

2020

In Our Mothers' Quilts: How Womanism Connects the Quilts of Gee's Bend with Alice Walker's "In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens" and "Everyday Use"

Delaney Edmondson

Follow this and additional works at: <https://athenacommons.muw.edu/merge>



Part of the [Educational Sociology Commons](#), [Race and Ethnicity Commons](#), [Sociology of Culture Commons](#), and the [Women's Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Edmondson, Delaney. "In Our Mothers' Quilts: How Womanism Connects the Quilts of Gee's Bend with Alice Walker's "In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens" and "Everyday Use." Merge, vol. 4, no. 4, 2020, pp. 52-72.

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by ATHENA COMMONS. It has been accepted for inclusion in Merge by an authorized editor of ATHENA COMMONS. For more information, please contact acpowers@muw.edu.

Delaney Edmondson

In Our Mothers' Quilts: How Womanism Connects the Quilts of Gee's Bend with Alice Walker's "In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens" and "Everyday Use"

Introduction

Stories in families are often passed down generationally from elder to child to try and keep tradition alive and maintain a long-lasting legacy. How these stories are told makes each family unique. Some families choose to spend family reunions rehashing the same old tales that only keep the attention of young ears. Others instead may focus on telling their stories in the forms of artisan crafts like quilt-making, where young and old members alike can come together and recount the souls of the tales from long ago while piecing together fabric scraps to make a beautiful piece of art. Being able to tell these stories, no matter how lovely or painful their histories may be, is a long-lasting tradition that exists in many forms. Quilting and similar media like gardening allow elders to preserve histories in an attempt for the present generation to better appreciate a potential future that is free of their ancestors' past hardships.

The community of Gee's Bend in Boykin, Alabama, has been using quilting to preserve the African American experience since the 19th century, and many of its members often come together to make quilts that have now come to be world-famous for the magnificent stories that each project tells in its pattern. The members of Gee's Bend all have ties to the inlet's plantation history, where in pre-Civil War times the community's African ancestors were enslaved by the Pettways, who were relatives of the original founders of the community. Celia Carey, an award-winning filmmaker, director, and producer, directed the documentary *Quiltmakers of Gee's Bend* that details the painful history and the lives of the women who are behind the wondrous quilt patterns of this part of the Black Belt. She follows a group of women from the community as

they reach scholastic and world fame for their remarkable prints that are said to detail the suffering and the beauty of the African American side of history in their lives.

Alice Walker also studied the impact of quilt prints, along with other artistic mediums like gardening and writing, in her prose writing. She connects her own upbringing to these media in her personal essay “In Search of Our Mothers’ Gardens” and short story “Everyday Use.” Both apply the use of voice as a theme in an effort to describe how even when silence is the only course of dealing with pain, that it at least presents a way to fight the oppression that is thrust upon a person.¹ “In Search of Our Mothers’ Gardens” does not speak of Gee’s Bend outright but it does mention the purpose behind the creative juices that flow into beautiful works of art like quilts. This purpose can be better explained as an “urgency that involves the knowledge that [their] stories—like [their] life—must be recorded” (Walker 1187). The quiltmakers and many of the other women that Walker describes feel this urgency because their art is an outlet for coping with the painful events recorded in the patterns of their quilts that detail history over decades and decades.²

Walker also relates back to this desire to make a mark in history in the quilts that Maggie and her grandmother have tirelessly made in her youth in “Everyday Use.” Maggie, while ironically soft-spoken and simple in thought, finds her voice in making quilts with her grandmother in growing up. However, her sister Dee, an innovative college grad, comes home to visit and stirs up trouble for Maggie and their mother during her time there. She sees the novelty in her African ancestral connections that her and her family have. The story is set during the Black Power Movement, which pushed for the search for roots beyond African American heritage. Dee’s desire to have anything relating back to her heritage for the sake of just having these heirlooms leads her to want to take the quilts along with other familial hand-me-downs

back home with her, without being able to fully have as close as a connection as Maggie has had in the creation of the quilts. In retaliation for Dee taking the quilts, their mother then realizes their true worth and snatches them right out of Dee's hands as she departs at the end of the story (1194).

The search for voice is how the Gee's Bend quiltmakers and the women in both of Walker's works understand and channel their pain into beauty, where they all manage to leave their legacy in some way for the next generation. The quiltmakers create intricate patterns with scrap clothing that tell histories as detailed in each quilt. The matriarchs in "In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens" and in "Everyday Use" forge their pain into wonderful art in the creation of ornate gardens and quilts akin to the Gee's Bend quiltmakers. By trying to push for a means of communicating the African American experience, these women exhibit womanist ideals as they aim for feeling empowered in some way by being able to tell their histories, their pain, and their tradition. Womanism can be related back to the spirituality in the aesthetic in the quilt patterns of Gee's Bend and how they reflect the painful experiences of the quilters of this community. It also can be compared in how the mothers referenced shape their legacy through experience in gardening and quilting in "In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens" and the tradition of quilting in Maggie's legacy shaped through experience "Everyday Use."

Alice Walker and Womanism in Quilting

What exactly does it mean to search for voice through quilting? To search for one's own voice is to discover what true personal worth means in the vastly oppressive world that presently exists. Oppression is defined here as discrimination that occurs from existing in a marginalized population and trying to coexist with other populations that hold prejudice against minority groups. Alice Walker is considered to be one of the leading feminists in this movement. She

studied at the graduate level the vast materials of African American women whose voices have been muted, meaning that they are eventually heard but are presently ignored at the time that they are living or even completely silenced in their efforts to have as much opportunity given to them as their white and/or male counterparts. It is important to understand that womanism is a branch of feminism that focuses on the experience of African American women as a marginalized group and was conceived during the Civil Rights era. Womanists are interested in many artisan outlets, including quilt-making, as a means to voice and record the stories of pain, hardship, and adversity without necessarily trying to push for change.

Alice Walker's initial concept of womanism is seen as her being the first to write on the importance of African American women having the ability to find their voice in society and to know of their right to equal opportunity in a white and/or male-dominated culture.³ As defined in the article "A Theoretical Exposition of Feminism and Womanism in African Context," Maxwell Z. Shamase explains that womanism is based on the empowerment of the experience of African and African American women both spiritually and culturally (911).² He argues for the "demarcation" of African womanism from African American womanism offered by Chikwenye Ogunyemi, a scholar in African feminism and womanism, but notes that S. Arndt's research in African American womanism encapsulates the same values and ideals as precisely as African womanism does (Shamase 9217). Being able to differentiate these two forms of womanism helps to better understand African American womanism, which will be the solely focused theory from here, and allows for readers to better comprehend how the African American female experience can be heard through the mediums that women express through writing, gardening, or even quilting.

In what Walker describes in “In Search of Our Mothers’ Gardens,” these artistic mediums are able to “[hand] on the creative spark, the seed of the flower they themselves never hoped to see: or like a sealed letter they could not plainly read” (1186). Walker implies that the grandmothers and mothers that have gone before “us” want their descendants to have a happier, less stressful life than they have had and to also appreciate the struggles and hardships that “our” ancestors have gone through to get “us” to where “we” are today. The plural first person is used here, as Walker does in her prose, in order to convey that the African American women that she is referring to should collectively view themselves as a group and not as singular parts of this population, that searching for a history that is representative of African American female culture allows for society in general and African American women to gain a better understanding of what types of discrimination have been faced and how to grow and learn from it with each passing generation.

Understanding the histories of African American female culture often means looking at the inherent connection that these women of this population have to nature and to spirituality. Ecowomanism is a branch of womanism that focuses exclusively on the relationship between the soul, in the spiritual sense, and protecting and maintaining the environment (Harris 28; Betancourt 69). Ecowomanism allows us to better comprehend the connection that womanism has to the spiritual and historical aesthetic of the quilters’ patterns and the shaping of matrilineal legacy in gardening and quilting in both of Walker’s works. This relation demonstrates further evidence of how protecting the environment has contributed to the pain and to the beauty in the lives of African American women.

Spiritual and Historical Aesthetic in the Gee's Bend Quilts

The tradition of quilt-making has been a generational practice that is often taught at a young age. Women brought up in this tradition create different quilts alongside other women of the same circle, often relatives, and manage to piece a tapestry that may voice simple or complex tales of their family in the stories told in each quilt pattern. What is included in these tales often contains a great spiritual and historical context for the painful lives and experiences that the quilters are most likely trying to retell in each pattern.⁴ Womanism, and especially ecowomanism, can be connected to the quilters' patterns in how spirituality and history are used in the making of Gee's Bend quilts. However, to understand how this social theory connects with the spiritual and historical tales interwoven into each pattern, one must first understand the process of how each pattern is made.

Other than Celia Carey's previously mentioned documentary about the quilters, one valuable resource that details the process of how the quilters create the quilts is in Vanessa Kramer Sohan's article "But a Quilt is More": Recontextualizing the Discourse(s) of the Gee's Bend Quilts." This article is very valuable in its detailed descriptions of why the quilters follow similar patterns in each group. Sohan explains how this artistic choice by the quilters is intentional, arguing that this purposeful "[r]econtextualization disrupts the idea of a singular, normative standard" in the creative choices of the quilters in their patterns (296). Although this process of recontextualization can inhibit the creation of new, original patterns, according to Sohan's standards, the measure of these quilts' effectiveness in telling stories is reevaluated each time a new iteration of a print style is produced in each group.

Much like the purposeful recycling of the same patterns in Gee's Bend quilting bees, the spiritual aesthetic of the quilts is representative of ecowomanism in the connection that the

quilts' stories and tales have to the more natural side of African American heritage. The main detail of focus in the aesthetic is in the cycle in coming back to the very same earthly origin that a story, or person, may journey from.

A study by social and personality psychologist Jacqueline Mattis of how African American men and women identify with spirituality, as told by Angelina Graham in her article "Womanist Preservation: An Analysis of Black Women's Spiritual Coping," talks of the multiple themes examined in this research and of how they all reflect self-preservation hand-in-hand with spirituality (108). Also, Graham describes a second study by the same psychologist that further defines how spirituality differs from religion, showing that the study's participants distinctly view these two concepts as separate entities (qtd. in Graham 108). This separation allows for a somewhat better understanding of the ecowomanist side of the quilt patterns in that the spiritual aspect of the quilts' aesthetic calls for a more natural connection to the environment in the patterns' connection to Gee's Bend's painful past;⁵ it is found even in the recycled clothing material that the quilters use for their squares that go into their quilts.

Examples of a couple of the variations of two of the seven quilting groups, "Housetop" and "Work Clothes," by the Gee's Bend quilters are described for their historical aesthetic value in relation to their spiritual aesthetic context in connection with womanism. Rachel Carey George's variation on "House Top" titled "*Housetop*"—*Sixteen-Block "Half-Log Cabin" Variation* (see figure 1) and Annie Mae Young's variation on "Work Clothes" titled *Work-Clothes Quilt with Center Medallion of Strips* (see figure 2) are ascribed by their online representation on *Souls Grown Deep*. The site details the recycled material that goes into the squares of each pattern, like wool in George's and corduroy in Young's ("Housetop"—*Sixteen-Block*," "Work-Clothes Quilt with Center Medallion of Strips"). This context into the material

that goes into only two of the multiple quilt patterns found on *Souls Grown Deep* shows how the quilters not only wanted to “recontextualize” the patterns, as Sohan argues, but also that they wanted to continue on the story of the clothes that goes into each of the scrap pieces of fabric of the squares in the patterns. This innovation of the patterns by the Gee’s Bend quilters furthers their spiritual aesthetic value, from the ecowomanist perspective, in that the desire to continue on the inherent tales that are locked into each piece of fabric in these patterns presents a change in natural and spiritual connection to the painful growth in society that has occurred historically for the quilters and other African Americans since the Civil War.⁶



Figure 1. Image of quilt pattern from "Housetop" group, "*Housetop*"—*Sixteen-Block "Half-Log Cabin" Variation*, by Rachel Carey George. In the collection of the Souls Grown Deep Foundation (George).



Figure 2. Image of quilt pattern from "Work Clothes" group, *Work-Clothes Quilt with Center Medallion of Strips*, by Annie Mae Young. Featured in the Metropolitan Museum of Art's collection, gifted by the Souls Grown Deep Foundation (Young).

Historically, the quiltmakers of Gee's Bend have been a secluded group of lively women who have been most recently popularized with the help of art curator William Arnett for their prints like "Work Clothes" and "Housetop" in the last decade;⁷ the prints have been critiqued and sorted into groups of like patterns to help tell their stories. Christine Tate's critique in "The

Quilts of Gee's Bend" acknowledges the meteoric success of seven groups of the quilts and also questions the relevance of having the prints exhibited in numerous museums worldwide (300).

The quiltmakers did not intend to make these prints relevant on the world stage, but rather to just simply to portray how they experienced the world through their eyes in each quilt that they developed. The quiltmakers' slave history also is detailed in many of the patterns in the subject matter of what some of them are about. For instance, Tate mentions in the group "Work Clothes" the sharp linear shape of the patterns and how aesthetically pleasing each print has come to be (300). Annie Mae Young's pattern *Work-Clothes Quilt with Center Medallion of Strips* is a great example of how patterns from this group may use crisp linear shapes. Young's print utilizes a combination of medium to dark wash blue jean strips around the border with alternating tan corduroy with dark wash jean strips to bring contrast between the border and the center of the pattern (see fig. 2). The sharp lines in each pattern in this group show the rough edges of the quiltmakers' working class past. The days of the Reconstruction the people of Gee's Bend have been hard at work to make the most use of their deserved freedom from oppression from terrible work conditions. The sense of voice in these prints can be seen in the history that is described in the prints, as in the groups "Work Clothes" and "Housetop." To produce like patterns, these women tirelessly spent hours upon hours in bees to create pieces that channel the truth that has been hidden for so many years in African American history.

Another way that these quilts can aesthetically be seen as historic representations of African American heritage is in the understanding of their place in the dialogue of how they can be considered a method of storytelling. Sohan's article attempts to best tell the stories of the Gee's Bend quiltmakers by non-objectively interpreting their patterns via the quiltmakers' primary accounts of their intended messages in each quilt pattern and the secondary criticisms in

translating the quilts' stories in an unobjective manner (297). The author criticizes fellow academics for attempting to impose their own Western aesthetic on the quilters instead of understanding the influence of West African forms on these prints. For example, a portion of the art community did not like how “‘sloppy and irregular’ [the] quilting, stitching, and piecing [was]” (qtd. in 298). This view on the irregularity in the quilts of Gee’s Bend was due to a rise in the comparison with the patterns to the Western aesthetic style versus to the West African form (298). Sohan references John Dixon Hunt’s argument of the “‘series of translations’” that can come from the variants of quilt patterns of the Gee’s Bend quilters; the different “‘translations’” of the stories of the patterns were an artistic choice by the quilters to not stick to just one mode of cultural influence, whether that be predominantly Western or West African (qtd. in Sohan 297).

Tate focuses on Western influence as a mode for the creation of much of the Gee’s Bend patterns while Sohan disputes this. Tate feels the historical aesthetic value adds to the quilters’ stories that they are trying to tell in each pattern, which supports an interpretation of the quilts as representations of but a few of the histories that reside in Gee’s Bend. The intended translation of each pattern, as supported by both Tate and Sohan, allows for the African *and* American history to be told through the voice, or rather the working hands, of the quilters of Gee’s Bend.

The Legacy and Tradition for Quilters in “In Search” and “Everyday Use”

Womanism can be seen in context of the African American female experience with the two Walker pieces that will be examined, the essay “In Search of Our Mothers’ Gardens” and the short story “Everyday Use.” The establishment of matrilineal legacy that the artisans (in writing, gardening, and quilting) create in “In Search” continues the African American female (womanist) experience, as “Everyday Use” does likewise in the matrilineal legacy that Maggie is tasked with handling in learning how to quilt. “In Search,” aimed at an audience of African

American womanists, explores how their mothers and grandmothers might have sought empowerment through artisanal work and used it to find the voice that has been stripped away from them in telling their painful experience as an African American female. However, “Everyday Use” connotes more of the empowerment Maggie feels in the connection to quilting she has in her matrilineal inheritance. This difference in how womanism is utilized sheds a little more insight in the legacy and tradition that will later be discussed. “In Search” does this in the use of artisanry as an avenue for the black women that Walker fights for to be able to tell of their pain by whatever means necessary, which so happens to be a more hands-on approach due to a lack of being allowed to have access to educational literacy materials in their youth (“In Search” 1182-3). “Everyday Use” differs in that while Maggie did not get the same education as her sister Dee. She only realizes her true worth in not seeing the novelty in the tradition of her grandmother’s quilting and later is able to understand how learning how to quilt growing up is the more authentic tradition of Black empowerment that Dee is trying to imitate (“Everyday Use” 1193-4).

The search for voice is further observed in “In Search of Our Mothers’ Gardens,” where Walker reflects on the various ways that mothers, like her own, and grandmothers of readers tend to find ways to express their everyday experiences in the creation of various forms of art that she examines, for example, the gardening Walker observed her mother doing and of the quilting that Walker researched in her collegiate studies. Gardening, as an artistic means of empowerment for Walker’s and “our” own mothers, can be connected in a different way to the previously mentioned spiritual aestheticism that was related to the quilters of Gee’s Bend in the previous section. Jeania Ree V. Moore discusses this in her findings in “African American Quilting and the Art of Being Human: Theological Aesthetics and Womanist Theological Anthropology,”

where she connects the spiritual side of how gardening, and also quilting, is used to sync nature with Walker's womanist ideals (457-8).

Walker continues her description of how quilting, like gardening, are means of black women telling of the painful African American experience in her recounting of the quilt she sees at the Smithsonian, and notes it is by an anonymous female, African American artist who made use of the few materials that she had in order to channel the divine spirit through Christ in portraying the Crucifixion of Christ in her quilt (1186). The artist's legacy surely was kept from the public spotlight simply because of its creator being a woman. As pointed out by Walker in "In Search" and by Moore, there seems to be a "[limitation] of media and role" that has prevented the anonymous quilter from being able to have her voice heard and furthers how like the quilter could be in relation to "our" grandmothers (qtd. in Moore 458; Walker 1186). Moore furthers this assumption in how the women behind African American quilt-making have "struggle[d] against and overcome collusions of race, class, and gender, and [present quilts] to [the] inner world of the quilters' own making" (Moore 465).

This personal essay by Walker is further examined by Laurie McMillan in her article "Telling a Critical Story: Alice Walker's 'In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens'". McMillan describes Walker as "assert[ing] the value of the marginalized voices (those of African American women in particular in this case)," which claims that the anonymous quilter that Walker defends in her essay where the quilter being listed as "anonymous" does little justice to what this artist may have actually been trying to create in her pattern (112). The struggle behind the creation of quilts in both the quilters of Gee's Bend and in the grandmothers and mothers in "In Search" shows the effort and the turmoil that each African American female artist has gone through in creating their patterns so that in some way, they can receive their deserved recognition for the art

that they create. Not every quiltmaker may seek recognition (or desire to have to have their quilts even be released to the public spotlight as the Gee's Bend quilters have felt), but they at least do desire that their stories are told, or rather to have their voice heard, as they desire to have them told in their quilts.

The stories behind the quilts in Walker's "Everyday Use" are only really told as the quality time that Maggie and her grandmother have spent together in her youth creating the very quilts that Dee is trying to usurp from their childhood home. Dee believes that Maggie does not see or value the heritage that has gone into making the blankets, but it is really the reverse that is actually happening as Dee storms away from the house with her boyfriend since she is the one who actually does not understand or even comprehend their heritage since she was not around to help out with the creation of the quilts; Dee and Maggie's mother sees the truth in their heritage, which is why she yanks away the quilts from Dee, or Wangero as she now likes to be called (1194). The heritage behind the quilts is but another way that voice is shown in the quilts' creations. Maggie is silent as she does not protest against her sister since she is so used to Dee always getting what she wants, but even in creating the quilts with their grandmother Maggie was able to find her voice. The time that she spent with her grandmother gives Maggie the valuable assets to be able to understand their tumultuous past that was not to be celebrated as Dee is able to comprehend via the Black Power movement. In her article "The Quilt Threads Together Sisterhood, Empowerment, and Nature in Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* and 'Everyday Use,'" Jennifer Martin writes of the authentic bond that Maggie has established to the family matriarchy after being taught the family history, which creates unbreakable ties to the "family sisterhood" (37). Martin also references here the "bond with nature" that Maggie holds in being a part of this tradition since it underlies Maggie's connection to her spiritual side of her

African American heritage; by having this “bond,” Maggie is also able to be at one with nature as Martin points out that both Maggie and her mother are in living out in the country (37). These ties are where Maggie finds her voice and uses it to procure the quilts that will detail her family’s legacy, as many of the quiltmakers of Gee’s Bend and of those mentioned in “In Search of Our Mothers’ Gardens” have been able to do.

Conclusion

Ties to family and the past are where voice is found in the various quilts of the women in both of Walker’s works and in the Gee’s Bend quiltmakers, despite having oppression on their backs every step of the way. The female artisans that Walker mentions often are described to not have much of a voice, like the anonymous quiltmaker in “In Search of Our Mothers’ Gardens” experiences, and experience a sort of “social death,” as theorized by Orlando Patterson in *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study*, as they are never really given the same kinds of acknowledgement as their male counterparts, which suggests the lack of control that these artisans had in the production of their own masterpieces. However, the female quiltmakers of Gee’s Bend manage to overcome the veil of oppression in being able to get their prints recognized on the public, global stage. Keeping oppression down in making the quilts perhaps is the largest feat of healing through the very pain that the quiltmakers channeled into their work, which shows the growth that they are able to have in spite of the indifference that they have faced for even creating their pieces every step of the way.

Notes

1. Womanism is one of the main platforms of feminism from which collective groups of women and women of color go out and forge their own paths in an oppressive, white and male-dominated society. Alice Walker coined the term “womanism” and it can be referenced in her preface to her prose anthology *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens* (xi-xii).

2. The discourse of womanism in relation to any artisan crafts like quilting is to be handled with the utmost humility and sensitivity as to best express the feelings and/or experiences of African American women who have experienced discrimination and chose to tell their stories via these crafts, in order to remain as non-objective as possible in the compilation or research of this topic.

3. Reference the essay “Saving the Life that Is Your Own” to gain more understanding of why Walker feels the need to push for a fairer representation of female African American writers in scholarship (3-14).

4. I hope to further my research on the topic of the tales of what actually is behind the patterns of Gee’s Bend after this paper but this will not be included at this time for the purposes of this section.

5. Refer to Elizabeth W. McLaughlin’s “Quilting as Living Metaphor: A Study of the African AIDS Quilt as a Visual Parable of the Peaceable Kingdom” for more information on the spiritual side of womanism in quilting (McLaughlin).

6. See Note 4.

7. “Housetop” is distinguished by L-shaped strips that are said to resemble the tops of houses, hence its name (“Housetop and Bricklayer”). Refer to Figure 1 (George).

8. Walker's discussion in "In Search" of African American women and writing in accordance with womanism will not be discussed further because this discourse would take away from the non-lexical means of expression discussed in gardening and quilting in this section. McMillan's article "Telling a Critical Story: Alice Walker's 'In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens'" is a great reference here to further pursue the connection between Walker's discourse on the outlet of writing and womanism (115-6).

Works Cited

- Betancourt, Sofia. "Between Dishwater and the River." *Worldviews: Global Religions, Culture & Ecology*, vol. 20, no. 1, Mar. 2016, pp. 64-75. *EBSCOhost*, doi:10.1163/15685357-02001006.
- Carey, Celia, director. *The Quilmakers of Gee's Bend*. Released February 2005. *Vimeo*, uploaded by Celia Carey, September 2012, <https://vimeo.com/50174695>.
- George, Rachel Carey. "Housetop"—Sixteen-Block "Half-Log Cabin" Variation. Created in the 1930s, Souls Grown Deep Foundation. *Souls Grown Deep*, <http://www.soulsgrowndeep.org/artist/rachel-carey-george/work/housetop%E2%80%94sixteen-block-half-log-cabin-variation>.
- Graham, Angelina. "Womanist Preservation: An Analysis of Black Women's Spiritual Coping." *International Journal of Transpersonal Studies*, vol. 35, no. 1, Jan. 2016, pp. 106-17. *EBSCOhost*, libproxy.muw.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=hlh&AN=120311515&site=ehost-live&scope=site.
- Harris, Melanie L. "Ecowomanism: Black Women, Religion, and the Environment." *Black Scholar*, vol. 46, no. 3, Fall 2016, p. 27-39. *EBSCOhost*, doi:10.1080/00064246.2016.1188354.
- "Housetop and Bricklayer." *Souls Grown Deep Foundation*, Souls Grown Deep Foundation, <http://www.soulsgrowndeep.org/quilt-categories/housetop-bricklayer>.
- "Housetop"—Sixteen-Block 'Half-Log Cabin' Variation." *Souls Grown Deep Foundation*, <http://www.soulsgrowndeep.org/artist/rachel-carey-george/work/housetop%E2%80%94sixteen-block-half-log-cabin-variation>.

- Martin, Jennifer. "The Quilt Threads Together Sisterhood, Empowerment, and Nature in Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* and 'Everyday Use'." *Journal of Intercultural Disciplines*, vol. 14, Winter 2014, pp. 27-44. *EBSCOhost*, libproxy.muw.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=101320325&site=ehost-live.
- McLaughlin, Elizabeth W. "Quilting as Living Metaphor: A Study of the African AIDS Quilt as a Visual Parable of the Peaceable Kingdom." *Journal of Communication & Religion*, vol. 27, no. 2, Nov. 2004, pp. 141-68. *EBSCOhost*, libproxy.muw.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=hlh&AN=15840658&site=ehost-live&scope=site.
- McMillan, Laurie. "Telling a Critical Story: Alice Walker's 'In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens'." *Journal of Modern Literature*, vol. 28, no. 1, Fall 2004, pp. 107-23. *EBSCOhost*, libproxy.muw.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lfh&AN=16514191&site=ehost-live&scope=site.
- Moore, Jeania Ree V. "African American Quilting and the Art of Being Human: Theological Aesthetics and Womanist Theological Anthropology." *Anglican Theological Review*, vol. 98, no. 3, Summer 2016, pp. 457-78. *Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Collection*, libproxy.muw.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=pbh&AN=117086910&site=ehost-live.
- Patterson, Orlando. *Slavery & Social Death: A Comparative Study*. Harvard University Press, 1985, pp. 35-76.
- Pitkin, Stephen, photographer. *Work-Clothes Quilt with Center Medallion of Strips*. Pattern by Annie Mae Young. 1976. *SoulsGrownDeep.org*,

<http://www.soulsgrowndeep.org/artist/annie-mae-young/work/work-clothes-quilt-center-medallion-strips>.

---. "Housetop"—Sixteen-Block "Half-Log Cabin" Variation. Pattern by Rachel Carey George, 1930s. *SoulsGrownDeep.org*, <http://www.soulsgrowndeep.org/artist/rachel-carey-george/work/housetop%E2%80%94sixteen-block-half-log-cabin-variation>.

Shamase, Maxwell Z. "A Theoretical Exposition of Feminism and Womanism in African Context." *Gender & Behaviour*, vol. 15, no. 2, May 2017, pp. 9210-22. *Academic Search Complete*, libproxy.muw.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=126152223&site=ehost-live&scope=site.

Sohan, Vanessa Kraemer. "'But a Quilt is More': Recontextualizing the Discourse(s) of the Gee's Bend Quilts." *College English*, vol. 77, no. 4, Mar. 2015, pp. 294-316. *EBSCOhost*, libproxy.muw.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=hlh&AN=101606257&site=ehost-live&scope=site.

Tate, Christine. "The Quilts of Gee's Bend." *Textile: The Journal of Cloth & Culture*, vol. 1, no. 3, Nov. 2003, pp. 296-301. *EBSCOhost*, libproxy.muw.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=15372215&site=ehost-live.

Walker, Alice. "Saving the Life that Is Your Own." *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens*, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1983, pp. 3-14.

---. Preface. *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens*, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1983, pp.xi-xii.

---. "Everyday Use." *Norton Anthology of African American Literature*, edited by Henry Louis Gates Jr. and Valerie A. Smith, 3rd ed., vol. 2, Norton, 2014, pp. 1188-94.

---. "In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens." *Norton Anthology of African American Literature*, edited by Henry Louis Gates Jr. and Valerie A. Smith, 3rd ed., vol. 2, Norton, 2014, pp. 1180-8.

"Work-Clothes Quilt with Center Medallion of Strips." *Souls Grown Deep Foundation*, Souls Grown Deep Foundation, <http://www.soulsgrowndeep.org/artist/annie-mae-young/work/work-clothes-quilt-center-medallion-strips>.

Young, Annie Mae. *Work-Clothes Quilt with Center Medallion of Strips*. 1976, Metropolitan Museum of Art. *Souls Grown Deep*, <http://www.soulsgrowndeep.org/artist/annie-mae-young/work/work-clothes-quilt-center-medallion-strips>.