

# Response: Womanist Work in a Time of Pandemic

Damaris Parsitau

Even as she rests in power, Katie Geneva Cannon's legacy continues to be central to women's struggles as well as to the resistance against these struggles. Through an intentional centring of Recognition, Resistance and Rest, the authors in this special issue focus on the experiences of Black women in academic and religious spaces. I find this special issue methodologically, theoretically and thematically grounded. More importantly, I think this special issue comes at a time when we are required to intentionally reflect on the COVID-19 pandemic – an ongoing crisis that has had an unprecedented impact on all our lives. The pandemic has, once again, brought attention to the pre-existing and now exacerbated struggles of Black women as they are choked by non-biomedical pandemics including rampant white privilege and racism, inequalities in knowledge production and publishing, sexism and gendered violence. This special issue engages these persistent, varied and interlocking racial and gendered oppressions and allows readers to reimagine and rethink the various ways that women experience and engage them in the academy, ministry and society. In this way it offers us tools to think through how we might continue to resist, even as we seek rest from 'our struggles.' My response in this paper focuses particularly on the contribution this special issue makes as the COVID-19 pandemic further shapes and transforms our world.

## Restlessness of Pandemic

Although the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic began to sweep across the world in early 2020, observers are just now beginning to unravel its devastating social impact on the most vulnerable members of society. While it has had an unprecedented impact on almost every country and community around the world, not everyone has been affected in the same way. Women have borne the social, economic, political and gendered brunt of its consequences.

---

**Damaris Parsitau** is Associate Professor of Religion and Gender Studies at Egerton University in Kenya and the current President of the African Association for the study of Religion (AASR).