Uncovering Black Feminist Writers 1963–90

An Evaluation of Their Coverage in Research Tools

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Has the move toward online resources had an effect on source material for the study of black feminist theory? The last forty years have witnessed a critical mass of literary and theoretical writings on the black feminist movement. This article evaluates the coverage of writings by a select group of forty "second wave" (1963–75) and pre–"third wave" (1976–90) black feminists in twelve major electronic-literary and women's-studies indexing and abstracting services. Most of the twelve resources studied provide materials on the black feminist movement; however, Gender Studies Database, Black Studies Center, and Periodical Index Online, respectively, were identified as offering the best overall coverage of black feminist writers. Each of the twelve databases studied are discussed in detail, offering some useful hints for black feminist studies researchers interested in finding the most comprehensive materials in the field. The survey investigates the breadth of coverage of writings authored by these black feminists and determines that there is a critical need to either update current thesauri or develop a new comprehensive tool for indexing and abstracting black feminist writings. Finally, the results of this study will assist libraries and librarians in making decisions about purchasing the most relevant resources for research on the writings of the feminist movement in general and black feminists in particular.

Since the mid-1990s, there has been an explosion of indexing and abstracting databases incorporating previously print-only resources with newer, more comprehensive, full-text services. Although there are a plethora of print indexes considered invaluable to researchers, the movement within the library field to replace print with electronic access to online databases has seen a marked increase. How has this move toward online resources affected access to source material for the study of black feminist theory? The last forty years have witnessed a critical mass of literary and theoretical writings on the black feminist movement. This article will evaluate the coverage of writings by a select group of "second wave" (1963–75) and pre–"third wave" (1976–90) black feminists in twelve indexing and abstracting services. Are the writings of these black feminists indexed in the major electronic literary and women's studies database resources available for researchers? What services provide ease of use combined with multiple levels of search strategies that include searching by author, subject, title, and publication date simultaneously for retrieval of information? The survey will answer these questions and identify the availability of these writings as full text or

abstracts. The survey investigates the breadth of coverage and determines that there is a critical need to develop a comprehensive tool for indexing and abstracting black feminist writings. The study will, more importantly, show what databases provide access to scholarly, peer-reviewed articles that legitimize a subject matter. Providing access to these resources encourages critical analysis of black feminist theory, thus furthering the diversity and scope of research. The results will assist researchers in choosing the most relevant resources for their research on the writings of the feminist movement in general and black feminists in particular. In this era of shrinking budgets, the data will provide guidance for librarians seeking to purchase electronic resources in the area of black women's studies.

The black feminist writers chosen are consistently listed in major research about and writings on the feminist movement, including Patricia Hill Collins's *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness and the Politics of Empowerment*; the voluminous Pioneer Feminists Project out of Harvard University and its first major publication, *Feminists Who Changed America*, edited by Barbara Love in 2006; Barbara Christian's seminal 1985 work *Black Feminist Criticism: Perspectives on Black Women Writers*; and the more recent two-volume set, *Encyclopedia of African American Women Writers*, edited by Yolanda Williams Page in 2007. Two comprehensive websites were also consulted during formation of the list of black feminist writers in this survey: Sherri L. Barnes's *Black American Feminisms: A Multidisciplinary Bibliography* from the University of California–Santa Barbara and the University of Minnesota's *Voices from the Gaps*.[1]

LITERATURE REVIEW

In searching library literature using the terms *women*, *women's studies*, and *indexing* in a variety of combinations, five articles were retrieved: "Table of Contents Services: Retrieving Women's Studies Periodical Literature" by Loretta P. Koch and Barbara G. Preece (1995); "Women's Studies Periodical Indexes:

An In-depth Comparison" by Linda A. Krikos (1994); "An Evaluation of Indexing Services for Women's Studies Periodical Literature" by Deborah Mesplay and Loretta Koch; "Indexing Adequacy and Interdisciplinary Journals: The Case of Women's Studies" by K. H. Gerhard et al. (1993); and "Indexing of Feminist Periodicals" by May Alice Sanguinetti (1984).[2] The Koch and Preece article surveyed table of contents services and not the coverage of individual writers. The articles by Mesplay and Koch and by J. A. Gerhard surveyed the general coverage of women's studies journal literature but not the writings of individual black women writers that represent an important subset of feminist writers in the United States. Mesplay and Koch concluded that "of the indexing and abstracting services examined, 'Women Studies Abstracts' provides the overall best coverage."[3] Krikos's article was a follow-up to the Mesplay and Koch article with the inclusion of the "Women's Studies Index."

Although Krikos's article also reviewed indexes rather than the coverage of individual writers, it is an important resource because of its comparison of the three major resources at that time, "Women's Studies Index," "Studies on Women Abstracts," and "Women Studies Abstracts." The article is also important for its development of the following standards for comparing indexes: scope; depth of indexing; currency, time-lag, and cost; publisher and editor; format and arrangement; and vocabulary and subject headings.[4] Two of these standards will be used in this study: scope, which Krikos describes as "the number and type of materials indexed (meaning articles, book chapters, books, dissertations, pamphlets) and overlaps and gaps in coverage," and format, defined as "considering the usefulness of the overall arrangement of the service and the content of the citations."[5] Krikos concluded that "'Women's Studies Index' actually indexes the most comprehensive combination and greatest number of women's studies journals."[6] Krikos also concluded that "Women Studies Abstracts" "is essential to research collections."[7]

Sanguenetti's article surveyed the coverage of women's studies and feminist journals in the leading paper indexing services available at that time and, again, "Women Studies Abstracts" was found to offer the best coverage, albeit in paper format. Some of the indexes surveyed by Sanguenetti are included in this survey: "Alternative Press Index," "Essay and General Literature," and "Women Studies Abstracts" (now a part of the much larger Gender Studies Database). Although the articles mentioned did not survey coverage of individual writers, they provided a set of criteria to assist in reviewing the databases. This study will also test some of the conclusions of these earlier articles and determine whether "Women Studies Abstracts," which was found to have the best coverage of women's and gender studies in earlier reviews, offers the best coverage of black feminists writers.

BACKGROUND

The study covers forty black feminist writers: fifteen Second Wave (SW) and twenty-five pre–Third Wave (pTW). The SW arguably dates either from 1963–75, according to Barbara Love and Harvard's Pioneer Feminists Project, or from 1965–75, according to Darlene Clark Hine, African American historian and scholar. Love states, "we honor changemakers in the Second Wave movement beginning in 1963, when Betty Friedan's book, *The Feminine Mystique*, was published and spurred countless women into action . . . some historians say the true Second Wave movement began in 1966 when the National Organization for Women was founded . . . 1963–1975 were the years of involvement by the greatest number of feminists."[8] All of the selected writers were known activists in the feminist movement. This SW period relates to the founding of the modern feminist movement that grew out of the larger civil rights era, a time when America was coming to grips with those people unwilling to be classified as "second class citizens." The feminist movement saw the larger movement as not

addressing issues of sexism, unequal pay, and the leadership role of women. Black women long involved in civil rights activism came to a similar conclusion, but the sensitive issue of women's rights was often subsumed into the larger struggle of achieving equality as black people. With the achievement of some of the goals of the civil rights movement, such as the passing of the Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts, black women felt it was time to turn their attention to the rampant sexism and chauvinistic tendencies in many of the black civil rights movement leaders. The Combahee River Collective, a group of black feminists that have met since 1974, state in their discussion of the genesis of contemporary black feminism that

> many of us were active in those movements (civil rights, Black nationalism, the Black Panthers), and all of our lives were greatly affected and changed by their ideology, their goals, and the tactics used. . . . It was our experience and disillusionment within these liberation movements . . . that led to the need to develop a politics that was antiracist, unlike those of white women, and antisexist, unlike those of Black and white men.[9]

Many within the black feminist movement viewed the early white feminist movement as focusing primarily on issues of gender equity while ignoring issues of racism and classism that were the everyday experience for women of color. Benita Roth, in *Separate Roads to Feminism*, sums up the feelings of many black feminists: "They were wary of joining white women's liberation groups that paid insufficient attention to the links between gender, racial, and especially class oppression. Critical of the middle-class bias of liberation movements, Black and white, Black feminists therefore found themselves maneuvering in the interstices between the two." [10]

The writers in this study represent those who worked within and outside

the women's movement, and produced scholarship that reflected the issues and concerns of black women who faced discrimination that was both similar to and different from the discrimination faced by the women represented by the dominant white feminists' movement. According to Joy James, the women chosen generated a wealth of materials to address these issues "not in an attempt to diminish feminist struggle but to enrich, to share in the work of making a liberatory ideology and liberatory movement."[11] The SW writers established an unprecedented body of scholarship, which is now being studied and analyzed by scholars the world over.

The writings of Toni Cade Bambara have been cited by writers, both black and white, as some of the most groundbreaking work on documenting the emergence of black feminism in the late 1960s and early 70s. Her publication *The Black Woman: An Anthology* is considered the first "major contribution in the development of Black women's literature."[12] She also served as editor of *Women Writers of the Contemporary South* and *Black Women Writers at Work*. Barbara Christian's *Black Women Novelists: The Development of a Tradition* and *Black Feminist Criticism: Perspectives on Black Women Writers* are two of her best-known works. Christian was the first African American woman awarded tenure at Berkeley in 1978 and became a full professor in 1986.[13] Angela Y. Davis, scholar and political activist, a professor in the History of Consciousness at the University of California–Santa Cruz, has written extensively on black liberation politics and prison reform. A former member of the Black Panther Party, she became someone who intimately knows the U.S. justice system after having been incarcerated and put on trial in 1970 in a sensational case in which she was later acquitted of murder, kidnapping, and conspiracy. This experience made her a worldwide "cause celeb": "Free Angela Davis" was the rallying cry. This also provided her a unique entrée and perspective on racism and political oppression. Influential works such as Gloria Hull, Patricia Bell

Scott, and Barbara Smith's anthology *All the Women are White, All the Blacks are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave: Black Women's Studies* and Smith's edited collection *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology* challenged the prevailing notions of racial and sexual bias within and outside of the academy.

Others used poetry, playwriting, and essays as the avenues for their expressions, reaching audiences from around the world; such as the prolific writer bell hooks, who taught at Yale, the University of California, Oberlin, and was a distinguished professor of English at the City College in New York.[14] Essential to the discussion about feminists' writings centering on the intersection of race and sex are the poetry and essays of Audre Lorde—she chronicles the struggles of a black lesbian feminist poet and mother in *Sister Outsider* and *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name*. *Cancer Journals* records her battle with breast cancer. Toni Morrison and Alice Walker are prolific writers that embraced the labels of controversial, insightful, and creative from their first ventures in feminist writing. Examples of their early writings, *The Bluest Eye* and *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens: Womanist Prose*, respectively, are still cited and studied in academic departments around the world. Beverly Guy-Sheftall and Patricia Bell Scott are recognized authorities on black feminist scholarship and are founding coeditors of *SAGE: A Scholarly Journal of Black Women*. Pat Parker and Michele Wallace, two lesbian, radical, and revolutionary writers, wrote about contemporary political issues as well as domestic and sexual violence against women. Wallace's seminal work *Black Macho and the Myth of the Superwoman* created an enormous storm of controversy with her negative depiction of black men. Johnnetta B. Cole and Pauli Murray represent the diverse professions drawn to the feminist movement. Cole, primarily known for her tenure as the first African American female president of the renowned Atlanta school for African American women, Spelman College, was also named Emory University's Presidential Distinguished Professor of anthropology, women's studies,

Table 1. Second Wave Black Feminists

Significant Texts	Toni Cade Bambara	Barbara Christian	Johnnetta B. Cole	Angela Davis	Beverly Guy Sheftall	bell hooks	Gloria T. Hull	Audre Lorde	Toni Morrison	Pauli Murray	Pat Parker	Patricia Bell Scott	Barbara Smith	Alice Walker	Michele Wallace
Encyclopedia of African American Women Writers (2007)	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	
Encyclopedia of Feminist Literature (2006)	X			X		X	X	X	X					X	X
Encyclopedia of African American Culture and History (2006)	X			X		X		X	X			X		X	X
Feminists Who Changed America (Love, 2006)	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X		X	
Black Women in America (Hine, 2005)	X	X		X		X	X	X	X	X				X	X
Separate Roads to Feminism (2004)	X			X		X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Black Feminist Thought (Collins, 2000)	X	X		X				X	X	X			X		
Black Feminist Reader (James, 2000)	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Facts on File Encyclopedia of Black Women in America: Literature (Hine, 1997)	X			X		X		X	X					X	
The African Continuum & African American Women (Writes, 1995)		X		X		X		X	X					X	
Reading Black, Reading Feminist (1990)	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X
Black Feminist Criticism (1985)	X	X		X				X					X	X	
Black Women Writers (1984)	X							X	X					X	X

and African American Studies.[15] She has written consistently on women's issues including coauthoring with Beverly Guy-Sheftall *Gender Talk: The Struggle for Women's Equality in African American Communities*. Pauli Murray was a founding member of the National Organization of Women (NOW), a lawyer, and poet. Her autobiography (published posthumously), *Song in a Weary Throat: An American Pilgrimage*, "recounts her awakening to both racial and gender inequities and eloquently explains how she shaped herself into the civil rights' activist and feminist she became."[16] In her later life, she became the first ordained woman African American Episcopal priest in the United States. The depth and breadth of writing by these women should be discoverable within the research tools available today. Table 1 lists the texts consulted in making the selection of black feminist writers to include in the study.

The pTW feminists were influenced by the SW writers and those that wrote in the 1980s, but who were most ac-

Table 2. Pre-Third Wave Black Feminists

Significant Texts	Maya Angelou	Gwendolyn Brooks	Octavia Butler	Patricia Hill Collins	Rita Dove	Nikki Giovanni	Rosa Guy	Trudier Harris	Jacqueline Jones	Gayl Jones	June Jordan	Paule Marshall
Encyclopedia of African American Women Writers (2007)	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Encyclopedia of Feminist Literature (2006)	X	X	X		X	X				X	X	X
Encyclopedia of African American Culture and History (2006)				X								
Black Women in America (Hine, 2005)	X	X	X		X	X				X	X	X
Black Feminist Thought (2000)												
Black Feminist Reader (James, 2000)		X		X	X				X	X	X	X
Facts on File Encyclopedia of Black Women in America: Literature (Hine, 1997)												
The African Continuum & African American Women Writers (1995)				X				X		X	X	
Reading Black, Reading Feminist (1990)	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Black Feminist Criticism (1985)		X				X	X			X	X	X
Black Women Writers (1984)	X	X				X				X	X	X

tive prior to the 1990s when the Third Wave of the feminist movement is commonly thought to have begun. During the period after 1975, there continued a consistent outpouring of writings by black feminists writers who chose a path that would not necessarily distance them from the larger women's movement, but carve out for them a unique identity as black feminists. This new theory used by many black women writers and coined by author Alice Walker to distinguish them from the white female-dominated feminist movement is termed *womanism*—the bridge between the two sides of feminism, black and white. Walker defines this concept as a "woman who gains her strength from her community and uses that strength to uplift her people, physically, spiritually, economically, and politically."[17] The twenty-five writers who work within this womanist tradition represent a small number of the literally hundreds of writers who could have been chosen for this survey. Based on the genre and focus of their research and writings, these writers fall into several broad groups. Maya Angelou, Nikki Giovanni, Rosa Guy, Gayl Jones, June Jordan, Sonia Sanchez, Ntozake Shange, Joyce Carol Thomas, and Margaret Walker Alexander have all blurred the lines between poetry, essays, and fiction writing for years. Each of these women has received numerous accolades for their works. Gwendolyn Brooks and Rita Dove are also well-known poets, each having been named Poet Laureate of the United States in 1985–86 and 1993–95 respectively. Terry McMillan, Gloria Naylor, and Ntozake Shange have all written plays and popular literature that focus on relationships between women and men. Patricia Hill Collins, Deborah E. McDowell, Trudier Harris, Jacqueline C. Jones, Paule Marshall, Nellie McKay, Valerie Smith, Hortense Spillars, Claudia Tate, and Gloria Wade-Gayles are known for academic scholarship that

Table 2. Pre-Third Wave Black Feminists (continued)

Significant Texts	Deborah E. McDowell	Nellie McKay	Terry McMillan	Gloria Naylor	Sonia Sanchez	Ntozake Shange	Ann Allen Shockley	Valerie Smith	Hortense Spillers	Claudia Tate	Joyce Carol Thomas	Gloria Wade-Gayles	Margaret Walker
Encyclopedia of African American Women Writers (2007)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Encyclopedia of Feminist Literature (2006)			X	X	X	X							X
Encyclopedia of African American Culture and History (2006)						X							
Black Women in America (Hine, 2005)	X					X	X	X		X			
Black Feminist Thought (2000)	X			X	X	X		X	X				
Black Feminist Reader (James, 2000)					X								
Facts on File Encyclopedia of Black Women in America: Literature (Hine, 1997)													
The African Continuum & African American Women Writers (1995)	X	X		X		X			X	X			
Reading Black, Reading Feminist (1990)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X
Black Feminist Criticism (1985)						X	X	X		X		X	X
Black Women Writers (1984)				X	X	X							X

focuses on women's studies, ethnic and gender equity, and literary criticism. Octavia Butler writes science fiction that has female central characters. Ann Allen Shockley has written novels and is a curator of African American collections at Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee. Table 2 lists the writers and the leading feminist texts in which they are represented. Some Second Wave and pre-Third Wave writers overlap in age and time, either due to the popularity of their writings only taking hold after the earlier dates, or due to their publication after the Second Wave had passed. The criteria for selection of these writers were that they had to have written and published at least three scholarly articles or books.

METHODS

The American Library Association's Association of College and Research Libraries Women's Studies Section's (ACRL/WSS) "Collection Development Resources," the University of California at Davis's extensive Women and Gender Studies study guide, Hope Olsen's *Information Sources in Women's Studies and Feminism*, and Texas A&M University's women's studies guide developed by librarian Nancy Northup were consulted in the development of the database and readings list.[18] The databases chosen were the most widely used and available sources of literature that contain comprehensive coverage of periodical articles, literary works, popular and alternative literature, book reviews, essays, and other writings in women's studies.

The twelve databases chosen are consistently listed as the major databases for the study of feminist writings and literature in general: Alternative Press Index includes the API Archives, Black Studies Center, Black Women Writers, Communication Studies, Contemporary Women's Issues, Essay and General Literature Review, Gender

Studies Database, GenderWatch, MLA Bibliography, Periodicals Index Online, Web of Science, and Women and Social Movements. Two of the databases, Black Studies Center and Black Women Writers cover a wide range of material specifically related to black women's literature. Each of the forty writers' works were searched in these databases, using the author search option when available, with the results divided into three sections: peer-reviewed; not peer-reviewed; and books, anthologies, or edited works. The difference between finding peer-reviewed materials versus not peer-reviewed means that the views of the writers are considered scholarly and have a better chance of becoming a part of the canon of scholarship in a particular subject or discipline, in this instance ensuring that black feminist scholarship is considered within the larger feminist ideological and theoretical paradigm. The combined databases contain millions of pages of information and offer the most sophisticated approaches to discovering research material.

RESULTS

Uncovering the depth of coverage of black feminist writings within the most commonly available research tools for the scholarly community today presented a number of challenges. The standards used to evaluate the databases included scope, format, ease of use of the search interface (location on home page, help screens, and multiple search strategies), full-text availability, and peer reviewing. The search results were restricted to only those writings authored by the individual writers. Some databases did not offer author searches, so alternative search strategies were used and will be further explained in the discussion section. Tables 3 and 4 tabulate the frequency of writings by the authors within each of the twelve databases. The overall results of the survey showed that the National Information Services Corporation's (NISC) Gender Studies Database (GSD) and ProQuest's databases, Black Studies Center (BSC) and Periodical

Index Online (PIO), covered all the authors in this study. All three databases have very simple search interfaces that can be accessed from their home page. While the top three databases were chosen for very different reasons, ease of search and scope of coverage for each of the selected writers are shared qualities for these resources.

GSD provided more discreet writings by the authors and a wide variety of formats for writers' works (books, articles, book reviews, and chapters), but that information was only discernable by viewing each record. The retrieval list for GSD was inconsistent, sometimes retrieving articles written by other authors about the target author. BSC has an excellent search interface, and the items retrieved were sorted into a variety of formats such as essays, journal, resource, newspapers, and other divisions. Individual works retrieved included national and international writings. PIO searches retrieved smaller sets because the database contains only journal articles, but the search interface is simple and allows separation of the content into articles and book reviews.

MLA Bibliography is an excellent resource covering thirty-eight of the forty individual writers in this survey. MLA has a simple search interface and a variety of options for retrieval of writings. After retrieving results, MLA provides options to refine the search into separate data sets such as peer reviewed, books, book chapters, dates, genre, and other options. The lack of coverage of Octavia Butler, one of the few black female writers of science fiction, and Pauli Murray, known for her legal and poetic legacies, is not explained.

Alexander Street Press's Black Women Writers (BWW) focuses on voices of women from Africa and the African Diaspora, lacking coverage of African American women writers. BWW covered six of the writers in this survey: two SW (Angela Davis and Audre Lorde) and four pTW (Rita Dove, Nikki Giovanni, Rosa Guy, and Margaret Walker Alexander). API and the API Archive (API/A) included writings by all of the SW writers but in-

cluded only twelve of the twenty-five pTW writers. Communication Studies (CommSt) covered fourteen of the SW writers and nineteen of the pTW writers. Contemporary Women's Issues covered the writings of sixteen of the forty women in this survey: eight of the SW and eight of the pTW. Using the author search options returned primarily book reviews.

Essay and General Literature Review (E&GLR), given its coverage that includes the humanities and social sciences, covered only twenty-eight of the forty writers, with a paltry number of citations for those covered. E&GLR covers subjects that range from economics, political science, and history to criticism of literary works, art history, drama, and film, areas in which most of the women in this survey have published writings. GenderWatch (GW) had an unimpressive return, covering only seventeen of the forty writers, ten SW and seven pTW. GW was hampered by its limited dates of coverage that will be further elaborated on in the discussion section of this article. Web of Science (WoS) covered thirty-seven of the writers, but is a difficult database to use because of the format of author citations. The search interface allows for last names and first-name initials only. Women and Social Movements (W&SM) covered only two of the writers as authors, but included all of the writers as subjects or discussion points in the new module in the database titled "The Second Wave and Beyond," an online scholarly community. This feature offers an opportunity for those interested in the feminist movement to discuss and share research within the scholarly community, making W&SM an invaluable source for the study of this field.

DISCUSSION

Searching for articles and books written by black feminist writers presented some challenges, but the overall coverage of the most commonly available of the research tools at most institutions offered a wealth of materials. Some databases are superior to others because of the simplified search interface, the

scope of documents within the resource, and availability of a wide range of writings, but in other cases it was a matter of finding the right formula for retrieving items. The resources surveyed display a variety of strengths and weaknesses. These tools may offer access to articles available as abstracts, full text, or through interlibrary loan. This section of the article will include a discussion of each of the databases, offering some useful hints for the black feminist studies researchers interested in finding the most comprehensive materials in the field.

Table 5 lists the individual writers and the twelve databases surveyed, showing those databases where their writings are covered. The table includes the percentage of databases where each author's works are located, the percentage of the forty writers covered for each database, and the average coverage for SW and pTW writers overall.

Alternative Press Index and Archive presented some serious problems and inconsistencies in searching. The scope and depth of searching was hindered by difficulties in searching for individual writers. When searching using a writer's last and first name as search terms, results were found, but often indexing in this resource uses a last name and first initial. This presented serious problems for writers with common last names such as Davis, Cole, Parker, Scott, or Smith. Also, searching names as an author search sometimes retrieved articles about the authors' books written by someone else. Despite these problems, searches retrieved articles and book reviews by each of the SW writers. Availability was confined to a brief citation listing and allowed no direct access to the articles, although a longer citation view includes format type. Discovering whether articles cited were peer reviewed was extremely difficult and required further research in many cases. Another flaw with API is that it required two separate searches, one for the Index and one for the Archive. It would be advantageous if those two databases were combined. A search to find articles for Nikki Giovanni using "Giovanni" only came up empty,

but when using "Giovanni, Nikki," articles were retrieved. "Davis, Angela" found nothing, but using "Davis, A" as a search string retrieved over sixty articles by or about her. API/A presented a similar problem when searching for writings by Trudier Harris, retrieving articles when a last name and the first initial were used. However, Harris is a common name; determining whether or not a work was written by her was not possible unless you knew the titles of her writings. There was a similar problem with Marshall, McKay, Shange, and others. In many instances it was impossible to determine if the cited author was the desired person or someone else with the same last name and first initial. In fact, there were writers with the same first and last names writing on similar topics, as in the case of Margaret Walker and Margaret Urban Walker, who both wrote on women's issues. Sometimes Margaret Walker used her married name, Alexander, in her writings, but often she did not. Confusion between the two is inevitable.

Black Studies Center has an excellent search interface. Searches retrieved short citations, but only provided access to full-text articles listed in the Resource category. No access was available to those listed under Journals, which seems illogical and counterintuitive. BSC covers scholarly and popular black studies periodicals, but peer-reviewed articles were not identified. As a relatively new resource available since 2005, BSC continues to add to its various component modules. The scope of coverage makes this a great resource for researchers interested in black feminist writings. The one drawback to this resource is that the six black newspapers that are a part of the resource center must be purchased individually at a cost that is prohibitive for smaller library budgets.

Black Women Writers has a simple search interface and provides a useful division of a variety of formats for each author, such as newspaper, essay, media, and journal. Available since 2005, BWW is a relatively new resource, but it has a promising future as a useful resource for the study of black feminists' writings.

Communication Studies has limitations for this study because its content dates from 1984 to the present. Many of the black feminist writers in this survey began their scholarly output much earlier than 1984, so this limited the scope of coverage for these women. Those articles retrieved included a citation and abstract for each entry, but despite its designation as a full-text resource, often the resources retrieved were not available as full text. The database provides a breakdown of the author's writings into peer-reviewed journals, number of books, and catalogs published, but entries had to be checked to make sure the correct author is listed. Search terms should be specific to the author's full name if possible. For instance, a search for "Davis, Angela" retrieved five published works, but one of the listings was for an Angela E. Davis, not Angela Y. Davis. Similarly, with a common name like Barbara Smith, an initial or knowledge of the person's writings was necessary to find relevant material accurately. The interdisciplinary nature of many of the authors' writings in this survey necessitated changing the subject area to include Art and Humanities or Social Sciences. An initial search for "Davis, Angela Y." retrieved one item; searching under Arts and Humanities retrieved two articles; and searching under Social Sciences retrieved fifteen articles, eight of those being peer reviewed. A similar search for "Angelou, Maya" retrieved zero under the default and Social Sciences search, but five documents were retrieved under the Arts and Humanities search. Although the search strategy in CS can take time, the resources retrieved are useful to studying the writings of these individual black feminist writers.

Contemporary Women's Issues is noteworthy for its multidisciplinary and international resources that include "grey literature." The coverage of writings begins in 1992, excluding most of the writers in this survey with the exception of bibliographies and book reviews. Authors such as Sonia Sanchez, Toni Morrison, and the late June Jordan, women with national and international reputations, continued to

Table 3. Second Wave Writers

Black Feminists	API/A	BSC	BWW	Comm St	CWI	E&GLR	GSD	GW	MLA	PIO	WoS	W&SM
Toni Cade Bambara												
Peer-review	4	2		0						5		
Non peer-review	10			1			9		1		4	
Books						1	2					
Barbara Christian												
Peer-review	13	7		4				1	8	19	14	
Non peer-review	16			3			79	1	34			
Books						10			2			
Johnnetta B. Cole												
Peer-review	1	8		3						16	2	
Non peer-review	2			7			66		3		2	
Books				1			2					
Angela Davis												
Peer-review	27	12	13	8	2			1	2	23	5	
Non peer-review	5			7			61		4		2	
Books			1	1		3						
Beverly Guy-Sheftall												
Peer-review	1	5		5	1			3	5	8	2	
Non peer-review	1			4	1		120		12		2	
Books				1		1						
bell hooks												
Peer-review	5	9		8				3	6	17	5	
Non peer-review	2			14	1		142	2	28		26	
Books				6		8						
Gloria T. Hull												
Peer-review	5	7							4	22	6	
Non peer-review	4			1	2		73		20		4	
Books						3			1			
Audre Lorde												
Peer-review	32	23	48	3				3	2	32	4	
Non peer-review	10			2			94	7	3		21	
Books			3			2			1			
Toni Morrison												
Peer-review	3	2						1	1	11	7	
Non peer-review				3			48	1	16		15	
Books				2		13			2			
Pauli Murray												
Peer-review	5	8		1						13		
Non peer-review	3			1			16					14
Books												
Pat Parker												
Peer-review	8	2		2	1					1	2	
Non peer-review							17	3				
Books												
Patricia Bell Scott												
Peer-review	1	2		4	2			4	1	19	1	
Non peer-review				4			49	1	1		17	

Table 3. Second Wave Writers (continued)

Black Feminists	API/A	BSC	BWW	Comm St	CWI	E&GLR	GSD	GW	MLA	PIO	WoS	W&SM
Books												
Barbara Smith												
Peer-review		6			2			1	1	14	4	
Non peer-review	5						165	12	12			
Books	1					5						
Alice Walker												
Peer-review	24	18		6	2			3	3	36	7	
Non peer-review	39			22			88		23			
Books				1		1			4			
Michelle Wallace												
Peer-review	4	8		1	1				2	9	7	
Non peer-review	7			1			84		11			
Books				3		3			2			

Table 4. Pre-Third Wave Writers

Black Feminists	API/A	BSC	BWW	Comm St	CWI	E&GLR	GSD	GW	MLA	PIO	WoS	W&SM
Maya Angelou												
Peer-review	2	6						1		6	7	2
Non peer-review				3	1		35	1	1			
Books				3		1						
Gwendolyn Brooks												
Peer-review	3	7								30	5	
Non peer-review							15		4			
Books				1					2			
Octavia Butler												
Peer-review	1	7								1	3	
Non peer-review	1						17					
Books												
Patricia Hill Collins												
Peer-review	2	9		22	3			2	3	15	44	
Non peer-review				9	1		119	1	3			
Books				3		2						
Rita Dove												
Peer-review		32							1	81		
Non peer-review			145				12		4		145	
Books			4			1						
Nikki Giovanni												
Peer-review	1	7		1	1				2	9	1	
Non peer-review			329	1			28	1	3		10	
Books			8			1			1			
Rosa Guy												
Peer-review		1								1		
Non peer-review			1	1			5		1			
Books			1			1						

Table 4. Pre-Third Wave Writers (continued)

Black Feminists	API/A	BSC	BWW	Comm St	CWI	E&GLR	GSD	GW	MLA	PIO	WoS	W&SM
Trudier Harris												
Peer-review		17							13	36	4	
Non peer-review				1			24		41		5	
Books						6			11			
Jacqueline Jones												
Peer-review	1	5		2					3	24	1	
Non peer-review	3			1	2		44		3		2	
Books				1		2						
Gayl Jones												
Peer-review		18							4	19		
Non peer-review							8		1		12	
Books						2						
June Jordan												
Peer-review		11		2						38		
Non peer-review	14			3			56		4		14	
Books						3			1			
Paule Marshall												
Peer-review		5								5		
Non peer-review							10		2		2	
Books												
Deborah E. McDowell												
Peer-review		6		3					3	13	6	
Non peer-review	3			1	5		48		20		9	
Books						7			1			
Nellie McKay												
Peer-review		5		4				1	5	21	3	
Non peer-review				3	1		50		29		2	
Books						8						
Terry McMillan												
Peer-review	2	3								2	2	
Non peer-review							7		1			
Books												
Gloria Naylor												
Peer-review		2								4	6	
Non peer-review							11		5			
Books												
Sonia Sanchez												
Peer-review	26	32						1		25		
Non peer-review				2			17		6		23	
Books									1			
Ntozake Shange												
Peer-review		8							1	11		
Non peer-review							23		3		13	
Books				1								
Ann Allen Shockley												
Peer-review	5	7		2				2		24	11	
Non peer-review				5		14			4		1	
Books									1			

Table 4. Pre-Third Wave Writers (continued)

Black Feminists	API/A	BSC	BWW	Comm St	CWI	E&GLR	GSD	GW	MLA	PIO	WoS	W&SM
Valerie Smith												
Peer-review		6		2					5	8		
Non peer-review					1		31		24		2	
Books						7			2			
Hortense Spillers												
Peer-review	7	9		2				1	11	18	15	
Non peer-review	8				1		55		23		15	
Books						10			2			
Claudia Tate												
Peer-review		9		1					5	22		
Non peer-review				2			45		33		4	
Books						6			2			
Joyce Carol Thomas												
Peer-review		3							1	3		
Non peer-review				1		1			2		1	
Books												
Gloria Wade-Gayles												
Peer-review		3		1					1	12		
Non peer-review							18		3			
Books									1			
Margaret Walker												
Peer-review		10	33							27		
Non peer-review							17		2		6	
Books			1			1			1			

generate scholarly writings that were missing from this resource.

The search interface is difficult for the average searcher because the default search is full text, requiring use of the help screen to learn how to search. The help screen notes, "CWI's search interface offers the ability to apply complex search logic to a query."[19] Even the most advanced researcher would have to continually review the help screen because the options are complex. The database provides four main options for searching for writings: by article author, book author, search title and enhanced title (ST&ET), and search full text and citation (SFT&C), along with options to restrict by subject, geographic region, article, and publication type. Of the four options for searching CWI, the SFT&C option retrieved the most coverage and includes works retrieved under the other searches. Despite these specific options, the searches returned very uneven coverage of the writers in this study. The retrieved results did include thorough information on the publication, including source, publisher, subject areas, record type, word count, publication and article type, country, and language. Tables 3 and 4 show that the coverage using the article author and book author options was mixed. Since this study is specifically about coverage of the writings of these individual authors, those were the only two options listed.

Some examples of retrieved results for Maya Angelou using the article author option retrieved nothing; the book author option retrieved one book review of Angelou's writings; searching by both the ST&ET and the SFT&C options retrieved an interview transcript with Angelou. Using these same criteria for searching for works with Toni Cade Bambara, using only her last name, retrieved nothing under article author; a book review of her work was retrieved in the book author search; but the SFT&C option retrieved fifty-five results of which thirty-eight referenced her writings. CWI offers Boolean searching. For example, using the search options for Gwendolyn Brooks retrieved nothing, but using the Boolean option, "Brooks AND Gwendolyn" retrieved thirty-four titles with twenty-three of those related to the poet Gwendolyn Brooks.

Searching for works by Patricia Hill Collins retrieved four articles, all written by her, and all were peer-reviewed, although the database doesn't note this distinction; searching book author retrieved six titles, but all were reviews of Collins' works; the SFT&C option retrieved sixty-six results of writings by or about Collins, including those found in the article and book author search options. Searching for works by Barbara Smith proved even more challenging

Table 5. Complete Listing of Black Feminist Writers and Databases

Black Feminists	API/A	BSC	BWW	Comm St	CWI	E&GLR	GSD	GW	MLA	PIO	WoS	W&SM	Total	%
Maya Angelou	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	11	91.6
Toni Cade Bambara (SW)	X	X		X		X	X		X	X	X		8	66.6
Gwendolyn Brooks	X	X		X			X		X	X	X		7	58.3
Octavia Butler	X	X					X	X		X	X		6	50
Barbara Christian (SW)	X	X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X		9	75
Johnnetta B. Cole (SW)	X	X		X			X		X	X	X		7	58.3
Patricia Hill Collins	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		10	83.3
Angela Y. Davis (SW)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		11	91.6
Rita Dove		X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X		7	58.3
Nikki Giovanni	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		11	91.6
Rosa Guy		X	X	X		X	X		X	X			7	58.3
Beverly Guy-Sheftall (SW)	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		10	83.3
Trudier Harris		X		X		X	X		X	X	X		7	58.3
bell hooks (SW)	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		10	83.3
Gloria T. Hull (SW)	X	X		X		X	X		X	X	X		8	66.6
Jacqueline C. Jones	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X		9	75
Gayl Jones		X				X	X		X	X	X		6	50
June Jordan	X	X		X		X	X		X	X	X		8	66.6
Audre Lorde (SW)	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X		9	75
Paule Marshall		X					X		X	X	X		5	41.6
Deborah E. McDowell	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X		9	75
Nellie McKay		X		X	X	X	X	GW	X	X	X		9	75
Terry McMillan	X	X					X		X	X	X		6	50
Toni Morrison (SW)	X	X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X		9	75
Pauli Murray (SW)	X	X		X			X			X		X	6	50
Gloria Naylor		X					X		X	X	X		5	41.6
Pat Parker (SW)	X	X		X	X		X			X	X		7	58.3
Sonia Sanchez	X	X		X			X	X	X	X	X		8	66.6
Patricia Bell Scott (SW)	X	X		X	X		X	X	X	X	X		9	75
Ntozake Shange		X		X			X		X	X	X		6	50
Ann Allen Shockley	X	X		X			X	X	X	X	X		8	66.6
Barbara Smith (SW)	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X		9	75
Valerie Smith		X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X		8	66.6
Hortense Spillers	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		10	83.3

Table 5. Complete Listing of Black Feminist Writers and Databases (continued)

Black Feminists	API/A	BSC	BWW	Comm St	CWI	E&GLR	GSD	GW	MLA	PIO	WoS	W&SM	Total	%
Claudia Tate		X		X		X	X		X	X	X		7	58.3
Joyce Carol Thomas		X		X			X		X	X	X		6	50
Gloria Wade-Gayles		X		X			X		X	X			5	41.6
Alice Walker (SW)	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		10	83.3
Margaret Walker Alexander		X	X			X	X		X	X	X		7	58.3
Michelle Wallace (SW)	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X		9	75
TOTALS	27	40	6	33	16	26	40	17	38	40	37	2		
PERCENTAGES EACH DATABASE	67.5	100	15	75	40	65	100	42.5	95	100	92.5	5		66.4
OVERALL COVERAGE														
SECOND WAVERS COVERED	15	15	2	14	8	11	15	10	13	15	14	1	131	88.6
Pre–THIRD WAVERS COVERED	12	25	4	19	8	15	25	7	25	25	23	1	190	75.6

because of the commonness of her name. Knowledge of the preponderance of her writings on gay issues and on black women writers was essential in finding her works. Of the ten items retrieved under the book author search, seven were references to Smith's works; SFT&C retrieved twenty-six works, but discerning which were Smith's works required viewing each of the retrieved sources and reading through each article. The author Barbara Ellen Smith also writes on feminist topics and her writings were retrieved under Smith's name, and often the indexer did not include her middle name or initial.

Despite the search problems and uneven coverage of the individual black feminist writers in this survey, CWI is an importance resource because there was material on each of the individual writers, albeit from the perspective of other writers reviewing or citing their works. The inclusion of the writings of SW and pTW black feminists in this resource demonstrates the global importance of their works; they are being cited in the works of international scholars, included in major women's studies journals, and are consistently listed in bibliographies on feminist scholarship.

Essay and General Literature Review has a limited scope of coverage because its focus is only on books and anthologies. Online indexing began in 1985, thus eliminating many of the writings of both the SW and pTW writers. The retrospective of this database has just become available, so it was outside the scope of this project. The database presented some serious problems when searching using full names of the writers because the retrieved results listed only a last name and a first initial. This required reviewing all results for relevance to the individual author. For some writers, such as Michele Wallace and Barbara Smith, this database listed each of the chapters in their books as individual essays, including those books where they are the single author, thus skewing the search results.

Gender Studies Database provides a very simple search interface readily accessible on the home page. Search results are listed as short citations with links to the full records if available; often there are only citations with subject terms. Scope and indexing coverage includes every possible format. Some book records retrieved provide a table of contents. The tables only show the total citations for each author because of the peculiarities of the search mechanism. The results of an author search are a combination of works written by the author and reviews of the targeted authors' publications by other writers. This database, similar to several others, gives a total number for all of the writings, but doesn't distinguish between books, articles, or reviews. For example, a search for "Angelou, Maya" retrieved forty-four citations, but only thirty-five were actually written by her. The forty-four citations included multiple essays from the same book, some by the author but often written by another author, and the target author was listed along with the other writer of the essay, again, skewing the totals. It would

take much more time to distinguish between those items that were books, peer-reviewed and not peer-reviewed articles, especially if the search retrieved a large number of citations. In the case of bell hooks, the search retrieved 165 citations: 142 showed her as the author and twenty-three were reviews of her works. Barbara Smith posed additional problems because of the commonness of her name, although other Barbara Smiths do appear to use their middle initials. The initial search for her works retrieved 213 citations, but close examination of the list to remove false drops narrowed the citations to 165, because many of these were duplicates or books with each chapter listed as a separate citation. Although problems were encountered in searching, the results are impressive and cover virtually everything published by the writers.

GenderWatch is a full-text database that covers subjects related to how gender affects society and dates back to the 1970s. The database contains scholarly journals, magazines, newspapers, newsletters, regional publications, books, nongovernmental organizations, and government and special reports. The search interface is not on the home page, so it would be wise to look at the Search Tips before entering the search site. After entering the site, the basic search interface, similar to PIO and MLA, date range, and limits can be set for scholarly peer-reviewed journals or biographical information. For an author-specific search, the advanced search tab must be used. Results retrieved include links to the abstract and full-text articles, but very few books are retrieved. Scholarly journals, magazines, or other source material are included in the retrieved set. Another feature of this resource is an alert service that can be set up to inform the researcher when new material on a particular author is added.

For consistency of results throughout this survey, only the author-related search option was recorded to evaluate the coverage of the individual writers. Additional search options retrieved a wealth of articles about or which referenced the individual writers; this was beyond the scope of this article. The results of author searching were very disappointing considering the subject coverage scope of GW. It appears to cover the 1990s and the 2000s very well, but the 1970s to 1980s are lacking in important content, especially for many of the SW writers in this survey. Although the database states that it is a full-text resource, there were a number of searches that only retrieved an abstract.

MLA Bibliography has a comprehensive scope of coverage; the database indexes books, journals, dissertations, book articles, and websites. MLA provided the most sophisticated search interface. Either before or after an author name search, the results can be narrowed to peer-reviewed articles, language desired, genre, period, and other publication types such as book chapters, forewords, or electronic. Depending on the name searched, adding a middle initial may help focus a search or make it overly restricted. For example, searching for "Davis, Angela" retrieved nine items, six articles by the targeted author, three by other authors with the same last name but different middle initials, but searching "Davis, Angela Y." retrieved five items. The wisest choice is to do both searches, or at least to experiment with middle initials to see what results are found. Searches can be categorized by format, identifying items as book, journal article, or book article.

Periodicals Index Online only indexes journal articles. It has an easy search interface on its home page. The scope of coverage is comprehensive, including national and international journal articles. The search results include peer-reviewed articles and book reviews. The ability to filter the results retrieved by journal titles, languages, dates, or subjects helps to narrow the results to the correct author. For example, searching for "Christian, Barbara" retrieved thirty-one articles, but not all were her articles. The option of filtering the searches by language first narrowed the listing to twenty-six in English, then filtering by subject and in some cases by journal helped to narrow the listing even more. Limiting by language, however, will lose articles translated into foreign languages, as was the case with one of Christian's articles that had been republished in Italian. Filters are good if the diverse areas of a particular author's research and writings are known. There are also some further issues on using the middle initial of authors. The search for "Davis, Angela Y." retrieved ten items, but the search for "Davis, Angela" retrieved twenty-nine titles, twenty-three of which were the Davis in the study. The search would have missed thirteen additional titles had only the middle initial been used. On the other hand, a search for "Guy-Sheftall, Beverly" retrieved eight citations, and conversely, searching "Sheftall, Beverly" retrieved the same eight citations.

In **Web of Science (WoS)**, the retrieval of content is determined by the researcher bridging the steep learning curve for this resource. WoS has its genesis mapping citations to scientific papers, and that model is not suited to discovering humanities or social sciences articles. Using the Author Find tool in WoS is helpful, but the major drawback is that the search engine only allows searching by the author's last name and first and middle initial. The database provides a number of options for pinpointing writers. Options are available to limit by discipline and by university affiliation, but if the writer is not affiliated with a university, as in the case of Audre Lorde or Octavia Butler, then results must be viewed individually. If the journals are known, it is possible to limit by source, type, or publication year, but these are all imprecise. The Preferred Name format works well in searching for authors with names that are not common, such as Sonia Sanchez or Ntozake Shange, but for names such as Barbara Smith or Pat Parker, it presents serious searching problems. Both women have written extensively, so searching involves reviewing each citation for relevancy. A new feature called the Distinct Author is a discovery tool showing sets of papers possibly written by the same person. Citation data is analyzed to create these sets. This feature is best used as a tool to

focus a search rather than as a definitive list of a specific author's works.

Women and Social Movements is a series of document projects that include primary and secondary writings within each project and is published as an online journal. This Alexander Street Press resource continues to evolve from day to day, so what is seen on the home page may not be there in the future, a fact to keep in mind when using this resource. The writings include primary and secondary source materials such as photographs, poetry, court documents, newspaper articles, broadsides, and letters documenting women and social movements in the United States from 1600 to 2000. A search of writers in this study retrieved primary source documents on only Maya Angelou and the attorney Pauli Murray. Of particular interest to researchers of black feminist writers is the module included under Women's Commissions on the WSM homepage called "Second Wave" and Beyond, a free online scholarly community of feminist thinkers that will facilitate a supportive framework for online publishing and discussion of feminist activism and theories. The website provides a history of feminist activism since the 1960s and links to oral histories, discussions, reviews, images, teaching, and research resources. Discussions with the group of scholars may be useful for further developing ideas for research and scholarship.

CONCLUSIONS

This study sought to determine the coverage of writings by forty black feminist writers within the primary electronic scholarly research tools available. The findings show that access to their writings is widely available and, while there are some issues with search interfaces, the overall scope of coverage is good; in some tools, the coverage is excellent.

Despite the lack of consistent terminology for searching these resources, the databases surveyed in this study show that a majority of the SW writers are adequately covered, but the coverage of pTW writers is uneven. The more prominent writers such as Maya Angelou, Rita Dove, and Nikki Giovanni do appear frequently. However, too often many of the pTW writers such as Gwendolyn Brooks, Ntozake Shange, Margaret Walker Alexander, and Terry McMillan were missing from databases that covered literature.

Eight of the twelve databases covered fifty percent or more of the writers. Most of the resources contained a variety of formats, including articles, reviews, and books, showing the variety of subjects covered by the writers. The accessibility varied, but most of the databases provided citations with links to further information such as abstracts and tables of contents for some items, and in many cases access was provided to article full texts. Some of the difficulties of searching could be reduced if databases would add either the initial or middle name of those writers with common names so finding their writings would be much easier and more accurate. The more realistic alternative is better indexing and good name authority records. In some cases, it was difficult to determine if the citations were books, book chapters, or articles, so the numbers listed should not be used as definitive numbers for the resources, especially since all of these resources continue to add new information daily.

Tables 3, 4, and 5 offer snapshots of the possibilities for discovering the broad spectrum of writings by this group of selected black feminist writers. Based on the results of this study, a similar survey of secondary article writings about the forty black feminist writers used in this study would be of benefit to black feminist researchers. Especially for those writers that were not covered as authors in the selected databases, further research to determine if their writings are referenced, cited, or reviewed would be of interest to researchers looking for the appropriate resources. Additionally, a study comparing black, Asian, and Hispanic feminist writers may provide insight into patterns of coverage for feminist writers in standard bibliographic databases.

This study affirms the previous studies by Mesplay, Krikos, and Sanguinetti that Women Studies Abstracts, now a part of the much larger Gender Studies Database, continues to offer the best overall coverage of black feminist writers thirteen years later. There are competitors of equal importance, such as the Black Studies Center, which continues to grow in content, and Periodicals Index Online, which provides a straightforward search interface that divides the results into useful categories and dates. There are now also a number of excellent women's and feminist studies–specific resources—Black Women Writers, GenderWatch, Contemporary Women's Issues and Women and Social Movements—available to researchers interested in black feminist writers.

Despite the coverage currently available, there is a need for the development of a comprehensive resource for indexing and abstracting black feminist writers. There are models of how to develop this type of resource, such as the *European Women's Thesaurus*, which states succinctly on its introductory page why this type of resource is necessary: "With a professional thesaurus information can be made retrievable."[20] The *Women's Thesaurus*, edited by Mary Ellen S. Capek and published in 1987, is another model, but new terms such as *womanism*, *womanist*, *liberatory feminist critique*, and *African Diaspora feminism* should be added. A thesaurus that contained name authorities would be ideal because of the problems encountered searching for writers with common names where the writers does not use a middle initial, such as Barbara Smith, Valerie Smith, and Pat Parker. A name authority listing would also assist with writers such as Angela Davis and Margaret Walker, prominent writers in their own right, but there are two other writers with the same names who also write on feminist topics. The scholarly output of black feminist writers and the feminist movement in the United States in general could use an online version of a thesaurus similar to the *Canadian Feminist Thesaurus*, with links to the individual writers. The online environment is ideal for this sort of project. New technologies such as blogs, wikis, and social networks offer a variety of options for such projects. Perhaps one

of the women's studies groups in the American Library Association would be willing to take on this project. It would provide a tremendous service to the study of feminist writings in particular and feminist studies in general.

As the distinguished scholar Barbara Christian states in her essay "The Race for Theory," "I know from literary history that writing disappears unless there is a response to it."[21] While this study reveals an unevenness of coverage within some databases, it confirms that these black women writers are included in the leading databases so others can find them, cite them, and, more importantly, respond to their theories and scholarship, thereby enriching and acknowledging their important contribution to the canon of feminist studies.

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