



Education, Colonial Sickness

A Decolonial African Indigenous Project

Edited by
Njoki Nathani Wane



palgrave
macmillan

Education, Colonial Sickness

Njoki Nathani Wane
Editor

Education, Colonial Sickness

A Decolonial African Indigenous Project

palgrave
macmillan

Editor

Njoki Nathani Wane
Department of Social Justice Education
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
University of Toronto
Ontario, ON, Canada

ISBN 978-3-031-40261-6 ISBN 978-3-031-40262-3 (eBook)
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-40262-3>

© The Editor(s) (if applicable) and The Author(s), under exclusive licence to Springer Nature Switzerland AG 2024

This work is subject to copyright. All rights are solely and exclusively licensed by the Publisher, whether the whole or part of the material is concerned, specifically the rights of translation, reprinting, reuse of illustrations, recitation, broadcasting, reproduction on microfilms or in any other physical way, and transmission or information storage and retrieval, electronic adaptation, computer software, or by similar or dissimilar methodology now known or hereafter developed.

The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc. in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use. The publisher, the authors, and the editors are safe to assume that the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication. Neither the publisher nor the authors or the editors give a warranty, expressed or implied, with respect to the material contained herein or for any errors or omissions that may have been made. The publisher remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

Cover illustration: Anastasiia Kulikovska / Alamy Stock Photo

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by the registered company Springer Nature Switzerland AG.

The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

Paper in this product is recyclable.

*I dedicate this book to all the knowledge keepers and knowledge seekers.
I would also like to dedicate this book to Leonard Wandili who transitioned
to the spirit world before the book was submitted to the publishers.*

FOREWORD

This remarkable book details how people of African ancestry have endured the painful effects of colonial exploitation and subsequent loss of their languages, cultures, medicines, foods, spirituality, systems of governance, indigenous economics, and even their educational systems.

However, despite this bleak reality, this book represents hope. In this book, the authors take us on a transformative journey of healing, reclaiming, excavating, extracting, and reassembling the pieces of our Africanness. They recreate our story by focusing on various areas of study, while affirming that although we have suffered immense damage, all is not lost. Whether excavating the troubling echoes of our past or examining the complexity of our present, they offer words that address the psychological and spiritual injuries inflicted upon us and suggest a way to a future of dignity. The authors of this book shed light on the multifaceted dimensions of decolonizing work, emphasizing its structural, epistemic, personal, and relational aspects. They provide critical insights and propose alternative ways of knowing, challenging unjust practices, assumptions, and institutions. In their telling, the importance and urgency of acting and dismantling colonial structures becomes imperative.

Most importantly, this work serves as reminder: the concept of decolonization extends beyond the removal of colonial symbols from university campuses. The authors call for an Afrocentric shaping of academic knowledge and expertise and suggest that we can do this through critical scholarship, theoretical inquiry, and empirical research. To demonstrate this, the writers challenge, rectify, and critically examine the interplay between

knowledge and power, and ably dismantle existing hierarchies, while at the same time, strive for mutual understanding and plurality.

I am grateful for this timely work and sincerely believe, as the authors do, that the journey toward decolonization requires a reevaluation of African Studies, embracing an Afrocentric multidisciplinary approach that resists systems of oppression. Our efforts must be directed toward reclaiming African subjectivity, questioning Euro-North American-centric epistemologies and rejecting Euro-centric narratives. This book is therefore crucial for the sake of our future generations, as it will indeed enable them to know who they are and where they come from.

Lusaka, Zambia

Mulenga Kapwepwe

PREFACE

Colonization has left deep and lasting wounds on our spirits. Our minds have become prisoners, trapped by an assumed notion of “normality.” This “normal” has turned us into outliers, made to feel as though we should be ashamed of our very essence. Throughout the harrowing years of colonization, we’ve been taught to devalue our dignity. Mainstream media often portrayed an inferior version of us, and we were led to believe that this distorted representation truly defined us. We were conditioned to accept a notion of our own inferiority, which has silently bred shame within our cores. Now, burdened with this self-doubt, we strive to align ourselves with Eurocentric ideals, as if they are the gold standard. It’s as though our rich cultures, civilizations, traditions, and histories pre-colonization never existed. As if civilization itself was a gift handed down by colonizers!

Mentioning the shame we harbor is met with further shame. It’s a vicious cycle that forces us into silent suffering, isolated with our colonially imprinted thoughts. The colonization of our lands wasn’t just a physical invasion, but also a psychological one. It permeated our minds, our self-perception, and our shared sense of identity. Remaining silent and not confronting these feelings only serves to perpetuate a legacy of internalized inferiority. To heal and reestablish our pride, we must shatter this silence, challenging both the external narratives thrust upon us and the internal voices that hinder our progress. The book *Colonial Sickness* is here to shatter that silence, guiding us on a transformative journey toward healing. It’s not just a beacon but a balm, aiding us in unlearning the deep-seated shame and various other maladies stemming from colonialism. It

teaches us that there's inherently nothing wrong with us. While we have patterns to unlearn and wounds to heal, at the core of our being, we remain untouched and whole. This book seeks to help us unlearn generations of harm, offering African-centric educational recommendations as pathways to healing. Above all, it beckons us to remember and embrace love—to wholly love ourselves, cherish our identities, and take pride in the rich tapestry of our heritage.

While *Colonial Sickness* is deeply rooted in African-centric perspectives, it's not solely for those of Black or African descent. Its teachings and reflections can resonate with anyone who has been touched by the tendrils of colonization. Remember, colonization did not solely leave its mark on Africa and Africans; it cast long shadows over various parts of the world. Every corner has its stories, every soul its wounds. Whether you're directly connected to African heritage, or you've felt the ripple effects of colonial ideologies in other ways, *Colonial Sickness* invites you on a journey of understanding, healing, and reconnecting with identities and histories often muted by colonial narratives.

Colonial Sickness delves deep into the often-painful realization many grapples with the internalized belief that we are inherently flawed, and as a result, undeserving of love, belonging, and connection. Yet, the authors of this book don't merely expose this affliction; they offer a healing balm. They navigate us back to the heart and soul of our identities—to the profound depth of what it means to be African, and beyond that, what it means to be genuine and true to oneself. Central to this journey is the importance of re-educating oneself about pre-colonial history, culture, and values. This re-education serves as a foundation, grounding readers in the rich tapestries of their heritage, dispelling myths, and setting right the skewed narratives they've been exposed to.

The authors infuse their pages with a potent blend of wisdom and compassion, empowering readers with courage. Courage to stand tall and proud, courage to embrace the truth that we are enough just as we are. With each chapter, they invite readers to embark on a transformative journey to decolonize their minds, urging the shedding of colonially imposed narratives and the reclamation of authentic self-worth. The goal is clear: to unlearn the distorted teachings of colonized education and to forge ahead, free, and unfettered, in a world rich with diverse and vibrant cultures.

Toronto, Canada

Natasha Shokri
Willis Opondo

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This book would not have been written without the dedication of all the contributors. There was something intimate about the various stories and the willingness to share the authentic self.

I am also indebted to all those who may not be directly involved, but whose presence in my life kept me going. This edited collection is a testimony of how our friends, family and our ancestors support our efforts to recenter our African ways of being.

I would also like to thank my ancestors for their guidance and for opening the pathway to rethink of the African past and her expansiveness.

I would like to thank those who will open this book to read, may you find what you are looking for.

Finally, I want to acknowledge my Creator for guiding this project to the finishing line.

Asante sana

CONTENTS

1 Introduction	1
Njoki Nathani Wane and Babere Kerata Chacha	
Part I Decolonizing History and Its Impact on Education from K-12 and Beyond	15
2 Seafaring Africans and the Myth of Columbus: Reflecting on Fourteenth-Century Mali and the Prospect of Atlantic Voyages	17
Jesse Ashiedu and Dhanela Sivaparan	
3 <i>Ubuntu</i>: Social Justice Education, Governance, and Women Rights in Pre-colonial Africa	43
Hellen Taabu	
4 Women to Women Marriage, Social Justice and House Property System in the Precolonial Period: Implications for Educating the Youth	59
Babere Kerata Chacha and Hellen Taabu	

5	Back to the Roots: Reconnecting Africans in Diaspora Through Cultural Media, Education, and Personal Narratives	79
	Kathy Lewis, Fanta Ongoiba, and Leonard Wandili	
6	Ubuntu: An Educational Tool to Dismantle Patriarchy—Voices from the Women Community Elders	103
	Rachael Kalaba	
Part II	Identity and Ways of Knowing for the Educator and the Learner	129
7	Knowledge Production and Colonial Myths: Centring Indigenous Knowledges Through Decolonization	131
	Andre Laylor	
8	Seeking the African Indigenous Ways of Being in Academia: The Intersecting Journeys of Two Black Women from Different Historical Colonial Experiences—Part One	151
	Osholene Oshobugie Upiomoh and Betty Walters	
9	Seeking the African Indigenous Ways of Being in Academia: The Intersecting Journeys of Two Black Women from Different Historical Colonial Experiences—Part Two	165
	Betty Walters and Osholene Oshobugie Upiomoh	
10	Resistance, Reparation, and Education Awareness: Resurgence of African Identities	191
	Nadine Abdel Ghafar, Veraline Akello, and Melanie Blackman	
11	Cultural Genocide: The Miseducation of the African Child	211
	Wairimu Njoroge	

Part III Spirituality and Land-Based Education	229
12 Three Souls in Search for the Inner Peace and Spiritual Journey: Educational Moments	231
Anushay Irfan Khan, Joel Mukwedeya, and Sameer Kapar	
13 The Soul in Soul Music: Educational Tools for Decolonial Ruptures	259
Sein A. Kipusi	
14 Kumina: Kumina! Afro-Jamaican Religion, Education, and Practice: A Site Where Afrocentricity, ‘Bodily Knowledge’, and Spiritual Interconnection Are Activated, Negotiated, and Embodied	271
Tanitiā Munroe	
15 Land Teachings: Lessons from Keiyo Elders	289
Evelyn Kipkosgei, Isaac Tarus, and Njoki Nathani Wane	
16 Beyond Territory: Engendering Indigenous Philosophies of Land as Counter-hegemonic Resistance to Contemporary Framings of Land in Kenya	313
Wambui Karanja	
17 Conclusion	343
Njoki Nathani Wane and Babere Kerata Chacha	
Index	351

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Nadine Abdel Ghafar is a first-generation Egyptian immigrant. She completed an MA in Social Justice Education with a Collaborative Specialization in Public Health Policy at the University of Toronto. She is currently a doctorate student at the University of Toronto's Dalla Lana School of Public Health. Nadine is interested in exploring social and political barriers that impact mental health service utilization among migrant and refugee women. Drawing on critical, decolonizing, and anti-racist frameworks, Nadine's research aims to redress inequitable policies and hegemonic practices that marginalize underprivileged populations.

Veraline Akello is a teacher by profession and a certified member of the Ontario College of Teachers. A Canadian and World Studies teacher for the last 19 years, she is currently completing her Master of Education in the Social Justice Education (SJE) program, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, OISE, University of Toronto, Canada.

Jesse Ashiedu is a Nigerian-Canadian doctoral student at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto, researching African animation practices. Having completed a master's degree in media production researching whitewashing in Hollywood, Ashiedu's research interests focus on race, culture, and ethnicity, and how these concepts are represented and manufactured in media.

Melanie Blackman Care, joy, and wholistic relationship curation are at the center of Melanie's praxis. Working alongside community for over 15 years, her expertise in relationship building brings members of community

together to thoughtfully engage in meaningful dialogue and create actions for collective change. Working in the education field for over a decade, she uses this as an opportunity to leverage institutional privilege to foster mutually beneficial relationships between community stakeholders and post-secondary institutions. For Melanie, education is an ongoing journey to achieving individual and communal transformation. As an ongoing learner, she is currently a student doing her Master of Education in the Social Justice Education (SJE) program. Her research interest honors community knowledge and healing with a focus on African knowledges and identities in connection to collective organizing within the Black communities.

Babere Kerata Chacha is Senior Lecturer in African History in the Department of Social Studies at Laikipia University in Kenya. He has an MA in History and a PhD in African History, both from Egerton University. He is former director of External Linkages and the founder and coordinator of the Centre for Human Rights at Laikipia University. Chacha has been a Fellow scholar of Oriental and African Studies, University of London; Junior Fellow, St. Antony's College University of Oxford; Fellow, Wolfson College Cambridge; Global Fellow, University of New South Wales, Australia; and more recently honored by the University of Cape Town with a Sarah Bartmann Award for the year 2022 in excellence in teaching African women history. In the past, he was Adjunct Lecturer in History and Development Studies at the University of Eastern Africa, Baraton, and Egerton University. Chacha has also been engaged in designing curriculum for Police Science, Military History at the Kenya Military Academy in Lanet. His main research interest includes political assassinations and human rights, but he also has wide interests in environment, gender, education, reconciliation, religion, and sexuality. He consulted for the TJRC in Kenya on political assassinations and spearheaded the launch of the police science program and the study of human rights as a common core course at Laikipia University.

Rachael Kalaba is the creator and founder of ZamWILL. Rachael's multifaceted career encompasses roles as an educator, board member, author, blogger, and activist, with a deep-rooted commitment to international development and education in Africa. Rachael Kalaba is completing her PhD in the Adult Education and Community Development program at the University of Toronto and a collaborative specialization in Comparative, International and Development Education. Her proposed PhD research combines adult education, international development, community

development, and gender studies to explore women leadership in the African context using Afro-feminism and Ubuntu lenses.

Sameer Kapar is pursuing a PhD in Social Justice Education at University of Toronto's Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE). His focus is on fostering curiosity in students to learn about social issues so that they become social change agents. As a Fulbright Scholar with a doctorate in Information Technology, he advocates for access to information and technology usage for poverty alleviation, sustainable development, and addressing social justice issues in Nepal. Kapar believes religion is a complex tapestry that incorporates spirituality, traditions, and ideas; hence, it goes beyond formalized rituals and dogmas. He believes religion can evoke awe, humility, and a sense of connectivity with the cosmos when viewed with an open mind.

Sameer's intellectual rigor allows him to critically examine religious beliefs and explore alternative perspectives. He also appreciates religion's beauty and mystery, recognizing its profound impact on individuals' lives and their search for meaning. He is working on a dissertation on how participation as a social justice pillar assists with community development, focusing on marginalized communities in Nepal and developing a citizen's participation framework to confront and mitigate social justice issues.

Mulenga Kapwepwe is a highly accomplished Zambian artist, writer, cultural activist, and arts administrator. She is the co-founder of the Zambia Women's History Museum. Born in Lusaka, Zambia, she has dedicated her life to promoting and preserving Zambian culture and arts. With her outstanding contributions to the cultural sector, Kapwepwe has earned recognition as one of Zambia's leading cultural figures. Kapwepwe's passion for the arts and culture developed at an early age. She attended primary and secondary school in Zambia before pursuing her tertiary education at the University of Zambia where she obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology. Kapwepwe has played a significant role in the cultural scene for over 30 years. Kapwepwe's dedication to the cultural sector goes beyond her artistic endeavors and publications. She has served in various leadership positions, serving on the Board of the National Museums Board of Zambia and the Board of UNESCO (Zambia), as well as serving as the Chairperson of the National Arts Council of Zambia, where she actively worked to promote and develop the arts across the country. Her efforts included organizing cultural festivals, supporting emerging artists, and advocating for the recognition of the arts as a vital

part of national identity and development. Kapwepwe was the first Chairperson of the Arterial Network, an African network of artists that spans the entire continent. In recognition of her immense contributions, Kapwepwe has received numerous awards and accolades both locally and internationally. Her work has significantly impacted Zambia's cultural landscape, and she continues to inspire generations of artists and cultural enthusiasts in her country and beyond.

Wambui Karanja is a PhD Candidate in the Department of Social Justice Education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto (OISE/UT). Wambui has a Master's in Law from the University of Toronto, Canada, and a Bachelor's in Laws from the University of Nairobi, Kenya. Her research interests lie in the fields of anti-colonial and decolonial theorizing, Indigenous philosophies and epistemologies, decolonization, Indigenous land rights, research methodologies, gender issues, and law and development theories. Wambui has published several book chapters on land, indigeneity, and gender issues and has co-authored an anthology on the role of Elders' Cultural knowledges in education.

Anushay Irfan Khan is a community-centered educator, scholar-practitioner, and researcher currently pursuing a PhD in the Department of Social Justice Education, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), University of Toronto. As a critical scholar whose work is rooted in anti-racist, feminist, Indigenous, anticolonial ways of knowing, Anushay is passionate about examining the tensions and challenges that emerge in the pursuit of decolonization. With a specific interest in anti-education and decolonial education in South Asia and its connection to the global, transnational geopolitical praxes of power, her research draws on intersectional and anti-oppressive education and social change in the pursuit of decolonial futures.

Evelyn Kipkosgei is Assistant Professor of Teaching Stream in the Department of Social Justice Education, OISE, University of Toronto, and is Associate Fellow in the Centre for Media, Culture & Education. Her scholarship encapsulates impacts of resource extraction, environmental degradation, and climate change recognizing that the environment is a significant cultural artifact to local communities.

Sein A. Kipusi received her doctorate in Social Justice Education from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto. Her doctoral work investigated financial literacy education among

racialized business owners in Toronto. Her research and advocacy centers on anti-colonial and African and indigenous knowledge frameworks. Sein completed a two-year postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Toronto Scarborough Campus at the pilot Transitional Year Program focusing on the challenges and successes of curriculum development, equity in recruitment, and inclusive diversity in access programs.

Andre Laylor is a PhD candidate in Social Justice Education in the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) at the University of Toronto. Andre's research interests are in anti-Black racism, child welfare, colonialism, neoliberalism, anti-colonial interventions, and resistance movements. Particularly, he is interested in how the child welfare system reproduces itself and the disparity of Black families it encounters.

Kathy Lewis is a Secondary School Teacher with the Toronto District School Board (TDSB). As an educator with the TDSB, in the role of Curriculum Leader for Student Engagement, Equity and Wellbeing, Kathy has been critically involved in school and community activism. She has organized several professional development workshops for staff and administrators through critical inquiry, in deconstructing anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism and examining ways educators can critically engage students in a co-construction and co-production of knowledge within their own instinctual frame of understanding that is self-validating and self-affirming. Kathy is also a member of The Centre for Integrative Anti-Racism Studies (CIARS) and was one of the panelists for the Rising up During COVID-19: Solidarity, Anti-Black Racism and Health's panel discussion. Kathy also co-moderated the CIARS in Conversation: Critical Cross-Racial Conversations: Thinking Through Our Complicities, Implications and Responsibilities.

Kathy has completed her Master's in Education in Social Justice Education, with a Collaborative Specialist in Educational Policy, at OISE, University of Toronto. She is pursuing her PhD in Social Justice Education at OISE, University of Toronto. Her research and practice mirror a decolonial framework that centers students' history and cultural ways of knowing.

Kathy's unique approach to school as a community is one that is rooted in the solidarity of inclusivity, a subversive lens that embraces sites of historical curiosity necessary in authenticating students' lived-experiences and histories and building links of communal bonds.

Joel Mukwedeya is an All But Dissertation (ABD) candidate in the Doctor of Philosophy in Social Justice Education at the University of Toronto's Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (U of T/OISE). He holds a Master of Education in Adult Education and Community Development from the University of Toronto/Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) and a postgraduate Diploma in Career and Work Counselling, from George Brown College, Toronto, Canada. He received his Bachelor's in Education from Worcester College of Higher Education in England. He is both an Ontario Certified Teacher (OCT) and a Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) holder in the United Kingdom, in good standing. He shares extensive teaching experience, both international and local, holding space and bearing witness to the life stories of creativity, courage, sharing, appreciation, empathy, compassion, reciprocity, hope, and learning journeys of diverse children, youth, adult individuals, families, and communities. His Doctoral Thesis is entitled "uBuntu: Towards a Curriculum in Environmental Education" where he contends that of all the many adverse outcomes colonialism has exacted on colonized peoples everywhere is erosion and, in some cases, erasure of Indigenous languages, cultures, and knowledge systems. In the context of environmental education, non-western perspectives have often been ignored, marginalized, or made to seem diminished as "primitive." Since environmental sustainability is a global imperative, it will be important that these different worldviews are acknowledged, especially when these contribute toward practical and sustainable solutions to the environmental challenges that blight us all.

Tanitiā Munroe is a Black scholar and researcher with degrees in education and child and youth care practice. She is pursuing a PhD in Adult Education and Community Development with a collaborative specialization in Educational Policy at Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE)—University of Toronto. Her scholarship and research are focused on the education experiences of African, Afro-Caribbean, and Black (ACB) diasporic youth and their families in Canada using an anti-colonial, critical race, and Queer Black feminist theorizing. Tanitiā has published and otherwise disseminated on issues and themes related to Canadian K-12 education policies, Black youth and their family's experience engaging with Canadian schools, and Post-Secondary Education (PSE) access for Black 2SLGBTQ young people. Over the years, Tanitiā has been professionally engaged with young people in education and community settings and the

youth criminal justice system through community outreach initiatives in various countries. She is a 2023 Viola Desmond Award honoree. Earning recognition for her community work with Black youth in the areas of health and wellbeing, research, education, and advocacy, Tanitia is a senior research coordinator at Toronto District School Board (TDSB) where she continues to re-imagine education research by centering student voice.

Wairimu Njoroge is an African Indigenous woman. She holds undergraduate and graduate degrees in Social Work. Njoroge is currently pursuing her PhD in Social Justice Education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto, and also studying African spirituality to journey in the becoming of a humane-scholar and healer.

As a therapist, Njoroge capitalizes on African Indigenous knowledges and wisdom in her interventions with individuals, families, and communities. Njoroge takes a holistic approach to wellness, centering people's stories within the context of their ancestral and diverse collective histories, collaboratively working to strengthen people's sense of dignity. Njoroge is committed to therapeutic practices invested in restoration, healing, and recreation of dignified, meaningful, and sustainable living.

Fanta Ongoiba holds Master's in Administration and Management from Sherbrooke University Québec, Canada; Master of Science in Economy from the National School of Administration of Bamako (University), Mali; a Bachelor's in Business Administration from the National School of Administration of Bamako (University), Mali; and another bachelor's degree from Business school of Administration in Algeria on Taxation (University) Fiscal inspector diploma. Presently she is doing her PhD on Social Justice Education at OISE University of Toronto.

Ms. Ongoiba has worked in a number of capacities related to human rights and humanitarian causes, including as treatment information exchange counselor at CATIE (Canada's source for information about HIV and hepatitis C) and as a community health promotion worker at the francophone center of Toronto. She considers herself a human rights activist and is particularly concerned with human rights and health for people living with HIV and AIDS.

Ms. Ongoiba is currently the executive director of Africans in Partnership Against AIDS (APAA) and a leader in the African community. She works on a number of projects related to challenging but important issues such as supporting people to speak about reproductive health and sexually transmitted infections (including HIV), Muslim girls and Imams, and HIV.

Ms. Ongoiba is also a founding member and currently a co-chair of the African and Caribbean Council on HIV/AIDS in Ontario (ACCHO) since 2011, co-chair of the Committee for Accessible AIDS Treatment in 2008, and treasurer of the Board for Women's Health in Women's Hands in 2003. She also served on the Ontario Advisory Committee on HIV/AIDS for at least 10 years and served on the Board of Directors for the Prisoners Action Support AIDS Network (PASAN) in 2009, as well as on the Board of Directors for Canadian Center For Victims of Torture as a chair 2016.

Willis Opondo is a third-year PhD student at the Department of Social Justice Education, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, the University of Toronto. Willis is currently a research associate consultant with the Center of Excellence for Black Student Achievement at the Toronto District School Board. Previously, he taught undergraduate sociology courses at Machakos University and the University of Nairobi in Kenya as an adjunct lecturer and worked as a consultant urban sociologist for organizations in East Africa. He has also been involved in various social development and behavioral research projects in East Africa. His research interests include Indigenous knowledges and governance, decolonization, youth engagement in decision-making, and equity in education in Africa.

Natasha Shokri is a PhD student in Social Justice Education at OISE, University of Toronto. She works as a teaching assistant and graduate assistant, focusing on research areas like happiness, decolonization, Black feminism, Black education, peace and conflict, hope and resiliency, and post-memory, with a focus on promoting equity, justice, and positive social change. She has been entitled as UNESCO Youth Peace Ambassador in 2011

Dhanela Sivaparan was born and raised in Toronto, Ontario. She is an educator, social activist, youth advocate, and equity, diversity, and inclusion director. Dhanela Sivaparan enjoys spending time with youth, creative writing, storytelling, and traveling. She is currently pursuing her PhD in Social Justice Education at the University of Toronto. Her goal is to inspire young people to dream, write, build positive relationships, and give back to their communities. She has co-authored her first children's book, *Gavin's Hidden Talent*, along with two academic chapters and peer reviews.

Hellen Taabu Kenyan Born Hellen Chepkoech Komen Taabu is a Registered Nurse in Ontario, Canada, pursuing her PhD studies at the

Department of Social Justice Education. She is also an educator and a community activist who actively champions Black immigrants and nurses' rights in her community. Hellen's work revolves around disrupting power imbalances, inequities, and injustices that are deeply entrenched in the schools and healthcare system in Canada. Hellen calls for the interrogation of varied perspectives and exposing colonizing rhetorics and characteristics in a bid to expose, resist, transform, and liberate the spaces we inhabit from the persistent presence of colonialism. Hellen champions decentering knowledge, learning, and unlearning through embracing the rich and diverse Indigenous African knowledge. She advocates for the disruption of the Western ways of knowing in academia by embracing African thoughts and ideas that are empowering, meaningful, and context specific and have meaningful impact on the lived experiences of those impacted.

Isaac Tarus is currently a senior lecturer in the Department of Philosophy, History and Religious Studies at Egerton University. He was head of Department from May 2017 to June 2021. He holds a BA (Honours) and an MA (History) from the University of Nairobi and a PhD from Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South Africa. His PhD was on the "Direct taxation of Africans in Kenya" which has generated a number of articles published in refereed journals, among them CODESRIA's *Africa Development*. He has successfully supervised more than twenty MA (History) students and one PhD. He has attended many local and international conferences in South Africa, Ghana, Tanzania, Senegal, Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, Malaysia, and the USA. He served as external examiner for Kenyatta University and the University of Nairobi for the academic year 2020–2021. In addition, he has served as postgraduate external examiner for Kabarak University, Kisii University, Mount Kenya University, and Laikipia University. Between May and August 2021, he was a Carnegie Africa Diaspora Fellowship Program Host for Prof Shadrack Nasong'o, Rhodes College, Memphis, Tennessee, USA. After serving as head of department for a period of four years, he is now back to active teaching, research, advising, and mentorship.

Osholene Oshobugie Upiomoh also known as Iye Uyemi is a wife and mother with a productive Meritah (African) family rooted in her Meritah Indigenous culture, spirituality, and worldview. Very significant to her becoming and career as a researcher and educator is her life as an initiate of Meritah's (Africa's) traditional Ancestral education and Wisdom school of the Dogomba (Dogon) bloodline, where she learns at the feet

of traditional Meritah Indigenous elders, a network of priesthood, and kingship in Western Meritah (Africa). As an author, she writes stories that honor Meritah's Ancestral lineage, culture, tradition, and spirituality. She is also a Meritah (African) Wisdom Indigenous Educator, cultural consultant, storyteller for children and families, the founder and executive director of Meritah Wisdom Education Center for Children and Families, program coordinator of Meritah Indigenous Homeschool, the owner of OshoIseh Indigenous African Educational and Cultural Consulting Services, the host of the Repiyah Heritage TV show, and recipient of many prestigious awards. As a cultural educator, through the lens of African Indigenous Education, she helps her learners answer the questions of identity (who am I?), goal, and purpose. She is currently pursuing a PhD degree in Social Justice Education at OISE, University of Toronto, where she also gained her Master of Arts in Educational Leadership & Policy, with some published academic work. She lectures and presents at schools and is invited as the Mistress of Ceremonies to host conferences and moderate events, along with breathtaking oral traditional storytelling performances, all from the perspective of the richness of Meritah (African) Indigenous culture, spiritual worldview, traditions, and stories. As a cultural consultant, she possesses extensive knowledge of the Meritah culture and how services can best be delivered to meet the needs of the community of the people of Meritah (African) descent. Meritah is the Indigenous name with which our Ancestors referred to the beloved Land people call Africa today.

Betty Walters is in her final year as a student in the MEd Social Justice Program at OISE/UT and is an Alumni from the University of Toronto with an Honours BBA in Political Science, English and Writing and Rhetoric.

As an employee at the University of Toronto for over 26 years, she has worked in several departments in various capacities and is presently the program advisor in the Management Department at UTSC. She has created many initiatives to facilitate students' successful transition into university life, such as Peer Tutor Program, Exam Prep Sessions, and Smart Study Groups.

Betty serves as a leader of the Private Space Group which is comprised of Black-identifying staff, and this group provides support and guidance to the department in matters pertaining to equity, diversity, and inclusion for Black folks. They have created relevant initiatives for Black identifying

high school students and Black community professionals, as well as providing mentorship to the Black Student in Business club.

Betty serves on the executive of the USW1998 union of the University of Toronto which has approximately 8500 members. Additionally, for several years, she served as a Steward and Chief Steward and spent countless hours guiding employees through the grievance process.

Betty is a strong advocate for justice and has helped developed policies within her department to enhance student experience, and through her guidance and advocacy, she has contributed to maintaining a welcoming and inclusive workplace for all stakeholders. Her lifelong passion is to promote equity and justice in all spaces.

Leonard Wandili was born in Western Kenya. After graduating from Friend's School Kamusinga in Kimilili, he taught for one year before immigrating to Canada in 1989. He enrolled in George Brown College (Toronto), earning a Diploma in Information Systems. Further education included a BA in Political Science (University of Toronto) and an MED (York University), and he was working on his PhD at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto.

Leonard worked with the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (IRB) until his demise. Prior to IRB, Leonard worked with the Toronto District School Board (TDSB). Leonard was an experienced education administrator (International Languages and Cultural Heritage Programs). He initiated several international language courses targeting community-specific needs for children of immigrants, including Kiswahili language classes delivered mainly to children of the East African diaspora.

Leonard was a founder member of several academic and community associations in Canada including the African Heritage Educators Network (AHEN) and the Kenyan Community in Ontario (KCO) where he served as the founding president. He also served on the board of CES (Community Education Service) Canada and Abeingo Association Canada as a director.

Njoki Nathani Wane, PhD is a professor at the University of Toronto, and currently chair in the Department of Social Justice Education at OISE/U of T. She is an accomplished educator, researcher, and educational leader. From 2011 to 2014, Professor Wane served as special advisor on Status of Women Issues, contributing to research and policy development concerning the intersectionality of gender with race, disability, sexual orientation, and aboriginal at the University of Toronto. From 2018 to 2021, she has also served as the advisor to the vice-president,

human resources and equity on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. She also served as director, Center for Integrative Anti-Racism Studies (CIARS) at OISE from 2006 to 2014. An award-winning teacher, Professor Wane was the recipient of many awards, the most recent ones being Black History Champion & Leadership Excellence Award, presented by CETI, HHS, NICS & SC (all community organization) (2023); Excellence Award in Education, awarded by JunCtion Community Organization (2022); Excellence Award in Community Engagement in Toronto (2020); The Gown: African Scholars Award, African Alumni Association, University of Toronto (2018); The President of Toronto Teaching Award (2017). She is well published with her most recent book being: *From my Mother's Back: A Journey from Kenya to Canada*. Her forthcoming edited collection book is *Education, Colonial Sickness: Anti-Colonial African Indigenous Project*.

LIST OF FIGURES

- | | | |
|----------|---|----|
| Fig. 2.1 | The genealogy of the kings of Mali based on the chronicle of Ibn-Khaldun (Levtzion, 1963) | 24 |
| Fig. 2.2 | The kingdoms of Ghana and Mali, dated ca. 1050, ca. 1300, and ca. 1500 (Levtzion, 1973, p. 2) | 28 |



Introduction

Njoki Nathani Wane and Babere Kerata Chacha

Over the last 500 years people of African ancestry have been objects of research. Interestingly, we have come to accept (not all though) the status quo. We have lost our languages, our culture, our medicine, our foods, our spirituality, our systems of governance, African Indigenous economics, and even our educational systems. We have been exploited so much that there is vehement denial of this open exploitation. The outcome of all this is what we are referring to as colonial sickness. How do we explain the open self-hatred of how we look, the texture of our hair, the color of our skin? In this book, however, the authors are reminding us that all is not lost. In this decolonial project we have embarked on a journey of healing, reclaiming, excavating, extracting, and reassembling the pieces of our Africanness to recreate our story. We are excavating our past to enable us to deal with psychological sickness as well as the spirit injury. The exercise

N. N. Wane (✉)

Department of Social Justice Education, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto, Toronto, ON, Canada
e-mail: njoki.wane@utoronto.ca

B. K. Chacha

Laikipia University, Nyahururu, Kenya
e-mail: bchacha@laikipia.ac.ke

of excavating information which the colonizers have made every effort to mask is so that our next generation will know who they are and where they have been. To do this, we had to be focused and identify the areas we would concentrate on. Some of the authors examined colonial education and how this has distorted our past; some chapters wanted to examine how life was before 1492; while others decided to compare notes from their own standpoint, regardless of whether they were of African ancestry. At the initial stages of this project, we held lots of conversations and there was a felt need to carry out an action orient project, and in particular the dismantling of colonial structures and creation of new ones.

Dealing with colonial sickness is a complex process because it is informed by elements such as unlearning and learning what was/is African. The process is informed by multiple elements such as knowing who we really are; our roots, our Indigenous knowledges, and identifying our lost histories; Indigenous education; science; astronomy; philosophies. In addition to this, knowing how our minds have been manipulated (Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, Albert Memmi; Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni; Kenneth Kaunda; Mudenda Simukungwe). Also paying attention to how our past has informed our present reality and how it will impact our future (Sankofa Philosophy). As well, knowing how colonized we are because, as Harriet Tubman said, "more slaves could have been saved if they knew they were slaves." We, the colonized, have "became the prisoner of the entire system" (Fanon, 1991, p. 122). The big question is: how do we free ourselves from the yoke of self-imprisonment; individually and collectively? Our conversations concluded that, understanding things beyond what is obvious and the fact that decolonizing journey is an essential aspect of our moving forward, we need to know our past to decolonize and none can do this for us, except us. As one of the African proverb states: *A Bird can only wave its tail*. This proverb is to warn us that we are the only ones who can take care of our colonial sickness. We cannot wait for outsiders to do it for us.

In the last two decades, we have witnessed the quest for decolonization through research, writing, teaching, and curriculum across the globe. Calls to decolonize higher education, in particular the university, has been overwhelming in recent years (Fommunyan, 2017). Originally the term 'decolonization' was used to denote the processes relating to cultural, economic, socio-political, and cultural aspects, especially after colonial rule. Nonetheless, the goal of decolonizing has evolved past not only the need to dismantle colonial empires but all imperial structures. Today,

decolonization is deemed a basis for restorative justice under the lens of the psychological, economic, and cultural spectrum (Imam et al., 1994). Africa, the Caribbean, and Latin America have led the way, but this process has lagged especially in Canada, Australia, and most parts of Europe. Kessia, Marks, and Ramugondo (2020, p. 271) argue that

[d]ecolonizing ... is best understood as a verb that entails a political and normative ethic and practice of resistance and intentional undoing—unlearning and dismantling unjust practices, assumptions, and institutions—as well as persistent positive action to create and build alternative spaces and ways of knowing. We present four dimensions of decolonizing work: structural, epistemic, personal, and relational, which are entangled and equally necessary.

Not long ago, inspirations to ‘decolonize’ the subject of western scholarship seemed to be the in thing. The necessity to revisit Indigenous land, for instance, has been fronted by Boveda and Bhattacharya (2019); those dwelling on and have critically reflected on existing practices and knowledge (Ali, 2014; Datta, 2018; Torretta & Reitsma, 2019; Zavala, 2013) embrace the local processes (de Martins & de Oliveira, 2016; Dourish & Mainwaring, 2012; Walters & Simoni, 2009) and strengthen Indigenous theory and practice (Du, 2023; Mawere & van Stam, 2015; Nkwo & Orji, 2018); in fact, decolonization has demanded an Indigenous contextual framework and a centering of Indigenous sovereignty, and ways of thinking. Others have delved on dismantling the colonial status quo (Bidwell, 2016; Boveda and Bhattacharya, 2019; Keyes et al., 2019; Le Grange, 2019).

Indigenous people have been on the receiving end in most nations across the globe where the reign of coloniality is still abound. They do not possess power or self-determination (Mamdani, 1990). Such nations that still have colonizers are deemed as *settler-colonial*, a term that Patrick Wolfe coined in the 1990s. Wolfe asserted that “*invasion is a structure but not an event*” (Wolfe, 2002). As a result, decolonization connotes attempting to understand the diverse yet complex societies in our continents based on Indigenous values and structures. This task came to light in the decolonization era between the 1950s and 1960s. According to Mama (2005), decolonizing entails having a shift in our perspectives from viewing Africa from the colonial power institutions as well as an intellectual apparatus carried from the Global North, which is applied across the globe, to

delving into the Indigenous African societal origins and patterns of thought that are embodied and the ways through which the patterns of thought have been influenced based on the impact of the colonial rule (Boshoff, 2010) and indeed spiritual—derived from Northern dominance (Yarosh, 2017).

When ‘Rhodes Must Fall’ campaign called for statues of Cecil Rhodes to be removed at the University of Cape Town, the decolonization initiative moved beyond requesting the removal of colonial symbols from university campuses to demanding that universities recognize the structural and epistemological legacy of colonialism in academic curricula and take steps to correct them (Maldonado-Torres, 2007: 243). Christopher Clapham insists that calls to ‘decolonize’ African studies beg the question of what this quest involves (Shahjahan et al., 2009).

Historians and anthropological insights have played a critical role in revolutionizing and subsequently understanding the African continent, which had continuously failed to hold on to its impetus given the prevalent authoritarianism and decay of the post-independence era, which further led to a deterioration of Africa’s universities (Chalmers, 2017). The idea spread fast to other nations across the globe.

The term has recently connoted development, especially in North America and Europe, subordinating the African study to agendas present in the Global North that may point at recolonization as opposed to decolonization. Nonetheless, profound decolonization of knowledge production for the African continent relies on a return to the African roots. Thus, this book will elucidate epicolonial dynamics that characterize a significant level of higher education and, subsequently, the local knowledges relating to its production of, with, and for the African continent. Authors have approached this from an interdisciplinary and multicultural approach.

We confront various dimensions of decolonizing work—structural, epistemic, personal, and relational—which are entangled and equally necessary. This book illuminates other sites and dimensions of decolonizing not only from Africa but also from other areas. This convergence of critical scholarship, theoretical inquiry, and empirical research is committed to questioning and redressing inequality in contemporary history and other African Studies. It signals one of many steps in a bid to consultatively examine how knowledge and power have been both defined and subsequently denied through the sphere of academic practice.

We have approached the term decolonizing both as a verb and as the study subject; also, as an epistemic and methodological orientation,