



“We Are the Catalyst of Continuation”: Introducing the Revolutionary African Woman

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One day, like any other, two African women finally found time out of their busy schedules to sit and build by sharing some of each other's stories and knowledge. It almost did not happen – one was leaving to visit her home in Nigeria the next day, after co-leading a successful study abroad program there in Dakar, Senegal; the other was busy working with a new group of international students visiting Dakar. However, it did happen, as Dr. Ọlaọcha Nwabara went to leave the center but then saw a glimpse of Dr. Korka Sall walking to her office, whilst giving Dr. Nwabara that

smile that can only be understood as Teranga, or the Senegalese philosophy of hospitality towards one another and newcomers. Always, Sall, like her fellow Senegalese, made Nwabara feel at home, protected, and seen. Nwabara turned towards Sall's office and a journey began, or "continued." In that office, organized with good vibrations to facilitate ancient African women's conversations in the present, these two women celebrated life, celebrated each other, celebrated their African womanhood, and poured into each other what they knew about other women's power through her storytelling.

Sall did not hesitate to argue that African women are still doing Negritude, that it's required of African women as a result of the marginalization of our ways of knowing. She listed Wolof songs that were incorporated into novels written by Senegalese women in French such as Aminata Sow Fall. Nwabara talked about how Nigerian, Black American, and Zimbabwean women authors like Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Toni Morrison, and Tsitsi Dangaremba find radical ways to include Igbo, Ebonics/African American Vernacular English (AAVE), and Shona, respectively, unapologetically into their pages, demanding that the reader pay attention to the context in order to understand the translation, alongside learning their cultures from their perspectives. "But this is the way our grandparents tell stories," Sall added. We were required to listen to the context in order to understand the full meaning; it is not all laid out easily for an inactive listener. African stories require attention, criticism, the breaking open of one's mind to ingest new worlds, and to translate the lessons into their everyday lived experiences. Even African proverbs give like the endless blossoming of a flower, demanding one understand and use it in multiple ways, given any particular moment, or experience, and the force from which it is provided to you from its messenger. It gets stronger each time it is told, and that is particular to the power of it, as one of many African ways of knowing. Proverbs "enhances the attention value of discourse or argument, making it more appealing, audible, and memorable" (Yankeh 328). Nwabara remembered that Ghanaian filmmaker and novelist Blitz Bazawule stated in an interview for his film, *The Burial of Kojó*, "I've always wondered what filmmaking would be like if those who came before us, like say my grandmother, had a camera. It would completely be magical, it would completely be non linear" (Bazawule). Bazawule's aim was to tell stories the way his grandmother did, where present, past, and future could exist simultaneously, and there was nothing linear about the narrative. In another form

of storytelling, Nwabara's friend, a professional drummer and dancer out of Conakry, Guinea told her that a new drummer must first master the sound as an observer and listener before taking up the djembe for the first time amongst his/her elders. Drumming demanded attention to detail, to hear the drum talk and know what it is saying, how it communicates to other drums and their drummers, before becoming its storyteller, and aiding the drum in telling its people's story.

We, Nwabara and Sall, agreed that African women are at the center of storytelling. This storytelling influences the way our men tell stories, and how we keep knowledge, generation after generation. No matter what is done to us as a people, we continue to find multiple ways to survive and to maintain our future; we continue to find things to protect or build our community. We interweave what we deal with into who we are and continue forward. As Sall put it in our conversation, "We are the catalyst of continuation." It is that Negritude like, Harlem Renaissance-esque, Igbo Women's War of 1929 type, African/Black¹ women stabilizing our men's freedom revolutions, globally, kind of energy, that we channel and evoke, with this special issue, "The Continuation of the Revolutionary African Woman." The African woman continues, and we must put it on the record.

Dr. Amina Mama said in an interview as a part of the *Know Your African Feminist* interview series:

We should put ourselves on the record, for the next generation, for our own inspiration, for denying the myth, and to demystify the whole apparatus that helps keep us subordinated, alongside economic and sheer force, violence: violence, economy, and cultural lies, and misappropriations are key to our oppression. (African Feminist Forum)

As an example of our revolutionary African woman "continuing," Mama centered her own narrative as invaluable data that is necessary to tell the story of African women. As African/Black women, African feminists, Black feminists, and African

¹ Black, unless otherwise noted, is used to refer to Black people globally (i.e. global Black peoples, Black world). African, unless otherwise noted, is used to refer to Black African people globally (i.e. global African peoples, African world). Our special issue on the revolutionary African woman is populated by stories coming from both the African continent and the African diaspora. In an attempt to discuss our shared histories, within the continent and across the diaspora, the terms are used interchangeably and simultaneously to acknowledge and honor our shared realities. The articles help to celebrate and discuss our unique regional and cultural differences.

womanists have been doing since the European Slave Trade, colonialism, and long before, she activates human experience and ways of knowing as critical tools for survival. What does this survival look like? Well, it goes beyond living, beyond each human atrocity on her body, mind, and spirit, and incorporates the minute details of everyday living that make up knowledge systems, cultural practices, and artistic expression from her point of view, from her brothers' point of view, and from her children's points of view. It is a regular heralding of one's existence in the face of erasure, and we agree with Mama that we must find systems, archives, and repositories to sustain and build upon what we know, for future generations to come.

We ended that conversation, which we still hold as sacred between us as sisters, colleagues, and friends, with a determination to involve others and expand upon it. We wanted not only to bring African women's knowledge to the forefront, from as many corners of the globe as possible, but to see it transform into something that can directly and positively impact our youth, our communities, and ourselves. We called on the revolutionary African woman in spirit and in physicality, and she arrived in great numbers, proving our own belief correct – that she is out there doing phenomenal things and looking for places to house her stories for others to benefit, to gain, to grow, and to build. The authors in this special issue shape this introduction, as their papers demand focus on the African woman's archive; attention to her epistemological frameworks; new stories created about her power as both warrior and nurturer; and autoethnographies and interviews related to contemporary community work. Volume I of “The Continuation of the Revolutionary African Woman” is captured here, in *Siyabonana: The Journal of Africana Studies* with ten papers on these topics. Volume II will sit within *Wagadu: A Journal of Transnational Women & Gender Studies* with another set of papers continuing the conversation. The nature of the articles challenges us to think deeper about the problems we face, to best celebrate and present their work in ways that honor and represent African women's approaches.

Creating Possibility from Systemic Problems

When Black women meet, they have many opportunities to build relationships, open collaboration, and contribute to the work they are doing. Our ancestors have left us their legacies through storytelling and “we are the catalyst of continuation.” Orality, or oral literature, has been the window through which Black communities circulate

knowledge production. Sall remembers her grandparents asking them to come together after dinner, to tell them stories. Each story had a moral lesson embedded in it; it also was performative and interactive. They would ask questions and give children the opportunity to contribute. This means they must pay attention to understand what is happening, what the lesson is, and apply it in their daily life. In this case, the audience is not only receiving but giving/participating.

We are looking at the work of these African and Black women (authors and/or those centered in the articles) and giving them the credit for their work within their communities, the real experiences they write into existence, and the intentional care that results towards bettering society. The authors/subjects consider the choices they make in their lives which can positively affect others in general, younger generations in particular. This type of work is subtly yet vibrantly the efforts of the revolutionary woman and her allies, bringing forth practical ways to represent and build awareness of their everyday realities towards collectively finding solutions. These solutions come from forward thinking such as how to change mindsets and how to produce and pass on the legacies of past and present African women and peoples. These actions are not simple; each thought and action is full of intention. African and Black women have organically used their epistemologies to resolve issues of today and tomorrow, considering self, family and community in present and future generations. It's about finding solutions while living, being parents, and teaching at the same time, and writing at the same time.

African women are rethinking and building their whole vision of life. They look at what matters right now, and what solutions would work for everybody, so that there's no selfish thinking about what can be done since it is centered in communicating and community building. This is showcased in many different ways, including Black women writing, Black women telling stories, and even just connecting to each other. For example, in Senegal, we can talk about the "Tontine," which is a monthly or weekly meeting among women where they take time to find solutions about finances. But it's also a gathering that helps them talk about things that work at home, in the societies they find themselves to be sustainable, and as they manage the different social pressures that they go through. Nigerian women (and men) also share similar practices in Nigeria and across the diaspora by creating groups to provide financial support to community-based projects. Members contribute money monthly and each month a different person takes a year's worth

to support their project or family needs. Relatedly, Black women are writing and putting their stories and ways of knowing out there in the world hoping it reaches someone. They write to add their voices to local, regional, and global conversations where they have previously been silenced or erased because they have something to say. And in speaking, they recognize it is their duty to correct what has been written about them and their people, so others are aware, and African and Black peoples are supported in a larger global community.

One of the distinctive strengths of Black women's intellectual and creative traditions lies in the recognition that orality is not separate from writing, but already embedded within it. Rather than dismissing this dimension of women's ontologies, African women writers affirm and re-valorize storytelling as essential to lived experiences and knowledge production. When Aminata Sow Fall incorporates Wolof songs into her novel *Le Revenant* —and *The Beggars' Strike* —she performs an act of resistance to Western literary conventions. This stylistic choice disrupts expectations of linguistic accessibility, compelling readers to engage with footnotes and translations, and in doing so, foregrounds the presence and legitimacy of local language within the text. She said “J’ecrit pour ma communauté” [I write for my community], in an interview with Sall, in 2018.

Earlier still, Awa Thiam's *La Parole aux Nègresses* (1978) stands as one of the foundational texts of feminist thought in Senegal. The work centers the lived experiences of Black women within continental African contexts, examining the intersections of health, social life, culture, and patriarchy. It reveals how women navigate and negotiate these overlapping structures in their everyday lives, offering a deeply grounded account of their realities.

African and Black women's awareness of our responsibility in knowledge production is central to any conversation about liberation. It is equally vital when we speak of creating space—of giving voice—to the ongoing legacy of the revolutionary African woman. Whether embodied by her or by the storyteller who carries her narrative forward, this figure is positioned through the deliberate creation of spaces where intergenerational dialogue can unfold. Within these exchanges, diverse voices are reimagined, and stories are revisited, reshaped, and retold.

This process echoes the foundational encounter between Sall and Nwabara, whose dialogue traced lived experiences across Senegal; Ghana; Nigeria; the United States; and the broader African diaspora. It is precisely this kind of transnational,

intergenerational engagement that this special issue seeks to cultivate. We envision this issue as a continuation—one that highlights the work of African and Black women across different corners of the world, and models the many ways we contribute to knowledge production.

Rebuilding African Women's Epistemology

We posit that African women's epistemologies are an amalgamation of deep ancient knowledge. Her knowledge emanates from her contemporary everyday existence and is transcribed by the way she understands and articulates who she and her people are as a result of their experiences. This knowledge is evident in the way that her great great great great grandmother made fufu, which flows into the way her daughter or son pounds, while she turns the mixture of cassava and plantain between each contact of mortar and pestle in the outskirts or central region of Accra. In times of war, she forages and grows the plants her father's father and mother's mother did, although she spent her life in the city away from the farm, in 1960s Umuahia. In contemporary Chicago, she tells the folktales that her great great great great grandfather told their family in 18th century Mississippi. She braids her hair as the women did before her in Bogotá. She remembers how her grandmother reminded them of their African heritage in the outskirts of Colombo in Sri Lanka. "The Continuation of the Revolutionary African Woman" does not "merely" recognize the power of African women discovering new ways of archiving and documenting complex ways of knowing and being; it argues that she rediscovers and unearths generational knowledge that has been passed onto her over generations, over centuries. This series celebrates her ability to innovate based on ancient knowledge and push that knowledge to the forefront despite her oppression. In doing so, she recognizes that her ways of knowing and existing are not only powerful, but critical to her survival, and her ability to lead herself, and her people, to thriving conditions.

Nwabara often likes to think of striving to tell one's story, to incorporate Black women's epistemologies into everyday knowledge, side by side Audre Lorde's essay "Poetry is not a Luxury." Poetry can be understood as African and Black women's epistemologies, and when it is expressed from deep within them it offers vital knowledge to the world by "form[ing] the quality of the light within which we predicate our hopes and dreams toward survival and change, first made into language, then into idea, then into more tangible action" (Lorde 37). Flora Nwapa

is an excellent example, in the time it took to write and publish *Efuru* – the first novel published by an African woman (post-independence). With the support of Chinua Achebe, she was able to finally publish the book. It would later be republished and translated into many languages, complicating negative stereotypes of Nigerian and other continental African women by showing how and why they arrived at predicaments, which was due to their multifaceted oppression. When continental African men were finding the pen to write what would become classic continental African novels, they often marginalized their fellow women by writing them as stereotyped caricatures (Davies and Graves 14-15). Women like Nwapa and later Mariama Ba, Buchi Emecheta, Ama Ata Aidoo, Nawal El Saadawi, and Bessie Head, became revolutionary African women by simply, yet complexly, attempting to write corrective stories of African women from her own perspective. In order to break this ground in publishing, including publishing her own future works, Nwapa established Tana Press in 1976/1977 (Umeh 25). While African women do this type of work intentionally and/or naturally, the authors of “The Continuation of the Revolutionary African Woman” are acutely aware of the critical nature of consciously writing about African women’s contributions to knowledge making. It is a revolutionary act towards freedom through self-determination. We do not write merely for the sake of sharing knowledge. We write to reposition the African woman as a heroine in the history of storytelling and of history making itself. She is the heroine of cultural production, of artistic design, and of divining of the mystique. She is a translator that allows us to use our power as storytellers to herald the stories she may not have been able to share to the world.

Lorde argued that the ability to “feel” is a tool, an ingredient, to the nature of storytelling for Black (US/Caribbean and we add global African) women. The subjectivity of how one feels is completely oppositional to the “rational” and “objective” nature of Western (specifically White male) narration that is void of the complex nature of perspective, which can include emotional intelligence. We agree with Lorde and believe that Black and African women *feeling* is paramount to her freedom to properly express herself. Lorde states, “The white fathers told us, I think therefore I am; and the black mothers in each of us-the poet whispers in our dreams, I feel therefore I can be free. Poetry coins the language to express and charter this revolutionary awareness and demand the implementation of that freedom” (38). And so, it is upon the African woman to FEEL, and to express how she feels, and with

that emotional intelligence, bring forth her language to the world. This feeling driven language, or epistemology, has been carefully constructed. She has taken time to derive it in a world that enforces languages that are counterproductive to her existence. Authors in this special issue, “The Continuation of the Revolutionary African Woman” such as Drs. Ifeanyi Awachie, Tanisha Jackson, and future Dr. Deborah (Ọmọwùmí) Chat Dauda, recognize the African woman’s body as a site for knowledge production and innovative artistic expression. As a result, they argue that the use of her body, her movement, is a method to express and then archive knowledge. Through images, videos, dance and beyond, they represent such movements in ways that can be added to repositories of African women’s epistemologies. They demand that we break away from written knowledge as the only way storytelling is not only told, but remembered.

Dr. Sylvia Tamale helps to explain this diversity of knowledge production and expression in her book *African Sexualities: A Reader* when defining sexual knowledge as diverse modes of existing and expressing. She argues that to understand African sexualities, “historical accounts of African sexualities are alive in folklore, traditional songs, dance, folk art, body markings, clothing, jewellery, names and naming systems” (Tamale 14). This demands that reading goes beyond what is on paper, but learning languages which allows one to interpret knowledge through what can be received from all the senses (hearing, seeing, smelling, feeling, tasting). This is where we center ourselves in this special issue – we pushed our authors and they pushed us to radically revise the way we understand African womanhood by the way she remembers; the way she tells what she remembers; by the way she fights back against attacks on her body mind and spirit; by the way she heals herself; by the way she gives to her community; and by the way she shares these experiences with us to retell through scholarship.

The Archive of the Revolutionary African Woman

Themes coming from the authors in “The Continuation of the Revolutionary African Woman,”: Volume I, overwhelmingly remind us of the importance of the archive as a revolutionary tool to recapture, redefine, validate, and create repositories for African and Black women’s epistemologies. The range of ways the archive takes shape across these articles is phenomenal, validating our argument that African women’s knowledge exists in everyday realities, beyond what’s written with

pen on paper. Paper and pen become a way to retell and represent narratives; knowledge and ways of knowing; creating archives of the body, the spirit, the mind, the community, and of family; and adding women's knowledge to incomplete archives. Each author honors African and Black women who archive knowledge in ways organic to her ontological positioning. The authors use scholarship, interviews, or stories to help tie these women's knowledge to what we hope to see as a perpetual forefronting of African women's stories and means of storytelling as critical methodologies to how we live, love, create art, and write within academia.

One major theme “The Continuation of the Revolutionary Black Woman”: Volume I shows us is the use of art as an archive to reclaim the Black body from its colonial subjugation. In “Rioting in the Gallery: Diasporic Nigerian Women's Installation Art,” Dr. Ifeanyi Awachie walks us through the process of disrupting the colonial narratives about Black women through a critical rereading of colonial archives, women's histories, and lived experiences; the analysis foregrounds the politics of vision, representation, and resistance, thereby moving Black women from the periphery to the center of archival and artistic discourse. She positions the gallery as a revolutionary space where Black women revise and reinvent Nigerian histories by radically rewriting colonial visual images in ways that reflect African women's epistemologies. Igwe's installation *A Repertoire of Protest* “reveals the capacity of diasporic Nigerian women's installation art to address epistemic violence and stage alternative readings of archival histories.” It does so by juxtaposing archival film that presents stilted and controlled images of Nigerian women from England's colonial occupation of Nigeria alongside reconfigurations of the same film. Awachie argues that Igwe challenges the viewer to consider the colonial Nigerian women's existence, her mind, her purpose. The viewer does this alongside watching dance and movement from contemporary Nigerian women who, in the future, reclaim the loss of movement of their colonial mothers. In the piece “Specialised Technique,” Awachie shares a question that Igwe imagined to be asked by the colonial woman – “Should I move?” The contemporary filmmaker uses her revisioning and reimaging of this moment, with juxtapositions of her own movements, to answer her sister in the past by answering “yes.”

In *My Body Is Not Your Battlefield: The Bodily Aesthetics of Black Women as Sites for Self-Preservation, Resistance, and Radical Self-Care*, soon to be Dr. Deborah (Ọmọwùmí) Chat Dauda brings a similar but distinct theme of cultural

narrative, and personal healing, with stories of self-reclamation, as a Yoruba woman living in contemporary Nigeria and eventually migrating to the United States. The autoethnography is centered around the necessity to tell our own stories, since doing so can touch lives including our own. Dauda weaves narratives of her own life journey, her ancestors and elders (especially “othermothers”), and her artistry and activism, with Black and African feminist and womanist scholars, who have inspired her personal and intellectual journey. She states that the article “employs a Black feminist transdisciplinary lens and an autoethnographic and performative approach to illustrate the revolutionary re-creation of the Black female body, arguing that it is sacred and not a battlefield.” The piece draws together “epistolary work, creative writing, letters, journals, and diaries” as “essential fabric of African societies and a vital tool for political sense-making, healing, and resistance for African-heritage women globally.”

“Reframing the Archive: Black Women Writers and Artists Building Ancestral Memory” by Dr. Tanisha Jackson is another piece that challenges traditional notions of the archive, reshaping it from the art and livelihood of Black women. She centers archives, how they are analyzed and exposed, and their accessibility as central to storytelling. However, she argues that we need to reframe the archives, to get away from the hegemonic narrative of what they should represent. Jackson reveals how her artists reframe the archive and contribute to a “living ecology of memory,” which disrupts “linear temporality” of the West, by centering African/Black epistemologies of time and place that are solar, “cyclical, ancestral, [and] future oriented.” She states that “the archive is a site of struggle where memory is produced in the present tense, and where survival itself becomes an archival practice.” Jackson concludes that, “storytelling becomes a technology of survival, binding the living and the dead into a shared continuum of memory.”

Where Awachie, Jackson, and Dauda examine archives developed from the artistry and bodies of Black and African women, Dr. Sedrick Miles and Dr. Jaimee Swift examine physical archives created by Black and African women within their communities in Brazil and Ghana that function to retain important histories coming from Black and African women. Their subjects, and these authors, as dedicated contributors to these communities, find ways to document the stories of African women to add to these growing repositories. In “Visual Ancestralities: Insurgent Memory Work Against Postcolonial Entropy in Afro-Brazilian Terrios,” Miles

demonstrates how “Afro-Brazilian Terriros transform the processes of erasure into a powerful storytelling and sharing of their lived experiences.” They are maintained and protected by “Black cis and trans priestesses facing postcolonial entropy.” Miles frames postcolonial entropy as “the gradual erosion of cultural memory produced by structural inequality, environmental degradation, and archival neglect” and posits that the Afro-Brazilian terriros combat this through “insurgent memory work” or “the community-led practice of preservation that resists this entropy through intentional acts of remembering.” Through his work, we learn different ways that three different Black cis and trans priestesses in Bahia honor their community by archiving their stories and by “repairing each photo, recording each story, and infusing new life into future sites of ritual activation and epistemic resistance.” At Ilê Axé Jifan Okan Onile, priestess Mãe Elisa captures the essence of this work stating, “We don't live forever. The children must know the names of the leaves, the songs for each orixá. That's why I allowed Adamo to help us remember.”

In “African Literary Archives at the Vanguard: An Interview with Sylvia Arthur,” Dr. Swift interviews Sylvia Arthur about her research. A Black British woman, Arthur “interviewed 100 West African women in Benin, Togo, Sierra Leone, and The Gambia, over 60 years-old, to create an extensive oral archive, to record their stories and preserve their legacies as a correction to their erasure from official histories.” Arthur uses these narratives to create an archive based in Accra, Ghana which, in her words, unapologetically and “unashamedly center the work of Black women writers, knowing that they are the truth-tellers, the archivists, and the memory keepers of our history.”

Shifting from community Black women to those in our home, future Dr. Mjali centers her paper on her aunt, Ambassador Sikose Mji, who is also a South African apartheid freedom fighter. In “We Are Still Fighting White Domination: Intergenerational Dialogue with Ambassador Sikose Mji and Sikose Mjali on African Women’s Writing as a Continuation of Revolutionary Resistance,” Mjali practices the isiXhosa tradition of ukuzilanda, or “to fetch oneself and connect oneself to the past in the present moment.” Using primary sources surrounding her aunt’s activism, including newspapers and an interview, Mjali intentionally shifts away from Western epistemologies tied to storytelling and insists “that archival storytelling between generations of South African women is a radical methodology of survival, memory, and futurity.”

Considering social media as a form of a living online archive, Drs. Alexa Harris and Devlon Jackson's article reveals the connectedness between African and Black women through social media to discuss critical issues that affect them, women around them, and women globally. In "The Art of Response: Crafting Meaning in African Women's Reaction Videos on Black American Issues," Harris and Jackson frame the theme of geographical connection to answer the question, "How do we react to vlogs and blogs that cover issues touching African American women?" They poignantly frame the way continental African women respond to and contextually retell stories about issues coming from African American women's vlogs. Specifically, Harris and Jackson focus on how continental African women respond to African American woman YouTube vlogger @TabithaSpeaksPolitics through digital "call and response." They attribute this practice as "similar to traditional African Music, 'work songs' or, spirituals of those enslaved in America," tying this interactive communication to traditions across the Black American experience to global African communities. Harris and Jackson recognize that "from documentaries and video diaries to Substack and traditional blogs, Black women are using inexpensive alternative media forms to share stories." The essay reveals that social media, due to its global accessibility, can be a medium for storytelling that not only archives knowledge and ways of knowing, but allows others to share their stories. Through social media, then, Black American and various continental African women can build community.

"The Continuation of the Revolutionary African Woman": Volume I also celebrates articles that look at the way African women translate their languages and epistemologies through stories and narratives. In "Daughters Reappropriating Genocide Narratives in Scholastique Mukasonga (2008) and Beata Umubyeyi Mairesse (2019)" by future Dr. Catherine Behm, she recognizes the overwhelming privileging of men's narratives about the Rwandan genocide, noting also that many stories center the genocide in relation to many other aspects of Rwandan lived experiences. She showcases Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's, "Danger of a Single Story," as a framework to complicate the Rwandan novel and centers novels by Rwanda women, Scholastique Mukasonga's *La femme aux pieds nus* and Beata Mairesse's *Tous tes enfants dispersés*, which engage complex narratives of motherhood. As such, Behm argues that the "literary works commonly emphasize the daughters' responsibility to use their narrative privilege to preserve their mother's story and to

decolonize the library of the Rwandan genocide by including women's views, ultimately contributing to expand the knowledge of their country's history."

Our next piece comes from Dr. Daniel Tia. In his article, "Unsubmissive Self: Identity Quest and African Feminine Resilience," he writes about Imbolo Mbue's *Behold the Dreamers* and Léonora Miano's *Season of the Shadow* and explains how the authors have "illuminate[d] the nuanced ways in which female subjectivity is both imposed upon and resiliently reclaimed within African and diasporic contexts." In his analysis, he shows how Eyabe, and the other captured women, assert their identities through mnemonic practices and secret rituals, transforming the act of remembering into a profound act of defiance. Their agency resides in an unyielding mental fortitude that resists the dehumanizing logic of slavery.

After our literary criticism, we share a story by Odunayo Buliaminu. In "Àrà the Owl: The All-seeing Guardian of Ayédèrú," Buliaminu shares a story of a seer, protector, and guardian of the people of Ayédèrú. Dutiful and effective in her role as a truthsayer, Àrà the Owl has a power all her own that is dedicated to the well-being of the community. Yet, vengeance and jealousy conspire to reduce her methods of protecting her people from falsified claims of deceit and theft, driving her out of the town. Àrà the Owl's story is one of a reverent, humble, and balanced woman whose knowledge far surpasses those around her. Because of these qualities, she is empathetically able to exude forgiveness, while at the same time seeking justice and reclamation of her name and position, and thus her sacred duty. The story also reveals how those who dedicate themselves to truth, in turn, find strength to support those who have supported them. The story embodies the oppressions African women face, while recognizing her sheer strength, resilience, and dedication to protecting even those who harmed her, in the name of building and nurturing community.

The Way Forward: A Call to Current and Future Scholars of Revolutionary African Women

"The Continuation of the Revolutionary African Woman" emerges from a commitment to expanding the reach of Black women's knowledge production across the African continent and the diaspora. It goes beyond creating spaces for Black women's epistemologies, storytelling, and identities; it seeks to sustain and multiply these contributions through intentional systems of connection, mentorship, and collaboration. At its core, the project envisions a structured mentorship network that

links older generations of Black women scholars with younger writers, researchers, and thinkers across Africa and the diaspora. This reflects a fundamental understanding that knowledge production and circulation have always existed within Black and African communities, and that the legacy of the revolutionary Black woman continues across generations, adapting to different contexts, while remaining rooted in continuity and resistance.

Black and African women, wherever they are located, are actively engaged in building the future. Whether on the African continent or outside of it, they continue to reclaim space, create platforms, resist erasure, and articulate their lived realities. Their work is both intellectual and deeply embodied, shaped by everyday experiences, and by a refusal to be silenced. Black women persistently produce knowledge, sustain their communities, and imagine new possibilities despite structural constraints from Senegal to Mali; from Mauritania to South Africa; from Ethiopia to Kenya and Uganda; from US to Brazil or Martinique; from Nigeria to Rwanda; from France to Papua New Guinea and Sri Lanka; and across Global Africa, or the Black world. This initiative therefore seeks to develop a platform that connects Black women across these geographies in meaningful and accessible ways. It aims to facilitate knowledge production that reflects lived realities, engages ancestral thought, and contributes to ongoing processes of decolonization and cultural affirmation. In doing so, it positions itself as a space of exchange, visibility, and collective learning.

Central to this vision is the importance of connection. The project recognizes that collaboration with existing organizations, scholars, and community-based initiatives is essential. It is through these relationships that knowledge can be strengthened, shared, and expanded. The initiative is not designed as a closed structure, but as an evolving network that learns from, and contributes to, broader movements of Black feminist and intellectual work.

The relevance of this work today is evident in its engagement with themes of archiving, resistance, storytelling, decolonization, and self-positioning. It responds to the urgent need to document, share, and amplify the experiences and contributions of Black women, while also creating spaces where these narratives can shape future generations. To support this, the initiative envisions conferences, gatherings, and collaborative spaces that invite participation, encourage dialogue, and highlight the

ongoing impact of Black women's work. These spaces aim not only to showcase existing knowledge but also to inspire new forms of engagement and production.

Ultimately, this project is about creating both safe spaces and dynamic networks. Safe spaces allow for reflection, expression, and shared experience, while networks enable connection, solidarity, and collective action. What began as a simple conversation between two scholars from different countries has grown into a living and expanding initiative—one that now includes conferences, publications, and a growing community committed to sustaining and advancing the intellectual and creative work of Black women across the world. We hope you enjoy what we've been honored to put forth, and look forward to seeing you in Volume II.

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