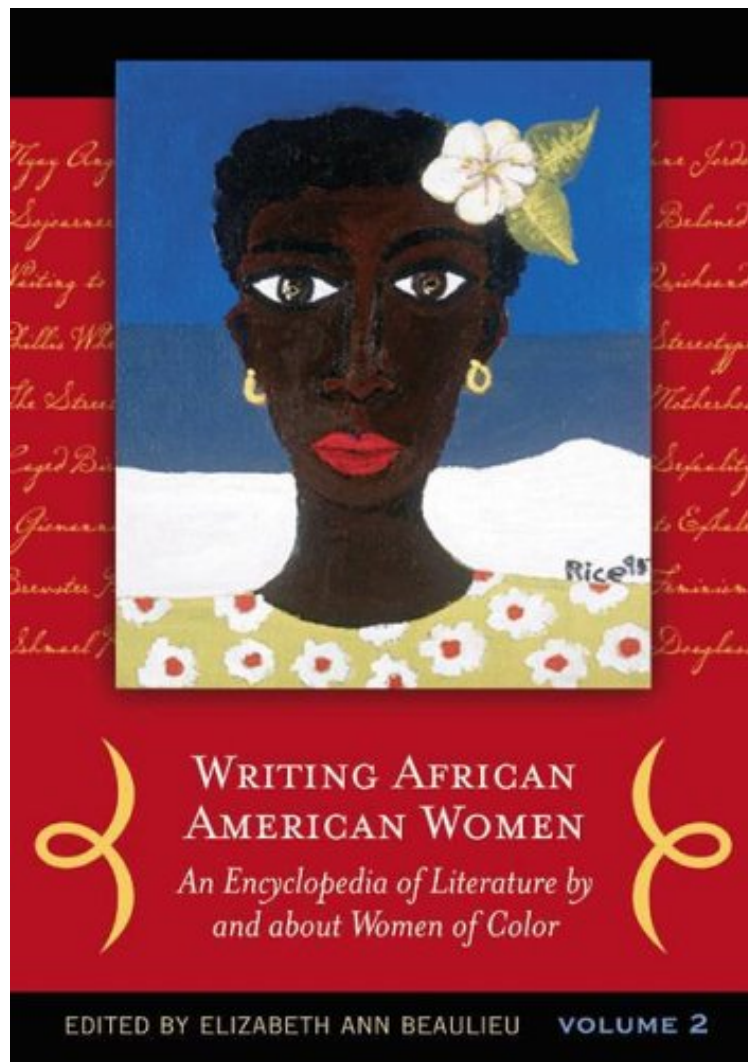


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Elizabeth A. Beaulieu

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Elizabeth A. Beaulieu : Writing African American Women [2 volumes]: An Encyclopedia of Literature by and about Women of Color before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Writing African American Women [2 volumes]: An Encyclopedia of Literature by and about Women of Color:

Women have had a complex experience in African American culture. The first work of its kind, this encyclopedia

approaches African American literature from a Women's Studies perspective. While Yolanda Williams Page's *Encyclopedia of African American Women Writers* provides biographical entries on more than 150 literary figures, this book is much broader in scope. Included are several hundred alphabetically arranged entries on African American women writers, as well as on male writers who have treated women in their works. Entries on genres, periods, themes, characters, historical events, texts, places, and other topics are included as well. Each entry is written by an expert contributor and relates its subject to the overall experience of women in African American literature. Entries cite works for further reading, and the encyclopedia closes with a selected, general bibliography. African American culture is enormously diverse, and the experience of women in African American society is especially complex. Women were among the first African American writers, and works by black women writers are popular among students and general readers alike. At the same time, African American women have been oppressed, and texts by black male authors represent women in a variety of ways. The first of its kind, this encyclopedia approaches African American literature from a Women's Studies perspective, and thus significantly illuminates the African American cultural experience through literary works. Included are several hundred alphabetically arranged entries, written by numerous expert contributors. In addition to covering male and female African American authors, the encyclopedia also discusses themes, major works and characters, genres, periods, historical events, places, and other topics. Included are entries on such authors as: ; Maya Angelou ; James Baldwin ; Frederick Douglass ; Nikki Giovanni ; June Jordan ; Claude McKay ; Ishmael Reed ; Sojourner Truth ; Phillis Wheatley ; And many others. In addition, the many works discussed include: ; *Beloved* ; *Blanche on the Lam* ; *I know Why the Caged Bird Sings* ; *The Men of Brewster Place* ; *Quicksand* ; *The Street* ; *Waiting to Exhale* ; And many more. The many topical entries cover: ; Black Feminism ; Black Nationalism ; Conjuring ; Children's and Young Adult Literature ; Detective Fiction ; Epistolary Novel ; Motherhood ; Sexuality ; Spirituality ; Stereotypes ; And many others. Entries relate their topics to the experience of African American women and cite works for further reading. Features and Benefits: ; Includes hundreds of alphabetically arranged entries. ; Draws on the work of numerous expert contributors. ; Includes a selected, general bibliography. ; Offers a range of finding aids, such as a list of entries, a guide to related topics, and an extensive index. ; Supports the literature curriculum by helping students analyze major writers and works. ; Supports the social studies curriculum by helping students use literature to understand the experience of African American women. ; Covers the full chronological range of African American literature. ; Fosters a respect for cultural diversity. ; Develops research skills by directing students to additional sources of information. ; Builds bridges between African American history, literature, and Women's Studies.

From School Library Journal Grade 10 Up A collection consisting of essays with an acknowledged feminist/womanist perspective. It also contains biographies of those male writers who have dealt with themes from feminist perspectives, as well as important works, movements, periods, genres, and events relevant to the literature. Each author profile is followed by a list of selected works by and about the subject. Unfortunately, there are no illustrations. The first volume provides lists of the entries in both thematic and alphabetical order. The essays, which include cross-references in bold print, are by a variety of literary critics and experts, particularly African-American women. Although several of the authors are identified as writers of literature for children and young adults, not all are. For example, the poet Lucille Clifton's *Everett Anderson* series is neither discussed in the section about her nor listed in the bibliography of her work. The second volume includes a listing of the contributors' credentials and a brief time line of significant literary events, with bold entries indicating African-American firsts. A clearly written, accessible resource. Linda Greengrass, Bank Street College Library, New York City Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. Following closely on the heels of the five-volume *Greenwood Encyclopedia of African American Literature* (2005), this set not only overlaps the coverage of that work but also strongly resembles it in outward appearance and format. Beaulieu, who also edited *The Toni Morrison Encyclopedia* (2003), concentrates on writings by black women from the antebellum period to the present, noting that *Writing African American Women* is the first reference work to focus "specifically on feminist and womanist approaches to African American literature." Contributed primarily by scholars from U.S. academic institutions, the 379 alphabetically arranged articles cover authors, significant works, themes, and other topics. Although most of the writers featured are black women, a number of prominent black men, such as Frederick Douglass and Richard Wright, are also included. With the exception of the 16-page overview article *Literature*,^B entries generally range in length from 1 to 6 pages, and most include cross-references and selective bibliographies. Prefacing the entry portion of each volume are alphabetical and thematic lists of entries. Unfortunately, the thematic list omits a large number of the entries in the encyclopedia. For instance, there is no category identifying individual works treated (e.g., *Our Nig*, *Sula*); no representation of articles on specific stereotypes (e.g., Aunt Jemima, Jezebel); and no listings for political and literary movements (e.g., Civil rights movement, Harlem Renaissance). Concluding the set are a brief chronology of major milestones in the history of African American women's writing, a general bibliography, a detailed index, and a directory of contributors. Although this set differs in focus, approach, and perspective, it duplicates a considerable amount of information in the aforementioned *Greenwood Encyclopedia of African American Literature*. Only 16 of the writers in the current set are

not featured in the earlier one, and both works include articles on topics such as autobiography, epistolary novel, and slave narrative. On the other hand, the earlier set does not contain entries for individual titles, nor does it include entries on motherhood, rape, and a number of other subjects critical to the understanding of black women's writings. Although it is flawed by the incomplete thematic list, this work is an important contribution to the study of African American literature by and about women. Its well-written articles are appropriate for students, scholars, and general readers, and it will be especially valuable in larger public libraries and in academic libraries that support programs in women's studies and African American studies. Marie Ellis

Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved "This encyclopedia presents 400 articles that treat African American women writers from the 18th century forward, their works and themes, and a handful of male authors as well. Contributors look at the writers and their works from a feminist-womanist perspective, and address issues relating to race, class, and gender. Topical entries, e.g., Work, Protest Tradition, Religion, The Use of Myth, and Memory, provide a rich context for the literature. Most entries include a brief bibliography of primary and secondary sources. The encyclopedia is thoroughly cross-referenced, and includes an alphabetical and thematic list of entries, a literary time line, and a selected bibliography of book-length studies on African American literature from a feminist perspective.[t]his encyclopedia provides interested browsers with discoveries and new ideas, and scholars with details that might otherwise be difficult to track down. Recommended. Large public libraries, schools, and all academic libraries supporting lower-division undergraduates through faculty/researchers; general readers." - Choice

"The work of over 100 academic contributors, this A-to-Z encyclopedia, in the words of editor Beaulieu, is the first to focus specifically on feminist and womanist approaches to African American literature. The approximately 400 entries cover writers (e.g., Octavia Butler, Angela Jackson, Pauli Murray), written works (e.g., *Beloved*, *Kindred*, *Mama Day*), and themes addressed in writings of interest to an understanding of African American women and their depiction in literature (e.g., beauty, film, slavery). A time line, bibliography, and comprehensive index, as well as contributor bios, all help make this encyclopedia accessible to students at high school level and above. Generous cross-referencing further enhances its usefulness as a research tool. Recommended for all public and university libraries." - Library Journal

"This two-volume set consists of entries related to literature by and about African American women, with a focus on feminist and womanist approaches by writers of fiction, nonfiction, drama, and poetry. Meant to contribute to the ongoing transformation of the American literary canon, the encyclopedia includes 400 entries appropriate for scholars, high school and college students, and general readers. A sampling of writers: Phyllis Wheatley, Zora Neale Hurston, Suzan Lori Parks, Toni Morrison, Alice Walker, Mae Cowdery, and Kate Drumgoold. Children's authors, political pamphleteers, and journalists are included, as well as some male writers who address themes from feminist or womanist perspectives, like Ralph Ellison and Frederick Douglass. Biographical entries encompass analyses and a selective works list, and works and thematic articles are included, covering topics such as race, stereotypes, motherhood, sexuality, slavery, violence, masculinity, black feminist criticism, and the South." - Reference Research Book News

"This two-volume A-to-Z encyclopedia, the first of its kind, embraces the writings of African American women through the benefaction of over 100 academic contributors, bringing to light the rich textures and vibrant motifs that have come to define the work of African American women writers. This two-volume set is a valuable, if not indispensable, addition to any research institution or public library. It may well find its home in academic departments interested in women's or cultural studies, anthropology, history, and of course African American studies. Like its contributors, this work is representative of a nation of women writers and their legacy to American literature. *Writing African American Women* should be considered a foundational source for the study of writings by and about women of color, as well as a starting point for further academic pursuits in the study of African American culture." - Feminist Collections

"[T]his work is an important contribution to the study of African American literature by and about women. Its well-written articles are appropriate for students, scholars, and general readers, and it will be especially valuable in larger public libraries and in academic libraries that support programs in Women's Studies and African American Studies." - Booklist/Reference Books Bulletin

"The scope of this two-volume encyclopedia makes it a welcome addition to scholarship about African-American women writers. Of the approximately 400 entries, 225 examine the lives and work of individual African-American women writers, ranging in time from the colonial period to contemporary emerging authors. The work ends with time line listing major literary achievements of African-American women, followed by a selected bibliography of secondary sources. The length and introductory lists of topics make this work usable as a very browsable reader's guide. This encyclopedia is essential for college libraries, and recommended for high school and public libraries." - MultiCultural

"A collection consisting of essays with an acknowledged feminist/womanist perspective. It also contains biographies of those male writers who have dealt with themes from feminist perspectives, as well as important works, movements, periods, genres, and events relevant to the literature. Each author profile is followed by a list of selected works by and about the subject. A clearly written, accessible resource." - School Library Journal

"The 378 essays of this encyclopedia explore the portrayal of African American women in American literature. The result is a guide that opens the mosaic of African American literature for students and the general reader. This set will serve a wide audience in both public and academic libraries." - Lawrence Looks At Books