

ABSTRACT—"Africana-Melanated Womanism for Global Human Survival? (ABSTRACT)

The first African America woman intellectual to formulate a position on Africana Womanism was Clenora Hudson-Weems, author of the 1993 groundbreaking study, *Africana Womanism: Reclaiming Ourselves*. Taking the strong position that black women should not pattern their liberation after Eurocentric feminism but after the historic and triumphant woman of African descent, Hudson-Weems has launched a new critical discourse in the Black Women's Literary Movement. (Hill, general editor, *Call and Response: The Riverside Anthology of the African American Literary Tradition* p. 1811)

For 3 decades, Africana Womanism has been operating from a family-centered perspective within a global cross-cultural and multi-disciplinary context, appropriately prioritizing race, class, gender.

Appearing in *The Western Journal of Black Studies* in 1989, "Cultural and Agenda Conflicts in Academia: Critical Issues for Africana Women's Studies" was the 1st call for Black Women to name and define themselves. *Africana Womanism: Reclaiming Ourselves* (1993) and *Africana Womanist Literary Theory* (2004) followed. The term now is Africana-Melanated Womanism, for many of diverse ethnicities, rooted in blackness, have also found this theory more compatible:

Self-Namer, Self-Definer, Family Centered, Genuine in Sisterhood, Strong, In Concert with Male in Struggle, Whole, Authentic, Flexible Role Player, Respected, Recognized, Spiritual, Male Compatible, Respectful of Elders, Adaptable, Ambitious, Nurturing and Mothering. (AW, 55-73)

In the 2004 book **Jacket Endorsement** of *Africana Womanist Literary Theory*, **Dr. Adele S. Newson-Horst** proclaims the following:

Clenora Hudson-Weems' work provides a theoretical construct that boldly restores meaning within historical and cultural contexts that are peculiar to the African and African Diasporic woman's experiences. It offers an element historically denied such women: a choice. Moreover, her application of the Africana Womanist theory to Black life and literary texts proves to be both accurate and useful as we search for appropriate theories and methodology for Africana writers.

International scholar and founder of the first African American holiday, *Kwanzaa*, **Dr. Maulana Karenga**, states in *The International Journal of Black Studies*, that Hudson-Weems is, in fact, "the founding theorist of Africana womanism [and] holds a central place in contributing to the discourse on African-centered Womanism within Black Studies and the National Council for Black Studies" (32). Expounding on the significance of the term and the concept, Afrocentric scholar, **Dr. Ama Mazama**, asserts in *Journal of Black Studies* that "the term Africana Womanist itself is the first step toward defining ourselves in setting goals that are consistent with our culture and history. In other words, it is the 1st step toward existing on our own

terms.” (400-1). Editors, **Dr. Itia Muwati, Dr. Zifikile Mguni, Tavengwa Gwekwerere, Ruby Magosvongwe** in *Rediscovering African Womanhood in the Search for Sustainable Renaissance: Africana Womanism in Multi-disciplinary Approaches*, contend that “Africana Womanism liberates the enslaved and distorted African cultural space and draws pedagogically nourishing perspectives on African womanhood and gender that can be utilized by people of African descent in their attempts to deal with challenges affecting their existence” (xvii).

In the **Foreword** to *Africana Womanist Literary Theory*, **Dr. Delores P. Aldridge**, Grace T. Hamilton Professor Emerita and Chair of Africana Studies at Emory U, asserts that “it provides an extensive and thorough understanding of the concepts, *nommo*/self-naming” and self-defining. It comes as no surprise, then that the work takes to task those who have ignored, distorted, or misappropriated all or parts of the theory that she has articulated” (xii). In its **Afterword**, **Dr. Molefi Kete Asante**, the conceptualizer of the term Afrocentricity, contends that

Perhaps one of the most important challenges facing Africana Womanism is keeping clever writers from siphoning off ideas and then claiming that those ideas really belong to feminism or to some other Western construction. What has usually happened is that those writers have found the Afrocentric ideas and concepts developed in Hudson-Weems’ Africana Womanism significant and, therefore, have sought to appropriate them without proper attribution because they do not want to admit that their concepts were first conceived in the writings of the Africana Womanism school (138).