrad: *Heart of Darkness*

Section B

Forster: *A Passage to India*

Cary: *Mister Johnson*

Green: *The Heart of the Matter*

Section C

Voltaire: *Candide* (In Translation)

Dostoevsky: *Poor Folk* (In Translation)

Harsek: *The Good Soldier Schweik* (in translation)

Section D

Steinbeck: *The Grapes of Wrath*

Gordimer: *A World of Strangers*

Peters: *The Second Round*

**H. Local Examinations Syndicate: GCE**

**1973**

**800/8 Advanced Level English 8 (22 June), Paper 8 (Literature since 1900)<sup>514</sup>**

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<sup>514</sup> Since this is paper 8, it seems that the other seven papers may be missing. It is also unclear whether examinations under this title occurred in other years.

Section I

Katherine Mansfield: *In a German Pension*  
Orwell: Selected Writings  
Frost's poetry  
Thom Gunn, *The Sense of Movement* and Ted Hughes, *Lupercal*  
Wilfred Owen (poetry)  
O'Casey (plays)

Section II

Ford Madox Ford: *The Good Soldier: A Tale of Passion* (Ford's title, *The Saddest Story* while publisher imposed the title *The Good Soldier*, Thomas C. Moser (Editor)  
D.H. Lawrence: *The Rainbow*  
F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*  
Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World* (1932) and *Island*  
Ford Madox Ford, *The Good Soldier*

Section III

General

**I. Local Examinations Syndicate in collaboration with the East African Examinations Council: Joint Examination for the East African Certificate of Education and GCE<sup>515</sup>**

**1969 (pages 8–11 missing)**

**208/1 East Africa Literature in English A (21 Nov)**

Section A

Bolt: *A Man for all Seasons*  
Bridie: *Tobias and the Angel*  
Golding: *Lord of the Flies*

Section B

Shakespeare: *The Merchant of Venice*  
Bridie: *Jonah and the Whale*  
Obey: *Noah*  
Steinbeck: *The Pearl*  
Sherman: *Old Mali and the Boy*  
Shute: *No Highway*  
Durrel: *White Eagles Over Serbia*  
Maurice Wollman (ed.) *Ten Twentieth-Century Poets*  
Editor(s): *Rhyme and Reason*

Paper 2 missing

**1970 All papers missing**

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<sup>515</sup> Though the East African Examinations Council was short-lived. It was not clear from the files whether there were any other examinations from prior years that used this title.

**J. Local Examinations Syndicate: East African Certificate of Education (EACE)  
and School Certificate Examination (in Collaboration with the EA Exams  
Council**

**1971**

**208/1 Literature in English (East Africa) Nov/Dec Paper 1**

Section A

Bolt: A Man for all Seasons

Ijimere: The Imprisonment of Obatala and Everyman

Paton: Cry the Beloved Country

Mongo Beti: Mission to Kala

Section B

Shakespeare: *Julius Caesar*

W. Soyinka: The Lion and the Jewel

W. Soyinka: The Trials of Brother Jero

Laye: The African Child

Bradbury: Fahrenheit 451

Ngugi: The River Between

General question from Wollman and Spencer

*Children's Song* by R. S. Thomas from Wollman and Spencer (eds.), *Modern Poems for the Commonwealth*

Paper 2 is missing.

**1972**

**208/1 Literature in English Nov/Dec**

**Section A**

Part I

Soyinka: Kongi's Harvest

Shakespeare: *Julius Caesar*

Part II

Browning: Balaustion's Adventure

Coleridge, Samuel Taylor: *The Ancient Mariner*

Arnold, Balder from A Pageant of Longer Poems

Goldsmith: *She Stoops to Conquer*

Drinkwater: *Abraham Lincoln*

Part III

Hardy: *Far From the Madding Crowd*

Wells: *The History of Mr. Polly*

C. Bronte: *Jane Eyre*

Paper 2 missing

**1973**

**208/1 East Africa Literature in English Nov/Dec.**

Section A

Soyinka: Kongi's Harvest

Gogol: The Government Inspector

Abrahams: *Mine Boy*  
Achebe: *No Longer at Ease*  
Section B  
Shakespeare: *Romeo and Juliet*  
Mphahlele: *Down Second Avenue*  
Oyono: *The Old Man and the Medal*  
Amadi, Elechi: *The Concubine*  
Nwanko: *Danda*  
Okot p'Bitek: *Song of Lawino* and *Song of Ocol*  
Paper 2 missing

## **East African Examinations Council Certificates**

### **A. East African Certificate of Education (EACE) and School Certificate Examination**

**1974**

#### **208/1 Literature in English Nov/Dec**

##### Section A

The Brother's Capek: *The Insect Play*  
Gogol: *The Government Inspector*  
Achebe: *No Longer at Ease*  
W. Somerset Maugham: *The Moon and the Sixpence*

##### Section B

Oyono: *The Old Man and the Medal*  
Nwakwo: *Danda*  
Amadi: *The Concubine*  
Shakespeare: *Romeo and Juliet*  
Okot p'Bitek, *Song of Lawino* and *Song of Ocol*  
Poem A Prayer for my daughter by W.B. Yeats from Wollman and Spencer (eds.), *Modern Poems for the Commonwealth*

Paper 2 is missing.

### **B. East African Examinations Council; East African Certificate of Education (EACE)**

**1975**

#### **208/1 Literature in English Nov/Dec Paper 1**

##### Section A

Shakespeare: *Coriolanus*  
The Brother's Capek: *The Insect Play*  
W. Somerset Maugham: *The Moon and the Sixpence*  
Elechi Amadi: *The Concubine*

##### Section B

Gogol: *The Government Inspector*  
W. Soyinka: *The Lion and the Jewel*

Peter Abrahams: *Mine Boy*

Okot p'Bitek, *Song of Lawino* and *Song of Ocol*

Richard Hughes: *A High Wind in Jamaica*

Poem: Frost: *The Exposed Net* from Wollman and Spencer (eds.) *Modern Poems for the Commonwealth*

Paper 2 missing

## 1976

### 208/1 Literature in English Nov/Dec Paper 1

#### Section A

W. Soyinka: *The Lion and the Jewel*

Shakespeare: *Coriolanus*

Chinua Achebe: *Things Fall Apart*

W. Somerset Maugham: *The Moon and the Sixpence*

#### Section B

James Ngugi: *The River Between*

Abrahams: *Mine Boy*

George Orwell: *Animal Farm*

James Bridie: *Tobias and the Angel*

Richard Hughes: *A High Wind in Jamaica*

Poems (i) *A Child Ill* by John Betjeman and (ii) *One Hard Look* by Robert Graves from Wollman and Spencer (eds.), *Modern Poems for the Commonwealth*

Paper 2 is missing.

## 1977

### 208/1 LIE Nov/Dec Paper 1

#### Section A

J. Ruganda: *The Burdens*

W. Soyinka: *The Lion and the Jewel*

Chinua Achebe: *Things Fall Apart*

M. Mwangi: *Kill Me Quick*

#### Section B:

W. Shakespeare: *Coriolanus*

James Ngugi: *The River Between*

George Orwell: *Animal Farm*

James Bridie: *Tobias and the Angel*

Abrahams: *Mine Boy*

Poem: *I love you my gentle one* by Ralph Bitamazire from Cook and Rubadiri (eds.), *Poems from East Africa*. (Page missing.)<sup>516</sup>

### 1977 Paper 2 missing

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<sup>516</sup> Though taught and part of the syllabus, the poems by Angira and Nturu were deliberately excluded from the exam because MinEd ruled their poems immoral (interview with Mr. Indongole, KNEC).

**1978**

**208/1 LIE Nov/Dec Paper 1**

Section A

J. Ruganda: *The Burdens*  
James Ngugi: *The River Between*  
James Bridie: *Tobias and the Angel*  
Meja Mwangi: *Kill Me Quick*

Section B

W. Shakespeare: *Merchant of Venice*  
Chinua Achebe: *Things Fall Apart*  
George Orwell: *Animal Farm*  
W. Soyinka: *The Lion and the Jewel*  
Poem: *A Freedom Song*, In: *Poems from East Africa* by Cook and Rubadiri, eds.

**1978 Paper 2 is missing.**

**1979 All papers missing**

**1980**

**208/1 LIE Nov/Dec Paper 1**

Section A

F. Imbuga: *Betrayal in the City*  
Shaw: *Androcles and the Lion*  
Amadi, Elechi: *The Concubine*  
Flora Nwapa: *Efuru*  
Chinua Achebe: *Things Fall Apart*

Section B

W. Shakespeare: *Merchant of Venice*  
Okot p'Bitek: *Song of Lawino* and *Song of Ochol*  
George Orwell: *Burmese Days*  
V.S. Naipaul: *Miguel Street*  
Gogol: *The Government Inspector*  
G. Orwell: *Killing the Elephant*

**1981**

**208/1 LIE Nov/Dec Paper 1**

Section A

F. Imbuga: *Betrayal in the City*  
Shaw: *Androcles and the Lion*  
Camara Laye: *African Child*  
Chinua Achebe: *No Longer at Ease*

Section B

W. Shakespeare: *Julius Caesar*  
Okot p'Bitek: *Song of Lawino* and *Song of Ochol*  
George Orwell: *Burmese Days*  
V.S. Naipaul: *Miguel Street*

Gogol: *The Government Inspector*  
Poems from Cook and Rubadiri (eds.), *Poems from East Africa*<sup>517</sup>

**1983**

**208/1 LIE Nov/Dec Paper 1 A (Oral Literature) Oral Literature papers introduced and students learning excerpts from:)**

Section A

Ogotu and Roscoe: *Keep My Words*  
Taban Loliyong: *Popular Culture in East Africa*  
Okot p'Bitek: *Horn of My Love* and *Sons of Sango*  
Ngumbu Njururi: *Kikuyu Proverbs*  
Rose Mwangi: *Kikuyu Folktales*  
Osogo: *The Bride Who Wanted a Special Present*  
S.S. Farsi: *Swahili Sayings*, volumes 1 and 2

Part 2 A

Ngugi: *The River Between*  
Joe de Graft: *Muntu*  
Grace Ogot: *Land Without Thunder*

Section B

Chinua Achebe: *No Longer at Ease*  
W. Shakespeare: *Julius Caesar*  
W. Soyinka: *Kongi's Harvest*

**C.University of Cambridge, Local Examinations Syndicate in collaboration with the East African Examinations Council; East African Advanced Certificate of Education (EAACE)**

**1970**

**801/1 915/1 East African LIE Paper 1 A (18 Nov) Paper 1 (Prose and Poetry)**

Section A

George Orwell, *Selected Essays*. A passage describing an incident that occurred when serving in the Burmese police.

John Steinbeck, *The Moon is Down*

Section B

Gabriel Okara: "Piano and Drums"

Paper 2 is missing.

**1970**

**801/3 917/3 Literature in English (East Africa) Paper 3 A (20 Nov) Paper 3 (Novels and Short Stories)**

Section A

Dickens: *Bleak House*  
Thomas Hardy: *The Mayor of Casterbridge*  
Bronte: *Wuthering Heights*

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<sup>517</sup> *ibid.*

Section B

E. M. Forster: *A Passage to India*  
D. H. Lawrence: *Sons and Lovers*  
Golding: *Free Fall*

Section C

Voltaire: *Candide* (in translation)  
Camara Laye: *The Radiance of the King* (in translation)  
N. Kazantzakis: *Zorba the Greek* (in translation)

Section D

Naipaul: *A House for Mr. Biswas*  
Ngugi: *A Grain of Wheat*  
Peter Abrahams: *A Wreath for Udomo*

**1971 missing**

**1972 missing**

**1973**

**Papers 1 and 2 missing**

**801/3 917/3 Literature in English (East Africa) Nov/Dec, Paper 3 (Novels and Short Stories)**

Section A

Eliot: *The Mill on the Floss*  
Fielding: *Joseph Andrews*  
Bronte: *Jane Eyre*

Section B

Koestler: *Darkness at Noon*  
Powys: *Mr Weston's Good Wine*  
Green: *The Quiet American*

Section C

Camus: *The Plague*  
Turgenev: *Fathers and Sons*  
Gogol: *Dead Souls*

Section D

Hemingway: *For Whom the Bell Tolls*  
Armah: *The Beautiful Ones are Not Yet Born*  
Salinger: *The Catcher in the Eye*

**D. East African Examinations Council; East African Advanced Certificate of Education (EAACE)**

**1975**

**P310/1 S310/1, Literature in English (Nov/Dec) Paper 1 (Prose and Poetry)**

Section I: "A Boy's Will" (A short story by Janet Frame (New Zealand))

Section II: A Passage from *A Sermon* by James Kweggir Aggrey

Section III (Poetry); "A brother" by Edwin Thumboo (Singapore)

Papers 2 and 3 missing

**1976**

**P310/1 S310/1, Literature in English (Nov/Dec) Paper 1 (Prose and Poetry)**

Section I: Lewis Nkosi: "African in Negro American Poetry" (a passage)

Section II: George Orwell: *A Hanging* (Passage)

Section III: Robert Frost: *The Road Not Taken*

**P310/2 S310/2, Literature in English Paper 2 (Nov/Dec) Paper 2 (Plays)**

Section A: Shakespeare: *Richard III* and *Anthony and Cleopatra*

Section B

Aeschylus: *Oresteia*

Johnson: *Volpone*

Sheridan: *The School for Scandal*

Section C

T.S. Eliot: *Murder in the Cathedral*

G.B. Shaw: *Barbara*

Bolt: *A Man for All Seasons*

Section D

Brecht: *The Good Woman of Setzuan*

Arthur Miller: *The Crucible*

Athol Fugard: *The Blood Knot*

Paper 3 missing

**1977 All three papers (P1, P2, P3) missing**

**1978**

**P310/1 S319/1, Literature in English (Nov/Dec) Paper 1 (Prose and Poetry)**

Section I

"The Aims of Liberal Studies in the Sixth Form." Introductory Lecture to conference on the subject of general studies in the sixth form organized by Hinmarch at the Institute of Education, Makerere University, January 2–4, 1963.

Section II: Passage by Janis Mwosa

Section III: Kamara Das: "My Grandmother's House" A. D. Amateshe: "Drowned in the Murmuring Crowd"

**1978**

**P310/2 S319/2, Literature in English (Nov/Dec) Paper 2 (Plays)**

Section A

Shakespeare: *Richard III*

Shakespeare: *Anthony and Cleopatra*

Section B

Sophocles: *Theban Plays*

Webster: *The Duchess of Malfi*

Moliere: *The Imaginary Invalid*

Section C

T.S. Eliot: *Murder in the Cathedral*

G.B. Shaw: *Saint Joan*  
S. Beckett: *Waiting for Godot*

Section D

W. Soyinka: *The Road*  
A. Miller: *The Crucible*  
A. Fugard: *The Blood Knot*

**1978**

**P310/2 319/3, Literature in English Paper 3 (Nov/Dec) Paper 3 (Novels and Short Stories)**

Section A

J. Swift: *Gulliver's Travels* (Parts 1 & 2)  
C. Dickens: *Great Expectations*  
Thomas Hardy: *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*

Section B

E. M. Forster: *A Passage to India*  
D. H. Lawrence: *Sons and Lovers*  
W. Golding: *Lord of the Flies*

Section C

A. Camus: *The Outsider*  
F. Kafka: *The Metamorphosis and Other Stories*  
Camara Laye: *The Radiance of the King*

Section D

Alex la Guma: *In the Fog of the Season's End*  
Ngugi: *A Grain of Wheat*  
Peter Abrahams: *A Wreath for Udomo*

**1979**

**P310/1 S319/1, Literature in English (Nov/Dec) Paper 1 (Prose and Poetry)**

Section I: Passage from C.C. Jung's *Man and his Symbols*  
Section II: Passage from *The Black Jacobins* by C.L.R. James  
Section III: "Vanity" by B. Diop from *Poem of Black Africa* (ed) Wole Soyinka

**1979**

**P310/2 S319/2, Literature in English (Nov/Dec) Paper 2 Plays**

Section A: Shakespeare: *Macbeth* and *Hamlet*

Section B:

Sophocles: *Theban Plays*  
Webster: *The Duchess of Malfi*  
Moliere: *The Imaginary Invalid*

Section C

B. Shaw: *St. Joan*  
T.S. Eliot: *Murder in the Cathedral*  
S. Beckett: *Waiting for Godot*

Section D:

Soyinka: *The Road*  
Ibsen: *Hedda Gabbler*

Brecht: *Mother Courage and Her Children*

**1979**

**P310/2 319/3, Literature in English (Nov/Dec) Paper 3 (Novels and Short Stories)<sup>518</sup>**

Section A

J. Austen: *Pride and Prejudice*

W. M. Thackeray: *Vanity Fair*

Thomas Hardy: *The Mayor of Casterbridge*

Section B

E. M. Forster: *A Passage to India*

Arthur Koestler: *Darkness at Noon*

Harper Lee: *To Kill a Mockingbird*

Section C

A. Camus: *The Plague*

N. Kazantzakis: *Zorba the Greek*

Camara Laye: *The Radiance of the King*

Section D

Alex la Guma: *In the Fog of the Season's End*

Ernest Hemingway: *For Whom the Bell Tolls*

Peter Abrahams: *A Wreath for Udomo*

## **E. Kenya Certificate of Education (KCE)**

**1981**

**205/1 English Literature Nov/Dec**

Section A

William Shakespeare: *Julius Caesar*

Nikolai Gogol: *The Government Inspector*

Camara Laye: *The African Child*

Chinua Achebe: *No Longer at Ease*

Section B

Francis Imbuga: *Betrayal In the City*

Okot p'Bitek: *Song of Lawino and Song of Ocol*

Elechi Amadi: *The Concubine*

V.S. Naipaul: *Miguel Street*

G.B. Shaw: *Androcles & the Lion*

Laban Erapu, *I Beg You*, and A. S. Bukenya, *I Met a Thief*

Everett Standa, "I speak for the bush"

John S. Mbiti, "My father's wooden house"

Cook and Rubadiri: *Poems from East Africa*

**1981 P205/2 missing**

**1982**

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<sup>518</sup> Not clear if this exam also occurred in 1980.

**205/1 Literature in English Paper 1**

Section A: Oral Literature

Narrative: *The Woman and the Ogre*

Proverbs

Section B: Poetry

p'Bitek: *Acoli Song*

Laban Erapu: "An elegy"

**1982**

**205/2 Literature in English Paper 2 Nov/Dec**

Section A:

Ngugi: *The River Between*

Joe de Graft: *Muntu*

Grace Ogot: *The Bamboo Hut, and Land Without Thunder*

Section B:

Wole Soyinka: *Kongi's Harvest*

Shakespeare: *Julius Caesar*

Chinua Achebe: *No Longer at Ease*

**1983**

**205/1 Literature in English Nov/Dec**

Paper 1: Oral Literature and Poetry

Section A: Oral Literature

Narrative: *A Judgement, Tales of Amadou Koumba* rendered by B. Diop

Poem: "The lazy man" (traditional from the Yoruba)

Section B: Poetry

Charles Khaminwa, Extract from *A Letter to Leopold Sedar Senghor*, and *Evening* by

Stephen H. Lubega, In: Kariara and Kitonga, *An Introduction to East African Poetry*

*Africa* by David Blackburn; Horsefall and Wanjala: *Attachments to the Sun*

**1983**

**205/2 Literature in English Paper 2 Nov/Dec**

Section A:

Ngugi: *The River Between*

Joe de Graft: *Muntu*

Grace Ogot: *Tekayo in Land Without Thunder*

Section B:

Wole Soyinka: *Kongi's Harvest*

Shakespeare: *Julius Caesar*

Chinua Achebe: *No Longer at Ease*

**1984**

**205/1 Literature in English Nov/Dec**

Paper 1

Section A: Oral Literature

The wise man and his sons, Kenya (Kamba)

A lullaby (Traditional from the Akan)  
A lullaby (Traditional from the Kamba)

Section B: Poetry

Stephen Lubega, *Evening*. In: Kariara and Kitonga, *An Introduction to East African Poetry*  
Nissim Ezekiel, *Night of the Scorpion*  
Blackburn, *Horsefall*  
Wanjala: *Attachments to the Sun*

**1984 205/2 Literature in English Paper 2 Nov/Dec**

Section A: 1 & 2

Excerpt, Wole Soyinka: *Kongi's Harvest*  
N. Gogol: *The Government Inspector*  
C. Achebe: *No Longer at Ease*  
Meja Mwangi: *Carcase for Hounds*

Section B: 3) a)

The White Veil and Elizabeth; Grace Ogot: *Land Without Thunder*  
Mariama Ba: *So Long a Letter*  
Shakespeare: *Julius Caesar*

**1985**

**205/1 Paper 1 Literature in English Nov/Dec**

Section A: Oral Literature

Narrative, Hyena and Baboon  
A Lullaby and a Dirge

Section B: Poetry

Sam Mbure, *Song of the Sisters*; Blackburn, *Horsefall* and Wanjala: *Attachments to the Sun*  
Laban Erapu, *The Guilt of Giving*; Cook and Rubadiri: *Poems of East Africa*

**1985**

**205/2 Literature in English Paper 2 Nov/Dec**

Section A: 1 & 2

J. Ruganda: *The Burdens*  
F. Imbuga: *Man of Kafira*  
M. Mwangi: *A Carcase for Hounds*  
Kibera and Kahiga: *Potent Ash*

Section B

Mariama Ba: *So Long a Letter*  
Alex la Guma: *A Walk in the Night*  
Nikolai Gogol: *The Government Inspector*

**1986**

**205/1 Literature in English Nov/Dec**

Paper 1 Oral Literature and Poetry

Section A: Oral Literature

*The Dog and the Leopard's Children*  
"Nyangumbe Nyangumbe!" (pre-marriage song)

Section B: Poetry

John Ssemuwanga, *Strange Breed*, Cook & Rubadiri: *Poems of East Africa*

Dennis Brutus, *On the Island*; Reed and Wake: *A New Book of African Verse*

**1986 205/2 Literature in English Paper 2 Nov/Dec**

Section A

J. Ruganda: *The Burdens*

F. Imbuga: *Man of Kafira*

M. Mwangi: *A Carcase for Hounds*

Kibera and Kahiga: *Potent Ash*

Section B

Mariama Ba: *So Long a Letter*

Alex la Guma: *A Walk in the Night*

Nikolai Gogol: *The Government Inspector*

**1987**

**205/1 Literature in English Nov/Dec**

Paper 1

Section A: Oral Literature; 1.) oral narrative (no information); 2.) oral poem (no information)

Section B: Poetry

Henry Barlow, *The Village Well* from Cook & Rubadiri: *Poems of East Africa*

Gabriel Okara, *You Laughed and Laughed and Laughed*, from J. Reed and C. Wake: *A New Book of African Verse*

**1987 205/2 Literature in English Paper 2 Nov/Dec**

Section A

J. Ruganda: *The Burdens*

F. Imbuga: *Man of Kafira*

M. Mwangi: *A Carcase for Hounds*

K.I.E.: *Chameleon's Second Delivery*

Section B

Mariama Ba: *So Long a Letter*

Alex la Guma: *A Walk in the Night*

Nikolai Gogol: *The Government Inspector*

**F. Kenya Advanced Certificate of Education: KACE**

**1981**

**P311/1, S316/1. Literature in English Nov/Dec**

Paper 1: Prose & Poetry

Section I: Passage from an article "Malnutrition as a Social Disease" by Dr. Moises Behar

Section II: "The Manipulators" from *The Healers*, Ayi Kwei Armah, EAPH 1978

Section III: Jonathan Kariara, *The Dream of Africa* from *Commonwealth Poems of Today*, 1967

**1981 P311/2, S316/2. Literature in English Nov/Dec**

Paper 2: Plays

Section A:

Shakespeare: *Macbeth*

Shakespeare: *Othello*

Section B:

Euripides: *Medea*

Sheridan: *A School for Scandal*

Johnson: *Volpone*

Section C:

Shaw: *Major Barbara*

Bolt: *A Man for all Seasons*

O'Casey: *Juno and the Paycock*

Section D:

Soyinka: *The Road*

Ibsen: *Hedda Gabbler*

Brecht: *Mother Courage and Her Children*

**P311/3 1981: paper 3 missing**

**1982**

**P311/1, S316/1. Literature in English Nov/Dec**

Paper 1: Critical Appreciation

Information missing.

**1982 P311/2, S316/2. Literature in English Nov/Dec**

Paper 2: African Literature

Section A: Novels and Short Stories

Leonard Kibera: *Voices in the Dark*

Sembene Ousmane: *God's Bits of Wood*

Alex la Guma: *A Walk in the Night*

Section B: Plays

Ngugi wa Thiong'o & Micere G. Mugo: *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi*

Ola Rotimi: *The Gods are not to Blame*

Athol Fugard: *The Blood Knot*

Section C: Oral Literature

Compulsory oral literature theory (fieldwork)

The Girl and the Ogre (narrative)

"The Twilight Song of the Honey-Bird"

"Who will throw Goat's Dung at me"

**1982 P311/3, S316/3. LIE Nov/Dec Paper 3: Literature from the Rest of the World**

Section A

V.S. Reid: *New Day*

George Lamming: *In the Castle of my Skin*

Lonne Elder III: *Ceremonies in Dark Old Men*

Section B

Arthur Miller: *Death of a Salesman*

Alejo Carpentiere: *Explosion in a Cathedral*  
John Steinbeck: *The Grapes of Wrath*

Section C

Bhabani Bhattachariya: *So Many Hungers*  
Mulk Raj Anand: *Coolie*  
Rabindranath Tagore: *Binodini*

Section D

Ivan Turgenev: *Fathers and Sons*  
Bertolt Brecht: *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*  
Patrick White: *Voss*

**1983**

**P311/1, S316/1. Literature in English Nov/Dec, Paper 1: Critical Appreciation<sup>519</sup>**

Section I: A Story adapted from *Men Like Gods* by H.G. Wells

Section II: Passage from *In Corner B* by E. Mphahlele: (EAPH 1967)

Section III: "Report of an Injustice" by Otto Rene Castillo

**1983 P311/2, S316/2. Literature in English Nov/Dec**

Paper 2: African Literature

Section A: Novels

Leonard Kibera: *Voices in the Dark*  
Sembene Ousmane: *Gods Bits of Wood*  
Alex La Guma: *A Walk in the Night*

Section B: Plays

Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Micere Mugo: *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi*  
Ola Rotimi: *The Gods are not to Blame*  
Athol Fugard: *The Blood Knot*

Section C: Oral Literature

Compulsory oral literature theory  
Narrative Ogun (Traditional from the Yoruba)  
Unidentified oral narrative. (Both narratives were adapted from *African Myths and Tales*, edited by Susan Fieldman)

**1983 P311/3, S316/3. LIE Nov/Dec; Paper 3: Literature from the Rest of the World**

Section A

George Lamming: *In the Castle of my Skin*  
Richard Wright: *Native Son*  
Lonne Elder III: *Ceremonies in Dark Old Men*

Section B

Arthur Miller: *Death of a Salesman*  
Alejo Carpentier: *The Lost Steps*  
John Steinbeck: *The Grapes of Wrath*

Section C

Bhabani Bhattachariya: *So Many Hungers*

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<sup>519</sup> The normal mark for the end of the exam was absent and, hence, it is not clear if some pages were missing.

Mulk Raj Anand: *Coolie*  
Rabindranath Tagore: *Binodini*

Section D

Ivan Turgenev: *Fathers and Sons*  
Bertolt Brecht: *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*  
Graham Greene: *Honorary Consul*

**1984**

**P311/1, S316/1. Literature in English Nov/Dec**

Section A

Paper 1: Critical Appreciation

Section I

Charmaine Silva and Socci Capulong: *Why millions suffer in the Third World* (*Daily Nation*, 22 Dec. 1982)

Section II: 2. Shiva Naipul: *From North of South*

Section B

Grace Ogot: *Land Without Thunder*  
Mariama Ba: *So Long a Letter*  
William Shakespeare: *Julius Caesar*

Section III: 2. Poem: *Aftermath* by Ayi Kwei Armah from *Messages: Poems from Ghana*,  
by Kofi Awoonor and G. Adali-Mortty, eds.

**1984 P311/2, S316/2. Literature in English Nov/Dec**

Paper 2: African Literature

Section A: Novels

Leonard Kibera: *Voices in the Dark*  
Sembene Ousmane: *Gods Bits of Wood*  
Ayi Kwei Armah: *The Healers*

Section B: Plays

John Ruganda: *The Floods*  
Ola Rotimi: *The Gods are Not to Blame*  
Athol Fugard: *The Blood Knot*

Section C: Oral Literature

Compulsory question on oral literature fieldwork theory  
Narrative: Next page was missing

**1984 P311/3, S316/3. LIE Nov/Dec Paper 3: Literature from the Rest of the World**

Section A

George Lamming: *In the Castle of my Skin*  
Richard Wright: *Native Son*  
Lonne Elder III: *Ceremonies in Dark Old Men*

Section B

Arthur Miller: *Death of a Salesman*  
Alejo Carpentiere: *The Lost Steps*  
John Steinbeck: *The Grapes of Wrath*

Section C

Bhabani Bhattachariya: *So Many Hungers*

Mulk Raj Anand: *Coolie*

Rabindranath Tagore: *Binodini*

Section D

Ivan Turgenev: *Fathers and Sons*

Bertolt Brecht: *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*

Graham Greene: *Honorary Consul*

**1985**

**P311/1, S316/1. Literature in English Nov/Dec**

Paper 1: Critical Appreciation

Section I: Preface to *How Musical is Man?* by John Blacking

Section II: "The Beggars Procession," Sembene Ousmane, Xala

Section III: Poem entitled "parade of the old new" by Bertolt Brecht

**1985 P311/2, S316/2. Literature in English Nov/Dec**

Paper 2: Oral Literature and Drama

Section A: Oral Literature

Oral Literature Theory

*A Woman and a Bird* (Story from Ateso)

Poem "Mekatilili" collected by Miss Safari, from UoN

Section B: Drama from Africa

John Ruganda: *The Floods*

Athol Fugard: *Sizwe Bansi is Dead*

Wole Soyinka: *The Road*

Section C: Drama from the Rest of the World

Bertolt Brecht: *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*

William Shakespeare: *King Lear*

James Baldwin: *Blues for Mr. Charlie*

**1985 P311/3, S316/3. Literature in English, Nov/Dec Paper 3: Novels and Short Stories**

Section A

Ayi Kwei Armah: *The Healers*

Ngugi wa Thiong'o: *A Grain of Wheat*

Alex la Guma: *In the Fog of Season's End*

Section B

Richard Wright: *Native Son*

George Lamming: *In the Castle of my Skin*

Gabriel Garcia Marques: *One Hundred Years of Solitude*

Section C

Graham Green: *The Honorary Consul*

Charles Dickens: *Hard Times*

Anton Chekov: *Lady with Lapdog and other Stories*

Section D

Bhabani Bhattachariya: *So Many Hungers*

Mulk Raj Anand: *Coolie*  
Kamala Markandaya: *Nectar in a Sieve*

**1986**

**P311/1, S316/1. Literature in English Nov/Dec**

Paper 1: Critical Appreciation

Section I: Writing for the United Nations

Section II: *A Letter from Uncle James* from *My Dungeon Shook* by James Baldwin

Section III: Two jazz poems by Carl Wendell Hines Jr. (B.1940)

**1986 P311/2, S316/2. Literature in English Nov/Dec**

Paper 2: Oral Literature and Drama

Section A: Oral Literature: General question on Orality

Oral narrative

Poem entitled "Moshoeshoe" (no info)

Section B: Drama from Africa

John Ruganda: *The Floods*

Athol Fugard: *Sizwe Bansi is Dead*

Wole Soyinka: *The Road*

Section C: Drama from the Rest of the World

Bertolt Brecht: *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*

William Shakespeare: *King Lear*

James Baldwin: *Blues for Mr. Charlie*

**1986 P311/3, S316/3. Literature in English Nov/Dec**

Paper 3: Novels and Short Stories

Section A, missing pages 2 & 3

Section B

An unknown title

George Lamming: *In the Castle of My Skin*

Gabriel Garcia Marques: *One Hundred Years of Solitude*

Section C

Graham Greene: *The Honorary Consul*

Charles Dickens: *Hard Times*

Anton Chekov: *Lady with Lapdog and Other Stories*

Section D

Bhabani Bhattachariya: *So Many Hungers*

Mulk Raj Anand: *Coolie*

Kamala Markandaya: *Nectar in a Sieve*

**1987**

**P311/1, S316/1. Literature in English Nov/Dec**

Paper 1: Critical Appreciation

Section I: 1. Passage from Chinua Achebe's *The Trouble with Nigeria*

Section II: "A Day's Wait." In: *Short Stories* by Ernest Hemingway

Section III: Poem entitled "The Market Woman" by A. Neto

**1987 P311/2, S316/2. Literature in English Nov/Dec**

Paper 2: Oral Literature and Drama

Section A: Oral Literature

Theory

Narrative collected by Bole Odaga from Kisumu Dogo near Malindi among the Giriama of the Coast Province, narrated by Mama Kahaso

Section B: missing.

**1987 P311/3, S316/3. Literature in English Nov/Dec**

Paper 3: Novels and Short Stories

Section A

Ayi Kwei Armah: *The Healers*

Ngugi wa Thiong'o: *A Grain of Wheat*

Alex la Guma: *In the Fog of Season's End*

Section B

Richard Wright: *Native Son*

Gabriel Garcia Marquez: *One Hundred Years of Solitude*

V.S. Naipaul: *A House for Mr. Biswas*

Section C

Charles Dickens: *Hard Times*

Anton Chekov: *Lady with Lapdog and other Stories*

Thomas Hardy: *The Mayor of Casterbridge*

Section D

Bhabani Bhattachariya: *So Many Hungers*

Mulk Raj Anand: *Coolie*

Kamala Markandaya: *Nectar in a Sieve*

**1988 (Entered 2004)**

**P311/1, S316/2. English Nov/Dec**

Paper 2: Critical Appreciation

Section I, missing pages 2 & 3

Section II Passage: *A Night with the Sphinx* from *A Search in Secret Egypt* by Paul Brunton

Section III Passage: *The Things You Sent Me* by Nguyen Khoa Diem, translated by Alex Miller

**1988 P311/2, S316/2. Literature in English Nov/Dec**

Paper 2: Oral Literature and Drama

Section A, missing pages 2 & 3

Poem from Mazisi Kunene, *Emperor Shaka the Great* (London: Heinemann: 1980)

Section B: Drama from Africa.

John Ruganda, *The Floods*

Wole Soyinka: *The Road*

Athol Fugard: *Sizwe Bansi is Dead*

Section C: Drama from the Rest of the World.

Henrik Ibsen: *An Enemy of the People*

William Shakespeare: *King Lear*

James Baldwin: *Blues for Mr. Charlie*

**1988 P311/3, S316/3. LIE Nov/Dec Paper 3: Novels and Short Stories**

Section A

Ayi Kwei Armah: *The Healers*

Alex la Guma: *In the Fog of Season's End*

Section B

Richard Wright: *Native Son*

Gabriel Garcia Marques: *One Hundred Years of Solitude*

V.S. Naipaul: *A House for Mr. Biswas*

Section C

Thomas Hardy: *The Mayor of Casterbridge*

Charles Dickens: *Hard Times*

Anton Chekov: *Lady with Lapdog and Other Stories*

Section D

Bhabani Bhattachariya: *So Many Hungers*

Mulk Raj Anand: *Coolie*

Kamala Markandaya: *Nectar in a Sieve*

**G. 8-4-4: Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education KCSE**

**1989**

**101/2 Literature in English 1989 (Year Handwritten)**

Poetry: David Diop, *The Renegade* (Senegal)

Oral Literature: "The man who was pregnant in the knee" taken from *Kenya Oral Narratives*  
(Place of origin: Kikuyu, collected by P.K. Ndendero)

Play: Francis Imbuga: *Betrayal in the City*

Novel: Chinua Achebe: *Things Fall Apart*

**1990**

**101/1B English (Summary, Comprehension and Grammar)**

Missing

**1990**

**101/2 Literature in English Oct/Nov**

Poetry: "Western Civilization" by Agostinho Neto from Dickinson. *When Bullets Begin to Flower*

Oral Literature: "Bad Company" adapted from *Tales of Amadou Koumba* by Birago Diop

Play: Francis Imbuga: *Betrayal in the City*

Novel: Chinua Achebe: *Things Fall Apart*

KIE: *The Chameleon's Second Delivery* (This book was withdrawn in the middle of the year and not substituted. (KNEC chief, Mr Indongole, mentioned more books but they did not appear in the examination papers, e.g., *Romeo and Juliet*.)

KIE: *Stranger and Other Stories*

## 1991

### 101/1B English (Summary, Comprehension and Grammar)

Passage: African traditional education

Passage: Man playing God (Source: Article by Daphne Sheldrick in *The Weekly Review* September 16, 1988)

Short passages, etc. for grammar

### 101/2 Literature in English Oct/Nov

Poetry: "The death of my father" by Henry Indangasi

Oral Literature: "How the tortoise took the bee's drums" from *African Prose* compiled by W.H. Whiteley, (UP 1964)

Play: Francis Imbuga: *Betrayal in the City*

Novel: Chinua Achebe: *Things Fall Apart*

## 1992

### 101/2 Literature in English Oct/Nov

Poetry: "The guilt of giving" by Laban Erapu

Oral Literature: "Why Chameleon's change colour" from *Oral Literature of Kalenjin* by C. Chesaina

Drama: William Shakespeare: *Romeo and Juliet*

Novel: Chinua Achebe: *Things Fall Apart*

The Short Story: Aidoo, *In the Cutting of a Drink* and Jones' *A Man Can Try* from Grandsaigne, J.T. De and S. Nnamonu, *African Short Stories: An Anthology*

## 1993

### 1993 101/2 Literature in English Oct/Nov

Poetry: "A Sudden Storm" by Pius Oleghe

Novel: Elechi Amadi: *The Concubine*

Short Stories: Maurice Chishimba, *Weekend of Carousal*; Cyprian Ekwensi, *The Ivory Dancer*, Nicol Abioseh, *The Truly Married Woman* and Fwanyanga Mulikita, *The Tender Crop* from Grandsaigne, J.T. De and S. Nnamonu: *African Short Stories: An Anthology*

Oral Literature: "The Hyena and the Hare" from Rose Mwangi's *A Girl Who Could Not Keep Quiet*

Drama: William Shakespeare: *Romeo and Juliet*

## 1994

### 1994 101/2 Literature in English Oct/Nov

Oral Literature: Narrative, Source: Unidentified (Story about Mola and his 3 wives, one overpraising, second annoyed, makes him disappear to the land below...same motif as the man who did not work and got many cattle from the foreign lands...)

Poetry: "A letter from a contract" by Antonio Jacinto (Angola) from Margaret Dickinson, *When Bullets Begin to Flower*

Drama: William Shakespeare: *Romeo and Juliet*

Novel: Elechi Amadi: *The Concubine*

Short Story: Ezekiel Mphahlele, *The Master of Doornvlei* and Richard Rive, *Resurrection* from Grandsaigne, J.T. De and S. Nnamonu: *African Short Stories: An Anthology*

## 1995

### 1995 101/2 Literature in English Oct/Nov

Novel: Elechi Amadi: *The Concubine*

Poetry: "Once upon a time" by Gabriel Okara

Drama: William Shakespeare: *Romeo and Juliet*

Short Story: Alex La Guma, *Blankets* and L. Kibera, *A Silent Song* from Grandsaigne, J.T. De and S. Nnamonu, *African Short Stories: An Anthology*

Oral Literature: "They are asking for her all over" *Oral Literature of Embu and Mbeere* by Ciarunji Chesaina

**1996 (A letter by MinEd, dated 26 Oct 1995, purportedly replaced *The Concubine with Mine Boy* but this apparently it never happened)**

## 1996

### 101/2 Literature in English Oct/Nov

Oral Literature: 4 proverbs: Source unidentified:

(a) Too many arguments destroyed marriage negotiations. (b) Many rats cannot, all at once, dig a hole for their home. (c) The mouth that ate the grain is the same one which asks, what shall I plant tomorrow? (d) A wife is like a blanket; if you cover yourself with it, you itch, but if you throw it away, you feel cold.

Novel: Elechi Amadi: *The Concubine*

Short Stories: Magayu Magayu, *Do you know anybody* and Barbara Kimenye, *The Battle of the sacred Tree, The Winner and Other Stories* K.I.E

Poetry "No easy task, son" by Everett Standa

Drama: Nikolai Gogol: *The Government Inspector*

## 1997

### 101/2 Literature in English Oct/Nov

Oral Literature: missing

Novel: Peter Abrahams: *Mine Boy*

Short Stories: *The Winner and Other Stories*, K.I.E

Poetry: Passages missing

Drama: Nikolai Gogol: *The Government Inspector*

## 1998/99

### Set books for 1998–1999 Literature in English 101/2

#### Form III—1998

Novel: Margaret Ogolla: *The River and Its Source* (Focus Books)

Play: John Ruganda: *The Burdens* (OUP)

Short Stories: *Looking for a Rain God and Other Short Stories from Africa* (MacMillan, Kenya)

#### Form IV—1998

The Novel: Peter Abrahams: *Mine Boy* (Focus Books)

Play: N. Gogol: *The Government Inspector* (OUP)

Short Stories: Looking for a *Rain God and Other Short Stories* from Africa (MacMillan, Kenya)  
Poetry and Oral Literature remained as per the 1992 Revised Secondary Education Syllabus  
Volume 5. Every school was ordered to keep copies of the syllabus.

## **Appendix 2: Summary: Examination Titles and Dates**

University of Cambridge, Local Examinations; Local Examinations School Certificate: 1940(I), 42(I), 43(I), 45(I), 46(I), 48 (I), 49(I) 1950(I)

University of Cambridge, Local Examinations: Local Examinations Overseas Junior: 1944 (3)

University of Cambridge, Local Examinations; Oversea School Certificate: 1951(3), 52(3), 53(3), 54(3), 55(3), 56(II, 6 alt II), 57(6 alt II), 58(212/1)

University of Cambridge, Local Examinations Syndicate; Oversea Higher School Certificate: 1955(14 (1), 15,17, 18, 21, 85); 58(217/3 802/1; 217/7 806/1; 861/1)

University of Cambridge, Local Examinations Syndicate; Higher School Certificate: 1958(217/1,3,4,5,7, 861/1), 1959(217/1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 805/1, 861/1), 1960(217/1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6), 1961(217/2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 861/1), 1962(217/1, 2, 4, 5, 7), 1963(106/1, 217/2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 861/1)

University of Cambridge, Local Examinations Syndicate; School Certificate and GCE: 1959 (212/1), 60(212/1), 61(212/1), 62(212/1), 63(212/1), 64(212/1, 212/1), 65(212/1), 67(212/1)

University of Cambridge, Local Examinations Syndicate; Higher School Certificate and GCE (Oversea Centres): 1964(217/2 801/2, 217/3 802/3, 217/5 804/5, 217/6 805/6, 217/7 806/7, 861/1), 1965(217/2 801/2, 217/3 802/3, 217/7 806/7), 1966(217/2 801/2, 217/3 802/3) 1967 (217/3, 802/3) 1968(801/2 916/2, 801/3 917/3)

University of Cambridge, Local Examinations Syndicate in collaboration with the East African Examinations Council: Joint Examination for the East African Certificate of Education and GCE: 1969(208/1)

University of Cambridge, Local Examinations Syndicate in collaboration with The East African Examinations Council; East African Advanced Certificate of Education (EAACE): 1970(801/1 915/1 801/3 917/3), 73(801/3 917/3)

University of Cambridge, Local Examinations Syndicate; EACE and School Certificate Examination in collaboration with The East African Examinations Council: 1971–73(208/1)

University of Cambridge, Local Examinations Syndicate; GCE: 1973(800/8)

East African Examinations Council: East African Certificate of Education (EACE) and School Certificate Examination: 1974 (208/1)

The East African Examinations Council; East African Certificate of Education (EACE): 1975–78(208/1)

East African Examinations Council; East African Advanced Certificate of Education (EAACE): 1975(310/1 S310/1), 76(310/1 S310/1, 310/2 S310/2) 78 & 79(310/1 S319/1, 310/2 S319/2, 310/2 319/3)

Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC); Kenya Certificate of Education; KCE: (1981–1987)

Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC); Kenya Advanced Certificate of Education; KACE: (1981–1988)

Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC); 8-4-4, Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education KCSE: (1989–1997)

## Appendix 3. Texts selected for the national examinations between 1940 and 1998

**The Anglo-European literature selected and the years it was taught** (abbreviated to two digits, e.g., 40 for 1940)

- Shakespeare: *As You Like It* (40, 46, 53, 63, 64, 65)  
*The Tempest* (42, 55, 59x2, 60, 65, 66x2)  
*King Henry IV* (Part I) (42, 59, 60, 68)  
*King Henry IV* (Part II) (61, 62)  
*Henry V* (43, 52, 60, 61, 65, 66x3)  
*Hamlet* (43, 64x2, 65, 79)  
*Twelfth Night* (45x2, 55x2, 62, 63)  
*Anthony & Cleopatra* (45, 66x3, 68, 76, 78)  
*Macbeth* (48, 49, 54, 55x3, 58, 59, 62, 64x2, 63x2, 79, 81)  
*Richard II* (44, 50, 63, 64)  
Richard III (76, 78)  
*Julius Caesar* (51, 55, 56, 57, 60, 61, 65, 67, 71, 72, 81, 82, 83, 84)  
King John (55)  
The Merchant of Venice (64, 69, 78, 80)  
*Othello* (58, 59, 66, 68, 81)  
The Winter's Tale (58, 62, 63)  
Love's Labour's Lost (59, 66)  
*Sonnets* (59, 60)  
*King Lear* (60, 61, 85, 86, 88)  
A Midsummer Night's Dream (60, 61)  
Measure for Measure (61, 62)  
Troilus and Cressida (62, 63)  
*Coriolanus* (64, 65, 75, 76, 77)  
Much Ado About Nothing (64, 65)  
*Romeo and Juliet* (73, 74, 92, 93, 94, 95)  
An Anthology of Longer Poems (42, 45, 48, 53, 54, 55)  
An Anthology for Modern Verse (43)  
Goldsmith: *Essays* (43); *She Stoops to Conquer* (50, 51, 52, 58, 59, 62, 72, )  
Sheridan: *The Rivals* (40, 45, 51, 52, 56, 57, 60, 61)  
Section C: *Golden Treasury of Longer Poems* (Book IV): Keats, Wordsworth, Shelley (40, 46, 63, 64)  
Drinkwater: *Abraham Lincoln* (48, 49, 63, 64, 72)  
Coleridge: (55, 59, 60)  
*Christabel* (40, 58, 63)  
Poetry and Prose (64)  
Wordsworth *Michael* (40, 51, 54)  
George Eliot: *Silas Marner* (40, 45x2, 52, 53) 59, 60, 61, 63, 64)  
The Mill on the Floss (73)  
T. S. Eliot: *The Waste Land* (55)  
Murder in the Cathedral (76, 78, 79)  
Selected Poems (64x3, 65)  
The Family Reunion (62, 63x3, 64)  
Four Quarters (61, )  
H.G. Wells: *Mr. Polly* (40, 73)  
*Kipps* (43)  
*Tono-Bungay* (55, 61x2)  
Short Stories (Series 1) (5, 58)  
Daviot: *Richard of Bordeaux* (42,  
Hardy, Thomas: (61, 63, 64)

The Trumpet-major (42)  
*The Mayor of Casterbridge* (45, 61, 62, 68, 70, 79, 87, 88)  
 Selected Poems (55, 67)  
 Far from the Madding Crowd (63, 64)  
 Last Words to a Dumb Friend (67)  
 Tess of the D'Urbervilles (78)  
 Furbank (Ed.), Selected Poems of Thomas Hardy (67)  
 Kinglake: *Eothen* (42, 46, 54, 55)  
 Sheridan: *School for Scandal* (43, 63, 64, 65, 67, 76, 81)  
 Scott: Quentin Durward (43)  
 Hudson: Far Away and Long Ago (43, 54)  
 (No 44)  
 R. L. Stevenson: *An Inland Voyage* (45)  
     Travels with a Donkey (45)  
     *Glory* (45)  
     *Kidnapped* (42, 48, 49)  
 Scott: The Fortunes of Nigel (45, 46)  
 Dickens, Charles: (59, 60, 61, 63, 64)  
     *Hard Times* (68, 85, 86, 87, 88)  
     Bleak House (70)  
     A Tale of Two Cities (45, 56, 65, 67)  
     *Great Expectations* (50, 51, 57, 58, 78)  
 Conrad, Joseph: *The Rover* (45, 46, 51, 52, 60, 61)  
     *Lord Jim* (58x2, 59, 61, 64, 65)  
     Youth and Gaspar Ruiz (48, 49)  
     Heart of Darkness (68)  
 Youth and Gaspar Ruiz (48, 49)  
 Street: *Father's Glory* (48, 49)  
 Boswell *life* (45x2)  
 Galsworthy: *Strife* (46)  
     *The Silver Box* (52)  
     *Justice* (59, 60)  
 Kinglake: *Eothen* (46, 54, 55)  
 Street: *Father's Glory* (48, 49)  
 Kipling: *Kim* (50, 51)  
 Adrian Bell: *Apple Acre* (50)  
 C.S Forester: *The Gun* (52, 53)  
 Chaucer: The Nun's Priest Tale (53, 54, 56)  
     The Prologue to the Canterbury Tales (51, 52, 55, 63, 64)  
     The Pardoner's Tale (57, 61x2)  
     The Knight's Tale (58x3, 59)  
     The Clerk's Tale (61, 64, 65, 66)  
     The Squire's Tale (59x2, 60)  
     *Canon's Yeoman's Tale* (in modern trans. by Nevill Coghill) (60, 67)  
     The Franklin's Tale (63x2, 64x3, 65)  
 John Buchan: The Thirty-nine Steps (53, 54)  
 H.M. Tomlison: *Gallions Reach* (54)  
 George Bernard Shaw: *Androcles and the Lion* (55, 60, 61, 80, 81)  
     A Prose Anthology (62, 63, 64)  
     *Major Barbara* (58, 59, 76, 81)  
     Saint Joan (78, 79)  
     (1894) *Arms and the man* (53, 54, 57, 58)  
     Pygmalion (61)  
     The Devil's Disciple (64, 65)  
     The Apple Cart (68)  
 Heyerdahl: The Kon-Tiki Expedition (56, 57)

Goldsmith: *The Book of Narrative Poetry* (50)  
 Dwight: *The First Virginians* (44)  
 Shackleton: *South* (44) (Basic English)  
 Conan Doyle: *Rodney Stone* (44) (Simplified Text)  
 Coleridge, Samuel Taylor: *The Ancient Mariner* (51, 64)  
 Sir Thomas Malory: *Morte d'Arthur* (51,  
*The Coverley Papers* (48, 53, 54)  
 Oscar Wilde: *The Importance of Being Ernest* (55, 63)  
 Tennyson: *Selected Poems* (World's Classics OUP) (56, 57, 58, 59, 64)  
     *The Coming of Arthur* (63, 64, 65, 67)  
     *The Holy Grail* (63, 64, 65, 67)  
     The Passing of Arthur (63, 64)  
 Melville: *Moby Dick* (58, 59)  
 T.H. Huxley: *Lay Sermons (1870)* adapted (55)  
 Aldous Huxley: *Selected Essays* (63, 64, 65)  
     Proper Studies (58, 59)  
 Sir Henry Knyvett: *The Defence of the Realme* (1596), (55)  
 Wlater De la Mare: "Night" (55)  
 James Elroy Flecker: "A Ship, and Isle, a Sickle Moon" (55)  
 Thomas Deloney: *Thomas of Reading* (55)  
 Thomas Nashe: The Unfortunate Traveller (55)  
 Bacon: *The New Atlantis* (55x2, 63)  
     Piers Penniless (61)  
 Browne: *Religio Medici* (55)  
 H. J. C. Grierson (Editor) *Metaphysical Lyrics and Poems [of the Seventeenth Century: Donne to Butler. With an  
 Essay]* (55)  
 A Century of Lyrics (55x2)  
 Dryden: *All Our Love* (55, 64, 67)  
     Poetry and Prose (58)  
     Absalom and Achitophel Part I (61, 63, 64)  
 The Confessions of an English Opium Eater (55, 60, 64)  
 J. Austen: *Pride and Prejudice* (55x2, 60, 61x2, 79)  
     *Mansfield Park* (58, 59)  
     *Emma* (62, 63)  
     Persuasion (64)  
 Southey: *Life of Nelson* (55)  
 Blake: *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* (55, 58, 62x2, 63, 64)  
 George Crabbe, *Tales of the Hall* (55)  
 Ann Ward Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (55)  
 John Dryden A Song for St. Cecilia's Day, (1687) or Fanny Burney: *Cecilia: Memoirs of an Heiress* (55, 63)  
 Sir Walter Scott: *Red Gauntlet* (55)  
 Erasmus Darwin: *The Loves of the Plants*(55)  
 Arnold Bennett: *Clayhanger* (55x2)  
 E. M. Forster: *Aspects of the Novel* (55)  
     *A Passage to India* (67, 68, 70, 78, 79)  
 Joyce: *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (55, 64, 65, 66)  
     *Ulysses* (59); *A Modern Symposium* (55)  
 Milton: *Comus and Some Shorter Poems* (Ed. Tillyard), pp 60–70 (55, 61x2)  
 Keats: *Lamia, the Eve of St Agnes, Odes* (550)  
     Ode to a Nightingale (62)  
     *Selected Letters and Poetry* (ed. Walsh) (58, 59, 60, 63, 64)  
     Poems of 1820 (61, 64)  
 Shelley: (46, 55, 58)  
     *Selections* (Ed. Thompson) (55, 59, 63, 64)  
     Ode to the West Wind (62)  
     Selected Poetry and Prose (63, 64)

Trollope: *The Warden* (59, 60, 63, 64)  
 Arthur Grimble: *A Pattern of Islands* (59, 60)  
 A Pageant of Longer Poems (60, 62, 72)  
 Gray: *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* (60)  
 Bridie: *Mr. Gillie* (61, 62)  
     Jonah and the Whale (64, 69)  
     Tobias and the Angel (69, 76, 77, 78)  
 Browning: *Balaustion's Adventure* (62, 72)  
 Campbell: *Tristram da Cunha* (62)  
 Durrell: *My Family and other Animals* (62)  
 Bronte, Charlotte: *Jane Eyre* (62, 63, 72, 73)  
 Bronte, Emily: *Wuthering Heights* (59, 60, 63, 70)  
 Obey: *Noah* (64, 69)  
 Steinbeck: *The Pearl* (64, 69)  
     *The Grapes of Wrath* (68, 82, 83, 84)  
 Sherman: *Old Mali and the Boy* (64, 69)  
 Shute: *No Highway* (64, 69)  
 Durrell: *White Eagles over Serbia* (64, 69)  
 Fielding: *Joseph Andrews* (64, 65, 66, 73)  
 Yeats: *Sailing to Byzantium* (64),  
     *Selected Poems* (ed. Jeffares) (63, 64, 66)  
     "A Prayer for my daughter" (74)  
 Milton: *Samson Agonistes* (58, 59, 60, 64, 65, 66)  
     *Comus and Some Shorter Poems* (Ed. Tillyard), pp 60–70 (55, 61, )  
     *Paradise Lost* (Books ix and x) (58, 63, 64, 67)  
 Hemingway: *The Old Man and the Sea* (65, 67); *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (73, 79); *Short Stories* (87)  
 Fleming: *News from Tartary* (65, 67)  
 Spenser: *The Faerie Queen* (Book i) (58, 59, 63, 64); *Minor Poems* (60, 61, 62) and *Amoretti* (62)  
 Marlowe, Christopher: *Dr Faustus* (68)  
 Marlowe: *Tamburlaine, Part 1* (58); *Edward II* (62, 63)  
 William Shakespeare: *Edward III* (61, 62)  
 Dekker: *The Shoemaker's Holiday* (58, 59)  
 Winny: *The Elizabethan Voyages* (58, 59, 64)  
 W. T. Young: *Poetry of the Age of Shakespeare* (58)  
 Bunyan: *Grace Abounding* (58)  
 Thomas Love Peacock: *Crotchet Castle* (58, 59)  
 Lord Byron: *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* (58)  
 George Crabbe, *The Borough* (58)  
 Walter Scott, *The Antiquary* (58, 62, 64)  
 William Hazlitt: *The Spirit of the Age* (58)  
 Lamb: *Essays of Elia* (58, 61, 62, 63)  
 The Edinburgh Review (58)  
 Vita Sackville-West, *The Edwardians* (58, 59)  
 Reginald Pound: *Biography of Arnold Bennet* (58, 59)  
 C. Day Lewis: *Selected Poems* (Penguin) (58, 59)  
 J. B. Priestley: *I have been here before* (58, 59); *Time and the Conways* (58, 59); *An Inspector Calls* (62, 63)  
 D.H. Lawrence: *Selected Poetry and Prose* (58, 59, 61); *Sons and Lovers* (62, 63, 70, 78); *St. Mawr* (64, 65); *The Rainbow* (73); *The Virgin and the Gipsy* (64, 65)  
 Housman: *Last Poems* (58)  
 Lyly, John: *Campaspé* (55, 59, 60); *Midas* (61, 62)  
 Johnson: (46, 62, 64)  
     *Every Man in his Humour* (59, 60, 61)  
     *Selections* (67)  
     *Volpone* (68, 76, 81)  
 Webster: *The Duchess of Malfi* (59, 60, 61, 63, 78, 79)  
 Sidney: *Apology of Poetry* (59, 60)

Silver Poets of the Sixteenth Century (61)  
 Walton: *Lives* (59, 60)  
 Hazlitt: *Selected Essays* (46, 59, 60, 63, 64)  
 Arnold: *The Future* (59)  
 Greene, Robert: *Pandosto* (60, 61, 55)  
 John Lyly: *Euphues* (60, 61, 63)  
 Green, Graham: *The Heart of the Matter* (68)  
     *The Quiet American* (73)  
     *Honorary Consul* (83, 84, 85)  
 Lyrical Ballads (59, 60)  
 Beppo, Waverley, Lalla Rookh, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, *The Task*, (60)  
 Cowper: *The Task* (60, 63)  
 Nightmare Abbey (60, 61)  
 Cavalier poets *English Verse, Vol II* (60, 61)  
 Lord Byron: *Satirical and Critical Poems* (55, 59, 60, 61)  
 Crabbe: *Selections* (59, 61, 62)  
 George Orwell: *Selected Writings* (61, 73)  
     *Selected Essays* (70)  
     *Animal Farm* (76, 77, 78)  
     *A Hanging* (Passage) (76)  
     *Burmese Days* (80, 81)  
     *Killing the Elephant* (81)  
 O'Casey: *Juno and the Paycock* (61, 68, 81)  
 Wilfred Owen: *Collected Poems* (61, 62)73  
 Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher: *The Maid's Tragedy*(1622) (62, 63)  
 Davies: *Orchestra* (61, 62)  
 Nashe: *Pierce Penilesse* (62)  
 J. Winny (ed.): *Elizabethan Prose Translation* (62, 63)  
 Peacock: *Headlong Hall* (62, 63)  
 Hartley: *The Go Between* (62, 63)  
 Osbert Sitwell: *The Scarlet Tree* (62)  
 W. H. Audens: *Poems selected by Himself* (62, 63x2)  
 Francis Beaumont (English): *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (1607) (63)  
 Astrophel and Stella (63)  
 Haklyut: *Voyages and Documents* (63)  
 Christopher Marlowe: *The Hero and Leander*, Thomas Kyd: *The Spanish Tragedy*, King James's Bible, Bacon:  
     *The Advancement of Learning* (63)  
 Wordsworth, William: (40, 46, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62)  
 Wordsworth, William: *Prelude* (63, 64) and "Lines Written above Tintern Abbey" (60)  
 The Village,  
 Blake: *Poetical Sketches*, (63)  
 Lord Byron: *Don Juan* (63)  
 Walter Scott: *The Heart of Midlothian* (61, 63)  
 Graves: *Goodbye to All That* (63, 64, 76)  
 H. M. Tomlinson: *Gallions Reach* (54)  
     *The Sea and the Jungle* (63)  
 Herbert: *Selected Poems* (Ed. Brown) (59, 63, 64)  
 Sir Thomas North (Trans): *Lives of the Noble Greeks and Romans* (63)  
 Pope: *The Rape of the Lock* (64, 65, 66)  
 Burke, Edmund. 1909: *14 Reflections on the French Revolution*  
 Byron: *Childe Harold*  
 Thomas Love Peacock: *The Four Ages of Poetry* (64)  
 Bertrand Russell: *Unpopular Essays* (64)  
 Walter de La Mare *Goliath* (64)  
 L. Untermeyer: *Portrait of a Machine* (64)  
 George Bourne: *Change in the Village* (65)

Stevenson, Robert Louis (1850–1894): *Marching Song*, (65)  
*Saint's Day*

### **African literature selected between 1964 to 1998 and the year(s) each text was taught**

Abrahams, Peter: *Mine Boy* (65, 73, 75, 76, 77, 97, 98); *A Wreath for Udomo* (70, 78, 79)  
Achebe: *Things Fall Apart* (64, 76, 77, 78, 80, 89, 90, 91, 92); *No Longer at Ease* (65, 73, 74, 81, 82, 83, 84); *The Trouble with Nigeria* (A story extract) (87)  
Aggrey, James Kwegyir: *A Sermon* (only a passage) (75)  
Amadi, Elechi *The Concubine* (73, 74, 75, 80, 81, 93, 94, 95, 96)  
Armah, Ayi Kwei: *The Beautiful Ones are Not Yet Born* (73); *The Healers* (81, 84, 85, 87, 88; in 1981 an excerpt "The Manipulators" from *The Healers*,")  
Ba, Mariama: *So Long a Letter* (84x2, 85, 86, 87, )  
Bitamazire, Ralph; "I love you my gentle one" (77)  
Chesaina, C.: *Oral Literature of Kalenjin* "Why Chameleon's change colour" (92); *Oral Literature of the Mbeere and Embu* "They are asking for her all over" (95)  
Cook and Rubadiri: *Poems from East Africa* (77, 78, 85, 86, 87)  
de Graft, Joseph Coleman: *Muntu* (81, 82, 83, 85)  
Erapu, Laban: "I beg you" (81)  
Farsi, S.S.: *Swahili Sayings*, volumes 1 and 2 (83)  
Fugard, Athol: *The Blood Knot* (76, 78, 82, 84); *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* (85, 86, 88)  
Gordimer, Nadine: *A World of Strangers* (68)  
Grandsaigne, J.T.: De and S. Nnamonu: *African Short Stories: An Anthology* (92, 93, 94, 95)  
Ijimere: *The Imprisonment of Obatala and Everyman* (65, 71)  
Imbuga, Francis: *Betrayal In the City* (80, 81, 89, 90, 91); *Man of Kafira* (85, 86, 87)  
Kibera and Kahiga: *Potent Ash* (85, 86)  
Kibera, Leonard: *Voices in the Dark* (82, 84)  
KIE: *Chameleon's Second Delivery* (87, 90); *The Winner and Other Stories* (96, 97)  
Laye, Camara: *The African Child* (65, 71, 81); *The Radiance of the King* (translation)(70, 78, 79)  
Loliyong, Taban: *Popular Culture in East Africa* (83)  
Mbiti, John S.: "My father's wooden House" (81)  
Mongo, Beti: *Mission to Kala* (71)  
Mphahlele, Ezekiel: *Down Second Avenue* (65, 73); An extract from *In Corner B* by E. Mphahlele: EAPH 67 (83)  
Mwangi, Meja: *Kill Me Quick* (77, 78); *A Carcase for Hounds* (84, 85, 86, 87)  
Mwangi, Rose: *Kikuyu Folktales* (83)  
Ngumbu Njururi: *Kikuyu Proverbs* (83)  
Nwanko: *Danda* (73, 74)  
Nwapa, Flora: *Efuru* (1980)  
Ogot, Grace: *Land Without Thunder* (82, 83, 84X2)  
Ogutu, Onyango and Roscoe: *Keep My Words* (83)  
Okot p'Bitek: *Horn of My Love and Sons of Sango* (83)  
Okot p'Bitek: *Song of Lawino & Song of Ocol* (73, 74, 75, 80, 81)  
Osogo: *The Bride Who Wanted a Special Present* (83)  
Ousmane, Sembene: *God's Bits of Wood* (82, 84); *Xala* (1985...an extract)  
Oyono: *The Old Man and the Medal* (73, 74)  
Paton: *Cry the Beloved Country* (65, 71)  
Peters, Lenrie: *The Second Round* (68)  
Rotimi, Ola: *The Gods are Not to Blame* (82, 84)  
Ruganda, John: *The Burdens* (77, 78, 84, 85, 86, 87, 98); *The Floods* (84, 85, 86, 88)  
Soyinka, Wole (ed.) *Poems of Black Africa* (79)  
Soyinka, Wole: *Kongi's Harvest* (65, 72, 73, 82, 83, 84); *The Lion and the Jewel* (71, 75, 76, 77, 78); *The Road* (78, 79, 81, 85, 86, 88); *The Trials of Brother Jero* (71);  
Standa, Everett: "I speak for the Bush" (81)  
Thiong'o and Mugo: *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi* (82, 83)  
Thiong'o: *The River Between* (65, 71, 76, 77, 78, 82, 83); *A Grain of Wheat* (70, 78, 85, 87)  
Wollman and Spencer: *Modern Poems for the Commonwealth* (65, 71, 74, 75, 76)

## Other selected literature from 1964 to 1997 and the year(s) each text was taught

- Aeschylus: *Oresteia* (76)  
Anand, Mulk Raj: *Coolie* (82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87x2, 88)  
Baldwin, James: *Blues for Mr. Charlie* (85, 86, 88); "A Letter from Uncle James" from *My Dungeon Shook* (86)  
Beckett, S: *Waiting for Godot* (78, 79)  
Bhattachariya, Bhabani: *So Many Hungers* (82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87x2, 88)  
Bolt, Robert: *A Man for All Seasons* (69, 71, 76, 81)  
Bradbury: *Fahrenheit 451* (71)  
Brecht, Bertolt: *Galileo* (translation) (68); *The Good Woman of Setzuan* (76); *Mother Courage and Her Children* (79, 81); *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* (83, 84, 85, 86); Poem: "parade of the old new" (85)  
Camus, Albert: *The Plague* (73, 79); *The Outsider* (78)  
Carpentiere, Alejo: *Explosion in a Cathedral* (82); *The Lost Steps* (83, 84)  
Cary, Joyce: *Mister Johnson* (68)  
Chekov, Anton: *Lady with Lapdog and other Stories* (85, 86, 87, 88)  
Congreve, William: *Love for Love* (68)  
Dostoevsky: *Poor Folk* (translation) (68)  
Elder III, Lonnie: *Ceremonies in Dark Old Men*, (82, 83, 84)  
Euripides: *Medea* (81)  
Farnaby, Will: *Island* (73)  
Fitzgerald, F. Scott: *The Great Gatsby* (73)  
Ford, Ford Madox: *The Good Soldier* (73)  
Frame, Janet. "A Boy's Will" (A short story de New Zealand) (75)  
Frost, Robert: *The Road Not Taken* (76)  
Gogol: *The Government Inspector* (73, 74, 75, 80, 81, 84, 85, 86, 87, 96, 97, 989); *Dead Souls* (73)  
Golding, William: *Lord of the Flies* (69, 78); *Free Fall* (70)  
Guma, Alex Ia: *In the Fog of the Season's End* (78, 79, 85, 87, 88); *A Walk in the Night* (82, 83, 85, 86, 87); *Blankets* [short story] (95)  
Gunn, Thom, *The Sense of Movement* (73)  
Hasek, Jaroslav: *The Good Soldier Schweik* (translation) (68)  
Hughes, Richard: *A High Wind in Jamaica* (75, 76)  
Hughes, Ted, *Lupercal* (73)  
Huxley, Aldous: *Brave New World* and *Island* (73)  
Ibsen, Henrik: *An Enemy of the People* (88)  
Ibsen, Henrik: *Hedda Gabbler* (79, 81)  
Kafka, F.: *The Metamorphosis and Other Stories* (78)  
Kazantzakis, N.: *Zorba the Greek* (translation) (70, 79)  
Koestler, Arthur: *Darkness at Noon* (73, 79)  
Lamming, George: *In the Castle of my Skin* (82, 83, 84, 85)  
Lee, Harper: *To Kill a Mockingbird* (79)  
Mansfield, Katherine: *In a German Pension* (73)  
Markandaya, Kamala: *Nectar in a Sieve* (85, 86, 87x2, 88)  
Marques, Gabriel Garcia: *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (85, 86, 87, 88)  
Maugham, W. Somerset: *The Moon and the Sixpence* (74, 75, 76)  
Miller, Arthur: *The Crucible* (68, 76, 78); *Death of a Salesman* (82, 83, 84)  
Moliere: *The Imaginary Invalid* (78, 79)  
Naipaul: *A House for Mr. Biswas* (70, 87, 88); *Miguel Street* (80, 81)  
Powys, Theodore: *Mr Weston's Good Wine* (73)  
Reid, V.S.: *New Day* (82)  
Salinger, J.D.: *The Catcher in the Rye* (73)  
Sophocles: *Antigone* (translation) (68); *Theban Plays* (78, 79)  
Swift: *J. Gulliver's Travels* (Part 1 & 2) (78)  
Tagore, Rabindranath: *Binodini* (82, 83, 84)  
Thackeray, W.M.: *Vanity Fair* (61, 79)  
The Brothers Karel and Josef Capek: *The Insect Play* (74, 75)  
Turgenev: *Fathers and Sons* (73, 83, 84)

Voltaire: *Candide* (translation) (68, 70)

Wesker, Arnold: *Roots*

Wright, Richard: *Native Son* (83, 84, 85, 87, 88)

## **Appendix 4: Deselected Orature: *Myali* and *Ngakali***

Below are the four Kamba oral songs analysed in Chapter 6: two *myali* and two *ngakali*. *Myali* were songs presenting criticisms of society and individuals; *ngakali* (a subclass of *myali*) were initiation songs that also presented advice for and criticisms of Kamba life.

### **Two *myali***

1. *Silingi syiumina andu* (Shillings have finished/are finishing people)<sup>520</sup>
2. *Nthi ya Kenya ndikola athungu iia na iia ii* (*The country Kenya will never forget/be forgotten by athungu or Athungu will never forget the country Kenya, oh! my! oh! no!*)

### **Two *ngakali***

3. *Aiîîîî, Nimukulya nthuke ya ambalû* (*Hey, I ask you! the Ambalû age-group*)
4. *Mwaakya Iiii Lili, Niwambaika iii* (*You all Say, my father, you've "cut"/initiated me or had me initiated, iii*)<sup>521</sup>

Besides the *ngakali* and *myali* examined in the dissertation, many other *myali* are renowned throughout Ukambani because they had helped to organize the resistance in Ukambani, e.g., against mandatory terracing, hut and poll taxes, forced recruitment for the militia, army, *askari* corps, and state jobs to build roads, railways and buildings; and coercion to oblige people to help tax collectors to seize their neighbours' goats and other property. Some of these famous *myali* are:

5. *Syokimau ai mwathani!* (*Syokimau was a seer*)
6. *Mbaitu! Ukai muyonee!!* (*Mbaitu! Come see for yourself!*)
7. *Athani ukai nakuu* (*Seers! Head this way!*)
8. *Mwaitu wakwa Tiwa na useo ninathi Mbama Yu* (*My mother, be left well, I'm off to Burma now*)
9. *Mundu Ndakusaa Ngai atanenda* (*A Person does not die till God wishes it*)
10. *Kisoi wa Munyao* (*Kisoi, son of Munyao*)
11. *Oonthe melekele kwa Jackie na kwa Luvai* (*All head/have gone to Jackie's and Luvai's*)

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<sup>520</sup> sung by Uyuuyu Kilungya (1984) Luvanzi Keli, John Kieti Ndolo, and Elizabeth Waki (1986)

<sup>521</sup> sung by Daniel Kaindo Kilungu; Kawive Wayua, Luvanzi, Musukuma Kwing'athula, Makula Mutua and Waki Ngonzi (1984, 1986 and 1994)

Songs 1 through 8 are presented in full below. For convenience, explanations of terms or expressions have been inserted within brackets into the song texts though long explanations appear in footnotes.

### **1. Silingi Syiumina Andu** (*Shillings have finished/are finishing people*)

Silingi syiumina andu syoovotesyaii  
Woon Kingi wa Ndivo syandwaie Nanyuki ndaamba uvika kwo  
Tutwaaaitwe ni ngali ni ngilimiti  
Ku twaingiiawa mbokini ta ngombe tutwaitwe Nanyuki tuende Malawa tukweete tulai na  
ilemba na sululu  
Ai kasi ya mboki ninavunie nesu, ai yila twavikie tnoonwá sululu na tnoonw'a yolomu ivia  
itatatika  
Ninavutie vu kwiwá woo Vavu wa Muindi wanengetwe kasi Singi yasovete ou  
Ii, kuimaa malaa, malosii, ai mwa! mukw'u malaa!  
Inywi, o malaa matongelwa kingi, ii, kyutu, mwaiw'ou!  
Ta sua umwi yatwaite avakasi naku  
Mbee wa Nyili mutituni kithekani  
Ku noonie syimbuva syasyaanie syeanaa ou  
Kuvika mambo leo na makulumi syausuite itheka usyimaa nthwaia kuu  
Nanikwo tukwosa mavia tuikandiwa

Kotevo naithiisye kingee ta mukavilondo  
Na nzui ino yekala mbuu ta yi langi kuvika In'gee nailyi Musungu  
Kasi isu inengawe ndia ndivandiawa  
Kotevo Kioko wa Musau waneeneaa na avakasi  
Aimea saa sita ni syavika twiw'aa nzaa muno  
ou ukatwika undu wai ko maumaniwe

Makaanza iteta "koita andu mbiti nuumanya tuinaya kuma masangyá"  
Nake na kivoko aimakulya "kooinyie liu wenyu?"  
Ninatumbiwe nee via ni mukavilondo  
Tuivanga ni nomwi akandekelya matuvali  
A maasa ma vuti nyaanya ngatuuuuumbwa kyaa  
Ngaemwa ni uvikya ala angi  
Ngatinda suosu vate kindu mbikya  
Kuikya ngetwa voleni na andu angi ngatavwa  
Ndwi muwau thi wose sululu wasindwa i kasi kavoinuke kwenyu

Ngaasya ndika ou kavaa mbutiwe oyu  
kivande ngetwá oyu kikatopolwa kalai ngatunga sitoo na sululu  
Ninavutiee vu kathamani ni na wa Mathuva  
Mutungi watiwa wi na Mwenda aka  
Tiwai na kwaeli mundu wa Mwania nyie i nauma

Ninaendie vu ndunyuni Sakana  
Ninavethia mbemba ithyaitwe na maiu  
Nineetya mbemba imwe nithoooe na lwela  
Ngavitya uthukuwa nu mwikuyu usu  
Ni mwiitu wa Mwikuyu wambonaa ta nai muuki  
Weekiite ivui matu akonaa ta museo  
Ndineena ni nake akewáa tonguna  
Niithitye nzui na kingéee nake emenea ou  
Akaelya utavwa no iveti syai vau  
Munenge mbembeimwe no mundu taku  
Noyooosa kalwela ndena sendi ingi  
Akaema naaayo ngatungilwa kalwela  
Nakosa ngewa woo ngomiisya nzaa isu  
Ngasyoka vaa mboki iniukunia kyandi  
Ngatula itaa ngaasya vu ndikamuuwá

Ngali iikusya ninai mukomu, Malawa yavitie ndeumanya itese  
Ngomeeeetwe ni nzika sya mwikuyu usu  
Ninaendie Thiiiiika ngavethia kivetu  
Kyaumite Kya Nzavi kya musikali wa kilauni  
Kiingulya koimuwau uvwana ta inyanyi no ila nzui mwiitu wa mwikuyu wameneaa yo  
Kyandavya ou ngavewa inee yiingi, nganyusanga uvoo ni nakyo ngetwa mituki  
Ngali iiiikatungwa tili kula twauma  
Ngavindya kyooooongo ngakulya wa Mathuva  
Ona eka kasi ingi yolomu yivau nivo ngutungwa kitai ngavita inywi?  
O nakau twaumite savali tuyuka mwei uu wathela ninguvutia  
Nditonya iyongela mwei ngakwé nauma  
Tukaenda navu tukaema kwonwá kasi ya kusimba tukoonwa kasi ingi syiliva syai vau  
Syumwa ikatulwa nyamu ikavinduka  
Tukaenda ukoma naku ngóko wa Malawa  
Pundamilia naku ngóko ya Thika ngamanya ninenuka vati na undu ungi ngakeeethye Vengiiii,  
Meliii, Laaaangi ena Kathaaambi!

*Ending (First Version):*

Takeka wia usu tutetheasya Mwala saa sita kyavika tueteawa liu vau muka wakwa numanyaa  
ateo vavu aimwonia  
Konamosetwé ni yolomu muno na namosete na nzui ikeana nyeki kingéwa nai nakyo mbwana  
imulindi namosetwe ni ukua kalai na ndyeenzawa  
Mwiitu eeeeeevata anengawe nthenge ta ndila yi ndithye ikethua novya nayiiiiwa thi ukathoosye  
nukuuwa ndiitya, yii Singi  
Na wookwisa kiwá akiasya wookwisa ukwata mbui yakwa ngiaswa kano kanywoki kanokaua  
yiii mwoothuwa ni syindu mwandekie niilyou!

Nai umau waakwa wambendete ta kandu wangeeaaa ngewa ni nake ngonaa ta mwendya  
aindavya undu mo mai na nzele na iwúlu aimbua mainaa muthenya vate wi ngua yi mwii

Ngatheka muno ngakulya “andu tata!”  
 “Nivookaa iwandu?” akambia “yii, nisyookaa!”  
 “Ona athoni nimookaa kwiloela mboka”  
 “Na twasungaa muno tuvuite itimba kwituluma ou kuthi ukwata muthanga”  
 Ngatheka muno ngakulya “andu tata, eitu aa ma tene, namo koo..”  
 “Matwaawaa ni Thwake yiyia aka ii”  
 Na nthuku sya moko na lesu ii  
 Wiwá ta kwaaasya ata Mwilu wa Kikotho ndukaaasye nikwenda ninyie noombiwe ou  
*cut off!*

*Ending (Alternative Version):*

Nake mwanaa Mbingu oomba miio nthi, Muindi ausya ukemi, na eetikwa mbu!  
 Ko kwasya kuiva no kwa uvanga!  
 Na nzeleleke nzoka mbai!  
 O u wakulwa “No kikuu”  
 I syana ikaya ki? Na ti tuviivii, kikatheea  
 Kilauni kya kanyanga na makovo?<sup>522</sup>  
 Kwovanisya nguku na mbui, Na masendi ma uvonokya! Nao wauni muthele!  
 Nynie ningumantha utuo kikuyu, neteele valua kuma kilauni mwene [ulwaya]!  
 Akavi ni athonua! Nima ngundya!  
 No kikuu ta andu a ngelani!  
 Na maiaa mitwe thome na kivendela

**Translation**

Shillings have finished [are finishing people]  
 Shillings have finished [are finishing people], may they [shillings] ruin/lose more...oh yea!  
 If you see them [shillings] having taken Kingi wa Ndivo [Ndivo’s son, King] to Nanyuki a place  
 I had never been before  
 Taken by the train, the *ngilimiti* [agreements]

Into the train where we were herded into the trailers like cows  
 Being taken to Nanyuki to be transferred to Malawa, holding basins, *ilemba*<sup>523</sup> and *sululu*<sup>524</sup>  
 I had enough of these “trains jobs” with that job, Imagine! When we arrived, we were shown the  
 ballast, an impenetrable stone to break  
 I resigned/was chased/left that job because of anger, Vavu son of Muindi, unlike Singi who had  
 such a wonderful job!<sup>525</sup>

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<sup>522</sup> *Kilauni* means the crown, i.e., the colonial administration, especially the provincial administration including the chiefs, sub-chiefs and their law enforcement *makovo* (literally, boots or army soldiers’ boots), i.e., soldiers or guards

<sup>523</sup> head turban, a cloth wrapped around the head

<sup>524</sup> a very heavy metal rod used for digging hard surfaces

<sup>525</sup> reference to friend who worked in a settler house and whose only job was to tend to the memsab’s rose bushes, pruning, watering, and pulling the weeds! Another *mwalĩ* refers to the utter happiness of these men, whose jobs were no jobs, really, and they had to follow instructions blindly like sheep

Tending rose bushes, mere flowers, not golden or such, yes, differently coloured and like  
*kyutu*,<sup>526</sup> but mere flowers  
One day it was taking the overseers to beyond Nyeri, into the deep forest in the jungle full of  
puff adders and boa constrictors this big<sup>527</sup>  
*Mambo Leo* and *Makulumi* [snakes] had filled up that jungle where they regularly hunted  
*nthwaia* [antelope]  
And here is where we picked up the ballast stones under orders and strokes

That is where I reared my beard like a *mukavilondo*<sup>528</sup>  
And my hair looked like it had *mbuu*,<sup>529</sup> like it had dye, reaching down to the beard. I looked like  
the White Man!  
That type of job is only given to a fool, it is not a job you look for yourself

That is also the place where Kioko son of Musau talked to the overseers  
It is now midday. We have eaten nothing since dawn. We are famished.  
Something that developed into an unprecedented quarrel like that one of the cursed!  
You may not know it, but we are famished. Do you think we have become hyenas?  
Are you calling people animals? Don't you know that we have eaten nothing since dawn?  
With *kiboko*, he responds, "And am I your food?"

A huge stone held by a *mukavilondo* crushed me!  
As we arranged the slabs, he deliberately dropped the side he was holding  
The slab! Not just any stone, it's the eight-foot-long stones!  
The stones that are eight feet long *crushed my finger!* Oh, giving fingers!<sup>530</sup>  
Making it impossible for me to carry the other slabs  
That whole day I stayed, unable to lift anything  
In the morning of the next dawn, I was called off the counting line  
and told "you are not sick. Go pick up your *sululu*. If work has defeated you, better for you to go  
home"  
I replied, "I can't do that. I'd rather be fired on the spot."  
They asked for my *kipande*,<sup>531</sup>  
And, after it was punched,<sup>532</sup> I returned the basin and *sululu* to the store

That is how I left that island, I along with the son of Mathuva

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<sup>526</sup> local tree from which perfume is made

<sup>527</sup> a gesture indicating a torso size of a grown man

<sup>528</sup> a man from the Kavirondo gulf in Western Kenya, often applied to Luos

<sup>529</sup> a type of red ochre, often used by the Maasai men on their hair

<sup>530</sup> Hurting a finger was especially serious because, to obtain a registration card (*kipande*) or make any agreement, one had to "give a finger and fingers," meaning to sign with the thumb being unable to write. So, he laments this serious injury that could get him in trouble, as he could be suspected of hurting himself deliberately to avoid signing.

<sup>531</sup> identification document

<sup>532</sup> *Punched* means the ID was punched, and a hole made by a legal employer to indicate to the next administrator that the holder was legally released from of a contract, not running away, and therefore not likely to be arrested as a vagabond in areas outside his own home.

Mutungu you have been left there with Mwenda aka [women's lover]<sup>533</sup>  
Stay well, bye bye, I Mwanias person am gone! [I'm out of here!]

I arrived at the Sagana market  
I found maize [cobs] spread out like bananas  
I asked to buy one maize cob with a cent, and just missed a slap by that Kikuyu!  
It was a Kikuyu girl, who thought I was out of my mind  
She wore big earrings and thought she looked beautiful  
When I spoke to her, she felt like beating me for my long, unkempt hair and beard which she  
detested

Some women standing by attempted telling her  
"Give him a maize cob. He is a human being like you  
And take the cent. He has no more cents."  
She denied me the maize-cob, and the cent was returned to me  
After taking it, I was nearly overcome by anger and hunger!  
Bearing my hunger, I returned to where the trailer was chug! Chug! Chug! Chugging!<sup>534</sup>  
I climbed up the *itaa* and gave instructions not to be woken up from there<sup>535</sup>

When the train left, I was fast asleep  
It passed Malawa without my differentiating the train-stations  
Sleeping because of the bad feelings created by that Kikuyu girl!

At Thika I found a woman  
Who hailed from Kya Nzavi, a soldier's wife [wife of a "crown" fighter]  
Who kindly asked me if I was sick because I looked like a baboon due to the hair the Kikuyu girl  
had earlier despised me for!  
When she told me that I was suddenly overcome by nostalgia for home, and was sad and  
depressed and filled with self-pity  
We drank the news together for a while before I was called urgently  
And the train turned around so we could be returned where we had come from!

I silently called counsel with my head and asked, I of Mathuva  
Forget any other job. With the ballast that I left behind, if I'm returned there, how will I survive?  
How will I not die?  
Although we had come from a *savali* when we came, at the end of this moon [month] I will  
desert, abandon, "be released"<sup>536</sup>  
I can't add myself another month only to die after I leave

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<sup>533</sup> a *wathi*-name of a colleague

<sup>534</sup> the sound made by a stationary steam-engine train

<sup>535</sup> *Utaa* here means flopped down dejectedly. The Akamba made *itaa* for storing maize and other grains near the roof of their huts a horizontal bed made from wood, closely joined together to hold grains. Sometimes, one could use this *utaa* as a bed, but it was not a substitute for the bed that they made the same way, but on it was spread several dried and softened leather, so that they were hard, but comfortable beds.... so to sleep in the *utaa* means a very lowly place to sleep

<sup>536</sup> leave work for home

We returned there and were not shown the digging and blasting jobs  
 We were instead shown some nearby heavy metals  
 The metal was loaded up on the train, and the train was turned around [reversed]  
 We spent the night beyond high hills of Malawa  
 Pundamilia, way beyond Thika  
 Way beyond Pundamilia, beyond Thika, knowing well I'm homeward bound.  
 Without a doubt, I'm headed home where I can be reunited with Vengiiii, Meliii, Laaaaangi and  
 Kathaaambi!

*Ending: First Alternative*

If this job was being done at Mwala, by midday [noon]  
 I would get home-food, my wife knows what to do, except if the overseer spotted her  
 And I had gotten very, very thin, I had got thin because of the ballast that had thinned me down  
 And my hair had grown like grass.  
 With my beard, I looked like a huge ugly Indian! Hairy Indian!  
 I had been thinned down by carrying the basin [with ballast] without having my hair cut  
 A girl is very favourite, she is given a young he-goat and a young she-goat that is so well-fed it  
 scratches itself with its horn, and she [the daughter] is told: go sell these and buy yourself  
*ndiitya*<sup>537</sup>, oh, yes, Singi!  
 And sometimes you may hear them saying, if you ever caught my goat when I'm being *kuasw'a*  
 (i.e., when negotiations for my marriage are ongoing) or drink beer or buy beer  
 yes, may your tummies go bad from the food you eat, for leaving me looking like this! [ugly, i.e.,  
 without adornments]

I once had a grandfather who dotted on me, loved me like food, and he used to regale me with  
 stories in such a fashion you would have thought he was the child of my father's brother(s) or  
 sister(s) [a cousin]  
 He would tell me how he and his mates during his day [his time]  
 You know they had *nzele* and *iw'ulu* [vigorous dance types]  
 My grandfather announced how they danced naked, stark stark naked in the middle of the day!  
 Without a stitch on!  
 I chuckled a lot, and sometimes asked, "Oh my! Oh, my people! Dear grandpa!"  
 "Did wives also participate?"  
 He would respond, "Oooh yes, they came, of course"  
 "Even *athoni* [relatives by marriage] came to the *wathi* to watch the celebratory dances!"  
 "And, boy! did we dance!"  
 "We danced vigorously, ass up in the air, hands waving up and grabbing the soil"  
 I would laugh loudly and ask, "Oh my! Oh, my people! Dear grandpa! These girls of a long time  
 ago, were they married or did they drown in River Thwake. Oh, these females iiiii?"<sup>538</sup>

And the *nthuku* of hands, and the *leso* ii!!<sup>539</sup>  
 What do you want to say?

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<sup>537</sup> a type of bead for a girl's *mio*, her finest outfit

<sup>538</sup> This is a pun on the double meaning of the Kamba word *twaa* (to be married, or to drown)

<sup>539</sup> *Nthuku* and *leso* were the names of two age-groups.

Mwilu son of Kikotho, don't say it is my own wish, I was just created that way.  
*Cut off!*<sup>540</sup>

*Ending: Second Alternative*

And Muindi set down his "load"<sup>541</sup>

Muindi "screamed" and people listened [i.e., responded to the cry]

Do you think sharpness belongs only to a machete? And the shyster? the crafty snake?

Whoever was asked responded in unison—"Just the old one. What will these children eat?"—  
they are not *tuviivii*.<sup>542</sup>

Will the crown of Kanyanga [trespass fine] and *makovo* [boots] descend? Arresting and tying up  
chickens and goats!

And cents for the "rescue". The hunger for cents! If this goes on, I will look for a dwelling place  
in Kikuyuland

After waiting a year for the crown letter! Akavi [the Maasai] are not my in-laws! And they  
they've never brought me celebratory beer! Just the old one like the people of Ngelani! And  
those eating goat heads under the waving flag!<sup>543</sup>

**2. Nthi ya Kenya ndikola athungu iia na iia ii** (*The country Kenya will never forget/be  
forgotten by athungu or Athungu will never forget the country Kenya, oh! my! oh! no!*)<sup>544</sup>

Nivingusya kwitu, Nivingusya, Ukamba, kwoonthe ngomany'e

Kukilitye ki, nyie ndyaaona mui

Andu na syana na iveti syonthe maendie tooni

Nyie Kyuma kimwana ndikona umamo nienda kikuyu

Nthi ya Kenya ndikola athungu iia na iia ii

Niweta maundu na thina mwiingi noonee Siloni [Ceylon]

Ngililikana kau wa Mbama na thina wa Mbama [Burma]

Na kukomaa ikuthuni ta ng'ombe, umuu mwiingi na Mbua

Kwai minyungo na syimba nyiingi kya muy'avani

Nthi ya Kenya ndikola athungu iia na iia ii

Nisisya ivalo nikethya anyanya masaku na Kangundo

Nakw'o Kilungu ni nthi ya iima na miti ya makoko

Nak'wo Kangundo kwi mbua nyiingi kwi mbemba na mboso

Nakw'o Mwala ni nthi ya n'gombe mwee mwiingi na iia

Nakw'o kitui kwi pamba mwingi kwi mbumbu sya nguma

---

<sup>540</sup> injecting useful English words here, to show knowledge of the new powerful language!

<sup>541</sup> Set down the "load," put down what one is holding to free your hands to fight or concentrate on an urgent matter.

<sup>542</sup> beautiful little birds that are very noisy when eating together

<sup>543</sup> the Union Jack

<sup>544</sup> *Nthi* means the world, a country, the floor, the soil, and, by analogy, the people (the colonized and colonizers; the rebels and the sell-outs). Thus, *nthi ya Kenya ndikola athungu iia na iia ii* has multiple meanings. This song was sung by John Ndolo on 30 Dec 1985, composed in the 1950s by Vwana Kyuma of Mbilini, Kangundo. A former KAR soldier, Kyuma fought in Abyssinia, Burma, and Ceylon as a British soldier.

Nthi ya Kenya ndikola athungu iia na iia ii

Mutua munyanyaa mwanaa wa Nthembwa wakilililye we kyauni  
Philip muindi mwanaa wa Mutiso lilikana siloni  
Kith-ekani twamamie Kyuma ku twaiaa kisimisi  
Tulilikane no kikuu ta andu a ngelani  
Nthi ya Kenya ndikola athungu iia na iia ii

Niamba ukethya Matee wa Nganga Matiliku Mbitini  
Kuu twai kauni nthi ya uvasi na twooka tulukana [Ethiopia and Turkana]  
Nthi ya iima na syua yiingi kuuya Lotwa [Lodwar]  
Na Wilison Kitheka kaia neeElia Maliti  
Nuulilikana mutondo mwingi wai tulukana [marshy land]  
Wai mwiingi na nitwautiie kuuya Lotwa  
Nuulilikana muvuko wa Sukali wandiie nyie Kyuma  
Ona ngamama ngamamia ikumbi ndyulwa nutethyo usu  
Nthi ya Kenya ndikola athungu iia na iia ii

Kiveti musyai ndueke kumaka wasyaia no wasyaie  
JKM mwana wa mwaitu lilikana Siloni  
kuu twai kauni twi na andu a Nyasa Chawino Pangondo [Rhodesia and Nyasaland, now  
Zimbabwe and Malawi]  
Nthi ya Kenya ndikola athungu iia na iia ii...

### **Translation**

The country Kenya will never forget/be forgotten by athungu/Athungu will never forget the  
country Kenya, oh! my! oh! no!

I *vingusya*<sup>545</sup> at home [our place], and I *vingusya* the entire length of Ukambani, and I find none  
to let me in  
All is very quiet and still and nobody notices [minds] me  
People, children, and women have all slept  
I, Kyuma, young man, having failed to find a sleeping place, I will head to Kikuyuland  
The country Kenya will never forget/be forgotten by *athungu* or *Athungu* will never forget the  
country Kenya, oh! my! oh! no!

I would also want to mention/recall the great suffering endured in Ceylon  
Remembering the war in Burma, its associated problems and suffering in Burma  
Sleeping under shrubs like cows with swarms of mosquitoes and torrential rain  
Memories of awful stench, emanating from the many Japanese corpses

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<sup>545</sup> Kamba houses were closed from the inside with *ivingi*—strong, straight wood (translation: “closers” about a metre long and four inches in diameter)—that were wedged between two vertical posts on each side of the entry and placed one on top of the other to secure the door. *Kuvingusya* or *vingusya* is to request someone to remove the *ivingi* to allow entry into the house

The country Kenya will never forget/be forgotten by *athungu* or *Athungu* will never forget the country Kenya, oh! my! oh! no!]

Glancing across the districts and divisions, I greet my friends in Machakos and Kangundo  
Kilungu is a mountainous country with lots of rain and wattle trees  
Kangundo has much rain, maize, and beans  
Mwala is a country of cows, lots of millet and milk  
In Kitui exists much cotton and famous *mbumbu* [A type of bean]  
The country Kenya will never forget/be forgotten by *athungu* or *Athungu* will never forget the country Kenya, oh! my! oh! no!]

Mutua my friend, son of Nthembwa, where have you been keeping so quiet?  
Philip Muindi son of Mutiso, remember Ceylon?  
The thick forest under which we slept, Kyuma, where we “ate Christmas”? [celebrated Christmas]  
Better remember: *no kikuu ta andu a ngelani* [it is still as we decided; it is still the old agreement]  
The country Kenya will never forget/be forgotten by *athungu* (*Athungu* will never forget the country Kenya, oh! my! oh! no!)

I begin my salute by greeting Matee son of Nganga of Matiliku, Mbitini  
Where we fought in Abyssinia [Ethiopia] before moving down to Turkana  
A mountainous country with a lot of sun, up there at Lodwar  
And Wilson Kitheka, my beloved brother! [my mother’s little son] and Elijah Maliti  
Do you remember the huge marsh land and deep bog at Turkana?  
It was immense, and we left it at Lodwar  
Do you remember the bag of sugar you left me, Kyuma?  
Even if I slept as if drugged, flattening the granary, I would not forget that assistance  
The country Kenya will never forget/be forgotten by *athungu* (*Athungu* will never forget the country Kenya, oh! my! oh! no!)

Woman parent [who gave birth], stop worrying, once you gave birth, you gave birth!  
JKM my mother’s son remember Ceylon!  
Where we fought alongside people from Nyasaland Chawino Pangondo [Rhodesia and Nyasaland...now Zimbabwe and Malawi]  
The country Kenya will never forget/be forgotten by *athungu* (*Athungu* will never forget the country Kenya, oh! my! oh! no!)

### 3. **Aiĩĩĩĩ, Nimukulya nthuke ya ambalũ** (*Hey, I ask you! the Ambalũ age-group*)<sup>546</sup>

Aiĩĩĩĩ, nthũke ya aa mbalũ

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<sup>546</sup> sung by Daniel Kaindo Kilungu; Kawive Wayua, Luvanzi Kelli, Kilungya (Uyuuyu), John Kieti Ndolo, Makula Mutua, Mutethya Ndolo and Waki Ngonzi (1984, 1986, 1990 and 1994). The song addresses the people initiated or

Aiĩĩĩ, nthũke ya ambalũ ndela mũkũlye ũsu ũnĩkwanga nũũ?  
 Kote mũtw'etumo woowaie mũkavi wakĩlĩtye kũthũka Īlĩa Nzyoka  
 Katong'ana kwa akavi kwĩ nduka na ngo ĩĩ.  
 Ũ mũkavi aa, ũ mũkavi aa, ĩĩ mũkavi aa akĩthũsa  
 Ndeiwe se, ndeiwe semba na nzĩa  
 Ũkwate, ũkwatange kyano kwĩvitha ta aka kũneneva  
 Ndĩkalea kũtembũa ngao  
 Kĩamba kya, kĩamba kya ĩa ĩa  
 Īĩvole, ĩvole yĩ kĩthiano tũyaato ...  
 Tũyaato ... tũyaatonya mwanya wĩ kĩvuthi ĩ nthekeo kathenge ngũemwa  
 Ũndei syĩ ... ũ ndei syĩ mutitũ ndatia syatilaa nyama kiluuto  
 Aũmeĩ ... Munduume ĩ mũkũlkĩla mũkethĩa Mbalũ nĩ mwanake  
 Ī wookũva ... wookũva Kyende na Mũito manoowaie mwĩtu wa Nzaũ  
 Tikaũke ... tikaũke makono ndakeie tutĩsyẽ mwikithi  
 Tũyĩatha ... tũyĩatha akavi tũyaang'oka kĩtumbĩ ngalĩko na kwikya maangi!  
 Īĩ ũmwendaa ... ũmwendaa ngelele no kũng'okelya ĩtheo kũũ kwitũ, nĩtwaithũie mmmmmmm

Aiĩĩĩ, the *nthuke* ya *ambalũ* age-group

### **Translation**

I have not asked, who is that walking aimlessly?  
 Of course, it is Mũtw'etumo<sup>547</sup> who killed a Maasai who was worse than Ilia Nzioka  
 And among the Maasai's different age-groups is the leopard  
 The Maasai, yes, the Maasai, who was scouting, was told to run along the road and to hold the  
     arrows, and to hide like women  
 To become famous, I penetrate [destroy] a shield!  
 We didn't, we didn't, we didn't penetrate  
 There were stones, laughter, and mockery  
 Because the he-goat defeats me!  
 The vultures, the vultures are in the forest.  
 I left them grabbing, cutting, and greedily engorging themselves with meat  
 Men! [real men] men! You have lost to Mbalũ  
 Mbalũ has just now become [turned into] a man.  
 May you, [epithet, equivalent to "may you fuck your mother"].  
 Kyende and Mũito killed Nzaũ's daughter  
 For us to go, to go, so Makono does not say we postpone the dawn!  
 When we aimed at the Maasai, we didn't go beyond one side of the body  
 and begin throwing the arrows!  
 Whoever wants, can go through the lower part  
 Here, where we are all allergic to it, mmmmmmmmm

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who came of age during the *mbalu* songs. Like other Kamba names, age-group names or nicknames are given according to some event or circumstance that happened around the time of birth or initiation. Renaming by one's peers or elders is an ongoing process.

<sup>547</sup> *Mut'wetumo* is a common Kamba name, meaning the spear-breaker, the one who broke the spear.

#### 4. Aiĩĩĩ, Nimukulya nthuke ya ambalû (*Hey, I ask you! the Ambalû age-group*)

Îĩ nĩmũkũlya ûû unĩkwenga mũtw'etumo watemanganie na mũndũ wa ng'ombe nake asa  
ukethĩwa nĩ mbu îĩ wakwaaaa  
Li mũkavi aa, îĩ mũkavi aa, akĩthũsa, nandeiwe se, na ndeeiwe samba na nzia, kwĩvitha ta,  
kwĩvitha ta aka kutetema ndĩkakĩa kũtembũa ngao  
Kĩamba kya, kĩambak ya îa îa  
Îvole, îvole yĩ kĩthiia no tĩtaako  
Tĩtaatonya mwanya ûla wĩ kĩvuthi no nthekeo  
Maneetanie, kathenge ngũemwa  
I wĩemwa, wĩemwa mana ndũkalea ûtembũa ngao  
Î ngao nĩ, ingao nĩ nyũmũ na yĩ îvĩndĩ na yĩ ngalakala îĩ aa îĩ îĩ  
Waĩ îĩĩĩ, yokĩveti kĩ wĩlea ûsĩlĩla na nakũmbĩa mũnuka wĩana wa ndomatomi namwĩa ningũke  
kũvuta nĩ kyaĩ iwakwa îĩ?  
Î kavu ka, îkavu kauite kavano, kavono mũngili wekisyeye ûvoo kĩĩma akulwa akyasya “yĩisaa o  
kuawa”

*I said*

Yĩ nginyĩ, yĩ nginyĩte kyole namo mavuti no kĩtĩo  
Kasĩla ta, kasĩla takinyĩte katutawa na ûtuti  
Undei kye, ûndei kyĩ mũtitũ kũtoona inatĩlĩle nyama kĩluuto, mmmmm

Mwaakya Iiii Lili, Niwambaika iii<sup>548</sup> (You all Say, my father, you have “cut”/initiated me or had  
me initiated, iii)

Mwaakya îĩ lĩlĩ asa nĩwambaĩka îĩ.  
AAAaaa, wangĩlya aĩmũ kutindaa nyumba ta kana. Aaaa.x2  
Îĩ mwakya îĩ lĩlĩ asa nĩwambaĩka îĩ.

Mwakya îĩ lĩlĩ nyũmba nĩ nene îĩ.  
Aaaa nyũmba nĩnene ngũmĩthĩa inyĩa na syana aaa.a x2  
Aaaa nyũmba nĩ nene ngũmĩthĩa inyĩa na syana  
Ngasya îĩ lĩlĩ nyũmba nĩ nene îĩ.  
Mwasya îĩ lĩlĩ kakeni kakena îĩ.  
Aaaa kakena ngei ua kangĩ kakena musyamo aaaaaaa.  
Aaaa kakena ngei na kangĩ kakena musyamo  
Mwakya îĩ lĩlĩ kakeni kakena îĩ  
Mwakya îĩ lĩlĩ nguvingĩwa nangũ îĩ.  
Aaaaaa na îngĩ nyũmũ na îngĩ sya muvĩndavĩndĩ aaaa.  
Aaa na îngĩ nyũmũ na îngĩ sya muvĩndavĩndĩ iiii  
Mwakya îĩ lĩlĩ nguvingĩwa nethoka îĩ.  
Mwakya îĩ lĩlĩ nguvingĩwa na mukwa îĩ...  
Mwakya îĩ lĩlĩ nguvingĩwa na kikuu îĩ  
Mwakya îĩ lĩlĩ nguvingĩwa na nzele îĩ.  
Mwakya îĩ lĩlĩ nguvingĩwa na ua îĩ.

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<sup>548</sup> sung by Musukuma Kwing'athula, Makula Mutua, Mutethya Ndolo, Nzilani Mutua and Waki Ngonzi (1986, 1994 and 1996)

Mwakya ãã lãlã nguvingãwa na nthio ãã.  
 Mwakya ãã lãlã nguvingãwa na mbisu ãã.  
 Mwakya ãã lãlã nguvingãwa na muo!...ãã.  
 Mwakya ãã lãlã nguvingãwa na nthungi!...ãã.  
 Mwakya ãã lãlã nguvingãwa na kiinga ãã.  
 Mwakya ãã lãlã nguvingãwa na kivingi ãã!  
 Mwakya ãã lãlã nguvingãwa na ikanda.ãã..  
 Mwakya ãã lãlã nguvingãwa na kivanga ãã  
 Mwakya ãã lãlã nguvingãwa na ivia ya uthia ãã.  
 Mwakya ãã lãlã nguvingãwa na ivia ya uthamba ãã  
 Mwakya ãã lãlã nguvingãwa na ngose !!. ãã..  
 Mwakya ãã lãlã nguvingãwa na ndawa!.. ãã.  
 Mwakya ãã lãlã nguvingãwa na kikuni! ãã

Mwakya ãã lãlã nguvingãwa na mbemba ãã.  
 Mwakya ãã lãlã nguvingãwa na nzuu ãã....  
 Mwakya ãã lãlã nguvingãwa na nthooko ãã.  
 Mwakya ãã lãlã wakavalũkũ ãã.  
 Mwakya ãã lãlã nguvingãwa na ndaka  
 Aaaa, wakavalũkũ vulya mũu uvete na weu aaaaaa.  
 Aaaa wamwaĩtu notitĩ, wa mwĩtu notitĩ kivila mwakya ããã lãlã wamwaitũ notitũ ããã.

### **Translation**

Hey, I ask you!

Who is that cutting or preparing the land, Mutw'etumo who sliced the cattleman and got sliced up, and my father was also around. Oooh my!

Yes, the Maasai, yes, the scouting Maasai was told to run and hide like a scared woman because of his shaking

I'll never fear penetrating the shield

And the *kiamba* [bugle] goes ia ia ia!

But we've never managed in that space with a hole and that's ridiculous!

They called for a he-goat that beats me! I can't handle it.

But no matter, you still must tear open that shield!

The shield is hard, and has a bone and is of this ceremony

Why don't you put this woman in her place?

Yet I created for you a mouth as big as that of a woodpecker!

I said I'll come visit you although weren't mine

A small stomach that had been cooked

Kavano Mungili, who threw the story to the hills/mountains.

His response when asked? "It was going to be killed"

Yes, I've stepped on *kyole* and the guns have been postponed

The route we took, the path we took was swept with a broom

The vultures, the vultures in the forest, the greed! The avarice!

They grabbed and pulled the meat in their vulture way!

mmmmmm

You Say you have “cut” [initiated] me iii  
You all Say, my father, you have “cut”/initiated me or had me initiated,  
Yes, you’ve taken me across *aimu* staying at home like a small child.<sup>549</sup>  
You all Say, my father, you have “cut”/initiated me or had me initiated

You say ãî ãî the house is big!  
Oh yes, the house is big, inside it I found the mother and children x2  
Yes, the house is big, inside I found the mother and children  
You say ãî ãî the house is big!

You say ãî ãî a light shone  
Yes, it shone at Ngei and another shone across  
Oh yes, it shone at Ngei and another shone across  
You say ãî ãî a light shone

You say ãî ãî I’ve been blocked with firewood!  
Yes, some dry and others not so dry x2  
You say ãî ãî I’ve been blocked with firewood!

You say ãî ãî I’ve been blocked with an axe!....  
You say ãî ãî I’ve been blocked with *mukwa* the big rope!....  
You say ãî ãî I’ve been blocked with a gourd!...  
You say ãî ãî I’ve been blocked with a *nzele* [plate made of half a gourd]!....  
You say ãî ãî I’ve been blocked with an *ua* [a huge half-gourd container]  
You say ãî ãî I’ve been blocked with a *nthio* [stone for crashing grains]  
You say ãî ãî I’ve been blocked with a pot!  
You say ãî ãî I’ve been blocked with a *muo*! [small metal farm implement]....  
You say ãî ãî I’ve been blocked with a *nthungi*! [woven basket]  
You say ãî ãî I’ve been blocked with a *kiinga* [huge round grain-storage]  
You say ãî ãî I’ve been blocked with a *kivingi*!  
You say ãî ãî I’ve been blocked with a rope!  
You say ãî ãî I’ve been blocked with a panga [machete]!  
You say ãî ãî I’ve been blocked with a grinding stone!  
You say ãî ãî I’ve been blocked with a washing stone!  
You say ãî ãî I’ve been blocked with a washing stone! na ndawa!.. ãî.  
You say ãî ãî I’ve been blocked with tweezers!  
You say ãî ãî I’ve been blocked with a *kikuni*!<sup>550</sup> ãî.  
You say ãî ãî I’ve been blocked with maize!  
You say ãî ãî I’ve been blocked with pigeon peas!  
You say ãî ãî I’ve been blocked with a *ndakai*!<sup>551</sup>  
You say ãî, one of the hare/rabbit ãî

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<sup>549</sup> *Aimu* means 1, childish state, 2, dangerous state 3, ogres 4 non-person.

<sup>550</sup> *kikuni*: a device to remove the green flesh off a sisal leaf to get to the white fibers in the middle for use as the thread

<sup>551</sup> mud, earth, indicating land for ploughing, grazing, planting, and dancing

Yes, the one of the hare/rabbit, please scoop some ash and get rid of it in the wilderness! Or hare  
you remove the ash and remove it from the wilderness  
Oh yes, my mother's child it is titit titi on the seat [movement]  
Oh yes, my mother's child it is tit ititiiii

### 5. Syokimau ai mwathani! (*Syokimau was a seer*)

Syokimau ai mwathani!  
Ekai nimutavye Akamba  
Syokimau ai mwathani x2  
Niwaminie ena Syotune  
indi Syokimau ai mwathani.  
Athanie nzoka weuni, kai ti nzoka ni lelii

Aathanie nzoka kiw'uni, kai ti nzoka ni meli ii  
Syokimau ai mwathani x2  
Nake niwaminie! "Andu naaya atune mokite mekiite myaki ngusuni"  
kai ti myaki ni mavuti! [iviliiti]  
Oonie isoka, nene kute itaa!, isamu imelya!  
Avai! Nyamu a nzi!  
Syokimau ai mwathani x2  
Akamba imanyililei  
Syokimau ai mwathani x2  
Matu na nyeki mutwe ta inyanyi  
Eetele o kwasya, ndoona wai ndisembe!  
Syokimau ai mwathani x2  
Na ... Syotune wa Kathukye  
Syokimau ai mwathani x2  
Na Syotune, indi Syokimau ai mwathani.

#### ***Translation***

I tell you something, you Akamba [Kamba people]  
Syokimau was indeed a seer x2  
And she spoke/finished speaking!  
Alongside Syotune, Syokimau was a seer!

She foretold of the big snake in the sea  
It was not a snake, it was a ship  
She spoke! "I see! They are coming, some people, people walking towards us, carrying fire in  
their pockets"  
But it was not fire, it was guns and gunpowder!<sup>552</sup>  
She saw a huge snake, bigger than a python,  
A terrible sight, the swallower!  
Oh my, the earth beast!

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<sup>552</sup> This also alludes to matchsticks.

Syokimau was a seer indeed x2  
You Akamba watch out for yourselves  
Syokimau was indeed a seer x2  
Clutching a green twig and grass on the head like a baboon!  
While waiting to say, “Had I seen danger, I would have fled!”  
Syokimau was indeed a seer x2  
And ... Syotune wa Kathukye

## 6. Mbaitu! Ukai muyonee!! (*Mbaitu! Come see for yourself!*)<sup>553</sup>

Around the time of Kenya’s famous written travel classics, parallel texts of Kenyans’ orature were being produced, narratives portraying a different world, a world of wonder, amazement, apprehension, and incredulity at the audacity of the once new visitors. Their arrival had, at first, inspired wonder and amazement and, later, disgust for these strangers who had been welcomed, fed, and given the customary hospitality but had overstayed their welcome. In Ukambani, orature texts of the time exhibit a combination of caution, curiosity, amusement and wonder at these visitors.

The *mwalĩ* below memorializes the legendary Kamba seer, Syokimau, who “saw” red strangers with “fiery eyes, carrying fire in their pockets.” She also saw a “huge snake walking in the water, towards her”. Syokimau’s frightful visions warned the Kamba against the expected “strangers”, whose fiery eyes and fire in pockets symbolized widespread violence and destruction amongst them. Soon after her vision, the first white man appeared in Machakos. Her vision of “the red men” has endured and variants of the folksong survive in Ukambani.<sup>554</sup> In Syokimau’s vision (*and she spoke!*), a destructive, poisonous, and terrifyingly huge snake slowly made its way, swallowing things, biting, and killing with its poison, and destroying anything in its path. The poison in the

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<sup>553</sup> *Mwalĩ* was sung by Makula Mutua in 1989. *Mbaitu* is a combination of *mbai* (tribe, clan, family, totem) and *yaitu* (our) and roughly translates into “my people” as in “people from my place/clan/land/home/totem.”

<sup>554</sup> Though I found eight versions of the song I used above the lines common to all.

snake of Syokimau’s vision is notable since huge snakes—*ikuu* or *itaa* (python or boa constrictor)—are non-poisonous.

After the terrible snake, Syokimau then “saw” red frightening people with fiery eyes walking towards her, carrying in their pockets live fire. After consultations, the snake was defined as a ship at sea because, at the time, some people had made journeys to the coast to trade ivory for beads, cloth, mirrors and other trinkets. The foreseen fire was interpreted as the destruction of major aspects of Kamba daily life and, hence, people were told to be on guard.

Though Syokimau was a powerful seer, much respected and renowned for the accuracy of her visions, the Akamba did not heed her warnings. Instead, they welcomed the man, who was “clutching a green twig and grass on his head like a baboon.” Even after he later brought more strangers, his brothers, to live with him, people still took little notice of Syokimau’s warnings. The destruction came later. Too late, the Akamba finally understood the stranger’s force and saw the destruction in their midst. By then, the “red people” were deeply rooted in Ukambani and their superior weapons (fire, i.e., guns) were no match even for the best arrow or a “Mau Mau” sharpshooter. The proverb *ndoona wai ndisembe* translates as “had there been any danger, had I sensed any danger, I would have fled”. The variants of Syokimau’s vision and other folklore show the changing scenery in British East Africa.

*Mbaitu! ukai muyonee!* thus begins with a war cry, an appeal to stop and take note. “My people, come see for yourself.” Trust no ears!

**Mbaitu! ukai muyonee!!**  
Mbaitu ukai nakuu! x2  
Ai Syokimau ai uu?

**Mbaitu! Come see for yourself!**<sup>555</sup>  
Mbaitu! Come see for yourself! x2  
Did Syokimau die?

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<sup>555</sup> *Mbaitu* means my people, people from my place/clan/land/totem.

Malolomeela ta myei ya kithiia?  
 Mbaitu ukai nakuu! x2  
 Ai nitwika mulei, uu! neitu aia, tulinawa  
 nula witikilo  
 Meuvivya miio yonthe, aii o yonthe!  
 Na metwika yu ni Laveka! veleka! na  
 Eeseta  
 Nake yasua na ikovo meovo

Ku yai Kisuini  
 Mbaitu ukai nakuu! x2  
 nimantha kamulendele kang'i ta Ee Mutie ii!  
 Ai witikilo! kwitikila, na ngilimiti  
 Mbaitu ukai nakuu! x2

Ninisie kwikiwa kyaa itho  
 Nitilye kuasa na ngala  
 Na ivoko itimba, ai atumia!  
 Ou woonekieva kwau?  
 Mbaitu ukai nakuu! x2

And the rest *lolomeela*<sup>556</sup> like the roots of *kithiia*?<sup>557</sup>  
 Mbaitu! Come see for yourself! x2  
 I understand I am a refuser, my mother's girls [my  
 followers, my sisters] and those other *eetikili* [agrees]  
 my mother's daughter has burned her *miio*!  
 Yes! Burnt all! I hear she is Laveka [Rebecca] and the  
 other Esther  
 And Joshua and the boot [army man] count themselves  
 among the agrees [Christians, Christ accepters]  
 Where it was in Kisuini [Mombasa]  
 Mbaitu! Come see for yourself! x2  
 like Mutie, I will find another way?  
 They talk about Agreeing, Agreement, but it is *ngilimiti*  
 Because of agreement, accepting, Agreeing [not  
 refusing]! Mbaitu! Come see for yourself! x2  
 A finger thrust in the eye  
 As I sit comfortably, far from the *ngala*<sup>558</sup>  
 And strokes on the ass, Old men!  
 Whoever saw that, where? [whoever heard of that?]  
 Mbaitu! Come see for yourself! x2

<sup>556</sup> *Lolomeela* means to die for good, never to sprout out again, e.g., like the tubers which die but sprout new leaves from the old stem, even when dead, e.g., banana.

<sup>557</sup> *kithiia*, *n., pl. ithiia*, a savanna plant with many lots of thorns that start coming out when the plant is very young. The tree features in other Kamba folklore—a proverb and two legends. **Proverb**; *kithiia kyananasya nthe na miw'a yayo* (A *kithiia* bursts through the soil (ground) already with its thorns, i.e., a person will be what they will be, and it is manifested early in childhood). *Note*: Other trees develop sharp thorns later in life. **Legend 1; why do people die completely without rising again?** and **Legend 2; why is the chameleon despised?** The story goes that when God talked to people a long time ago, people complained to him that they did not like dying for ever and would like to have their dead come back to life. God then said he/she would/will think this over, and asked humans to send someone to find out what he decided. Humans sent *kiimbu* (chameleon). God told the chameleon that the people were right, and that the decision: people will start dying and waking up after a while. Chameleon walked slowly back to earth to report what God told him. “I w-a-a-s ... t-o-o-o-lll-d ... I w-a-a-s ... t-o-o-o-lll-d ... I w-a-a-s ... t-o-o-o-lll-d ...” he kept murmuring, ““I w-a-a-s ... t-o-o-o-lll-d ... I w-a-a-s ... t-o-o-o-lll-d ... I w-a-a-s ... t-o-o-o-lll-d ...” The people gathered would get impatient after listening to this slow stammering creature and shout, “Yes! What were you told, fool?” “I w-a-a-s ... t-o-o-o-lll-d ... I w-a-a-s ... t-o-o-o-lll-d ...” the chameleon continued. Humans realized that God’s message was never going to come out of this incompetent lowly creature who forgot such a crucial message, which he had to pronounce before God sent another emissary. As humans sat in muted anger and outrage at the chameleon’s major flaw—mental and physical slowness—a *ngomakomi* (woodpecker) flew in and swiftly announced “I was told that humans will continue dying without EVER rising from the dead again”. Just as he finished speaking, the chameleon seemed to remember his message, which he finished slowly “I w-a-a-s ... t-o-o-o-lll-d ... .that humans will begin rising from the dead after they die.” Tragically, his good message had been overtaken by *ngomakomi*’s grim message. That is why humans die and why they despise the chameleon.

<sup>558</sup> *ngala*, *n., 1.* a flea. **2.** a spark from a burning fire. **3.** trouble: *ndikwenda utalilikilwa ngala!* I don’t want to have any part of that.

## 7. Athani ukai nakuu (*Seers! Head this way!*)

Africans saw themselves as superior to the violent and often unpredictable white man and those Akamba foolish enough to follow him, the way dogs follow owners who feed them well. The white strangers—once seen to act more like children than adults—were becoming “masters” with power to enforce their wishes and desires with the *kiboko* and jail cells where they locked up people. This was no longer child’s play.

The early Akamba-turned-Christians were ordered to burn all their *mii*o, i.e., all the traditional skins and adornments that they wore. In their place, they received blankets and cloth. These traditional-clothes-burning sessions shocked many non-believers, labelled *alei* (the refusers, i.e., those who refused to accept Jesus like the *etikili* (agreers) or accepters of Christ and the word of the new god, i.e., having accepted Jesus Christ and the missionaries. According to the preachers, burning the evil clothes was only symbolic, as the fate of the *refusers* would be worse, they would forever burn in a bigger, more painful and long-lasting hell fire at the end of the world, a fate worse than that of the *mii*o they craved and treasured. As befitting their new status, the newly converted Christians also sent their children to church and to school.

Several folk songs mention the *mii*o burning, lamenting the utter waste of such expensive (within the economy of the time) clothing, often obtained from Mombasa at huge risk and cost, as demonstrated by one Mutie on one such trip.<sup>559</sup> Really, what had Kamba clothes done to deserve

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<sup>559</sup> Mutie was a trader from the village I was born in, and I got his story from my father. To trade, the Akamba walked many weeks to Mombasa in groups, walking many hours per day and locating safe sleeping spots along an extremely dangerous route. Not only did they have to confront wild animals, they also had to deal with the weather and the elements. If one was unlucky to fall sick, the others helped him as much as was possible. If however, one’s condition worsened and he could not walk, the colleagues would forcefully get saliva from him and spread it on his luggage that would be given to the family with his spittle, a part of him. Often, such people resisted willingly spitting on their luggage as an admission of despair, e.g., Mutie got too sick to walk and refused to spit on his luggage, declaring he had found another way of walking (on his knees). As the vultures circled closer and closer, awaiting his death, Mutie was endangering the others because the vultures signalled to other wild animals that there was easy meat around. His companions regretfully pried open his mouth, forcefully took his saliva, and put it on Mutie’s luggage. Among Mutie’s luggage were beads for making **mii**o. *Source*: interviews with John Kieti Ndolo, Kavunda and Mutethya.

this fate, and what type of religion or gods are these that require people to do things only mad people do? The *alei* could not understand this or the fact that not only the clothing suffered but people's names were maligned when, they (the *alei*) and their relatives were labelled *alei* and shunned by their Christian relatives.<sup>560</sup>

The Christian converts felt superior to others and only used their new Christian names like Joshua, Rebecca, and Esther. The song laments this division of families, asserting that gods that dare be this rude to the people who serve them deserve little respect and would be better abandoned. Hence the rhetorical question “and who wants to associate with such gods? Only the ‘damn fools’ who have joined these crazed strangers and Christians ... with their mournful songs ... calling or stalking death.”

The Kamba views expressed in the *myali* were in sharp contrast to those of the earlier adventurers and travellers in the colony. For instance, when Delamere was getting 160,000 acres of land in Huxley's *White Man's Country* (1935) and setting out to form a White country with support by the colonial state, the Kamba were shocked at this use of land by one individual, land they had always, unquestionably owned communally. To “develop” the land, the colonial state was also imposing new rules and orders that included, incredibly, the caning of old men for minor infractions like not paying taxes on time or not standing up because the D.O. or the D.C. was passing by (“As I sit comfortably, far from the *ngala*; And strokes on the ass, old men!”). In this context, the *myali* in No kikuu **ta ndu a ngelani** and the **Mbaitu! Come see for yourself!** revealed the Kamba's readiness to fight for their cattle and communal lands though they had to camp illegally in the open for three weeks.

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<sup>560</sup> This division worked well to enable relatives to ferret out their “Mau Mau” relatives during the emergency as most “Mau Mau” were non-Christians or undevoted Christians.

Neither *myalĩ* nor the early adventure travel narratives have been selected for the high school literature syllabus in Kenya.

### **Athani ukai nakuu (*Seers! Head This Way!*)**

Athani ukai nakuu! x2  
Ai Syokimau kowakwie  
Na malolomeela ta myei ya kithiia?

Athani ukai nakuu! x2  
Ai nitwika ni mulei, na mwiitu wa ia  
Eu vivya miio yonthe, Ii, yonthe vyu!  
Nayu eyita Laveka! veleka!  
Ku yai Kisuini  
Athani ukai nakuu! x2  
Ee Mutie atisa uthi na mau!  
Ai witikilo  
Athani ukai nakuu! x2  
Ninisie kwikiwa kyaa itho  
O nitilye  
Athani ukai nakuu! x2

Seers! Head this way!  
Did Syokimau die?  
And the rest *lolomeela*<sup>561</sup> like the roots of *kithiia*<sup>562</sup> to  
disappear forever?  
Seers! Head this way! x2  
I understand I am a refuser, I have been labelled  
while my mother's daughter has burned her *miio*!  
Yes! Burnt all! And now she is Laveka [Rabecca]  
Where it was in Kisuini [Mombasa]  
Seers! Head this way! x2  
When Mr. Mutie walked on his knees!  
Because of agreement, accepting, not refusing!  
Seers! Head this way! x2  
A finger can be thrust into the eye  
As one sits comfortably<sup>563</sup>  
Seers! Harken this way! x2

### **8. Mwaitu wakwa Tiwa na useo ninathi Mbama Yu (*My mother, be left well, I'm off to Burma now*)**

Mwaitu wakwa tiwa na useo ni nathi Mbama yu  
Nake mwaitu akimbita akinguna mutwe  
Akimbia uthi na useo uthi Mbama ukakw'e

Yila navikie Mbama nasen'gie muno  
Kyau kya ku kyai kiseo kyenzawa na mulau  
wia wakwa wai vinya kuseuvya mitokaa  
ila yaendaa utuku nziani ngungani sya kiw'u [kikw'u]

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<sup>561</sup> The closest meaning of *lolomeela* is never to sprout out again.

<sup>562</sup> The *kithiia* is a savanna tree with sharp thorns and deep roots. It is referred to in the legend about why humans die instead of living forever.

<sup>563</sup> without being aware of what is really happening

Liu wakwa wai musele na mutu wa nganu  
Kai mwaitu niwangengie!

***Translation:***

My mother, be left well, I'm off to Burma now  
My mother! be left well as I am going off to Burma now  
And my mother calls me and hits me on the head  
Saying "You go well to Burma to die"

When I arrived in Burma, I was very shocked!  
There everything was good for me since I used the car all the time  
My job was to repair the cars that went out into the water caves [death traps] at night

My food was rice and wheat flour  
Oh! I realized! My mother cheated me!

## **Appendix 5: Kenya National Goals of Education (Objectives for English and Literature Syllabi)**

The Ominde report outlined nine objectives for education that were adopted as Kenya's national goals of education. These served as the basis for all secondary school curricula, including English and Literature, namely:

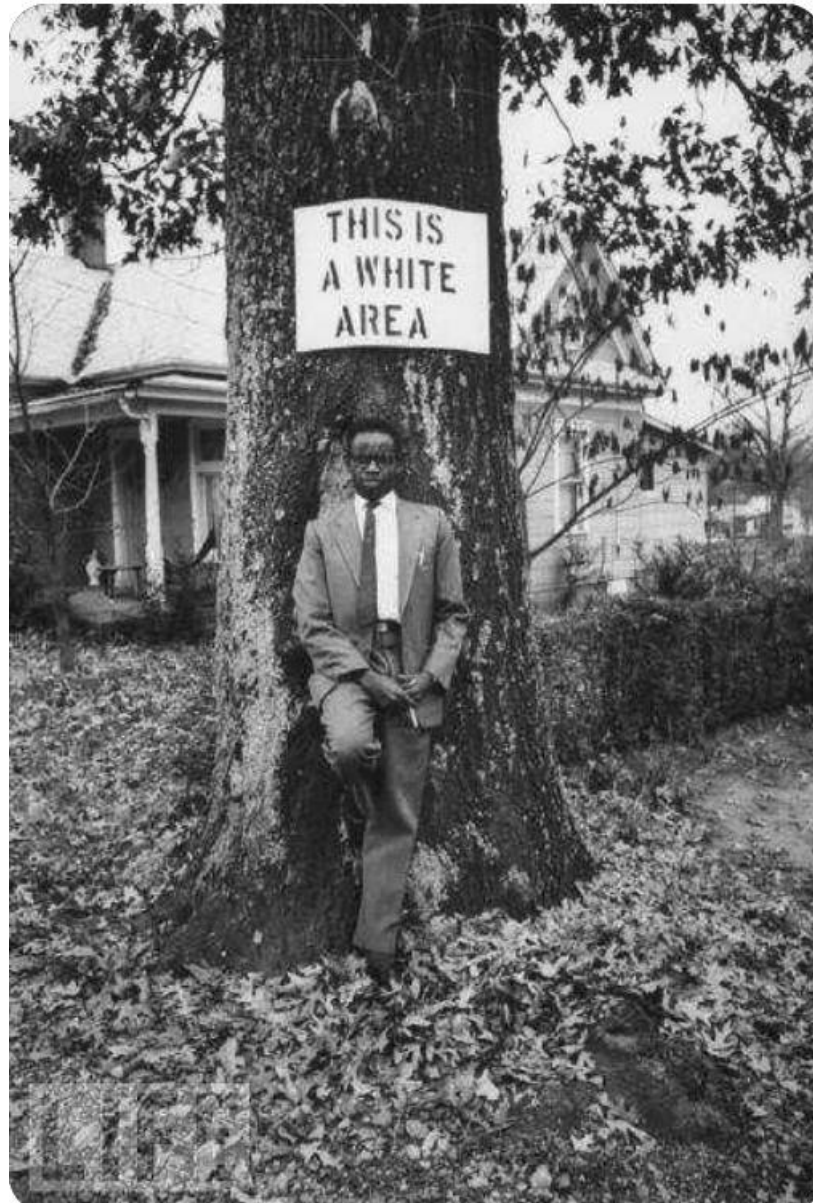
- “Education is a function of the Kenya nation; it must foster a sense of nationhood and promote national unity.
- Education in Kenya must serve the people of Kenya and the needs of Kenya [*sic*] without discrimination.
- Our public schools are an instrument of the secular state, in which no religion is privileged, but they must respect the religious convictions of all people.
- The schools of Kenya must respect the cultural traditions of the peoples of Kenya, both as expressed in social institutions and relationships.
- An excessively competitive spirit in our schools is incompatible with our traditional beliefs and must be restrained. Every young person coming from our schools must be made to realise that he has a valuable part to play in the national life.
- Education must be regarded, and used, as an instrument for the conscious change of attitudes and relationships, preparing children for those changes of outlook required by modern methods of productive organisation. At the same time, education must foster respect for human personality.
- A most urgent objective of education is to subserve the needs of national development.
- Education must promote social equality and remove divisions of race, tribe and religion. It must pay especial [*sic*] attention to training in social obligation and responsibility.
- An outcome of our educational provision at all levels must be adaptability to change” (Kenya 1964:25).

Objectives of the English and Literature syllabi. At the end of the literature course, the learner should be able to:

- “understand the nature and form of oral literature and show more confidence in his cultural foundations as expressed in both oral and written literature;
- appreciate the social environment that gives rise to oral composition;
- develop an awareness of the varieties of oral literature and cultural links between different peoples as expressed in their oral literature;
- develop a critical response to oral literature;

- cultivate the habit of reading for enjoyment;
- relate written literature to real life and understand the relationship between the issues raised and the concerns of society;
- understand the texts in terms of plot(s) narrative techniques, themes, characters and their relationships with one another;
- develop an insight in the appreciation of language use in literature;
- develop the ability to compose and write creatively;
- communicate in English fluently;
- respond to literature as a reflection of everyday experiences;
- enjoy literature and its pursuit as a general cultural activity;
- understand and appreciate more the literature of the peoples of East Africa, Africa, the third world and the rest of the world;
- develop a critical appreciation of form and style, narrative techniques, language use, imagery, creation of atmosphere, mood, and tone and many other literary devices used by the author; and
- evolve mature self-expression and cultivate a fluent and coherent style through exposure to well-written literature” (MinEd and KIE 1985:10 and 15).

***Appendix 6: Images of the Guerrilla War for Land and Freedom, including Colonial Government Propaganda***



*Figure 1. 1960. Kenyan student Philip Maundu attending Morehouse College, stands underneath a Nairobi real estate sign.*

*Source: <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/507006870546604538>*



*Figure 2. 1952: Rounded up Mau Mau suspects sit behind a makeshift barbed-wire compound before interrogations*

*Source: <https://www.gettyimages.ca/detail/news-photo/war-and-conflict-africa-kenya-pic-1952-suspected-black-mau-news-photo/78963704>*



*Figure 3. October 1952, Kenya: Chief Waruhiu lying dead after being shot in his Hudson car*

*Source: <https://historianet.nl/oorlog/revolutie/de-britse-goelag>*



*Figure 4. 1952: A woman Mau Mau suspect being hauled out of bed by a member of the Kenyan police*

*Source:*

*<http://www.facebook.com/photo.php?pid=3651629&id=836831464>*



*Figure 5. Nov.1952: A night raid by the Army and the Kenya police to find members of the Mau Mau*

*Source: [https://media.gettyimages.com/id/2660167/photo/a-night-raid-organised-by-the-army-and-the-kenya-police-to-find-members-of-the-mau-mau-november.jpg?s=612x612&w=0&k=20&c=vZqrmXXEiXPmDy8yBRNAP5EN2cYZMYK\\_o\\_7hVMLaq4=](https://media.gettyimages.com/id/2660167/photo/a-night-raid-organised-by-the-army-and-the-kenya-police-to-find-members-of-the-mau-mau-november.jpg?s=612x612&w=0&k=20&c=vZqrmXXEiXPmDy8yBRNAP5EN2cYZMYK_o_7hVMLaq4=)*



*Figure 6. 1953, A white European and loyal black natives armed with spears searching for members of the Mau Mau*  
*Source: <https://www.gettyimages.ca/detail/news-photo/war-and-conflict-mau-mau-uprising-kenya-east-africa-pic-news-photo/79655144>*



*Figure 7.* November 24, 1952: British police examine suspects for the seven initiation cuts on the body that mark a Mau Mau member

*Source:* <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/colonial-sins-return-haunt-former-world-powers-flna6240805>



*Figure 8. Naivasha, Kenya 1952; Mau Mau “terrorists” in court  
Source: <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1373650/Mau-Mau-rebellion-Torture-rebels-including-Obamas-grandfather.html>*



*Figure 9.* March 30, 1953, Lari, Kenya: The charred and horribly mutilated body of a little child among the ruins of the burnt-out home of Chief Luka, who with his three wives and eight children, perished in the blaze when their home was set on fire during the Mau Mau massacre in the Uplands area of the Kiambu reserve. In revenge, the colonial forces killed more Africans while blaming the Mau Mau for those actions too.

*Source:* <https://www.gettyimages.ca/detail/news-photo/30th-march-1953-nairobi-kenya-the-horribly-mutilated-and-news-photo/79666563?adppopup=true>



*Figure 10. Kenya 1954. Hooded Loyalist Screeners ... (tuguniras)*  
*Source: <http://www.facebook.com/photo.php?pid=3601565&id=836831464>*



*Figure 11. "Pseudo gang" members: at left are 2 ex-Mau Maus and, at the far right, is a white British soldier disguised as an African*  
*Source: <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/344243965239531459/>*



*Figure 12.* February 27, 1954: Mau Mau “terrorist” group killed in a battle at Kandara are having fingerprints taken

*Source:* <https://www.gettyimages.ca/detail/news-photo/war-and-conflict-mau-may-uprising-kenya-east-africa-pic-news-photo/79655142?adppopup=true>



*Figure 13.* An overview of Langata Detention Camp in Nairobi

*Source:*  
<http://www.facebook.com/photo.php?pid=3421294&id=836831464>



*Figure 14.* 1954. Home Guard with rifles and spears drill to prepare for an attack by Mau Mau

*Source:*

*<http://www.facebook.com/photo.php?pid=3644827&id=836831464>*



*Figure 15.* 1954: To offset propaganda spread by Mau Mau “terrorists” in the British colony of Kenya, loyal Kikuyu are presenting the government’s view of the tense situation to fellow tribesmen. The main weapon in the war of words is an information van equipped with a loudspeaker. Here, at a marketplace above a new village in the Kikuyu preserve, Reuben Ciugu makes a sweeping gesture as he tells fellow tribesmen how the Mau Mau “terrorists” have been responsible for impeding the progress of the country. Newspapers and leaflets are also distributed to combat the influence of the Mau Mau, who have recruited many of their adherents from the tribe.

*Source:* <http://www.facebook.com/photo.php?pid=5670007&id=836831464> and <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/420734790195401909>



*Figure 16.* 1954: Dead and injured men lying on the ground tied to posts during a Mau Mau roundup. (Photo by George Rodger//Time Life Pictures/Getty Images)

*Source:*

[http://www.facebook.com/photo.php?pid=4998591  
&id=836831464](http://www.facebook.com/photo.php?pid=4998591&id=836831464)



*Figure 17. Sep. 1961: The vast crowd which heard African leaders, Jomo Kenyatta, Tom Mboya, and Julius Nyerere speak in Nairobi, Kenya,  
Source: <https://www.universalis.fr/index/afrique-noire-histoire-periode-coloniale>*



*Figure 18. 20th December 1963: Field Marshal Mwariama inspects his troops at a Mau Mau hideout in Meru..... tricked with “independence”,  
Source: <https://face2faceafrica.com/article/meet-the-little-known-somali-who-secretly-funded-the-mau-mau-that-fought-for-kenyas-independence>*

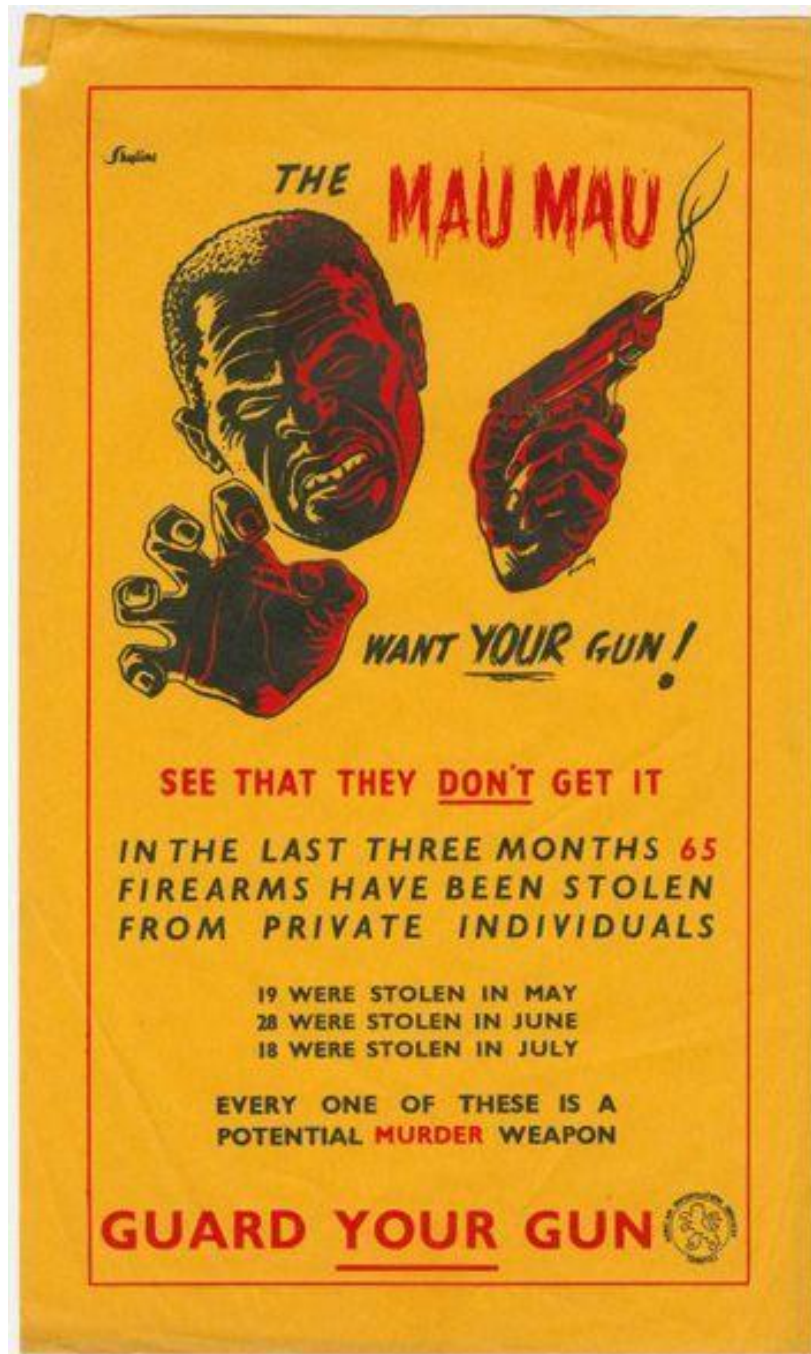


Figure 19. Kenya Colonial Government propaganda leaflet, “Guard Your Gun!”  
Source: <https://i.pinimg.com/474x/90/aa/30/90aa307e6dda12a2adf1164d7af45c7e.jpg>

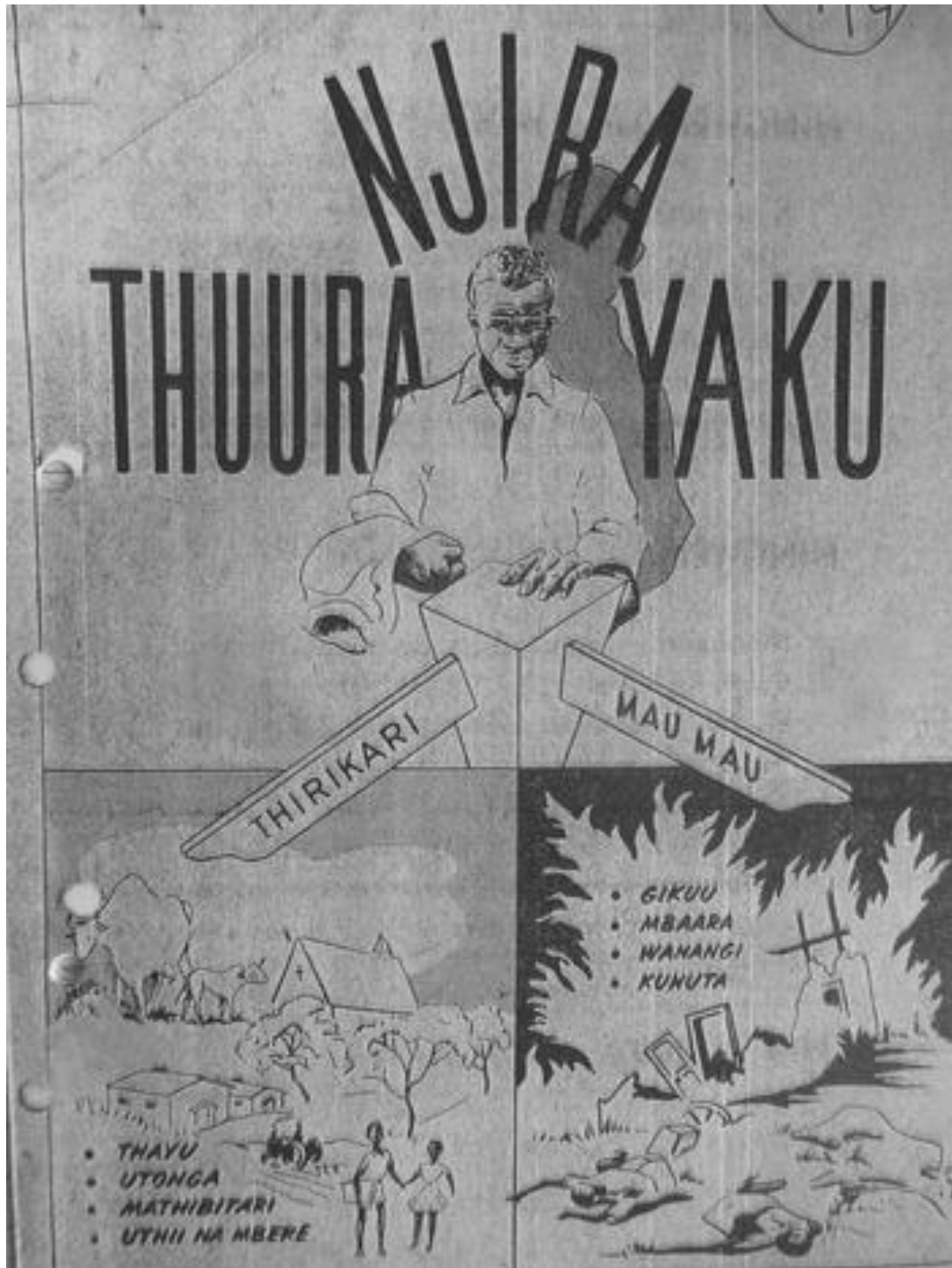


Figure 20. Kenya Colonial Government propaganda leaflet, “Choose Your Path!”  
 Translation: With the Government (Life, Prosperity, Hospitals, Development) versus With the Mau Mau (Death, War, Violent Destruction, Hunger)

Source: [https://static.cambridge.org/binary/version/id/urn:cambridge.org:id:binary-alt:20160615155902-03261-mediumThumb-S002185371400067X\\_fig1g.jpg?pub-status=live](https://static.cambridge.org/binary/version/id/urn:cambridge.org:id:binary-alt:20160615155902-03261-mediumThumb-S002185371400067X_fig1g.jpg?pub-status=live)