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# What is the use of the colonial model (or, better yet, the concept of coloniality) for studying Appalachia?

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## WHAT IS THE USE OF THE COLONIAL MODEL (OR, BETTER YET, THE CONCEPT OF COLONIALITY) FOR STUDYING APPALACHIA?

BY JACOB L. STUMP

*This article engages a recent Journal of Appalachian Studies roundtable (Volume 22, Number 1), organized by Steve Fisher and Barbara Ellen Smith, that critiqued the colonial model. My basic argument is that the colonial model has critical value because it offers a well-established orientation, framework, and line of argument to counter the culture of poverty thesis, which was recently re-popularized in J. D. Vance's memoir Hillbilly Elegy. My argument centers on three main points. First, I concur that the internal colony model warrants scholarly and activist reconsideration. But, in contrast to the majority of the forum voices, I argue that the idea of coloniality is imminently relevant to understanding and acting in the global political economy in which Appalachia is situated. Second, I locate Appalachia in the global political economy. The important and often overlooked point that I make is the global political economy, its historical emergence, and present-day practice are already implicated in Anglo-European colonial relationships. Third, I reconsider the way that colonialism is conceptualized, moving away from colonialism as attributes and toward colonialism as relationships between colonizer and colonized.*

### Introduction: Let's Start with *Hillbilly Elegy*

A Spring 2016 panel discussion at the annual Appalachia Studies Association (ASA) conference suggested that the colonial model is not very useful when examining the situation of Appalachia. This discussion turned into a roundtable that was published in Volume 22, Number 1, of the *Journal of Appalachian Studies* (Anglin 2016; Billings 2016; Fisher and Smith 2016; House 2016; Kunkel 2016; Smith 2016; Smith and Fisher 2016).

Around the same springtime period, J. D. Vance's *Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis* (2016) was published to great fanfare, with his story apparently resonating with a varied audience across the United States. Ordinary readers overwhelmingly find positive words

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This argument raises an even more basic problem that I want to stress in this essay: the culture of poverty and violence argument re-articulated by Vance resonates with a broad audience of readers because *it makes sense to them* and because *they are likely unaware of or they reject alternative frameworks* for understanding the enduring inequality of Appalachia. I am seeking an alternative framework for making the inequality of Appalachia intelligible.

Here is the crux of my argument. To the extent that the culture of poverty thesis is alive and well and the recipient of popular accolades by people inside and outside the region, the colonial model has critical value because it offers a well-established orientation, framework, and line of argument to counter the culture of poverty thesis. In other words, that Appalachia exists in the public imagination in this peculiar way is precisely a display of the value of the colonial model, which lays out a framework for analyzing the types of dynamics also at play in the culture of poverty thesis. Indeed, Helen Lewis (1978) framed her seminal book on the colonial model in modern America as a response to the culture of poverty model that explained regional inequality because of internal deficiencies. The established rendering of the colonial model in the study of Appalachia has limitations, but I suggest that the model has potential to offer a serious response in theoretical, empirical, and political terms. In this paper, I look closely at the arguments made in the 2016 JAS roundtable against the colonial model and suggest an alternative reading based on my own research and established examples in the literature.

My argument centers on three main points. First, I note limitations of the internal colony model, which contributors to the roundtable highlighted. I concur that the internal colony model warrants scholarly and activist reconsideration. But, in contrast to the majority of the forum voices, I argue that the idea of coloniality is imminently relevant to understanding and acting in the global political economy in which Appalachia is situated.

Second, like Anglin (2016), I locate Appalachia in the global political economy. The important and often overlooked point I make is that the global political economy, its historical emergence, and present-day practice are already implicated in Anglo-European colonial relationships. In other words, to locate Appalachia in the global political economy is to simultaneously locate Appalachia in a web of enduring colonial relationships.

Third, I reconsider the way that colonialism is conceptualized by Fisher and Smith (2016) and Anglin (2016). Their conceptualization of colonialism focuses on the presence or absence of certain attributes, like Appalachia's lack of political coherence or a shared political ideology. To some, these absences render Appalachia *not* a colonized space. I find this conceptualization of coloniality less useful because it forecloses potentially fruitful lines



of inquiry and theorization. Conceptualizing colonialism as a *relationship* (or set of relationships) between colonizer and colonized, where differences between self and other are rendered starkly unequal and open to intervention (in terms of health, education, religion, economy, political institutions, language, and dialect, etc.), serves to open up possibilities for empirical study and theorization.<sup>4</sup>

### Coloniality; or, What's beyond Internal Colony?

The internal colony model exhibits a number of problems. The authors in the JAS roundtable highlighted some of the most concerning ones. The key critiques are the following: First, that the model masks class conflict inside Appalachia. For example, Billings (2016) noted the longstanding issue wherein the internal colony model has focused on unequal exchange at the expense of production. Subsequently, the internal colony model reified Appalachia as a "unitary exploited subject," ignoring "class conflict" and antagonistic relationships between owners and workers inside the region (Billings 2016, 58). Second, Fisher and Smith (2016) highlight a related problem. They point out that failing to see the internal economic and political divisions can absolve Appalachia and its residents' own exploitation of the land and people. Don Blankenship is one prominent example of an Appalachian exploiter that the model would miss because of its focus on external colonialism, Fisher and Smith (2016) suggest. Blankenship was born and raised in eastern Kentucky and became a CEO for a major coal mining operation in West Virginia. He was jailed for his connection to a mine disaster that killed twenty-nine men in 2010. A third problem with the internal colony model, at least from the perspective of global political economy, is suggested by Kunkel (2016): the model presumes that there is an internal realm that is clearly demarcated from an external realm, which ignores the chains of extraction, production, and consumption that flow globally and through Appalachia. Kunkel captures this dynamic in her comments:

Central Appalachian coal competes in a global market. Natural gas investment is driven by global capital. Coal and natural gas companies—whether they are owned by Appalachians or not—have to contend with these global capitalist forces. As a result, there does not appear to be much difference between inside capitalists and outside capitalists in terms of the degree of exploitation of the land and people. (2016, 70)

Fourth, the internal colony model is a holdover from the exceptionalist tradition in Appalachian studies and Appalachian-based activism. Billings, Pudup, and Waller (1995) engage this point in their discussion of

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Appalachian exceptionalism. Exceptionalist renderings of the internal colony model by scholars and activists alike often imagine “white” Appalachia as a unique case in the modern United States, a specially exploited land and native people.<sup>5</sup> This sense of exceptionality has enabled Appalachian studies to forgo a serious engagement with the idea of coloniality that appears in other disciplines—particularly settler colonialism and indigenous studies. As Pearson (2013) traces out, the internal colony model is part of a mode of “self-indigenization” (165) in scholarly and activist discourse whereby dominant “white” Anglo-European settlers and their ancestors continue to subordinate others (e.g., “red” Cherokee, Iroquois, and Catawba bands that lived in the southern mountains prior to settlement). As a consequence, the internal colony model makes a kind of racial, national, religious license possible that ignores and silences the ongoing struggle over indigenous land and livelihood.<sup>6</sup> Appalachia and the various “white,” “black,” and “brown” peoples who live there now are all implicated in settler colonialism. Further, as Fisher and Smith (2016), Smith and Fisher (2016), Anglin (2016), and Kunkel (2016) all suggest, Appalachia is just one more site of inequality in global politics.

With all of these issues, the fate of the internal colony model seems dim. Smith and Fisher conclude that the internal colony presents “a greatly oversimplified story” for the study of Appalachia (2016, 76). As they read the scholarly and political environment, “social justice activists in former colonies have surpassed colonist analyses [and] that makes our [Appalachian studies] attachment to the internal colony model appear questionable and out-of-date” (Smith and Fisher 2016, 77). Smith and Fisher see a world in which,

victorious in their anti-colonial revolutions, progressive movements in countries from South Africa to India now grapple with complicated postcolonial questions of democratic process, the role of the state, cultural identity, and the desperate need for more egalitarian access to land and wealth in the face of aggressive privatization and neoliberal “gush-up” (as opposed to trickle-down) policies that redistribute resources upward to domestic elites. (2016, 77)

Indeed, I concur with Fisher and Smith (2016). These topics and problems among others are being pursued in developing countries. But the words articulated by Fisher and Smith could only come from a position that assumes the postcolonial context means independence was won once and for all and noncolonial relations were permanently set in place. However, Nkrumah (1987), Fanon (2008), and Gregory (2004) present examples of the variety of analyses of neocolonialism, settler colonialism, or what is called the colonial present. Therefore, we have good reason to reconsider



the relationship between the colonial question and Appalachia in terms other than those presented by Fisher and Smith (2016).

I contribute a new angle to Fisher and Smith's reading. In disciplines like international political economy and international studies, there are many prominent examples of postcolonial insights coming to bear.<sup>7</sup> Chowdhry and Nair (2002, 11) point out that "the postcolonial does not signify the end of colonialism, but rather that it accurately reflects both the continuity and persistence of colonizing practices, as well as the critical limits and possibilities it has engendered in the present historical moment." Contemporary, global, political-economic inequalities that are so intimately connected with the past, Chowdhry and Nair suggest, keep "the postcolonial" relevant "for the study of I[n]ternational R[elations]" (2002, 11–12) and, I would add, for Appalachian studies, too. The idea of the postcolonial "provides insight into the ways in which the imperial juncture is implicated in the construction of contemporary relations of power, hierarchy, and domination" (Chowdhry and Nair 2002, 12). From this, I find it useful to conceptualize Appalachia along the lines of other semi-peripheral and peripheral sites in the global political economy, which continue to make coloniality relevant. Coloniality is useful in the context of Appalachian studies because it can help highlight the relations of power, hierarchy, and domination that produce "Appalachia" as a marginal space in the global political economy. In the next two sections of this paper, I make a more detailed case for the value of the idea of coloniality for the study of Appalachia.

### Appalachia in/of a Colonial Global Political Economy

Anglin (2016) argues that Appalachia should be placed in the global political economy. Anglin presents Appalachia as one of a series of de-industrialized, environmentally degraded, and economically shrinking zones of poverty scattered across the United States and the world. Anglin "places Appalachia within America *not* as an internal colony with its specific apparatus of exploitation and vertical authority but rather as one space of poverty and disenfranchisement among many" (2016, 55). This depiction of Appalachia in a global context is similar to Kunkel's (2016) narrative of Appalachia. Kunkel locates contemporary West Virginia in a global political economy, focusing on struggles over land ownership, control over natural resources, environmental degradation, and energy markets for coal and natural gas. Both Anglin and Kunkel avoid the notion of internal colony, but their empirics, theoretical suggestions, and examples are all consistent with the idea of coloniality as I am using it here.

I argue that *none* of these attempts to locate Appalachia in a global historical context is far-reaching enough. Ada Smith (2016, 73) critically and rightly highlights the way that the internal colony model has fostered

a "complacent [attitude] in the face of the suffering of indigenous peoples as well as other indigenous peoples." European colonization of North America and the subsequent marginalization of Appalachia as told by the 2016 census of indigenous peoples from their perspective is a consequential period of time to consider the colonization of indigenous peoples. To consider Appalachia and the postcolonial, we need to theorizing, and politically engaging.

If we locate Appalachia in the context of the global political economy, we acknowledge that Anglo-European colonialism has been central to the formation and development of the world space. The "whole world economy over the last hundred years," manifests itself in an area (Anglin 2016, 80) and includes Appalachia as a marginal zone.

Appalachian studies has yet to fully address the effects of colonial relationships, but the resulting "new global colonialism" of the twenty-first century covered the whole planet in Appalachia. This "coloniality of power" is a result of multiple and heterogeneous hierarchies of power, political, epistemic, economic, spiritual, and exploitation" (Grosfoguel 2009, 10). "Appalachia" (among many other regions) is a world politics.

Furthermore, the (semi)peripheralization of Appalachia and the diverse people who settled there led to an emergent middle class during the nineteenth century, which simultaneously also re-emerged from Anglo-European colonial dynamics yields another connection to the marginality of Appalachia in the global political economy. The entanglement of hierarchies enacted by the colonial class and includes gender, sex, race, and class. This logic is absent from the conventional history of Appalachia. I would posit that this history of Appalachia is necessary for studying and better understanding the global political economy.<sup>8</sup> I

In early eighteenth-century America, the mountain ecosystem into the global market terms of fur markets (Dunaway 1991, 100).



a "complacent [attitude] in the further erasure of the Cherokee people as well as other indigenous people." But, beyond that, I find that Anglo-European colonization of North America is largely omitted from the story of Appalachia as told by the 2016 JAS roundtable. The forceful expulsion of indigenous peoples from their lands and livelihoods is a significant and consequential period of time to consider the power of coloniality. However, the colonization of indigenous peoples is *not the only* time period in which to consider Appalachia and the power of coloniality for understanding, theorizing, and politically engaging with "Appalachia" in the present.

If we locate Appalachia in the global political economy, then we must acknowledge that Anglo-European colonialism and industrialization has been central to the formation and positioning of Appalachia as a peripheral space. The "whole world economy," which emerged over the last four hundred years, "manifests itself in an atmosphere of inequality" (Braudel 1979, 80) and includes Appalachia as a peripheral or at best a semi-peripheral zone.

Appalachian studies has yet to grapple with the history, processes, and effects of colonial relationships, but there is good reason to do so because the resulting "new global colonial power matrix that by the late nineteenth century covered the whole planet" (Grosfoguel 2006, 172) remains anchored in Appalachia. This "coloniality of power" is composed of "an entanglement of multiple and heterogeneous hierarchies ('heterarchies') of sexual, political, epistemic, economic, spiritual, linguistic, and racial forms of domination and exploitation" (Grosfoguel 2006, 172) that are visibly at work producing "Appalachia" (among many other spaces) as a space that is marginal to world politics.

Furthermore, the (semi)peripheral position and status of Appalachia and the diverse people who settled there can be seen as intimately related to an emergent middle class during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, which simultaneously also reflects globally expansive class processes emerging from Anglo-European colonial powers. Recognition of these dynamics yields another connection: the idea of the colonial model is that the marginality of Appalachia in the past and present relates to a global entanglement of hierarchies enacted in everyday life that goes well beyond class and includes gender, sex, race, spirituality, language, and so on. Yet this logic is absent from the conversation about the colonial model, although I would posit that this history of Anglo-European colonial intervention is necessary for studying and better understanding the place of Appalachia in the global political economy.<sup>8</sup> Let me explain why.

In early eighteenth-century Appalachia, colonial traders incorporated the mountain ecosystem into the global capitalist economy particularly in terms of fur markets (Dunaway 1994, 1996). The industrialization of the

southern mountains and the formation of class politics during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, especially surrounding coal mining, timber extraction, and sawmilling occurred afterward (Eller 1982). One aspect of my own research on a small community in southwest Virginia has focused on the introduction of industrial sawmilling by a religious, moralistic, and paternalistic businessman. My focus is on the construction of more starkly unequal class relationships, a more disciplined labor force, and a labor force increasingly dependent on Fordist models of employment.<sup>9</sup> The industrialization of the mountains at the turn of the twentieth century is historically connected to the early incorporation of the mountain system into ongoing processes of producing and placing "Appalachia" within a global political economy of exploitation and inequality.<sup>10</sup> These long chains of extraction, production, distribution, and consumption that made up global capitalism during the colonial age and afterward meant that places like Yellow Creek in eastern Kentucky and the "capital intensive, resource extraction" going on there were closely connected to the "energy demands of British and American metropolises" (Gaventa 1982, 80). Appalachian Kentucky was as much a part of the global colonial economy of the Anglo-European powers as were major cities like London, New York, and Bombay, and countries like the Congo and the Philippines. These all existed in a web of connections extending across time and space, from the core cluster of cities, regions, and nation-states, to the (semi)peripheral clusters of cities, regions, and nation-states. Relatively wealthy, mobile, privileged people of enviable social status were scattered through underdeveloped peripheral zones, while core zones were populated by clusters of poor, low-status, cheap-laboring, easily exploited peoples trying to survive in increasingly austere and competitive conditions.<sup>11</sup> For students of Appalachia and particularly for the readership of popular memoirs and nonfictional accounts about Appalachia, the omission of this history of Anglo-European colonialism and its relationship to the global economy of the past and present yields superficial analysis and thin, misleading story lines that prop up degrading stereotypes about peoples who live in Appalachia.

It is also unnecessary, for placing Appalachia in the global political economy is already to have recognized Appalachia's historically enduring set of colonial relationships. And coloniality carries rhetorically persuasive power. As Fisher and Smith (2016) aptly noted about the older colonial model, it has an "enduring popularity," even if it also has some serious problems (46).

### Global Colonial Relations in/of Appalachia

In suggesting that the internal colony model is not the most useful way to define, theorize, or organize Appalachia, Fisher and Smith (2016) note

the comparative absence of key attributes similar to "colonial situations in the United States and Smith list missing attributes like "a distinct political unit," "Appalachian social and economic anticolonial ideology," and the "possibility" for the region (2016). This model is conceptualized as the presence of "Third World" sites possess. Since Appalachia, they suggest, Appalachia should be seen as a line other than the colonial model.

But perhaps a language of relationships rather than attributes, are perhaps more useful for thinking about Appalachia. For example, the relationship or set of relationships. For example, the relationship of exploitation have always been (see, for example, Memmi 1991; and significantly to Appalachia. Imagining Appalachia perhaps primarily) by Scots-Irish settlers. It sees Appalachia in a very particular way, as argued. The Scots-Irish settler narrative movement in the United States and the popular writers. This particular narrative reproduced by Vance in *Hillbilly* and slaves, former slaves, and indigenous people. X Walker, bell hooks, and the Affrilachian context other than Scots-Irish and re-popularization of the fairytale hillbilly difference elide. Further, Vance's essentialization and marginalization of Appalachia is quite white enough" because of the almost biological "hillbilly" difference. The reading audience seems to take the reveals "so many truths" (bjb 2016). The representations of Appalachia and in the form of Vance's memoir or *Some Pine*, help to discursively sustain these relationships.<sup>13</sup> A consideration of power can open doors for historical key relationships of domination and "Appalachia" in the United States.

Colonial relationships can also be seen as differences between self and other are



the comparative absence of key attributes that would situate Appalachia as similar to "colonial situations in the Third World" (48). Among others, Fisher and Smith list missing attributes like "Appalachia is not a single, distinct political unit," "Appalachian social movements do not share a common anticolonial ideology," and the colonial model lacks any clear "politics of possibility" for the region (2016, 48–49). For Fisher and Smith, colonialism is conceptualized as the presence of a combination of attributes that various "Third World" sites possess. Since Appalachia lacks these colonial attributes, they suggest, Appalachia should be defined, theorized, and organized along a line other than the colonial model (2016).

But perhaps a language of *relationships* rather than attributes is more useful for thinking about colonial power. The colonizer and colonized, rather than attributes, are perhaps more usefully thought of as a relationship or set of relationships. For example, racial relationships of domination and exploitation have always been important in studies of colonial power (see, for example, Memmi 1991; and Fanon 2008). Race also matters significantly to Appalachia. Imagining that Appalachia is populated only (or perhaps primarily) by Scots-Irish settlers is a commonplace trope that racializes Appalachia in a very particular way, as Dunaway (2008) convincingly argued. The Scots-Irish settler narrative emerged during the global eugenics movement in the United States and has since been reproduced by scholars and popular writers. This particular "mountain white" reading, such as that reproduced by Vance in *Hillbilly Elegy*, effectively obscures the voices of slaves, former slaves, and indigenous peoples living in Appalachia. Frank X Walker, bell hooks, and the Affrilachian Poets represent experiences in the Appalachian context other than Scots-Irish settlers that Vance's reiteration and re-popularization of the fairly commonplace racial stereotype of the hillbilly difference elide. Further, Vance's stereotype also contributes to the essentialization and marginalization of some "white" people who are "not quite white enough" because of dialect and class, with his assertion of an almost biological "hillbilly" difference.<sup>12</sup> This is significant because much of the reading audience seems to take Vance as an authoritative voice, one who reveals "so many truths" (bjb 2016) about Appalachia and its peoples. The representations of Appalachia and hillbillies and their reception, whether in the form of Vance's memoir or John Fox, Jr.'s, novel, *The Trail of the Lonesome Pine*, help to discursively sustain unequal and exploitative racialized relationships.<sup>13</sup> A consideration of colonial relationships or the coloniality of power can open doors for historical and contemporary research along key relationships of domination and resistance (like race) that constitute "Appalachia" in the United States and world politics.

Colonial relationships can also be thought of as those where social differences between self and other are more starkly defined and closely policed





today with continued settlement, reservations, segregation, and inequality. These events are significant and consequential colonial encounters that mark Appalachia, the United States, and world histories. The subsequent "indigenization" of European settlers and former slaves in the Appalachian Mountains, along with the resettling of the few indigenous survivors who escaped the Trail of Tears, are important parts of the historical colonial process.<sup>14</sup> Dunaway (1994, 1996) has shed considerable light on this early process, particularly in terms of the expansion of the global economy and the harnessing of indigenous labor and mountain resources. My own research has focused on the boundary between North Carolina and Virginia, particularly its survey during the eighteenth century. I argue that the survey boundary functions to erase indigenous life and representations and to simultaneously inscribe the modern sovereign state. At the same time, through William Byrd's *Histories of the Dividing Line betwixt Virginia and North Carolina* (1929/1967), I argue that the encounter between surveyors and indigenous peoples yielded the possibility (though ultimately dashed) of a common humanity.

Another iteration of the colonial project in Appalachia arguably emerged during the mid-nineteenth century and extends through the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Anglin (2016) and Fisher and Smith (2016) seem to focus primarily on this time period when they cast doubt on the usefulness of the colonial model for studying Appalachia. Anglin's and Fisher and Smith's discussions belie important assumptions about colonial processes, namely, that colonial relations end *after* a place becomes settled by Anglo-Europeans. From the perspective of dead and exiled indigenous peoples, like the Cherokee and the Catawba, the Appalachian Mountains they once inhabited remain colonized by Anglo-Europeans. In addition, when considered from the perspective of global political economy and Anglo-European state foreign policy, this time period (the nineteenth through twenty-first centuries) is commonly regarded as the height of colonial expansion *and* the height of US imperial-colonial interventions abroad in Hawaii, the Philippines, and Latin America. It is not a stretch to imagine that colonial relationships in Appalachia endured or, more precisely, were re-iterated, thereby producing a durable entanglement of unequal relationships that stretch across time and space in a matrix of colonial power.

Take one narrow stream of these ongoing relations: missionaries and missionary educators have long been seen as an integral part of the Anglo-European colonial process more broadly. For example, Christianity and missionaries were central to the British Empire during the late nineteenth century (Carey 2013). Female Christian missionaries were also key to this process of settlement across the North American plains. They were "colonists occupying the land. Unlike the missionaries sent to China,



Africa, and India, those at Bethany [Indian Mission in South Dakota] were not sojourners in a foreign land but settlers, displacing those whom they would convert and Americanize" (Bergland 2010, 168). "Home" missions (as opposed to "foreign" missions) were institutionalized by the 1880s and carried out by evangelicals of a variety of Christian denominations across the United States. As Chang (2010) highlights one notable missionary in particular, she "quickly came to see a connection between her efforts in the [American] South and Christian missions in Africa" (293). In the Appalachian context, this missionary labor was called "mountain work," and it reflected a paternalistic and Christian social reformer orientation (Messinger 2010, 242). Dozens of Christian denominations had hundreds of missionaries working in Appalachia by the early 1900s (Fraley 2011). In a chapter of his classic book *All That Is Native & Fine*, Whisnant (2009) focused on the Hindman Settlement School in eastern Kentucky. Hindman represents one case study on the colonization of the mountain South by middle-class mainline Protestant white men and women from the northeastern United States. Whisnant closely traced how class, religious connections, and discursive representations concretely shaped unequal relationships and interventions.

In my own research on the Konnarock Training School (KTS) for girls in southwestern Virginia, middle-class and educated female Lutheran missionaries from the northeastern United States were integral to implementing the colonial imperative.<sup>15</sup> Just as important to the establishment of the missionary school in Konnarock were local ministers, business owners, teachers and educational administrators, and ordinary parishioners who saw the people from the mountain community as deficient and in dire need of medical, spiritual, and economic intervention. But it is a mistake to stop there. More formal and distant institutions were involved in the missionary work, particularly the Lutheran Women's Missionary Society. These women were key to the establishment and success of the school. These missionary-teachers discursively constituted relations of inequality in publications like the *Lutheran Woman's Work* magazine, which functioned to legitimate a series of interventions into the bodies and minds of the men, women, and especially the young girls in Konnarock. In *Lutheran Woman's Work*, for example, which was circulated very widely in the United States and abroad, stories about the KTS were regularly placed alongside stories about indigenous missionary schools in Colorado and stories about foreign missionary schools in China and India. Notably, these various sites, while all very different in important ways, were also all rendered similar in their deficiencies and neediness by the Lutheran missionaries and educators. These deficiencies in turn justified a series of interventions by a host of private and public actors.<sup>16</sup>

## Toward A Matrix in/of (De)C in Appalachia(n) (Studies)

It can be useful to think about Appalachia as composed of many other varying sites in a matrix of colonial power that I highlighted at the start of this article, I highlighted the KTS as two discursive sites in this matrix of power as marginal in the national and global context. I also suggested research possibilities that would start to explore these and other sites. I point to an increasingly decolonizing approach, notes, "overtly assumes the geographic center from the perspective of marginalization in the matrix of colonial power (170). In the context of Appalachian studies, sites of political resistance, bend, and racialize Appalachia and the global colonial approach. For example, through print magazine, #queerappalachia, and artists who re-present "Appalachia" and the region in new ways. These artists are explicitly working with relations of inequality, particularly those that have been bound up with colonial power. The contrast by #queerappalachia contrast fair representation of the line, socially conservative depiction of Appalachia, portrayals of individual material conditions in global relations. Unfortunately, the representations produced by #queerappalachia, Vance's *Hillbilly Elegy*, which is a representation of inequalities that I have examined in a decolonial organization that cut across racial boundaries (like the Hillbilly Nationalists who were in Chicago to direct life for "white," "black," and "brown" people are missing from similar struggles). As Kimberly Williams aptly highlighted in her work across racial/national boundaries, the "matrix" is so elided in the present) is work that Appalachia can usefully be critiqued as if it were in/of a global context constituted by and bound up with power scattered broadly and localized a



### Toward A Matrix in/of (De)Colonial Politics in Appalachia(n) (Studies)

It can be useful to think about Appalachia as a (semi)peripheral site, composed of many other varying unequal and entangled sites, knotted in a matrix of colonial power that extends across time and space. At the start of this article, I highlighted Vance's *Hillbilly Elegy* and his readership as two discursive sites in this matrix that work to position Appalachia(ns) as marginal in the national and global imagination and political economy. I also suggested research possibilities—theoretical and empirical paths that would start to explore these and other colonial dynamics. Those possibilities point to an increasingly decolonized epistemology that, as Grosfoguel (2006) notes, "overtly assumes the geopolitics and body-politics of knowledge" from the perspective of marginalized men and women entangled in the matrix of colonial power (170). Presently, in the contexts of Appalachia and Appalachian studies, sites of political mobilization working to queer, class-bend, and racialize Appalachia and its study offer examples of a more decolonial approach. For example, through Twitter, Instagram, and an occasional print magazine, #queerappalachia brings together a combination of artists who re-present "Appalachia" and "Appalachians" in stereotype-breaking ways. These artists are explicitly working to refuse everyday entanglements with relations of inequality, particularly those relations that have historically been bound up with colonial exploitation. Representations produced by #queerappalachia contrast fairly sharply with Vance's more staid story line, socially conservative depictions of identity, and economically liberal portrayals of individual material success occurring in nonexistent national/global relations. Unfortunately, but surely expected, boundary-crossing representations produced by #queerappalachia are much less popular than Vance's *Hillbilly Elegy*, which is a relationship that arguably reflects the very inequalities that I have examined in this paper. Nonetheless, other modes of decolonial organization that cut across and challenge relations of inequality (like the Hillbilly Nationalists who joined with the Black Panthers and the Young Lords in Chicago to directly deal with pressing issues of 1960s daily life for "white," "black," and "brown" peoples living in squalid conditions) are missing from similar struggles today with Black Lives Matter—as Kimberly Williams aptly highlighted during a 2017 ASA panel.<sup>17</sup> That connection across racial/national boundaries (or, more precisely, how that connection is so elided in the present) is worth investigating. But my larger point is that Appalachia can usefully be empirically investigated, theorized, and critiqued as if it were in/of a global matrix of colonial power relations, or constituted by and bound up with a set of unequal entanglements that are scattered broadly and localized and institutionalized in everyday life.

## Notes

1. The over eleven thousand reviews and the 4.5 (on a scale of 5) rating on online bookseller Amazon are evidence of this popularity. The reviews on the audio bookseller Audible are triple that number and even more effusive in praise. On Amazon, see "Sad, but True" ([https://www.amazon.com/gp/customer-reviews/R37R3IS98MLFKZ/ref=cm\\_cr\\_arp\\_d\\_rvw\\_ttl?ie=UTF8&ASIN=0062300555](https://www.amazon.com/gp/customer-reviews/R37R3IS98MLFKZ/ref=cm_cr_arp_d_rvw_ttl?ie=UTF8&ASIN=0062300555) [accessed June 27, 2018]) and "Not Just for Hillbillies" ([https://www.amazon.com/gp/customer-reviews/R137YTUFSHSFG1/ref=cm\\_cr\\_arp\\_d\\_rvw\\_ttl?ie=UTF8&ASIN=0062300555](https://www.amazon.com/gp/customer-reviews/R137YTUFSHSFG1/ref=cm_cr_arp_d_rvw_ttl?ie=UTF8&ASIN=0062300555) [accessed June 27, 2018]) as just two examples.

2. Vance was invited to speak at the 2018 ASA conference. Some attendees protested his talk, which highlighted political differences within the conference between elements of the leadership and younger activists.

3. In attempting to account for the enduring inequalities of Appalachia compared to the broader United States and in spite of antipoverty policies, in the 1960s, the culture of poverty thesis became politically significant. See Oscar Lewis's *La Vida* (1968) as an important early example of the basic argument. Critics of the cultural of poverty argument referred to it as the "deficiency model" because it attributed responsibility for underdevelopment to the cultural deficiencies of the impoverished population. Importantly, it has also been criticized for missing political-economic-social exploitation by outside actors, which was a key factor instigating the development of the colonial model. For an example of this critique, see Helen Matthews Lewis (1978).

4. For example, relationships organized around race have been central to colonization. I discuss this point later, citing Fanon (2008) and Memmi (1991).

5. This exceptionalist rendering ignores the politics of settler colonialism.

6. Ada Smith (2016) makes a similar suggestion. Smith suggests that "Appalachian futurism" is a roadblock to recognizing the more fundamental claim to the colonial relationship made by indigenous people in the United States. My argument slightly differs. Regardless of which colonial relation is more fundamental, I argue that colonial relations are *re-iterative*.

7. There are many other prominent examples of writing that use the concept of postcolonial to think about global politics today. For example, in my own introductory-level global connections class in an international studies department, I use a text edited by Jenny Edkins and Maja Zehfuss (2013). Chapters by Manzo (2013) and Krishna (2013), for example, explicitly discuss the relevance of the concept of coloniality in the present. Manzo traces out chains of economic exploitation surrounding agricultural production of the cocoa bean in the Ivory Coast and the use of forced, unpaid labor at that site. She shows how this labor strategy is a remnant of colonial relations in the Ivory Coast and suggests the possibility of this relationship in other postcolonial contexts. Krishna suggests that psychologically and economically, "colonialism, far from being over and in the past, continues to hold us and our futures in its thrall to this day" (2013, 340).

8. Anglin's (2002) book serves as an excellent example. She expertly traces the connections between global economics and everyday life for people in western North Carolina mica factories. At the same time, Anglin avoids the concept of internal colony or coloniality.

9. A "Fordist model" represents the industrialized forms of mass production and consumption that emerged with late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century automobile production, most notably with Henry Ford.

10. Consider Anglin (2002) and Smith (2014) for analyses of inequality and liberal economics in more contemporary times.

11. I am thinking here of Galtung's (1971) structural analysis of the connections between center and periphery.

12. In reflecting on national, racial, gender, and class differences among Appalachian settlers, I also think of Inscoe (1995); Jacobson (1999); Mann (1995); Roediger (2005); Smith (2004); Turner and Cabbell (1985); and Wray (2006).

13. I am thinking of Cunningham's (*Pine*, which, he argues, is a colonial narrative).

14. In thinking about the complexity from Pearson (2013) and Pudup, Billings,

15. Whisnant (2009) originally highlighted middle-class women from the northeastern

16. Take the March 1926 edition of *Between* pages 109–11, a story entitled "On 'The India Lace Industry: No Spools This in Puerto Rico.

17. For more on this historically significant (2011). Kimberly Williams made this point hosted at Virginia Tech. She spoke on the "Justice" panel.

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13. I am thinking of Cunningham's (1990) excellent analysis of *The Trail of the Lonesome Pine*, which, he argues, is a colonial narrative.
14. In thinking about the complexity of the ongoing encounters in Appalachia, I drew from Pearson (2013) and Pudup, Billings, and Waller (1995).
15. Whisnant (2009) originally highlighted the intervention in Appalachia by educated middle-class women from the northeastern United States.
16. Take the March 1926 edition of *Lutheran Woman's Work* as an illustrative example. Between pages 109–11, a story entitled "Opening Day at Konnarock" is sandwiched between "The India Lace Industry: No Spools This Year" and a "Letter of Thanks" from missionaries in Puerto Rico.
17. For more on this historically significant political development, see Sonnie and Tracy (2011). Kimberly Williams made this point in 2017 at the annual ASA meeting, which was hosted at Virginia Tech. She spoke on the "Class Identity, White Racial Identity, and Social Justice" panel.

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