

AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN IN APPALACHIA: PERSONAL EXPRESSIONS
OF RACE, PLACE AND GENDER

A Thesis

by

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ABSTRACT

African American women in Appalachia have lived, survived and long been overlooked by dominant narratives that support stereotypical depictions of the Appalachian region and its inhabitants. A little over twenty years ago, poet and scholar Frank X Walker coined the term “Affrilachia” to describe people of African American descent in the Appalachian region. Though Walker’s term announces the presence of blacks in Appalachia, in a multidimensional sense of cultural identity place is a central theme, along with race, gender, and class, in the identity experiences of Appalachia’s African American women inhabitants. As a marginalized group in the region of Appalachia, Black Appalachian women discussed in this work provide a compelling case for understanding identity experiences within the region. This thesis works to acknowledge and analyze the “intersectionality” in the personal expressions, poetry and creative works of Black Appalachian women. This thesis investigates the personal expressions of four modes of survival by African American women in/of Appalachia to understand the multiple dimensions of Affrilachian identity and memory.

This research project brings together scholarship of performances studies and Kimberle Crenshaw’s notion of intersectionality to explore the unquestionable intersection of place and other dimensions (race, class, gender) of the African American women’s experience in Appalachia. This thesis explores how themes of survival and place manifest in the oral history, personal narratives and creative works of Black women in Appalachia. The investigation and analysis of Affrilachian women’s identity

from the point of view of Affrilachian women, offers an opportunity to exponentially increase our understanding of the intersections of class, gender, race and place in performances of the everyday life.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my mother, Remona Barbour, who has shown me firsthand what Black women's survival in Appalachia "sounds like," "looks like," and "lives like," my entire life. I love you to the moon and the stars and back.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This project is a study of how the memory of survival, in its various iterations among African American women in the region of Appalachia, represent a multidimensional identity experience. I focus on four modes of survival: creative, community, individual and collective survival. Each case represents experiences of African American women in and of the region and presents their memories of growing up as insider/outside. The experiences of the women are against a narrative of the region which erases the presence of theirs and other black bodies from its social, local and geographic history. Despite this historical erasure, the women each claim a place for themselves through their stories of adversity. I examine the expressions of Black women in Appalachia to understand what it means to be an Appalachian.

With the obvious presence of African Americans within the region of Appalachia, the sporadic amount of research on black women's experiences specific to the region is surprising. This is a significant exclusion based on the reports of the ARC that have documented an African American presence in the region for well over 100 years. In particular, the study of black women's survival in the region represents survival only in the medicinal sense. Of those Black Appalachian women included in the cancer survival research, a large majority represented the central parts of the region. Of the studies that document the historic presence of African Americans in the region, very few speak directly about black women. Even fewer speak to their identity experiences

specifically and does not include those voices outside the rural and central parts of the region.

Research Question and Methodology

In 1990, in response to the historic marginality of persons of color in the region of Appalachia, poet and scholar Frank X Walker founded the word Affrilachian to describe people of African descent from the region of Appalachia. Since the creation of the word in 1991, the designation Affrilachian has expanded to describe not just Black, but Brown and other persons of color sustaining a presence within Appalachia. As an Affrilachian woman myself, I have experienced that identity in a gendered, educated, semi-country, semi-urban, Black, Southern, Regional culture. My work joins the efforts of black woman scholars such as Kimberle Crenshaw, calling for an indebted understanding of life at the intersections of race, gender, class and place. Affrilachia serves as a theoretical frame for intersectional engagement.

The chapters of my thesis explore survival at the intersection of race, place and gender. The idea of survival works in multiple ways. Each chapter highlights one of the four modes of survival [creative, community, individual, collective] as a means of understanding black women's sense of identity experience within the region of Appalachia. Across the four modes, survival means two things. On one level, it means the sustained life and presence of black bodies in the region, literature, archive and community spaces of the region despite a historical marginalization and/or exclusion of Blacks in these sectors. Locating them as Appalachian survivors explicitly links their experiences to Appalachian regional and cultural history. On another level, survival

means withstanding the emotionally traumatic experience of community dispossession, land/environment degradation, and physical abuse of women's bodies and the literary silencing of Blacks in Appalachia. In essence, I link survival not just to victimization but more broadly to adversity. I apply this meaning of survival to the texts, oral histories, personal narratives and aesthetics performed by Black women of Appalachia.

In this thesis, I apply on ethnographic, archival and textual methods. My methods for this project include archival research in the Black Appalachian Oral History collection, participant observation and interviews with Affrilachian Poets in 2012 and 2013 and performance and auto-ethnography of memories as a black woman in the region of Appalachia. My thesis is intended to suggest a way of thinking about black Appalachian women's identity subject to ever-changing social historical contexts and closely linked to an experience of place geography.

Chapter Overviews

Chapter II: ““BOOM BOOM” Creative Survival in Affrilachia,” examines four creative works of Affrilachian Poets. The Affrilachian Poets are a multicultural community of activist writers. Their works often embrace multiple creative influences and themes of “family, identity, place and social justice” (qtd. in Taylor Trauth). Writing about Appalachia and regional identity, Ronda Jenkins Armstrong says “The notion of Affrilachia problematizes the Appalachian identity, both as it is seen within and outside the region, by asserting the sometimes controversial presence of racial diversity within Appalachian, and by illustrating the ways in which Appalachia is not so unlike the rest of America” (212). The works of female members of the Affrilachian

Poets bring problematic facets of Appalachian identity to the fore. Their works depict Black life, relationships and the visibility of non-whites in the specifically southern and central parts of Appalachia. Using Kathryn Taylor Trauth's notion of Performative Rhetorical Ecology as a point of departure, the chapter speaks clearly against black erasure in the region. The poets themselves suggest that their works are rooted in autobiographical, political and historical contexts. In each poem, I analyze the construction of regional and racial identities that critique or challenge ideas about the region at large. I interpret the construction of Black and Appalachian identity through their Affrilachian poetry.

Chapter III 'No place like Newtown' The Personal Narrative Performance of One Black Appalachian Woman," presents reflections on black community experience. Newtown, a Southwest Virginia community in the town of Blacksburg, Virginia, was the focus of my research in the summer of 2010. The all black neighborhood lay at the "edge of the sixteen squares," a phrase often used by interlocutors to describe the marginal place of Newtown within Blacksburg's limits. Newtown, a now extinct neighborhood, endured economic hardships, illuminating a history of Appalachia in which blacks migrated from rural parts of the region to more urban areas in search of jobs in the 20th century (*Blacks in Appalachia*). In this chapter, I discuss an interview I had with one black woman of Newtown, Ms. Faith Christian. In this chapter, I analyze the personal narrative performance of Mrs. Christian, a black woman born and raised in Blacksburg, Virginia. Persistent in Ms. Faith Christian's personal narrative are values of family, place, safety and home. Underscored by American ideals of the 1950s and 60s, she

presents Newtown as both a real and fictive place. Today the ruins of this now extinct neighborhood lie in the Odd Fellows Hall, an historic landmark and museum of African American history in Blacksburg, Virginia. Though Newtown would appear emptied of history and memory, it remains in the memories of its former residents. Ms. Christian's personal narrative performance fills its empty spaces with her most cherished memories. She performs her Black Appalachian identity through reflections of life experiences growing up in Newtown.

Chapter IV "Accounts of Labor, Education and Race in the Black Appalachian Women's Oral Histories," is an analysis of a group of women's oral histories. The Black Appalachian Oral History Collection contains oral history interviews with real residents of Southwest Virginia. Within the oral histories, Montgomery County Virginia residents explore their memories of growing up in Appalachia. In 1990, Dr. Michael Cooke of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University conducted interviews with twenty five residents in Southwest Virginia. In his interviews, he asked questions concerning black life in Appalachia, explored experiences specific to a historically black educational institution in Christiansburg, Virginia and sought to understand race relations in Appalachia prior to desegregation. The participants of Cooke's oral history interviews represented communities in and around Montgomery County including Blacksburg, Christiansburg, Elliston, Riner, Shawsville, and Wake Forest (*Black Appalachian Oral History Project*). In this chapter, I feature the experiences of the female participants from the Black Appalachian Oral History Collection to begin to question Appalachian identity as a construction linked to diverse experiences of race, class and work.

Chapter V “Affrilachian Memory: A Performance Exploration of Identity” is an auto-ethnographic analysis of Affrilachian Identity. Affrilachian Memory is a series of performance ethnography scenes. The performance script present alternative contemporary voices to the Black Appalachian women represented in the archive and Appalachian literary tradition. The scenes in this chapter represent my personal journey as an Affrilachian woman. As an Affrilachian, I offer my auto-ethnographic analysis depicting my familial experiences in and of Appalachia to critically analyze a concept of black identity in Appalachia. Affrilachian Memory traces my social, cultural, political concept of Appalachia. In this chapter, I combine my reflections on the oral histories, fieldwork, poetry, personal interviews with Affrilachian poets, and personal conversations with Black women in and of the region to yield a complex view of Affrilachian survival from multiple angles.

CHAPTER II

‘BOOM BOOM!’ CREATIVE SURVIVAL IN AFFRILACHIAN POETRY

“The experiences of blacks in Appalachia were not circulated until they were named, not meaningful until they were performed, and not rhetorical until those performances inspired new conceptions of Appalachian identity” (Taylor Trauth).

"Insisting on the black presence in Appalachia, on the existence and vitality of Affrilachia, is a way of showing that we are here, of showing ourselves as much as anyone else” (P.C. Taylor 1).

“Affrilachian writers write about being Black in America. They write about being Black in the South and they write about being Black in Appalachia. They write about human relationships that all people have” (K.N. Ellis¹³).

The Affrilachian Poets are a group of poets who creatively document experiences specific to Blacks in the region of Appalachia. As a group, the Affrilachian poets are heterogeneous, embracing male, female, Black, Puerto Rican, and other demographics across the region. I have selected a group of black women among the Affrilachian Poets who are an example of diversity within the Appalachian region. Specifically, I examine the works of female Affrilachian poets Crystal Good, Kelly Norman Ellis, Crystal Wilkinson and Bianca Spriggs. The poets I have chosen represent various states of Appalachia including Kentucky, Tennessee and West Virginia. They also represent the first and second generation members of the Affrilachian Poets. Both the women

themselves (bodies and experiences) and their works offer points of departure for conversations regarding the centrality of place in the formation of racial and gender identities.

In this chapter, I approach poetry as an expressive form of identity. I study how black women in Appalachia constructed their identities around the idea of creative survival. The mode of survival that I am exploring is the creative mode in Affrilachian poetry. Using intersectionality as a frame and paying close attention to place as a component of their Affrilachian identity I answer: What are the themes of survival represented in the works of these poets? What forms of community do these themes represent? More broadly, what do the works of Affrilachian Poets teach us about Appalachia? I argue that the themes expressed by the Affrilachian female poets discussed here are identity (regional, cultural, racial and gendered), the concept of homeplace and connection to the region and landscape. These themes underscore the significance of place in how African American women of the region see their identity.

Together, the works of the female Affrilachian Poets I discuss in this chapter creatively represent facets of Black life in Appalachia. The women's works imagine a community between poet and region, of Affrilachian literary artists, a creative family and color-filled Appalachia. Their works present Affrilachia as a frame for developing and maintaining culture codes that make community through relations of power between individuals. The works involve aesthetics choices that represent Black consciousness along with regional ideals and intimacies. Finally, the poems, as works of black voices in the region, evidence Black visibility in Appalachia. In all, the poems express narratives

of growing up in Appalachia, educate readers on Appalachia's inextricable relationship to place for Appalachian's, and protest disregard of the region by hegemonic forces, thus advocating for all, not just Affrilachians, of Appalachia's people.

Brief Background to Affrilachian Poets

The Affrilachian Poets (AP), a group of artists who self-identify as members of the African diaspora and as inhabitants of Appalachia, was founded in 1991. The original ensemble was established at the University of Kentucky's Martin Luther King Cultural center. This group of "rhetorical agents," comprises scholars, activists, professoriates, and poet laureates (Taylor Trauth). Since its inception, the group has grown from one generation of founding poets to include five generations of artists collectively working to name and redefine Appalachia as a place of "ethnic and *racial* diversity" (McCarroll 23). More than a group of artists, the AP are a movement toward reshaping perceptions of Appalachia, within and outside the region's imagined boundaries. In 2000, the Poets participated in the production of *Coal Black Voices*, a documentary that sought to acknowledge and showcase the works of the Affrilachian Poets. The AP openly acknowledge that they sought to shift monolithic perceptions about the region of Appalachia and its diversity or seeming lack thereof. Since then, the poets have continuously contested the invisibility of Appalachia's black and brown people through widespread publication, touring, and poetry readings.

Narratives about Blacks in Appalachia, describe the racial heritage of Appalachia's non- whites as a "minority within a minority" (Drennen 5). The poets challenge Affrilachian invisibility by asserting Black survival in Appalachia through the

region's most visible characters. The Poets make this assertion by addressing a connection between place (mountains, tobacco and other landscape forms) and their Appalachian heritage in their works. The poets allude to important issues in Appalachia through their imagery, including forms of environmental racism, violence and neglect.

What follows is a section on the theoretical frameworks for the chapter. Second, are introductions to the poets individually, the contexts in which they write and the poems. The contextual introductions are preceded by a summary of the poems. For the remaining part of the chapter, I focus on analyzing four poems in three sections; themes, community and teachings to illuminate specific articulations of race, place and gender. Finally, I conclude with an explanation of how the poems fit into a larger context of survival, specific to African American Women in Appalachia.

Theoretical Framework

My theoretical approach is drawn from Performative Rhetorical Ecology. Performative rhetorical ecology refers to self-identification practices expressed by Affrilachians to identify their multifaceted experiences as “outsiders on the inside”(Taylor Trauth). Writing in an Affrilachian context, Kathryn Taylor Trauth's notion of Performative Rhetorical Ecology focuses on a performative influence of rhetorical scenes. Trauth's use of performance and performative refers to activities of naming and identifying that reconceive notions of place and history within Appalachia. Ecologies are a reference to the environmental scenes depicted in the poet's imagery. Performative Rhetorical Ecology offers a framework for understanding how the

Affrilachian Poets assert and perform Appalachian identity, gender and Blackness in Appalachia.

My interpretive methods are pulled from Dramatistic Analysis. Kenneth Burke's Dramatistic Analysis provides a frame for understanding the dramatic possibilities in a text. Burke's pentad of a textual analysis (act, scene, agent, agency and purpose), offers a lens for realizing potential action, specific claims the writer is making about culture, within the text. I use Burke's pentad to analyze the composition (the whole structure) and technical choices (poetic devices) used by the Affrilachian Poets. I apply Burke's emphasis on image and implications to the creative expressions, poems of the Affrilachian poets.

Given the readers' expected unfamiliarity with the works explored in this chapter, I use poet Audre Lorde's essay "Poetry Is Not a Luxury," as a theoretical frame for interpretations of survival enacted and embodied by the poets and their works. Pointing out the significance of poetry in Black women's lives, Lorde clarifies that, "it is through poetry that we give name to those ideas which are-until the poem- nameless and formless, about to be birthed, but already felt" (Lorde 37). Lorde goes on to say "For women, then, poetry is not a luxury. It is a vital necessity of our existence, it forms the quality of the light within which we predicate our hopes and dream toward survival and change first made into language, then into idea, then into more tangible action." (Lorde 38). Lorde is speaking of the importance of naming in a context in which women are writing as victims of sexual violence. As victims of literary silencing, In this chapter I interpret the writings of the AP in a context of invisibility.

Introducing the Poets

Kelly Norman Ellis

Kelly Norman Ellis, a native of Illinois, is a founding member of the Affrilachian Poets. Norman Ellis acknowledges that she became Affrilachian at the age of fifteen, when her family moved to Knoxville, Tennessee and she was first acquainted with the works of poet laureate Nikki Giovanni (K.N. Ellis¹²). Norman Ellis is currently an Associate Professor of English and Creative Writing in the MFA program at Chicago State University. As a Cave Canem fellow, a prestigious title awarded to U.S. African American writers, her works have been featured on a number of literary stages. She has published two books, including *Offerings of Desire* and *Tougaloo Blues*. Norman Ellis recognizes Langston Hughes and the Black Arts movement as her major literary influences. Her poem, “Raised by Women,” was her first poetry reading she presented as a member of the Affrilachian Poets (McCarroll 24). In her poem, Norman Ellis lyrically evokes African American women’s experiences of everyday life. Norman Ellis’s work tend to be about Black southern life, her family and Black life in America.

Crystal Wilkinson

Crystal Wilkinson, another founding member of the Affrilachian Poets, is a professor, story teller, book author and Kentucky native. Having grown up in the rural parts of Kentucky, Wilkinson asserts that “being country is as much a part of me as my full lips, wide hips, dreadlocks and high cheek bones” (*Blackberries Blackberries* 3). Wilkinson associates her membership of the Affrilachian Poets as a point of entry for expressing her subjugated knowledge’s. Subjugated knowledge’s are often expressed by

“oppressed and marginalized populations whose experiences had been described, defined and categorized by powerful experts” (Hartman 483). Wilkinson bears witness to her own experience as a marginalized person in the region, of being both Black and Appalachian. She says that “the Affrilachian Poets, validated my whole self and validated my whole body of writing that not only to them {AP} to that group, but that individually and collectively that we had a message that could be understood and heard by the outside world.” Wilkinson describes her membership in AP helped her to counter the marginalization she experienced two fold as a “minority within a minority.” Writing as an African American woman, many of Wilkinson’s poems explore identity, place and belonging to Appalachia.

Bianca Spriggs

Bianca Spriggs is a second generation member of the Affrilachian Poets, having joined the group as a student in 2004. Spriggs induction into the Affrilachia Poets can be credited to her national accomplishments as a doctoral student at the University of Kentucky, birthplace of the Affrilachian Poets. As an artist/activist, poet and film producer, she focuses her energy and writings to issues related to race, gender and violence (biancaspriggs.com). One of her more recent projects, *Thirteen*, involves an installation of art and poetry to represent the lives of African American women victims of lynching and other violence in Kentucky. Across her work, Spriggs captures an array of Appalachian voices to depict ethnic diversity and racial heritage.

Crystal Good

Crystal Good is a second generation member of the group, joining in 1999. Good self identifies as a “Writer, Poet, Quantum Thinker and Valley Girl.” Her works most notably address themes of “Quantum physics, Appalachian culture, gender equality and mountaintop removal” (CrystalGood.net). Born and raised in the region of Appalachia, she is a native of West Virginia and an activist of issues facing Appalachians of all kinds. She credits joining the Affrilachian Poets more than twelve years ago at her first feature, poetry reading. Good’s poems often offer a place for exploring gender, sexuality and environmental racism within the region.

Introducing the Poems

“Raised by Women”

Kelly Norman Ellis’s “Raised by Women,” is a reflective lyric poem, a reflection on the state of mind of the poet that tells a story about a Black woman’s coming of age in America and Appalachia (Ghare). Norman Ellis uses a female speaker who talks about the cultural lessons and instances when black women are required to undertake their journey toward womanhood. Norman Ellis imagines heritage through everyday interactions with various women, providing significant cultural moments to depict coming of age. The setting of the poem is in America’s south, evidenced by Norman Ellis’s southern heritage imagery of debutant balls and southern cooking. The speaker grows through her adolescence with each new setting of the poem, as she moves from the kitchen to the living room, the living room to the dance floor, the dance floor to the tea room, the tea room to the street, and from the street to the world. Within each of

these settings, Norman Ellis depicts different kinds of women, homemakers, hairstylist, church women, artists, and educators that influenced her personal growth. The poem is a fast paced progression toward black womanhood. The prideful tone of the poem and the changing rhythmic pattern of her repeating line “Kinda Women,” suggests this isn’t just a story of coming to age, but an account of heritage and identity.

“Terrain”

Wilkinson’s “Terrain,” is a prose poem, a poem that appears as prose but reads as poetry, about belonging and longing for home in Appalachia (Delville 15). The speaker of the poem has the persona of a black female Appalachian. The persona narrates her Appalachian origin and exile from those origins. Crystal Wilkinson’s personal history, having grown up in the rural parts of Kentucky, suggests the setting in this poem moves between her Kentucky homeplace and an urban area situated on the outskirts of Appalachia. The structure of this poem is worth mentioning. On the page, Wilkinson text is one long paragraph of writing, void of capitalization. Though she incorporates punctuation into her piece, the poem appears as one block on the page. This structure makes reading her words an effortless flow from one sentence to the next. Wilkinson uses the landscape as a metaphor for the woman speaker of the poem. Wilkinson alludes to southern heritage through references to “fried green tomatoes” and “oxtails and kraut boiling in a cast iron pot.” She also alludes to Appalachian spaces through her phrases, “mines in these lily covered valleys,” and “hills and mountains.” In “Terrain,” Wilkinson creates a portrait of an Appalachian woman struggling to hold on to her roots. Alluding

to Appalachian and Black culture, Wilkinson's work provides an opportunity to explore Black belonging in Appalachia.

"My Kinda Woman"

Sprigg's "My Kinda Woman," is a descriptive lyric poem, a poem that serves a didactic purpose and contains lengthy and detailed descriptions, about a woman character Appalachia of the region of Appalachia ("Poetry02"). The speaker of the poem describes the character's cultural heritage, character and qualities. Appalachia, the woman and speaker of the poem, personifies the diversity of the entire region of Appalachia. The woman represents the place of Appalachia itself. Spriggs' free verse poem moves the reader from line to line as we learn another dimension of the woman's identity, and something new about the place of Appalachia in each line. Spriggs writes about Appalachia's contradictions and contemplations, in a slow pensive tone. She uses phrases like "A white father," "black mother," and "claims Indian roots," to create the portrait of a woman of mixed cultural heritage and to represent Appalachia's mixed racial and ethnic history. Spriggs also uses metonymy to describe the changing political demographic of the region. Specifically, the woman's clothing expresses the political demographic of the region. The political character of Appalachia is most evident in her line; "she used to wear Blue but now it's Red most of the time." Here the colors are metonyms for the Republican (red) and Democratic (blue) presence and dominance in Appalachia. Spriggs' subject embodies the significant relationship between people and land within the region. "My Kinda Woman," offers a perspective on gendered representations of Appalachian politics and culture.

“BOOM BOOM”

“BOOM BOOM” is a descriptive lyric poem about environmental racism in Appalachia. Environmental racism is an “experience of people in communities that bear a disproportionate impact of environmental hazards” (Cole and Foster 11). The persona in “BOOM BOOM,” describes strip mining and the experiences of women in West Virginia. The poem reflects upon interactions between women from West Virginia and a group of male strangers. “BOOM BOOM,” choreographs a dance between the women and men by voicing the motives for both parties through the voice of an omniscient speaker. Good uses the women’s experiences as metaphors to depict the maltreatment of West Virginia’s landscape. The speaker of the poem redresses the habitual exploitation of the women, and land, by privileged men. Repetition of the phrase BOOM BOOM, the repeated hyperbole, signifies a vernacular context in which the music systems of country folk’s trucks have the base booming so loud that the vibrations can be felt by passersby’s. BOOM BOOM also signifies the destruction of Appalachia’s land as the sound of industrial explosions in mines. Additionally, another repeated line at the beginning of each stanza “them boys,” signifies the characters are outsiders to the Appalachia. Good presents the destruction happening within the region of Appalachia by writing “The Girls. The Mountains. Explode.” Good’s work provides an instance for exploring environmental racism in gendered representations of Appalachia.

Themes: Identity, Homeplace, and Connection to the Region

Identity, homeplace and connection to the region are three fundamental themes I outline in the works of Affrilachian Poets. I consider identity as an expression of belonging to Appalachia, homeplace as site of identity shaping, and relationship to the land as a way of evoking connections to place. Individually and collectively, these themes capture ways of understanding Black experiences in Appalachia as both Affrilachian and Appalachian. Some of the themes in the poems overlap, and help to further understand Affrilachian identity as something that is mixed and complicated. Indeed, all three themes in the writings of these black Affrilachian women poets illuminate personal and cultural heritage in Appalachia.

Identity

In the first stanza of “Raised by Women,” Kelly Norman Ellis begins with a story of her personal history. Norman Ellis uses imagery to describe the women of her family physically and emotionally. Offering colorful portraits of the women, she uses bright metaphors for their skin tones, wardrobes, the kind of food they created, and personalities. In her poem, Norman Ellis incorporates quoted dialogue phrases said by the women in the comfort of their private spaces. She includes particular black vernacular forms such as dance, cooking, etiquette practices and cultural events, like debutant balls, to allude to southern culture and her story of coming of age. She references notable Black figures like Angela Davis and James Baldwin to assert a political consciousness to her poem. The dialogue found in the lines of the poem, “better say yes ma’am to me,” “Girl lay back and let me scratch your head,” “Go on girl shake

that thing,” “Don’t mess with me, pack your bags and get the hell out of my house,” and “I’ll see you in court,” create the impression of the respectful, talented, and caring women that raised Norman Ellis (K.N. Ellis 5). Normans Ellis’ work depicts relationships between Black women and provides a way of understanding notions of identity among a family of Black women relevant to a Black experience in Appalachia.

In her own words, Norman Ellis says that belonging to Appalachia as a black woman is about being part of a community (*Coal Black Voices*.) In my interview with Norman Ellis she echoed her attitude saying “I never had any experience [of] really being in a community that understood what I was writing about. I think that was the common thread from my position that pulled us together.” For Norman Ellis being understood by her community of fellow Affrilachian writers has shaped her sense of belonging. In her poem, Norman Ellis locates her identity among a community of Black women in America. She communicates her Affrilachian identity through deeply personal reflections of her blackness and ties to her southern heritage. By repeating the phrase “by women,” at the end of each stanza, Norman Ellis defines herself within a collective of women who have had an undeniable impact and presence in her life and in the region. Whether they are matriarchs, activists, artists, church ladies, debutantes or educators, Norman Ellis emphasizes personal connections to the people that “raised” her, and to the attitudes they represent. As an Affrilachian artist, she announces her presence and the presence of other Blacks in Appalachia, via poetry. Through her story of coming of age, she shows that her communities were Black, Southern and Appalachian.

In Kelly Norman Ellis's work the kitchen is where she introduces the theme of identity. In her work, the kitchen is a site of acceptance and responsibility. Historically, black people's creativity was kept alive in the kitchen, primarily through the food ways of African American women. Showcasing the creative traditions of black women in kitchen spaces, in her first stanza Norman Ellis' shows the collective responsibility of the black women in her family with welcoming phrases associated with community meals. Norman Ellis demonstrates the personalities of Black women in the kitchen from her personal life through her line, "Go on baby, Get ya self a plate" (5). Norman Ellis immediately draws her connections to the black South and Appalachia through her use of the voices of Black women from her childhood. Further, she evokes Black women's food ways and health-consciousness in her lines "chitterling eating," and "vegetarian cooking"(5). Norman Ellis's work indicates that African American women have showcased their love and transferred heritage and community values through their cooking. Cooking becomes Norman Ellis's expression of her black identity and roots in resistance.

Norman Ellis moves from food talk to hair talk in her descriptions of kitchen spaces. Not only is the kitchen a site of acceptance for black communities in America, the kitchen is also the site of cultural politics. Individual and collective black hair care practices that take place within Black American kitchen spaces are the cultural politics that I refer to here. The relationship between black women's hair, society and cultural meaning has been widely documented (Jacobs-Huey) (Battle-Walters) (Rooks). Hair is central in the black woman's racial and gendered cultural socialization. Norman Ellis

shows cultural politics among Black women by drawing on the relationship between black women and their hair in the lines of her poem. In her second stanza, she depicts hair relationships among black women. Norman Ellis inserts the types of Black women's hair and sentiments shared with other women in her family about hair care through her lines "thick haired" and "Girl lay back and let me scratch your head" (5). Norman Ellis's direct quote of the women from her life signify the importance of black women's hair care to forming her identity. Her work sheds light on two of black women's markers of identity, social and cultural imperatives regarding food and hair. Thus, she brings together hair and food interactions in the kitchen to illuminate black women's self-love, identity and community.

An important element of Norman Ellis's poem is the incorporation of black women's values. In her last stanza she describes the women who raised her as "PhD totem" "Stand back I'm creating" and "World traveling"(6). Her lines depict the significance of educational attainment and economic independence for the black women in her family. Norman Ellis' reference to the education and empowerment of the women of her childhood demonstrates an emphasis on Black upward social mobility (Collins 28). One of the strategies Norman Ellis' women used to attain social mobility was education. For Norman Ellis personally, her education afforded her training in her craft as a creative scholar. Norman Ellis attributes her creativity in the gifts of her forbearers. Her description of the women that raised her as some "poetry writing" women allows the reader to understand Norman Ellis's creative identity as an Affrilachian Poet. In other

words, Norman Ellis moves from talking about the women to representing her Appalachian identity in particular in the last stanza of her poem.

Another poet that brings the theme of identity to the forefront in her writing is Crystal Wilkinson. In her Essay “On Being ‘Country,” Wilkinson represents her Appalachian identity by saying, “Country is as much a part of me as my full lips, my wide hips, my dreadlocks, my high cheek bones” (186). In her poem “Terrain,” Wilkinson emphasizes belonging to Appalachia through her connection to the landscape of Appalachia. For Wilkinson, writing a poem about her black body and the land of Appalachia is a political act. She says “if you are told you don’t exist, to write a poem about the land is political” (*Coal Black Voices*). For her, identifying as a Black woman and Appalachian are as naturally conjoined as roots planted in the ground.

For Crystal Wilkinson the theme of identity is closely connected to her relationship to the land. For example, her poem about growing up in Kentucky is entitled “Terrain.” The title suggests that identity and land are inseparable concepts for the poet. In the first line of her poem, Wilkinson writes “I’ve been geographically rural and country all my life.” She goes on to describe her life journey in Appalachia as “mines” and “lily covered valleys” (15). Her lines highlight the highly contested elements regarding black heritage within the region through her personal quest for belonging. She writes “the twang of my voice has moved down to the flat land a time or two” (15). Her lines reference the poet’s changes in her actual voice. Her ‘move down to flatland’ describes her voice moving from noticeable Southern Appalachian dialect to more acceptable, less noticeably Appalachian, voice. When I read the poem, I come to

understand the poet's experiences, good and bad, through her landscape metaphors. As a result, Wilkinson presents the land as the site of her attachment and disconnection to Appalachia as a black person.

In Crystal Wilkinson's poem, cooking is also represented as an expression of identity. Wilkinson writes "my taste buds have exiled themselves from fried green tomatoes and rhubarb for goats' milk and pine nuts" (15). Wilkinson's language indicates the rural and country-ness of her home through her reference to her comfort food. She writes, "I will continue to crave the bulbous twang of wild shallots, the gamey familiarity of oxtails and kraut boiling in a cast iron pot"(15). Wilkinson employs olfactory depictions of southern cooking to create an idea of the place she calls home. Her associations to southern cooking immediately gives me, an association to the smells and comfort of her homeplace. On the whole, Wilkinson's expresses her Affrilachian identity within the context of a black southern heritage.

Norman Ellis and Crystal Wilkinson's poems represent the diversity of black women in their expressions of identity. In both expressions the poets trace a heritage rooted in a southern, geographical and a political consciousness. Norman Ellis uses the lines in her poem to depict her black family values. She moves from talking about food, to hair, political consciousness and culture. Wilkinson's poem use metaphors that include the landscape of Appalachia to depict an insider/outsider experience in the region. Overall, both the poets claim their space in Affrilachia through discussion of identity, region, blackness, gender and southern traditions.

Homeplace

Homeplace is an explicit theme in the work of Crystal Wilkinson. The idea of homeplace permeates her poem as she searches for identity in the poem journeying home only to return to the place where it all started, the land of Appalachia. bell hooks suggests that the idea of homeplace stems from a shared history of community resistance among black women. Historically, “the homeplace has been the place of liberatory struggle, in which black women were able to safely encourage personal growth and development into womanhood” (hooks 45). Hooks indicates that the homeplace is a site where black women are able to resist racial domination and sexist norms. For Wilkinson, the privacy and security associated with her homeplace allowed her to receive validation, nurture, care and education on her writing skills and on the presence of other black writers who share heritages in Appalachia. In Wilkinson’s idea of homeplace, her black body and others like hers belong to and in Appalachia.

The images and figures alluded to in Wilkinson’s “Terrain” and Ellis’ “Raised by Women,” make the idea of homeplace clear. Church is a homeplace represented in Norman Ellis and Wilkinson’s works. The figures of respectable and religious black women appear as associations to the poet’s homeplaces in both works. The black women represented in the lines of the poems offered personal validation for the Affrilachian poets discussed here. As Norman Ellis’s title suggests, some of these women are figures from the poet’s upbringing. Norman Ellis describes her women as “Some tea sipping/White glove wearing/Got married too soon/ Divorced/ in just the nick of time... Type of sisters”(6). According to Norman Ellis, the gloves are a reference to purity and

hygienic practices of some of the women in her family. The white gloves also signify church practices. White gloves were and are still worn by some black women ushers in traditional African American Baptist churches. Wilkinson also mentions church in her poem. She writes “but still I’m called home through hymns sung by stout black women in large hats and flowered dresses” (Wilkinson 15). Both Wilkinson and Norman Ellis claim their connections to their homeplaces through descriptions of the women who were in those places.

Crystal Wilkinson’s creative work of claiming her homeplace is a personal testimony to the marginality she has experienced as an Affrilachian writer. She indicates that she has often had to defend her place in Appalachia as a Black woman living in the outskirts of the region. In her chapter in “On Being Country; One Affrilachian’s Woman’s Return Home,” in *Back Talk from Appalachia Confronting Stereotypes*, she describes her connections to the place that she identifies as the foundation for her country-ness and Appalachian sensibilities.

“Only when I returned to Indian Creek did I allow my jaw to loosen, my tongue to rest in its normal state. Only then did I dare let my toes dance in the grass or allow myself to be seen breaking Blue Lake beans on my lap. On my trips back to Casey County, I would wallow in the things I had done- wade in creek waters, shoot the breeze with the farers at the corner store, shuck corn in a big white tub in the backyard. My vacations were spent gathering hickory nuts or picking blackberries. It was there at my homeplace, as I approached thirty that I truly returned” (Wilkinson 184).

Wilkinson says that she felt most comfortable in her home in the country. She describes that in her return to Indian Creek she was able to escape the marginalization she felt outside of her home. For Wilkinson, the concept of Affrilachia is a reaction against her marginalization in Appalachia as a Black writer. Writing Affrilachia gives her permission to embrace multiple facets of her identity.

Wilkinson begins her poem about identity by inviting the reader into her homeplace. Within her work, she presents stories of home to aid her survival struggles away from Indian Creek. Wilkinson articulates her country rural-ness, physical and emotional identity in placed language; “the map of me can’t be all hills and mountains” and “I can’t say the landscape of me is all honey suckle and clover” (15). She presents her black female body as a metaphor for her homeplace. By doing so, she makes her body inextricable from the idea of Appalachia. Wilkinson presents a gendered representation of Appalachia as she centers her personal narrative of her homeplace in a narrative of the land. She includes lines describing her earliest and hardest lessons on black life in Appalachia. Toward the end of her poem, she is haunted by the relegation of her blackness and country-ness long felt in her home as a black woman. In short, Wilkinson’s poem counters Black marginalization in Appalachia by placing the poet and her story right in Appalachia’s midst.

Connection to the Region

Bianca Spriggs shares in Wilkinson’s aesthetic choice to offer gendered representations of the region. In an interview Bianca stated that

“Most of my work is through women [and] the woman’s voice. Typically I write very woman centric. Um so it’s natural to write about things in those terms. On the other hand, when you think about what’s been done in the region -ya know- geographically speaking- with mountaintop removal and fracking -you know- and all these things [mountaintop removal and fracking] to me that seems like an abuse of the land. Ya know something that is helpless and can’t fight back. Typically women are put in that position” (Bianca Spriggs Interview. 10/27/2013).

Bianca Spriggs draws the connection between women and the place of Appalachia. Specifically, she says that women are connected to the land through a common experience of vulnerability. For Spriggs, women’s bodies and the place of Appalachia are linked by perceptions of the inherent weaknesses both. Furthermore, the vulnerability of women’s bodies and Appalachia’s landscapes offer a creative opportunity for Spriggs to comment on the abuses endured by both. Her work imagines a domestic violence, inflicted on the land and in women’s homes.

In Bianca Spriggs poem “My Kinda Woman,” a woman personifies the diversity of the land, people and culture of Appalachia. More specifically, Spriggs represents the place of Appalachia through the image of an Affrilachian woman. Within her portrait of Appalachia, the woman and the region, Spriggs calls upon multiple aspects of the woman’s identity. Spriggs describes the woman in her poem as “Black/White” and “Indian.” The mixed ancestry depicted by Spriggs represents the ethnic heritage of the Appalachian region. Spriggs furthers her description of her Affrilachian subject’s

appearance in her lines “She got dread locks/ a gingham shift/and a Confederate flag for a belt buckle” (Spriggs 86). The description of the women’s hair represent black consciousness and the African heritage of some of Appalachia’s inhabitants. Like Norman Ellis and Wilkinson’s work, Spriggs sites black vernacular culture and social identity markers i.e., hair styles and clothing. Additionally, the gingham shift indicates a middle class identity of the woman and shifting roles of women’s identity (Whang 23). The belt the woman wears represents the Bible belt. The confederate flag be/lt buckle represents southern heritage and confederate nationalism (Bonner 2). In these few lines of her poem, Spriggs creatively celebrates the complicated racial and cultural histories of Appalachia

In the same way Spriggs uses her poem to personify the diversity of the region, she also includes sensuality to connect the qualities of the land and the women of Appalachia. Again, cooking becomes a trope for expressing identity. In the lines “She can cook up a storm when she is happy” and “she can smell rain,” Spriggs describes the special gifts of her female Affrilachian subject. Spriggs’ incorporation of cooking alludes to both regional weather patterns and domestic spaces of food preparation. She describes the place of Appalachia through the imagery of the woman in the kitchen practicing her cooking talents. Home subtly emerges as a theme in Spriggs poem connecting the sensuality of the woman to the land and place of Appalachia.

Violence and vulnerability are two themes that connect the experiences of women to the landscape of Appalachia. Spriggs directly refers to the abusive relationships of her female subject of her poem. She writes “ If you’re luckyand she’s

lonesome/waiting around for that no good man,/ she might lift up her shirt/ and show you the scar he left/ webbing up her ribs” (Spriggs 86). Spriggs depicts the subject of her poem as a victim of domestic abuse. Spriggs openly acknowledges that in writing “My Kinda Woman” she sought to create a “beautiful portrait of a person, the good the bad and the ugly” (Bianca Spriggs Interview. 10/27/2013). Her portrait of her Affrilachian subjects opens up larger conversation around violence and abuse inflicted upon the woman and the region.

As we have seen, Spriggs uses the idea of women’s gendered vulnerability to depict reoccurring environmental abuses endured by the land. Spriggs, Norman Ellis and Wilkinson integrate themes of identity, homeplace, and connection to the region together in their works to paint a portrait of Appalachia’s cultural complexity and heritage. The poems I discussed reflect upon a black woman’s sense of belonging in the region of Appalachia. Each poet express the gifts of an Appalachian homeplace in their writings. Their writings also express burdens (defending their social presence and the physical place of the region) that are sometimes associated with a heritage that connects one to the land. Collectively, the women’s works name them as sympathizers and advocates for the region.

Connection to the Land: Environmental Degradation

The first line of Crystal Good’s poem, “BOOM BOOM,” is a confrontation and commentary on abuses inflicted upon the landscape of Appalachia. BOOM BOOM is a story of violence rendered on West Virginia’s women and mountains. The setting is in West Virginia’s mountains. The crime inflicted is upon both the mountains and the

women. The background context provided by Good suggests the criminal acts have occurred over a long period of time. Crystal Good's poem BOOM BOOM describes the escapades of "them boys," privileged white male status holders who travel to West Virginia in their leisure time to take advantage of "loose" women while simultaneously stripping them of their value. The actors/agents in Good's poem are presented within a predator/prey analogy. The women are described as precarious, complacent, illiterate and heedless. Good presents the women as figures of desire and dispossession in the lines of her poem. In summary, Good uses quoted phrases of victim blaming and metaphors of the violence brought on by the women themselves to critique systems of industrial power.

The agents in Good's poem are not just themselves, but metonyms for victims of environmental violence and racism produced by strip mining in Appalachia. Good double casts "them girls," as both women and mountains, and "them boys," as both men and industry. Violence is represented in the image of the interactions between the men and women. The men "smack their ass watch them girls tumble down," degrading and defiling the women selfishly, without remorse (21). The women are powerless, stripped of their beauty, dignity and abandoned without protection. Good also uses imagery to depict the mountains and the women's integrity. In the last stanza, Good's line "Forever gone," indicates all are left to deal with their injuries alone (22). Both "them boys" and "them girls" are left unsatisfied. The men return to their homes insecure, diseased and filled with a false sense of themselves. The women continue living and singing their

songs of life and abuse. As a result, the men and women treat the other as a means for getting their physical provisions to survive.

For Good, the West Virginia woman/mountain is the character and stage upon which American desire is imagined. Good's lines simultaneously works through classism/ sexism and environmental conditions in Appalachia. The boys stand in for hegemonic figures of exploitation. In respect to the boys, the women are both agents and victims of sexual exploitation. Good emphasizes phrases like "**them West Virginia girls,**" to clearly associate an idea of the Other with the hyper-sexualized subjects of her poem (21). Otherness then becomes a secondary trope in Good's poem. Still, Good pits her activism against environmental injustice with a narrative of desire all too familiar to women's hyper- sexuality.

Good's activism extends beyond the intimations in the content of her poem. She uses performative dimensions on the page, through her choice of repetition, bolding, capitalization and punctuation. Good signifies the destruction of the place and women through the bolded "**BOOM! BOOM!**" Her phrase directly invokes the place of Appalachia, as an allusion to the coal mining industry. The bolding of "**BOOM! BOOM,**" is performative because it becomes a disruption on the page. The phrase appears as an erratic force. The phrase screams to be performed through Good's sporadic placement of it on the page. Accordingly, the phrase iterates an increasing urgency, emergency and growing frustration to abuse. Urgency is represented on the page through the format of the poem. The actual text and phrase get progressively larger

as the poem evolves. Good's aesthetic choice regarding the way the form of her poem looks on the page signifies a growing problem with actual abuses of Appalachian land.

Appalachia becomes the subject and theme of Good's poem. Appalachia is invoked through Good's incorporation of regional issues in her stanza's. Environmental racism is one of the regional issues embedded in her lines. The actual scene iterated in the poem is the place of West Virginia. This place is a landscape that if you have ever traveled through the hills of West Virginia Route 60, is largely characterized by its winding highways and is analogously inserted into mountains creating geographic shape of West Virginia. Consequently, mountain top removal and strip mines are major industries in West Virginia. Environmental activists of the region argue those industries violate the sacred and preferred spaces of the Appalachia.

Crystal Good's work provides a lesson on the mutual relationships between Appalachia's communities and connection to the land. Good's imagines three communities through her use of personification. First, Good conceives a community of women. She characterizes the girls as indigenous West Virginian's, oppressed by a system that relegates them to using their bodies as a means for satisfying physical needs. Next, Good imagines a community of mountains. Good's work depicts not only physical mountains but also social mountains. The social mountains she evokes have yet to be climbed. These are mountains of Appalachian stereotypes and of sexist norms that pervade Appalachian people's lives. Those norms are improperly used to justify manipulation of the land and its resources, ultimately affecting the people. In her

description of the habitual abuse of the women, Good's work argues that the mountains are burdens of misrepresentations and mistreatments for Appalachians.

Good's work is reminiscent of Langston Hughes infamous poem "A Dream Deferred." At the end of Hughes poem, he questions what happens to the aspirations of individuals (and communities) seeking to overcome social obstacles. The speaker of Hughes's poem is a presumed victim who has been silenced and ignored by social injustices. Hughes offers an answer in his last line suggesting that the dream "explodes" (Hughes). Similarly, at the end of Good's poem she writes "**BOOM BOOM! Them. Girls. Them mountains. Explode**"(22). The explosion at the poems end conjures a potential for social and environmental activism. Though Hughes work only hints to the end of abuse, Good provides no room for contemplation. BOOM BOOM frees the women and mountains from a history of violation. Good's last line advocates for the disruptions of harmful societal norms through multiple explosions.

George Ella Lyon says Appalachian women poets encounter challenges as creative representatives of the region. She writes: "To speak as an Appalachian woman means to push two hands away from your mouth, to break a double silence. For, if you are female, you are outside the mainstream literature as it is published and taught. Your experience is seen as trivial, narrow, and other. Likewise if you are Appalachian, you are perceived as outside the parade of American culture" (qtd. in Mitchell xix). Lyon's comments directly speak to the necessary creative survival from Appalachia's women writers. As an Appalachian woman writer, Crystal Good's work joins in the activism of Lyon's remarks to break cultures of silence imposed upon women and Appalachians.

Another Appalachian woman poet Joyce Dyer has also affirmed the injustices endured by Appalachian women poets commenting that “few groups of women writers have suffered as many literary injustices as those from the southern hills. They have had to bear injustices caused by their gender as well as by their place” (Dyer 2). Dyer’s words speak directly to institutional challenges experience by Appalachian women writers. The women writers discussed in this chapter do not escape the challenges Dyer mentions. Both Dyer and Lyon’s comments offer a context for understanding the necessity for creative survival and impact especially for the region’s women writers.

Extending Lyon’s take on challenges faced by other Appalachian women poets, if you are also black in Appalachia, you are forced to remove two hands and then shout your black visibility. Black women Poet’s in Appalachia creatively survive a monochromatic Appalachian identity formation. The Affrilachian poets exist in a triple silences culture as regional writers and as women of color. Their embodied intersectionality requires that their works confront gendered and racial barriers. Crystal Good confronts the issues pertaining to gender, race and place through her interconnected representation of women’s exploitations, environmental racism and racism. By participating in the narrative about environmental corruption and debasement of women’s through the voice of an Affrilachian woman “BOOM BOOM,” loudly interrupts the triple silence.

Community: Literary Arts Community and Creative Family of Colorful Voices

Affrilachian Literary Arts Community

The Affrilachian Poets are a creative community of literary artists. The artists all arrive at a sense of belonging to a community of Affrilachia through various concrete events in their lives. Together, their lyrical creativity embody and represent a multi-vocality within the region of Appalachia. In the documentary *Coal Black Voices*, Kelly Norman Ellis reflects on the diversity of the group.

“Even in our different voices, some of us very rural, very urban. Some of us romantic, postmodern, all of these different places. We still claim that physical space {of Appalachia}. Again, that is very unique. And I think because the south has so many connections to African culture, that’s appropriate. Survival, you know, is plenty in the south. It makes sense to me to identify Affrilachia, because it is Southern and it is Black.”

Kelly Norman Ellis reminds us that the community of the Affrilachian Poets comprises of a diverse group of artists representing multiple geographic locations in Appalachia. As a consequence of their diversity, the writings they produce convey diverse perspectives of Black (and other) regional cultures within Appalachia. The diversity of the artists is grounded in their various Appalachian homeplaces. Kelly Norman Ellis’s roots in Jackson, Mississippi and Knoxville, Tennessee allow her to produce writings betwixt and between a Black Southern and rural Appalachian context. In contrast, Crystal Good’s origins in West Virginia allow her to speak directly against an essential pastoral and industrial Appalachian mountain context. Crystal Wilkinson’s background

in Indian Creek, Kentucky shape the rural sensibilities' often expressed in her writings. And Bianca Spriggs' starting place in Lexington, Kentucky informs the racial and historical contexts often represented in her writings. Together, the works of the Affrilachian Poets demonstrate a wide range of Black Appalachian experiences.

Collectively the Affrilachian Poets works represent invisible communities across the region. The aesthetic decisions of the poets often signify Appalachia's underrepresented cultures and groups. For example, Bianca Spriggs shares her personal motivations for representing voiceless figures.

“You see a lot of us writing in persona. For one, to give voice to the voiceless but also the other part of that, that we like to shed light on -you know- has a lot to do with Black people of course, but also our relationship to the land, to one another, to sexual incest. Things we might not- that defy the culture of silence you know. REJECTS cultures of silence because now that's a part of our survival in a different way. Its saying air it out, and, “tell the family business,” ya know- we going to talk about the things we're going to talk about because if we don't then we're not going to see progress” (Bianca Spriggs Interview, 10/27/2013)

Spriggs' comment highlights the creative survival the poets enact in their writings. Sometimes their creative survival tied to a necessary survival found in black family spaces. The 'culture of silence' Spriggs discusses effects multiple dimensions of black family experiences in Appalachia. The voices in her poems form a community of writing that defy the cultures of silence.

Georgia Ellen Lyon's notion of voiceplace recognizes the vital connection between voice and place in Appalachia. She argues that culture resides in the voice, as the landscape and life in the place of Appalachia shape the language of its inhabitants (qtd. in Dyer 186). Lyon maintains, "For if you abandon or ridicule your voiceplace, you forfeit a deep spiritual connection, (qtd. in Dyer 192). Affrilachian poetry upholds Lyon's observation about the significance of language and place. The presence of multiple rhythms and voices on the page and in performance, illuminate the transformative potential of the Affrilachian Poets and their work. Spriggs demonstrates her belief in the power of voice sharing that during her poetry readings she tries "to disappear into their [the subjects of her poems] voices" (Bianca Spriggs Interview, 10/27/2013) The actual voice of the Affrilachian Poets in performance makes up a significant aspect of the groups identity and activism. The poets embrace the language of Appalachia through their choice of dialect in their works. Transferred in performance and publication, these dialectical choices coupled with the Affrilachian accent, a mix of black vernacular and Appalachian English, and Appalachian content illuminate an intertextual quality of Appalachian culture. By intertextual quality I mean the ways in which the works of Affrilachian writers work together with other Black and Appalachian forms.

Creative Family

".. I compare it to like a trapeze artist. You know when a trapeze artist like starts out and they still have the net under them, so if they fall its okay, they are expecting the net. But eventually they roll the net away and you are just out there

flying on your own and better have practiced or [you will] land very much like the Affrilachian Poets. They are kind of like my safety net -you know- I can't see [the net], but I know somewhere they're there" (Bianca Spriggs Interview. 10/27/2013).

Bianca Spriggs describes the Affrilachian Poets as a creative support group that stimulates discourse around racial identity and advocates multi- disciplinary in their creative and professional works. In the interview excerpt above, she presents the Affrilachian Poets as a supportive safety net. Bianca's reflections address the way in which the groups' esteem has influenced her and other artist's work. As members of a collective group of accomplished writers, Bianca is continuously challenged to produce works that critically engage Appalachia's cultural misrepresentation and environmental conflict. The heightened skill and engagement of the writers form a community of poets that challenge and advocate Black participation in Appalachia's literary activism.

Not only does the group represent a revolutionary literary arts community speaking to the concerns of the land and people of color within the region, on a more intimate level the Affrilachian Poets also serve as a creative family for one another. In her essay, "What The Road Had to Say: The Affrilachian Poets Spring Bus Tour," Bianca Spriggs writes her experience of the shared creative energy between the group on tour in 2009.

"Some of us stayed up most of the night, hammering out a poem or two, uploading blogs, images and videos from the previous day until the gray hour of the morning, just to pack it all up and try to catch every moment again the next

day, no matter how seemingly mundane. We turned the car into our classroom, loaded up our point and shoot camera's and our notepads determined not to miss one gem. As a result, we weren't penning merely poems; these were testimonies of the Affrilachian experience, and the tour was our occasion, our revival room, our rite of passage" (Spriggs15).

In Spriggs sentiments about the experience of the tour as a training ground and their works as testaments, the poets are presented as a group of Affrilachian warriors. As Bianca suggests, their works, interactions and experiences with other people of color in the region, simultaneously widen ideas about Appalachia's diversity. When readers or audiences witness the Affrilachian Poets and their works, the diversity of the region is brought center stage. As a group of literary artist, the group is a community that redefines the image of Appalachia's people and places. What can Affrilachian artists as activist like these teach about Appalachia?

Teaching: Redefining Appalachia and Imagining Affrilachia

In her essay, "Black Mountain: The Affrilachian Literary Tradition," Norman Ellis says her political and artistic heritage of Affrilachia is found in Black vernacular culture and movements such as the Civil Rights and Black Arts Movement (12). During the Black Arts Movement, artists contributions changed the culture of the American arts scene by creatively connecting with, expanding and confronting mainstream America (Cooks 39). Similarly, The Affrilachian Poets are challenging Black exclusion within mainstream perceptions of Appalachia, regionally and nationally, through their poetry collections and invention of Black aesthetics in their works. The Affrilachian Poets

extend black aesthetic traditions initiated during the Black Arts Movement by challenging the invisibility of people of color within the region. By naming and recognizing their presence within the lines of their works, the Poets signify the black woman's impact in the region. Norman Ellis says that the responsibility of Affrilachian writers is to represent a voice of the region (*Coal Black Voices*). The poets are taking hold of Appalachia's creative history by providing multifaceted responses and reflections on Black communities within Appalachia.

In this chapter, I have shown the affective structures of creative survival represented and produced by the Affrilachian Poets. As a group of literary activists, their works and visions of Affrilachia provide the foundation for which I frame the remainder of this thesis regarding discussions of identity. Many of the works of the Affrilachian Poets redress the historic literary injustices towards people of color within Appalachian literature. The works of the Affrilachian Poets that I have discussed in this chapter collectively redefine Appalachia, by imagining Affrilachia through Appalachian cultural associations, metaphors and imagery. In this case, the Affrilachian Poets perform a political and social endeavor through their works that insists on the presence of race within discourses about Appalachia. In the next chapter, I take the conception of Affrilachia discussed here, and apply it towards personal expressions of an African American woman hailing from the region.

CHAPTER III

'NO PLACE LIKE NEWTOWN': THE PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF ONE BLACK

APPALACHIAN WOMAN

On a Monday in July, a little over a month after our introduction I sat in the living room of Ms. Faith's home, tucked away in the still precious corners of Blacksburg. She had recently been discharged from the hospital and sat upright in all black silk pajamas on her blue paisley couch on the other side of the room. She had been lying on the couch since she got home and upon my arrival had raised herself a little so that her voice could be picked up by the recorder. Ms. Faith smelled like grown woman, her gray hair matted from laying down all day, her skin dark from sleep and her full body propped beautifully as she sat knees over ankle, breast over knees, no bra and hands crossed, I assumed to provide a bit of modesty in the company of a well-known stranger.

Her black silk pajamas seemed to float on her body. She faced me squarely toward me with her back against the window. The glow behind her evidenced the angel I knew her to be. I sat facing the door. Just two weeks prior after a Sunday service at the First Baptist Church of Blacksburg, she had introduced me to members of the congregation, encouraging them to contact me to help with interviews. Afterwards, she had been admitted to the hospital for lung cancer, had surgery, and had only now just returned home. I asked her, "Can you tell me about your relationship to Newtown?"

(Barbour-Payne)

I first met Ms. Christian during a participant observation of the Museum of Blacksburg Board of Director's meeting at the Odd Fellows Hall. The Odd Fellows Hall is a museum of African American culture in Blacksburg, Virginia. The museum is the former social gathering spot for the Newtown community's residents ("Town of Blacksburg, VA:Home"). I sat in on these meetings monthly over the course of eight-weeks. Ms. Faith was the cousin of the only female board member. I would sit quietly and observe the elders, particularly the African American members of the Board, share stories of the Hall and the community that once stood in its intimate surroundings. I was drawn to Ms. Faith's open spirit and welcoming air. Immediately after the meeting, she

invited me to church and expressed her willingness to talk with me about her connection to the community.

Ms. Faith Christian was born in Blacksburg, Virginia in 1948. She lived and died in Blacksburg near the people and places she called home. Until the time of her death, she held close ties with and active participation in the First Baptist Church of Blacksburg and Newtown community. Faith was one of only a few residents of Newtown still living in Blacksburg long after the Newtown community's extinction.

The Personal Narrative of Ms. Faith Christian

Ms. Faith Christian's personal narrative provides a case for understanding African American women's expressions of identity and memory. In Ms. Christian's personal narrative performance, she uses Newtown as a metaphor to identify with the place of Appalachia. As a community survivor, she presents her understandings of race and place through the lens of Newtown. In this chapter, I ask: What are the themes of survival in Ms. Christian's narrative? What forms of community do these themes imagine? What can Ms. Christian teach us about black women's survival? The themes of community survival that emerge are kinship, terrain and home. The particular form of community that she imagines is an American utopia defined by purity and fictive harmony. As one of the few living survivors of the Newtown community, Ms. Christian's personal narrative performance is a recollection. She counters black community invisibility in Appalachia, by inserting her story and the story of Newtown into national narratives of experience in America through tropes of survival.

The personal narrative performance by African American women in Southwest Virginia constitute the most representative archive of first person account's specific to Blacks in Appalachia. Southwest Virginia is one of three archival collections that explicitly addressing Black experiences within the region¹. Ms. Faith narrative performance re-presents the memory of an African American woman in her Appalachian homeplace². Her stories are of community experiences in Newtown/Blacksburg Virginia. Her narratives evidence how women worked as active agents and authorities in their communities in various leadership capacities (Reynolds 600). Her recollections of life in Newtown asserts Black presence in rural Appalachia. The personal narrative performance of Ms. Christian represents cultural, social and political forces of Black Appalachian life.

Drawing on place and race as central themes of the African American experience in Appalachia, in this chapter the mode of survival I address is community survival. I examine how Ms. Christian's personal narrative performance of race and gender, imagines an Appalachian community in and beyond the geographical boundaries of the region. In this chapter, I interpret community survival as an embodied practice performed by African American women during the narrative performance event. The personal narrative explored in this chapter reveal the ways in which black women created community through family gatherings, town hall meetings, secret societies and community food gatherings. Ms. Christian's narrative in and of itself evidence Black

¹ Collections include the Black Appalachia Collection at Clemson University, Black Appalachian Oral History Collection at Virginia Tech, Appalachia Oral History Collection at the University of Kentucky

² Here I am using homeplace in the bell hooks sense.

presence and visibility in Appalachia. Her personal narrative is a story of growing up black in Appalachia. It shows the unique quality of Appalachian community life and protest issues related to race and class relations within the region. Here, I investigate articulations, associations and themes of survival and place in the recollected community experiences of one African American woman of Appalachia.

Theoretical Framework

Kristin M. Langellier offers a performance centered theoretical position for understanding personal narratives as storytelling performance. In Langellier's explanation of personal narratives, the narrative is treated as a "story-text in context of performance" (255). I use Langellier performance approach to personal narratives by treating Ms. Faith Christian's narrative as a result of oral storytelling. By applying Langellier's concept, I am able to highlight the performance features in Ms. Christian's narrative. Additionally, Soyini Madison's concept of poetic transcription, captures the multidimensional nature of a narrative event through performance centered texts (240). The form those texts take on the page represent the personal utterances of the speaker and strive to recapture the aural experience of the listener. I interpret the personal narrative in this chapter through poetic transcription to account for "the performative dimensions" of Ms. Faith Christian (Madison 239).

Lisa Merrill describes history as "the performative act of telling a story, calling it into being," (22). Ms. Faith Christian's personal narrative performance calls the community of Newtown into being. During her recollection of her history with the place,

Ms. Faith offers opportunities to see the conversations between repertoire and archive³ through her persistence of memory, repetition of descriptive phrases and reiteration of community ideals. The personal narrative performance of Ms. Faith Christian presents problematic instances in the American imaginary, the problem with doubt and certainty, and forgetting and remembering.

In order to understand the racial dynamics of Ms. Faith Christian's personal narrative performance, I draw my theoretical approach upon Afrocentric theories. Terry Kershaw's approach to Afro-centrism emphasizes an analysis rooted in historical and contemporary realities of black people. Kershaw "asserts that the life experiences of all people of African descent must be a focal point of Afrocentric generated knowledge" (Kershaw 161). In this chapter, I focus on the total life experiences of Ms. Faith, past and present, to understand the cultural, historical and contemporary experiences of Black people within the region of Appalachia, during a particular moment and in a particular place.

Clenora Hudson-Weems Africana Womanism or black Womanism, is a theoretical concept "designed for all women of African descent" to create an opportunity for black women to establish individual criteria's for assessing their own realities (Hudson-Weems 207). An Africana Womanism approach looks at the empowerment of women as closely joined with the racial and cultural empowerment of their communities. Contrary to other forms of feminisms, Africana Womanism prioritizes race issues before

³ I am referring to Diana Taylor's distinction between the archive and repertoire. Taylor's work draws connections between the two by focusing on embodied enactments in the transmission of knowledge, memory and identity.

gender issues in struggles against inequality and oppression. I use Weem's paradigm that focuses on a family centeredness approach to feminism, to identify the self-naming practices enacted by Ms. Faith Christian, as a Black woman in Appalachia.

Reiland Rabaka separates the theories of Africana philosopher Frantz Fanon, into distinct categories called Fanonisms. Antiracist Fanonism, emphasizes the notions in Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* and contributions to critical race theory and revolutionary blackness. Specifically, Antiracist Fanonism uses the lived experience of blacks and their "love/hate" attitudes about the white populations they interact with to stress revolutionary moves toward love and understanding between blacks and whites (Rabaka 55). Here, I apply Fanon's Antiracist theory of the love/hate dialectic to Ms. Christian's personal narrative of her lived experiences in Newtown. Her memories of individual and community interactions are relevant to African American community experiences in Appalachia. Keeping survival as embodied practice at the center of this discussion, I regard the black Diaspora in Appalachia as a theoretical concept. As an African American woman survivor of the now extinct Newtown community, Ms. Christian represents a place-centered understanding of Appalachian and African American identity.

I examine Ms. Faith Christian's accounts of the lived experiences in Appalachia as an example of her sense of Affrilachian collective responsibility. By Affrilachian collective responsibility, I mean the moral and personal investment to security (food, financial and economic) shared by a community of Black Appalachians. I talk directly about intersections of place and race within Appalachia. I study the ways place and race

are joined in Ms. Christian's ideas of community survival. My analysis demonstrates the significance and influences of place in African American women's community experiences in the region. In the following personal narrative Mrs. Christian, a black woman born and raised in Blacksburg, Virginia, expresses her connection to Appalachia through her reflections of life experiences growing up in Newtown.

Themes: Home, Kinship and Terrain

I identify three prevalent themes of community survival in the personal narrative of Ms. Faith Christian. The themes are home, kinship and terrain. Home as a site of social empowerment, kinship as a space of belonging and security, and terrain as the site of economic empowerment recur throughout the personal narrative. My discussion of these themes together makes the lived experiences of Newtown as told by the community survivor herself real.

The conversation between Ms. Faith and myself took place in the living room of her home. As Chih Hoong Sin has said, "the space in which an interview takes place can yield important information regarding the way respondents construct their identities," (306). Observing Ms. Faith in her home, discussing her notions of home in relation to her beloved community, made tangible the comfort of her home and her descriptions of Newtown as 'home.' At one point, she refers to a community member of Newtown, whose house was next door to hers at the time of this interview. Her association with her childhood friend who still lived in close proximity demonstrates the spatial intricacies in her idea of home. In our conversation, she dedicated time to reflecting on the people and places that form her construct of the Newtown community. Her sense of Newtown as

home is a sophisticated expression of belonging, because her physical address in Blacksburg, present and past, is on Woolwine Street. The address was not actually within the Newtown community barrier, though it was commonly associated with another predominantly black area in town. In that regard, Ms. Christian identifies her own connection to Newtown through a broader concept of home. Specifically, she identifies with Newton through her aunt and uncle, whose home was one of the fourteen original houses that comprised the Newtown neighborhood. Newtown as home is thus rooted in her connection to her family's homeplace, and more importantly the people.

Home

Excerpt 1. "Home Away from Home"

Well Basically Newtown is my home away from home

I had family and friends who lived there.

I had an uncle and aunt who lived there.

Uh the Christians

Then

I had a very good friend who lived there

Who we thought were like family to us

And that's why I can say that was just like-

Going to their home was like my home away from home.

(Faith Christian Interview. 7/26/2010)

Home is a recurrent theme in Ms. Christian's narrative of personal survival. Ms. Christian addresses Newtown as home in three persistent iterations; "Home away from

home,” “There’s no place like [Home] Newtown,” and “Just like being at home.” These phrases reveal the nostalgic undertones of Ms. Christian’s narrative. She repeated sentiments of home in the midst of reflection. As she remembered her time in Newtown I could see a physical shift in her body. Her shift was light and suggested an embodied return to her childhood neighborhood. Nikol G. Alexander Floyd and Evelyn M. Simien point out that “The Africana woman values family as part of her African heritage,” (qtd. in *Still Brave : The Evolution of Black Women's Studies* 95). Ms. Christian had Floyd and Simien’s ideas of black heritage during her personal narrative. In Excerpt One, (“Home Away from Home”) Ms. Christian draws a connection between her Newtown heritage and her family. Newtown has greater significance for Ms. Faith as a space of desire. She claims Newtown as home through feelings of belonging transferred to her by “family and friends who lived there.” Here again, Ms. Christian’s narrative depicts themes prevalent to race. More specifically, she demonstrates themes of respect, ambition, nurturing and spirituality, which are vital to Africana Womanist scholarship. She shows her respect and loyalty to Newtown as she talks about her relationship with her friends who “were just like family” to her. In this excerpt, she shows a love for others by describing the atmosphere of the community and its people as “family” and “home.”

In Ms. Christian’s personal narrative performance, she simultaneously evokes the alliances between herself and the rest of the members in the community. She talks about her friends saying “we thought they were like family to us.” Her expressions blur the distinction between community and family. Some Africana scholars assert that “by

recounting the attributes of others and the relationships of friendships or kinships between self and other, individuals can assert virtues and achievements not directly but rather through associations they have made with other persons and roles”(*African Philosophy as Cultural Inquiry* 83). Their ideas of relations between the self and others suggest that as an interlocutor describes their relationship to their communities they work as agents, raising personal moral standings of integrity and respect. In the same vein, Ms. Christian dedicates the majority of the narrative to speaking highly about the community and its people rather than herself. In fact, in the entire recorded interview, she only spent three minutes talking specifically about herself. While remembering the innocence of life in Newtown, her private/public performance⁴ becomes increasingly complex. I learn about Ms. Christian’s identity and experiences only in the context of Newtown’s residents. Moving forward in the interview, her expressions of kinship are attached to the place of Newtown. Positive memories and relationships to the people fill her reel on belonging to Newtown. Eventually, her repeated expressions evoke an anxiety surrounding her ideas of home.

Excerpt 2. “Being at HOME”

I could truly say
couldn’t nobody say anything bad about her
because she was a wonderful sweet heart,
and I thought the world of her

⁴ Here I refer to Erving Goffman’s notion of front stage/backstage performances in the private/public identity discourses of everyday life

and yes and that was ANOTHER reason why I could go to Newtown
and knew that Newtown was
Just Like being at Home.
Just like BEING AT HOME.

(Faith Christian Interview. 7/26/2010)

In Excerpt 2 Ms. Faith Christian emphasizes the sense of belonging associated with Newtown. She declares Newtown was a place she went to feel comforted and welcomed. Ms. Christian's emphasis on the positive, "feel good," quality of the place she calls home invokes utopian imagining in her narrative performance. Soyica Diggs Colbert's notion of "utopian imaginings" suggests individuals may perform an embodied return, as a "material manifestation of the possibility of home" is expressed (219). Similar to the sentimentality conveyed in the famous quote from the Wizard of Oz, "there's no place like home," "there's no place like Newtown," suggests a return to Ms. Faith's childhood neighborhood. Her declaration hints of an innocence and security lost. Home in her narrative is not simply a place, but a space shared between extended family and friends. In Excerpt 1 and Excerpt 2, Ms. Christian depicted Newtown as a place that was all-inclusive and a space in which people would go to feel safe and at home. Her emphasis on the "feel good" quality of Newtown also allows me to interpret her reflections on both place and space.

Nikol G. Alexander Floyd and Evelyn M. Simien argue that an overarching theme of Africana Womanism that expose structures of oppression is "alliances" (qtd. in *Still Brave : The Evolution of Black Women's Studies* 94). Their theme of alliance places

particular importance on “family centeredness, wholeness, and genuine “sisterhood” between black women,” (qtd. in *Still Brave : The Evolution of Black Women's Studies* 95). Ms. Christian’s expression “couldn’t nobody say nothing bad about her [aunt]” reveals her alliance with family. As she talks about the connections between her aunt, the community members of Newtown and herself saying “couldn’t say anything bad,” about any of them, she consistently expresses a respect for her aunt and the camaraderie shared between them. Her expression of “couldn’t say anything bad” also allows me to understand her reports as a strategy for survival, in which she preserves her memories of Newtown past and present. As our conversation continued, I asked her if she could tell me more about her connection to her aunt and other family members who lived in the community.

Kinship

Excerpt 3. “Aunt Reece”

She called me little Theriffa
and don’t you know
we had a lot of ways alike
Habits
Sweet
just as sweet as sweet could be
and something else
I could truly say
Couldn’t nobody say anything bad about her

Because she was a wonderful sweet heart, and I thought the world of her
And yes that was another reason while
I could go to Newtown
And knew that Newtown was just like being at home.

(Faith Christian Interview. 7/26/2010)

In Excerpt 3, Ms. Faith reflects intimately on her relationship with her aunt who lived in Newtown. She affirms her deep love for her aunt by repeating she “couldn’t not say anything bad about her,” the exact phrase she also used in Excerpt 2. Ms. Christian presents her aunt as fault-less and flawless. Her refusal to say “anything bad,” shows she is protective of her community and aunt. In earlier and later parts of the interview, Ms. Christian’s memories of Newtown are strongly tied to the domestic ingenuity and the nurturing qualities of her aunt. Ann M. Oberhauser says in her work on gender and household economic strategies in rural Appalachia that “the household is a common, yet potentially contentious place where women would perform multiple types of productive and reproductive work,”(178). Similar to the women Oberhauser studies, Ms. Faith’s aunt and other women and men of Newtown would cook and sell their food weekly at markets and gatherings at the Odd Fellows Hall. The women would regularly grow their own food, cook, and feed immediate and extended family members whose homes were both in and outside of Newtown’s limits. Ms. Christian’s iterations of home expand Oberhauser’s ideas of the reproductive work beyond one Appalachian household to a community of households that constitute the Newtown community. This community of

black households was the site of income generating activity for Black women in this area of rural Southwest Virginia.

The women of Newtown used the skills gained in their personal households to make money as domestic workers outside of their homes. The work and goods produced in their Newtown households aided in their struggles against economic and other forms of oppression. bell hooks writes about the survival strategies that black women employ to resist domination (41). Exploring the language of “motherhood” common in African American women’s discourses, hooks suggests that black women understand “intellectually and intuitively the meaning of homeplace in the midst of oppressive and dominating social reality, of homeplace as a site of resistance and liberation struggle,”(45). hooks’ idea of the home as “motherhood” is also present in Ms. Christian’s memories of her aunt and uncle’s household. Her aunt provided a welcoming home space in Newtown despite poverty and social limitation that blacks endured in Blacksburg during this time. As Ms. Christian describes the economic and social strategies employed by people every day in Newtown, she clearly defined the space by moral values, and a sense of security and belonging. In the next excerpt, the space of Newtown becomes one that she protects and personalizes in various ways.

Terrain

Excerpt 4. “The Pear Tree”

But I remember [a] time
When that pear tree would be-
People would rob my uncle’s pear tree.

And they were the BEST pears

You don't see those pears this day and time Nina.

Little old brown pears that came off my uncles' tree

And they were the prettiest golden pears you would ever lay your eyes on

(Faith Christian Interview. 7/26/2010)

In Excerpt 4, Ms. Christian talks about her relationship to the pear tree that sat in the front yard of her aunt and uncles home. She suggests the respect of the community and the beauty the community yielded was connected to the fruits that were produced there. Her description of the pears exhibits the protectiveness about Aunt Reece that she showed in Excerpt 3. Her memories of the pear tree demonstrate her connection to the region. Her expressions align with traditional values of Appalachia. A sense of beauty and love of place are values that demonstrate the relationship to the land many people of Appalachia share (Jones).⁵ Descriptions of Newtown's beauty and its fruitful terrain permeate Ms. Christian's narrative. As a result, Appalachia is an explicit aspect of Ms. Christian's community experience.

As stated previously, the women of Newtown produced their own forms of community knowledge's through their gardening and food ways. In her discussion of gardening practices by African Americans during the Progressive Reform era, Dianne D. Glave writes that "rural African American women in the rural south controlled how and where they gardened, and by implication, why they gardened"(396). The link between

⁵ Loyal Jones' complete list of Appalachian Values include: Individualism, Self-Reliance, Pride, Religion, Neighborliness and Hospitality, Family Solidarity, Personalism, Love of Place, Modesty, Sense of Beauty, Patriotism.

gardening practices and strategies for power is clear. The garden is a terrain in which black women gained and maintained control of their personal community spaces. Beyond the Progressive era, African American women still produce and sustain food security for themselves. Ms. Christian's recollections of the land and gardens of Newtown demonstrate black women's survival practices in Appalachia. Ms. Christian directly describes food as the medium that brought people together, whether for markets, ritual celebrations, or community preparation. Like the pear tree at Ms. Christian's aunt and uncle's home, other households in Newtown were known for their signature fruits. Thus, fruit trees were not simply signifiers of the care of the community, but were also the means by which the women were enabled to plant and practice care for the community. The exceptional, "one of a kind," presentation of Newtown's terrain mirrored the quality of the people. Just as we cannot say anything bad about the people of Newtown—we can neither say anything bad about the food and gardens in Newtown! In the following excerpts of Ms. Faith Christian's personal narrative, I discuss show the ways in which themes of home, kinship, and terrain are woven together to portray communities in and beyond Newtown.

Communities: Loving Neighborhood, Family, and Secret Society

Excerpt 5. "Something like Mayberry"

Newtown was ...

has always been ...

it reminds me of this program that comes on T.V.

by Andy Griffith

and uh bout being

bout..what is it bout...

Home away from Home.

There's no place like home.

and Newtown was our home away from home.

(Faith Christian Interview. 7/26/2010)

Associating her neighborhood to a well-known American ideal, Ms. Faith likens Newtown to Mayberry, the fictional town of the Andy Griffith show popular during the 1960s. As a “Nostalgic American Popular,” Mayberry is a “place of tranquility in a world of anything but that,” (Vaughan 397). Mayberry is a place where there is never any real crime, and exists only in the fictional spaces of nostalgia. Mayberry is nostalgic, light-heartedly funny and most important timeless. Time and its changes preempted Ms. Christian's reflections of Newtown. So nostalgia in Ms. Faith's narrative suggests that time is inevitable. Her nostalgia for the place is immediately rooted in an American ideal. By describing the community of Mayberry as a metaphor for Newtown, she presents Newtown as something more than an extinct community preserved only through her memories. Ms. Christian's narrative places Newtown right down the street from Mayberry.

Loving Neighborhood

Excerpt 6. “On Gilbert Street”

and We did a lot of functions

out there on Gilbert Street

And like I say
that was the name of the place where everybody would
always want to go ...
to-Newtown.
And it was just a loving neighborhood to visit.
To go visit family and friends

(Faith Christian Interview. 7/26/2010)

As Ms. Faith imagines a community of Blacks in Appalachia, she articulates more specific forms of community: neighborhood, family and secret society. Her “loving neighborhood” iteration evokes the familial ties and kinship shared between individuals. Referring to Newtown as a community of extended family members, she highlights the shared emotional connections and dependability between the people of Newtown. Finally, she describes the secret society, the Independent Order of St Luke, and its place of gathering, the Odd Fellows Hall. Her descriptions demonstrate that the St. Luke and Odd Fellows organizations served as the economically and spiritually supporting entity for the community.

Ms. Faith identifies Newtown as an intimate open armed space. Her memory of the trusted and supportive community is reminiscent of a safe place. A place of recreation and fun, Newtown was the site of socialization and socializing in her childhood. Her adolescent memories are filled with stories of homemade ice cream and good fun times. Newtown was also a space of desirability, as her memory illustrates the beautiful and inviting landscaping members of the community worked to create. She

describes the love she experienced in the community as an innocent one. According to Ms. Faith, Newtown's neighborhood love was equivalent to a forgiving and accepting child-like love. Envisioning a community of young people, she re-enacts conversations about the neighborhood with children from her childhood throughout her narrative.

Though Ms. Faith performs the persona of several of her childhood friends, her aunt becomes the central character in her Newtown reflection. The way she expresses protection of her aunt is through the food, particularly ice cream, her aunt prepared. "The dominant figure in the cultural translation through food is the black woman. Her expressions of love, nurturance, creativity, sharing, patience, economic frustration, survival, and the very core of her African heritage are embodied in her meal preparation," (Hughes 272). Ms. Faith's discussions of her aunt's critical role in providing food and play for the children highlights the historical significance of black women's employment of survival strategies through their creativity (Richardson 99). As Ms. Faith talks about the food gatherings and baking that would occur between the men and women of Newtown, she conceptualizes the community's survival through its moments of communion.

Family

Excerpt 7. "Down Home"

You'd be surprised as to how many people that would visit Newtown
couldn't say anything bad about it.

Couldn't say anything bad about Newtown
because the people that lived there

Friendly

Down-home

Earth people and

that's what its all about

its like going there and

knowing you's at home

(Faith Christian Interview. 7/26/2010)

Down-home is a “members’ term” that emerges in Ms. Faith’s description of the people and community of Newtown (Emerson 119). Down-home is a constituted space of family members, who are related by both blood and unofficial adoption. Down-home is a space of rurality reflecting the people’s relationships with and attitudes to the land in rural Appalachia. Down-home makes real the inseparable connection to the place of Appalachia in the black Appalachian experience. It is a terrain typified by hills, farmland and tobacco. As a black woman with roots deeply planted in the central Appalachian region, I found Ms. Christians’ phrase down-home all too familiar to me. Whenever my mother, aunts or uncles talk about returning to the place where they grew up for the holidays or special occasions they will refer to our family’s homeplace, in the heart of Kentucky, as “down –home.” Down home is our acknowledgement of rural beginnings, and a reference to our specific place of origin in Hart County Kentucky. As a first generation urban Black Appalachian, myself, as well as my cousins have adopted the phrase to signify our living relationship to our mothers’ homes, our second homes.

For me down-home immediately evokes notions of hard work. I was raised on horror stories about growing up on farmland and having to do the arduous work of cutting tobacco. Many of my uncles had to start school late or miss school days altogether due to the prioritizing of tobacco season in my grandfather's household. "Don't work, don't eat," was a phrase and work ethic often echoed by my mother throughout my adolescence. This was a phrase passed on to her by her father. The phrase was a very real sentiment and testament of an embodied experience growing up in rural Kentucky. Growing up, I associated down-home with the idea of pulling oneself up by the bootstrap, a commitment to family and community as my mother constantly reminded me to be thankful for my education, and that I did not have to cut tobacco and pick up rocks. The tobacco fields simultaneously signified the beauty and work ethic of my ancestors. The fields also provoked my mother and aunt's to middle class aspirations. Their desires to leave the rural parts of Kentucky inspired journeys toward social mobility.

Down-home is the spiritually inhabited place of my ancestors, buried in Kentucky's hill-valleys. When I go down-home, I return to the site of my family's heritage. This is the place where all of my ancestors were born and buried. This place holds the school-house where my grandparents and their parents attended. Down-home is the place where my uncle still preaches today with a congregation of "Mountain Christian's," another members term, and church staff that consist mostly of my immediate and extended family members. His church, built by my ancestors, still stands off the dirt road and gravel driveways. For me, the rural heart of my family lies in the

heart of Kentucky, a place where my ancestors first created a safe space for themselves. My lived experience, as well as that of my family members past and present, serve as a testament that “down-home” is the space and understanding of heritage for some black Appalachians.

It is because of my understanding of down-home, that I see the family theme in Ms. Faith’s community imaginings of Newtown. “Couldn’t say nothing bad,” is a description Ms. Faith Christian uses to attribute particular significance to the Newtown community’s family character. She uses this natural description not only to testify to the beauty of the community, but also to the integrity of its members. Her phrase is both proactive and reactive. She proactively prevents any injurious accounts of Newtown and its black inhabitants. She reacts to widespread misrepresentation and misconception of Blacks in and outside of Appalachia in the American imagination. Here I interpret Ms. Faith’s personal narrative as an instance of vernacular theory.

Darlene Clark Hine discusses vernacular theory in her account of the ways in which black women in the Middle West survived sexual exploitation, stereotypes and negative estimations of sexuality. She states, “It was imperative that they collectively create alternative self-images and shield from scrutiny these private, empowering definitions of self,” (Hine 916). Hine’s take on self-naming and cultures of dissemblance⁶ among black women in the Middle West, help to understand the ways Black Appalachian women employ similar survival mechanisms, as what I will call a

⁶ Darlene Clark Hines’ cultures of dissemblance refers to “the behavior and attitudes of black women that create the appearance of openness and disclosure while shielding the truth of their inner lives from their oppressors” (Hine 380).

culture of silence. The refusal to air dirty laundry is a strategy practiced by Black Appalachian women to protect the domestic spaces of their families. On the one hand, the culture of silence makes real the relationship between black women and the larger society. Culture of silence is reminiscent of Ntzoke Shange's *Lady in Brown* plea, "don't tell nobody, don't tell a soul," (3). On the other hand, the importance of not being able to say anything bad highlights the value placed on integrity and moral obligations of family members in African American communities. The family centeredness within Black Appalachian community cultures of silence celebrates community relations. In Ms. Faith's narrative, *her* family is composed of individuals within and outside the mother/father/child triad. Ms. Christian personal narrative performance perpetuates this culture of silence by repeating "couldn't say anything bad." Her phrase challenges any ideas that Newtown has dirty laundry and simultaneously protects the community's integrity and family secrets. As Newtown's extended family member, she is obligated to maintain the integrity of the community through her words, particularly what she shares with outsiders like myself.

Secret Society

Excerpt 8. "You Don't Ask Questions"

You don't ask questions about it and

I said "How did it go?"

And I was 'mused "it went fine-"

And you used to ask him nothing else cause-

You ask and that's all you need to know about it-

But it was a good thing to get into the St Luke's

(Faith Christian Interview. 7/26/2010)

In Excerpt 8, Ms. Faith re-enacts child hood conversations with her father about his weekly St. Lukes meetings. Her father held leadership in the organization and was privy to information regarding the organization's special ranks and codes. She depicts the secrecy and respect her father commanded in their interactions by describing his very brief and limited response to her questions. She presents an interesting power dynamic, as she reflects on the ways her father simultaneously upheld his own culture of silence, an obligation of his St. Lukes and Odd Fellows membership, and shaped hers.

The Grand United Order of Odd Fellows (GUOOF), a secret society that originated in England, was the first ceremonial secret society in the United States. Self-designated as a "Friendly Society," the principles of the order included "friendship, love and truth" (Brooks 220). The Odd Fellows was the first fraternal organization to have black members in the United States (Palmer 208). The Independent Order of Odd Fellows, the black division of GUOOF, was an organization that introduced the secrecy feature into black benevolent organizations.

The Independent Order of St. Luke played a critical role in the political, economic, and social development of black communities (Brown 616). Serving as the loci of the community, this mutual aid organization upheld principles of self-sufficiency and self-determination by promoting ideas of racial solidarity through collective economic development activities. More specifically, the Independent Order of St. Luke, the Virginia branch, was one of the larger and more successful of the many thousands of

mutual benefit societies for African Americans that developed in the eighteenth century (Brown 622).

The St Luke fostered an environment of collective responsibility in Newtown. The Independent Order of St. Luke and its sister organization, the Household of Ruth, were dominant organizations for African Americans in Blacksburg and surrounding communities in the 1900s and well into the 1950s. The organizations instituted self-help programs and activities within the community, regarding that “it was the self-interest of black men and communities to support expanded opportunities for women,” (Brown 629). The families, churches and society’s activities were all rooted in similar ideas of collective consciousness and collective responsibility (Brown 619). Likewise, the Odd Fellows Hall served as the primary gathering place for the Independent Order of St. Luke. In short, the Tadmire Light District Odd Fellows was the heart of the Newtown community.

Maggie Walker, one of the most notable leaders of the Independent Order during its height of activity, suggested that the St. Luke viewed family as “a reciprocal metaphor for community; family is community and community is family,” (Brown 624). Maggie Walker’s family metaphor provides a compelling case for understanding the racial history of secrecy in family and societies, a strategy for survival among Blacks in Appalachia. Ms. Faith Christian said that the Independent Order of St. Luke projected the autonomous self-sufficiency of the community. For Ms. Faith, the St. Luke made possible the recreation, beauty and safe functioning of the neighborhood. Further, many of her family members were members of the organizations. Traditionally, the men would

join the Independent Order of St. Luke and the women would join the Household of Ruth. Since she herself was not a member, she was prohibited from knowing the secret details of the Orders' functions. Secrecy created its home in the meeting place of the St Luke, the second floor of the Odd Fellows Hall and in the households of Newtown's residents. The St Luke's expectation for secrecy within their meetings resonated into the cultures of silence in the Newtown community.

In Excerpt(s) 6, 7 and 8, family, neighborhood and secret society simultaneously depict the collective responsibility that molded Newtown. Notions of kinship and organization worked together to meet the needs of Newtown's immediate and surrounding neighbors. The community maintained its autonomy through its self-reliance efforts. The forms of community expressed by Ms. Faith highlight significant understandings of heritage in the black Appalachian experience. It is through Ms. Faith's expressions of community that we understand her lessons on what it means to live and survive in Appalachia.

Teachings: American Utopic Community, Race Relations, the Work of Nostalgia

Nostalgia operates affectively in how Ms. Faith Christian expresses the significance of kinship, family, and community in her experiences of rural Appalachia and particularly her Newtown neighborhood. Shannon Jackson observes that "the efficacy of nostalgia's narratives lies in what it erases from memory as what it retains." I apply Jackson's observation to Ms. Christian's narrative. Ms. Christian's memory of Newtown retains an innocence of life, by erasing Appalachia's stereotypically unruly and "decidedly dangerous" image (Cooke-Jackson 187). Thus, Ms. Christian reclaims

the space of Appalachia through her selective remembrances of Newtown as a “utopic community space” (Diggs Colbert 280).

Ms. Faith Christian connects Newtown to Mayberry, the fictional town from the Andy Griffith Show, through the theme of “human goodness,” an American ideal in the show. The theme of “human goodness,” also reiterates Newtown’s wholesome quality and evokes transgressive ideas of revolutionary blackness prevalent in Antiracist Fanonism: “Mayberry provides a comforting illusion of society and human nature” (Kelly12). Ms. Christian’s account of Newtown also perpetuates this illusion. This illusion of a peaceful and “seamless –society” of good human nature recurs throughout Ms. Faith Christian’s narrative. By invoking the image of the popular show and metonymically substituting Gilbert Street for Newtown, Ms. Faith reclaims her desired space of Newtown. In the imaginative account of Mayberry and Newtown, her memory of the community’s day-to-day functioning omits any displacement, threat, or economic hardship. Newtown becomes a space for fictive harmony and humanism.

Similar to the charmed perceptions of Mayberry that American audiences have, Ms. Christian’s memories rid of degenerate anti-Black ⁷images in everyday life. Her assertion of Newtown’s Mayberry-like quality in Excerpt 6, a place about which “you can’t say anything bad,” disputes Appalachia’s unruly “lower class” reputation. Ms. Christian’s narrative ruptures Appalachian stereotypes and conceals black oppression. She remakes the past as she imagines Newtown’s members, characters, and quality

⁷ Fanon refers to anti-Black racial gaze in which blacks are confronted with white supremacy in the form of anti-Black racism. In lieu of a particular Appalachian context, I understand that the harmful effects of the gaze is twofold, as anti-Black and anti-Appalachian.

counter to violent and immoral Appalachian and black stereotypes. Presenting her personal utopian aspirations, she mobilizes her memory to demand better human treatment. Though Ms. Christian's account would seem to merely illuminate the positive, her selective recollection of only the appealing aspects of the community, and her silence on the mundane, is a loud reaction to the community's oppression.

Excerpt 9. "Love Where I Live"

we used to..

we live there...

We LIVED there..

We lived there because we were in our own dwelling places

because we had our family and our friends...

Now...

well like I say ..

can't nobody ever say anything bad about the place-

but you know..

you just.. like to say..-

you look at the houses

and fix it up ...

do this do that..

but then there come the expenses and

I always say ..

like that..

I would say this to say that.
it doesn't make any difference where you live
or how you live
if you love me ,
you gonna love where I live
and don't make no condition what the conditions are.

(Faith Christian Interview. 7/26/2010)

In the excerpt above, Ms. Christian describes the economic condition of Newtown past and present. She reflects on the diminished condition of the neighborhood. She talks about how the economy in the area has changed. She recognizes these economic changes as the cause for Newtown's transformation, from a place of security into a vision of abandonment. The sentimentality in her account reveals the pain both of and associated with the place she calls home. At this point in her personal narrative performance, completing her thoughts becomes increasingly difficult as she reflects on the distressing changes of the community overtime. At the time of this interview, the remnants of Newtown's' beauty was in three of its original fourteen houses. A parking garage construction intended for Virginia Tech demolished the last standing houses by 2011. Now, the only standing piece of the community, the Odd Fellows Hall, lies in the shadows of a Wendy's parking lot. Ms. Christian narrative openly acknowledges what she chooses to remember and forget. Again, "can't say anything bad," is both protective and an assertion of her authority over Newtown's narrative. Her shift from talking about Newtown as a place where she lived, to a place

where she lives, suggests Newtown is an ever-present emotional space. In an attempt to keep to the Mayberry –like qualities of Newtown, she maintains the image of the community as timeless and priceless. Therefore, the now emptied space of Newtown is re-possessioned through her Ms. Faith Christian’s expressions of human goodness.

During Ms. Christian’s personal narrative a dilemma arose. Immediately, she is confronted by Newtown’s present day and ruin the moment she attempts to preserve its innocent memory. Towards the end of her narrative in Excerpt 9, she signifies the violence rendered upon the remaining casualties, Newtown’s three standing homes, through a strategic shift from talking about the community as an external place to a more personal space. Her affect routes through her personal narrative performance. As she realizes herself the living witness of Newtown, her narrative shifts from nostalgia to contemplation. She inscribes her kinship with and attachment to the place on positive memories and relationships. In this, she brings the “public transcript” of Newtown in conversation with the “hidden transcript,” of Newtown (Scott). James C. Scott’s notion of the hidden transcript, describes discourses or gestures performed by subordinate groups that often contradict public transcripts and evidence open interactions between contrasting power relations (Scott 4). As Ms. Faith reveals her hidden transcripts, her reflexivity in this particular moment suggests the problematic nature of her utopian imagining.

Ms. Faith Christians’ direct comments on racial identity and local belonging expose contradictions in some of her earlier expressions. I witnessed her pain about these problems in her embodied performance. Her rate of speech and breath both speed

up. She asserts her agency through her telling of history and selective sharing memory. Lisa Merrill suggests that “in the performative act of telling a story, recovering and uncovering strategies for secrecy and discovery, it is important to explore the absences and silence in the historical record of subjects,” (67). Up to this point in her narrative, there has been an absence of a direct account of the everyday trivial and political characteristics of Newtown. However, as she begins to talk about present day race relations, she provides plainspoken reflections upon the past. Within these reflections, Ms. Christian offers a series of lessons on community survival.

Race: Lesson 1

Excerpt 10. “Gitin’ Along”

I’d sit back and I look at it today..

-isn’t the same...

There’s no place like Gilbert Street.

No place like Newtown

you know it’s like they say..

I wouldn’t even want to change the name of Newtown-

I would leave it as it is.

You know a lot of people talk about

changing this and changing that-

Why change?

Why change something that you have value from it.

But that means so much to you now –

I could see changing it
if were something that didn't have any value to you at all –
no meaning to it.
But Newtown meant a whole lot to a lot of people.
Black and White.
I could truthfully say black and white.
Yeah white people came out to the blacks in the neighborhood.
Weren't no prejudice area-
everybody just got along good together.
And that the main thing'
Gitin' Along

(Faith Christian Interview. 7/26/2010)

In the excerpt above, Ms. Christian describes interactions between white and black members in the community of Blacksburg. Ms. Faith offers a two-part lesson on self-preservation. The first part of her lesson involves the conditional character of change and the second a survival strategy, known as “gitin’ along.” The phrase “gitin’ along,” best characterizes the space of Newtown. The phrase alludes to the interactions between people within and outside the Newtown community space. As she talks about Newtown as an intra and inter racial space of goodness, nostalgic iterations underscore Ms. Faith’s memory of racial unity. Space is a central trope in Africana approaches to community and survival. During the onset of the Negritude Movement, the Nardal Sisters were some of the earliest black women to demonstrate the importance of a spaced

sensibility in Africana studies. Their French café provided a literal space for some of the most compelling and articulate artistic endeavors, initiating a place for blacks in society and scholarship. The space they created allowed conversations and ideas between activists, artists, and scholars to flow freely, presumably without a need for censorship or public restraint. Expanding the idea of space typified by the Nardal sisters, the space of Newtown, as told by Ms. Faith, is a space of possibility. As Ms. Christian suggests, Newtown was a space for racial harmony and social significance.

In *Appalachian Elegy*, bell hooks, an African American woman scholar and poet, suggests that Appalachia is a place not rooted in a region but rather is constructed by a sensibility of personal space. hooks describes making a place for herself, by calling for a return migration, not to Africa, the place where many African descended people identify as the utopian site of belonging, but to Appalachia. As Black Appalachian scholars William Turner and Ed Cabbell have said Blacks in Appalachia have “been excluded from the history of Appalachia and continue to suffer the worse economic conditions of any subgroup in the region” (*Blacks in Appalachia* 13). hooks suggests that for Blacks in Appalachia, the idea of home and belonging is both a comforting and painful reminder. For hooks, personal space is associated with themes of homecoming and belonging. Both themes have become significant tropes in ecofeminism and black feminist’s work. hooks’ notion of space is similar to notions of freedom in the narrative of Ms. Faith Christian. In Ms. Christian’s lesson, “gitin along” offered a way to exist. Finding her personal space within the traumatic history of her community calls for a moral and emotional preservation of and return to Newtown.

As Ms. Christian narrates the history of race relations in Newtown, she is steadfast and defensive. In writing about revolutionary humanism and the ways blacks may constructively combat racism, Frantz Fanon suggested that black people literally use anger as an instrument in their battle against their oppressor (Rabaka 62). Fanon's concept demonstrates the potential function of Ms. Christian's narrative. Her personal narrative performance is a strategy for redress, secrecy and discovery. Again, the nostalgia of Newtown is evident in her "No place like home" sentiment. "No place," is not just in reference to the vanished community, but to the constructed nature of her account of the vanished social circumstances. "No Place" withdraws Newtown from the peaceful realms of Ms. Christian's thoughtful remembering.

"There is no place like Newtown," presents Ms. Christian's personal narrative alongside the collective one. As she talks about Newtown as a prejudice-free community, her statements introduce the story of Newtown as a counter narrative to that of other race relations in America on the national stage. During the historic moment on which her reflections are ingrained, the 1960s marked the height of the Civil Rights Movement and Black Power Movements. Ms. Christian's "conflict free" Newtown social imaginary conjures two social-historical possibilities. First, it supports the backward stereotype of Appalachia. Newtown is alienated from the struggle for progress brooding in the nation at large. Keeping at the forefront of this analysis the power that performance yields through absence and silence, her idea of "gittin' along" does not imply that black members of the Blacksburg community collaborated with white or other counterparts. The nature of the inter-racial interactions between members of the

community is absent. Her claims do not disclose to what extent the “gitin’ along” straddled cordial interaction or submissive regulation.

My second interpretation of Ms. Christian’s performance is that Newtown was an irregularity in the struggle for progress. Newtown’s human goodness makes it so the community wins the national race toward equality. However, the details omitted from her narrative arouse a need for clarification. Does her account of Newtown serves as a lesson plan for interracial harmony? Why/ how did they get along? Was the harmony a result of complacency or passivity? Unfortunately, she immediately dismisses an opportunity for clarity by her assertion that the “most important thing” was that everyone got along. Next, her “Black / White harmony” dichotomy imagines Newtown as *an* American utopic community, void of any race or class distinctions. Ms. Faith’s ideal American community recalls the infamous “I have a dream speech.” According to Ms. Christian, in Newtown all the differences and prejudices are overlooked and conquered. Her prejudice free claim echoes Kings’ prophetic speech calling for idyllic social relations, while also mimicking a racial coherence sustained by a hegemonic white rurality. In this next excerpt, Ms. Christian continues her lessons on preservation, speaking specifically about intra-racial relations in the Newtown community.

Race: Lesson 2

Excerpt 11. “Black Business Men”

a lot has changed

and

to be honest about-

I didn't like the idea
but they had to sell the land
if I had all the money in the world
I would try to hold on to what's given to me
by our forefathers.
You know because we as
Black
have had to come up a long ways
to where we are
and we still have a long ways to go,
And here we got people,
our own people
they sit on the rumps,
they tell the black men all of their business
and then the next thing you know
it's like renovators have all that information up under
and now they the ones who got the land .
see and I just have a problem with that.
Ya'll just let these people come in
and take away from what is really and rightfully yours.
And that is what has happened.

(Faith Christian Interview. 7/26/2010)

As Ms. Christian talks about what she sees as the greatest challenges facing Newtown and her disappointments with its current state, she indicates her concern by becoming increasingly condescending and irritated. Again, Ms. Christian's use of anger evokes theories of Frantz Fanon. Ms. Christian's lesson on the importance of property ownership and her anger in this episode goes beyond initial frustration with the community's extinction, to that of the causes. Her frustration is tied to the memory of the community and to its replacement. Themes of identity and labor are present in this excerpt. As she comments on black business men, she says "they sit on their rumps and tell the black men all of their business." The black men she refers to here are industry representatives outside of Newtown. Ms. Christian signifies that the most pressing claims within her narrative are issues of race and class, not gender. Her comments offer an opportunity to contextually explore themes of Appalachia and race.

Ms. Christian's narrative is Afro-centric because she speaks directly to the concerns of black folk in the region. The presence of black people in and outside the region of Appalachia is largely due to the trans-Atlantic slave trade, an industry that was supported by free labor of African slaves. Ms. Christian's reference to "forefathers," presumably representatives who signed the constitution, a large number of whom were slave-owning constituents, suggests that her own perceptions of identity transcend historic race boundaries. She does not depict the labor the residents had to perform to acquire the land, nor the labor required to keep it. However, Ms. Christian's frustration with the present state of things is due to property loss. Property, in Ms. Christian's sense, extends beyond land ownership to personal, emotional, and intellectual property.

In Excerpt 11, work and alienation of labor are the nightmare to Ms. Christian's nostalgia for the place of Newtown. Performance and Africana theory make visible the work not mentioned in Ms. Christian's narrative. Saying Newtown's residents "just let people come in and take away what is rightfully theirs," her image of Newtown as a painless community changes to an image of a community disenfranchised by exploitation, institutional racism and economic degradations. Ms. Christian's lesson in Excerpt 11 on "Black Business Men" reprimands people who did not maintain secrecy of the community and were not adequately aware of their property rights. She also critiques the system that failed to provide adequate means of survival for its black residents. As black Appalachians of Newtown left the area in search for economic opportunities, they made their private properties public in a quest for work. In Excerpt 11, the harmonious race relations pictured in prior Excerpts 4, 5, and 6 transform.

In Excerpt 11, Ms. Christian begins to provide a more realistic glimpse of both inter and intra racial relations. At this point in the narrative, she projects her resentment toward the neighborhoods' desolation unto the black businessmen she comments about. She depicts the men as docile and disloyal wingmen to hegemonic forces. The moment she begins to describe the way the houses looked and the current conditions of black property, her sentimentality shifts from endearment to contempt.

Race: Lesson 3

Excerpt 12. "Taking"

WHY?

WHY YOU TAKING WHAT ISNT YOURS?

See well...

“you know you black and we white and blah blah

but “I’m not prejudice”

(Mimicking)

“but why are you taking from this person?”

just like Robin who take from the rich and give to the poor.

I’m sorry-

I mean I sit back and I look at stuff like that-

If it ain’t yours why you taking it?

I’ve always learned

IF IT ISN’T YOURS YOU DON’T MESS WITH IT

Not less you ASK.

YOU ASK, then if they say okay-

THAT’s what I was always taught.

ASK BEFORE YOU TAKE ANYTHING.

you don’t take things for granted.

(Faith Christian Interview. 7/26/2010)

In this last excerpt, as Ms. Christian reflects on the present-day realities of Newtown, she shares what she believes people should know about Newtown. Ms. Faith’s nostalgia for Newtown shifts altogether from her very intimate moments demonstrated in Excerpt 1. Her agitation builds the tension in her voice. Her voice then raises out of an intimate space and enters a public space of contestation and sermonizing.

It is as if she begins to use the personal narrative performance as a platform for Newtown's redresses. As her testimony becomes oppositional and direct, she practices what she would say to those powers that disrupted the tranquility of her home. Her narrative provides an imaginary solution to the injustice of Newtown, a place left vacant and disregarded. As she critiques the economic degradation of her community in racialized terms, she mimics an imaginary hegemonic voice. In this way, her personal narrative performance allows Ms. Faith Christian to show power over her identity as a cultural translator of black community experiences in Appalachia.

CHAPTER IV
ACCOUNTS OF LABOR, EDUCATION AND RACE IN BLACK APPALACHIAN
WOMEN'S ORAL HISTORIES

S: That's why I said a lot of instance happened. But it depending on who you are at the right time when all of this happen. 'Cause I don't care where we go or what we do, there's going always be problems. Somewhere growing up. It's never going to be where everything going to run smooth because if they did- like the woman said- they wouldn't have anything to write about or talk about (*Interview of Sarah*).

Sarah's philosophy on her survival describes a necessary tension between friction and cooperation. In each of the oral histories discussed in this chapter, the experiences and philosophies that emerge introduce survival strategies practiced by Black women in Appalachia. In this case, survival is understood through their individual perspectives. While this study is unique in its purpose to analyze the reports and accounts of black women's experiences in Appalachia collectively, this sample of oral history transcription represents only those voices in and around Montgomery County in southwestern Virginia. As the region of Appalachia spans thirteen of the United States' northern, eastern, and southern states – this study is far from a demographically representative sample of black women's account in Appalachia. However, in joining the voices of women from varying educational, occupational, and class statuses, what I hope to provide is an intimate look at one particular area in the region during a very specific moment in history.

One source for understanding the diverse aspects of Black women's experiences in Appalachia is to explore the accounts of participants inside the Black Appalachian Oral History collection. The Black Appalachian Oral History Collection holds thirteen recordings with women living in Southwest Virginia. Narrated by themselves, the oral histories are the women's personal accounts of labor, schooling and race relations. The accounts' evidence day to day interaction and experiences endured by the tellers themselves as well as members in their families and communities. These experiences involve black women working in white private family homes, reflections on life in the holler⁸, education experiences at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU), daily interactions in predominantly white communities and familial influences on personal philosophy and survival in rural Appalachia. By examining their deeply personal recollections of their experiences growing up Black in Appalachia, I argue that the women in this collection express an Affrilachian identity rooted in multi-vocality. In other words, their accounts offer multiple perspectives of an Affrilachian identity.

I collected data for this chapter from five of the thirteen oral history recordings within the Black Appalachian Oral History Collection held at the Virginia Tech Special Collections library. I analyzed five tape recorded oral history interviews. Only one of these recordings had been transcribed ahead of time. These oral histories were conducted by Dr. Michael A. Cooke between March 4th and 14th in 1991. The oral histories I discuss here, contained principal female informants on the tapes, with little-to-no additional input from others. The women range in age from early 70's to late 90's. All of

⁸ A holler is Appalachian English for a valley between two hills. (Owens 2000).

the women self-identify as African American. Fairly common attributes among the women were a sense of religion or faith along with reports of their church-going practices and participation. Overall, the experiences narrated by the women of the Black Appalachian Oral History Collection represent memories of Black life in Appalachia across a span of forty years.

I focus this chapter on Black Appalachians' complex oral histories of race relations in Appalachia. I approach the experiences shared by these Black Appalachian women as distinct influences toward an understanding of Appalachian identity rooted in memory. In the case of the Black Appalachian Oral History collection, the varied recollections of acceptance, tolerance and resistance to hostility – a result of white supremacist dominated environments – offer compelling view points for imagining a black identity construct within the Appalachian region. Thus, my goal in this chapter I bring together divergent black women's attitudes on race in order to understand individual survival within the region. I identify some examples from the oral histories that illustrate black-white cooperation as well as reports that illustrate tension to explore the intricacies of black individual and collective struggle. I conclude that these women's varied collections ultimately link past occurrences with contemporary attitudes toward black identity within the region.

As an Appalachian woman myself, my goal is not to homogenize the black women's experiences in Appalachia in any way. Instead, I wanted to explore different experiences of an Appalachian identity than what I had previously been exposed to. In the oral histories, the women's experiences and places of origin varied so much that I

focus on the most frequent and common themes. These women's oral histories feature race relations, education and work as explicitly addressed topics. However, my point is that these common themes represent individual modes of survival in various contexts.

I find these common themes across the oral histories. They are cooperation, friction and autonomy. First, I discuss the theme of cooperation, by presenting the women's memories of community fellowship during the era of Jim Crow. Next, under the theme of friction, I present their recollected instances of social agitations in rural communities and racial tensions in education and work environments pre and post segregation. Under the final theme of autonomy, I present reports of labor relations and community living, including avoidance of racial tension in rural areas and independent spirit of black businesses during the Jim Crow era. Again, the thematic categories are mine and do not represent particular accounts. Many of the accounts demonstrate an overlap between cooperation, friction and autonomy and evidence the complexity of black meaning-making in Appalachia.

Theoretical Framework

I draw my interpretive methods in this chapter from performance theory. Richard Bauman understands the oral history as both a narrative and a narrated event. Bauman recognizes that multiple dimensions of performance, contexts and embodiment, shape the telling of a story. Just as Bauman's work with memories of the past are situated in oral histories, here I treat the Black Appalachian women's oral history as forms of personal and collective history rooted in past recollections. These women's direct and indirect narratives about their communities and individual experiences of survival in

Appalachia reveal performative dimensions in their recollections. I apply Bauman's contextualization of the oral history as a narrated and narrative event as a lens for understanding multiple dimensions of survival in the oral histories given by the women in this chapter.

Introducing the Women of the Black Appalachian Oral History Collection

Sarah

Sarah was born in Rustburg, Virginia, located in Campbell County. At the time of this interview, she is a resident of Blacksburg, Virginia and 73 years old. Sarah moved to Blacksburg when she was 21 years old. She is the mother of two sons and one girl. Sarah has a 7th grade education and lived the majority of her life working for white families in Blacksburg. Sarah places particular importance on her faith and spirit in her interactions with the families she worked with.

Leola

At the time of this interview, Leola is a 97 year old widow born and raised in Christiansburg, Virginia. She is a graduate of the Christiansburg Industrial Institute and Hampton University. Over the course of her life she was employed as an educator for over twenty years, custodian for a state library during the Depression and then transitioned into a cafeteria business, where she managed high school cafeterias in Roanoke, Virginia. Leola considers herself to be a lady and takes pride in her respectability.

Roxie

Roxie grew up in the holler in Shawsville, Virginia located in Montgomery County. At the time of this interview, Roxie is 78 years old. Roxie is a wife, mother of one, grandmother and at one time a member of the St. Luke's organization in Shawsville. Roxie came from a family of farmers. Roxie attended school when she was twenty years old and had a 7th grade education. She worked in restaurants and was employed as a janitor at the local post office for twenty years.

Rosa

Rosa was born in Beckford West, Virginia and went to elementary school in Christiansburg, Virginia. Rosa grew up in the rural-county area just outside of Christiansburg, Virginia. She also came from a family of farmers. At the time of her interview, she is 78 years old. She is a graduate of Hill School in Christiansburg, the Christiansburg Industrial Institute, and Virginia State University. Rosa is married to a husband who financially supported her college education and only briefly mentions any children during her interview. Her primary profession over the course of her life was as an educator. She taught and retired in Blacksburg.

Christine

Christine was born in Lawton, Virginia in Giles County. When she was young, her family moved to Blacksburg, Virginia so she and her siblings could attend school. When her family settled in Blacksburg they made their home in the Newtown community. Christine is a wife, mother of three and was a member of the St. Luke's organization. At the time of this interview, she is 76 years old. Christine attended school

in Blacksburg and had an 11th grade education. As an adolescent, she quit school to help her mother raise her younger brothers. Christine worked as a domestic in white households in Blacksburg and in the schools for a period of time. Her primary responsibilities were as a caretaker to her children and family.

Moving away from the brief introduction to the women of the Black Appalachian Oral History collection, I turn to their stories and individual histories within the region.

Cooperation: No Problems, Friendly People, and Instilling a Black Work Philosophy

The examples of cooperation that I address are of inter-racial fellowship and intra-racial agreement. I define inter-racial fellowship as moments of close social interactions between blacks and whites in a self-made community void of overt racial intolerance. Intra-racial agreement involves an accepted power dynamic between Blacks practiced daily inside educational institutions. The dynamics require black individuals to consider their labor, whether in the workplace or community, as acts of obedience and allegiance to the community and its cause. It is very important to note that individuals are expected to do these tasks in their communities. Their engagement with labor stems from their idea that working is a form of “character- building.” In both the community and workplace, labor and interactions between Black Appalachians is the way these women affirm their place in their respective communities. With these distinctions in mind, I turn to the first form of cooperation, fellowship.

In her oral history, Sarah describes the cooperation between herself and her white employers in her work as a domestic in their households. In contrast to Sarah, other

respondents reflect on more unsociable kinds of cooperation between rural blacks and whites during Jim Crow. According to Sarah, the effects of segregation did not influence the work relations nor play between children. For example, in an instance of reflection she says the race relations she experienced in and outside of work contrasted with national tensions black people experienced in society:

“⁹I didn’t have no problem nowhere I went to work either. With the people I went to work with. Well they had, yes children come to play I had no problem with none of them. Whatever I said. They came there they was told that Sarah is the head of the house here now. We are gone – whatever ya’ll want done and everything, whatever she say goes. And I want to hear no back talk. And they didn’t hear none. And I didn’t hear none either. Because they say you raise my children just like you raise yours –thank you. I raised ‘em just like raise mine.”

(Interview of Sarah).

In this case, Sarah describes a work environment in which she had full authority over the children in her white employer’s absence. She mimics her white employer’s voice in the performative transfer of power from parent to caretaker. As a black woman working in a white household, at this moment her white employer releases her from any racist attitudes that could subvert her work. In another part of the interview, she goes on to describe interactions between black and white children in the community.

⁹ In this chapter I use prose rather than poetic transcription because I was not physically present for the interviews, and therefore cannot account for the embodied dimensions in the speaker’s performance of the narrative.

“Yeah the children, the truth concern what they know – We are kids. We are playing together. I told them -yeah I played with white kids too. Played with them all of my life and never had no problem myself. I said and that was back then in the country with those days when people was just as mean I guess then as they are now. But just depend on where you are I’m guessing and at the time that you there. But those kids had a wonderful time here playing together. And it really did shock a lot of those kids, I mean a lot of the white kids as well as -they did the white kids don’t say too much about it because the black ones-I guess they figure they didn’t have too much to say anyway. But as far as they concerned and my children concerned honey they didn’t have no problem with no kids” (*Interview of Sarah*).

As she describes black and white children’s play in Blacksburg, she draws connections between her childhood and her children’s experiences. In her description, the interactions between the interracial group of children was friendly. Not all of the interview echoed the friendship between blacks and white that Sarah reports she observed in the warm and friendly play between the children she observes here. While Sarah introduces an idea of fellowship among black and white children, her discussions of children are the only instances in which she recalls cordial relations between blacks and whites.

Leola also recalls friendly interactions between whites and blacks. In her recollection she distinguishes the congenial interaction between white Quakers in the county area different from interactions with white southerners in the town. She said the

Quaker family that owned a store in her home were a “very friendly family.” When asked if the relationship between the blacks and the white was “pretty good,” she responded saying “it was alright.” Her attitudes about black and white interactions moves from friendly to dissonant in her expressions. Leola’s “alright” comment suggest there was more of an interracial agreement in the community space.

Roxie Bryson, a resident of a rather remote and less diverse area with a minute Black population also described the relationships among black and white in the area as “alright.” When asked if there were any whites living in the area when she was growing up she says:

R: I don’t think so. Some might have lived in here a little while but not much they all got along alright. Some of –plenty of ‘e up here now.

M¹⁰: So nothing but whites live up here in Kirks Holler now?

R: That’s right.

M: But at the time you were growing up they were very few? Wasn’t any?

R: Wasn’t none

M: None at all.

R: I don’t think. They rent house later on after I got older. Few whites come up here and rent and go on back. Now they staying.

M: it doesn’t make no difference now does it – that’s interesting. Were there any problems with the Klan or Klan type organizations in this area? Any incidence a black and white that was really bad – a fight or killing or murder?

¹⁰ “M” is the interviewer and collector of all the Black Appalachian Oral Histories Dr. Michael Cooke.

R: Naw (*Interview of Roxie*).

According to Roxie, her home of Kirks Holler was void of any interracial conflict because it was uninhabited by white residents. Here she also references how the space of her community had changed saying “plenty of ‘e up here now.” In both Roxie and Leola’s oral histories of the intra-racial cooperation, the blacks’ experiences were talked about in a context of spacial proximity. If blacks and whites all got along “alright,” it was because they weren’t required to inhabit a shared community space.

The tepidity with which Roxie describes social relations as “alright,” calls for deeper reading. Roxie’s experience of a black/white cooperation is shaped by her emersion in a homogeneous black community. Roxie’s account is different from Leola who speaks out of a context in which black/white cooperation is evidenced in the midst of a heterogeneous community of black and white. Unlike Sarah’s account of children’s play, Roxie’s ‘alright’ does not suggest a kind of cooperation defined by a friendly mingling between blacks and whites. On the contrary, Roxie’s word describes a kind of cooperation in which blacks and whites maintained a distant concept of cooperation. Thus, in Roxie and Leola’s conceptions, distance was an accepted social relationship between blacks and whites that allowed them to exist together in a segregated space.

During the time of segregation, historically black institutes provided a context for intra-racial cooperation. In Leola’s oral history, she provides two examples of fellowship between Blacks. First, she shares her experiences as a student at the Christiansburg Industrial Institute. The Christiansburg Institute was a trade school for blacks in Southwest Virginia. The second example was her reflections as a student at Hampton

University. The Hampton Institute was a predominantly black community of scholars in Eastern Virginia. Leola recalled that during her entire time as a student, she worked in various capacities to support her education. In her first year at Hampton, she worked as a maid for a black couple that was affiliated with the university. In her second year, she got a job on campus working in laundry and then as a waitress for the campus hotel that catered to visiting faculty and scholars of the university. In her final year, she recalled struggling to balance work and school. When asked about her second ‘work year’ and the classes she took she says:

L: and it was just a few [classes] we had a night. And then we- the second year – I would have to work in the mornings, go to school - back [to work] and go to school in the evening. I waited on tables, then I waited on teachers home and- they had a inn called Holler tree Inn -where teachers and outsiders could eat there too. And I waited there too.

M: Was this typical of the Hampton experience? I mean that is not something unusual the potential student to spend a work year and work through their-

L: No throughout their – it was a thing. Boys did the same thing- it was work for everybody

M: Was it a part of the philosophy?

L: That’s right it was. It was (*Interview of Leola*).

The work philosophy that Leola mentions is similar to the notion of “paying dues.” Its implications of racial solidarity, mobility and opportunity within black communities is important here. The time period her reflection is based saw a regional

appearance of black institutions and university across the southern parts of the United States. Within these historically black communities of education and preparation, there were often individuals who were one or two generations removed from black subservient jobs as sharecroppers or even something as severe as the U.S. institution of slavery (Washington). In addition to being reared-up in the “peculiar institution” of U.S. slavery ideology, students like Leola were members of a generation blacks who for the first time could actively seek education in U.S. universities and institutions (Stamp). With the help of organizations such as the American Missionary Association and key leaders like Booker T. Washington, black institutions were ignited across the south, specifically in rural and urban areas, to educate and train blacks in preparation for integration into society. Both Hampton University and the Christiansburg Institute were among the institutions heavily influenced by the leadership and self-help philosophy of Booker T. Washington. Moreover, the institutions sought to prepare blacks for employment-dare I say survival- in a white dominated society by cultivating accommodation skills, technical skills and equipping students with a work ethic. The work ethic impressed upon the students of the institute was based on a ‘both and’ philosophy. This philosophy required the students to emulate the work ethic of their ancestors, and to aspire for the newfound freedom that education offered to the black working class. According to Leola, the students agreed to work within this philosophy. They understood that working within this philosophy was on-site training for individual and collective black upward mobility. Their commitment to intra-racial cooperation in their education and in their

work demonstrates that they regarded such cooperation as the foundation for successful black integration into white society.

Friction: Didn't Work, Didn't Do, Didn't Have

Whereas, some of the women's accounts identify moments of inter and intra-racial cooperation, others identify moments of friction in their social relations. I consider as an example of friction those instances of interracial tension that the women report about Black Appalachian everyday life. The instances that the women report range in varying intensity from subtle, moderate and more radical moments of conflict within public spheres. I define subtle moments of friction as instances of avoidance and resistance that bear non-confrontational outcomes for the parties involved. I consider moderate friction as the moments of tension that result in indirect confrontation between parties. Last, I define the radical moments as the more highly confrontational activist demonstrations, i.e. Sit-ins, campus protest, etc. that both blacks and whites enacted within public spaces.

Subtle Friction: Avoidance

I define avoidance here as the deliberate distancing practices Blacks would implore to steer clear of confrontation with white residents in the area. The common indicators of friction across interviews were responses to questions regarding black-white relations in the areas where the women lived. The women's answers often associated their attitudes of inter-racial relations with various personal and social encounters in public spaces. These spaces included white owned business

establishments, work environments and commerce routes. For example, Roxie is asked about black participation in a local white-owned convenience:

R: Naw, nothing but bout two stores over- ov-ov-over there.

M: Where they owned by whites or black?

R: By whites-

M: So some whites owned stores in the holler?

R: Naw- they didn't- they didn't own it- YEA I guess they did. Yea- some of them owned it over there- but no colored people worked- didn't even dare work there. (*Interview of Roxie*).

Roxie hesitates as she recalls facts regarding property ownership and race relations in Shawsville. Here, her feelings of reluctance emerge when she states the black absence from local stores. Specifically, she states that Blacks in the area “didn’t even dare,” work or seek work in white owned establishments. Roxie’s report of avoidance reflects one instance of friction represented in the Black Appalachian Oral History collection.

Likewise, in Leola’s oral history, when asked to share specific memories of black-white relations from her childhood, she also reports black reluctance to interact with whites in public spaces. Right after her tepid ‘alright’ expression she shares more about her indifference saying:

L: Well down-town you would pass by some that would say. “Hi Nigger.”

M: Oh they would?

L: Oh yes! And they’d push ya off on the way to school—they’d knock us off the street.

M: On the sidewalk?

L: On the sidewalk! They didn't want us to be on the sidewalk!

M: Hmm. You remember that very vividly.

L: I do {remember} *-that* because –

M: Did that happen to you?

L: No, no...

M: But you saw people?

L: I didn't see it, actually see it – but I know that it did.

M: People told you that you couldn't do this or they'd push you-

L: one time one pushed a girl off the sidewalk and she took a rock and threw- and the rock struck a child so they had to go to court. The dad brought –

M: struck a white child?

L: Yes. Struck a white child. It bounced – it hit the side of that man's dog and hit the child. (*Interview of Leola*).

According to Leola, the threat of being pushed off the sidewalk and stories of repercussion served as warnings to black children traveling to and from school. Leola herself reports never having been a victim of the physical sidewalk regulations. Despite the absence of direct violence on her person, the deeply felt stories/threat of violence and intimidation to which she was exposed, notably from other blacks in the community and members of her immediate family, inhabited a very significant part of her memory of interracial tension. In the latter half of Leola's recollection, she points to more direct responses by blacks to white intimidation. Her story of the young girl who threw a rock

in retaliation to her white intimidator is a much more confrontational example of black resistance to white supremacy in rural Appalachian communities.

Roxie, like Leola, reflects on moments of subtle interracial friction, in which black bodies were regulated through white intimidation. When asked about the kind of work she performed she mentions her experience working in a local Post Office.

R: I worked at the – I worked in um Reston and Post Office and that was bout- that was my jobs. That's two jobs – at the post office for 20 years -

M: Oh so you were a federal employee?

R: NO just an ole janitor didn't –didn't- didn't- didn't make nothing- tell you. L- Lady – and at wasn't nothing uh hundred dollars every two weeks. So -two hundred dollars Naw it wasn't no two – uh hundred dollars every two weeks. That's all.

M: So what- when did you stop working?

R: uh Last – May before last I guess

M: Oh so you just finished working?

R: uh- I –I –I –I didn't get sick, but the woman didn't do right so I couldn't -

M: So something said this is not working anymore-

R: mm mm (*Interview of Roxie*).

Roxie brings up an issue of the workplace inequality that some blacks endured in rural areas. During the era in which she sets her reflection, Blacks and women struggled to gain equitable and livable wages. Thus, the tension and resulting friction in Roxie's former place of employment is contained in larger issues related to rural and black

poverty. In Roxie's account she evokes the notion of "sedimented racial inequality" (Oliver and Shapiro 5). This notion locates black economic disadvantage in the social history of U.S. black subservience and vulnerability. While Oliver and Shapiro argue that the best indicator of sedimented racial inequality lies in wealth, I see this notion in Roxie's memory of her embodied experiences of inequality. Roxie provides a vague explanation for the reason why she quit her job, saying she "didn't make nothing" and later that the woman 'didn't do right.' Her vague report leaves the listener to speculate what triggered her resignation, whether mismanagement, mistreatment or misappropriation of funds. Though it may appear Roxie has enacted an avoidance strategy in her response to the workplace friction between herself and the female employer, I interpret her leaving as an agential move. Roxie reveals her individual agency in her narration by telling of how she quit her job to release herself from an economically subordinated status. In this case, Roxie's not-so-subtle resignation confronted the subtle friction in her work place.

Moderate Friction: Resistance

Two other women, Rosa and Christine, offer divergent experiences of black integration in one rural Appalachian area in Montgomery County Virginia. These women's reflections on education and resistance to integration show moderate examples of friction. One of the markers of the Jim Crow era was "the state-sponsored, constitutionally protected system of racial discrimination and segregation that deliberately disadvantaged more than 10 million black people in the South and parts of the border states"(Patterson and Freehling xvi). A form of legalized segregation, the

system of Jim Crow perpetuated economic and political inequality and heavily affected the social and educational spaces of black children. In 1954, the *Brown vs. Education* decision challenged the system of legalized separation of the races that Jim Crow supported. This decision officially mandated desegregation in public spaces. Some of the first spaces of desegregation were in the public schools of the South. Activist stories like Ruby Bridges and the Little Rock Nine are among many resistances that happened nationally to actualize legislation (Morrison). The black integrationist demonstrations sought to redress the historical inequality of black and white educational spaces. This resistant effort toward integration in public schools led to the creation (and in some cases re-creation) of interracial learning environments in the south.

For some black people, the struggle to obtain educational equality was linked to greater movements for social justice and change. Accordingly, “the struggle over school segregation was often to become the most impassioned and bitter of all battles for racial change in America after the 1950’s” (Patterson and Freehling xviii). Rosa and Christine report experiencing and witnessing this struggle in their oral histories. Rosa speaks as an educator, reflecting on her time in rural areas in Christiansburg and later in other parts of Virginia during and after segregation. She recalls that for both black and white parents there were significant concerns that the integration of their children’s class rooms would disturb the learning environments. When asked about integration, Rosa suggested that neither blacks nor whites in Christiansburg were in favor of switching from the Jim Crow system to interracial learning environments.

R: Now before it started- when it first started talk about it, both sides didn't want it. I think just as much one way over the other.

M: Why did blacks- Why were blacks opposed to it?

R: I don't know. They was afraid the children wouldn't get along with each other.

M: I see. They were just concerned about the type of friction that-

R: mm hmm that would happen-

M: could happen- for- that would impede the educational process-

R: That's right-

M: obviously- but uh- what about white? What was their reaction?

R: They were just as afraid as we were. That it wouldn't work.

(Interview of Rosa).

According to Rosa, both black and white parents feared friction between children in school. Rosa also had a niece and nephew who were the first to integrate the schools in Christiansburg. Rosa's experience as a teacher in schools with both white and black children and teachers, and with her education at the Christiansburg Institute, suggests she herself understood the power of education was in its connection to social mobility and access. Rosa's position as an instructor privileges her with a certain insight in both black and white parents' perspectives on integration.

Christine speaks as a mother, constructing her attitude through the experiences of her two children. One of her children was the first black child to integrate the schools in Blacksburg. In an earlier part of her recollection, Christine denied experiencing any

friction personally when she was growing up in the Jim Crow south in Blacksburg. In contrast to her own experience, as a parent she witnessed her children's torment during the time of integration.

C: So we really as far as I know got along pretty good. My daughter wouldn't tell that because she had a rough time going up here to the high school.

M: What kind of problem did she have? Was this during segregation?

C: Yes. That's when, I told you, she and my little blind son now was first ones to integrate up here at Blacksburg High School.

M: What kind of problems did Anna have?

C: Well, you know, the kids picking on her and all like that.

M: Picking on her for being a kid...

C: For being black. (*Interview of Christine*).

In Christine's portrayal, Anna has a 'rough time' because she is picked on for "being Black." Later on in the interview, she goes on to say that much of what her daughter had to endure was necessary for her younger siblings. In support of Rosa's earlier point, Christine comments on the friction between her daughter and white children. Christine shows that her daughters' experiences were a direct influence of interracial tensions due to integration. Christine argues that Anna's success, regardless of her personal suffering, was necessary for the survival of her younger black brother and others that would follow in her footsteps, particularly in educational settings. In this case, the collective entry and survival of black children in white spaces depended on the retention and success of a selective few black students.

On the contrary to the intraracial tension in Christine's recollection, Rosa reports that many of the tensions that arose in her classroom were due to the under-performance of black children. As she talks about the differences between white and black parent's expectations, Rosa indicates that she, like Christine's daughter, had a rough time.

R: When I was teaching in the white school I was afraid I wouldn't get 'long with the children. But don't you know I got along better with the white ones than I did with the black. So many of the blacks wanted you to give the children grades just for sitting there looking at you. I wouldn't do it.

M: That's right.

R: And I had a rough time on that. [Laughs] 'Course got along much better-Got along Better with the white teachers- than I did with the black.

(Interview of Rosa).

Differences in black and white parents' expectations of their children in the classroom led Rosa to assert that the friction she experienced was with her black counterparts. Unlike the exemplar schoolchild behavior that was expected of and demonstrated by Christine's daughter, the black children Rosa taught demonstrated a sense of entitlement. Both Rosa's and Christine's expression of having "a rough time," are examples of moderate inter and intra-racial tensions in rural Appalachia. In the next section, I shift to the women's descriptions of friction in public spaces where moments of interracial tension were either disputed or reinforced.

Radical Friction: Protest

The public activism of black ministers in rural areas add to the resistance that took place in Appalachia and in the South during the Civil Rights Movement. Black pastors and their churches were extremely active during the Civil Rights Movement. In areas along the Appalachian periphery, specifically Birmingham and Atlanta, notable pastors such as Dr. Benjamin Mays, C.D Hubert and S.A. Archer served as influential organizers during the movement (Morris and Staggenborg 8). Historically, the ministerial and social power that black pastors generated from black churches has aided and facilitated their interactions with white officials. In Appalachia, black ministers were often the organizing agents of civil and political protests. In Montgomery County, Virginia, there were several reports of black ministers leading civil rights protests and demonstrations in the public spaces of their local communities.

In addition to black pastors, the church house itself has been a social and political organizing entity. As the center of black-white alliance initiatives, the church played a critical role to address interracial friction (Morris and Staggenborg 12). As a symbolic site of the victimization for black communities, because of the burnings of churches as retaliation to black resistance, the church maintained a median position between white supremacist oppression and black resistance during the Civil Rights Movement. In the Blacksburg, Virginia area, one example of friction and activism during the era of Jim Crow and the Civil Rights Movement involves the St. Paul AME church. In this instance, the African American pastor of the church had the church's anniversary or jubilee celebration at a segregated "whites-only" park space. When the police officials

came and required the black pastor and congregation to leave the segregated park, the pastor of the church responded by leading the congregation in a resistant protest. The St. Paul protest is just one example of a public display of tension between black and white authority figures.

When asked about Klan activity in the Blacksburg area, Rosa describes the participation of black pastors in civil rights issues in her own community. Speaking about a black pastor who had a run-in with the Klan she says:

R: Now uh- if you had any kind of problems they would come around dress up and try to intimidate you- then would scare em, but they didn't do any real damage.

M: Mm Hmm. Off the tape you mentioned about a minister who was at Schaeffer {Memorial Baptist Church}-

R: Yea they wanted to get rid of him- he wouldn't leave. And then the Klan marched in the church one night and other than that [Laughs] I don't remember anything else.

M: The Klan (laughs) marched in the church- oh- ok- did that minister leave?

R: Yes he did (*Interview of Rosa*).

Rosa shares an instance in which a black minister conceded to white domination after the invasion of the sacred and public space of the church. In this case, avoidance as a theme emerges again only differently. The pastor left the community, for which he served as an advocate, to prevent any future violence to the church suggested by the Klan's intimidation tactics. Rosa's memory of the pastor's run in with the Klan relates to

her comments earlier about blacks confrontation with white hecklers on the sidewalks. The black/white power dynamic that emerges as the pastor of the church is disempowered through the Klan's intimidation further supports feelings of friction expressed by Rosa in previous section.

Shifting interracial power dynamics comes up elsewhere in the interviews as the women talk about racial tensions. Sarah also experiences a black- white power dynamic shift in her role as a domestic. She recalls that her daughter told her about an interaction she had on the campus. This interaction was between her daughter and a well-known white professor.

S: [her daughter] said they were sitting in [the store], at that time Tech drug store had an eating counter in there. And [her daughter and other black students] was in there- anyway. She said they was in there and this professor- course he's dead now. She said he came through – and they were eating now, had [already] been served- said he came through and his expression was 'what in the hell is this going on here now' and [the] four of them [were just] siting at the counter eating. And she come back, because she knew we knew him- the man-

(Interview of Sarah).

Sarah's account describes a white professor expressing racist attitudes toward blacks in a public space. Prior to the incident, Sarah and her daughter had thought of the professor as an ally to the black community. Because of Sarah's respected reputation in the community, it is likely that she had interacted with this professor in the private spaces of her white employer's home. The racist expression of the professor changed the attitudes

of the black students. Following her daughters' report of the friction between her and the white professor, Sarah talks about a shift in the way this specific professor interacted with blacks. She recognizes the professor's double faced-ness as a result of his position on campus and in the community. Sarah argues that black-white power dynamic her daughter experienced were a result of the larger political and economic forces. The capital he gains in his position as a lawyer, obligates the professor to demonstrate his white supremacist ideals in public. For Sarah, his status as a professor drives his public display of racism. Accordingly, the professor's behavior led to an insidious friction between him and other members of the black community.

Earlier in the interview Sarah recalls another example of changing black-white relations. Moving to a kind of transformative friction, in this recollection she locates power in students' bodies. Sarah shares a different perspective on black-white power dynamic as she describes a sit in organized by the Core of Cadets at Virginia Tech.

S: I was told a bunch of kids went up here on the hill where they or they used to always go to the movie but they sit up in the balcony. Now they never bothered to go anywhere else. They just went on up there and sit down. And then some big orchestra was coming here to play at Tech and they went up and had the bus turned up yonder on the hill and the woman didn't want to feed them, the people. So some of the students – I was told- the white students down on campus went up there. They broke that up by ordering up all this food. After she wouldn't feed them. Ordered up all this food and then all walked out and left it. And told her if the food wasn't good enough for them it wasn't good enough them either. So that

broke her up. She finally gave up... And she refused to feed them. So the students just-

M: Were these cadets –

S: Yes. It was cadets. Bunch of em

M: So they just simply took it upon themselves?

S: Yea, yea and it was all over.

M: And so that practice no longer-

S: Yea, they didn't bother them anymore and nobody mess with them. But she was come up wouldn't keep it open any longer. She just turned it over to somebody else. She never bothered it anymore.

M: She decided-

S: She gave it up that's right. (*Interview of Sarah*).

The protest Sarah describes is an example of a power dynamic shift different from the one she previously describes between the white professor and black students. In this account, a white supremacist figure, the white female restaurant owner, backs away when she encounters the advocacy of a predominantly white male group of cadets on behalf of an All-black orchestra group. The confrontation that arises between the white cadets and the white store owner ultimately lead to her relinquishing her position as restaurant manager. The friction between the cadets and white store owner led to a protest in white-black solidarity. Although this is an example of an interracial alliance between the White cadets and black performers, and of intra-racial friction between the cadets and restaurant manager, it is still a radical act in the larger context of interracial

tensions between blacks and whites. On the whole, the protest described here show moments of social incoherence and alliances between black and white groups in rural Appalachia in the midst of racial tension.

Autonomy: They Went, They Wanted, They Road

A theme of autonomy was present in the accounts of all the women whose oral histories I examined. Whether found in the stories of mothers, sons or black businessmen, the memory of Black survival in Appalachia during Jim Crow is linked to a struggle for independence and freedom from the constraints of unemployment and segregation. In these cases, Black Appalachians achieved autonomy through forms of labor. The forms of labor the women mentioned included labor in the mines, business entrepreneurship, and domestic work. The Black Appalachian's emphasis on labor in the midst of institutional restrictions was a survival strategy employed to carve out an autonomous life for themselves within the region.

One of the first strategies blacks implemented to make a place for themselves in white dominated societies, was the creation of black owned businesses. Because of the strict limitations on the movement and involvement of Blacks in a segregationist rural society, the black businesses both established and represented the historical place of black people in parts of Appalachia. Stories of black business men comes up in three of the oral histories. In Rosa's account, she recalls that the black men and their business provided safe and welcoming spaces to the blacks living in her community.

Blacks and Businesses

R: And at one time they had two black restaurants, people went there.

M: tell me about those black restaurants.

R: Then later on I had a cousin to operate a cafeteria-it was always nice- had good food -course he was a good cook.

M: Oh so it's in the family?

R: In the family yea-

M: Well okay-

R: Ran the lunch room and the taxi business. And that's where we went. We didn't try to go to the white people -

M: Yea that just made sense. S.B Morgan's place you could go in and sit down-

R: Yea you could.

M: And receive good service.

R: That's right. And didn't hear too many racial incidences. We do what we was supposed to do. Accepted it. (*Interview of Rosa*).

Rosa recalls that because segregation prevented blacks from eating inside restaurants that most people didn't bother with white owned business. Thus, the black business, by default, was a community space. In Rosa's recollection of the black business men, she presents a narrative of acceptance and pride. The black restaurants and taxi businesses are all depicted as quality spaces. For example, Rosa talks about the culinary skills of her cousin's cafeteria saying it "had good food of course." Her comments demonstrate that black businesses were places not just where Blacks had to go, but places where they

wanted to go. She goes on to say “We did what we were supposed to do.” She suggests that by visiting predominantly black spaces Blacks avoided conflict with whites and adhered to the restrictions of segregation. Her recollection suggested black business became a place of pride and obligation.

Rosa shows that more important than the obligation, blacks were able to make and sustain their own establishments. In their sustaining efforts, black families had a personal investments and responsibility to black businesses. In her oral history, Rosa says that a number of her cousins owned and operated the business she attended. Beyond obligation, these businesses were sources of pride for black families and communities. The role of family in conversations about work and independence also come up in an earlier part of Rosa’s conversation. When she talks about her mother raising her and her siblings, Rosa describes that her independence emerged out of an obligation rather than choice. After her father’s death, Rosa’s work ethic was shaped by her mother’s survival and family upbringing:

R: After my father got killed in the mines, she kept us all there, kept us in line and took care of us.

M: He was killed in -do you know what area of West Virginia?

R: It was in Beckford, West Virginia. Cause see want none of us but seven years old when he got killed.

M: I see. So that must be real rough-

R: It was really was. {The note of his death} came home for Christmas (unintelligible) it was awful.

M: Were you notified prior to that?

R: That it had happened.

M: So many people were, I keep interviewing so many people who had lost legs. And so many people, I talked to two people whose father's legs were amputated because of mining or cowry related injuries. And I've also talked to people who lost a lot of –knew people in say Wake Forest who lost a life.

R: Yeah. A lot of them dead.

M: So that was a tough occupation. People didn't have many opportunities so they took the jobs they could get. So what your mother do to support all these children?

R: She got a pension from it... And as soon as we got old enough we all started working out of people's homes (*Interview of Rosa*).

The tough labor Rosa's father had to endure ultimately led to his untimely death. The death of her father led to an economic situation that left her family without their primary provider. After her father's death, Rosa and her other siblings began working at an early age to ease the financial stress their mother endured. The constraints of motherhood, unemployment and a father-less household compelled her mother to assume the occupation of mother and father. A chain reaction occurs as one tough occupation is transferred from one generation to the next generation. Here, tough labor is the force that compels Rosa's mother's financial independence and consequently her children's independence.

Labor and Independence

Labor and independence are themes that also emerge in Roxie's oral history. Like Rosa, Roxie talks about the menial and disparate jobs available to Blacks. When asked about the kind of jobs people had in the area where she lived, she stated "No they didn't have nothing they just road [around the country] looking for jobs I guess." Roxie indicates that her husband and his family had come to the Shawsville area in search of work in the mines. Roxie's story of her husband is similar to that of Blacks' migration to Appalachia. Ronald Lewis describes economic history and influx of Blacks to the region of Appalachia for employment and independence in his *From Peasant to Proletarian: The Migration of Southern Blacks to the Central Appalachian Coalfields*. Unfortunately, for Roxie's husband and others, desperate positions of Blacks often compelled them to accept high-risk jobs with little to no pay. In more severe circumstances, Blacks accepted work at the expense of their own lives. For this reason, there is a prominent narrative describing the experience of Blacks in Appalachia as one of exodus (Kirby). The Black Exodus is that of black people's departure from rural areas to urban peripheries of Appalachia and northern parts of the United States between the 1910's and 1960s. When Roxie explains why all the Blacks left their various places of residences in Shawsville, she says that they left in search for jobs. In her explanation of Shawsville's mundane character, she expresses that the younger people left because "they wanted to go get work I guess." The independence and freedom that was available to black bodies in Appalachia was defined by employment opportunities there were often outside remote Appalachian communities.

For Sarah, black men's need for work meant that they sought asylum and protection in the military as a way to achieve their independence. She talks about how her oldest son and some of the other boys in the area gained autonomy from white tensions in their communities by enlisting in the army:

S: Yeah well – well my oldest son – he don't live here anymore. He went in service when he was um – aw-17. I had to sign for him. I didn't want to but he and a group of white kids here- every time turn around there were a bunch of white kids – that said- they call them rednecks – they was always in a fight. Always in a fight. He said he didn't want to be fighting and going on like this all the time with these white kids. And he decided, he and Allen Price, Christine's son, Allen they went in service together. They went – we had to sign- I DIDN'T want to sign. Lieutenant came in here and he said ma'am, Ms. Wade, he said I think he is doing a wonderful thing. He say 'cause a lot of these kids around here is really getting out of hand. He said its- says it's got to be some separation somewhere. But he says – he volunteered and wanted to do it, let him do it. And I said well I feel terrible signing my son away somewhere – and he said no he wants to do this! Okay – I hope he makes it. So when I signed the paper- and off my son went joined the airborne. He was one of those streaming eagles. He was in the service for eleven years. Oh he made it come out in flying colors. But um – and Allen he stayed- he just stayed – he was a medic- paramedic – and he didn't stay but two years. But [her son] stayed 11. And that's why-and then my brother in laws son- he went -In service- and left- all those kids – a Todd boy that come

up along with them – he goes in service-Kids- then the oldest ones just come checking themselves into the armed service. (*Interview of Sarah*).

Sarah agrees that, for her son and other black men, joining the military provided job security that was not available in their rural Appalachian homes. As she also suggest, her son enlisted to escape or avoid future interracial confrontations with his white counterparts in Blacksburg. Her account shows the ways in which black men were able to have some control over their lives, allowing them to both preserve and provide for their families and gain independence through their military employment. Thus, military participation didn't just provide individual security, it offered economic security for the future communities of Black Appalachian families.

CHAPTER V

AFFRILACHIAN MEMORY: A PERFORMANCE EXPLORATION OF IDENTITY

This chapter addresses the ways performance may celebrate, critique and construct multiple Black images of Appalachia. The performance represented here foregrounds a long invisible history of “individual independence and commitment to family and working” across an array of Black Appalachian voices (McLuaghin, Lichter and Matthews 9). The movement toward visibility I express through performance are themes of claiming Appalachia as homeplace, escaping Appalachian stereotypes and invisible survival in Appalachia. In order to understand how African American women’s memories of growing up in Appalachia express Affrilachian identity, the choreo-poem¹¹ “Affrilachian Memory” offers a dramatic expression of black recognition and inclusion in Appalachia.

Theoretical Framework

Autoethnography is ethnography of one’s own “social, ethnic, or cultural group as an autobiographical focus” that yields contextual insight (Madison 197). In this chapter, I use autoethnography to contextualize Affrilachian culture through my personally lived experiences as an Affrilachian woman. Bryant Keith Alexander regards performance ethnography as “the staged reenactment of ethnographically derived field notes,” intended to illuminate and invoke change in cultural politics (411). In this chapter, I use

¹¹ Choreo-poem was coined by Ntzoke Shange and is meant to describe a dramatic form of expression that incorporates poetry and dance in performance.

my personal narrative as performance ethnography to place my experiences as an Affrilachian woman dialectically against a master narrative of the social and cultural history of the Appalachian region.

Introducing Affrilachian Memory

I offer *Affrilachian Memory* as a performance ethnography and auto-ethnography on being Black in Appalachia and becoming Affrilachian. Carolyn S. Ellis and Arthur Bochner states that “Back and forth auto-ethnographers gaze, first through an auto-ethnographic wide-angle lens, focusing outward on social and cultural aspects of their personal experience; then, they look inward, exposing a vulnerable self that is moved by and may move through, reflect and resist cultural interpretations” (739). Ellis incorporates a variety of forms to describe representations of an auto-ethnographic text. Following Ellis’s lead, I include short stories, poetry, embodiment and dialogue into “Affrilachian Memory” to convey my auto-ethnography as a Black Urban Appalachian woman. I use the term Black Urban Appalachian to geographically locate myself within the region. As the designation suggests, I take pride in my African heritage. I also acknowledge the nuances of my southern culture shaped by my upbringing in Louisville, Kentucky. I claim Appalachia to navigate the intersecting histories that influences my identity (Taylor Trauth). These histories explain the light tone of my skin, the cultural heritage that brings me back to the region as home, and an appreciation for and academic investment in the region of Appalachia. Speaking as a woman with a sensitivity to and awareness of my body in all of these spaces, “Affrilachian” is the only term I have found that explains all of these identities at once.

Affrilachian Memory is not only an expression of who I am, but is also a representation of how I came to understand myself as Affrilachian. This performance is made up of the deeply personal, critically distant and the liminal moments I have experienced in the course of my studies. In an attempt to enter into dialogue with the subjects I engage in the previous chapters of my thesis, I present my voice and the voices of the Black women in my family. Bryant Keith Alexander states that performance ethnography is and can be a strategic method for inciting culture” (411). Within this script, I am triply reflexive as I represent myself, the women in my family and my understanding of Affrilachia through my (and their) embodied experience. The scenes upon which I reflect represent my personal life and expressive moments of women’s survival in Appalachia from my perspective.

In addition to the autobiographical components of this work, I present a collective history of Affrilachia from its inception to current existence. Unlike previous chapters, in which the designation “Affrilachian” is explicitly assigned to a prestigious group of poet’s and applied in the abstract to Black experiences in the region, here I take the complexities of Affrilachian identity out of its traditional context of poetry and apply it to cultural performance in various spaces. I name the critical memory of Black, creative, community and individual, survival in Appalachia studied in previous chapters as Affrilachian Memory. My aim is to speak to a long history of black women’s survival in Appalachia, forgotten and remembered. I seek to address how the individual and collective memories represented in theatrical performance present memory as a route through which Affrilachian identity may be interpreted, constructed and challenged.

I organize the chapter into three parts to highlight the journey from identifying as a Black Urban Appalachian to claiming “Affrilachian” as my identity. I include scenes that contain autobiographical performances and follow with an auto-ethnographic analysis of my own lived experience as a Black woman. My first encounter with the concept of Affrilachia is the Scene “In the Beginning was the word,” which is a representation of the invention of the word “Affrilachia.” In this scene, I offer a reflection on exclusionary stereotypes and naming practices among African Americans in Appalachia. “Affrilachian Memory: Tobacco fields,” is a fictive interpretation of experiences transferred to me by the women in my family. I explain issues of violence and cultures of silence in my personal experience to open larger conversation regarding life in the region. “BOOM BOOM The Sequel: I came to Affrilachia” is a reflection that entails an intimate account of regional issues through experiences of alienation and community.

Table 1. A List of Dramatis Personae

AP Short for Appalachia	A scholar of the Appalachian region, she is an introverted person of great intellect
AF Short for Affrilachia	A scholar, friend and colleague of AP and BL, she is the mother figure to the dancers and students.
BL Short for Black Girl	A scholar of Black studies, a woman of great pride, strength and spirit representing all things Black and all things city.
Black-tuckian	A young middle class Black Urban Appalachian woman interested in the region.
Girl #9	A young poor tobacco farm girl and a dreamer representing all things country and southern.
Girl #13	A student and protégé of BL and AP, representing negotiations between the ideas of region and race.

Scene 1. In the Beginning was the Word

The scene begins with AF, AP, and BL each standing at the podium with an opened book. AF stands at the center podium with a spot on her and an oversized dictionary. Her head is buried in the book, as if she is trying to find herself.

AF: In the beginning was the word

BL. And the word was loud

AP. With a long A....

BL. Two legs, two arms and a small head

AF. Some high and low points

AP. Low like valleys and high like mountains

AF. Long as the region

AP. Moving like curvy mountains on a page

AF. With 2 p's

AP. And 5 a's

BL. 5 a's?

AP. 4 a's

AF. The word has history

BL. Of minority and marginal folks

AP. Of coal *country* and *field* recordings

Of welfare and privatization

Of back water, back hills and backwards hillbillies

BL. *White* backward hillbillies

What? That's what they say!

AF. It's Catholic, Celtic and Cherokee

Its Old time and Bluegrass

It's English, Scott's- Irish

It's German and African

BL. *African?*

AP. its American values

BL. Don't forget Lil Abner and the Biltmore estate

AF. And the word was "summary"

AP. It was southern and rural-

BL. Don't forget northern and eastern

AP. It was central

BL. Inaccurate "summary"

AP. Totalization

BL. An urban imagination

AF. And the word was history

(AF shuts the book)

BL. Who's history?

AF. And the word was erasure

BL. Not my history

(BL opens AF's book tears out the page she has book marked. BL writes the word "Affrilachian" across the page).

AF. Ah! And then there was The word

(BL takes the page and motions for AP to turn toward her and read it. BL and AP face each other with AF splitting the middle as if the two are joining hands in marriage.)

BL. And the word stuttered

AP. Af-f-f--

BL. *(impatient)* And struggled

AP. Af-f-f r-il -Affril - ach

BL. And stumbled

AP. *(visibly uncomfortable)* A-f-r-r-i-l-a-c-h-i-a-

BL. And finally stuck

(BL slaps the page into AF's book)

AP. *(surprised by BL's slap)* Affrilachia.

(AF abruptly throws a handful of rice in the air and the union is complete.)

AF. And it was loud

*(Magical)*And smokey

And black

AP. *(contemplative)* Affrilachia

BL. And Black and Brown

AF. And colorful

With 2 F's

AP. And 3 A's

AF. Affrilachia!

BL. *(sarcastically responding to AP)* Hallelujah!

Its gospel

Its rejection and racism

AF. Its acceptance and diversity

BL. Reclaiming where and how and with whom

AP. with whom?

BL. Etta B. and Carter G.

AF. My ancestors and

BL. with what?

Hemp and tobacco

Banjoes and okra
AF. Mm Hmm and Kentucky bourbon
AP. Melungeon¹²?
BL. Melungeon too. And Bessie and Nina

AF. and Frank, Crystal & Crystal, Kelly, Bianca and the word was good and evil. The word was truth and lie, was me, not me and not not me. The word was reproduced and printed, represented and identified, the word was corrected and clarified. But don't get it twisted, it didn't Begin with the word-
BL. Word!

Lights Out. AP, BL and AF cross and sit down stage right, left and center.)

“In the Beginning was the Word” explains the word Affrilachia crafted by Frank X. Walker of the Affrilachian Poets. BL’s black cultural images, AF’s regional images and AP’s literary definitions capture the initial process of defining Affrilachia as described by the Appalachian Poets in countless interviews (Spriggs) (K.N. Ellis) (*Coal Black Voices*). AF shows that to name one self an Affrilachian is to recognize a culturally diverse heritage across rural/urban and racial divisions. Since the invention of the word in 1990, its use has expanded in application and concept. For example, on the Affrilachian Poet’s official website, the group highly encourages any person outside of the group to identify as Affrilachian.

“Q: What if I identify as Affrilachian? Can I use the term to refer to myself?

A: Of course! The word is in the dictionary! The more people who inundate the world with the concept of Affrilachia, the closer we are to overthrowing the unfortunate stereotypes of a homogenized region” (affrilachianpoets.org).

While the group of writers reserve the designation “Affrilachian Poet,” Affrilachia is changing into vernacular. On the FAQ page of the Affrilachian Poets website the

¹² Melungeon describes a cultural group in Appalachia, perceived to have Italian ancestry.

designation “Affrilachian,” is extended to any person of color hailing from the region. The “Question and Answer” portion from the website shows that the Affrilachian Poets desire to extend the term outside of their elite circle to any person seeking to place themselves within the region of Appalachia. Their answer also openly acknowledges the political implications of identifying with the region through the term. When I read the “Question and Answer,” on the Affrilachian Poets website, I saw it as a movement for racial inclusion in the region. I felt I was officially given permission by the group to name and validate myself as an Affrilachian. *Affrilachian Memory* represents my vernacular use of Affrilachia through performance and text.

Scene 2. Affrilachian Memory: Tobacco Fields

Place: Tobacco Field

The stage is empty except for GIRL #9 kneeling down stage right. THE BACKGROUND IMAGES CHANGE TO A PHOTO OF A TOBACCO FIELD. The sound of country leaves/ wind swaying and birds in the background plays throughout the scene.)

GIRL #9. I was raised working in tobacco. Grew up working on eighty acres of farmland in a family of eleven- Eight boys and three girls. Folks nickname the boys and girls based on the number they come out of mama. For instance the oldest boy we call Number One and the youngest Number Eleven -with all the rest of us falling in between. And we worked- *all* one through eleven of us. We raised chickens, pigs, cattle to sell, milking cows- shoot- anything and everything country, you name it, we did it. We worked outside and inside. In tobacco, corn and wheat fields. Cooking and cleaning, gardening and laundry. Both washing and ironing. And if you ask me to choose between them I’ll choose laundry every time. I don’t know what I want to do when I grow up -but I sure know what I DON’T want to do. Tobacco. I don’t want to cut it, smell it, hell is don’t even want to look at! Matter of fact I think I’m allergic! It’s hard, it hurts. It makes you start school late or not at all. When its tobacco cutting season girls not treated like girls in the country. When there’s leaves to hang and bodies to work being a girl don’t matter. A body is a body, don’t make no difference the sex. Though my daddy lets my brothers sharecrop tobacco and get money from it. But us younger ones and girls don’t get no money. Less you be woman in the south,

no rights and no voice them tobacco fields become your hell and your haven-
place for hiding and crying. Whether it's on our place or going to another.

Sometimes numbers Four through Nine go working on Bill James farm:
picking the ground leaves for tobacco. See with tobacco, the lower leaves ripen
and have to be harvested first. I usually do alright. See because I'm younger and
a little smaller it's sometimes easier for me than the other ones- because I can
stay low to the ground longer. You gotta get the ground leaves before they turn
brown otherwise that's money that you lose- that's what daddy say. Another
thing 'bout being little is that when you lie down to take a break, no one can see
you 'cause they might as well assume you working. So sometimes I take a break,
to lie down and dream about City-man. (*Dreaming of him*) He's my future
boyfriend. He's from the city. I take breaks long enough to call up his face, then
back to picking leaves. (*Lays down*) I was doing alright with my small moments
with him, til one day Number Five caught me by myself.

*At this moment two dancers enter up stage right and mime the tobacco predator
scene with their bodies.*

Girl ain't safe anywhere in the country, 'specially not in no tobacco field.

Number Five come up on me.

*Dancer #1 plays the role of Number Five and pushes the Dancer #2 playing the
role of*

GIRL #9. to the ground. Beat.

DANCER 1. It doesn't look as painful as it is.

Pressing her Hard. Beat.

Dancer 2. It doesn't sound as painful as it is!

GIRL #9. Pressed my face hard into the ground leaves.

DANCER 1. This doesn't sound as painful as it is.

GIRL #9. He pressed into me hard and it hurt. Told me to keep my mouth shut.

DANCERS 1&2. This is doesn't sound as painful as it is!

Both dancers freeze in a tableau.

GIRL #9. Afterward, I lay out in the tobacco field next to the ground leaves
pricking my back and in my hair. I laid there while my mind left my body. I laid
there with my hands outreached hoping someone would be there to help me.
Place their hand in mine and pull me. I closed my eyes, thinking on the fine city-
man that would come. Rescue me from tobacco fields and hard work. I see my
City-man. He is big, way bigger than Number Five and athletic, and smart. He
never misses school and never even seen tobacco— only mountains. City-man

was born on a mountain top. My City-man never goes to the field 'cept this time when he's come here to save me. I reach my hand out to my City-man who is coming to surprise me with flowers in hand, all black on, leather gloves and sunglasses. I can hear him talking love to me. His voice is deep like water wells. I lay there, tears hard on my face and I can feel City-man's presence blowing my tears dry. I even feel heat next to my hand and I know it is City-man's glove. I've never felt leather before but I feel it now with the heat from his hand sliding in mine. I open my eyes to see my City-man. Instead I see a Black copper head has slid in place of my city-man's hand. When I realize it is not my City-man I jump, and me and the snake both fly into the air.

While I'm flying, I turn my head and see daddy and Number Five standing side by side at the end of the field.

Dancers 1 & 2 give a quick hard laughter.

Both me and the snake hit the ground.

DANCERS 1&2. It doesn't sound as painful as it is.

GIRL #9. And I hear daddy laughing at me from a far. In between laughs he's scolding me for laying down on the job.

DANCERS 1&2 It doesn't sound as painful as it is.

GIRL #9. He laughed and I laid there. Said he didn't know who was higher.. Me or the snake.

DANCERS 1&2 It doesn't sound as painful as it is

GIRL #9. Number Five was laughing so hard he had to hold his stomach. And I was a child, lying in a field of tobacco.

Like I said -tobacco don't care if you're a girl and hurting and terrified- a body is a body. No room for daddy's or daughters in tobacco fields, just masters. Can't trust tobacco. Nothing good happen in the field. 'Cept sweat and tears.

GIRL #9. Dancers 1&2 **"It doesn't sound as painful as it is"**

(The women and dancers enter the stage from all sides. Loving on Girl #9.

Dancers 1 & 2 hold Girl #9 at the edge of the stage -as the women sit in a group.)

Girl #9 is still and silent.

"TOBACCO FIELDS," represents the work philosophy, conveyed to me in the form of personal narrative by the women in my family. In one conversation, I asked my mother and aunt why they decided to leave rural Kentucky and move to the city. In answer, my aunt responded "to get away from tobacco." My mother and aunt's narratives of tobacco and violence prepared me for adversity. "Black daughters are raised to expect to work, to strive for education so that they can support themselves, and to anticipate carrying heavy responsibilities in their families and communities because

these skills are essential for their own survival as well as for the survival for those whom they will eventually be responsible” (Collins 334). In moments of perceived laziness or disrespect, my mother would often respond with either a personal anecdote that usually ended in “girl if you were in Floyd Barbour’s (my grandfather) house you would be dead by now,” pointing to the no-nonsense authoritarian attitude my grandfather had with his children. As a child, I translated the phantom figure of my punitive grandfather as a direct reflection of his life as a sharecropper. Every time I heard stories of my grandfather, from either my mother or aunts, they were always situated in a context of work, specifically tobacco.

This idea of work and obligation was also supported through other narratives. For instance, during family gatherings and in many one on one situations, my mother would tell me that I was born with callouses on my hands. The callous, was and still is a feature that nearly all of my aunts and uncles hold as an embodied memory of their farm, and in particular, tobacco raising days. Over time, callouses and the narratives associated with them were transferred to Barbour children to instill a strong sense of hardwork, independence and discipline at an early age. At one family gathering my cousins, aunts and uncles had a conversation about hands while sitting in a circle. I can recall very vividly that conversation began when one member of my family commented on the apparent smoothness of my own hands. My hands quickly became source material for a joke as my mother then touched my hands and said that they evidenced my life of work, or lack thereof. Though at the time I was the youngest girl in my generation and had not formally began working, I already had a strong sense of the value my family held toward

hardwork. As the conversation about hands continued, each of them displayed callouses for the others to see. At the start, my aunt and mother held up their hands which were calloused at the wrist crease and the areas where the fingers touched the palm. In a conversation of “who’s hands were worse, “ my cousins would present tougher hands, some with the light yellow pigment of their hands burnt with permanent dark lines from manual labor. Out of the entire circle, it was clear to me that my uncle’s hands were the roughest and hardest. Both of his hands had calloused so much that the entire inside of his hand was swollen hard and the sound of his hands clapping sounded like the breaking of a large stick. He and another uncle had become business men at an early age in urban Louisville. Their hands signified years of creating and sustaining black businesses. I learned an embodied theory of work through the sight, feel and conversation of my family’s hands.

Not only was a work ethic instilled in me through the personal narratives by my family a sense of identity, specifically one of black femininity, was also instilled. I experienced the intimacies of my rural Kentucky homeplace through narratives about growing up country. The narrative tradition in the writings of women of color include efforts to recover the history of mothers (Collins 64). In my relationship with my mother, she would often use dreams, oral and written narratives to teach lessons about womanhood and culture. Snakes in particular were recurring figures in her stories and dreams. As Patricia Hill Collins says “In raising their daughters, Black mothers face a troubling dilemma. To ensure their daughters’ physical survival, they must teach their daughters to fit into systems of oppression” (Collins 334). When my mother and aunts,

my other-mothers, told me stories, it was indeed a strategy of power. The women in my family understood the subordinate position black women held in the family, local communities and society at large. Their stories socialized me to learn how to be aware of my vulnerability as a black woman in any setting. Girl #9's encounter with the field snake after her abuse is a metaphor for her encounter with Number Five. Like the story told by Girl #9 in "Tobacco Fields," it seemed to me that the stories involving close encounters with predators ultimately crafted an image of non-victim. In all of the stories, there was never an actual instance of a person getting bit or harmed by the snake. The stories served to prevent naïve girls from falling victim to an everyday human predator, such as a pedophile. The presence of the snake in the story was a symbolic way of avoiding actual sexual predation and manipulation. In other words, snake stories were a way of teaching about a woman's instincts, behavior and place in her community. A common stereotype and expression my mother would often use to describe perceptions of country folks moving to urban areas was that they didn't know anything and thus were easy bait for fast talking city men. The stories told to me while I grew up in an urban setting were embedded in black women's rural sensibilities. These sensibilities shaped my awareness of my female Affrilachian body. So, significant knowledge about urban and rural spaces were transferred to me by my family's stories of surviving tobacco and snakes.

There is a relationship between snakes, popular culture and news media representations of the Appalachian region. Recently, during the Appalachian Studies Association (ASA) conference, I was engaged in a conversation with a few Appalachian

scholars over dinner about the image and symbols of snakes in Appalachia. With the recent February 2014 media coverage of Appalachian snake-handling and the rattlesnake bite death of reality television Pastor Jamie Coots, of Middlesboro, Kentucky, snakes are a reoccurring theme of conversations in the region. In mainstream media coverage such as the headline for the CNN story of the pastor's death, the snake handling incident in the Kentucky church was expanded from its original context and evolved into a story about a 22 year old pastor in Tennessee "working to bring his obscure brand of Christianity into the mainstream" (Hardy). In particular, the religious practices surrounding snake handling has become a channel of objectification used by mainstream news outlets against Appalachian communities and people. The media's exaggerated association of snakes with Appalachia has worked to make Appalachia a spectacle of American culture.

Similar to the danger metaphor of the snake in "Tobacco Fields," the snake image in Appalachian history and culture has broader implications. Our ASA dinner conversation shifted from talking about snakes in churches to snakes in other areas of Appalachia. The snake topic developed into a discussion of Coal Mining Company Store predators. Company Stores in Appalachia have a long history of power relations and exploitative practices against coal miners and their families (Fishback). Michael Kline, writing about local memories of coal company dominance at the Whipple Company Store in West Virginia writes "that bureaucratized rape has been a feature of capitalist expansion and industrial development in the coal fields" (Kline 81). In Kline's interviews with community members in southern Appalachia, he obtained stories about

the Whipple Store Company building and its accompanying rape room. His work documents that women were expected to service store managers sexually in repay for mundane objects such as shoes (Kline 79). As Kline's research implies, the economic differential between miners and store manager made women's bodies alternative forms of payment. As a result, the women were obliged to submit their bodies to the sexual depredations of company men.

The narrative surrounding women's exploitation in Appalachian coal fields is yet another instance in which a culture of silence pervades Appalachian women's lives and culture. The memory of the rape room, which according to Kline has been preserved through a museum, constructs a survival story of Appalachia grounded in domestic and public spheres. The power of the rape room narrative lies in the historic and symbolic vulnerability of women's bodies in Appalachian spaces specifically. In 1962, Henry Caudill used the phrase "Rape of Appalachia," to depict the effects of central Appalachian mountain top removal and strip mining. Countless others have used the phrase to describe pollution and destruction in the region (Shanyerson) (Kranitz) (Stockburger). While the phrase does indeed evoke the environmental abuse of the region, it directs attention away from the violent and vulnerable histories of Appalachia's women, including her black and brown women. I share the thought of Omi Joni Jones who says "it is my black female body that wears its history and shares its history with other black female bodies" (Jones 58). Like Omi, in my own writing, I work to address the violent and vulnerable histories that exist in cultures of silence. "Tobacco Fields" is a move toward establishing a place, for my body and others like mine, to be

able to speak and be more complex in how I identify with Appalachia through a gendered experience. My writing function as witness to the history I wear and share with other Affrilachian women whose bodies are fixed in a state of necessary resilience. Not only are Black women escaping tobacco fields and predators in our private spaces, the people who are a part of the Appalachian region are also working to escape environmental predators in our community spaces.

Scene 3. I Was Raised.

Setting: Living Room

(The tellers move left, as a group of dancers come center stage repeating the phrase “ I Was Raised.” The tellers mimic the movement of the group of dancers. A recording of Kelly Norman Ellis “Raised by Women” plays on television. The dancers move their bodies in fluid movement to the first two stanzas. BLACK-TUCKIAN is sitting down stage left watching the television screen. Each dancer in her own way finds herself on the floor positioned in the same lying position as BLACK-TUCKIAN now watching the screen. As Kelly Norman Ellis ends the second stanza BLACK-TUCKIAN pauses the video and begins.)

BLACK-TUCKIAN. Ms. Kelly Norman Ellis is one of the founding members of the Affrilachian Poets. The first time I saw her I was sitting. Wearing pajamas and my curls pulled back in a bonnet. My roommate was burning an apple scented candle in the living room and I could smell it my bedroom. I was comfortable. (Proudly) “Raised by Women.” Something about that poem and the way she says it. And even though I can only see the top half of her body, my screen is filled with a full shot of her head, neck and a glimpse of her shoulders.

(A picture of Kelly Norman Ellis from the COAL BLACK VOICES documentary is projected on the screen. The poet’s name is printed across the bottom of the screen.)

Hey I know those shells. The earrings she’s wearing, they are made of Gorre shells. Like the Gorre shells native to Gorre Island- yes the historic site of the infamous slave castle off the West coast of Africa.

BL. She’s conscious. (BL raises her fist to symbolize black power solidarity)

GIRL #13. If I were to guess I would say she’s in her thirties. That lipstick screams I’m a black woman in my thirties.

BLACK-TUCKIAN. Sista girl looks at me from the side of her eyes. She speaks to me carefully. Her voice is all smooth and she gotta gap too. I used to have a gap. I can see its fingernail sized right in between her two

front teeth. Her sandy brown locks flow freely on her shoulders, shifting slightly as she moves only her head from left to center. She purses her lips and looks at me on her phrases like, “big-legged,” “daring debutants moving,” and “I know I look good.” In the middle of her poem she raises her chin and glances down at the podium. She speaks with the wisdom of an old black woman.

GIRL #13. She reminds me of my mama a little bit too, especially on that “better say yes ma’am to me” part.

BLACK-TUCKIAN. Her tone and body getting tired as she reflects on getting married at a young age and divorced right in the nick of time. And I feel her. I feel her as she gets all kinds of energized in the body and voice for the line, “Say it loud I’m black and I’m proud.”

BL. Yea she’s conscious.

BLACK-TUCKIAN. Grinning while she talks about James Brown and dancing, dipping her shoulders back to the down beat in her lines.

GIRL #13: No doubt she’s black with the way she reenacts signature black mama phrases. “Pack your bags and get the hell out of my house!”

BLACK-TUCKIAN. She looks above me or past, I can’t tell as she emphasizes “I’ll see YOU in court.” It is at this moment I am inclined to believe this is not a persona. Now I know you aren’t supposed to assume that the work of the poet is a testament of her own life. But it’s just something about the way she says it.... See see look!

(Girl #13 turns the video on for the last stanza of the poem. The video is projected on the screen. The dancers watch the video and begin to move their bodies lyrically to the sides of the stage. At the end of the poem Girl #13 is heard in the background)

Girl #13: You know these women? I know them too!

In response each dancer says the phrase “I was raised by ____”. In the blank the dancers insert personal memories of the people or ideas that raised them. As they say their lines they move their bodies to physically represent the people from their recollections. Girl #13 turns to the audience.

Girl #13: Do you know these women?

At this moment Girl #13 prompts any member of the audience to share a personal memory beginning with the phrase “I was raised by.” Once every dancer has shared a moment the ensemble exits.

Scene 4. Affrilachian Memory: What the Hell Is an Affrilachian!?

Setting: Liminal Space

PICTURES OF TOBACCO FIELDS AND THE BARBOUR FAMILY FARM ARE PROJECTED. BLACK-TUCKIAN enters with laptop and books in hand. She wears a red bandanna around her neck, overalls, and is barefoot}. She sits

center stage. She looks through a host of research materials including family pictures, Appalachian Heritage, and Ed Cabell's Blacks in Appalachia manuscript.

BLACK-TUCKIAN. (Addressing the audience) I embrace Kentucky stereotypes. I drive with no shoes on because I can, with one leg propped up on the dash and right foot on the gas. Only when I'm by myself. I can slip in and out of Louisville black urbanite vernacular to my Hart County Kentucky influenced twang. I grew up on 'ya'll's" and "over yonder," "reckon's" and using 'down thur' to describe wherever you went no matter if it was 150 miles north. I heard stories about a daddy growing up in Virginia. I didn't know much about him other than he was born in Lynchburg, which in my mind had to be the birthplace of white racism just by the sound of it. Come to find out Lynchburg is in the county just outside the Appalachian perimeter. So what am I – well- then I think about the stories of my great-great grandfather -a ladies man and fugitive fleeing from Virginia- who made his way to Kentucky... There's no need for me to go down a list of all the ways my family and I favor Kentucky's backward stereotypes despite the fact that we are BLACK and those stereotypes are white -it doesn't matter. When I tell people where I'm from, you know the first thing they say:

BL. "I didn't know there were black people in Kentucky"

BLACK-TUCKIAN. Well yeah I suppose so-

AP. "Kentucky that's known for horses, you all ride horse?"

BLACK-TUCKIAN. Well yeah I've rode a horse before-

BL. "Kentucky that's pretty racist- Black people really live there?"

("What are You?" projects on the screen.)

BLACK-TUCKIAN. I reckon I lived there my whole life so I'm guessing yes-

(The word "black," appears under the "What are You?).

There might be because I've been black my whole life far as I know, even though sometimes I'm called light skin or mixed with something or yellow.

(The word "yellow" appears next to "black" now "~~black~~" on the "What are You?" screen).

I respond to the people who call me yellow (yelling) "I'm blacker than you"- one time I was called a yellow roach by the boy who asked me to marry him in the 4th grade

(The words "Yellow Roach" appears next to "~~yellow~~" and "~~black~~" on the "What are You?" screen).

I responded "no"

He responded "You Yellow Roach!"

Kids are cruel. And I was a yellow roach then-

(The words disappear and "Affrilachian" appears under the "What are You?")

Now I am Affrilachian. Chances are I am your very first real life Affrilachian huh. Then again chances are I am not. Now you might be wondering what the hell an Affrilachian is. Is it a race? A racial sub-group? Is it a state of being? A political stance? Well I'm glad you asked (in my Kentucky southern bell voice) it's all of these things. Maybe you're wondering well how one comes to be an Affrilachian. Let me tell you it varies from one Affrilachian to the next. For me my coming began with the word.

(All computer activity is projected on the screen She googles the word "Appalachia" and "The Map of the ARC" appears on the screen)

(Reading from the laptop) The Appalachian Regional Commission calls the county and state where I grew up, and my Black family calls home a part of the region of Appalachia.

(Breaking from the screen) Yet, in my experience, I have never EVER not even once heard my family refer to ourselves as Appalachian. I had heard the word somewhere else but never really thought it applied to me or us or my interest. The first time I even learned what the word Appalachian really meant was during a research internship. I thought I was coming to study Black women and their communities, and they told me I was doing Appalachian studies.

(BLACK-TUCKIAN Walks down stage right to AP who has assumed the role of a teacher in a one on one student/teacher scenario. A MAP OF THE APPALACHIAN REGION IS PROJECTED AND POINTS TO THE SPECIFIC SITES NAMED.)

The run down went a little something like:

AP. We are in southwest Virginia and that is a part of Appalachia.

Appalachia cuts across thirteen of the eastern, northern and southern states of the U.S.

BLACK-TUCKIAN. I thought that was just mountains.

AP. No it's not just mountainous, Appalachia touches open low lying farmlands areas too.

BLACK-TUCKIAN. (Referring to the conversation she's having with AP) Words like Scott-Irish and Melungeon were important in the experiences of Appalachians.

AP. Appalachia is more than mountains and low lands, it's a cultural experience. If you want to learn more, you can go to the Appalachia Regional Commission website!

(BLACK-TUCKIAN returns to her materials. She begins the search for more information on the website. The search is projected on the screen. She searches with the words "Kentucky," and "Virginia." She looks for the county breakdown of Appalachia according to the ARC.)

BLACK-TUCKIAN. So I did, and I searched and I saw the map that outlined the states and counties that touched the Appalachian region. And I looked because I thought I could have Appalachian roots somewhere. I got to looking in Kentucky on my mama's side, and see that the county where they grew up – (ZOOM IN ON KENTUCKY MAP) – is..... The furthest Appalachian county west in KY.HA!

(A SYMBOL OF A HEART AND HOME APPEAR ON THE MAP PROJECTION OF HART COUNTY KENTUCKY.)

So with my new found geographic knowledge; (*Crosses down stage to the place where the AF and BL sit. BL and AF play as though they are Black-tuckian's mother and aunt*) I ask my mama and my aunt sitting on my living room couch

BLACK-TUCKIAN. "Are you Appalachian?"

BL. (answering with a bit of disdain) "NO we are not Appalachian." (THE PROJECTION ZOOMS IN 100% ON THE HEART AND HOME IMAGES ON THE COUNTRY AREA MAP PORJECTION)

BLACK-TUCKIAN. But-

BL. "WE are not *Appalachian*." (IMAGE ZOOMS IN 124%)

BLACK-TUCKIAN. But-

BL. "WE are NOT Appalachian." (IMAGE ZOOMS IN 200%)

BLACK-TUCKIAN. (Exasperated) "Well what *are* you?"

AF. "Just a country girl." (IMAGE ZOOM IS SO CLOSE IT IS UNINTELLIGELE)

BL. "I am a girl FROM the country, NOT a country girl."

(MAP IMAGE EXPLODES) *Black out.*

What is explicit in the responses of BL and AF to Black-Tuckian's question "Are you Appalachian?" is that the presence of Blacks in Appalachia is imperceptible to two Black Appalachians. This phenomenon is not particular to my family but is widespread across the region, white or black. Recently, I attended a session during the

Appalachian Studies Association Conference. At that session entitled the “Rape of Appalachia,” a white woman, self-identifying as born and raised in West Virginia, expressed that she didn’t know she was Appalachian until just recently. The question of how one comes to understand oneself as Appalachian is important in these Appalachian educational spaces. Comments like that of the white West Virginian woman often spur conversations around when and how individuals come to see themselves as Appalachian within the conference space. In the instances in which I return to the region to present my work on Black communities in Southwest Virginia or perform my One-Woman Show on the Stories of Newtown, I am always asked either during a presentation or immediately afterward to explain my point of entry into Appalachia. I interpret this question as “How do you find your place here?” In response, I always begin with my Black family’s place of origin in the heart of Kentucky in Appalachia. My claim challenges fellow Appalachian scholars to read my black body as that of an indigenous ethnographer.

Unlike my unmarked White West Virginian female counterpart, I am always already dislocated from the region of Appalachia by my racial designation as a black urban woman. As Harvey Young explains, “black bodies, in the twentieth century, continue to share in the experiences of their ancestors who were viewed as other” (Young 4). Likewise, I feel marginalized when I am in Appalachian spaces, especially during the ASA conference. I suspect that for the black person living in or around Appalachia, much of this is the result of years of pervasive stereotypes of what and who is Appalachian. The idea of the Appalachian stereotype grew out of an essentialist

project. “The hill-billy, redneck, white trash and other monikers visually establish whiteness that is visible when the subject is socially corrupt (Massey 127). Though the commercialization of those stereotypes and their effect on a macro level has been addressed at great lengths, harmful images emerge within particular micro social instances as well.

The Appalachian stereotypes are not just enforced through media depictions and larger institutions, they are also re-enforced by my family’s understanding of who we are and who we are not. As the conversation at the end of “What the Hell is an Affrilachian” illustrates, when I asked my elders how they identify themselves it became clear to me that regional stereotypes have been supported and disputed in my family’s bodies. Mikhail Bakhtin’s ideas about the use of language are evoked by the visceral response to the question “Are you Appalachian?” BL and AF represent the absurdity my mother and aunt shared when I associated the word Appalachian to their black experiences. Bakhtin argues that “language, for the individual, lies in the borderline between oneself and the other. It becomes “one’s own” only when the speaker populates it with his own intention, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention” (qtd. in Mandelker 94). My aunt and mother’s rejection of the word “Appalachian,” is fiercely connected to their class perceptions of the region. “We are NOT Appalachian,” translates into more important classed characteristics that work against the Appalachian stereotype: “We are BLACK,” “We are EDUCATED,” “We are CIVILZED.” In this moment, they both worked within stereotypes of the Appalachian to distinguish their racial identity.

BL's emphasis on "we" is also a reminder to Black-tuckian, of the younger generation, to acknowledge the sweat of her ancestors. Despite growing up in rural Kentucky, they worked tirelessly to remove themselves from stereotypical Appalachian experiences by establishing respectable lives through education and work. "The presence of a system of racial meanings, and stereotypes of racial ideology seems to be a permanent feature of U.S. culture" (Omi and Winant¹⁴). Claiming Appalachia is a regressive action in lieu of the social mobility my black mothers have achieved. Patricia Hill Collins uses the concept of other-mothers to suggest that the black family network shared economic and affective responsibility for the physical survival of their black children ("Shifting the center"). Similar to other-mothers, my black mothers include my mother, aunts and other women who provided key support in my childhood to develop my identity. The tension represented in the scene between BL, AF and Black-Tuckian reflects generational gap in how Black women identify themselves in Appalachia. For Black-tuckian, a pervasive invisibility and an absence of education on the region of Appalachia shapes her sense of difference.

It is likely that my aunt and mother's knowledge of Appalachia was limited to images like those from Lyndon B. Johnson's War of Poverty. During LBJ's crusade, he and Lady Bird entered into the Eastern parts of Kentucky capturing photos with "poor," and "helpless," children, exposing "hard" Appalachian life. My own impressions, prior to studying the region as an undergraduate, were also limited to degrading depictions of Appalachia as America's step child. Appalachian history and culture was absent from my primary education. The little exposure to Appalachia I had as a Black theatre student

was through one theatrical production at Actor's Theater of Louisville. The cast of the production was all –white. Admittedly so, the racial make-up of the cast affirmed my homogenous perceptions about the region. I insist on claiming Appalachia as redress against the homogenous depictions of the region I witnessed as a young student.

In contrast to my insistence on claiming Appalachia, the resistance BL and AF is typical when it comes to black folks outside of academic contexts. Besides the community of scholars devoted to Appalachian studies and the artists who self- identify as Affrilachian, it has been my experience that some black folks from the region see themselves as Black rather than Appalachian. The identity marker Black is situated in a community and socio-political context of race relations. Black is a reference to intra and inter racial relations and an urban/rural distinction. In my own self-definitions, and I suspect for other Blacks of my generation in Appalachia, racial self-definition is a personal practice. During the ASA conference, I spoke with a storyteller who identified as a Black person from Ironton, Ohio. She has consistently attended the Appalachian Studies Association conference since my introduction to Affrilachia and uses the word Appalachia to explain her homeplace. In a side conversation between us after a panel on race pedagogy in the region, she intentionally stuttered the word “Affrilachian,” as she told me she just could not bring herself to identify as Affrilachian. For her, Affrilachia is a relatively new term in her long history of living and knowing Appalachia as a Black woman. Her expression highlights the way race and its meaning in institutional life “yields a particular socio historical concept” (Omi and Winant 11). I interpret the storyteller's identification as Black as an expression of her personal social and political

contexts. Her preconceptions about Blackness alongside the ambiguity surrounding “Appalachia as a brand,” demonstrate larger attitudes toward identity for some of the region’s Blacks (Turner 27).

In BL’s self-definition, the designation ‘country’ is a more fitting explanation of place of origin among Blacks in the region. The women in my own family left their homes in rural Kentucky at a very young age and moved to urban areas for jobs and education. In the instance represented in performance, both women in my family were presently reaping the fruits of upward mobility found in an urban lifestyle. To be situated in the city is to mark everything and everyone else outside the city as rural. As bell hooks reflects on a distinctly black/urban/folk selfhood, she says that “We learned that the self-existed in relation, was dependent for its very being on the lives and experiences of everyone, the self not as signifier of one ‘I’ but the coming together of many I’s, the self as embodying collective reality past and present, family and community” (hooks 31). Hooks echoes my ideas about understanding Appalachia through generational and geographic insider/outsider positions. What she says about understanding the self through the collective is exactly what my experiences demonstrate. I understand the urban/rural distinction and my family’s collective past in Appalachia first hand when my aunt and mother take me back home to visit our “country-cousins.” The communities that I traversed were that of my rural Kentucky family and Black-conscious communities in urban Louisville. I learned about myself and rural blackness through trips down home to Kentucky’s rural areas and its visible and physical remnants of hard work and tobacco. I learned about the self and community of urban blackness through a series of

black consciousness training, including an initiation into African American culture in the form of performance and five years of Saturday morning Black Achievers educational sessions. In school, we were taught American history with notable black heroes who were mentioned sporadically in every other history section. Consequently, I learned about black culture and black history in the liminal space between and between my tobacco-raising perceived “uneducated” family and a group of urban black educated elites.

I highlight my personal history of learning about blackness in formal and informal spaces to demonstrate the absence of an explicitly Appalachian culture and history in my adolescence. It was only until I came to college and learned of the black presence in Appalachia, initially through performance of Frank X Walker’s choreo-poem *When Winter Come*, that I recognized the absence of Appalachia in my personal history. Through a series of mentor-relationships, all of which were with white Women from the region, I learned of Appalachia and Affrilachia. A section on Affrilachia was offered during my sophomore year Black Studies course. Learning about the cultural experience of growing up a minority, whether as woman or poor, informed my understanding of the region and spurred personal interests’ in social justice. Unlike the Black Appalachian Storyteller I spoke with at the ASA, my claim to Affrilachia is a cultural bridge between my blackness in America and in the region. It serves as an acknowledgement of the familial ties I hold that mirror those of the region. The women in my family conveyed to me living memories of survival in Appalachia. Their memories allow me to draw connections between my black family’s experiences and an Appalachian experience.

Scene 4. Affrilachian Memory: March on Blair Mountain

Setting: On the Road

(THE VOICES OF THE AFFRILACHIAN POETS RECORDING IS PLAYED. TWO OF THE POETS ARE ANSWERING ‘HOW DID YOU COME TO SEE YOURSELF AS AFFRILACHIAN?’) {*Thirteen Dancers shift from being bodies in learning to bodies in protest. Each dancer ritually removes bandanna from their pockets and ties them around the neck.*}

GIRL #13. On a day sometime in June of 2011, I came to Affrilachia.

At the time I wasn't aware I was making my way to there

I thought my destination was Blair.

I came riding between an old white woman and a young black man.

I came holding up a sign

I came during a protest, of labor and MTR.

Amidst two hundred other people wearing bandannas around their necks.

I came to Affrilachia frowning,

Hot

My eyes squinting against the harsh of the sun

Wearing red, white and blue, holding green.

It took six hours, ten miles, one mountain and sweat.

Gallons of sweat and lard.

(*AP plays the role of the old white woman and BL the role of the young black man in the back seat of the car traveling to Blair. The other ten dancers use their bodies to create the body of the car and window scenes of mountains and flat tops*)

We traveled an hour and half to the rally commemorating the March on Blair Mountain. On the way there, the Dr. and I talked about *The Help*, the novel and the movie. And I'm telling her about how they remind me a lot of the women I work with and the oral histories I collected. On the way there, she points out mountains that have been chopped off by MTR. She briefs us on issues relevant to Appalachia, including environmental racism and MTR. She shows me why it is important that we are taking this trip today by pointing out mountains flattened by industries on our way. And my nose opens wide.

(*The women transition their bodies from dancers to moving as a Hill-billy block watch, using threatening gestures to limit the movements of Girl #13, AP and BL.*)

We are here. I am thinking ‘So this is Appalachia.’ I can see ‘A sea of hillbillies and tree huggers. We step out of the van,

DANCER #4. “Do NOT walk on the grass.”

The people that live here are not too fond of strangers and especially not people coming to cause trouble.

AP. Their grass is private property. They are waiting for reason to call the police or take the law into their own hands to handle a jasper.

BL. Oh my goodness if I go to jail here my mama will have my tail. Or worse, she may never find out!

GIRL #13. So we walk on the road. (*Girl #13 walks across the stage, past the Hill-Billy Block watch*)

It's hot. And as the day goes on it gets hotter.

We drove here fresh with morning showers but some of these people haven't bathed in ten days. They have spent the last days walking here up and through the mountains in commemoration of the March on Blair Mountain more than fifty years ago. And in the heat of the day we sit in grass.

(*Nine of the dancers, Girl #13, AP and BL sit center stage. They all show growing agitation, Waffing away flies and fanning for air. One dancer picks up a protest sign and stands down stage right.*)

We listen to speaker, after speaker in the heat.

AP. Look at the Environment activist and famous figure Robert Kennedy is speaking.

GIRL #13. He ignites the fire and energy- as if it isn't hot enough. The girl beside me is so excited she gets up to sing and there are probably ten to twelve people with signs around the podium. When they get tired, the speakers encourage us to take the load off our "brothers or our sisters" dedicated to the cause.

(*GIRL # 13 goes down stage right and trades places with the woman holding the sign*).

So I do. I grab a sign and stand with a man I do not know. I hold the sign for maybe thirty minutes or an hour.... who knows how long. .. then I switch and hold another.

(*Ritual switching of the signs occurs between girl #9 and the other nine dancers*)

I shade my forehead.

(**VIDEO OF MARCH ON BLAIR MOUNTAIN PLAYS IN THE BACKGROUND**).

This is the first time I experience Appalachia's issues up close and personal. The people here walk far and long to this place. There's a rumor floating around that the CNN news anchor Soledad O'Brien is here taking it all down.

(*GIRL #4 rushes down stage left.*)

GIRL #4: (Spoken in the news anchor's voice) Good afternoon, I am here in West Virginia where people from all across the country have come together to commemorate the history of Blair Mountain. They have walked for ten days to come together here-where they will walk up the mountain. Seems to be well around two hundred people gathered here in protest.

GIRL #13: And out of the two hundred something people only five are black. There is the young black male photographer who I came with us (points to BL), one girl who is around my age from some University in New York (points to DANCER 4). The other the two, William and Margo are from Tennessee.

(GIRL #13 points out 4 black bodies (BL, Girl #1, #2 and #3) and each stand. Beat. All bodies are in motion on stage- moving in sporadic chaos to get into a chow line.)

The rest are a mere two hundred bodies of white people wearing red bandannas and they smell like red onions. Red onions are coming out of their pores. This is a smell you do not forget. We eat red cabbage and beans. Whoever the cook is puts onions in everything! No wonder everyone smells like ‘em. There are old people and young people. There are some hippie like folks and some obvious locals. There is a big guy who looks like an oversized homeless Santa clause. He is with a real little white woman who looks like the sun is just about killing her. There are some young kids with camera’s walking around capturing every moment. They are interviewing people on “why they are here?”

One guy is wearing All Black - *in the sun*, and his spaghetti hair is wet from sweat.

(GIRL #4 rushes to play the role of the man in black)

And he is yellow like me. But I know he wasn’t born that way. While we are waiting in line to get food I see him. In his interview with the kids walking around with the cameras, he says the pollution from the industries in the mountains are affecting his water so much so it is turning the skin yellow. He shows the kids his teeth and he tells them it is also causing the teeth of the folks that live around here to decay.

(GIRL #4 poses in hill-billy fashion exposing her teeth. A big flash is seen and the picture is taken of the young man. Everyone freezes. On the next line, the dancers join hands and make one line across the stage. The line moves in a figure eight to depict the hike up the mountain. During the hike there are occasional pauses to indicate rest breaks and the watching of passer byers.)

We walk up the mountain and it doesn’t take long. We get about a mile of progress and then see a truck speed by with two or four white boys hanging out the back. They have signs like “go home” and things like that written on their windows. Nobody really seems to pay them any mind. I don’t even talk, except the occasional check-in with the lady that brought me.

(Turns to AP) Are you okay?

(AP nods in growing physical exhaustion.)

We get to the top and nearly everybody is tired. With so many elders you know they want to sit down, but there is a gift waiting for us.

(The line stops abruptly.)

The assholes in the pick-up trucks drove past us up the mountain to come smear lard all over the rocks and gravel and basically any and every place anyone would even think about sitting down!

(The line squats together. This should be visibly uncomfortable/painful)

That pisses me off. We try to sit down any way –to hell with our clothes. We are all into mountains and social justice. We all fight against stereotypes. Black stereotypes, hill Billy stereotypes. Did you know Appalachia is urban and rural too? Metro and County.

Beat.
I came to Affrilachia walking on the side of a mountain
with no grass
watching trucks with signs fly by
Fast fast fast up the mountain
and I sighed,
walked in silence,
sat into my confidence
and messed up my clothes
I came to Affrilachia in solidarity with tree huggers and I love mountain kind of
people.
Boom Boom.
SHIFT.

My experience as an activist, artist and student inspired me to accept an invitation to attend the March on Blair Mountain in the summer of 2011. I remember sitting in the field in West Virginia when one speaker asked the question “Why are you here?” I remember answering ‘because I am an activist.’ As a college chapter president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, I was entering my third year of intensive training in social justice activism and political consciousness. I was two generations removed from the radical activism displayed by my African American activist forbearers during the Civil Rights struggles. As a young black activist, I hungered for a vivid grass roots protest experience. The March on Blair Mountain was the demonstration that satisfied my craving and sparked a different kind of activism.

The March on Blair Mountain was organized in June of 2011. The event included 200 green activist, scholars and workers across the United States. The event served a double purpose as both protest and commemoration. The March aligned with the labor rights activism in the region of Appalachia (Vekasi). The March also commemorated the

1921 Battle of Blair Mountain, where 10,000 coal miners protested and fought mine operators in defense of their collective labor union rights. As the center for debates regarding mountain top removal coal mining, Blair Mountain cites labor issues past and present (Howell).

It is important for me to connect to the environmental issues often highlighted by Affrilachian Poet Crystal Good to my experience at Blair Mountain. Girl #13's narrative represents a moment when I felt the most alienated and involved in Appalachia. My infatuation with activism muted any consideration for the risks and tangible consequences associated with protests of any kind. My involvement in a march for regional issues forced me to engage with Appalachian agents of all kinds. In my conversations with fellow activist, the protestor's personal definitions of their Appalachian identity varied. Some were not inhabitants of the region but maintained their insider status through their investments in environmental issues. Some of the protestors held dual status, as insider/outsideers. Others were natives to the region of Appalachia. Some them had left and returned home to join in the commemoration.

I came to the protest as an outsider. I was Black with no current understanding of myself, or any other person of color as Appalachian. Admittedly so, I entered the region with assumptions, often stereotypical depictions, about who and what Appalachians are. Soyini Madison constructs protest performances as a method of intervention and praxis, in which protest becomes a "genealogical thread and testament of political beginnings." While Madison deals with radical acts of activism, her ideas around the consciousness and political quality of protest is appropriate for identity performance outside the protest

context also. In Appalachian educational spaces like the ASA, in addition to citing my family's home place in Kentucky, if necessary, I will express my regional identity through memories of the Blair Mountain protest. In the times when I come across a person from the region who has mistaken me for either Crystal Good, this happens very frequently because of my fair skin and similar body frame, or another person of color, I will ask if the individual was at 'Blair.' As a Black person in the region, the March on Blair Mountain is my evidence of my familiarity with Appalachia and a testament to my regional consciousness (Madison 102).

The protest experience conveyed by Girl # 13's is significant because it represents the moment I understood Appalachia's regional issues. First, my understanding of activism was redefined during the actual march. The protest required that I do the work of walking up the mountain, holding signs, avoiding arrest and sacrificing my clothes and appearance. The protest also required that I physically inhabit and share the environmentally conscious community space of green activists. I learned about major issues facing the region through picket signs and loud speakers. Weaving together performance, personal narrative, field work and analysis 'BOOM BOOM the sequel,' is my account of my embodied identity experiences and regional activism. It was my "body – to body" engagement with the fellow protestors that validated my identity as a black body in an Appalachian space. I was not aware of it then but my embodied experience of activism in Appalachia marked me Affrilachian.

Conclusion

Affrilachian Memory represents a distinct history of race, class and gender in the region. The complexity of Affrilachian identity performance is in its inherent intersectionality. As I have shown, I negotiate my Affrilachian identity between an outsider and insider status. Many Affrilachian poets identify their personal understanding of Affrilachia in the moments when they felt most like an outsider within their regional homeplaces. . Like the Affrilachian Poets, I openly acknowledge that I came to understand Affrilachia in the moments when I felt the most like an outsider.

My desire for grassroots and confrontational activism has since focused into scholarly activism for the region and its people of colorI was raised by an environmentally conscious aunt, who could recycle and grow anything and a country mother who could cook anything. While I am a generation removed from rural tobacco work, my relationship to the land still stands. I understand the vulnerability of the land through my embodied experiences of blackness and womanhood in and outside Appalachia's sacred spaces. Even now, I come back to Affrilachia in the moments I feel my outsider status most, as country/ city/ black/ woman/ or something in between.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

I had a phone conversation with my mother in October of last fall, while she was taking an independent writing class. In this writing class she was attracted to topics that encouraged her to write about life growing up in the country. In our phone conversation, we talked about her reaction to a recent paper she had written for the class. She sent the paper to me via email. In the paper, there was a story. The story was about a young girl's encounter with a snake in a tobacco field. She wrote this story as a testament of her survival. It was my mother's story of the abuse that she had endured growing up in rural Kentucky. For years, my mother has told me about a book that she has written. She never had the support from my family to actually get the book published, out of fear it would scar the family name. Living within our family's culture of silence, as an act of resistance she shared her stories with me.

Now, I remember the conversation I had with my mother during my first semester in graduate school. I sat on the bed in my apartment talking to my mother over the speaker phone. She explained her process for writing the story saying "As I wrote it I could feel my skin shed." She used the imagery of a snake shedding its skin to describe her transition from victim to survivor. It was at this point, I committed myself to writing about black women's survival in Appalachia. Because I knew not only were they surviving cancer, they were surviving a lot more. My decision to dedicate my thesis to the theme and to include auto-ethnography and performance, in my mind allows me to

intervene on the culture of silence that has long muzzled my relationship with my mother, my family and my homeplace.

The thrust of this thesis has been to illuminate the experiences of Black Appalachian women through intersectionality. The women's recollections have provided insights into particular components of Black women's identity and survival experience. In this thesis, I have used Affrilachia as a frame for understanding black women's identity in and outside the place of Appalachia. I have highlighted instances of survival in four case studies: I have looked at creative survival in the text of woman poets from the region, personal narratives of black community life in Appalachia, oral histories of race relations pre and post Jim Crow era, and the individual and collective stories of survival among Black Appalachian women represented in performance text.

Creative survival in Affrilachian poetry shows the complex relationship between black women's experiences of themselves as members of the region and their personal understanding of social justice activism within the place of Appalachia. Community survival in the personal narrative performance of Ms. Faith Christian shows the contradictory elements in interpreting and validation belonging to Appalachia as a person of color. Individual recollections of life in Appalachia for the women of the Black Appalachian Oral History Collection has further shown the complexity of Black Appalachian women's identity through diverse accounts of their survival strategies in work, education, and domestic spaces. And finally, Affrilachian memory has shown one black women's theory of her identity rooted in a performance betwixt and between an insider and outsider status in the region. This set of case studies has argued that the

place-centered experience of Black women in Appalachia is best thought of as an Affrilachian intersectionality that showcases examples of multidimensional experiences in Appalachia.

In Chapter III, I set out to understand black community survival in Appalachia through the personal narrative performance of Ms. Faith Christian. The mode of community survival presented by Ms. Christian helps to initiate steps toward understanding Black Appalachian community experiences as both American and Appalachian experiences. The case of Ms. Christian provides a meeting place for approaching the concept of Affrilachia through recollections of black community relations. Ms. Christian's nostalgia demonstrates a strategy for survival that reacts against regional and racialized to stereotypes and exploitation.

In Chapter IV, I engaged the black women's accounts in the Black Appalachian Oral History Collection to closely read a diverse set of individual survival strategies employed by black Appalachians. The women discussed in this chapter provided an analytical lens that helps to more accurately perceive black experiences in Appalachia overtime. Here, I identified examples from their oral history accounts to deal with the complexity, contradiction and illumination of identity politics and black equality. I conclude that these women's varying perspective, yet general sense of cooperation, friction and independence, demonstrate that black survival emphasizes the tension between " we all got along" and " there's always going to be problems." This chapter offers a context for today's current issues related to race and institutionalized inequality specifically as it pertains to Appalachia's black inhabitants.

In my fifth chapter, I used my personal experience to theorize a collective memory of Affrilachian survival. I have highlighted the social, environmental and political consciousness that shapes Affrilachian identity in everyday performance. I show that as an Affrilachian woman, identity and the concept of survival go hand in hand.

In four different instances, I have examined modes of survival that lend insight in the unquestionable influence of place for the Black women's sense of her identity in Appalachia. I am aware that this work in no way comes close to representing the many other Black Appalachian women living and surviving in the Northern, Central and Southern parts of Appalachia. In seeking to understand the influence of place within the region of Appalachia, this work is only a move in a direction of scholarship that thoroughly investigates the presence, influence and significance of Black life in Appalachia. This work inspires more questions about the Black woman's sense of herself in Appalachia: What are contemporary examples of black women's survival in Appalachia? How do their experiences of race, place and gender compare with the experiences of the women discussed in this thesis? How has Affrilachian survival changed or been sustained over a larger span of time? What other forms of oppression and resistance emerge in black Appalachian women's experiences? What does she continue to teach us about Affrilachian identity and American survival? We are far from a comprehensive understanding of the influence of place for Black women in Appalachia. This understanding can only be gained in the naming and defining practices of Black Appalachians. Once we allow Black Appalachian women and Affrilachians to

name and claim their place in Appalachia, then can we continue to counter the cultures of silence that have long rendered ourselves invisible and make our survival within the region visible.

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