

[The Beyond Beyonce Reader: Black Women, Womanism, and Contemporary Popular Culture](#)

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Call for Papers

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This is not an anti-Beyonce manifesto. The aim of this project, however, is to unabashedly and unapologetically challenge the notion that “Queen Bey” is the alpha and omega of black female representation and embodiment.

In fact, I contend that contextualizing Beyonce as the ultimate, and in many cases the only legitimate representation of black womanhood, has made us vulnerable to “the danger of a single story” –to borrow the words of Nigerian writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie—and has rendered invisible other black women whose artistry and messaging are equally valid; and deserving of scholarly critique.

This interdisciplinary anthology aims to diversify the narrative by giving voice to a number of contemporary black female artists throughout the Diaspora who have, and continue to make their mark in popular culture in order to demonstrate a nuanced, inclusive yet **critical lens** of expressions of black womanhood, sexuality, spirituality, and empowerment.

By narrowing the definition of contemporary from 1990 - 2010 I realize many worthy performers will be excluded. Nonetheless, space limitations make such a decision necessary.

As the title indicates, this project is contextualized within a womanist framework, a term first coined by author Alice Walker in her 1981 collection of essays *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens: Womanist Prose*, a worldview which was further developed by Chikwenye Okonjo Ogunjemi, Clenora Hudson Weems, Layli Maparyan, and others.

Maparyan in her 2006 edited volume [The Womanist Reader: The First Quarter Century of Womanist Thought](#) expanded the definition of womanism contending that womanism is not a theory or ideology but rather a worldview which moves beyond notions of patriarchy/sexism to engage “social change perspectives” which take into account “everyday experiences and everyday methods of problem solving in everyday spaces, extended to the problem of ending all forms of oppression for all people, restoring the balance between people and the environment/nature, and reconciling human life with the **spiritual dimension**.”

Her 2011 volume [The Womanist Idea](#) further expanded and developed the womanist worldview

underscored in this anthology.

While works engaging feminism, black feminism, and other intersectional feminist methodologies are welcomed, works grounded in a womanist worldview will be given priority.

The anthology will comprise **critical essays** on black solo, and duet female artists under music genres such as African, folk, hip hop, jazz, neo soul, R&B and rock and roll which celebrate and critically analyze the images and representations of black womanhood in popular culture over the past three decades.

Artists include Aliyah, India.Arie*, Erykah Badu, Tamar and Toni Braxton, Mariah Carey, Tracy Chapman, Rihanna Fenty, Rachele Ferrell, Floetry, Goapele, Lalah Hathaway, Lauryn Hill, Janet Jackson, Alicia Keyes, Angeliqe Kidjo, Solange Knowles, Ledisi, Les Nubians, Nicki Minaj, Janelle Monae, Meshell Ndegeocello, Corinne Bailey Rae, Martha Redbone*, Toshi Reagon, Sade, Jill Scott, Angie Stone, Esperanza Spalding, Jazmine Sullivan, Lizz Wright, and Zap Mama.

Other artists who adhere to the designated timeline will be considered. Please be aware, however, that the singers listed above will be given top priority.

Because the aim of this project is to reach both a scholarly and general audience, I seek authors with scholarly expertise who can write clear English prose with a minimal use of academic jargon (this should be demonstrated in your abstract).

Those who are interested in contributing to this project must submit a 500 word abstract **and** a one page cv **in one pdf document** (abstract followed by cv) to erykah05@gmail.com.

The deadline for abstract submissions is **October 31, 2018, 11:59 PT**; notifications will be sent via email by December 20, 2018. Essays (maximum of 30 double spaced pages including notes) will be due by August 1, 2019.

*Indicates chapter is already assigned.

Arica L. Coleman, Ph.D.

Independent Scholar, Time.com Contributor

www.aricalcoleman.com

Contact Email:

erykah05@gmail.com

URL:

http://www.aricalcoleman.com/?page_id=591