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Cover Story
Black Women - Who is Left to Call Aido Hwedo?
Represent Our Resistance
By Dr. Lenore J. Daniels, PhD
BlackCommentator.com Editorial Board

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Holy ghost woman
stolen out of your name
Rainbow Serpent
whose faces have been forgotten
Mother loosen my tongue or adorn me
with a lighter burden
Aido Hwedo is coming.
"Call,"
- Audre Lorde

The people find out that the iniquitous fact of exploitation can wear a black face...and they raise the cry of 'Treason!' But the cry is mistaken; and the mistake must be corrected. The treason is not national, it is social. The people must be taught to cry 'Stop thief!' - Frantz Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*

They come dressed in the latest fashion: tight tops and tight jeans or short skirts. Sandals are deco-style and nails are polished. Every hair is in place, mostly salon done. It's a college class of mostly Black women. They are young and sport their womanly awareness as a defense. But of what?

I have never seen so many women for this class I have taught four times before in the last ten years. The Black men have been kept away. There are only three white students and no one is Latino/a or Asian.

They do not like the question: *where are Black women's voices when it comes to geopolitics?* Should I explain the difficulty I had in producing this syllabus because, this time, I have become acutely aware that strong voices have been crushed in the last twenty years?

I am graying and wear dreads and attire made of African cloth. Heads come together to giggle and whisper. Sass is in, but now it's done with a sense of entitlement rather than in defiance of white indifference. There's no hesitancy here to speak back. No fear of consequences. No recognition here that I stand before the class as the professor and not momma or Black "bitch." Make concessions because we are "STUDENTS!" And we *students* know that a Black woman, with her degrees and all, can be eliminated! But I know it's not *their* voices I hear.

Here I am among a group of Black women, teaching a sophomore/junior level course on Black Women, and yet, I feel that for these women, I am the "enemy." I am the enemy because I am "back in the day." Some things have changed. And it's not a matter of feeling old, but of being made to feel irrelevant, out-dated like the history I want to impart to them.

Where are the "students"?

The hip-hop culture is here in the classroom. It's a hip-hop collective, a convention for the profiteers of American Empire, only the faces, bodies are Black and they do the work of promoting the profiteers.

"Do I feel some Blacks have 'sold out.?' " And it sounds like I am standing before a government mouthpiece from Fox News. Sold out? "People have to *change*. Change strategy and tactics." It's David Horowitz speaking behind the young Black face. She too is meticulously dressed and groomed. The young woman wants to know if I agreed. We are outside of class, and I am walking toward the office. I would rather not engage this voice. It's not *her* voice. I see the young Black woman, but there's a problem with the system. We can't communicate.

But *change* and become a billboard for corporate products? Change and ignore how the poor Black and working-class Black is lacking further and further behind because of economic policies and institutionalized practices that continue to marginalize and exclude them. Change and become complicit with consumerism and individualism? What of those struggles among the people of color that have never ended against poverty, and poor or lack of proper education? What of those struggles now for basic necessities like water? What of the unnecessary dying of Iraqis, Afghanistan women and children? Or the U.S. supported repressive regimes in Africa where lands remain "underdeveloped"? Relinquishing the right to stand among the oppressed is not an option; it's not a matter of younger generation and older generation. It is not what they have taught you to think.

I am not sure if she hears me.

I walk along now and share a collective sigh with my ancestors.

Will they care about Isis, Yaa Asantewa, or Sojourner Truth, or Bethune or Fannie Lou Hamer? Will the music of Odetta, Aretha Franklin, and Cassandra Wilson or the poetry

of Sonia Sanchez and Wanda Coleman turn them off? When did I feel this sense of disappointment before? At predominantly white Midwestern institutions. Mostly white students had a sense of entitlement and felt put upon having to read Black women's literature (*all she talked about was Black women!*), having to hear that racism, sexism, and classism are still alive and well (*she's racist! She hates men! She's anti-American!*).

They have come in our yards and truly stolen our children. When did the pods get placed near the bedsides of our young Black people? And I know they were stolen when Blacks surrendered and set out the white flags. Now the pods were delivered and I don't recognize these people in my class. They have been absorbed and as a result regurgitate the nonsense of "transcending race." They have been absorbed by the image of Rev. Jeremiah Wright represented as old, outdated veteran of the "Civil Rights Days." They have become full members of the stream that runs around the world aggressively looking for a regime to change, looking for a country to invade, and looking for a world to conquer once and for all. And do these students, Black students, sold on the idea that complicity is good, do they know what they have signed onto? On the first day of class, I asked them to consider the crisis facing Black women, and many of them took offense. A few of them began to whisper among themselves, looking askance at me. I had to stop class twice. At least two left the class while it was in session. These students have come to college for "jobs." But do they know that the "jobs" might not be there? Do they want to know why? Do they know the ancestors are weeping?

I hear the *fearful* whites and Black cohorts applauding as if they sense a victory in war.

I move from disappointment to anger.

So much depends on the inability of these students to think outside the cultural narrative. Their absorption has been smooth business, so smooth most do not even recognize that it is a narrative they have learned by heart—and not their narrative, the narrative of the "wretched" seeking liberation.

It's the tactic in the War on Terrorism waged by the American Empire against Black Americans. Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama is the latest spokesperson for the tactic. He's the ideal front man approved by the beneficiaries (multinational corporations) of American Empire.

But the damage was done long before Obama thought to start on the road to the hite House. The problem is bigger than any one man.

The people must be taught to cry 'Stop thief!'

But I must recover my spirit first...

Holy ghost woman

stolen out of your name

Rainbow Serpent

whose faces have been forgotten

Mother loosen my tongue or adorn me

with a lighter burden

Aido Hwedo* is coming.

On worn kitchen stools and tables
we are piercing our weapons together
scraps of different histories
do not let us shatter
any altar

she who scrubs the capitol toilets, listening
is out sister's youngest daughter
gnarled Harriet's anointed
you have not been without honor
even the young guerilla has chosen
yells as she fires into the thicket

Aido Hwedo is coming.

I have written your names on my cheekbones

Dreamed your eyes flesh my epiphany
Most ancient goddesses hear me
enter

I have not forgotten your worship
nor my sisters
nor the sons of my daughters
my children watch your print
in their labors

and they say Aido Hwedo is coming.

I am a Black woman turning
mouthing your name as a password
through seductions self-slaughter
and I believe in the holy ghost
mother

in your flames beyond our vision
blown light through fingers of women

enduring warring
sometimes outside your name
we do not choose all our rituals
Thandi Modise winged girl of Soweto
brought fire back home in the snout of a mortar
and passes the word from her prison cell whispering
Aido Hwedo is coming.

...

We are learning by heart
what has never been taught
you are my given fire-tongued
Oya Seboulisa Mawu Afrekete
and now we are mourning our sisters
lost to the false hush of sorrow
to hardness and hatchets and childbirth
and we are shouting
Rosa Parks and Fannie Lou Hamer
Assata Shakur and Yaa Asantewa
my mother and Winnie Mandela are signing
in my throat
the holy ghosts' linguist
one iron silence broken
Aido Hwedo is calling
calling
your daughters are named
and conceiving
Mother loosen my tongue
or adorn me
with a lighter burden
Aido Hwedo is coming.

Aido Hwedo is coming.

Aido Hwedo is coming.

Do I throw up my hands and give up? There are days I wish to do just that. I imagine days upon days of rising in the morning, looking at the clock, and saying: I am not there. I am not there. No more classrooms and faces perturbed. No more witnessing the procession of bodies dragging a cell phone in one hand and an Ipod in another, reluctant to disconnect themselves from the gadgets that envelop them in that "false hush of sorrow."

I imagine enduring no more sighs as I witness the repetition of this sorrowful scene.

We have *learned by heart what has never been taught*.

I would like for the burden to be passed to someone else.

I would like to think that I could pass them on the streets or sit next to them on the bus and not care, not worry that the silencing of our history will ultimately kill them.

I would like to think that it really does not matter.

But I witness too much sorrow, too much injustice, too many conspiracies to kill us Black, Brown, Red, and Yellow people.

Platitudes will not do. Political activism takes all shapes.

I believe in the holy ghost women, the women with stolen names - the ancestors of all ancestors.

I would like to imagine the holy ghost women taking hold of what has been stolen in that classroom and surround us as we call forth Aido Hwedo to help us form a community. This is what I imagine even while I am troubled by what I see.

*Aido Hwedo, Rainbow Serpent, "is also a representation of all ancient divinities who must be worshipped but whose names and faces have been lost in time."

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*Aido Hwedo, Rainbow Serpent, "is also a representation of all ancient divinities who must be worshipped but whose names and faces have been lost in time."

BlackCommentator.com Editorial Board member, Lenore Jean Daniels, PhD, has been a writer, for over thirty years of commentary, resistance criticism and cultural theory, and short stories with a Marxist sensibility to the impact of cultural narrative violence and its antithesis, resistance narratives. With entrenched dedication to justice and equality, she has served as a coordinator of student and community resistance projects that encourage the Black Feminist idea of an equalitarian community and facilitator of student-teacher communities behind the walls of academia for the last twenty years. Dr. Daniels holds a PhD in Modern American Literatures, with a specialty in Cultural Theory (race, gender, class narratives) from Loyola University, Chicago. Click [here](#) to contact Dr. Daniels.

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