

Representation and the Reproduction of Appalachian Space: A History of Contested Signs and Meanings

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Finding the Signs of Appalachia

In *The Fire Down Below* (1997), Steven Segal plays Jack Taggart, an undercover Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) agent who travels to Appalachian Kentucky to investigate the dumping of chemical waste in abandoned coal mines. As his cover, he takes on the role of a missionary who fixes porches and roofs and offers his aid to poorer residents. Segal's character, however, appears to be carefully written in order to distance him from the more judgmental representatives of the outside world who performed "mountain work" earlier this century.¹ When asked by the local sheriff if he is "here to help us poor folks," Taggart is quick to respond that his work is, "nothin' that condescending." As the movie drags on towards its inevitable and obvious conclusion, Taggart battles local toughs and corrupt police, tames snakes, befriends a wise old man who pretends to be a stupid hillbilly, saves a woman from her incestuous brother, and finds heaven in the Appalachian hills.

To create a sense of place for its audience, *The Fire Down Below* references a host of signs popularly associated with Appalachia. In this narrative, the omni-present mountains and the violence, poverty, snake handling, incest, and other signs of social degeneracy conspire to prevent the good, if overly simple, local folk from resisting an evil entrepreneur's environmental exploitation. This setting is intelligible as Appalachia to audiences because of a long and continuing history of using these regional markers in all manner of representations. Academic articles, travel narratives, and films from D.W. Griffith's *The Moonshiners* (1904) to

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or location of production. To accomplish this, I begin this paper with a two-part literature review that identifies the strengths and weaknesses of Appalachian studies' engagement with representation and then turns to recent theories of space and representation within geography to address some of these weaknesses. My history is then guided by three theoretical moments found in these literatures.

First, there is no real Appalachian space that precedes or exists outside of its representation.³ All images contribute to Appalachia as known and experienced and, therefore, cannot be judged for accuracy through comparison to a real region. Second, neither hegemony nor resistance are unitary and homogenous blocks in constant opposition to the other. Each serves as the other necessary for each to exist—hegemony requires resistance and vice versa—and both categories imperfectly contain representations created for a variety of purposes from a variety of perspectives.⁴ Finally, as the shifting boundaries of Appalachia are themselves representations and because images produced by both insiders and outsiders are intertextual, neither representations produced through the insider's intimacy nor the outsider's objectivity can be considered to be more authentic or accurate.

To end this introduction, I want to emphasize the partiality of my history of representing and reproducing Appalachia in both senses of the word. First, it is impossible to write the complete history of representing Appalachia. Too many images are constantly being produced and lost as people converse, paint, photograph, film, and write about the region. Second, because I believe that the continued efforts of scholars and activists to recreate Appalachia's definition in a manner more empowering to those claiming a mountain identity proves the always incomplete nature of hegemony, I hope my history argues for continued utility of representational politics.

On Boundaries and Appalachia

If the history of defining Appalachia as a space is unequally contested, the attempts to translate the dominant signs of the region into boundaries in cartographic space is doubly so. The bulk of both the Appalachian scholarship reviewed here and the images and definitions that constitute my history focus on West Virginia, the eastern counties of Tennessee and Kentucky, and adjacent portions of Virginia, North Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama. Indeed, the derogatory images of this Appalachia, sometimes referred to as the Southern Mountains, made some local officials in neighboring counties and towns argue against their inclusion in the much larger region defined and "represented" by the Appalachian Regional Commission since 1965.⁵ As chronicled by Raitz and Ulack, there is a long history of attempts to cartographically bound Appalachia according to various operationalizations of the definitional signs mentioned

the infamous *Deliverance* (1974) have invoked the mountains, primitive violence, poverty, and other signs to identify and denigrate the region and its inhabitants. While *The Fire Down Below* certainly re-presents this dominant construction of Appalachia, the screenwriter's attempts to show that Taggart respects mountain people, and that he would even return to live in the midst of their beautiful mountains, suggests an acknowledgment of the historical struggles over Appalachia's regional definition.

In this paper, I revisit this contested history of representing the region to explore the relationships between representation and the reproduction of Appalachian space. A number of authors working in Appalachian studies have described how the mountains, poverty, violence, and other signs have been used to mark Appalachia as a distinct and marginalized region within the United States. Henry Shapiro and Alan Batteau have been especially effective in arguing that the Appalachia known by these signs was created historically by their continuing use in the national media.² *Strangers & Kin* (1984)—a film produced by the Eastern Kentucky media-arts center, Appalshop—presents a filmic history of the hillbilly image to help mountain residents understand why this stereotype has been constantly recreated by outsiders and how it continues to contribute to the defamation of their very identities. These and other versions of this history are limited, however, when we try to use them to interpret even relatively straightforward representations, such as *The Fire Down Below*, or when attempting to understand the role representation plays in the reproduction of Appalachian space.

As I will argue in more detail below, the limitations of these histories of representing Appalachia are twofold. First, either explicitly or implicitly, Shapiro, Batteau, and others categorize representations of Appalachia according to the following dualisms: inside/outside, resistant/hegemonic, and real or authentic/misrepresentation. Second, and not surprisingly, they focus their analyses on images that they identify as having the greatest influence on how mainstream, urban, middle-class America perceives Appalachia. As a result, their narratives trace a history of outsider-produced hegemonic misrepresentations of the real Appalachia that have served to fix and naturalize the region as a distinct, homogenous, and inferior space in the eyes of Americans. To the extent that images produced within the region are covered at all, they are usually presented as being more authentic representations that are rarely noticed due to the power of the region's hegemonic construction.

While not denying either the power of the mainstream representations identified by Shapiro and Batteau or the political usefulness of their histories, I believe our understanding of how representations contribute to the reproduction of Appalachia as a distinct space can be improved by reading the history of representing Appalachia across the dualisms of insider/outsider, resistant/hegemonic, and real/representation. Therefore, I present in this paper a partial picture of the contested history of reproducing Appalachia through representation to illustrate the intertextuality of all images and definitions of the region no matter the author, purpose,

America shared common characteristics as a nation and the perceptions of travelers to the southern mountains who described its people and/or engaged in missionary work. He explores how the perception of Appalachia as "other" led to a need to explain this otherness and how this process "yielded in the end the explanation that Appalachian otherness was 'natural' because Appalachia was a legitimately discrete region of the nation."¹³

While Shapiro convincingly argues that Appalachia as known was a turn-of-the-century textual invention, his understanding of this process is constrained by the insider/outsider, resistant/hegemonic, and real/representation dualisms. Since his whole purpose is to find the origin of Appalachia's invention as an inferior other within America, he focuses his analysis on those outsider-produced images that contributed to the region's hegemonic definition. In addition, Shapiro does not quite escape the notion that the invention of Appalachia was based on misrepresentations of reality. When discussing the efforts of local-color writers and missionaries to promulgate their versions of the region, he states that their descriptions rarely made reference to "the real conditions of mountain life or the normal complexity of social and economic conditions which prevailed in the mountains as in every other section of the nation."¹⁴ This comparison between some never completely defined real space and the invented Appalachian region is most apparent in a chapter entitled "Naming as Explaining: William Goodall Frost and the Invention of Appalachia." Despite an interesting argument on how we divide reality into categories for our understanding and use, and how that creates new realities, Shapiro continues to keep the invention of Appalachia as a homogenous region separate from the "patterns of real diversity" that exist in real space.¹⁵

Calling Appalachia a "creature of the urban imagination," Alan Batteau, like Shapiro before him, describes Appalachia as an invention symbolized by its folk culture, poverty, and romantic wilderness.¹⁶ In *The Invention of Appalachia*, Batteau describes how the region has been created and re-created through the invention and continual reappearance of powerful poetic symbols found in portrayals ranging from mountain resident Harry Caudill's most influential book, *Night Comes to the Cumberlands* (1962) to the dish of holiday pathos served up by Charles Kuralt in the CBS News documentary, *Christmas in Appalachia* (1962). According to Batteau, the social and political significance of this textual invention of Appalachia does not lie in the misrepresentation of some real region, however. Rather, he presents:

an account of the invention of Appalachia, recognizing that Appalachia—read-about Appalachia, personally experienced Appalachia, laughed-at Appalachia, inspired-by Appalachia—is just as much a social construction as is the Cowboy, or, for that matter, the Indian.

in the introduction.⁶ This history is, of course, an important part of the reproduction of Appalachia as a distinct space. While a paper using recent developments in the critical cartography literature⁷ to deconstruct these mappings of Appalachia could and should be written, this article instead re-examines the reproduction of key signs of Appalachian space—the mountains, poverty, and violence—in other media.

Representation and Space in Appalachian Studies

Scholars in Appalachian studies who seek to define the region do so within a montage of images, stereotypes, and myths perpetuated through over a century of Hollywood films, news stories, and academic studies. Not surprisingly, many Appalachian scholars, such as Helen Lewis and David Walls, discard such mainstream representations as the products of ideology that hide the true class and colonial relationships that produce Appalachian poverty.⁸ Ronald Eller, among others, argues that the representation of mountain people as primitive and isolated robs Appalachia of its history and seeks to bring forth that real history as a source of strength for mountain people.⁹ The introduction of a recent volume, *Appalachia in the Making*, reveals history apparently to prove that the region may not be so unique after all.¹⁰ All these authors dismiss hegemonic definitions and images of the region as misrepresentations by claiming an ability to present reality in their texts.

This tendency is found in many of the works that focus on the history of representing Appalachia as well. For example, in *Modernizing the Mountaineer* (1980) and *All that is Native and Fine* (1983), David Whisnant argues that the obsession missionaries and developers have had for “discovering,” denigrating, and attempting to change Appalachian culture has hidden the extractive economic relationships between the region and the rest of country that have produced the “real” underdeveloped Appalachia. In addition, Whisnant focuses on the “flawed readings of local culture,” and the “ironies and confusions that have characterized most cultural work in the mountains.”¹¹ For him, therefore, there is a real Appalachia, definable in economic, cultural, and social terms that can be found by revealing the shortcomings of the representations produced by these powerful outsider missionaries, development agencies, and cultural preservationists.

In contrast to Whisnant’s approach to the historical relationships between “real” and “representational” regions, in *Appalachia on Our Mind* (1978), Henry Shapiro concentrates on the origins of the idea that Appalachia is “a coherent region inhabited by an homogeneous population possessing a uniform culture.”¹² Shapiro argues that the idea of Appalachia emerged in the last decades of the nineteenth century because of a dissonance between the new conception that all (white) peoples within

tions, their understandings of the reproduction of Appalachia through representation are limited by their continued reliance on the insider/outsider, resistant/hegemonic, and real/representation dualisms. I believe certain assumptions about the nature of space lies behind these shortcomings. As in the histories of Ronald Eller and David Whisnant and the political-economic analyses of Helen Lewis and David Walls, space for Shapiro and Batteau is little more than the container in which a nature and a people are exploited and misrepresented, and around which boundaries are rightly or wrongly drawn. Such a static construction of space makes it easier to argue that local experience ensures that the representations of insiders are, by definition, more real than those of outsiders. More importantly, this assumption allows for the continued existence of a space unaffected by its representation even if representation influences the "real" world of experience and action.

Space and Representation in Geography

Over the past two decades, geographers working within a variety of subdisciplines have re-theorized the relationship between representation and space.²³ Citing poststructural literary theory and the "crisis of representation" in anthropology, geographers working in a variety of subject areas have challenged our assumptions about how space, culture, landscape, social relations, place, and identity are known.²⁴ Of particular relevance here are those works that explain how media representations contribute to the reproduction of social space, describe how hegemony constrains, but does not fix, interpretations of landscape and other spatial signifiers, and challenge the notion that local, insider-produced images are more real than all other representations of a particular space. The following brief review provides the theoretical basis for writing a history of representing Appalachia that recognizes that regional definitions and images reference each other across the hegemonic/resistant and outsider/insider dualisms. This, in turn, will help to explain the role of representation in the reproduction of a heterogeneous Appalachian space that, while dominated by a set of intertextual definitions contributing to the region's marginalization, is comprised of many alternative and resistant images and actions as well.

One aspect of geography's engagement with representation is the increased examination of media images of spaces, places, and identities.²⁵ While many who engage with media to study environmental perception, the relationship between image and place, or the use of media to sell places use the same dualisms to separate reality and representation as those in Appalachian studies, others suggest that space and representation may be more dialectically related.²⁶ Jacqueline Burgess, for example, argues that places and landscapes are only knowable through

This invention was accomplished not in a professor's study, but in the hurly-burly of politics and commerce and industry. And further, it was pursued with some very specific political ends in view.¹⁷

Thus, Appalachia becomes a textual invention written through a struggle between mainstream America's domination of the region and mountain people's resistance to, and complicity with, that domination. The representations produced through this process range from images of poor, stupid hillbillies that mask the systematic exploitation of Appalachians to the noble images of Daniel Boone and Sergeant York that represent dominant American values such as the dignity of work, patriotism, and the pioneering spirit.¹⁸

Batteau provides one point of departure for my analysis of the role of representation in the reproduction of Appalachian space. His application of a politicized literary theory to the creation of a distinct and homogenous region within the mainstream American consciousness goes a long way towards denaturalizing Appalachia. Yet, while Batteau states that Appalachia emerges out of conflict, thereby giving some agency to those resisting the region's hegemonic definition, his emphasis on the power of a series of dominant images leaves little space for effective alternative representations. The insider/outsider and dominant/resistant dichotomies are maintained, effectively hiding the roles played by the relationships between these sets of opposites.

Nowhere is this more clear than in Batteau's representation of the unionization drives and the violent clashes between labor and management in the early decades of the twentieth century.¹⁹ In this section, he concentrates on the representation of the region by the national media and details how the already present marginalization of Appalachia in the American imagination served to hide the "real" nature of mountain labor's struggles with powerful outsider interests. Thus, the misrepresentations produced by the national media that portrayed class violence as mere hillbilly feuding overwhelmed the testimony of Appalachian miners recorded by radical publications that, according to Batteau, had "the ring of authenticity, local accents untouched by radial cant."²⁰ According to the chapter's conclusion, the only possible result of this unequal representational struggle was the erasure of an insider-produced alternative definition of Appalachia based on class politics—the complete triumph of hegemony over resistance.²¹ Yet, the violent and tragic events of Matewan, Bloody Harlan, and the battle of Blair Mountain continue to be re-presented by scholars and activists in both regional and labor literatures suggesting that this alternative strand in the representation of Appalachia continues to play a role in the struggles to define the region's space and identity.²²

While Shapiro and Batteau move beyond the traditional approach of dismissing outsider-produced images of Appalachia as misrepresenta-

This bipolar view of culture and hegemony, while praised for helping to reveal the role of power and for conceptualizing culture as process, has also been criticized for reducing the complex nature of cultural politics to a reified hegemonic/counter-hegemonic duality.³⁵ As in Batteau's presentation of the invention of Appalachia, using this definition of hegemony means that the successful establishment of a hegemonic definition of a space denies the continuing utility of many alternative representations that, while not unaffected by hegemonic images, are always present for people to draw upon as they attempt to define their spaces and identities for themselves. Gillian Rose draws on postcolonial literatures to theorize that neither the hegemonic nor the resistant are unitary blocks.³⁶ Rather, following Homi Bhabba, she argues that, "marginalized cultures are neither the same as hegemonic cultures nor entirely different from them; cultures affect one another, cultural forms are adopted, transformed, returned and cultural identity is itself constantly renegotiated through such dynamics."³⁷ This notion of culture recognizes the homogenizing influence of hegemony, but leaves open spaces for resistance by noting that hegemony itself is not monolithic, but open. Even as hegemony works to fix meanings and close down alternatives, the existence of resistance within hegemony and hegemony within resistance, ensures the continued reproduction of alternative representations and meanings.³⁸ Certainly, the constant re-invention of the very markers used to identify spaces and people as inferior into symbols of strength and power by marginalized groups is a prime example of this ongoing process. While this may not lead to an overthrow of hegemony, it indicates that space as reproduced through representation is never fully fixed, naturalized, or homogenized.

Finally, if space is a representation known and reproduced through actions and representations that take place within it, then there is little utility in using the insider/outsider dualism to separate real or authentic representations from various misrepresentations. Both the intimate knowledge of the insider and the objective reporting of the outsider are embedded in production contexts that are intertextual. In other words, the representations of both insiders and outsiders appropriate, negotiate with, and/or resist already existing representations. Indeed, building from Doreen Massey's progressive sense of place, it can be argued that the boundaries used to differentiate insider from outsider are simply another set of representations that mask both the unbounded social relations that reproduce the socio-spatial signifiers that make a place or region unique and the intertextuality of the various definitions and images of that space.³⁹ This does not deny that the perspectives of insiders and outsiders may differ significantly, but only questions the unproblematic use of these categories to ascertain accuracy, authenticity, or realism.

their representations that are given meaning through cultural systems of language and discourse.²⁷ Stuart Aitken and Leo Zonn further this line by recognizing that filmic images do not “merely capture, mimic, or mirror people and places.” Instead, these images are part of everyday experience or “the practice of living and the [spaces] that ground that practice.”²⁸ Natter and Jones describe this as a dialectic by stating that the “conditions of material life are shaped through their representation just as certainly as representations are shaped by material life.”²⁹

If representations in media are part of everyday experience—if they shape the social actions and relations that produce space—then, as Lefebvre claims, they are an integral part of the production of space.³⁰ At least latent in some appropriations of this theorization, however, is the idea that space as the geographic object of inquiry can still be known and that the contributions of representation to the social production of space are separable from experience, work, and other material practices.³¹ While such a theoretical construction is a useful heuristic device, social actors, including scholars, are always fully embedded in the spaces that we also help to produce through representation and experience. Therefore, those who represent space cannot see social space in its complex and changing entirety. Instead, space, as known and described, is always already a representation that reveals, conceals, and reworks the social relations and actions—including the production of representations—that constitute it.³² If this is the case, then anyone using spatial signifiers such as landscape elements, boundaries, or identity categories to represent a particular place or region are working within a space, or context, reproduced in part by representation. Thus, spaces and all particular representations of spaces are always intertextual; they reference existing representations as they are reproduced and reinterpreted.

This view of space and representation does not deny that there are very “real” differences in the power of representations. Because the socio-spatial and intertextual context within which images and definitions of spaces are produced is always uneven, some representations have greater influence on how a space such as Appalachia is defined. This issue is usually addressed through the concept of cultural hegemony. In cultural geography and cultural studies, culture has been theorized as a site of struggle between a dominant cultural group and various types of subcultures. The dominant group seeks to establish its own experience of the world as objective, valid, and natural for all people.³³ The successful establishment of hegemony means that “the central, dominant meanings, values and practices of a society are maintained through the dilution and incorporation of oppositional ways of life.”³⁴ Alternatives are closed down as hegemony fixes one set of representations as objective, natural, or otherwise “real.” Thus, culture is understood as a process comprised of two mutually opposing parts, the hegemonic or dominant and the counter-hegemonic or resistant.

The first widely distributed texts representing Appalachia as a recognizably unique region were travel writings and local color stories published in nineteenth-century literary magazines such as Lippincott's, Scribner's, and Harper's New Monthly Magazine. By the turn of the century, these were joined by the novels of John Fox Jr. and other writers. For the most part, the authors of these accounts of Appalachia identified themselves as representatives of an increasingly unitary American culture that was urban, industrial, and driven toward prosperity. They viewed the region as one of the "little corners of the nation" that had not been assimilated into the dominant culture and traveled into the mountains in search of publishable material. These stories and travel narratives, however, cannot be viewed as the originary moment of Appalachia or of its definitive signs. The idea that mountains are home to barbarous peoples can be traced back for millennia and these authors' descriptions of the wild mountains were informed by the romantics of the early 1800s.⁴⁰ In other words, while these turn-of-the-century travel writings and novels popularized the idea that Appalachia was an inferior other within America, they were already thoroughly intertextual.

In these tales, mountains were constructed either romantically as the physical barriers between Appalachia and the rest of America—entry into this space was usually gained through a wild mountain pass—or scientifically as the primary cause of mountain people's difference from, and inferiority to, urban, "progressive" America.⁴¹ When assigning the latter meaning to this regional marker, travel writers and novelists were clearly influenced by the environmental determinism of turn-of-the-century geography. Novelist John Fox Jr. remarks upon the:

... importance mountains have played in the destiny of the race, for the reason that mountains have dammed the streams of humanity, have let them settle in the valleys and spread out over plains; or have sent them on long detours around. When some unusual pressure has forced a current through some mountain pass, the hills have cut it off from the main stream and have held it so stagnant that, to change the figure, mountains may be said to have kept the records of human history somewhat as fossils hold the history of the earth.⁴²

To these authors, an important sign of this isolation was material poverty. In his travel narrative, "A Strange Land and a Peculiar People," Will Wallace Harney described his female companion as "moved alternately to tears and smiles by the scenes and people we met—their quaint speech and patient poverty."⁴³ Another travel writer, James Lane Allen, summed up the region's mountain-bound poverty in a more brutal fashion:

Living today as their forefathers lived before them a hundred years ago; hearing little of the world, caring nothing for it, responding feebly to the influences of civilization near the highways of travel

A History of Representing Appalachia

As stated earlier, existing histories of representing Appalachia focus on images and definitions that can be characterized as produced by outsiders and contributing to the hegemonic way Appalachia is known as an inferior other within America. By revisiting and augmenting this history within a theoretical context that questions the dualistic categories of space/representation, inside/outside, and resistant/hegemonic, I hope to illustrate that the reproduction of this space via representation is a more complex and contested, although still thoroughly unequal, process. Appalachia, although known primarily as that inferior other, is constantly re-created as a heterogeneous space through a multitude of representations that reference and contradict each other within and across the insider/outsider, resistant/hegemonic dichotomies.

I begin my partial history with the first mass media representations of the region, travel writings and local color stories from the late 1800s. To a large extent, these defined the spatial signifiers, or signs, that have been used in subsequent representations. I then trace the use of three of these signs, the mountains, violence, and poverty, through the twentieth century in mass media images and academic explanations of the region's "otherness." This history of the still-dominant way Appalachia is known within America, however, is interrupted and complemented throughout by the representations of authors, filmmakers, and other individuals—mostly identifying themselves as Appalachians—who contribute to the writing of Appalachia through their reference of, resistance to, and/or complicity with the marginalization of their space within this country.



Figure 1. Cover of dime store novel about mountain feuds.

Anthropogeographie. In "The Anglo-Saxons of the Kentucky Mountains," she described how the mountains served to make mountain people homogeneous and archaic in race and culture by effectively blocking the arrival of different people and new ideas. Furthermore, the mountaineer was limited by the distance and lack of transportation to urban markets and, therefore, could not take advantage of the rich mineral and timber resources held by the mountains. All in all the presence of mountains maintained a primitive culture in the midst of "one of the most progressive and productive countries in the world."⁴⁸

Sample's account was distanced and dispassionate. To her the distinctiveness of the region was a puzzle to be explained, not a problem to be solved. Therefore, while she described the simple and rough nature of mountain people's lives and she noted the relative lack of currency, she did not address poverty per se. Sample did refer to violence by declaring that decades of isolation ensured that "[e]very man depended on his own strong arm or rifle to guard his interests and right his wrongs."⁴⁹ Thus, the mountain feuds became feudal relics maintained in the absence of a system of law.

Such environmental determinist explanations of Appalachia's uniqueness were used by missionaries and educators who represented the region's isolation, poverty, and lawlessness as problems that could be solved. Perhaps the best known proponent of missionary work in the mountains was William Goodall Frost, president of Berea College. In his frequently cited essay, "Our Contemporary Ancestors," Frost stated:

The case of the mountain whites illustrates in a most impressive manner the importance of intercommunication as a means of progress They have been beleaguered by nature This is one of God's grand divisions, and in default of any other name we shall call it Appalachian America. It has no coastline like Scotland, no inland lakes or navigable rivers like Switzerland. The surface varies greatly in elevation and geologic structure, but as a place for human habitation the entire region has one characteristic—the lack of natural means of communication.⁵⁰

According to Frost, mountain people, or "our contemporary ancestors," did not have the knowledge, resources, or way of life that would enable them to take advantage of the coming of modern civilization to the mountains. Furthermore, the same isolation that inhibited their development ensured the survival of the blood feud. Unlike most of the travel writers and novelists, however, Frost believed that mountain people, as supposedly pure-blooded Anglo-Saxons, were a national treasure in an era of immigration. As president of Berea College, he hoped to prepare, and thereby recover, this national resource by exposing their children to students from the north.⁵¹

Mountain residents were not silent during this era. While few may

in around the towns ... but sure to live here, if uninvaded and unaroused, in the same condition for a hundred or more years to come; utterly lacking the spirit of development from within; ... the most of the people are abjectly poor, and they appear to have no sense of accumulation⁴⁴

Allen believed that the poverty and laziness that differentiated eastern Kentucky from the rest of the state could be eradicated. It was his hope that the development of the mountains' rich stands of timber and veins of coal, a process already underway when he traveled and wrote, would bring the needed entrepreneurial spirit from the outside. Allen's student, John Fox Jr., also noted Appalachia's natural riches and its residents' poverty and argued that the mountainous environment precluded the spirit of accumulation necessary to overcome poverty. Such representations provided, perhaps, the moral rationale for the subsequent underdevelopment of the Central Appalachian coal fields by national coal, steel, and rail corporations.

In the Appalachia of these local color stories, the energy of the mountaineers may not have been directed towards capitalist accumulation, but it was certainly expended in the primitive and senseless feuds that captured the imagination of urban, middle-class readers (Figure 1). The violence portrayed by James Lane Allen, John Fox Jr., and other authors was described as the inevitable consequence of mountain people's isolation from the more civilized mainstream and the need to fight a hostile nature in order to survive. This violence was used to reinforce to urban readers that Appalachia was a primitive space when compared to the rest of America.

Writing "A Strange Land and a Peculiar People" in the decade following the Civil War, Will Wallace Harney recounted tales of families divided by the conflict and noted that old grievances and new arguments tended to "flame forth in the vendetta fashion peculiar to the region."⁴⁵ Following in much the same line, James Lane Allen observed that mountain people seemed prone to holding grudges against kin and neighbors that blossomed into feuds. He argued that because of their isolation, abundant leisure time, and excess physical energy, "quarrels among them are frequent and feuds are deadly."⁴⁶ John Fox Jr. made violence a definitional characteristic stating, "it is the feud that most sharply differentiates the Kentucky mountaineer from his fellows, and it is extreme isolation that makes possible in this age such a relic of medieval barbarism."⁴⁷

The mountains, poverty, and violence, as given meaning by local colorists, also appeared in scholarly explanations of Appalachia's difference and, therefore, influenced the efforts of missionaries and government agencies to uplift and develop the region. Appalachia was one of many cultural settings Ellen Churchill Semple attempted to explain with her refinement of the environmental determinism found in Ratzel's

farmhouse, ox cart, and the violent nature of the story itself reinforced the notion that eastern Kentucky was inhabited by poor, primitive people.

Any number of films from the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s can be called upon to show that Hollywood movie-makers continued to reference existing media products to reproduce Appalachia as mountain-bound, poor, and violent.⁵⁴ Sometimes, as in *Sergeant York* (1940), the Appalachian setting was used to produce an American hero. Dramatic scenes of the mountains placed this narrative in eastern Tennessee. Their steep, rocky slopes may have prevented Alvin York from earning the money needed to buy valley property, but they were also romanticized as a source of inspiration for York and as symbols of the home he missed when overseas and in New York (Figure 2). The rough cabin he shared with his mother and brother and the Herculean effort required to raise the cash necessary to buy good land reminded viewers that Alvin York lived in a poor region. Finally, violence was a dark undercurrent in this representation of mountain life that was, nonetheless, necessary for York's development. While the youthful Alvin's gun play and tavern brawls were censured by his family, minister, and future wife, the skills and fortitude provided by his experiences ensured that he becomes a hero in World War I.

Alvin York may have been a much-needed hero to the still economically depressed nation as it entered World War II. Many labor activists within and beyond the mountains, however, interpreted the mountains, poverty, and violence of Appalachia differently. While Hollywood cast the hills and mountain people as problems for outsiders to solve or overcome, in the 1930s union organizers and folksingers labeled coal corporations and complicit local governments as "outsiders" and blamed them for the poverty and violence marring the region. In "Dreadful Memories," "I Hate



have been able to publish in the mass media, Samuel Johnson's "Life in the Kentucky Mountains, By a Mountaineer" (1908), represented mountain people struggling to define their own space within a national context dominated by local color writers. In this piece, Johnson both refused the labels of poverty and violence and acknowledged the mountaineers' relative powerlessness to define themselves:

The great press will speak in horrible terms of the lawlessness of the mountaineers, but us poor mountaineers, as far as the press is concerned, have no retaliation. Unschooled and unlearned, we must sit quietly back and bear it all in silence. Our only retaliation to speak of is the muzzle of our guns.⁵²

Samuel Johnson provides convincing evidence that the reproduction of a distinct Appalachian space meant the construction of two different sets of mutually informing, but thoroughly unequal, definitions of insiders and outsiders. The local colorists deployed already existing ideas of poverty, violence, and the mountains to construct the mountaineers as outsiders. The "peculiar characteristics" of these mountain people served as the rural past against which an emerging urban culture could be defined. To Johnson, however, the local color writers were the outsiders and their accounts of his homeland and people were not only inaccurate but damaging. As mountain people did not have access to the means to represent themselves, but were represented instead by the "the great press," they had no recourse but to violence in their struggle against their images in mainstream texts. Of course, by writing in violence, he only helped legitimize dominant representations of Appalachia.

In the twentieth century, entertainment and news media continued to reproduce Appalachia as "a strange land and a peculiar people" through intertextual references to the same signs of poverty, violence, and the mountains. In Hollywood films, and later on network television, the region provided both fodder for urban jokes about backwards, incestuous hillbillies and primitive settings to challenge, shape, and be changed by an array of heroes. These representations were produced by a mass media industry located outside the socio-spatial markers they used to define the region. They also served to further popularize hegemonic conceptions of the region's identity.

Appalachian settings and themes can be found in films dating from the origins of American cinema.⁵³ D.W. Griffith's *The Mountaineer's Honor* (1909), for example, used the signs of Appalachian difference already popularized by local color stories to present a classic story of love between insider and outsider. An earlier Griffith film, *The Moonshiners* (1904), used a mountainous location in upstate New York as the set for the tale of an eastern Kentucky family that battled federal revenuers in order to produce the moonshine it depended on for income. An isolated and dilapidated

the mainstream's categorization of Appalachia.

In describing how the absentee-owned coal and timber companies systematically destroyed the region's natural and human resources, however, Caudill found the causes of modern Appalachia's distinctive poverty not in the mountains or the mountain culture, but in the corporate and industrial heart of mainstream, prosperous America. Like the labor activists before him and the radical Appalachian scholars and activists of the 1970s to follow, Harry Caudill viewed Appalachia not as an isolated backwater sitting in the heart of a developing nation, but as a poverty-stricken region that existed because of how the rest of the country developed.

The 1960s were, perhaps, the time of the most intensive use of Appalachia in mass media representations. The works of authors such as Caudill and Michael Harrington "revealed" to the white, suburban, mainstream America the existence of many categories of people who did not share the nation's prosperity.⁶⁰ This rediscovery of difference resulted in a variety of representations that deployed the markers of mountains, poverty, and violence to further marginalize Appalachia. Most notably, "War on Poverty" news coverage used Appalachia to give poverty a white face—to make these poor "outsiders" in America a bit more familiar to those "inside" the prosperous suburbs. Instead of reproducing Caudill's arguments about the causes of the region's difference, however, the television documentaries hosted by Walter Cronkite, *Depressed Area, USA* (1963), and Charles Kuralt, *Christmas in Appalachia* (1963), simply placed desperate poverty against a mountainous backdrop. Other news media also relied on such a simple representation of regional "facts." The cover of the February 17, 1964, issue of *Newsweek*, for example, equates pov-



the Capitalist System," and other songs, Sarah Ogan Gunning and other radical folksingers combined the sad but strong melodies of traditional mountain folk songs, their own experiences of industrial poverty, and the Marxist message of the American communist party into an alternative representation of their region.⁵⁵ Their Appalachia was still marked by mountains, poverty, and violence, but was defined as a place where the richness of the mountains could be regained through class struggle. While Batteau is correct when he notes that the voices of Gunning, labor activists, and local miners were overwhelmed by their representation as primitive hillbillies in the national media, their alternative definitions of this space were not lost. This Appalachia continues to be reconstructed in the social memory of residents through the labor disputes of the past thirty years.⁵⁶

Representations of an Appalachia based on a working-class consciousness also had to compete unevenly with new federal interests in the region. From small-scale planned communities in northern West Virginia to the massive regional efforts of the Tennessee Valley Authority, the New Deal programs of the Roosevelt administration worked to define and solve Appalachia's problems.⁵⁷ In a context where the engineer and the planner were the heroes, both rapacious industrialists and stubborn, backwards, individualistic hillbillies were represented as obstacles to the grand social plans that would ensure that nature and industry would be correctly harnessed for progress. Previous and concurrent images of the hillbilly as lazy, uneducated, and backwards made this characterization stick in Appalachia. If most Americans never saw the government reports creating and evaluating this region, the stubbornly poor mountaineer as enemy of progress reached the silver screen in the acclaimed film, *Wild River* (1960).

In 1962, while the national economy grew at a record pace, mountain resident Harry Caudill published *Night Comes to the Cumberlands: A Biography of a Depressed Area*.⁵⁸ More than any other single representation of its era, this book brought Appalachia back to America's attention as a space marked by poverty. Throughout his work, Caudill reproduced both the hegemonic meanings of regional markers and their reworkings by the Appalachian labor movements. He painted evocative pictures of the region's mountains and forests and described them as both isolating and abundant sources of the necessities of life for the white settlers and their descendants.⁵⁹ He traced the origins of mountain people to poor, indentured servants and criminals who escaped mainstream colonial society and he cited their primitive farming methods as initial causes of the region's environmental degradation. In addition, he used an environmental determinist argument when he blamed mountainous isolation for the ease in which the Appalachian people were "tricked" out of their mineral and timber wealth by the unscrupulous agents of eastern corporations. To this extent, Caudill provided an insider's legitimization of

ever, the mountains were all but invisible in the culture of poverty model, becoming a silent witness to generations of human degradation.⁶²

A more technical, "scientific," and "value-free" approach to the explanation of Appalachia's problems was produced by the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC). The 1965 creation of this agency and its thirteen-state region helped further define Appalachia as the front line in President Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty. While violence disappeared from these scientific accounts, poverty continued to define the region and was seen as a symptom of a lack of development caused by the region's mountainous terrain, its unskilled and outmoded work force, its dependence on declining industries, and its poor infrastructure.⁶³ Despite the efforts of Caudill and other regional activists, any notion that unequal relationships between Appalachia and the rest of the country were involved in producing Appalachian poverty was written out of the act creating the ARC and its subsequent policies. Indeed, even suggestions to concentrate ARC spending on social programs proved too controversial for the thirteen state governors and federal officials who sat atop the commission.⁶⁴ The solution, therefore, was to budget money to build highways connecting the region to the outside world, to retrain the Appalachian work force, and to improve the internal infrastructure.

In the 1960s and 1970s, Appalachian studies emerged as a discipline and slowly became institutionalized within many of region's colleges and universities. Both reacting against and enabled by the attention Appalachia was receiving from the entertainment industry, the news media, and federal and state governments, young mountain residents began to search for their own histories and explanations of their region's defining characteristics. Perhaps inspired by the region's history of labor struggles, many took a radical approach and explained Appalachia's poverty and its symptoms as resulting from a century of outsider-controlled exploitation. This premise lay at the heart of the internal colony or periphery model applied by Helen Lewis and Edward Knipe, David Walls, John Gaventa, and other radical scholars and regional activists.⁶⁵ Poverty and corporate exploitation became the defining signs of this Appalachia while the mountains, violence, and other signs of cultural weakness were downplayed or absent in this literature. Like the environmental determinists and culture-of-poverty theorists, Lewis and Knipe, for example, maintained the idea that mountain people lived in isolation for eighty to 100 years, depended on subsistence agriculture for the necessities of life, and developed a distinct culture. They did not maintain that isolation caused a culture to develop that was poverty prone, however. Rather, regional poverty was the immediate result of the absentee development and control of the region's resources and the undermining of mountain culture by the mass media. The mountains were only mentioned as the physical backdrop for eighty years of external exploitation of Appalachia and violence became both a sign of the exploitative nature of capitalism

erty and the Appalachian region in a particularly striking manner (Figure 3). In the photograph, a white, redheaded girl with dirty face and hand peers through a hole in a tar-paper shack. At the bottom of the cover the words, "Poverty, USA," reduce a complex region to a single characteristic.

This rediscovery of Appalachia by the nation's journalists was accompanied by "new" academic explanations of the region's troublesome differences. While distancing themselves from the crude environmental determinism of the turn of the century, most scholars continued to rely on the theory that the cultural deficiencies caused by the region's isolation were the reasons behind the outward manifestations of Appalachia's difference, especially poverty. For example, in *Yesterday's People*, Jack Weller, a minister and sociologist, set out to describe Appalachian poverty and to identify the cultural traits that served to reproduce poverty.⁶¹ He described mountaineers as individualistic and lacking concern for their children despite their large families. Thus, people married young and had children without learning any skills that may help them escape their culture of poverty. While Weller never mentioned violence specifically,



he stated that the tendency of mountain people to be individualistic, fearless "seekers of action" led them to seek out dangerous situations.

In a manner similar to Harry Caudill, Charles Goshen, a behavioral scientist, traced the roots of the Appalachian culture of poverty to their supposedly indigent, criminal, uneducated, and unmotivated ancestors who escaped mainstream society by moving to the mountains. In "Characterological Deterrents to Economic Progress in People of Appalachia," Goshen could barely conceal his disgust for mountain culture long enough to explain how generations of mountain-bound isolation served to concentrate the traits of violence and laziness that Goshen considered to be so limiting to economic growth. In his argument, mountain people were to blame for their painful difference from the wealth and progress that was the American ideal. As a defining element of the region, how-



can barely communicate with, let alone understand, representatives of the civilized world outside Appalachia. These representatives, however, prove to be less than civilized themselves. Their descent into violence suggests the boundary between mainstream America and Appalachia may not be so clear cut.

A virtually identical Appalachia appears fifteen years later in *Next of Kin* (1989) despite the fact that this movie extends the region into the heart of the American city. In the film, Patrick Swayze plays Truman Gates, a Chicago policeman who was born and raised near Hazard, Kentucky. His younger brother, also an out-migrant from Appalachia, is killed by the Italian Mafia and throughout the rest of the film Gates has to mediate between his poor, violent, and revenge-minded mountain family and the urban, civilized system of justice he is sworn to uphold.

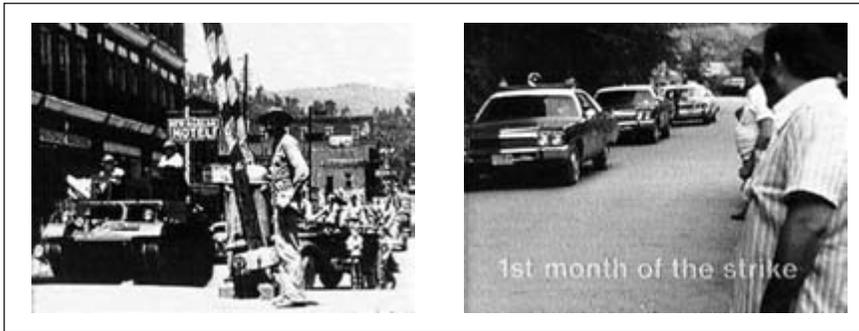
As most of the narrative is set in Chicago, it is even more important to be able to distinguish the mountaineer from the rest of urban America. Therefore, the movie opens with a bird's-eye view of a small town nestled in the mountains of Perry County, Kentucky. A century of rural to urban migration is captured by the subsequent fade to a Chicago street scene where two cops sit in a car parked outside of a rundown hotel. One says, "Uptown on a Saturday night. It's a hell of a place." The other responds, "Fucking hillbilly heaven, that's what it is." They are waiting for Gates to arrive to take a murderous hillbilly (Figure 6) into custody, although the second cop would rather just shoot the man. Because the main character is Appalachian, *Next of Kin* contains more sympathy for the region's reduction to a marginalized stereotype than *Deliverance*. Nevertheless, this stereotype is reproduced at the end of the movie as Gates, armed only with a hunting bow and helped by his brothers and cousins, is able

and a regrettably necessary form of resistance.

While the works of Helen Lewis, John Gaventa, and other radical Appalachian scholars have informed subsequent representations of the region by activists, artists, and scholars, they were only occasionally referenced in government policy and the entertainment industry. Since the 1970s, the latter has continued to produce films and other representations that mostly, but not exclusively, reference and reproduce the Appalachia of local colorists and culture-of-poverty theorists. In other words, they tend to reproduce the hegemonic definition of the region as an inferior other, but contain traces of a more heterogeneous Appalachian space as well.

Deliverance (1974), for example, may be the most pernicious and referred to representation of Appalachia produced in the past quarter century. In this film, four "city boys" from Atlanta drive into the mountains to canoe the last wild river in the South before it is dammed for electricity and flood control (Figure 4). As in the accounts of nineteenth-century travel writers, the mountains mark the entrance into a strange and wild region that has little in common with civilized, if a bit boring, urban America. Poverty and isolation are introduced in the very next scene. Just after commenting that some mountain people have never seen a town, the adventurers arrive at a small collection of run-down houses and other buildings that could have been lifted straight out of Walter Cronkite's, *Depressed Area USA*. The most thoughtful of the adventurers spots a boy with a banjo (Figure 5) and the two begin "Dueling Banjos" as the others note the boy's peculiar looks, "Talk about your genetic deficiencies," one wryly remarks. The viewer is thus reintroduced to the poor, isolated, and very peculiar mountain residents who, through years of isolation





filmmakers with little previous experience in the region, the Academy Award-winning *Harlan County, USA* (1976) provides some of the most powerful representations of Appalachian resistance produced in the past few decades. This film constructs a narrative of Harlan County miners' struggles to force the Duke Power Company to recognize their local chapter of the United Mine Workers of America. Miners and their families draw both inspiration and fear from their parents' experiences during the bloody union struggles of the 1930s. The film reproduces this by using old footage of soldiers with guns, riots, and lines of tanks rolling down Harlan's main street followed by a modern scene of lines of state police cars called in to keep the entrances to the mines open (Figures 8 and 9). While violence is a defining theme in this film, it is never called a natural tendency of mountain people. Rather, the miners merely respond to the violence of the police and the company's "gun thugs" with a restrained violence of their own.

The Appalachia of Harlan County, USA is not just a site of corporate violence against mountain people, but also of poverty caused by the same companies. Beginning in the opening scenes and continuing throughout the film, the miners' homes are shown to be old, in various states of disrepair, and lacking in plumbing and other modern conveniences. In one scene, a woman gives her daughter a bath in an old washtub and tells her that "when daddy wins the strike we are going to have hot running water and a big old bath tub." In addition, the coal companies and not the mountains nor mountain culture are blamed for the lack of other opportunities in Appalachia when a pair of miners state that the coal industry conspires to keep other industries out of the region.

Harlan County, USA is, of course, only one of hundreds of documentary films about Appalachia produced in the past three decades. Appalshop, a community media-arts center located in Eastern Kentucky, has alone made over one hundred films focused on the arts, culture, economy, and politics of the residents of Central Appalachia. Formed by a group of local teenagers in the late 1960s, with resources provided

to wipe out the equally stereotypical Mafia in a heavily wooded Chicago cemetery.

Unlike *Deliverance* and *Next of Kin*, John Sayles' *Matewan* (1987) is an explicit attempt to represent the Appalachia marked by class struggle. In this film, Sayles recounts the Matewan massacre, one of the bloodiest confrontations between union organizers and coal operators during the unionization drives of the 1920s and 1930s in West Virginia. This film is clearly sympathetic with the miners; it re-presents the history Batteau writes off as lost. *Matewan* thus aligns itself with Appalachian activists and scholars who try to overcome the region's marginalization by representing its "real" history. Of course, the film still draws on the same themes of mountains, poverty, and violence to drive both its narrative and its construction of Appalachia allowing both hegemonic and resistant definitions to be present.

As in *Deliverance* and *Next of Kin*, the Appalachia of *Matewan* is a violent space in which mountain people are almost naturally inclined to solve their problems with a gun or a stick of dynamite (Figure 7). This tendency is justified in this film by the actions of the coal company and its ruthless gun thugs who both initiate violence and hold the specter of jobless poverty over the miners' heads. Not all the miners facing this oppression, however, resist the company by resorting to violence. Outsider and union organizer Joe Kennahaw can convince the black and Italian miners that fighting will only give the company and state the excuse they need to crush the fledgling union. The white miners—the "native" mountain people, however—are much harder to convince. While not fully contained within the Hatfields vs. McCoys identity ascribed to them by the coal company's agents, *Matewan's* mountain people do reproduce that category. It is instructive to note, for example, that in the bloody gun fight at the end of the movie, the only participants are company men and white mountaineers led by their police chief, Sid Hatfield.

Many of the images and themes found in *Matewan* are, not surprisingly, very similar to those in an earlier documentary. Produced by



ing claims of authenticity to their insider status, Appalshop filmmakers created more overtly partial representations of the region. This Appalachia is home to women working in fast food restaurants, people suffering with AIDS, and communities resisting the political, environmental, and economic exploitation of corporate America.⁶⁹ Many of the people and events captured in these later films may well resonate with people identifying themselves as living well outside of Appalachia's boundaries and definitive signs. Even films focusing on Appalachian culture, such as *Dreadful Memories: The Life of Sarah Ogan Gunning* (1988) and *Beyond Measure* (1994), are more likely to place their subjects within an Appalachia produced by socio-spatial relationships connecting the region to urban America. Such a representational strategy no longer relies on the construction of an insiders' positive and authentic Appalachia to contradict an outsiders' hegemonic (mis)representation of the region. Rather, at its best, such a politics exposes and destabilizes the relational nature of the insider/outsider, dominant/resistant, and real/representational dualisms used to fix Appalachia as an inferior other within, but somehow not of, the United States.

Conclusions

Ending this history with Appalshop's films emphasizes that alternative representations of the region continue to be a strong undercurrent in its reproduction. Still Appalshop cannot be seen as the final moment in representing Appalachia. For that matter, such a claim cannot be attached to movies like *The Fire Down Below*, a film that many at Appalshop would repudiate if they thought it worth the effort, or to representational histories such as this paper. The region continues to be represented and interpreted by residents, activists, the mass media, and the academy. For example, the recent film *October Sky* (1999) celebrates a West Virginian teenager's educational triumph; he wins a 1950s national science competition with his rocket design. This film can be seen as a refreshing departure from the action movies that portray Appalachia as a dangerous foil for American heroes. On the other hand, many of the old signs and themes are also present in *October Sky*. The isolating mountains, a cultural disdain for education, and the intractability of unionized miners conspire to keep all but the most talented children from realizing their human potential and, thereby, escaping to the outside world. Once again, the culture-of-poverty model emerges to explain Appalachian difference as hegemony continues to constrain the meanings of this space and its representation.

Rather than seeking an origin or end to the image of Appalachia as an inferior other within America, my partial history illustrates, and contributes to, the reproduction of a complex and heterogeneous space through

through a federal program, Appalshop was immediately informed by a context that included the emergence of a radical Appalachian studies, continued resistance to "external" domination of the region by labor and environmental activists, and the omnipresent imagery of America's War on Poverty. These young filmmakers became the core of Appalshop, a large and diverse media organization that now includes a radio station, a media training institute for Appalachian teenagers, a recording studio, and a traveling theater troupe. Much of the recent struggle over the definition of Appalachia, including the continuing dominance of marginalizing representations, can be found within the thirty years of Appalshop filmmaking.⁶⁶

Many of Appalshop's early films were intended to counter what they saw as inaccurate and damaging portrayals produced by a mass media controlled by outsiders and elites. Taken as a body, they represent a relatively homogeneous space marked by beautiful mountains, poverty inflicted and/or mismeasured by outsiders, and a respect for mountain culture.⁶⁷ According to the organization's grant proposals and newsletters, Appalshop filmmakers, like Appalachian scholars, were able to capture this "real" Appalachia on film because of their position as insiders and their willingness to "remove" themselves from the space of their own films.

This tendency in the organization's films was both summarized and challenged by *Strangers & Kin* (1984), a film that represents the history of the mass-media Appalachia juxtaposed with Appalshop's own images of the region. In this explicitly intertextual film, turn-of-the-century book covers and clips of Hollywood films are edited together in roughly chronological order while three mountain actors provide historical context and personal stories to help viewers understand how and why the hillbilly image was invented and reproduced by the mass media (Figures 10 and 11). The film's use of previous Appalshop films to represent the real region, however, proved most controversial among its diverse audiences. The editor of *The Mountain Eagle*, the liberal newspaper in Appalshop's home town, slammed the film both for its ridicule of missionaries, federal assistance programs, and 1960s journalists as well as for its presentation of older, tradition-loving mountain people as the Appalachia worth preserving.⁶⁸ For some, these latter images recalled the simple, poor hillbilly found in the news documentaries and feature films of Hollywood. On the other hand, *Strangers & Kin*'s use of archival footage and Appalshop actors in front of the camera was a radical break from the group's previous films. The film selectively appropriated mass-media images to destabilize the hegemonic hillbilly stereotype and even may have destabilized its own definitions of Appalachia by helping viewers recognize that they could simply "try on" the Appalachia portrayed by the actors and, if necessary, reject it without rejecting their own mountain identity.

In the late 1980s and 1990s, Appalshop filmmakers produced works covering a much wider variety of topics thereby representing a more heterogeneous Appalachian space. Recognizing the limitations of bas-

while I maintain that a variety of representations reference each other to close down the meanings attached to the mountains, violence, and poverty in such a way that Appalachia continues to be known as a space where residents cannot overcome their isolation and culture to rejoin mainstream America, this hegemonic definition is never complete. The mutually constitutive nature of hegemony and resistance ensure that at least a trace of ambiguity and uncertainty always exists leaving space for alternative representations that also contribute to the reproduction of Appalachia.

Filmography

- Alleghany Uprising, directed by William Seiter (RKO 1939)
- Appalachian Genesis, directed by Bill Richardson (Appalshop 1973).
- Belinda, directed by Anne Lewis (Appalshop 1992).
- Beyond Measure: Appalachian Culture and Economy, directed by Herb E. Smith (Appalshop 1994).
- Chemical Valley, directed by Mimi Pickering and Anne Lewis Johnson (Appalshop 1984).
- Christmas in Appalachia, with Charles Kuralt (CBS News 1962).
- Deliverance, directed by John Boorman (Warner Bros. Home Video 1974).
- Depressed Area, U.S.A., with Walter Cronkite (CBS News 1962).
- Dreadful Memories, The Life of Sarah Ogan Gunning, directed by Mimi Pickering (Appalshop 1984).
- The Fire Down Below, directed by Felix Enriquez Alcala (Seagal-Nasso/Warner Bros. 1997).
- Harlan County, USA, directed by Barbara Koppell (Cabin Creek Films 1976).
- Matewan, directed by John Sayles (Cinnect 1987).
- The Moonshiners, directed by D.W. Griffith (Biograph 1904).
- Next of Kin, directed by John Irvin (Warner Bros. Home Video 1989).
- October Sky, directed by Joe Johnston (Universal 1999).
- Quilting Women, directed by Elizabeth Barret (Appalshop 1976).
- Sergeant York, directed by Howard Hawks (MGM 1940).
- Stand Up and Cheer, directed by P. Hamilton MacFadden (20th Century Fox 1934).
- Strangers and Kin, directed by Herb E. Smith (Appalshop 1984).
- Wild River, directed by Elia Kazan (20th Century Fox 1960).

all manner of representations. The regional markers of the mountains, poverty, and violence have been used by insiders and outsiders alike to construct any number of "real" Appalachias to suit any number of purposes. Thus, the region has been marginalized from America as the mountainous home of a poor, primitive folk, and partially re-attached to the nation as a source of valuable Anglo-Saxon bloodlines or as the front line of the War on Poverty. Simultaneously, it has also been a scene for the celebration of natural beauty, a setting for the respect of traditional ways of life, and the site of proud resistance to the injustices inherent in our political and economic systems. While this multiplicity of representations and their interpretations may be dominated by meanings that marginalize this space, this hegemony is neither unitary nor complete. Appalachia as a heterogeneous space continues to be reproduced through these mutually referencing and contradicting representations.

Traditional means of sorting through such an array of definitions and images would include a search for the representations that, due to the circumstances of their production, are closest to the real Appalachia. In this manner, the dominant definition of Appalachia as an inferior other could finally be supported or disproved. Commonly, these representations would be categorized under the unquestioned dualisms of hegemonic/counter-hegemonic and outsider/insider as well. Most scholars and activists writing the history of Appalachia's representation have used both of these methods to reveal the political, economic, and cultural motivations and conditions that mass-media images have served and reproduced. Explicitly or implicitly, they have also affirmed an insiders' vision of the region as real. Unfortunately, the valuable efforts of these authors are weakened by their reliance on the real/representation, insider/outsider, and resistant/dominant dualisms and by their refusal to recognize the partiality and intertextuality of their own works. As long as a real space is considered to be knowable outside of its representation, it can be called upon to refute any representation, no matter its purpose and source.

In this partial history of representing Appalachia, I seek to escape this dualistic trap by first recognizing that all these representations, including my own, are integral parts of the social space they reproduce and that Appalachia itself, as known and experienced, is already a representation. Since the unbounded social relations and countless representations that reproduce this space can never be fully known, no single real Appalachia can ever be fully defined. Second, I maintain that all the images of the region are intertextual; as they contribute to the reproduction of Appalachia, they reference already existing representations across the categories of insider and outsider, hegemonic and resistant. While the positionality of the writer/reader plays a large role in the politics of particular representations and their power to fix meaning to Appalachia, no intimate insider or detached outsider can see all of the region or can create a representation that does not reference existing texts. Finally,

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15. *Ibid.*, 116.
16. Batteau, *The Invention of Appalachia*, 1.
17. *Ibid.*, 6.
18. *Ibid.*, 18.
19. *Ibid.*, Chapter 6, "Which Side are You On?": 102-26.
20. *Ibid.*, 120.
21. *Ibid.*, 125-26.
22. See Stephen L. Fisher, ed., *Fighting Back in Appalachia: Traditions of Resistance and Change* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993).
23. My definition of social space is rooted in the following works: Edward Soja, "The Socio-spatial Dialectic," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 70 (1980): 207-25; David Harvey, "Labor, Capital, and Class Struggle around the Built Environment," *Politics and Society* 6 (1976): 265-95; and "The Urban Process under Capitalism: A Framework for Analysis," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 2 (1978): 101-31; Doreen Massey, *Spatial Divisions of Labor* (New York: MacMillan, 1984); Neil Smith, *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital, and the Production of Space* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994) and Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991).
24. Often cited literary theory includes Roland Barthes, *Image, Music, Text* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977); and Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, translated by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1974); and Jacques Derrida, *Limited Inc.* (Chicago: Northwestern University Press, 1988). In anthropology, the phrase, "the crisis of representation," is used by G. Marcus, "What Comes (Just) After Post? the Case of Ethnography," in *The Handbook of Qualitative Research*, N. Denzin and Y. Lincoln. (London: Sage, 1994), among others. Geography texts utilizing these ideas include, James Duncan and Nancy Duncan, "Ideology and Bliss: Roland Barthes and the Secret Histories of Landscape," in T. Barnes and J. Duncan, eds., *Writing Worlds: Discourse, Text and Metaphor in the Representation of Landscape* (New York: Routledge, 1992): 18-37; James Duncan and David Ley, eds. *Place/Culture/Representation*. (New York: Routledge, 1993); and Wolfgang Natter and John Paul Jones, "Space, Identity, and other Uncertainties."
25. Geography and media edited volumes include Jacqueline Burgess and John Gold, eds., *Geography, the Media, and Popular Culture* (London: Croom Helm, 1985); Leo Zonn, ed. *Place Images in the Media: Portrayal, Experience and Meaning* (Savage, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1990); and Stuart Aitken and Leo Zonn, eds. *Place, Power, Situation and Spectacle: A Geography of Film* (Boston: Rowan and Littlefield, 1994). Recent review articles include Christina Kennedy and Christopher Lukinbeal, "Towards a Holistic Approach to Geographic Research on Film," *Progress in Human Geography* 21 (1997): 33-50.
26. For the use of media in environmental perception see: Jane Zaring, "The Romantic Face of Wales," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 67 (1977): 397-418; and John Jakle, "Social Stereotypes and Place Images: People on the Trans-Appalachian Frontier as Viewed by Travelers," in L.E. Zonn, ed., *Place Images in the Media: Portrayal, Experience and Meaning* (Savage, Md.: Rowan and Littlefield, 1990): 83-104. For studies of the relationships between image and place see Leo Zonn, ed., *Place Images in the Media*; Stuart Aitken and Leo Zonn, eds., *Place, Power, Situation and Spectacle*; and Lisa Benton, "Will the Real/Reel Los Angeles Please Stand Up?" *Urban Geography* 16 (1995): 144-65. Examples from the "selling places" literature include S. Watson, "Gilding the Smokestacks: The New Symbolic Representations of Deindustrialized Regions," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 9 (1991): 59-70; Mark Boyle and George Hughes, "The Politics of Representation of 'The Real': Discourses from the Left of Glasgow's Role as European City of Culture, 1990," *Area* 22 (1991): 217-28; and Gerry Kearns and Chris Philo, eds., *Selling Places: The City as Cultural Capital, Past and Present* (New York: Pergamon Press, 1994).
27. Jacqueline Burgess, "The Production and Consumption of Environmental Meanings

Notes

1. See Bob Snyder, "Edubygodcation," *Antipode* 5 (1973): 2-5; Don West, "The People's Appalachia," *Antipode* 5 (1973): 6-11. Also David Whisnant, *All That is Native and Fine* (Boone: The Appalachian Consortium Press, 1983).
2. The two most comprehensive books on the invention of Appalachia through representation are Henry Shapiro, *Appalachia on Our Minds* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1978) and Alan Batteau, *The Invention of Appalachia* (Tucson: Arizona Press, 1990).
3. This argument is based on theories of space and representation found in John Paul Jones, "Making Geography Objectively: Occularity, Representation and The Nature of Geography," in W. Natter, T. Schatzki, and J.P. Jones, eds., *Objectivity and its Other* (New York: Guilford, 1995) and Wolfgang Natter and John Paul Jones, "Space, Identity, and Other Uncertainties," in G. Benko and U. Strohmayer, eds., *Space and Social Theory* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997).
4. See Gillian Rose, "The Cultural Politics of Place: Local Representation and Oppositional Discourse in Two Films," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 19 (1994): 42-66; also Natter and Jones, "Space, Identity, and Other Uncertainties."
5. Ann DeWitt Watts attempted to validate the ARC region statistically in "Does the Appalachian Regional Commission Really Represent a Region?" *Southeastern Geographer* 18 (1978): 19-36. As Watts (p. 34) notes in her endnotes, several Virginia counties that asked to be excluded from the region later appealed for inclusion citing, "poor judgement." The appeal was denied. See also Richard Ulack and Karl Raitz, "Appalachia: A Comparison of the Cognitive and Appalachian Regional Commission Regions," *Southeastern Geographer* 21 (1981): 40-53.
6. Karl B. Raitz and Richard Ulack, *Appalachia: A Regional Geography* (Boulder: Westview, 1984).
7. Noted works in critical cartography include J.B. Harley, "Deconstructing the Map," *Cartographica* 26 (1989): 1-20; Denis Wood, *The Power of Maps* (New York: Guilford); and Matthew Sparke, "Between Demythologizing and Deconstructing the Map: Shawnadithit's New-found-land and the Alienation of Canada," *Cartographica* 32 (1995): 1-21.
8. For examples see Keith Dix, "Appalachia: Third World Pillage," *Antipode* 5 (1973): 25-30; Helen Lewis and Edward Knipe, "The Colonialism Model: The Appalachian Case," in Helen Lewis, Linda Johnson, and Donald Askins, eds., *Colonialism in Modern America: The Appalachian Case* (Boone, N.C.: The Appalachian Consortium Press, 1978): 9-31; David Walls, "Internal Colony or Internal Periphery? A Critique of Current Models and an Alternative Formulation," in Lewis et al., eds., *Colonialism in Modern America*; John Gaventa, *Power and Powerlessness* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1980).
9. For arguments concerning the recovery of Appalachia's real history, see Ronald Eller, *Miners, Millhands, and Mountaineers* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1980).
10. Arguments against the region's exceptionalism can be found in Dwight Billings, Mary Beth Pudup, and Altina Waller, "Taking Exception with Exceptionalism: The Emergence and Transformation of Historical Studies of Appalachia," in M.B. Pudup, D.B. Billings, and A. Waller, eds., *Appalachia in the Making* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995): 319, 349.
11. Whisnant, *All That is Native and Fine*, 11. See also Whisnant, *Modernizing the Mountaineer* (Boone, N.C.: The Appalachian Consortium Press, 1980); and Bob Snyder, "Edubygodcation."
12. Shapiro, *Appalachia on Our Minds*, ix.
13. *Ibid.*, x.
14. *Ibid.*, xiv.