

3-25-2016

"The Afro that Ate Kentucky": Appalachian Racial Formation, Lived Experience, and Intersectional Feminist Interventions

Sandra Louise Carpenter
University of South Florida, sandra35@mail.usf.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/etd>



Part of the [Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Commons](#), and the [Other International and Area Studies Commons](#)

Scholar Commons Citation

Carpenter, Sandra Louise, ""The Afro that Ate Kentucky": Appalachian Racial Formation, Lived Experience, and Intersectional Feminist Interventions" (2016). *USF Tampa Graduate Theses and Dissertations*. <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/etd/6200>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the USF Graduate Theses and Dissertations at Digital Commons @ University of South Florida. It has been accepted for inclusion in USF Tampa Graduate Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ University of South Florida. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@usf.edu.

“The Afro that Ate Kentucky”: Appalachian Racial Formation, Lived Experience, and
Intersectional Feminist Interventions

by

Sandra L. Carpenter

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
Department of Women’s and Gender Studies
College of Arts and Sciences
University of South Florida

Major Professor: David Rubin Ph.D.
Diane Price-Herndl Ph.D.
Aisha Durham Ph.D.

Date of Approval:
March 22, 2016

Keywords: Intersectionality, Appalachia, Affrilachian Poetry, Autoethnography

Copyright © 2016: Sandra L. Carpenter

Table of Contents

Abstract	iii
Chapter One	1
Introduction	1
Theoretical Framework	1
Literature Review	5
Appalachian Environmentalism	6
Appalachian Socialism	7
Poetry is Political	9
Chapter Overview	10
Chapter Two – Belonging in Movement: Appalachian Racial Formation, White Flight, and Lived Experience	12
Introduction	12
Methods	14
Racial Formation and White Flight	15
Racialization and Moving to Kentucky	17
Deciding to Write—Deciding to Live	19
Racialized Appalachians	21
Journeying Home	24
Final Thoughts	27
Chapter Three – “The Afro that Ate Kentucky”: Affrilachian Poetry, Racial Formation, and Intersectional Feminism	29
Introduction	29
Background	30
Poetry as Feminism	37
Method	38
Analysis	39
Final Thoughts	47
Chapter Four	49
Conclusion	49
Works Cited	50

List of Figures

Figure 1: Frankfort OH, Fourth and Fifth Grade	26
Figure 2: Wittensville, KY: Fifth and Sixth Grade	26
Figure 3: Chillicothe, OH: Sixth and Seventh Grade	27

Abstract

This thesis examines selections of Appalachian women's personal narrative as well as Appalachian Poetry written by Kentuckians Bianca Spriggs and Nikki Finney. This project's goal lies in resisting oppression and erasure of Appalachian culture's heterogeneity. Contrary to constructions of Appalachians as lazy, complacent, and white, many Appalachians organize communities of resistance from within the region itself. Challenging these representations, I argue that Appalachian feminists as well as Appalachian poets create countercultures that disrupt monolithic, colonialist, and unquestioned constructions of Appalachia.

Chapter One

Introduction

It is no secret that Appalachian identities are constructed in popular media as biologically inferior and ethnically Other, with images of run-down trailers, abandoned vehicles in overgrown foothills, and redneck stereotypes all contributing to a homogenous construction of Appalachian culture. For those who deploy this homogenizing discourse, there is absolute impunity for the use of derogatory Appalachian stereotypes. Constructing Appalachian people as *bad* – poor and racist – reinforces the shame surrounding the region, suggesting that “these people get what they deserve” and are justifiably contemptible (Billings 15). In recent years, scholars from various disciplines have begun to challenge monolithic and reductive representations of Appalachian life and subjectivity. However, in the fields of cultural studies, Appalachian studies, and feminist studies, significant attention has not yet been paid to the ways in which women, people of color, and poor folks in Appalachia create their own feminist and anti-racist consciousness. Scholars who do examine feminism in Appalachia generally typify it as either relating to Appalachian socialism or Appalachian environmentalism (Engelhardt 17). Further, those who examine racial formation in Appalachia construct discourses of “Black invisibility” both within the region and in dominant discourse (Cabbell 4). By examining memoirs by bell hooks and Dorothy Allison alongside my own autoethnography in Chapter One, and selected Appalachian poetry in Chapter Two, this thesis answers the call for a more nuanced analysis of Appalachian culture. Using the tools of feminist cultural critique, I contend that Appalachian memoirs and Appalachian poetry

reveal cultures and discourses that disrupt dominant constructions of gender, region, and race as well as mark situated Appalachian and Affrilachian feminisms.

Theoretical Framework(s)

This project works to denaturalize common sense ideas of race, gender, and region. By doing so, I aim to situate a particular kind of intersectional feminism that emerges out of Appalachia, specifically a feminism that calls into question and transforms modernist notions of individual choice, agency, and standpoint. Thus, this project works with black feminist standpoint epistemology and alludes to theories of third space feminisms, or feminisms that work from knowledges situated in borderlands, contradictory and paradoxical spaces wherein “a dialectic of doubling” undercuts the notions of essentialized racial and gender identities (Perez 57). Black feminist epistemologies, then, engage standpoint theory to legitimate subjugated knowledges in a way that contextualizes the lived experiences of women of color. For instance, in “Black Feminist Epistemology,” Patricia Hill Collins frames “Black feminist thought as situated in a context of domination and not a system of ideas divorced from political and economic reality” (252). I also work from Gloria Anzaldúa’s theorizations of borderlands. Writing *Borderlands/La Frontera* allowed Anzaldúa to illustrate how one can hold “multiple social perspectives while simultaneously maintaining a center that revolves around fighting against concrete material forms of oppression” (7). In other words, Anzaldúa aims to privilege ways of knowing that center the ambiguity and contradictions of all social existence. Appalachian and Affrilachian writers and poets similarly forge a connection between subjugated knowledges and experiences of oppression and the realities of the social lives that structure and are shaped by oppression.

Further, emotional epistemology informs this project in terms of the discussions of survival throughout the various narratives that I analyze. In response to a masculinist, imperialist legitimation of knowledge, Allison Jaggar argues in “Love and Knowledge: Emotion in Feminist Epistemology” that “few challenges have been raised thus far to the purported gap between emotion and knowledge . . . I wish to begin bridging this gap through the suggestion that emotions may be helpful and even necessary . . . to the construction of knowledge” (379). In an attempt to work from a decolonizing theoretical framework, emotions play a large part in contributing to a feminist construction of knowledge. Additionally, Maria Lugones’s notions of “‘world’ travelling” will guide the analyses in and through places of being as opposed to places of belonging, or being “at ease” in a world, characterized by being a fluent speaker of shared cultural and linguistic languages, normatively happy in the environment by way of generally agreeing with the cultural norms, human bonding—“I am with those I love and they love me too,” as well as a shared lived experiences and cultural histories with other folks within that world (12). Lugones’s theories of borderlands are not only appropriate due to the migrant nature of belonging the worlds lend themselves to, but also to interrogate the situatedness of Appalachian racial minorities within a cultural minority.

I will also be working with feminist cultural theory to draw parallels between the shift in cultural studies—from examining a seemingly genderless culture to integrating feminist theoretical approaches—and my project aims to shift the conversation about Appalachia as a homogenous region. In “Feminism and Cultural Studies: Pasts, Presents, Futures.” Celia Lury, Sarah Franklin, and Jackie Stacey discuss the call to integrate feminist theory within cultural theory itself:

If . . . the category ‘women’ is not made an integral part of any investigation, then questions of gender can only be ‘added in’ to cultural studies. I will suggest that this does not mean that we should abandon attempts to theorize the cultural.

(Although, in my view, this might best be attempted in terms of middle-range, historically sensitive, theories, rather than as a grand theory.) This, I believe, will allow an exploration of not only the historical constitution of the cultural, but also its changing relationship with the social, and with categories such as ‘women,’ ‘race’ and ‘class.’ (35)

Cultural theory, then, opens up possibilities for exploring the evolving and intersectional relationships between gender, race, region, and class to systems of power or spheres of culture more generally. Feminism’s interruption of cultural studies is one Stuart Hall describes as covert, but creating an obvious shift: “as the thief in the night, it broke in; interrupted, made an unseemly noise, seized the time, crapped on the table of cultural studies” (40). Much like feminism’s intervention in cultural studies, my project aims to intervene in feminist studies as well as rural studies in such a way that not only makes these cultures of Appalachia visible, but also reworks accepted disciplinary ways of knowing them. Thus, I wish to use cultural studies’ theories of power and representation to inform not only my analysis of the texts themselves, but also my discussion about the discourse surrounding Appalachian cultures. By interrogating intersectional feminism situated within the Appalachian region, this project contributes to the theoretical shift in rural (and Appalachian) studies analyses of gender as well as cultural studies’ movement towards intersectionality and privileging the local.

Literature Review

Rural studies scholars have only recently begun to interrogate the place of gender in constructions of the rural. When examining rurality, Jo Little in “The Development of Feminist Perspectives in Rural Gender Studies” suggests that the few analyses of gender and rurality were limited to women’s roles in agriculture, sacrificing their potentialities for careers and other personal ambitions (109). Due to the difficulty for feminist studies to establish legitimacy in academic institutions, early feminist interrogations of gender involved largely urban and political spheres (Little 108). These studies, however, were not intentionally applying a feminist framework to the study of rural peoples: “rural gender research was initially criticized for its overly descriptive focus on women’s lives and lack of attention to the underlying power relations shaping the relational nature of gender inequality” (108). The lack of feminist engagement with the connections between the lived realities of rural women to larger structures of power, then, prevented feminist scholars from examining the “multiplicity of gendered experience in the rural” (Little 109). Appalachian women’s experiences, however, constitute a rich site from which to examine these multiplicities of experiencing gender and power within the rural.

Most Appalachian studies scholarship examines activism and feminism as responses to harsh economic and environmental conditions. Scholars therefore tend to situate Appalachian activism and feminism within the broad categories of Appalachian environmentalism and Appalachian socialist feminism. In *Fighting Back in Appalachia: Traditions of Resistance and Change*, Stephen Fisher argues that the drive to resist under harsh economic and environmental conditions creates cultures of activism among anarchist hillbillies: “responses to these conditions often assumed forms far less visible than picket lines and organized movements and included such individual acts of behavior as gossip, back talk, holding on to one’s dialect, refusal to

cooperate with outside authority figures, and migration,” (Fisher 246). Fisher identifies daily life as an important but often overlooked site of political struggle. She suggests that more nuanced conceptualizations of activism and resistance are needed in order to account for the diverse and dynamic modes of political articulation that Appalachians perform. The primary texts I analyze in this project at once embody these more nuanced forms of activism and resistance and challenge scholars to more carefully attend to the role of gendered, classed, and racialized conditions simultaneously.

Appalachian Environmentalism:

Some scholars suggest that the most prominent activism emerging out of Appalachia is that most closely related to environmentalism. In her book *The Tangled Roots of Feminism, Environmentalism, and Appalachian Literature*, Elizabeth Engelhardt embarks on a project similar to mine, examining the “tangled roots” of environmentalism and feminism within Appalachian women’s literature. Engelhardt suggests that looking at how women reacted to environmental injustice at the turn of the 20th century can be useful in understanding continuing efforts to contest mountaintop removal and exploitive coal mining: “Appalachia’s women writers and activists from the turn of the *past* century defined a philosophy of living that can help address social and environmental justice issues at the turn of *this* century” (2). Foregrounding the centrality of women’s voices to environmental discourse in “Stopping the Bulldozers: What Difference Did it Make?” Mary Beth Bingman documents conversations of activists who fought against mountaintop removal, one woman’s narration proving particularly poignant:

The hills they were stripping was people’s livelihood. And you know Grandpa hoed and raised corn on those hillsides, and we helped; and after they got started, there was nothing there but gullies and mudslides . . . You know, it destroyed the

wildlife, too. You couldn't see a bird around those big strip operations, you could not see one speck of life. (19)

This narrative points to the interconnectedness of the land and Appalachian folks' well-being. It also highlights how gendered relations of kinship shape the meanings ascribed to changing environmental and economic conditions. While Engelhardt's interpretation of this narrative illustrates a rich history of Appalachian struggles to protect the mountains from strip mining/mountaintop removal, she obscures the role of racial formation in these struggles and in the making of Appalachia as a contested space more broadly. To more fully account for Appalachia as a site of contestation, I argue that we also need to study contemporary black-led literary movements such as Affrilachian poetry and racialized Appalachian narratives that situate race, gender, and class in intersectional terms.

Appalachian Socialism:

Another prominent theme that emerges in Appalachian literature regarding social activism is socialism, or activism that foregrounds economic and class struggle. More specifically, Appalachian women played a large role in labor organizations' fight for safe working conditions and fair wages within the Appalachian coalmines. Virginia Rinaldo Sietz dissects the role women play in a way that alludes to feminist standpoint theory in terms of gender and class in "Class, Gender, and Resistance in the Appalachian Coalfields": "In this historically specific moment and setting, these mostly white, working-class women constructed an understanding of class struggle from their particular standpoint as Appalachian women" (213). Because most Appalachian women's narratives reflect gendered and classed experiences, their particular standpoints position them in a space from which they can more clearly see their own cultures in relation to more dominant ones. Sietz examines Appalachian gendered

experience in a way that identifies class struggles as a predominant influence shaping Appalachian women's consciousness and, consequently, their activism.

Sietz goes on to discuss women's role specifically in waging a strike against a Pennsylvania coal company, leading the Pittston Coal Strike. Women who were part of the United Mineworkers of America (UMWA) drew from their experiences with class, gender, and ethnic oppression to wage this successful strike against a powerful company. What's interesting here is how Seitz draws a unique connection between white Appalachians as ethnic minorities and the construction of biologically inferior castes more generally:

In these mountains, the ascription of negative characteristics to poor and working-class 'Appalachian' people, historically couched in the subtext of biological inferiority, is reminiscent of the racist rhetoric used in communities where greater racial diversity brings racism to the forefront of identity and of discursive and political practices. (214)

Sietz illustrates how Appalachian women's activism converges with labor movements in a way that figures socialist feminism as being most closely linked to an Appalachian feminist consciousness; however, this perspective is limited in its understanding of the role of racialization in Appalachian culture and gender relations. While I find Sietz's parallel between biological inferiority within discourse surrounding Appalachians and racial minorities to be useful, I challenge the notion that racism is in the forefront any identity category. Michael Omi and Howard Winant's frameworks of racialization and colorblindness developed in *Racial Formation in the United States* illustrate directly refute this notion. Neoliberal US economic, political, and identity formations are all moving towards a discursive construction of colorblindness where race and subsequently racism are not at the forefront of identity categories

(Omi & Winant). Colorblindness contributes to a discourse that suggests that racialized oppression does not exist or that our current cultural and political climates have made so much progress that racism and race no longer exist. This discourse places individuals as accountable for their own experiences of oppression rather than examining structural influences. I, on the other hand, situate this project in direct relationship to structures of power that create racialized experiences. I will use ethnicity in much the same manner as Omi and Winant, arguing that Appalachian identity is an ethnic minority, using the term ethnicity to refer to shared values, norms, and practices used by racialized subjects. Racialized subjectivity is formed through the othering of certain “types” of people. It includes iterations of whiteness as well as invisible cultures of blackness emerging out of Appalachia (Omi & Winant).

Poetry is Political:

In “The Poetical is Political,” T. V. Reed discusses how poetry serves a political function, especially for women and women of color: “Poetry is particularly well equipped to challenge two crucial dichotomies: the separation of private and public spheres, and the split between ‘emotion’ and ‘intellect’” (89). Here, Reed illustrates the notion that poetry can serve as a political project of shifting ideas of legitimated knowledge by challenging masculinist notions of intellect and rationality. Reed further details poetry’s utility as a genre for and by women and women of color:

Poetry can be done between shifts, in the hospital pantry, on the subway, on scraps of surplus paper . . . As we reclaim our literature, poetry has been a major voice of poor, working class [women], and [women of color]. (90)

Drawing a parallel between the function of early consciousness-raising groups and the accessibility of poetry, Reed points out not only the time efficiency of creating poetry, but also

the materiality of its accessibility. Thus, poetry is an accessible tool for women and especially women of color to use to produce subversive knowledges and to affect political change.

Chapter Overview

Feminist understandings of gender and race make the connection between these narratives and larger structures of power clear. Appalachia as a culturally minoritized space, then, becomes a rich site from which to challenge and resist dominant iterations of gender, race, and class within the United States. My own classed experiences of Appalachian migration paired with close readings of hooks and Allison's narratives of (un)belonging complements a feminist cultural analysis of Appalachian poetry in such a way that demonstrates the heterogeneity of the region. Thus, this project considers Appalachian women's narratives of belonging and home as legitimated standpoints from which to analyze cultural phenomena of racialization, existing on and within borderlands, and Appalachian feminist resistance.

In chapter one of this project, I draw from auto-ethnographic research on my role as a white, poor, queer woman in both rural and urban settings in the U.S. Eastern Kentucky and Ohio Valley regions to analyze Appalachian and Appalachian narratives of home. Ultimately, I use my experiences with popular feminist representations to disrupt the "white flight" narrative with support from critical race and feminist scholars. My story, paired with an analysis of bell hooks' and Dorothy Allison's personal narratives, applies a systems approach—"a structural view of racism that enables us to see the connections between seemingly independent opportunity structures" (Kirwan Institute, 2013, n.p.)—to the phenomena of racial migration in the United States, illustrating that folks navigate the neoliberal white supremacist capitalist (hetero) patriarchy in such situated ways that we are simultaneously complicit to it as well as victims of it. In this sense, Appalachian narratives of belonging become our resistance, our

epistemology, our outsider narratives within systems that both benefit us as well as erase us (Hill Collins 310).

Chapter two builds on chapter one's analyses of Appalachian culture not only by exploring themes of home and belonging in Appalachian narratives, but also illuminating the situated kinds of feminism that emerge out of Affrilachian experiences as a racial minority within a cultural minority. Affrilachian poetry becomes a rich text from which to analyze Appalachian culture and, more specifically, the intersectional nature of Appalachian feminism. Poems selected from Bianca Sprigg's *Kaffir Lily* illustrate the connection between the embodied feminine experiences and pleasure, power, and region. Nikki Finney's selections, then, explore the connection between femininity and the creation of black Appalachian cultures of care in Appalachia. Focusing on two poems by Affrilachian women poets, I explicate the certain kinds of feminist consciousness that emerge out of the region, using these poems as lenses through which to rethink Appalachian culture.

Chapter Two

Belonging in Movement: Appalachian Racial Formation, White Flight, and Lived Experience

I feel like there is a nation of us—displaced southerners and children of the working class. We listen to Steve Earle, Mary J. Blige, and k.d. lang. We devour paperback novels and tell evil mean stories, value stubbornness above patience and a sense of humor more than a college education. We claim our heritage with a full appreciation of how often it has been distained.

And let me promise you, you do not want to make us angry. (Allison 27)

Introduction

My story is one full of contradictions, the past often paying a visit to my present when I come across folks who sound like home: with a certain down-to-earthedness that reminds me of my mother who never met a stranger or of my Nana whose mantra was “Well where yuh been?” But my mother stole cars and never paid the bills and my Nana was actually of no blood relation to me. Until recently, I thought of my family as being part of what Dorothy Allison refers to as the good poor: “The good poor were hardworking, ragged but clean, and intrinsically honorable” (2). But memories have a funny way of wafting back into consciousness. Like watching a childhood movie after growing up, I finally began to pick up on the punch lines of our poverty. I never questioned my mother when she painted our old Buick with house paint and moved us to Kentucky. I naively assumed that we couldn’t afford car paint rather than thinking my mom was disguising the car and skipping the state to avoid repossession. Our final home count before my

mother, my sister, and I split paths was 25 different houses/trailers/apartments and 17 different schools clustered in and around the Ohio valley. Moving from place to place, the three of us made home where we could find it and forged integrity into a life marked with shame.

I always knew we were poor, but it wasn't until we moved to Kentucky that I was able to see myself as a racialized subject. When in Ohio, my sister and I attended some city schools (coded in southern Ohio as poor and black) and mom would sometimes take us to predominantly Black churches because she felt more at home there. I don't know enough about my mom to explain why she, as a white woman, felt such a deep connection to most things marked black. What I do know, though, is that trying to qualify the swing in her hips when she sang to the sink full of dishes or her bittersweet cry of "Oooh child things are going to get easier," feels almost sacrilegious. Like the Bible on our coffee table that no one ever read, you don't question it; it was just there. These small things—the Bible, mom's shoulder towel, her worn out Tina Turner album—were all things that kept us safe in our homes. When you move around so frequently, comfort becomes a luxury you can't afford and safety resides in maintaining a familiar connection to the few things you take along.

Growing up in a constant state of motion situated me in a place between trying to belong where I was and yearning for the familiarity of where I had been. This ambivalence would travel with me as I entered the university to study social justice and literature. Trying to both earn my spot in academia while also navigating home's rough terrain led me to seek out stories of women who'd somehow reconciled their Appalachian identities with their investments in larger social justice and scholarly projects. My story, paired with an analysis of bell hooks and Dorothy Allison's personal narratives, takes a systems approach—"a structural view of racism that enables us to see the connections between seemingly independent opportunity structures"

(Kirwan Institute)—to the phenomena of white flight in the United States, illustrating that Appalachians navigate the neoliberal white supremacist capitalist (hetero) patriarchy in such situated ways that we are simultaneously complicit to it as well as victims of it. In this sense, Appalachian narratives of belonging become our resistance, our epistemology, our outsider narratives within systems that both benefit us well as erase us.

Methods

I employ a combination of practices to provide both a situated context for white flight as well as an intersectional feminist textual analysis of narratives of home. In order to avoid homogenizing Appalachian folks, I analyze narratives of authors who identify as feminist, are racially and geographically diverse, and vary in their stories' emphases on class and race-based experience. I look at accounts such as bell hooks's narrative of "Kentucky is My Fate" and Dorothy Allison's *Trash* to provide racialized and classed narratives of Appalachian belonging different than my own. I then draw from my own epiphanic moments of racial visibility living in both rural, predominantly white, Appalachian settings and urban, more racially diverse, cities in the Ohio Valley.

I trace my experiences using feminist autoethnography to disrupt the white flight narrative and move toward diversity and antiracism. Feminist autoethnography is an especially appropriate method for this project because it explicitly connects the personal to the political by way of displaying multiple layers of consciousnesses (Ellis 37). This display illustrates a connection between the more traditionally academic analyses and the embodied lived experiences of queerness, fatness, poverty, and racialized Appalachian identity – identities about which feminist scholars often theorize and that this project will materialize. Additionally, autoethnographers often incite emotion to inspire action and "use narrative as a source of

empowerment and a form of resistance to canonical discourses (Ellis 121). I often find myself critical of the distance between many researchers and their subjects, especially when claims to objectivity and rationality are made; thus, I aim to disrupt the notion that the personal cannot be academic by materializing my experience in such a way that illustrates that my epistemology as a scholar consists of both.

I elect to layer these practices in order to provide both an Appalachian narrative of home that disrupts the homogenized narratives of white poverty and political conservatism as well as to critique academic and popular narratives of urban renewal that inherently promote post-racial and neoliberal ideologies. Due to the scope of this current project, I am focusing solely on textual analysis; however, there is more to be said about feminist and anti-racist activism in Appalachia. Analyzing personal narrative, then, requires contextualization and an understanding of the situated experiences of the author. Thus, I analyze hooks' and Allison's disclosed positionalities as well as the processes of producing their narratives and the impetus to write itself.

Racial Formation & White Flight

In *Racial Formation in the United States*, Michael Omi and Howard Winant define racial formation as a process describing how racial identities are created, lived, transformed, and destroyed (109). Popular discourse tends to see racial formation as only having to do with people of color; however, racial formation informs all racial identities—even if that formation would lead to signify a racial identity that is typically invisible, or so close to the neoliberal capitalist white supremacist (hetero)patriarchy that it does not define itself in its deviance. Looking explicitly at the notion that whiteness is often seen as an invisible racial category, Ruth Frankenberg interviews white feminist women as well as more politically conservative white women to trace their perceptions of whiteness and their own cultural identities. Frankenburg

finds that white women overwhelmingly see their culture as one that is invisible, unmarked, and even boring at times (94). This particular discussion of whiteness is one my Appalachian narrative disrupts, as whiteness becomes quite visible and tangible when it intersects with other forms of oppression within the neoliberal capitalist white supremacist (hetero)patriarchy. Further, racialization occurs when racial meaning is assigned to a particular social practice or group (Omi & Winant 109). hooks's, Allison's, and my narratives all disrupt the racialized implications for our geographical and racial situations, thus disrupting a process of racialization that would homogenize Appalachian folks into simplified groups.

Racial formation, however, is not simply a product of social construction. Dorothy Roberts, in *Fatal Invention: How Science, Politics, and Big Business Re-Create Race in the Twenty-First Century*, provides a keen insight into the social construction of a biological race—leading to racialized lived realities. This biologizing of race serves to create propaganda that upholds white supremacist racial projects like gentrification and white flight, displacing many raced and classed populations from their homes (Roberts 288). Some scholars use ‘suburbanization’ as a euphemism for white flight. Using coded language to discuss these racial projects normalizes them and, consequently, renders their racialized nature invisible, leading to a mass denial of racialized oppression. In *When America Became Suburban*, Robert Beauregard perpetuates this post-racial notion that social movement and inequities have more to do with resources and less to do with race:

The nation celebrated its suburban lifestyle, consumer products, and high wages. It also had to contend with pictures of boarded-up buildings, rioting African Americans, looted stores, burnt-out automobiles discarded on inner-city highways, and idle and abandoned factories. (35)

Using coded language, Beauregard creates a binary between white, suburban “national” citizens and black criminals by suggesting that the nation celebrated its collective suburban lifestyle and “contended” with (read: criticized, pathologized, and problematized) the black others who remained in the cities. This popular notion of white flight is one that creates a simplified narrative of racialized movement and, I argue, also extends to a white flight within narratives that promote post-racial and essential points of views. Whereas, Allison’s, hooks’s, and my narratives of home, movement, and racial formation all metaphorically disrupt this essentialist theoretical white flight and create new paths that illustrate the need for movement among counter-hegemonic Appalachian cultures. We create racial meaning-making within the movements themselves.

Racialization and Moving to Kentucky

Much of my early childhood was spent bouncing from one city school to the next in and around central Ohio. The daughter of a woman who felt more at home with black folks than she did her own family, I grew up comfortable being white in mostly people of color spaces. I grew up knowing how to talk about racism and oppression and felt a deep commitment to anti-racism from a very young age. What I didn’t grow up knowing how to talk about was my own race and how I was different from my black peers. Despite the contemporary push to move “beyond race” (Omi & Winant 218) I think colorblindness, in my case, mostly applied to how I saw myself. I knew my peers were black, but I’ve not always been conscious of my own whiteness, that is, until my family moved to eastern Kentucky.

At thirteen, I had mentally prepared myself for what I knew of Kentucky, based mostly on what I’d seen on TV. I knew about southern hospitality and that people talked differently, but I’d also heard that Kentucky was a dangerous place, especially for women. My mom, my sister,

and I moved to a small town in eastern Kentucky where we didn't know anyone—I later learned that this refuge-style move was my mother's intention. My first day of school was bizarre: I woke up at 4:45am to catch the 45 minute bus ride to school then was told to wait in the gym with the rest of the bussed kids until homeroom. As kids started to trickle in with each bus drop off, I began to notice that many of them looked the same, and a lot like me—poor, fat, and white. Partly because of how backward I had heard Kentucky was but mostly because I had yet to see any black kids, I walked up to my homeroom teacher's desk and asked if the schools in Kentucky were still segregated. Shocked at my question, she explained that they weren't and that there just weren't a whole lot of black folks who lived in eastern Kentucky.

The lack of faces of color in eastern Kentucky made room for many to be ignorantly and complacently—if not intentionally—racist. What was even more bizarre than the long commute was the fact that, for the first time, I consciously felt like an outsider, despite the fact that most of these kids and I seemingly shared racial and class identities. I was teased for acting “ghetto,” how fast I talked, and the music I listened to. Soon after we moved to Kentucky, some of our close friends came to visit from Ohio for the weekend and I understood why they were too scared to leave the house, and subsequently didn't return. Their small family complemented ours well, consisting of a single mother, a daughter my age, and a son my sister's age. I was nervous during their visit partly because of the poor condition of the trailer we lived but also because of the confederate flags waving from our neighbors' porches. Most of the people I talked to about the flags referred to them as rebel flags and expressed their connection to heritage rather than white supremacy. I hadn't paid too much attention to these flags until I got word of their visit, then I saw them everywhere. The idea that they represented some subversive Appalachian counter- or “rebel” culture became impossible to reconcile with the perceived threat it posed to

our friends. If my peers were willing to criticize and police me for “acting black,” I couldn’t imagine how folks would treat our friends for actually *being* black. Much like the flags, it was then that my whiteness became visible. I was growing to realize that I wasn’t like my black peers—that the teasing I got at school for the way I acted was in no way comparable to the fear our friends felt in our home during that visit.

Since that move, any kind of naïve hope for colorblindness I held onto when I was young has been erased. Whiteness began to mean an unfair freedom I possessed, but my black friends didn’t. Literally speaking, I was able to leave my house that weekend to grab some food or go to the grocery, while my black friends didn’t set foot outside until it was time to leave. Throughout the years that I lived in eastern Kentucky, I remained resistant to any kind of affiliation or identification with the area, rejecting even some of the positive aspects. I consciously policed the way I spoke, being sure to say I was from Oh-hI-oh instead of from Oh-hai as to avoid acquiring a twang like my sister did. Disciplining myself to be critical of Appalachia, then, served a dual purpose of my own goal in maintaining some stable identity that I’d assembled along the way as well as becoming hyperaware of my identity situation within a historically white region. On one hand, I did feel a sense of belonging because it was a space where I could be poor and not necessarily cast out; but on the other hand, I felt a strong urge to flee and reject the iteration of whiteness that feared my unfamiliar alliance with antiracism and people of color.

Deciding to Write – Deciding to Live

As I, hundreds of miles away from home, read hook’s “Kentucky is my Fate,” I am reminded of the kind of ambivalence Appalachians feel towards places of belonging. Belonging is a matter, not of convenience or preference for class-oppressed and racialized Appalachians, but of safety. We are scattered, displaced, moving through our stories like we move from city to

city for adjunct gigs, social activism, and education. For many poor Appalachians, going to college is a means of survival. If you demonstrate academic potential and are poor enough, scholarships and federal grants combined will pay you to go. What young Appalachians don't often account for, though, is the trauma involved in leaving their families for an institution bent on making them "global citizens." For instance, Allison poignantly discusses her experiences and thoughts of suicide during her first few years away at college:

There I met people I always read about: . . . children to whom I could not help but compare myself. I matched their innocence, their confidence, their capacity to trust, to love, to be generous against the bitterness, the rage, the pure and terrible hatred that consumed me. (1)

Going to the university, Allison was faced with the impetus to travel to that "world," or to be distinctly different in that world than she was in the world of poor folk in South Carolina.

Both Allison and hooks describe writing through their experiences in their native places as means of resisting suicide while situated in places of being (places where one isn't at 'ease' with one's surroundings [Lugones 12]) hooks alludes to the in-between space of being both critical and nostalgic of home once she's left:

The intense suicidal melancholia that had ravished my spirit in girlhood, in part a response to leaving the hills, leaving a world of freedom, had not been left behind. It followed me to all the places I journeyed. (16)

hooks continues to explain that writing through her experiences helped her reconcile the emptiness she felt leaving home, while also allowing space to continue to journey through different worlds: "Resurrecting the memories of home, bringing the bits and pieces together was a movement back that enabled me to move forward" (18). Not only does writing down one's

own narrative help heal the wounds inflicted when leaving home, but it also aims to disrupt the violent erasure of racialized and classed Appalachian narratives.

Allison echoes hooks' need to write through one's own history not only as means of catharsis and survival, but also as a way of inserting one's narrative into the conversation:

Every evening I sat down with a yellow legal-size pad, writing out the story of my life. . . Writing it all out was purging . . . More subtly, it gave me a way to love the people I wrote about—even the ones I fought with or hated. In that city where I knew no one, I had no money and nothing to fill the evenings except washing out my clothes, reading cheap paperbacks, and trying to understand how I had come to be in that place. (3)

Moving from home, then, is not necessarily a way *out* of Appalachia and all of its connotations; rather, it becomes a way *in* to a world where you either leave your Appalachian identity and ways of being behind, rendering you unable to go home, or you retain what fragments of home you can, but risk remaining in a constant state of exile. Once in exile, Appalachians imagine their material homelands as both “prison and protecting cocoon,” assembling the nurturing aspects of home alongside the violent and stifling ones (Stewart 42). Movement through the narrative and through the “worlds,” then, becomes a perpetual contradiction.

Racialized Appalachians

Both hooks and Allison reflect on what made them leave their native places, both pointing to racialized identities that didn't blend with their surroundings. hooks discusses how Kentuckians navigate white supremacy:

Even though the forces of imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy did ultimately subordinate the land to its predatory interests it did not create a closed

system, individual Kentuckians white and black, still managed to create sub-culture, usually in hollows, hills, and mountains, governed by beliefs and values contrary to those of mainstream culture. (20)

She points to a culture that both perpetuates white supremacy and a culture of anarchist white hillbillies who threaten the white supremacist capitalist heteropatriarchy. Living in the mountains teaches Appalachians to forge their own communities, become simultaneously interdependent and self-reliant, as well as to resist oppressive power structures (hooks 20). bell hooks and Dorothy Allison, then, become major names in a group of anti-racist Appalachian radicals as they express counterhegemonic identities that disrupt oppressive power structures, not because of theories learned in state schools, but because of lived experiences of racism and class oppressions. These lived experiences interact with one another in a way that establishes a situated Appalachian anti-racist epistemology: “the way in which that culture of anarchy had distinct anti-racist dimensions accounts for the unique culture of Appalachian black folks that is rarely acknowledged” (11). hooks suggests that this distinctly anti-racist Appalachian counter culture is one that is often overlooked, if not intentionally erased.

Allison experienced a similar, but not identical, yearning to leave one’s home because of its complicity in oppressive systems:

It is the first thing I think of when trouble comes—the geographical solution. Change your name, leave town, disappear, make yourself over. What hides behind that impulse is the conviction that the life you have lived, the person you are, is valueless, better off abandoned, that running away is easier than trying to change things, that change itself is not possible. (19)

Allison's narrative continues to disrupt a romantic notion of "good poor," reflecting that no one in her family ever joined a union and that their racism coupled with grit and endurance contributed to her ambivalence about her upbringing: "I would grind my teeth at what I knew was my family's unquestioning racism while continuing to respect their pragmatic endurance" (25). Travelling from one world to another, Allison expresses an epiphanic moment in racial solidarity when she conducted two speaking engagements regarding her coming out as lesbian: one at a predominantly white Episcopalian Sunday school class and another at a predominantly black and Latino juvenile detention center. She expresses frustration and contempt at the politeness expressed by the Episcopalians, their stammering questions illustrating that they are in some way complicit in perpetuating the shame surrounding her sexual and classed identity. Her experience with black and Latino youth, on the other hand, was more comfortable, more at home, as they teased her and shamelessly asked blunt questions about her sexuality. Allison saw herself in the black and Latino youth heckling her, resisting power structures, refusing to raise one's hand and instead belting out what begs to be spoken.

Both hooks and Allison take up racial formation in a way that explicates the particular situatedness of Appalachian anti-racism. hooks suggests that there is a thriving counterculture of Appalachian anarchists and anti-racists, but that they are also conflicting with the hegemonic culture of white supremacy that is also tied in with southern US identity. Allison illustrates in her narrative a sense of contradictory allegiances to both one's racist family and also to one's commitment to political activism. Racial formation, in these cases, is found in the movement from one place to another, as these Appalachian radicals discover and write through their journeys—Allison reclaiming the term "trash," traditionally used to connote a particular kind of

whiteness marked as poor and ignorant, and hooks writing blackness and Kentucky into her work, even as she lives and works in more cosmopolitan areas such as New York City.

Journeying Home

Returning home for hooks and Allison, then, becomes a nuanced journey. hooks recalls her decades of living away from home as necessary both for her own survival and development as a black Appalachian social activist and for her to even become able to recognize home for the place of belonging it signifies to her. In this particular movement, hooks illustrates a larger back-and-forth migration of young Appalachians from their homes to places of study or work. Young people's "drifting back and forth from the city to the hills" brings with it "revivalistic" progress in exchange for the sacrifices made in exile (Stewart 48). hooks describes this progress with a certain amount of hesitancy and fear.

Each year of my life as I went home to visit, it was a rite of passage to reassure myself that I still belonged, that I had not become so changed that I could not come home again. My visits home almost always left me torn: I wanted to stay but I needed to leave, to be endlessly running away from home. (17)

Realizing that racism informed her experience at home, she expresses that she doesn't simply desire to leave home, but that she needs to; however, hooks does ultimately realize that her place of belonging is in Kentucky. Seeing how the capitalist white supremacist heteropatriarchy dehumanizes black folk and Appalachian folk outside of Kentucky, hooks returns home for the sense of belonging that resonates with a specific geographical area.

*

Examining my Appalachian homes from my current location in Tampa, Florida has challenged me to look past my own experiences of exclusion within Appalachia and long for the

places that once nurtured and embraced me. Examining my home after a literal move away from it situates me at a “point in between” where my impression of home is not only influenced by my experiences there, but my feelings about Appalachia once in exile (Straight 8). Similar to hooks’s experience in exile, I have become “more consciously Kentuckian than I was when I lived at home (13). It wasn’t until I moved to Tampa that I realized I’d found a place of belonging in Louisville, Kentucky. I’d moved there initially for graduate school, but dropped out after a year because I couldn’t keep up without funding. When I moved to Louisville, my only criteria in finding a place was affordability. I’d told myself that I could live anywhere (because I’d lived everywhere) so I searched for a place with cheap rent close to campus. I ended up renting an unfinished basement apartment in the Old Louisville neighborhood, not knowing much about how different neighborhoods were racialized there.

I initially planned on staying at this apartment for only one lease cycle, but when I began to see folks I knew from school or work moving from Old Lou, claiming that it was too “ghetto,” I was reminded of the times folks used the term around me as a coded word for blackness, using it to describe something as simple as my favorite potato chips. I remembered riding the “ghetto” bus from a trailer park in Chillicothe, Ohio to a county school where most students did not receive the same free lunch ticket I did. This “flight” that I’d read about was, for the first time, happening right in front of me. Or at least at a time and place where I could recognize the white flight away from racialized Old Louisville for what it was.

During my time in Louisville, I continued to read about poor folks, black feminists, and tried desperately to reconcile what home meant to me. Louisville being very much a border city between Northern liberal and Southern hospitable connotations, folks were constantly asking me where I was from, and I never knew the answer. I felt the need to choose between the counter-

hegemonic whiteness I picked up as a poor kid in city schools in Ohio and the creek-dwelling, frog-hatching Appalachian identity I picked up as a poor kid in rural Eastern Kentucky. My need to create a sense of home and belonging led me to write through my experiences. After I'd finished my one year of graduate school, and in between part-time jobs and adjunct gigs, I took to the road with my sister to photograph all of our old homes that we could find. Even though my sister remains in Eastern Kentucky, we were both desperate for evidence of our existences, moves, flights, and, ultimately, identities.



1. Frankfort, OH. Fourth and Fifth Grade.

We were able to photograph about a dozen of the 25 houses we lived in due in part to some of the trailers being removed from the lots, or simply because we couldn't find our way back to others. Photographing our homes did not immediately provide us with the answers we'd been looking for, but the process of looking for them did. We spent hours at a time navigating interstates, highways, county roads, and hollers talking about what the homes looked like and



2. Wittensville, KY. Fifth and Sixth Grade.

why we moved there. As I began to recollect the traumas that caused us to move as well as the parts of myself I had to hide, I discovered that I was beginning to find a place of belonging in my counter-hegemonic, queer, anti-racist, grassroots activist community in Louisville. Although I returned to these places hoping to retrieve something I felt I was

missing, I ultimately found that it wasn't any singular place that developed my racialized identity. These literal houses had failed to provide for us the figurative and imagined sense of

home that Appalachian Others long for in the movements from place to place; rather, it was the movements themselves that shape how I can recognize a sense of belonging (Straight 92).

Travelling through different “worlds,” it becomes clear which ones are more at ease with the poor, anti-racist, queer, and sometimes-trashy iteration of whiteness I perform.

Final Thoughts

Throughout the three narratives, a theme of epistemic privilege emerges. Appalachian radicals not only have situated knowledges within racialized and classed Appalachian identities, but also illustrate a specialized way of knowing that is often overlooked, whitewashed, or erased altogether. Resisting normative feminist narratives that would lead me to dissect my positionalities and suggest that I work from a more essential standpoint of oppressed woman, or sexual minority, I choose to identify with the movement, or the paths in between temporal and geographical locations, that highlights and makes visible the interlocking patterns of oppression of the neoliberal capitalist white supremacist (hetero)patriarchy. Identifying with the movement in “Cold Hearths: The Losses of Home in an Appalachian Woman’s Life History,” Belinda Straight alludes to notions of being on “the verge of home” or an idea that, for many Appalachian women, home is a place in between the movement and the staying still, the idealized and the inaccessible, the urban and the homely (Straight 2). Throughout my discussion and narrative, I participate in a counterhegemonic white flight that guides me through whiteness and the shame associated with poverty and away from white supremacist notions of white performativity.



3. Chillicothe, OH. Sixth and Seventh Grade.

Identifying with the movement helps me resist the compulsion to “overcome” my poverty or to “get out” of the Appalachian region I’ve come from. Allison’s truths speak to mine in a way that connects us both to a larger reclamatory space: “the inescapable impact of being born in a condition of poverty that this society finds shameful, contemptible, and somehow oddly deserved, has had dominion over me to such an extent that I have spent my life trying to overcome or deny it” (Allison viii). Dorothy Allison and bell hooks both illustrate that this journey is necessary for the literary, social, and epistemic survival of Appalachian radicals, for the dominant culture shames us into the pressures of assimilation.

Chapter Three

“The Afro that Ate Kentucky”: Affrilachian Poetry, Racial Formation, and Intersectional Feminism

“Sandi – promise to keep your pen moving and I’ll do the same.” - Bianca (Bianca Spriggs, handwritten communication to author, September 16, 2011)

Introduction

In chapter one of this project, I drew from auto-ethnographic research on my role as a white, poor, queer woman in both rural and urban settings in the Eastern Kentucky and Ohio Valley regions to apply to a feminist cultural analysis of Appalachian and Affrilachian narratives of home. Ultimately, I used my experiences with popular feminist representations to disrupt the “white flight” narrative with support from critical race and feminist scholars. My story, paired with an analysis of bell hooks’ and Dorothy Allison’s personal narratives, applied a systems approach the phenomena of racial migration in the United States, illustrating that folks navigate the neoliberal white supremacist capitalist (hetero) patriarchy in such ways that we are simultaneously complicit to it as well as victims of it. This chapter builds on chapter one’s analyses of Appalachian culture not only by further exploring themes of home and belonging in Appalachian narratives, but also by illuminating the situated kinds of feminism that emerge out of Affrilachian experiences as a racial minority within a cultural minority.

Affrilachian Poetry as a genre is exemplary of the kinds of intersectional feminisms emerging out of the region because of its explicit focus on carving out a cultural space wherein “black” and “Appalachian” are not two mutually exclusive identity categories. Bianca Spriggs, a

contemporary proponent of Affrilachian poetry, writes in *Kaffir Lily* about her regionalized identity as a black woman: “I am not just a black woman writing about her roots anymore. I’m exploring more about what makes a black woman unique because she grew up in a place called Kentucky and how our respective complexities intertwine” (Spriggs, quoted in Perkins, 80). Nikki Finney, considered one of the founders of Affrilachian poetry, complements Spriggs’s in such a way that provides this project with both an inaugural representation as well as a more contemporary one (Kraver 135). Poems selected from Bianca Sprigg’s *Kaffir Lily* illustrate the connection between the embodied feminine experiences and pleasure, power, and region. Nikki Finney’s selections explore the connection between racialization and the creation of black Appalachian cultures of care and femininity in Appalachia. Affrilachian poetry becomes a rich site from which to analyze Appalachian culture and, more specifically, the intersectional nature of rural feminisms. Using feminist cultural studies derived from a tradition of women of color feminism to analyze these texts, I explicate the racialized kinds of feminist consciousness that emerge out of the region, using these poems as lenses through which to rethink the boundaries and politics Appalachian culture.

Background

Examining my Appalachian homes from my current location in Tampa, Florida has challenged me to look past my own experiences of exclusion within Appalachia and long for the places that once nurtured and embraced me. As a poor, fat, queer, and anti-racist Appalachian feminist, I found places of belonging within Appalachian reproductive justice organizations, local Showing up for Racial Justice chapters, and Kentucky Women Writer’s Association annual literary performances and workshops. All of these feminist pockets within Appalachia did not become strange until I began exploring Appalachian culture writ large. The process of

researching texts like Bianca Spriggs's *Kaffir Lily* and Nikky Finney's *Rice* necessitates an intersectional analysis. While feminist and Appalachian researchers do, however sparsely, account for Affrilachian poetry as a genre, there is a lack of analysis regarding how these specific texts are influenced by intersectional experiences and histories. Scholars such as William H. Turner in "Affrilachia as *Brand*," discuss the contested nature of being black in Appalachia; however, he does not attend to other intersecting categories of difference such as gender, class, and sexuality (26).

Using feminist cultural analysis to examine these poems, it becomes imperative to examine the discourse surrounding the Appalachian region. Rural studies in the United States examines the many ways in which rural regions have changed since the mid-twentieth century. Since the 1970s, general back-and-forth migrations shift the face of rural America by redistributing populations of people. This migration is generally believed to be linked to the distribution of resources (Johnson 15). According to Kenneth Johnson's "Unpredictable Directions of Rural Population Growth and Migration," however, these migrations do not occur in a vacuum and are not only directly related to shifting environmental, economic, and organizational factors; these migrations also lead to less investment in the sustainability of rural communities (16). Rural communities, then, are varied, shifting, and situated. In order to study the rural, it becomes imperative to privilege the local and situated cultures and experiences, as rural cultures such as Appalachia are shaped by these migrations and instabilities.

Despite the wide geographical area covered by the Appalachian mountains, dominant constructions of Appalachian culture point to a homogenous group of people in a shared geographical area, isolated from the rest of society. Appalachians are often constructed as poor white hillbillies with little to no social diversity. According to Turner "in the bulk of scholarly

work since Appalachian Studies emerged in the mid 1960s—and to a greater extent in the minds of the general public—the *only* thing black in Appalachia is coal” (27). In other words, Appalachian Studies as a discipline has neglected to attend to the ways in which the cultures and peoples of Appalachia are racialized, despite clear evidence of Appalachian racial formation (Cabbell 3). Quite often, research that does acknowledge racial diversity within Appalachia focuses primarily on the region’s urban growth centers and does not necessarily analyze how racial formation develops in more rural areas (Turner 29). In order to disrupt the erasure of the diversity of Appalachian cultures and narratives, a brief history of racial formation in Appalachia is necessary.

Some historians suggest parallels between discourse surrounding cultures of antebellum slaves and white Appalachian hillbillies:

Blacks in slavery and freedom were often stereotyped by whites as lazy but wily people who would not work hard if given the choice, as superstitious folk who believed in spirits and witches, as an immoral race in which illegitimacy was not uncommon, as an inferior class that seemed to cower in subordination when talking with whites, and—paradoxically—as violent, ‘savage’ people who needed ‘civilization’ and religion’s guiding hand. (Klotter 53)

In “The Black South and White Appalachia,” James C. Klotter draws a connection between stereotypes of black people during slavery and more general stereotypes of Appalachian white people. Stating that these stereotypes of black slaves were created by white people, Klotter also suggests that the same stereotypes apply to white Appalachians when discovered as “mountain people,” but that these constructions are created by other, more socially privileged whites. We can see this rhetoric surrounding both racial tropes continue to contribute to dominant narratives

of both blackness and Appalachian identity in the erasure of black cultures from Appalachia as well as the homogenous construction of whiteness in Appalachia.

Tending first to the erasure of black cultures in Appalachia, it becomes clear that, despite the fact that roughly one in every fourteen Appalachians is black, Appalachian studies' lack of racial analysis supports "the myth that the number of black people in the mountains is inconsequential" (Cabbell 3). Most scholars examine power and the foundations of class and status without examining the specifically racialized and colonial aspects of cultural formation within Appalachia. This omission not only leads to dominant discursive formations of Appalachians as unquestionably white, but also affects the lived experiences of black Appalachians in very material ways, leading to what Edward Cabbell in "Black Invisibility and Racism within Appalachia: An Informal Survey" refers to as "Black invisibility" or a kind of anti-black racism unique to Appalachia and studies about Appalachia:

Black invisibility also supports the myth that Appalachia is a land of 'poor white hillbillies,' beset solely with 'white problems' and not the 'color problems' that plague the rest of America. In reality, the 1.3 million blacks in Appalachia suffer worse economic status than white Appalachians, and their problems are compounded by racism and discrimination. (3)

Black folks in Appalachia not only experience lower economic status than white Appalachians, but also suffer from living in the same environment of "silt-filled streams, polluted air, burning slag heaps, acid water, and dried-up wells" that make for continuing health problems in Appalachia (Cabbell 5). Cabbell further suggests that these health problems lead to disproportionately poor outcomes for black Appalachians due to the combined low economic status as well as the lack of black representation in Appalachian healthcare. Thus, this "Black

invisibility” serves not only to create a discourse of Appalachian culture that is demographically inaccurate, but also has devastating material consequences for black Appalachian’s lived experiences.

Examining cultural artifacts that are created in Appalachia by folks whose identities are not typically encapsulated within the hegemonic discourses of Appalachian culture, then, illustrates this study’s goal in resisting oppression and erasure of Appalachian culture’s heterogeneity. Contrary to constructions of Appalachians as lazy, complacent, and white, many Appalachians organize communities of resistance from within the region itself: “While the peoples and cultures in the Appalachian Mountains are decidedly plural . . . in the arts, the academy, and popular culture, many representations of them . . . are often monolithic, pejorative, and unquestioned. But they are challenged in the region” (Billings 14). Challenging these representations, I argue that Affrilachian poets create a counterculture that disrupts these monolithic and unquestioned constructions of Appalachia.

Situated as a racial minority within cultural minority, black Appalachian artists have created a space for counterhegemonic Appalachian cultures to emerge. Frank X Walker is generally credited with coining the term “Affriliachia” and, consequently, the literary movement of Affrilachian literature from within his own poem “Affrilachia”:

some of the bluegrass
 is black
 enough to know
 that being
 ‘colored and all
 is generally lost

somewhere between
 the dukes of hazard
 and the beverly hillbillies
 but
 if you think
 makin' 'shine from corn
 is as hard as kentucky coal
 imagine being
 an Affrilachian
 poet." (Walker 92-3)

Walker moves from identifying the Appalachian genre of Kentucky bluegrass to discussing the popular construction of Appalachian Black invisibility and back in order to illustrate that Affrilachian social and literary positioning within the region is contested and difficult, but that the naming of it is politically necessary (Turner 27). Speaking specifically about blacks in Appalachia, Turner discusses the move to mark black Appalachian literature as Affrilachian: "black, people of color, and African American forms of cultural production emerge out of the impetus for black folks to own political, social, and cultural exertions to define (and redefine) themselves," (27). Therefore, Affrilachian poetry represents an impetus to name oneself, to account for one's own narrative and history within an underrepresented geographical and cultural area.

Women Affrilachian poets speak more specifically to racialized, gendered, and regionalized lived experience. While Walker is noted for the creation of Affrilachian poetry as a genre, scholarship focusing mainly on his contributions can reify a masculinist account of the

field. In other words, while Affrilachian poetry aims to push against and redefine racial and regional boundaries, scholarship analyzing the genre has somewhat erased the narratives of Affrilachian women and their contributions. Thus, an intersectional account of experience and identity becomes necessary to understand the ways in which this literary movement simultaneously deconstructs dominant paradigms of gender and constructs representations of black Appalachian femininity. Nikki Finney, considered to be another founder of the genre, creates a voice that is in dialogue with African American poets as well as southern American voices. Although she is from coastal South Carolina, much of Finney's work focuses on the intersections of history and culture that are central to the Appalachian region as she lives and writes from Lexington, Kentucky (Kraver 134). Her collection of poetry *Rice* was published in 1995 and seeks to remedy the lack of attention paid to how rituals of Appalachia and Africa relate to one another.

Another Kentucky-based poet, Bianca Spriggs, participated in the same "initiation" to the Affrilachian poetry troupe that Finney participated in years earlier. This ritual consists of a ten-day road trip touring the backroads of Kentucky in order to ground an appreciation for how place can shape a writer's voice (Perkins 83). This trip could also symbolize the reclaiming of space in response to Turner's notions of "black invisibility" within Appalachia (3). Touring the region, reading, and writing, these poets participated in a literal movement for visibility: "Affrilachia is something I take with me wherever I go. It's our flag. It's what we can carry through the world to say that we're a part of this region, part of this state. And we have narratives that need to be represented," (Spriggs, quoted in Perkins, 82). So, Affrilachian poets work as a collective to reclaim space within the region, while also forging their own literary community, or "family" as

Spriggs notes (82). Published 15 years after *Rice*, Spriggs's *Kaffir Lily* serves to complicate outdated narratives, borders, and epistemologies generally associated with the region.

Thus, Finney and subsequently Spriggs participate in a movement as Affrilachian poets to shift the narrative of Appalachians from a colonialist, monolithic representation of race and class:

It's so rewarding to consistently challenge obtuse stereotypes of small-town poverty and illiteracy. All too often, we get fed a one-dimensional picture of what an Appalachian is or looks like, particularly in Southern Appalachia: unlettered, unwashed, uncultured, snake-handling white person with a deep 'hick' accent. But we forget that Appalachia contains major cities too, like Pittsburgh or Birmingham. It's my job as the poet to offer a different picture and demonstrate that the region is a multicultural spectrum—so the Affrilachian Poets as an enclave are about the business of complicating an outdated narrative. (Spriggs, quoted in Perkins, 81)

Not only do these two poets highlight the region's "multicultural spectrum," but they also create a gendered analysis of the region's resistance movements that disrupts masculinist analyses of the region. Finney examines rurality and her family's connection to the land, whereas Spriggs represents a more urban/suburban iteration of black Appalachian femininity.

Poetry as Feminism

The role of literary movements as means of resistance becomes evident when examining literature emerging out of subjugated social locations. In "Does Poetry Have a Social Function," Stephen Burt explains that the social function of poetry as a genre is contested depending on which/whose poetry is the object of analysis. Certain kinds of poetry serve different functions;

some serve to create an exclusive community wherein the poet and their literary group and others aim to speak to and affect society more broadly outside of the social group (Burt n.p.).

Affrilachian poetry in particular exists in the borderlands between these two functions. It serves to simultaneously create a literary community while also affecting change by way of creating visibility outside of the community. In other words, the community is not exclusive in so much that it aims to be contained; rather, it aims to expand and transform the culture of Appalachia and of literature writ large.

Further, women of color feminist understandings of writing through traumas illustrate the need for literary movements as social activism. In *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, Gloria Anzaldua explains that the process of writing sometimes makes her physically ill—that writing through her experiences of oppression and unbelonging is often painful; however, it is productive in the meaning-making of one’s own narrative: “I sometimes get sick when I *do* write. I can’t stomach it, become nauseous, or burn with fever, worsen. But, in reconstructing the traumas behind the images, I make ‘sense’ of them, and once they have ‘meaning’ they are changed, transformed. It is then that writing heals me,” (92). Anzaldua points to the healing capacities of writing through one’s own traumas and subjugated social positionings. It is necessary for narratives of identities threatened with erasures to be represented; thus, many marginalized populations find writing itself to be an act of resistance to dominant representations of identity and culture. Allison and hooks echo these sentiments in their own writings analyzed in chapter one – they, too, see writing as a means of resisting social and psychic death.

Method

Due to the scope of this current project, I am focusing primarily on how contemporary Appalachian and Affrilachian texts challenge and reconfigure accepted understandings of

identity and belonging; however, there is more to be said about feminist and anti-racist cultural production and activism in Appalachia. Feminist cultural criticism is especially appropriate for this project, as the Affrilachian poetry provides a lens through which to see Appalachian feminism and, further, regional consciousness—considering the texts as openings and sites of possibilities themselves (Atkins 3). Decentering dominant accounts of truth becomes especially useful for the production of marginalized knowledge. In *Fighting Words: Black Women and the Search for Justice*, Patricia Hill-Collins argues that decentering can be used to oppose notions of humanity that only encapsulate the white male: “White male subjectivity has long stood as normative for ‘human.’ Deconstructing this narrow view by exposing its particularity creates space for Black women to be redefined as fully human and to accrue the ‘rights’ associated with being human” (138). Thus, this analysis decenters the assumed human subject to make room for the humanity not only of black women, but black Appalachian women. In this vein, a black feminist cultural studies framework investigates how including black Appalachian female subjectivity in the canon transforms what counts as legitimated knowledge. In my analysis of these poems, I provide historically and regionally situated contexts for them in order to situate them in place and in time; however, I do see my theoretical advancements in both cultural and Appalachian studies as open-ended and providing a site from which to advance dynamic and innovative understandings of Appalachian feminist consciousness.

Analysis

In her poem “The Afro that Ate Kentucky” Bianca Spriggs not only illustrates the contested nature of black Appalachian identities, but also shows their connections to narratives of resistance. Beginning the poem in the darkness, Spriggs draws a parallel between her hair, sexuality, and geography of her Kentucky home:

In the middle of the night,
 a part of me unravels and unwinds,
 has a few cocktails and lets loose
 to fan dance its way across the Bluegrass. (56, lines 1-4)

Discussing her hair as a “part” of her, Spriggs begins to draw upon intersectional theories of identities and experience to suggest that this “part” of her is agentic and in constant motion, moving from one isolated “world” and expanding into other worlds where this “part” can become more playful and more at ease (Lugones, 12). Spriggs suggests that this part “fan dance[s] its way across the Bluegrass,” invoking a particularly feminine erotic motion throughout the commonwealth of Kentucky, familiarly referred to here as “the Bluegrass.” Again, these dances illustrate a playfulness that this “part” is capable of at night in the deserted streets, suggesting that the world in which an Affrilachian poet can become “at ease” is one where she is given room sheltered from the visibility of the dominant culture (Lugones 12).

Alluding to myriad hereditary genealogies, Spriggs begins to weave historical evidences of Affrilachian identity into the roots of this poem:

Sitting five inches from my scalp by day,
 at night, the four textures from twice
 as many lineages Rapunzels itself out
 of my window tethered no more to nobody’s temple. (56, lines 5-8)

Calling attention here to the varied textures of the “Afro that Ate Kentucky,” Spriggs invokes a certain diversity within Appalachia by showing that these “four textures” derive from “twice as many lineages.” She continues to demonstrate the wild nature of Appalachian resistance, this subject being “tethered no more to nobody’s temple,” and escaping out of her window to

consume the landscape around her. Consuming the region's natural landscape during daylight hours, or openly and visibly, becomes representative of a privilege afforded only to the dominant culture. bell hooks, also from Kentucky, writes about black Appalachian resistance as being inextricably tied to nature: "Nature was the foundation of our counter hegemonic black subculture. Nature was the place of victory . . . There dominator culture (the system of imperialist white supremacist capitalist (hetero)patriarchy) could not wield absolute power" (8). Nature, here and throughout the poem, becomes an important part of the Afro's consumption and foundational to Affrilachian resistance.

Spriggs continues the discussion of Affrilachian resistance and focuses more specifically on the subversive and contested nature of the Afro:

Accused of being part werewolf, part white folk,
and everything else that goes bump in the night,
my hair canters down the street,
picks up enough speed to levitate,
and begins swallowing the decrepit
and gutted buildings, the splayed pastures rank
with spores, Boyd Orchard and any accompanying
back roads, half of Red River Gorge,
Keeneland, some groundhogs, and most of I-64. (56, 9-17)

Spriggs here calls on a kind of demonization of black experiences within Appalachia by referring to her hair as "part werewolf, part white folk, / and everything else that goes bump in the night" (9-10) while also pointing to the motion associated with Affrilachian art and activism by deploying imagery of her hair moving throughout the region. Infiltrating the city at night, the

Afro begins its consumption of scenes within Lexington, Kentucky, “the decrepit / and gutted buildings, the splayed pastures rank / with spores,” calling on gentrified downtown Lexington, Kentucky, then moving through the outskirts of pastures, and into other regional landmarks of central Kentucky: Boyd Orchard, Red River Gorge, Keeneland, and beyond. While landmarks such as the camp grounds and hiking trails of Red River Gorge and the horse races of Keeneland are most notably associated with white, middle and upper-class consumption, Spriggs makes room for the Afro to swallow up these narratives of exclusion and black invisibility at night, while the dominant culture sleeps.

In the penultimate stanza, this Afro continues to consume the region while also growing in size and unpredictability:

Bloated and cumulonimbus enough
to blot out the stars and bad dreams,
my hair looks around for a nightcap.

It slurps its way through three distilleries
and a good bit of Ale 8 before tottering home,
trailing gossamer exhaust, letting everything
it swallowed fall where it may. (18-24)

Here the Afro’s path becomes more turbulent, invoking “bloated and cumulonimbus” storm cloud imagery. Belligerently slurping its way through the region and back, the Afro is intentional to leave a trail of gossamer webs and trails of consumption behind as a reminder of its subversive agency, “letting everything / it swallowed fall where it may” (23-4). Much like Affrilachian poetry itself, this trail imagery intervenes on dominant cultures of consumption to create narratives of and mark a history of black Appalachian existence and power. Further, by focusing

specifically on a feminine intervention throughout the region, this Afro disrupts dominant notions of feminine respectability by daring to take up space, expansive enough to “blot out the stars and bad dreams” (Spriggs 19-20). Respectability politics, originally coined by Evelyn Higginbotham, plays a large role in how black women contribute to cultural narratives regarding their own identities. Representations that reflect these politics of respectability often align with some dominant cultural narrative of gendered or racialized identity, whereas Spriggs’s imagery here disrupts these respectable boundaries by reclaiming racialized markers themselves.

By the final stanza, the night has come to a close and, much like things that go bump in the night, the Afro retreats back to shelter before the sun comes up, having completed its mission and marked the region with its existence:

By dawn, my hair is exhausted.
 Deflated and dry, it creeps back
 to my bed and collapses on the pillow,
 winds itself back onto my head in coils,
 flattens, and burrows behind an ear.
 Coughing up dew, down, and web,
 my hair mumbles in my ear
 not to expect any cooperation today,
 that it is too hungover, too untamed, too spent. (Spriggs 56)

Again illustrating the agency of the Afro, Spriggs points to the intersection of blackness and Appalachian identity by using the Afro to speak not only to its own unruliness but also to notions of Appalachian anarchy by unapologetically expressing its exhaustion and refusal to cooperate or be tamed. These unapologetic expressions relate most closely to black feminist thought and “the

recognition of this connection between experience and consciousness that shapes the everyday lives of individual African American women,” but also suggest a situated intersectional feminism that emerges out of Appalachia as wild, contested, and agentic (Hill Collins 24). These trails, then, become necessary to illustrate the ways in which Appalachian poetry itself infiltrates the local expressions of dominant cultures within Appalachia and leaves traces of histories and resistance.

In her poem “Rule Number One,” originally published in *Rice* in 1995, Nikky Finney illustrates the connections between black feminine experiences and the back-and-forth migrations that are often implicated in Appalachian existences:

If you send me here again you

Send me back the same you

Can change my clothes

Only leave me in the right realm makes

No never mind to me

Which shade you decide upon just

Be sure and return me

As one whole

To a Black woman’s curly life

Nothing else nothing (168)

The subject (“you”) named in this poem becomes especially important for understanding the ways in which outside forces are often behind forced racialized migrations in and throughout Appalachia. In *A Space on the Side of the Road: Cultural Poetics in an ‘Other’ America*,” Kathleen Stewart analyzes the ways in which Appalachia and, more specifically, West Virginia exist as an “Other” America because of larger processes of capitalism and modernization. She suggests that, in this region, young people’s “drifting back and forth from the city to the hills” brings with it “revivalistic” progress in exchange for the sacrifices made in exile (Stewart 48). Stewart illustrates that home and belonging in Appalachia are often contested for women; however, Finney illustrates here that there is a situated Black femininity to which the narrator wishes to return after leaving. It makes no difference to her how she is forced to perform outside of this identity situation, “makes / no never mind to me / which shade you decide upon,” as long as it is still within the realm of black womanhood (Finney 4-6). Privileging Affrilachian femininity here, Finney is creating resistance within discourses of Appalachia and feminism that often overlook the experiences of Affrilachian women.

Finney then continues to outline the particular kind of Affrilachian womanhood to which she wishes to return after having been made to leave:

Jus’ something ‘bout the way we do

The do the words we use

The care we take the shit we shake off

The porch how it becomes our office

The lover cover we always find to throw

No matter how wide the waters roll

How we hide our heavy hearts

And laugh with our soup bone bony selves

And boil some water and offer even you some

Supper has always been on us (168)

Here Finney points to the resilience of Affrilachian womanhood but also alludes to notions of communal resistance and care: “the lover cover we always find to throw . . . / And boil some water and offer even you some / Supper has always been on us” (15-20). Throughout this section of delineating Affrilachian femininity, Finney illustrates that Affrilachian women not only care for one another, but also extend care to the “you” or outsider addressed in this poem. These notions of care and hospitality relate to what hooks refers to as “A Community of Care,” wherein Appalachians maintain a commitment to caring for one another and, notably, for outsiders, even those with whom they fundamentally disagree (228). This hospitality combined with other imagery invoking southern U.S. identity such as “The porch how it becomes our office,” serve to illustrate how Affrilachian women resist narratives of black invisibility within the region (Finney 14).

Continuing to call attention to the forces that often make Appalachians migrate throughout and outside of the region, Finney exemplifies the nature of resistance within Appalachian feminism:

If you decide (for whatever reason)

I should do this again you

You send me back here the same you hear

I want old familiar ordinary skin stretched

On any new bones

You are readying for me

Return me only

To a Black woman's curly conjured life (168-9)

Here, the narrator not only directly speaks back to these outside forces, but also demands to be returned back to Appalachia “the same you hear,” commanding an agentic authority that resists the changes and assimilations often implicated in Appalachian migration. This demand also resists the oppressive compulsion of outsiders to force both Appalachian hillbillies as well as black folks to “civilize” or otherwise erase Appalachian identities: Klotter again describing both as seen as “violent, ‘savage’ people who needed ‘civilization’ and religion’s guiding hand” (53). Thus, it becomes clear that “Rule Number One” outlines the ways in which Affrilachian poets demand not only visibility, but also agency and authority over their own identities, resistances, and experiences within and outside of Appalachia, or among their “world” travels (Lugones 12).

Final Thoughts

Spriggs and Finney interact with one another as Affrilachian poets to challenge the taken-for-grantedness of Appalachian racial heterogeneity. In “The Afro that Ate Kentucky,” the dominant culture’s sleeping is illustrative of what Turner calls “Black invisibility” within the region, where narratives and histories of blackness are overlooked and replaced with an

unquestionable construction of Appalachian identity as homogenously white (3). Spriggs subverts dominant iterations not only of Appalachian racial formation but also of femininity by marking her geographical location with traces of her Appalachian regional consumption while the dominant culture sleeps. Finney similarly prioritizes black femininity in “Rule Number One.” Although the representation of womanhood in Finney’s poem is closely related to southern US constructions of identity, it also highlights particular aspects of caregiving work attributes to Appalachian feminism and resistance. Ultimately, both poets illustrate a commitment to changing the narrative of Appalachian identity and, by virtue of working through feminine imagery and movements, intervene in the problematically homogenous representations of Appalachia by calling attention to intersecting and often contested interactions of race, gender, and region.

Chapter Four

Conclusion

Throughout the analyses of Spriggs's "The Afro that Ate Kentucky" and Finney's "Rule Number One," evidence of Appalachian feminism and Affrilachian resistance becomes clear. Spriggs tends to the ways in which Affrilachian femininity subversively consumes regional color in the dark of night, while Finney illustrates how migration and interaction with dominant cultures fails to compromise Affrilachian feminine identities. Further, Dorothy Allison's, bell hooks's, and my stories all illustrate that movement through geographical, temporal, and cultural locations is necessary for the literary, social, and epistemic survival of Appalachian radicals, for the dominant culture shames us into the pressures of assimilation. My autoethnography paired with readings of Appalachian memoir and Affrilachian poetry suggest that intersectional Appalachian feminism provides a potent site from which to interrogate many different cultural artifacts to continue to develop and problematize dominant constructions of Appalachian culture. There is certainly much more to be said about anti-racism as well as feminism within Appalachia, so this project aims to set the stage for those additional interrogations. Appalachian folk music, oral histories, and feminist organizational rhetorical strategies are all rich sites for continued analysis. Although I do not attend to these discursive sites within this thesis, it is my hope that laying bare the foundations of intersectional Appalachian feminism can productively contribute to the rethinking of race, gender, and region in rural studies and beyond.

Works Cited

- Allison, Dorothy. *Skin: Talking About Sex, Class, & Literature*. New York: McNaughton & Gunn, 1994. Print.
- Allison, Dorothy. *Trash*. New York: Penguin, 2002. Print.
- Anzaldúa, Gloria. *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. San Fransisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1987. Print.
- Atkins, G. Douglas. *Reading Deconstruction/Deconstructive Reading*. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2015. *Ebook Library*. Web. 15 September 2015.
- Barlow, A. L.. “The Contemporary Crisis of Neo-Liberalism and Black Power Today.” *Black Scholar* 40.2 (2010): 24-33. Web. 15 Apr. 2015.
- Beauregard, Robert A. *When America Became Suburban*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006. *eBook Collection (EBSCOhost)*.
- Bennett, Tony, Grossberg, Lawrence, & Morris, Meaghan. *New Keywords: A Revised Vocabulary of Culture and Society*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005. Print.
- Billings, Dwight B. “Introduction.” *Back Talk from Appalachia: Confronting Stereotypes*. Eds. Dwight B. Billings, Gurney Norman, and Katherine Ledford. Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 1999. Print.
- Bingman, Mary Beth. “Stopping the Bulldozers: What Difference Did it Make?” *Fighting Back in Appalachia: Traditions of Resistance and Change*. Ed. Stephen Fisher. Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1993. 17-30. Print.

- Burt, Stephen; Fried, Daisy; Jackson, Major; & Warn, Emily. "Exchange: Does Poetry Have a Social Function?" *Poetry* 189.4 (2007): 297-309. Web. 15 Jan. 2016.
- Cabbell, Edward J. "Black Invisibility and Racism within Appalachia: An Informal Survey." *Blacks in Appalachia*. Ed. William H. Turner. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1985. 3-10. Print.
- Dippel, John V. H. *Race to the Frontier: "white Flight" and Westward Expansion*. New York: Algora Pub, 2005. Print.
- Ellis, Carolyn. *The Ethnographic I: A Methodological Novel About Autoethnography*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2004. Internet resource.
- Engelhardt, Elizabeth S. D.. *The Tangled Roots of Feminism, Environmentalism, and Appalachian Literature*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2003. Print.
- Finney, Nicky. "Rule Number One." *Rice*. Toronto, Ontario: Sister Vision, 1995. Print.
- Fisher, Stephen. "Introduction." *Fighting Back in Appalachia: Traditions of Resistance and Change*. Ed. Stephen Fisher. Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1993. 1-14. Print.
- Frankenberg, Ruth. "Whiteness as an 'Unmarked' Cultural Category." *The Meaning of Difference: American Constructions of Race, Sex and Gender, Social Class, and Sexual Orientation*. Eds. Karen A. Rosenblum & Toni-Michelle C. Travis. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2003. 92-98. Print.
- Hall, Stuart. "Cultural Studies and its Theoretical Legacies." *The Cultural Studies Reader*. Ed. Simon During. New York: Routledge, 1993. 33-44. Print.
- Harding, Sandra. "Borderlands Epistemologies." *Just Methods: An Interdisciplinary Feminist Reader*. Ed. Alison M. Jaggar. Boulder: Paradigm, 2012. 331-42. Print.

Higginbotham, Evelyn Brooks. *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1993. Print.

Hill Collins, Patricia. "Black Feminist Epistemology." *Just Methods: An Interdisciplinary Feminist Reader*. Ed. Alison M. Jaggar. Boulder: Paradigm, 2012. 247-57. Print.

Hill Collins, Patricia. *Fighting words: Black Women & the Search for Justice*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998. Print.

Hill Collins, Patricia. "Learning from the Outsider Within: The Sociological Significance of Black Feminist Thought." *Just Methods: An Interdisciplinary Feminist Reader*. Ed. Alison M. Jaggar. Boulder: Paradigm, 2012. 308-20. Print.

hooks, bell. *Belonging: A Culture of Place*. New York: Routledge, 2009. Print.

Jaggar, Alison. "Love and Knowledge: Emotion in Feminist Epistemology." *Just Methods: An Interdisciplinary Feminist Reader*. Ed. Alison M. Jaggar. Boulder: Paradigm, 2012. 378-91. Print.

Johnson, Kenneth. "Unpredictable Directions of Rural Population Growth and Migration." *Challenges for Rural America in the Twenty-First Century*. Eds. Brown, David L., Swanson, Louis E., and Barton, Alan W. University Park: Pennsylvania, 2003. Print.

Kirwan Institute. "Structural Racialization: A Systems Approach to Understanding the Causes and Consequences of Racial Inequity," 2013. Web. 20 Apr. 2015.

Kraver, Jeraldine. "'Mobile Images:' Myth and Resistance in Nikki Finney's 'Rice.'" *The Southern Literary Journal*. 34.2 (2002): 134-47. *JSTOR*. Web. 12 Jan. 2016.

Klotter, James C. "The Black South and White Appalachia" *Blacks in Appalachia*. Ed. William H. Turner. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1985. 51 – 67. Print.

- Little, Jo. "The Development of Feminist Perspectives in Rural Gender Studies." *Feminisms and Ruralities*. Eds Pini Barbara et al. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2014. Print.
- Lugones, Maria. "Playfulness, 'World' Travelling, and Loving Perception." *Hypatia* 2.2 (1987): 3-19. Web. 3 Feb. 2015.
- Lury, Celia, Franklin, Sarah, & Stacey, Jackie. "Feminism and Cultural Studies: Pasts, Presents, Futures." *Off-Centre: Feminism and Cultural Studies*, Eds Sarah Franklin, Celia Lury, & Jackie Stacey. New York: Routledge, 2007. Print.
- Omi, Michael and Howard Winant. *Racial Formation in the United States*. New York: Routledge, 2015. Print.
- Perez, Emma. *The Decolonial Imaginary: Writing Chicanas into History*. Ithaca, Indiana: Indiana UP, 1999. Print.
- Perkins, Tanya. "Migration and the Appalachian Writer: Bianca Spriggs, Ann Pancake, and Robert Gipe." *The Chattahoochee Review*, 2015. 79-87. Print.
- Reed, T.V. "The Poetical is the Political: Feminist Poetry and the Poetics of Women's Rights." *Feminist Theory Reader*. Eds. Carole R. McCann & Seung-kyung Kim. New York: Routledge, 2005. 85-97. Print.
- Roberts, Dorothy. *Fatal Invention: How Science, Politics, and Big Business Re-Crete Race in the Twenty-First Century*. New York: The New Press, 2011. Print.
- Sietz, Virginia Rinaldo. "Class, Gender, and Resistance in the Appalachian Coalfields." *Community Activism and Feminist Politics: Organizing Across Race, Class, and Gender*. Ed. Nancy A. Naples. New York: Routledge, 1998. 213-36. Print.
- Spriggs, Bianca. *Kaffir Lily*. Nicholasville, KY: Wind Publications, 2010. Print.

Stewart, Kathleen. *A Space on the Side of the Road: Cultural Poetics in an "Other" America*.

Princeton: Princeton UP, 1996. Print.

Straight, Belinda. "Cold Hearths: The Losses of Home in an Appalachian Woman's Life

History." *Women on the Verge of Home*. Ed. Belinda Straight. Albany: State University of New York, 2005. 89-107. Print.

Straight, Belinda. "Introduction: Women on the Verge of Home." *Women on the Verge of Home*.

Ed. Belinda Straight. Albany: State University of New York, 2005. 1-25. Print.

Turner, William H. "Affrilachia As Brand." *Appalachian Heritage* 39.4 (2011): 27-30. *Project*

MUSE. Web. 22 Aug. 2015.

Walker, Frank X. *Affrilachia*. Lexington, KY: Old Cove Press, 2000. Print.