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Healing the Curriculum: Decoloniality, Africanization and Indigenization through Indigenous Knowledge Holders

Khaya Gqibitole
University of Zululand, South Africa.
Corresponding authour: gqibitholek@unizulu.ac.za

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Abstract: As the Africanization and decolonization of the curriculum gain momentum, care must be given to social cohesion and balanced collaboration with African knowledge holders. This paper argues that relegating African knowledge holders to the periphery of the debates and policies weakens the decolonial agenda at institutions of higher learning – an agenda that the curriculum should espouse. To ensure the relevance of the envisaged Africanized and decolonized curriculum, an honest, extensive and people-driven interface between academia and the holders of indigenous knowledge is indispensable. The paper deploys the critical social theory to advance the argument that African knowledge holders should play a primary role in these endeavors; since an Africanized higher education without their input renders these efforts rootless, directionless and complicit with the status quo. Therefore, traditional healers, village elders, storytellers, traditional leaders have a critical role to lead the transformation. African women, I argue, are central in the entrenchment of indigenous ideals in iintsomi, hence the idea of matriarchive receives a special treatment in the study. Additionally, researchers and scholars must recognize rural settings as hubs of knowledge to deepen their understanding of and form synergies with authentic indigenous knowledges. Without the voices of traditional practitioners, policy makers are bound to delay or even thwart these noble efforts not only to make the curriculum relevant but also contribute to sustainable development. Universities are better placed to spearhead these processes to harvest indigenous knowledges and inculcate them into the curricula. The paper contends that African cultural heritages such as storytelling contain the values, histories and identities that should be infused into the curriculum to heal it. Using indigenous languages, storytellers should form the backbone of that indigenous knowledge production without which generations of African students will continue to suffer the indignity of invisibility in their own continent. Finally, this paper hopes to contribute to the efforts of sustainable development through the formation of partnerships between universities and African indigenous societies.

Keywords: Africanization, Curriculum, Decoloniality, Indigenous knowledge holders, Matriarchive.

Introduction

This paper straddles three tributaries, indigenous language, African knowledge holders and the curriculum to posit that for the curriculum to heal, new African knowledges are critical. Currently, as the short story, *The Journey*, below demonstrates the curriculum renders the African student invisible in his continent. To reverse such anomalies, academia and researchers have a duty to collaborate with African knowledge holders. This paper debunks suggestions that colonialization and apartheid destroyed the essence of Africanness – the language. African languages have been resilient in the face of political and social assault they faced and thrive in some rural settings. However, despite the demise of both colonialism and apartheid their remnants still exist in the minds, literature, language of instruction and other seeming innocuous narratives.

The Journey by a first-year student, Mlungisi Myeni, raises several critical points about being an African student in South Africa. Through first person narration, the reader is given a glimpse of the main character's state of mind as his grades drop rapidly, as his friends turn their backs on him and as he loses his mind. His staunch Christan family is

oblivious to his mental state because of the religious wall they have adopted. As he roams around, he comes across an old man called Mdala (old man) who lives in the street. Mdala is described as dirty, smelly and a skunk of the community. On seeing the younger man, Mdala, with tears in his eyes, says to him, 'You won't run away forever, my son'. He repeats this accusatory counsel, but the younger man doesn't respond, even though the words trouble him immensely. Knowing his family's attitude regarding traditional rituals, he is forced to seek help from extended family. After the ritual is performed, the renewed and reborn young man goes back to campus wearing *isiphahla* (a wrist band made of an animal skin) around his wrist. Despite this, his lecturers demand a doctor's certificate or else!

Inconsequential and amateurish as the story seems, it highlights the failure of higher education to understand Africanness. The demand for a doctor's certificate is a clear sign of unresponsiveness of higher institutions of education to African concerns. The obvious ~~*isiphahla*!~~ *Isiphandla!* which grounds the young man in his Africanness is ignored. No attempt is made to understand its meaning because it does not feature in the world view of his lecturers and, therefore, it is just a nuisance – an affront that hardens their hearts. The lecturers' response reflects what they teach based on an unresponsive curriculum. This paper argues for the infusion of African thoughts and knowledges in the curriculum to heal it. Unless academia and researchers immerse themselves in African episteme, the African student will forever be invisible and alienated from his Africanness.

The Fact of Africanness: Connecting 'Random Events'

The struggle against colonialism and apartheid was characterised by what Njabulo Ndebele (2000) calls 'random events' – events whose shadows extend to the present moment. In 1955 the Freedom Charter made an undertaking that the 'doors of learning and culture shall be opened', in response to decades of the decimation of the African child's education and culture of his people. Twenty-one years later, in 1976, the Soweto uprising students brought education back on the agenda, but that opportunity ran out of steam. It would be the 2015 #feesmustfall movement that created conducive conditions for meaningful change. The movement opened the doors of learning to hundreds of African children who would, otherwise, have been left behind. African cultures, though, were locked outside of the lecture halls again. Today African cultures are still in tatters and scattered at the periphery of the schooling system. However, the 2015 ground-breaking moment not only affirmed African children's right to education, but also the possibility of reclaiming their Africanness. That promise, though, is facing a new challenge – a curriculum in which they don't feature. A curriculum that extends colonial-apartheid misrepresentation of their blackness through the subordination of African culture stokes coals of erasure, because:

Culture embodies those morals, ethical and aesthetic values, the set of spiritual eyeglasses, through which they come to view themselves and their place in the universe. Values are the basis of a people's identity, their sense of particularity as members of the human race. All this is carried by language. Language as culture is the collective memory bank of a people's experience in history. Culture is almost indistinguishable from language that makes possible its genesis, growth, banking, articulation and indeed its transmission from one generation to the net. (wa Thiong'o, 2020: p. 441)

The story by the young student makes this clear, but these 'random events', as Ndebele claims, are not irrelevant in the new struggle for Africanization because they are targeted at the same enemy. The assiduous nature of that enemy is evident in higher education. So, universities have a pivotal role to play in making sure that the 1955 call is realized. A concerted and deliberate effort to Africanize the curriculum must be undertaken, regardless of the voices that question the viability of African material to accomplish these goals. Scholars such as Makgopa have long appealed with universities to accept the inevitable. Two decades post-1994 he opined:

Universities must realize that the cultural ethos which apparently served the institutions so well in the past must change to accommodate other cultural values. The curricula have to change fundamentally as the Universities come to terms with the reality that they are educating all South Africans in Africa. *Africans in particular do not come to university to escape or erase their Africanness, but to confirm and articulate their roots.* (Ramoupi, 2011: p. 1)

Makgopa paints a dire picture of where the African students – a forgotten lot whose cultural values do not feature in the curricula. The fundamental change he alludes to goes beyond simply adding some form of African cultures to create a semblance of Africanization. Arican epistemologies must be an integral part of the curricula if a synergy with the wider Global South is to be realised. By erasing their cultural values, the universities effectively render them non-existent in their own country – their continent. Characterizing them as having been erased suggests their existence at some point in the past – at a time when Africans prided themselves on who they were. The injustice of colonial-apartheid undermined what Motaung calls 'African self-understanding' because '[t]he colonialisation period deformed, distorted and adulterated Africa's pre-colonial landscape – its sense of selfhood' (2022: p. 25). It is that 'sense of selfhood' that the curricula must restore on the African. If there has to be erasure, it has to be all forms of

knowledge that seeks to misrepresent Africans. The time for such forms of knowledge making, Ndlovu-Gatsheni notes, have come to an end. Now is the time for new ways of thinking that will embrace Africanness. According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni,

The state of knowledge at the moment is in a state of uncertainty. There's concern over whether the knowledge that brought us to the present is able to take us to the future. That uncertainty presents itself both as an opportunity and a challenge in the sense that we have to think of other knowledges and other concepts that will then reanimate knowledge and make it relevant and valuable.

Predictably then, the restoration of the African 'sense of selfhood' is unattainable unless and until a deliberate move in that direction is embarked on. For instance, the literature that misrepresents Africans must be replaced by that which restores the dignity of the African. Merely sprinkling the curricula with African texts will only be complicit with colonialization. The answer to Mphahlele's question, 'What is the African's image of himself?' must be positive and forward-looking, and informed by genuine African stories that build the African self-understanding mentioned above (Morosetti, 2013: p. 48). Ordinary Africans concerns, Mphahlele argues, are closely related to their literatures in order to heal their 'wounds of invisibility'. The short story mentioned earlier exposes these 'nervous conditions' which the current curricula cloud with what Morosetti refers to as 'hypervisible topics' such as wars, crime and the like (49). While such topics are critical, they should not be elevated above concerns such as identity, culture and Africanness. This is of critical importance to young people. Clarke's question: 'What is Africa to Africans?'; should be a guiding light as young people embark on their journey of self-knowledge (Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Ngqulunga, 2022: p.7). It is only when Africans' allegiance to the continent is clear and unambiguous that this question can be fully addressed. The short story, *The Journey*, we opened with demonstrates the invisibility of African concerns within university confines, hence the young man is directionless and lost.

[W]hat we cannot tolerate . . . is what I may describe here as the wound of invisibility—the open and insidious ways by which the moguls of the Western media contrive to keep us out of the platform of world discourse, as [sic] we were absent from history" ("Theatre and the Rites of 'Post-Negritude' Re/Membering" 159–60). The recurring presence of hypervisible topics in world media does not therefore imply, for Osofisan, a real visibility for Africa and its people, but rather the framing of a secondary place in which, perceived as unable to manage itself, Africa is consistently excluded by major decisions and/or political planning on the world scene. (Morosetti, 2013: p. 49)

These 'hypervisible topics' tend to divert Africans' from dealing with real issues that concern them – such as their identity, ancestry, and the value of oral literature. The neglect of last one, oral literature, is perhaps the most vexatious issue. Any curriculum that denies the African knowledge of his roots, instils a sense of loss – a sense of invisibility. Orature, despite attempts to denounce and silence it has survived and thrives in many rural settings. African knowledge holders use cultural heritage to impart some of the forgotten stories about the triumphs and setbacks of their people. Such stories should form a bases for the recovery of the lost African identities. Writing about Mphahlele's contribution to African literature, Phalafala (2020: p. 734) notes, 'Mphahlele's writing demonstrates resistance against the violent nature of colonization's erasure through its frame of intelligibility. His work advocates for difference in epistemologies, and draws from embodied textualities: the oral, aural, sung, performed, and enunciated'. Remembering the dances, songs, and other expressions of oneness is a precursor to healing. As wa Thiong'o states, '[r]emembering is the opposite of dismemberment,' so connection to the past helps with the reconstruction of Africanness.

Indigenous Episteme: Rock of a People

As alluded to above, African societies boast designated indigenous knowledge holders without whom bona fide African knowledge would have disappeared. Some of the key knowledge holders are traditional healers, elders, women and traditional leaders. This group is not only often endowed with spiritual acumen, but also act as repositories of African knowledge. The knowledge they hold has been orally passed down from generation to generation to ensure continuity – and as such can encourage resurgence and re-emergence of authentic African voices and societies. Consulting them, to appropriate Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Ngqulunga, 'entails the recovery of fragments. It means picking up of pieces. It is a reconstitution and restitution process after centuries of de-constitution and destitution' (2022: p. 7). Apart from being the mouthpieces of their communities, they are also endowed with powers to intercede between community members and the ancestors. The reliance of ordinary people on these knowledge holders cannot be underestimated that is why '[s]tudies show that 80% Africans still prefer consulting a healer compared to hospital.' This demonstrates not only their relevance to many Africans, but the potential for curricular builders to harness their knowledge. These fountains of knowledge carry the hope for the realization of the decolonization project.

Unresponsive Curriculum: A Stakeholder Challenge

As the story of the young man demonstrates, the curriculum is currently unresponsive to calls for decolonialisation, indigenisation and Africanization. As Ndlovu-Gatsheni posits, the current knowledge systems employed in the curriculum is unable to generate knew knowledge and as such new channels of knowledge making should be sought. In this regard, the engagement of stakeholders from the marginalized communities is critical. Studies have shown that the failure of the best of policies is caused by ignoring the most important stakeholder – the community. Just like policies, curricular that is not based on and has zero buy-in from the community is bound to fail. Organizationally, then, universities are supposed to be open systems where stakeholders have an equal say in the crafting of the curriculum. Universities that marginalize communities are exclusionary and as such antithetical to decolonization. Healing the curriculum then is not about a mere sprinkling of African texts but an overhaul of the whole system. Decolonialization of the curriculum calls upon the total eradication of texts that undermine Africans and their way of life. As *The Journey* demonstrates, the young man only finds himself when he immerses himself in his Africanness. A university that understands what this moment calls for, then, is the one that values input from the forgotten stakeholders (the African knowledge holders), that understands its transformation mandate (decolonization), that acknowledges *bona fide* feedback (the affirmation of students' Africanness) and values the wider environment in which it operates (the African continent). Legitimacy is earned not given and as such any institution that doesn't satisfy these elements in its operations abrogates its relevance to the decolonial agenda. As demonstrated in *The Journey,* African Knowledge Systems encompass the entire human existence. The unnamed character's education suffers, he loses friends, he is spiritually tortured and mentally lost. His supposed sanctuary, his family, is blinded by religion to his plight. His condition cannot be dealt with fragmentarily, but comprehensible. The knowledge possessed by the elders who can intercede with ancestors cannot be underestimated. Hence giving them space to produce knowledge has a potential to nurture and heal the curriculum. A healed curriculum serves the community's cultural, social, physical and spiritual needs. This can be achieved through making the history of the people the centrepiece of that decolonized curriculum. As Kgope (2023: p. 596) argues, '… the indigeneity of knowledge and its people are what should be traced to advance and produce knowledge.' As alluded to earlier, tapping into storytelling as a method to produce new knowledge, free of colonial influences, is the future.

Indlebe Lisela: Paying Attention to 'Knowers of Knowledge'

Indlebe lisela is isiXhosa for 'the ear is a thief', which simply means when you listen carefully you end up hearing what you were not meant to hear. In AC Jordan's Ingqumbo Yeminyanya (The Wrath of the Ancestors) Dabula wants the young man, Mphuthumi, who would play a leading role in restoring the kingdom of AmaMpondomise, 'while I am talking to the old man, you are to snore, but keep your ears open!' (1980: p. 11). What Mphuthumi hears whispered between Dabula and the old man, Ngxabane, has far-reaching ramifications for the amaMpondomise kingdom. The story he hears in deep isiXhosa language transports him to the roots of his people and points him to the direction that needs to be taken. Language and culture are intricately connected in the creation of the whole and how individuals interact with the world. The loss of one's language, particularly, means engaging with the world on other people's terms – a disempowered position the African has been relegated to. Without language one is '… denied ontological density, sovereign subjectivity, as well as self-pride and self-assertion' (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015: p. 490). wa Thiong'o posits, 'language is central to identity and how we see ourselves. The imposition of an alien language confuses and distorts identities of the colonial subject.' The confusion and distortion are persistent, stubbornness and insidious. To appropriate Ndebele (2000: p. 48) 'with the disintegration of [colonialism] as a formal structure, [its proponents] reacted in a number of ways. [They have '…either mutated and assumed the colour of change while retaining a core of self-interest or [have] genuinely struggled with the agonies of embracing necessary change'. On the same point, Quayle and Sonn posit that, 'the colonizers have not left and remain institutionally and culturally dominant…' He continues, '… colonization was not a moment – but is an ongoing experience with multiple persistent contemporary traumatising events continuing to impact daily …'on African students (46-7). Unsuspecting students first lose their languages in the belief that the alien language gives them a superior standing in the society. Uknown to them, by devaluing their indigenous languages, the colonial project dismantles their African identities because these their languages are repositories of everything African. During apartheid, '[l]anguage was the means of the spiritual subjugation', a violence that persist today (wa Thiong'o, 2000: p. 437). Over the decades Africans have violently resisted colonialism in what Zeleza calls 'proudest moments in African history'. The Ndebele-Shona uprising in the 1800s; the Great-Cattle-Killing of the mid-1800s the Maji Majiin the 1900s; the Mau Mau in the mid-1950s. Paul Tiyambe Zeleza invokes the 'proudest moments in African history' when he talks about the Ndebele-Shona uprising of the late 1800s, the Maji Maji of the 1900s in Eastern Africa and Mau Mau of the mid-1950s, the 1960 student uprising, and the recent #feesmustfall. These 'proudest moments in African history', may be seen as missed

opportunities, but they demonstrated the concerted efforts in which Africans of all ages and through history have engaged in. Speaking about the black people's struggle under apartheid, Ndebele (2000: pp. 44 – 45) echoes a similar sentiment when he says:

It struck me that through some daring act of faith, we are 'finding our way' through a turbulent sea of events. These events are the words, which we write down almost randomly on the pages of our future. We work our way forward through a continuous play of rando events. '… this is our own kind of peculiar randomness. It prompts a set of responses that incrementally define us. It is impossible to approach randomness from a singular perspective. We look for trends and shifts and react, sometimes in control, sometimes drifting, until we find a foothold that enables us to regain control. It seems to suggest that the way to look for the way is not to focus on specific issues but for emergent tendencies which provide an explanatory context which, while not exhaustive, opens up more room for new, innovative solutions.

Given the various outcomes of these incidents and others, the question perhaps is 'where to now, African languages?' This is a question that the decolonialization agenda must provide answer for. Until and as long stakeholders in higher education do not appreciate the value of indigenous languages, transformation will be stunted, because treating indigenous languages as stepchildren of dominant colonial languages, only entrenches inferiority on the people. Equally, African indigenous languages cannot survive without the involvement of elder women. The role of women, then, cannot be underestimated, hence Oyeronke Oyewumi (quoted in Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Ngqulunga, 2022: p. 8) highlights the significance of what she terms, '"maternal ideologies" because it is (sic) "enabling, and inclusive" … it is "community oriented, all-inclusive, life giving, life sustaining and life preserving. Therefore, the decolonization of knowledge has to entail depatriarchization of knowledge tool"'. Developing the curriculum requires a careful restoration of African cultural heritage. Africanness transcends its geographic location to the essence of being an African – language, culture and ancestry are critical elements that need to be revived and nurtured. The role of the healers cannot be disregarded. Healers do not only diagnose and heal, but they also mediate between individuals and the ancestors. To re-member the dismembered past, the knowledge traditional healers possess is of critical importance to researchers. New valid knowledges can be realized in collaboration with them. The knowledge holders mentioned above are key to the reconstitution of the curriculum. Any curriculum that doesn't deal with the social ills and wars of this continent, its hopes and aspirations condemn the African child to perpetual wandering – like the young man in *The Journey*. It is those who can see far ahead and where we come from who possess indigenous knowledge that can lead to a genuine restoration. African cultures and languages have survived the onslaught and can be gleaned from rituals, songs, stories and other cultural events that are still performed.

However, any attempt to recapture the past stand no chance against colonial pillars that still stand. To dismantle them, knew knowledges must be produced by those whose being had been disrupted – the indigenous people. As Quayle and Sonn (2019: p. 48) opine, '… collective forms of narrative afford people an opportunity to make sense of their experience, construct valued identities, and ensure the continuity and vitality of a community, or a people'. The production of new knowledges is necessary in dismantling colonialism. The knowledge holders mentioned earlier need affirmation through recognizing the value of their spirituality which has been undermined, castigated and demonized but not defeated. Elders should be afforded space, time and resources to reflect on the past and be allowed space for storytelling and counter-storytelling – not only about the ugly past of conquest and assimilation, but also about the resilience of their cultures and the triumph of their brave.

Again, as pointed out, the place and the role of elderly women in this regard are of immeasurable importance. Stories and adventures of matriarchs, some of whom led armies are crucial counter-narratives to the coy, defeated and subservient colonized African woman we encounter in prescribed novels. The study appropriates the term 'matriarchive' to fer to the wealth of knowledge African women possess. According to Phalafala (2020: p. 733), matriarchive refers to:

… these memories of earlier wisdom. The matriarchive holds together domestically specific matrilineal inherited influences, values, wisdom, relational subjectivities, philosophies, and aesthetics. The matriarchive gives primacy to the wisdom and gnosis of oppressed women and holds space for their forms of dynamic knowledge geared towards resistance.

Storytelling as a methodology is central to learning and understanding colonial histories and legacies but also in constructing identities in the present,' (Quayle & Sonn, 2019: p. 48). Appreciating that some of our cultures and traditions survived colonialism is critical in repositioning research efforts. Not every modicum of culture, ritual and tradition has been adversely touched by colonialism. In other words, despite its dominance colonialism failed to bring the essence of Africanness to its knees. Some of these cultures and rituals have survived because they are embedded

in the stories about the past, in dance, praises and songs. To effectively deconstruct and totally dismantle colonialism then, researchers keen to rethink and heal the curriculum need to harvest knowledge from these Africanized enclaves. Rituals, dresses and the Africanized location are replete with cultural knowledges from which the truth about the continent can be realized. Although the different voices within and outside the continent sound discordant, they stream in the same direction of African reawakening. As pointed out earlier, for instance, simply adding few African texts is hardly enough. The key is listening to the voices outside universities and develop a different consciousness. A consciousness that extends our search for answers beyond the confines of the lecture halls. In *Iph'indlela? Finding our way into the Future,* Ndebele (2000: p. 48) warns of 'the danger inherent in a singular approach', as such expecting only academia to lead the change would be limiting.

Opponents of Africanization sometimes mistake the numerous voices for discordance, forgetting that coloniality has many guises and need a variety of approaches to uproot it from the mind of the African child. Only Africanization can reverse the colonialization wrought in the mind of the African child, despite the opponents the Africanization agenda. The features that define colonialization and Africanization are distinctly different not only in terms of the power relations but also in what they set to achieve. At the level of language, for instance, colonialization's prominent feature is assimilation and dominance. Wherever colonialization took place, its first prize was the appropriation and finally decimation of local languages. On the other hand, though, Africanization is based on collaboration and mutual respect, especially for languages, cultures and traditions. Different language groups have lived side by side without major squabbles in the continent. In South Africa different clans with different languages and cultures cohabit and pay lineage to the same king. To a large extent then, Africanization is a code for the preservation of all African languages, cultures and traditions, hence multilingualism and multiculturalism are its enduring features. It is this unity and collaboration that colonialization and apartheid sought to disrupt, but, as wa Thiong'o, (2000: p. 447) argues:

But African languages refused to die… these languages, these national heritages of Africa, were kept alive by the peasantry. The peasantry saw no contradiction between speaking their own mother-tongues and belonging to a larger national or continental geography. They saw no necessary antagonistic contradiction between belonging to their immediate nationality, to their multinational state along the Berlin-drawn boundaries, and to Africa as a whole. These people happily spoke Wolof, Hausa, Ibo, Arabic, Amharic, Kiswahili, Gikuyu, Luo, Lubya, Shona, Ndebele, Kimbudu, Zulu or Lingala without this fact tearing the multinational states apart.

The establishment of the national states created artificial borders between Africans but could not succeed in creating a neat divide between the languages or even purging them despite the colonial and apartheid attempts to do so. As discussed in the next section, the destruction of African economies forced men away from what Phalafala refers to as the homeplace – a place of nurture – and left women not only to hold families together, but also to become the custodians of culture and traditions which they dedicatedly and defiantly transmitted to next generations through oral storytelling and other performances.

Ukuncanca Ulwazi Ebeleni: Revisiting Matriarchival Knowledge

The resilience of women in African literature is well documented, despite their stereotyped portrayal at times. The proliferation of novels that depict women as the 'weaker sex' have created a wrong view. Ama Ata Aidoo's Anowa perhaps gives a fuller picture of strong women who nonetheless fail. This study, though, argues that in real life women do not only have a will power to succeed, but archives of knowledge and wisdom. Therefore, in the quest to generate new knowledges, especially with regards to Africanizing the curriculum, women cannot be discounted. As suggested above, during the dark days of apartheid, it was women who became the repositories of what is to be an African. In fact, from time immemorial, women were tasked with telling folktales which not only groomed the young ones but helped root them in their Africanness. Despite their punishing home schedule, women always found time for storytelling because they understood the developmental value of the craft. Writers such as Eski'a Mphahlele, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Njabulo Ndebele and many others acknowledge the impact of the women they grew up around had in their consciousness.

The role of women, especially grandmothers and mothers, in 'housing' indigenous languages and feeding it to generations who would otherwise have been strangers to themselves is imbedded in African languages. *Ukuncanca ulwazi ebeleni* (to suck knowledge from the breast) has variants in all African languages; a strong acknowledgement of women's centrality in knowledge making, keeping and sharing. Phalafala's evocation of the term 'matriarchive' is instructive in its exposition of women's agency in cultural production and dissemination. For Africanization and decolonialization to achieve envisaged outcomes, a journey to the source – the mother figure – is non-negotiable. To echo Phalafala (2020: p. 729) '… decolonizing the mind entails a voyage into self, which is simultaneously a return to the source'. The mother figure as a source of vitality in understanding of self cannot be underestimated. During

some political events such as the banning and exile of black leaders left a social vacuum which women African women ably filled.

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Conclusion

To heal the curriculum, a concerted effort to Africanize and decolonize it cannot be ignored. Indigenous people – the knowledge holders – are critical stakeholders in this undertaking. As the short story, *The Journey*, demonstrates, failure to align the curriculum to the needs and aspirations of the African student will not yield the expected outcome and the African student will continue to suffer. African knowledges are embedded in African languages; therefore, the stories African women share cannot be underestimated. The concept of matriarchive is critical in realizing the matchless role women played in the past and what contribution they can still make.

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