

What's Love Got to Do With It?: Reading "Black Femininity" in a Media Text

Jeanine Staples

"See?" asked the little white girl in her pretty white dress and her pretty white shoes doing pretty white curtsies, "You have to be feminine!" But my femininity is Black like me.

Staples, Personal Journal Entry, 1993

Feminism began as a political movement in which women challenged the status quo "in a world that acknowledged and valued only male experiences" (Dentith, 2002, p. 163). Feminists explore the ways that gender is used as a social construct that affects access to power and social capital (Ferree & Hess, 2000; Naples, 1998; Orleck, 1995). Feminists also expose how particular constructions organize people into categories that privilege some and not others (Davies, 1989; Lorber & Farrell, 1991; Lorber & Farrell, 1991). Feminist pedagogies support social action through critical inquiry among students and teachers. Such social action publicly challenges the assumed limitations of marginalized people by cultivating awareness of their inherent power. It ultimately leads to conscious citizenship and amendment of social injustices (Dentith, 2002). Furthermore, *Black* feminist pedagogies provide useful ways to explore how the intersections of race, class, and gender inform and influence the lives and actions of people of color (Dixon, 2003; Collins, 1990). There are multiple ways to interpret Black feminist theories; they encompass a variety of perspectives on life and experience (Barton-Calabrese, 1998; Brady, 1995; Brady & Dentith, 2001; Fisher, 2001). The work of many Black feminist pedagogues brings to light the multiple ways that race and gender influence and are influenced by African Americans and other people of the Diaspora (Luke, 1996; Nicholson, 1990, 1997; Ropers-Huilman, 1998). I argue that it is helpful to address the ways that African American women teachers understand and use the intersection of race and gender, not because these aspects of identity represent the totality of experience or identity, but rather "in response to the limited ways in which most social science research, particularly educational research, has cast them" (Dixon, 2003, p. 219). Additionally, I suggest that scholars in the fields of literacy education and teacher education should explore the ways in which race and gender work synergistically for people of color, specifically African American people (Dixon, 2003).

As an urban practitioner committed to the education of adolescents of color and the teachers who take "responsibility" for them (Dillard, 2002), I am conscientious of representations of Black womanhood in popular culture. Specifically, I am interested in the particular ways femininity is portrayed among African American characters in media texts my students might engage outside of school. While feminism forefronts the prevalence and posture of race and gender, I find that it is equally important to understand how *femininity* is storied in the public domain. This is true because conceptions of femininity are parts of the structural forces (e.g. slavery, discrimination,

segregation, economic exclusion, artistic expression, political activism) that shape women's lives. Durr & Hill (2002) explain:

Much of the scholarship on the racial status(es) and class position(s) of Black women influenced their gender identities and experiences in ways that transcended the narrow boundaries of femininity, especially notions of women as innately domestic, submissive, and dependent (p. 439).

These transcendences should be explored for the sake of young women and men in schools who are in the processes of determining their roles in human relationships and as individuated beings with agency. Femininity encompasses the gendered ways that women identify themselves as social, sexual, spiritual, and intellectual beings. The transgression of many widely accepted descriptions of femininity has enunciated experiences of Black women and informed the ways that teachers of African American adolescents might support their students' development as whole beings. Because media harbor a multitude of the identity constructs consumed by adolescents, I frequently turn my analytic eye to them as I prepare literacy instruction for my teenaged students and pre-service teachers of middle and high school students.

Examining media texts as sites of intellectual and social stimulation that affect adolescents' literacy practices (Barton & Hamilton, 2000) is prudent for 21st century educators. Adolescents are on the cusp of childhood and adulthood (Klein, et. al., 1993); they engage media not only to be entertained, but also to be informed about ways of being. Television shows, films, music videos, and Internet websites depict images of male/female relationships and construct representations of womanhood and manhood in myriad ways. So, to scholars of English literature, Social Studies, Art History, and other disciplines, wondering how students read the world and the word (Freire & Macedo, 1987) through television and film is often very provocative. It is also very sensible. According to the Federal Trade Commission (1999) 98% of Americans own or have immediate access to a television set. Ninety-seven percent own or have access to a VCR, 90% have a CD or DVD player, and 89% have either a personal computer or other video-game-capable equipment. Another recent national study reported that consuming media is a full-time job for the average adolescent because he or she spends approximately 40 hours a week doing it (Roberts, Foehr, Rideout, Broadie, 1999). These young people are not lone investors in media texts. Many teachers are also regular consumers of popular culture. From experience, we know that nearly all of the stories spun by media interplay gender, race, and sexuality. Reality shows subjectify Black women. Music videos objectify Black women. Movies often spin stories of Black womanhood into salacious, tough tales. Such tale-telling offers multiple points of entry for the adolescent reader.

When I teach adolescents I wonder what sense they make of the African American women characters they see perpetuated in media texts. I think deeply about the connections my students may discover between and among media characters and real people in their everyday lives. Such connections usually parallel students' understanding of their own respective attributes – such as race and femininity. Garner, Sterk, & Adams, (1998) state “media stories provide the symbols, myths, and resources through which we

constitute a common culture and through the appropriation of which we insert ourselves into this culture” (p. 59). My students’ cultural self-insertion depends on whatever human depictions they subscribe to or reject, and whatever ways of being they emulate or criticize. In effect, one of my responsibilities as an “inquiring practitioner” is to be proactive in my reflection of media depictions in order to support and inform my students’ reading experiences and understanding (Newman, 1991; 1992). Because media are ubiquitous storytellers that are arguably hyper-utilized by youth, understanding their representations of the attribute assigned to African American womanhood, something I call “Black femininity”, is critical.

Black Femininity

Like all social constructs, Black femininity is a contrived notion in the minds of societal participants. I understand Blackness as a social identity trait that is informed by historical, cultural, political and linguistic variation (Collins, 1990; Dyson, 1993; Mama, 1995). It cannot be isolated and narrowly defined to accommodate general ideologies. It inspires different meanings for different people and is realized in numerous ways because the spectrum of humanity is vast among African peoples of the Diaspora. Blackness is a loaded characteristic that is endowed with passions, spiritual awareness, and intellectual/emotional sensibilities acquired through familial and communal awareness. Community members, kin, and strangers assign Blackness to the individual. In turn, it is either accepted or denied, as relatively determined by the assigner and assignee. Blackness is often considered both admirable and threatening to those who are centered in American society (read: White, middle class, heterosexual males) because it contains social power that is conjured by the imagination, enacted in experience, and sustained by the documented evolution of Black people (Zinn, 1995). Femininity is an assumed quality or condition of being female; further, it is a collection of attributes that can be performed. It is ascribed to womanhood, which is a state of humanity, but it is not necessarily generic or inclusive. The construct of femininity is standardized in the U.S. by the illusion of a “reputable, sweet, white woman” and is the point of measurement by which othered women are gauged. Generally, it is typified as docile, lovely, but dispassionate, compliant, and decidedly unthreatening. Black femininity is a particular, composite way of being because it merges the puissance of Blackness with typical notions of femininity. This merger radically changes femininity. Blackness, by virtue of its dynamism, constitutes a femininity that is long acquired, wildly beautiful, critical, spiritual, and resistant. This acquisition is nurtured and constructed internally by many African American women, supported in social strata, and occasionally re-presented externally by media.

What’s Love Got to Do With It?

As an African American woman, full of the reality of Black femininity, I understand inherently the dynamics of the construction. I live inside of it and it is all around me. I have claimed Black femininity in my *self* and take pride in its nuances, variation, and social and cultural meanings. As stated above, I also look for its depiction in popular media texts. In 1993, a stirring rendition of Black femininity was portrayed in

What's Love Got to Do With It? – a film depicting the life of famed popular music icon, Tina Turner, nee Anna Mae Bullock. The film strikes me as an impressive text to read in an effort to understand media's representations of Black femininity because it chronicles the life of Ms. Turner from childhood to middle adulthood. It encompasses a full spectrum of lifelong experiences – which are necessary to construct Black femininity. The film, starring Angela Bassett as Tina Turner and Laurence Fishburne as Ike Turner, begins with a pivotal moment in the life of young Anna Mae. As a five-year-old girl, Anna is full of confidence, verve, and excitement in rural Nutbush, Tennessee. She sings *This Little Light of Mine* in her church choir, visibly pleased with the strength of her voice and touched by the determination of the song:

*This little light of mine,
I'm gonna let it shine.
This little light of mine,
I'm gonna let it shine.
Everywhere I go,
I'm gonna let it shine...let it shine...let it shine...let it shine!*

Unfortunately, the strength in her voice obviously disturbs the choir director, who scolds her and eventually drags her by the ear and banishes her from the sanctuary. While I watched these scenes I found it ironic that little Anna was rejected from a refuge just as she discovered the impact and moving presence of her own sound.

Later, Anna makes her way home along a winding, dusty country road. As she approaches her home she witnesses her mother and older sister carrying suitcases and running from the house toward a waiting automobile. Anna's grandmother stands on the porch begging the mother to stay. Undeterred, the mother and sister speed off after beseeching the grandmother to "take care of Anna Mae." Anna runs to the house and surveys a haphazard, upturned living room and kitchen. In addition to being ostracized from church, she realizes that she has been abandoned and suffers feelings of terrible insecurity. However, her grandmother is benevolent; she cares for Anna Mae until her death some ten years later. Upon hearing news of the old woman's demise, Anna Mae's mother sends for her and the young girl arrives in St. Louis as a thriving adolescent. While settling into her new life in the big city, Anna Mae is resigned to the monitoring of her sister Alline, a stylish bartender, who works as in a local nightclub. At the club, Ike Turner, the star act and resident philanderer, is affected by the power of Anna's voice. He seduces her and convinces her to sing in his band. Over the next 25 years, Anna Mae Bullock becomes Tina Turner. As she develops into womanhood Ike abuses her painfully. He belittles her with demeaning epithets, intimidation, physical torture, rape, and emotional blackmail. Ike knows that Anna will not leave him because she fears transformation into the type of person who has hurt her most, the type she despises: a deserter. Realizing that Anna Mae's childhood trauma revolved around rejection and abandonment, Ike reifies himself as a victim of neglect and loneliness in a ploy to control her.

Despite her circumstances Anna Mae Bullock continued to sing as Tina Turner. As Tina, Anna fulfilled her heart's desire by using her voice and cultivating songs. On stage, as a powerful performer, she was not the victim, rather, she was the victor. Regardless of her physical bruises and wounded pride she developed, over time, into a aggressive entertainer who won the hearts of millions. This portrayal mimics the lives of many African American women I know. Amid awesome societal pressures induced by racism, sexism, and maltreatment, numerous African American women manage to maintain incredible successes as mothers, friends, sisters, daughters, and professionals. This success is often due to spirituality – a cultural anchor of Black femininity that so many African American women subscribe to. Recognition of the Higher Power and submission to the Love and Peace that can exist in our hearts and minds according to our own beliefs, choices, and subsequent actions, empowers many African American women as they construct their femininity. Over thousands of years, spiritual beliefs have been shown to influence African women's understandings of forgiveness, liberation, hope, justice, salvation, the meaning and purpose of life, and responses to oppression (Dillard, 2002; Cone, 1997; Mattis, 1997; Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990).

Tina Turner found her spiritual footing in *What's Love Got to Do With It?* after a bout with Ike that landed her in the hospital for an extended stay. She turned to prayer and meditation and began to recognize a source of Power that was beyond her yet had the capacity to work through her. Tina's decision to access that Power and meld it with the substance of her Blackness nurtured the development of her femininity. It evolved over time and was constructed in response to years of inquiry into herself and a quest for peace beyond what she could conceive in her immediate situation. She used what gifts she had, her voice and her determination, and embodied Black femininity where she was. Then, she broke free. At the end of the film, Tina Turner outflanked Ike Turner by eschewing his ploy to control her heart and mind, and reconfiguring her worst nightmare. Instead of seeing herself as a deserter, she saw herself as a survivor and advanced to a critical and resistant stance in personhood. She took command of her body, her mind, and her career and purged herself of outward domination and coercion. She left Ike Turner, continued to entertain and enjoyed the best years of her career as a middle-aged woman. Her Black femininity reached its pinnacle after years of struggle. Her womanhood was not inscribed with a femininity rooted in the pristine, soft, agreeable one endorsed by the mainstream. Hers emerged slowly and was stamped with pain, defiance, deep analysis, and spiritual attunement.

The idea that "Love" had anything to do with the depiction of Black femininity in Tina Turner's character representation is important. The title of the film was taken from a hit song recorded by Tina Turner in the mid-1980s. The question "what's love got to do with it?" is ironic given the main character's tumultuous life course. Yet it is worthy of inquiry. In my initial reading of the film, I considered the question figuratively. I watched the movie and read the scenes and representations of personhood. I thought of the absence of Love, and understood the film as a sardonic text. In a second read, I considered the literal impact of the question and actively searched for the spiritual component of Tina Turner's journey, using the film's title as an essential question (Lambert & McCombs, 1998). By drawing in the character's journey of internal struggle

– which manifested as a spiritual affront to emotional destruction – and outward triumph – which manifested as the acquisition of physical strength and intellectual rebellion – I learned that Ms. Turner’s Black femininity was full of Love. Her femininity was cut into her muscular frame and resounded in her rich alto inflections. It was attractive and ripe with its own spiritual, intellectual, physical, and sexual potency. It was depicted as solidified, not soft. It was thick with joy, assertion and revolution, not thin with niceties and false complacencies. It was self-contained and self-reliant by virtue of her personal choice to submit to a Higher Authority and, in so doing, released her inner power on her own terms.

These images and their messages are cogent. They push me to consider the conditions that support Black femininity. I teach African American adolescent girls and boys. I care for them all equally and deeply respect their gendered contributions to our work and classroom dynamics. I do not wish to unwittingly condone gender stratification through my reading experience and consequential facilitation of inquiry. As I engage in the work of reading media texts I caution myself to reflect critically on an underlying inference that Black femininity might somehow be dependent on harassment and tribulation, or unwittingly indicate that perpetrators have power over women and the development of Black femininity. While I consider my own femininity to be intimately connected with the tenderness of struggle, this connection does not empower adversaries or strife. Instead, I read Black femininity in this text and in my life as something that is emergent, resulting, and effectual – a kind of response to life’s work. I understand intuitively and experientially that it is not incited or designated by the agitator or oppressor, or manufactured by him (or her). Rather, it is assembled and organized according to the determination of the girl-to-woman human being who cultivates her self and her world. The work of the girl-to-woman human being points to the influence Love has on Black femininity (Staples, in preparation). Black femininity is designed within the individual with respect to the Power that ultimately loves, is joyful, peaceful, strong, undivided, faithful, temperate, and longsuffering. It is then commingled with the world’s harsh reality, melding a distinctive feature of womanhood that should not be underestimated.

Practitioner Inquiry and Literacy Education

Considering Black femininity is one way to spark various reading experiences, critical inquiry, and literacy practices among adolescents. My research shows that students co-orchestrate rigorous intellectual work with communities of peers when they engage media texts in out-of-school contexts. Students practice literacy, that is, they discover ways to interpret, manipulate, and utilize ideas, words, representations, images, and stories they encounter, when reading media. When teachers use different kinds of texts in the classroom the methods used to engage them are crucial. For instance, when reading *What’s Love Got to Do With It?* with my students, I might consider the story’s construction of Black femininity and assist them in developing their own ideas of what it means to be a feminine African American woman. This assistance most constructively emerges in relationship to other texts like printed articles from popular periodicals, excerpts from textbooks, written vignettes, poetry from well-known and obscure authors,

and my own personal reflections. Invitations to construct deep talk, write responsively, and collaborate in a community are necessary for this type of complex literacy development (Staples, in preparation).

Such teaching/learning environments are necessary for both struggling and adept readers because studies show that learning to decode print is intimately tied to learning to think critically (Barton & Hamilton, 2000; Barton & Hamilton, 1998; Newman, 1991; Newman, 1992). Reading intricate representations of personhood is one way that pre-service and in-service teachers can initiate a diversity of reading experiences and literacy practices among adolescents. These sustained inquires possess multiple opportunities to scaffold perceptions and awarenesses among all teaching/learning participants. These opportunities become apparent through the web of interactions that take place between and among students, texts, and teachers in literate rich communities. The opportunities become viable when couched in ongoing questions about race and gender. They are positioned to affect change in the ways adolescents use texts, negotiate literacy, and consider their own personhood. Constructing and maintaining such teaching/learning spaces – ones that support inquiry and complex literacy development – is imperative. Raphael, Florio-Ruane, Kehus, George, Hasty, and Highfield (2000) are members of the Michigan Teachers Learning Collaborative (TLC). They are a feminist group of teachers and university-based teacher educators who recognize the value of practitioner inquiry and literacy education, particularly for “readers who may conceivably go through school never engaging challenging texts that require higher order thinking and interpretation skills or enjoy the chances to talk with peers about such materials and the ideas they contain” (p. 1). Under such conditions, classrooms where reading should happen and literacies should flourish, become stratified, stagnant, and dangerously predictable. Such settings make it difficult, if not impossible, “for readers to join in or for the teacher to create a functioning community of learners” (p. 1). Rather, students’ literacies should be supported and developed in several ways. Raphael et. al. suggest that professional development should foster teachers who:

- Make sure all students have decoding skills sufficient to read independently.
- Help students read materials that are at their instructional level.
- Make sure students learn to think as readers and writers.
- Have access to age-appropriate materials that challenge student thinking and foster thoughtful talk and writing about text. (Raphael, Florio-Ruane, Kehus, George, Hasty, & Highfield, 2000)

I submit that an inquiring practitioner committed to Black feminist pedagogies should add to this list of tasks and incorporate social and political consciousness into reading experiences that take place in and outside of schools. In such a framework, students’ literacies would be pushed and challenged in several ways. Teachers concerned about students’ awareness of race and gender should:

- Introduce questions that provoke deep thought about controversial, taken-for-granted social constructs.
- Connect pertinent local and world events with students’ reading experiences.

- Connect popular culture with students' reading experiences.
- Co-construct reading and writing activities that allow student agency and curriculum direction (encouraging individuated senses of ownership, creativity and critical analysis).
- Discuss and demonstrate multiple lenses when reading texts.
- Encourage discussion and storytelling (with respect to culturally responsive praxis).
- Encourage responsive writing.
- Encourage personal reflection.
- Model personal reflection.
- Co-construct reading and writing workshops that challenge students' skills and intellectual abilities by incorporating multiple texts' representations of personhood. (Staples, in preparation)

Reading Black femininity in *What's Love Got to Do With It?* is an exercise of practitioner inquiry within a Black feminist pedagogical framework. By critically considering representations of personhood within a media text my students might engage outside of school and considering ways it might be interrogated inside of school, I inform my own teaching/learning ideals and nurture the scholarship of my practice. Wondering about the nature of femininity as it is redefined by Blackness in one woman's story helps to broaden the terrain that my African American urban adolescents, both boys and girls, navigate as they determine the definitive nature of their own personhood. Pawelczyk (2003) argues that "individuals negotiate identity by negotiating their participation in multiple communities of practice" (p. 416). As an African American woman teacher I understand the intersections of race and gender in my own person and know the value of developing communities of practice to explore them. These aspects of identity are transgressive and not subject to mainstream dynamics. Black femininity is storied in *What's Love Got to Do With It?* as a synergistic aspect of identity that develops over time and is distinct from traditional conceptions of femininity. The depiction is helpful because it demonstrates the complexity of some African American women's experiences in the development of the self. As an inquiring practitioner, I plan to re-read this text and this aspect of gender with my students and see the world and the word through their eyes. My students' reading experiences will undoubtedly inform my own professional development for years to come, and conversely, they will spark the cycle of intercommunication necessary for full literate lives.

Jeanine M. Staples is an adjunct professor of reading and writing at Philadelphia University and an Ed.D. candidate in Reading/Writing/Literacy at the University of Pennsylvania. She received her bachelor's degree in English from Howard University in Washington, D.C. (1998) and a Master's degree in Teaching and Curriculum from Harvard University in Cambridge, M.A. (1999). She holds certificates in English education for grades 9-12 (granted by the state of Massachusetts) and urban studies (granted by the University of Pennsylvania). She has extensive experience working with at-risk readers of all ages, in addition to pre-service and in-service teachers of urban school districts. As an inquiring practitioner with a critical research agenda, Jeanine's scholarship is vested in uncovering and utilizing the relationships that exist between

literacies, media, adolescence, and teacher education. Using frameworks indigenous to African American theorists and practitioners, she examines the ways urban youth of color use and develop literacy over time and the ways their teachers support and facilitate their work. Jeanine writes about her students' literacies and her own professional development as a teacher/scholar in "What's possible: African American urban adolescents as engaged readers" and "With spirit and with truth: African American women in the academy"- chapters in two forthcoming edited volumes. For questions or discussion please email jeaninestaples@hotmail.com.

References

- Barton-Calabrese, A. (1998). *Feminist science education*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Barton, D. (1991). The social nature of writing. In D. Barton & R. Ivanic (Eds.), *Writing in the community* (pp. 1-13). London: Sage.
- Barton, D. (1994). *Literacy: An introduction to the ecology of the written language*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Barton, D., & Hamilton, M. (1998). *Local literacies: Reading and writing in one community*. New York: Routledge.
- Barton, D., & Hamilton, M. (2000). Literacy practices. In D. Barton, M. Hamilton & R. Ivanic (Eds.), *Situated literacies: reading and writing in context* (pp. 7-16). New York: Routledge.
- Baynham, M. (1995). *Literacy practices: Investigating literacy in social contexts*. London: Longman.
- Brady, J. (1995). *Schooling young children: A feminist pedagogy for liberatory learning*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Brady, J. & Dentith, A. (2001). Critical voyages: Postmodern feminist pedagogies as liberatory practice. *Teaching Education*, 12(2), 163-174.
- Collins, P. (1990). *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment*. London: Routledge.
- Committee on Public Education. (2001). Sexuality, contraception, and the media. *Pediatrics*, 107(1), 191-194.
- Comstock, G. A., & Scharrer, E. (1999). *Television: What's on, who's watching, and what it means*. San Diego, CA: Academic Press.
- Cone, J. (1997). *God of the oppressed*. New York: Orbis Books.
- Davies, B. (1989). *Frogs, snails and feminist tales*. St. Leonards, Australia: Allen & Unwin.
- Dentith, A. (2002). Using Feminist theory in teacher education. *Electronic Magazine of Multicultural Education*, 4(2).
<http://www.eastern.edu/publications/emme/2002fall/dentith.html>. (accessed 2004, December, 26).
- Dillard, C. (2002). Walking ourselves back home: The education of teachers with/in the world. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 53(5). 383-392.
- Dixon, A. (2003). "Let's Do This!" Black women teachers' politics and pedagogy. *Urban Education*, 38(2). 217-235.
- Durr, M. & Hill, S. (August 2002). Guest editor's introduction special issue on African

- American women: Gender relations, work, and the political economy in the twenty-first century. *Gender and Society*, 16(4). 438-441.
- Dyson, M. (1993). *Reflecting black: African American cultural criticism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Federal Trade Commission (1999, September 9). Self-regulation in the alcohol industry: A review of industry efforts to avoid promoting alcohol to underage consumers. <http://www.ftc.gov>. (Accessed 2005, January 2.)
- Feree, M. M. & Hess, B. B. (2000). *Controversy and coalition: The new feminist movement across four decades of change* (3rd ed). New York: Routledge.
- Fine, M. & MacPherson, P. (1994). Over dinner: Feminism and adolescent female bodies. In L. Radtke & H. Stam (Eds.), *Power/gender: Social relations in theory and practice* (pp.286-302). London: Sage.
- Fisher, B. M. (2001). *No angel in the classroom: Teaching through feminist discourse*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Freire, P., & Macedo, D. (1987). *Literacy: Reading the word and the world*. Westport, CN: Bergin & Garvey.
- Garner, A., Sterk, H.M., & Adams, S. (1998). Narrative analysis of sexual etiquette and teenage magazines. *Journal of Communication*, 48(4), 59-78.
- Hall, S. (1992). The question of cultural identity. In S. Hall, D. Held, & T. McGrew (Eds.). *Modernity and its futures: Understanding modern societies* (pp. 77-101). Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Hall, S. (1996). Who needs identity? In S. Hall & P. Dugay (Eds.), *Questions of cultural identity* (pp. 1-17). London: Sage.
- Hall, S. (2000). Conclusion: the multicultural question. In B. Hesse (Ed.), *Un/settled multiculturalisms: Diasporas, entanglements, transruptions* (pp. 32-56). London: Zed Books.
- Hollows, J. (2000). *Feminism, femininity and popular culture*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- hooks, b. (1991). *Yearning: Race, gender and cultural politics*. London: Turnaround.
- hooks, b. (1994). *Outlaw culture: Resisting representations*. London: Routledge.
- Klein J.D., Brown J.D., Childers K.W., Oliveri J., Porter C., & Dykers, C. (1993) Adolescents' risky behavior and mass media use. *Pediatrics*, 92(1), 24-31.
- Lambert, N.M., & McCombs, B.L. (Eds.). (1998). *How students learn: Reforming schools through learner-centered instruction*. Washington: American Psychological Association.
- Lincoln, C., & Mamiya, L. (1990). *The Black church in the African American experience*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Lorber, J. & Farrell, S. A. (1991). (Eds.). *The social construction of gender*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Luke, C. (1996). Introduction. In C. Luke (Ed.), *Feminisms and pedagogies of everyday life* (pp. 1-27). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- MacAnghalil, M. (1995). *The making of men: Masculinities, sexualities, and schooling*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Mama, A. (1995). *Beyond the masks: Race, gender, and subjectivity*. London: Routledge.
- Mattis, J. (1997). Spirituality and religiosity in the lives of African American women.

- African American Research Perspectives, Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, 3(2), 56-60.*
- Mirza, H. (1992). *Young, female, and black*. London: Routledge.
- Naples, N. (1998). Introduction. In N. Naples (Ed.), *Community activism and feminist politics: Organizing across race, class, and gender* (pp.1-27). New York: Routledge.
- Nicholson, L. (1990). (Ed.). *Feminism/Postmodernism*. New York: Routledge.
- Nicholson, L. (1997). Introduction. In L. Nicholson (Ed.), *The second wave: A reader in feminist theory* (pp. 1-5). New York: Routledge.
- Newman, Judith M. (1991). *Interwoven conversations: Learning and teaching through critical reflection*. Toronto: OISE Press.
- Newman, Judith M. (1992). Practice-as-inquiry: Teachers reflecting critically. *English Quarterly, 24* (1), 1.
- Orleck, A. (1995). *Common sense and a little fire: Women and working-class politics in the United States, 1900-1965*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press.
- Pawelczyk, J. (2003). Redefining femininity: Call and response as gendered features in African-American discourse. *Multilingua, 22*(4). 415-437.
- Purville, C. (1994). Spirit of remembrance: Conflicting theories in the changing vocabulary of Blackness. *Cultural Studies, 3*(2), 205–217.
- Raphael, T.E., Florio-Ruane, S., Kehus, M., George, M.A., Hasty, N., & Highfield, K. (2000). Thinking for ourselves: Literacy learning in a diverse teacher inquiry network. *The Reading Teacher*. Article is based on the Research Awards Address presented at the annual meeting of the International Reading Association, May 2, 2000, Indianapolis, IN.
<http://www.ciera.org/library/archive/200007/artonline0007.html#commonground>
Accessed 2004, December 27.
- Reynolds, T. (1997). (Mis)representing the black (super)woman. In H. Mirza (Ed.), *Black British feminism: A reader* (pp. 88-101). London: Routledge.
- Roberts, D.F., Foehr, U.G., Rideout, V.J., Brodie, M. (1999, November). *Kids and media at the new millennium*. Kaiser Family Foundation: Menlo Park, CA.
- Ropers-Huilman, B. (1998). *Feminist teaching in theory and practice: Situating power and knowledge in the post-structural classrooms*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Rutherford, J. (1990). A place called home: identity and the cultural politics of difference. In J. Rutherford (Ed.), *Identity: community, culture, difference* (pp. 198-227). London: Lawrence & Wishart.
- Staples, J.M. (in preparation). *What's possible: African American urban adolescents as engaged readers*. In *Media learning and sites of possibility*. L. Vasudevan & M. Hill. New York: Routledge Press.
- Staples, J.M. (in preparation). *With spirit and with truth: African American women in the academy*. In *New dilemmas of the Black intellectual*. M. Hill & G. Seaton. New York: Routledge Press.
- Zinn, H. (1995). *A people's history of the United States*. Revised edition. New York: Harper Perennial.

