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The Evolution of Feminine Loyalty Trends in Twentieth and Twenty-first Century Appalachian
Literature

A thesis
presented to
the faculty of the Department of English
East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Masters of Arts in English

by
Candace J. Daniel
August 2008

Dr. Mark Holland, Chair
Dr. Theresa Lloyd
Dr. Ronald Giles

Keywords: loyalty, identity, Appalachian literature, Appalachia, family, husband

ABSTRACT

The Evolution of Feminine Loyalty Trends in Twentieth and Twenty-first Century Appalachian Literature

by

Candace J. Daniel

Loyalty to the self, family, and husband create interesting tensions for feminine characters in Appalachian literature. Traditional views of loyalty dictate that the Appalachian woman chooses to be loyal to her husband and family while abandoning her self loyalty. Appalachian women writers define the terms of loyalty and the conflicts these three levels create. Furthermore, studying a progression of novels from 1926 to the present shows that feminine loyalty trends have changed. This argument focuses on examining loyalty trends of feminine Appalachian characters, studying the contentions among those loyalties, specifically showing how loyalty patterns have changed in literature, and offering speculation on why these loyalty patterns have changed progressively in Appalachian literature. The study includes five Appalachian novels: The Time of Man by Elizabeth Madox Roberts, The Dollmaker by Harriette Arnow, Storming Heaven by Denise Giardina, Prodigal Summer by Barbara Kingsolver, and The Midwife's Tale by Gretchen Morgan Laskas.

DEDICATION

For Brenda, Pamela, Cledia, Claudine, Suzie, and Maggie, Appalachian women who defied tradition in their own ways.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In Appalachian literature, loyalty encompasses spouse, family, children, friends, and community. Nineteenth century Appalachian females are self-sacrificing for the good of their families, consistently abandoning their own desires and ambitions. Loyalty to the people around them takes precedence over loyalty to themselves. This nineteenth century character trait reflects the cult of domesticity ideology. Interestingly, because of the cult of domesticity, the idea of loyalty to the self is often absent in early versions of these courageous characters, yet it becomes a motivating force for later characters. The twentieth century, in literature, marked a dramatic change for both women writers and their literary characters. Elizabeth Ammons explains that a “large consequence of grouping turn-of-the-century women writers is the creation of new perspectives on what we believe is already firmly established” (viii). The new century began to bring women’s writing outside of the cult of domesticity. Martha J. Cutter explains, “it was not until the beginning of the twentieth century, when the New Woman emerged fully onto the scene of American culture, that the domestic voice was finally laid to rest” (14). Furthermore, this change in ideology is represented in literature. Twentieth century Appalachian characters battle with definitions of loyalty to themselves, husbands, and families, whereas under the cult of domesticity, these loyalties were clearly defined. Cutter notes that one characteristic of New Women is that they “insisted on independent identities” (19). The development of an independent identity for women is represented in Appalachian literature. This study examines three types of loyalty for female Appalachian characters: self, husband, and family. The study views characters as the novels were chronologically published to show the changes in female loyalty through the twentieth and into the twenty-first century.

Initially, some Appalachian women are loyal to themselves. Self loyalty can be defined as choosing to do what the self feels is right or wants to do in any given situation. Moreover, self loyalty is a reflection of identity; however, defining the term identity is complicated. Norman N. Holland says that identity is “the whole pattern of sameness within change which is a human life....That is, I am constantly changing but, no matter how much I change, there remains a continuing me who is the style that permeates all those changes and whom I understand as that which remains constant despite all the changes” (452). Obviously, loyalty to the self is part of identity. As Holland points out, part of identity is an element that “remains constant despite all...changes” (452). As the women in this study discover their identity or their “pattern[s] of sameness[,]” they also discover the extent of their loyalty to that identity (452). They create and discover their identities long before they marry or have children. For example, Ellen in The Time of Man comes to a greater understanding of her identity as she blooms into womanhood. Her loveliness is a source of strength for her during difficult times because, as Holland points out, her beauty is the element that “remains constant despite all the changes” of her life (452). Her beauty becomes a part of her identity because it comes to mean a great deal to her. She develops this identity before she marries but loses it soon after she begins to have many children.

Beyond identity, self loyalty is also tied to personal desires. These desires can include anything from land to helping people. The extent these female characters pursue their personal desires defines their self loyalty. When they give up trying to attain their personal desires, they may seem to betray their self loyalty. However, another element of this type of loyalty is selflessness. For many women in this study, their loyalty to the self is at least partly defined by how they can help the community around them. Elizabeth in The Midwife’s Tale learns that

being a midwife and helping people is part of her identity. Likewise, Carrie in Storming Heaven defines her identity through helping the miners as they struggle for unionization. So, for many characters, loyalty to the self is intricately related to the community and how they can help others. They define themselves through their surroundings. Nancy Carol Joyner notes that “the desire to succeed within the group and the desire to succeed without it are tandem elements of the identity search for women” (718). Clearly, the community has potential to affect the creation of self for these women, and for some of them, community plays an imperative role in their identity.

A second loyalty for these women is rooted in their dedication to their children. For nineteenth-century Appalachian female characters, loyalty to family is defined by the woman’s ability to be self sacrificing for the good of the family. This form of loyalty is steeped in traditional culture. Danny Miller points out that a “dedication to her family’s well being is a . . . characteristic of the mountain woman in literature” (Wingless Flights 10). Traditionally viewed, the Appalachian woman does any and everything for her family. Her loyalty to her children is never questioned. Miller points out that the Appalachian woman “constantly sacrifices for them, and her sacrifices are great” (Wingless Flights 10). Clearly, a dedication to the family is important in nineteenth-century Appalachian literature. Dedication to the family is often viewed as the strongest form of loyalty for these women. Sidney Saylor Farr notes that “[s]ometimes mountain women will go against their husbands [sic] wishes, especially if it concerns their children” (13). For example, Gertie in The Dollmaker betrays Clovis by buying the Tipton Place partly because she feels that owning land would better allow her to take care of her children. Yet, as this study will show, twentieth-century portrayals of loyalty to children is not always a role taken without question. Women in this study attempt to be loyal to their children; however, this

loyalty may clash and create contentions with their loyalty to the self. For example, some women in this study, such as Ellen, will have problems remaining loyal to their created identity after having children. Ellen abandons the self as she continuously bears children.

Independent identity for mothers is a subject of much debate in feminist criticism. Early twentieth century portrayals of motherhood, such as Ellen, illuminate the act of mothering as a loss of identity. However, later twenty-first century portrayals of mothering, such as Meribeth and Elizabeth in The Midwife's Tale, show a very delicate and sacred bond between mother and child. Some may argue that ideas of motherhood changed as women gained the ability to choose whether and when to have children. For example, early twentieth-century Appalachian author Emma Bell Miles wrote in her journal:

I have tried every way I can think of to escape what is coming, but for some reason the usual methods failed....It drives me wild to remember how, from the time Joe was born, I have begged Frank not to lay this burden on my sick body, and overworked hands; and how at each of the two births and three miscarriages since then I have tried to make him understand that it is bound to kill me sooner or later (qtd. in Engelhardt, The Tangled Roots 23).

The lack of choice to be a mother is one reason why nineteenth and early twentieth century portrayals of motherhood have this negative connotation. Yet, Elizabeth Ammons discusses the New Woman as an artist in turn-of-the-century American literature: “[n]or did they [turn of the century female authors] feel beholden to bear and raise children as their life’s work; motherhood for the majority of them represented a choice, and it was a choice generally rejected” (emphasis added 9). Motherhood obviously was not an option for Emma Bell Miles, and Ammons’s statement about women choosing not to bear children when given the option points to a

traditional late nineteenth and early twentieth century view of motherhood as an oppressive force.

However, modern views of motherhood make a very important distinction that explains the change in viewpoints for later Appalachian literary characters. Adrienne Rich's feminist work Of Woman Born explains motherhood as having two distinctions. She says, "[t]hroughout this book I try to distinguish between two meanings of motherhood, one superimposed on the other: the *potential relationship* of any woman to her powers of reproduction and to children; and the *institution*, which aims at ensuring that that potential-- and all women-- shall remain under male control" (13). Nineteenth and early twentieth century rejections of motherhood embody the institution, which is to say the ideal of motherhood. Fiona Joy Green explains the ideal mother through her "'innate' ability to parent and her 'unconditional love' for her husband and children, the idealized mother selflessly adopts their wants, needs, and happiness as her own" (127). Through this adoption of her family's desires, the ideal mother loses her own identity. This institution that promotes self sacrifice in motherhood combined with the lack of choice for nineteenth century and early twentieth century mothers explains the negative portrayal of motherhood for characters like Ellen in The Time of Man.

Yet, Rich points to another view of maternity, one that encompasses the "potential relationship" between mother and child (13). Green explains this bond: "I revel in the personal connection and relationship I have with my son. This unique relationship, one that I have yet to share with another person, offers moments when I experience my full potential as a human being" (126). Motherhood defined in these terms does not have connotations of suppressing female identity. In fact, this type of motherhood is often portrayed as an extension of identity, part of an overall fulfillment that women gain from being mothers. Elizabeth in The Midwife's

Tale upholds this view of motherhood. Clearly, motherhood and identity are portrayed in very different ways. However, defining motherhood for each of the mothers in this study explains why they view being a mother in either limiting or liberating terms.

A third aspect of nineteenth century feminine Appalachian loyalty is a dedication to the husband. Appalachian women are traditionally portrayed as being fiercely loyal to their husbands. Parks Lanier notes that the family “is patriarchal; no woman would dare usurp the authority of the husband and father” (373). Perhaps this loyalty to their husband can be partly explained because of the patriarchal society. Citing John C. Campbell, Miller notes that “[t]he mountain woman knew no other way of life than subservient drudge... because the traditional masculine and feminine roles were instilled in mountain children from infancy” (Wingless Flights 25). As Miller notes in his study of this loyalty trend, women are loyal to their husbands because the characteristic is instilled from birth. Being part of the nineteenth century patriarchal society partly explains why women are fiercely loyal to their husbands. Sidney Farr notes that “as women in other parts of the country were beginning to realize various degrees of personal freedom, the mountain woman was accepted not as an individual, but as a mere extension of the man in her life” (11). According to Farr, loyalty to the husband is the largest obstacle in women’s realization of “personal freedom” (11). Likewise, loyalty to the husband creates the greatest contention in twentieth century literature because women also seek to be loyal to themselves. Again and again in this study, women must choose between their self loyalty and loyalty to their husbands. As Miller notes, tradition dictates that women should be loyal to their husbands above all else. Early twentieth century examples of loyalty prove this to be true. Ellen in The Time of Man and Gertie in The Dollmaker both choose their loyalties to the husband over their self loyalties.

Mid-twentieth to twenty-first century novels prove that this loyalty choice is no longer necessarily made in favor of the husband. For example, Carrie in Storming Heaven, Elizabeth in The Midwife's Tale, as well as Deanna and Lusa in Prodigal Summer are not unquestionably loyal to the men in their lives. As this study will prove, loyalty to the husband begins to change in the 1980s. The causes for this change in loyalty stem from the feminist movement. The New Woman in turn-of-the-century America begins to challenge traditional nineteenth-century ideologies. Cutter explains, “[t]he New Woman broke with the domestic realm by asserting a self-defined identity and a right to sexual freedom” (24). Embodied in the sexual freedom Cutter discusses is the choice of who, when, and whether or not to marry. Ammons sums up that many female American turn-of-the-century writers “did not feel bound to marry or, if they did marry, to stay in the relationship when it proved self-destructive, as it did for most of them” (9). Clearly the early twentieth century concept of the New Woman is an important point to the changing loyalties of women. As women began to abandon the domestic sphere, they promoted their own identities. In Appalachia literature, however, this change is difficult to map, and Barbara E. Smith explains why:

[f]ashioned from Adam's rib, 'mountain women' are secondary, entirely compatible with the 'mountain men' from whom they are derived. Female agency (other than active support for her mountain community or her mountaineer), sexism, gender trouble—all the basic stuff of women's history are literally inconceivable (“Beyond the Mountains” 1).

Smith's argument is that women are largely absent from Appalachian history. Elizabeth S.D. Engelhardt points out that “[r]ather than investigating the diversity of actual women's lives in Appalachia, too often we have constrained our scholarship in ways similar to the football game,

implicitly allowing stereotypes to describe the terms of the field” (Beyond Hill and Hollow 4). The major problem of mapping the change from domesticity to liberation for Appalachian women is the lack of scholarly study aimed at the mountain woman. Their position as domestic keepers of the hearth, for many years in research, was an accepted and never questioned aspect of Appalachian life. However, the feminist movement played an imperative role by putting women’s issues on the center stage of research. Smith says, “[f]aced with the remarkable feat of more than half the population’s [women’s] erasure from history, few scholars have begun to sketch the outlines of Appalachian women’s experiences and activities” (“Walk-Ons” 6). More recent scholars have shed the traditional portrayal of Appalachian women and sought to define women’s position in the family and economy through research. Mary Anglin discusses the role of women in their families and how the economy changed these roles since the 1960s:

woman are entering the labor force in increasing numbers while their husbands are not necessarily formally employed, often working odd jobs so that they can devote the majority of their time to farming. My speculation is that this state of affairs has offset some of the power traditionally vested in the male heads of households (112).

This research proves that traditional ideologies of home and family in Appalachia have changed. Appalachian literature reflects this change through modern female characters that do not follow traditional roles associated with home and family. In summation, the break from a traditional domestic society is perhaps the major cause of women’s changing loyalty to their husbands. The feminist movement, beginning around the 1960s, also played an imperative role in bringing women to the center stage of study. The movement created a generation of women who voice their concerns and reflect the changing society through literature.

Loyalty to the self, family, and husband create interesting contentions for female characters in Appalachian literature. Traditional nineteenth century views of loyalty dictate that the Appalachian woman chooses to be loyal to her husband and family and abandon her self loyalty. In connection to these traditional views of loyalty, Appalachian women writers try to define the terms of loyalty and the conflicts these three levels create. Furthermore, studying a progression of novels from 1926 to the present shows that feminine loyalty trends have changed throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. This argument focuses on examining loyalty trends of female Appalachian characters, studying the contentions among those loyalties, and specifically showing how loyalty patterns have changed in literature. The conclusion will offer further speculation on why these loyalty patterns have changed progressively in Appalachian literature.

This study of feminine loyalty trends is specifically limited to novels by female authors. Male authors portray feminine loyalty in different ways, and viewing the differences in loyalty portrayal according to the author's gender is a study all to itself. Tanya Mitchell notes of female Appalachian writers that

due to their gender roles and thus their minority perspective in a patriarchal society, they write from the inside as well as from the outside....While they write against oppressive regional traditions, on the one hand, they at the same time represent and portray the social experience with regional culture that points towards a new regional identity (418).

Many female authors can portray the experience of being part of a patriarchal society. Through portraying that experience, as Mitchell notes, they point toward a new type of "regional identity" (418). This new type of identity is one that encompasses loyalty to the self. By writing as members of that society, they portray the changing traditional values of loyalty to the family and

husband while showing the contentions that accompany those loyalty choices. Furthermore, the progression of novels proves Mitchell's idea of creating new regional attitudes because women begin to question their loyalty choices and even choose to be loyal to themselves over their families or husbands as the twentieth century progresses

The choice of novels used in this study shows a development of changing loyalty trends. In some way, each novel is a reflection of the time it is written and, hence, is a representative of the time period. Earlier works discussed are included in the Appalachian literature canon. The Time of Man by Elizabeth Madox Roberts and The Dollmaker by Harriette Arnow would be considered canonical works. More recent novels, though not yet canonical, accurately portray the contentions of loyalty and how loyalty patterns are changing for Appalachian feminine characters. Storming Heaven by Denise Giardina reflects the social activism of Appalachian studies in the 1980s. Giardina creates strong literary characters who prove that Appalachia is not a culture of self defeat. Furthermore, Prodigal Summer by Barbara Kingsolver reflects changing loyalty attitudes for the feminine characters. Meredith Sue Willis notes that "Barbara Kingsolver's fiction...exemplifies some of the region's finest traditions" ("Barbara Kingsolver" 78). Willis notes that Kingsolver does maintain some Appalachian traditions, yet her works display the changing values of women in Appalachia. Lastly, Gretchen Moran Laskas's The Midwife's Tale also shows the changing loyalty trends of Appalachian women. Laskas's lead character Elizabeth deals with contentions between her traditional role as a midwife and her personal loyalty. Each novel in this study defines how loyalty trends gradually change over time. The female authors accurately portray the culture and the changing society to prove that loyalty trends in Appalachian literature have evolved. Later authors, such as Giardina, Kingsolver, and

Laskas are strongly influenced by the feminist movement, which is seen through the literary characters they create.

CHAPTER 2

THE TIME OF MAN

Published in 1926, Elizabeth Madox Roberts' The Time of Man is a bildungsroman about the story's protagonist, Ellen. The novel maps Ellen's growth from girlhood to womanhood as an itinerant sharecropper's daughter. Furthermore, the novel is successful in chronicling the lives of women. Wendy Pearce Miller accurately notes: "[b]ecause of her attention to the feminine and the domestic in the book, it appears likely that Roberts intended to speak specifically to a female audience" (par. 11). Roberts, speaking accurately about her culture, gives the feminine perspective importance because it chronicles Ellen's changing belief systems and her portrayals of loyalty to the self, family, and husband. Ellen's practiced loyalties closely resemble Danny Miller's description of the nineteenth century mountain woman. She is loyal to her husband and children, sacrificing selfhood for their needs. However, Patricia M. Gantt points out that "Roberts's women are able to transcend the domestic sphere if they wish" (93). Ellen does not acquiesce to these domestic loyalties immediately and without tribulation. In The Time of Man, Ellen deals with many loyalty conflicts. These contentions of loyalty are shown through Ellen's view of motherhood, her portrayal of motherhood, and the pressures created by being loyal to self, husband, and family.

Loyalty to Self

Ellen's self loyalty is something she creates as she grows to womanhood. From a young age, she seeks to define her identity. The novel begins, "Ellen wrote her name in the air with her finger" (9). From the first line, Ellen proclaims selfhood through this act of writing her name. Part of that self includes a romantic imagination. Louis Auchincloss claims that Ellen "yearns for permanent things, for houses that are more than shacks, with drawers to put things in, and friends

who are more than passing acquaintances” (125). Her youthful desires find an outlet through her companion on a wagon trip, Tessie West. Later, as she becomes a woman, she adds to this romantic imagination that Tessie represents. Ellen learns that self loyalty is the only element in her life that she can safely depend on.

The first representation of this self loyalty comes from Tessie West, whom Wade Hall describes as “a storyteller and folksinger who has four books in her wagon and a large romantic imagination”(ix). Tessie instills this romantic imagination in Ellen. When her family leaves the wagon trail, Ellen fails to realize that she will never see Tessie West again. Unaware of this permanent separation, Ellen tries to memorize her adventures in order to tell them to Tessie. Though the woman is not a lead character in the novel, her influence is strongly portrayed. For example, Ellen discusses Tessie’s desire for a home: “Tessie was always wanting a house” (30). This desire is transported to Ellen and becomes a part of her own personal goals. Furthermore, Tessie’s love of books is instilled in Ellen. When Ellen remembers Tessie’s books, she realizes, “I couldn’t stay here, I’d have to go where she [Tessie] is” (32). Time helps Ellen to understand that she will not live the gypsy lifestyle of Tessie; however, Ellen is still resolved to see the woman one last time: “[t]he thought that she really would see Tessie again thrilled her senses and caught her breath all day Saturday” (51). Ellen refuses to give up the romantic imagination that Tessie represents. Ellen runs away from home in the night to walk to town in hopes that Tessie will be there. Ellen knows that by running away she will be severely punished. However, her desire to see Tessie is greater than the consequences of her impending chastisement. Ellen’s loyalty to Tessie is a loyalty to the imagination and all that the woman represents. Tessie is romantic stories, the folklore tradition, and even dreams of a home.

Ellen's runaway trip to find Tessie is as a passage from girlhood to womanhood. As Ellen walks to town that night, her imagination is wild with many different thoughts. For example, Ellen thinks, "I wish I had a blue hat with a big white ostrich plume a-flyen for myself. Me a-sitten up in a buggy with a big white plume on my hat and white slippers on my feet" (54). Her loyalty to the romantic is present throughout her night walk. However, when she reaches the town, Ellen drops her imagination and becomes very fearful. Roberts notes, "Ellen felt estranged to all the people about and even to herself" (57). The town is largely outside of Ellen's country element. She feels a "chaos in her being" and tries to stay close to her mission of finding Tessie (58). Feelings of estrangement and chaos show that Ellen is experiencing a dramatic internal change. Even though Ellen does not see Tessie, she believes that she sent Tessie a message, telling the woman her location. When she gives the message, Roberts tells Ellen's feelings: "[o]ne sob shook her throat and then peace came after the hours of strain. She had sent a message to Tessie. She had sent word" (62). The fear Ellen experiences while in town gives her a different understanding. After Ellen sends Tessie the message, the narration does not mention this romantic character much again. Ellen's self loyalty begins to change. Alan Roland defines this change as identity synthesis, which is an "inner psychological integration... of childhood and adolescent psychological elements with the choosing of and commitment to a value system...and to various important adult roles involving work, love, and social relationships" (49). Shortly after sending her message to Tessie, Ellen meets Joe Trent. Through placing less emphasis on Tessie's romantic imagination and more attention on Ellen's attraction to Joe, Roberts shows an identity synthesis. Ellen comes to adopt more adult roles, especially in terms of love. So the chapter that ends with Ellen sending a message to Tessie also ends, to some degree, Ellen's reliance on the romantic imagination, which represents her childhood. Ellen does

not betray her loyalty to the imagination; she grows to include other loyalties that together create her identity.

Ellen's budding sexuality creates another complex element to her self loyalty. When Ellen first meets Joe Trent, Roberts says that Ellen "felt a new kind of smile come to her mouth and a new look come to her eyes" (65). Joe's attraction to Ellen causes her to realize her beauty: "[a]nd in myself I know I'm lovely. It's unknown how beautiful I am. I'm Ellen Chesser and I'm lovely" (73). However, Joe's rejection of Ellen does not devastate her. His attention gives her the realization that she could very well have "[s]omebody I might know all my life. A body to tell things to" (77). The realization is stronger than the disappointment that that person will not be Joe. Her sexuality creates two elements of loyalty: the realization of her power as a woman (in her beauty) and the idea of sharing herself with someone.

As Ellen continues to grow into womanhood, she relies on the self for strength. As an adolescent, she defines her self loyalty through her budding sexuality and her romantic imagination. She draws strength from her youth and beauty. At times of great anguish, she calls on her loveliness to give her strength. For example, Roberts explains that "[t]he perpetual sadness of youth had flowed to engulf her. She was unable to gather her sense of it into a thought" (96). Ellen's response to this feeling is calling back to her loveliness: "It's no known how lovely I am. I'm a-liven" (97). This created sense of self that hinges around her beauty and feeling alive adequately sustains her.

Calling back to the self is what upholds her through her first major obstacle of life. She falls in love with Jonas Prather. Hall explains, "she meets the love of her life, Jonas Prather, a young farmer who...betrays her for someone else" (x). During the tragedy of losing Jonas to another girl, Ellen questions, "how did she, Ellen Chesser, ever come to such a state of need that

a person outside herself, some other being, not herself, some person free to go and come and risk accidents far from herself, should hold the very key to her life and breath in his hand?" (220).

First, this quotation shows the importance of the self to Ellen. Her self loyalty sustains her and is her strength. When she gives this self loyalty to another person, she questions how she could have let this betrayal happen. Secondly, she learns to guard the self; Ellen will never trust the loyalty of another man, not even her husband. After the end of the relationship, Ellen calls back to the self for strength: "I'm Ellen Chesser. And I'm here, in myself" (228). She regains the self loyalty that she feared losing through her relationship with Jonas. Anne K. McBride explains, "[d]espite the intimacy that has evolved between Ellen and Jonas Prather, ...she instinctively apprehends the permanent and impenetrable separation dividing one human being from another" (par.6). When Ellen had first realized her beauty, she had considered sharing herself with someone. However, her relationship with Jonas teaches her that there is a separation between people. The result of this knowledge is a stronger reliance on the self. This lesson is proven with the constant calling to the self. During this time, she even calls back to her romantic imagination through her dreams:

but in her dreams in the night she often arose to a great quiet beauty. There a deep sense of eternal and changeless well-being suffused the dark, a great quiet structure reported of itself, and sometimes out of this wide edifice, harmonious and many-winged, floating back into blessed vapors, released from all need or obligation to visible form, a sweet quiet voice would arise, leisured and backward-floating, saying with all finality, "Here I am" (232).

This call to the self is rooted in the romantic imagination of her youth because it is reflected through her dreams. Furthermore, the self calling to her reaffirms her identity. Her heartbreaking

relationship with Jonas creates a stronger concept of the self. Harry Modean Campbell argues that “Ellen in a crisis turns to a stronger realization of her self-identity” (56). This is directly portrayed in her call to the self after the relationship with Jonas. The lesson she has learned from love is a strong loyalty to the self. This loyalty to the self creates a protective barrier for Ellen when she does marry Jasper Kent. As we will see in the next section, Ellen may be completely loyal to Jasper, but she has no faith in his loyalty to her. She creates this defense mechanism to protect the self from further pain.

Loyalty to Husband

Sidney Farr argues that “[a] mountain woman will stand by her man even when she knows he’s in the wrong or has broken the law” (13). This idea directly embodies Ellen’s loyalty to her husband Jasper. Before Ellen and Jasper marry, he is accused of burning down a barn. Consequently, he flees in the night without taking Ellen with him. Ellen must stay behind to deal with accusations that Jasper will not return and that he really was guilty of burning the barn. Ellen’s faith in Jasper never wavers; she even controls her anger when other townspeople question him: “[t]he hard words hammered at her throat as she bent over the fallen nuts, but she was cautious, for her wish to save Jasper was greater than her anger” (295). She wants to tell the townspeople that Jasper will come back for her, but she knows that her confession would do more harm because they are seeking revenge against the man they believe is a barn-burner. The collision of her loyalty to Jasper and her self loyalty create a paradox for her emotions. Ellen represses her own anger because of her loyalty to Jasper, though her self-loyalty, mainly pride, inspires that anger.

Furthermore, Ellen’s loyalty to Jasper is never questioned. She lashes out against her parents when they speak against Jasper, saying that he is “gone for good” (296). Ellen refuses to

accept this, and shows her loyalty to Jasper over her parents by saying, “[h]e’ll come back like he said he would” (296). Her faith in him never wavers.

After their marriage, Ellen continues to show her loyalty to Jasper throughout his trial on the barn-burning incident. When Jasper goes to court over the barn-burning, “[s]he set herself to save Jasper for it was her will that Jasper must not go [to jail].... Then she asked the farmer to sign the bond” (318). Ellen is responsible for getting Jasper’s bond, and she even saves money that she would normally have spent on her children to make sure Jasper has a lawyer: “[s]he spent the money sparingly for the cradle...saving the rest of the money for Jasper against the time of the trial” (322). Ellen even sells her calf to finish paying off the lawyer. Throughout the ordeal with Jasper’s going to court, she never questions his innocence, and she constantly figures out ways to settle the debt of Jasper’s trial.

Despite her loyalty, Jasper betrays her by having an affair with Hester Shuck. Even though Ellen is angry over the affair, she remains loyal to him. Roberts says, “Ellen felt a curious hardness in her body, as if her life had grown solid and stiff within her flesh. She wondered why she cared who had Jasper, turning this thought over and over as she worked” (347). His betrayal deeply hurts Ellen, yet she constantly tries to bring him back to her: “[s]he wondered why she cared where Jasper went and why she contrived to try to bring him back, surprised at each plan she made, but the plans would arise suddenly out of her listless thought” (348). To win Jasper back, Ellen tries to fix her hair differently and dress nicely. Ellen relies on her earlier faith in her beauty. As a young girl, Ellen had relied on her loveliness as a source of comfort and strength. During this time of great anguish, she calls back to that beauty for strength and help for winning her husband back from Hester Shuck. She tries to get his attention when he is at work. Despite her efforts, Jasper does not seem to notice: “[t]he men, all but Jasper, looked at her, saying

pleasant things” (349). Yet, even while she is making these efforts, she wonders “why she cared, even for one moment, to seem lovely before Jasper” (349). Ellen cannot explain her loyalty to him, and her constant questioning of her loyalty does not change it. Even though she does not understand why she tries so hard to win him back, she still makes every effort possible to secure his affection.

Ellen’s loyalty is further proved by her refusal to betray Jasper. The nature of her relationship with Joe Phillips, who owns the farm where Jasper works, is one of friendship. However, Joe Phillips is certainly very fond of her. He tells her, after she realizes that Jasper is having an affair: “[i]f ever you need, you understand, you just let me know, just send. If ever you want a friend or any help. As I just said I wish there was another just like you, exactly like, and don’t you forget what I say” (351). Joe’s confession shows that Ellen did not stay with Jasper because she felt that she had no other choice. Often, late nineteenth and early twentieth century portrayals of loyalty to husbands for Appalachian women carries the connotation of forced submission. The women seem to have no choice but to stay with their husbands. Danny Miller explains this by citing Cratis Williams, early researcher of Appalachian life: “[t]he apparent loyalty of the mountain woman to her husband and family probably grows out of economic and social conditions. She cannot leave her husband, for she would then have no place to go” (qtd. in Miller, Wingless Flights 28). This, however, is not true for Ellen. Her friendship with Joe Phillips, though it eventually becomes a great trial between her and Jasper, creates an escape from her husband should she choose to take it. But, true to form, Ellen is completely loyal to Jasper, despite Joe’s offer. She laughs at his comment and continues her attempts to win Jasper’s affection.

Though Ellen is completely loyal to Jasper, she has no faith in his loyalty to her. This lack of faith in Jasper is how she protects her self loyalty. In her youth, Ellen gave it to Jonas and was betrayed. Consequently, her inability to trust Jasper is the only way she preserves any amount of self loyalty she may still have after her marriage. Ellen's self loyalty in connection with her loyalty to Jasper is a cause and effect relationship: because she was once heartbroken by sharing her self loyalty with Jonas Prather, she learns never to share that loyalty again. Hence, Ellen does not trust Jasper's loyalty to her. Her lack of trust for Jasper is shown through her actions. From the onset of her relationship with Jasper, she questions his allegiance. She verbally defends him to her parents, when they say he will not return, yet she is conflicted about the issue in her mind: "[h]e would come back, her mind continued to affirm, but a great fear stood in her body, for there was nothing to bring him back except herself" (297). Again after they have children, she questions Jasper's dedication to her: "[s]ometimes she thought...that Jasper might think to run away as being the easiest course" (323). Furthermore, when Jasper confesses that he intends to leave, she uses the children to keep him and not any devotion he might have for her: "[y]ou'll not run off from your youngones. You're tied down with a whole bale of rope" (358). When she realizes that Jasper is having an affair, she is not surprised.

One may wonder why Ellen is so devoted to Jasper when she has no faith in *his* loyalty. According to Danny Miller, Cratis Williams offers one explanation: he believed women had no other option than to remain loyal. However, Joe Phillips's offer shows that Ellen has other options. Another reason that might explain Ellen's apparent loyalty to Jasper is the social roles of women. Martha Cutter, in discussing novels written from 1850-1930, explains the social pressures of that time: "[m]any of these texts thus promote a concept of identity that exercises a secondary power from within the limited realm of the home. They also encourage women to

define themselves through others (men and children)” (5). Ellen’s social role is thus defined through the home and family. Her faith in Jasper is part of that social role. Cutter explains that during this time period women “should be self-denying, domestic, subservient, and...silent” (8). The cult of domesticity is clearly a large factor in defining the social roles of women in early twentieth century Appalachia, even though the cultural ideology begins to lose momentum during this time. Yet, because of this ideology, Ellen is completely faithful to her husband Jasper. Evidently, The Time of Man does not create a conflict of loyalty when it comes to matrimony. Ellen may have conflicts of loyalty when it comes to her children, but her dedication to Jasper never wavers.

Loyalty to Family. At fourteen, Ellen closely associated motherhood with the institution that forces women to have children and become ideal mothers. She views motherhood as a betrayal of self loyalty. When speaking to Artie Pinkston, a pregnant woman struggling to walk in the July heat, Ellen questions, “[w]hy did she let herself be like that?” (40). Ellen cannot understand why any woman would willingly put her body through so much pain. Even at her young age, Ellen is aware of how Artie became pregnant: “for she knew all the externals of child-getting[,]” but the knowledge only disgusts her more (40). Ellen’s contempt for childbearing is directly stated: “Ellen hated the woman for the pain she was going to have” (41). At a young age, Ellen obviously does not view motherhood in sacred terms; she hates the idea. Wendy Pearce Miller notes that “Ellen, like Roberts, ponders the complications of female sexuality—the burden of femaleness—and considers the toll the rigors of motherhood exact on a woman’s health and appearance” (par. 13). At fourteen, Ellen is coming of age, and will soon be old enough to marry according to Kentucky society; this view of motherhood at her age shows that she does not willingly consent to her fate. Ellen views Eva Stikes, who goes into labor

shortly after Ellen's conversation with Artie, as ugly. She sees and hears Eva's pain and says, "[o]h, people are ugly and everything is ugly" (43). Ellen's experience at Eva Stikes's delivery makes her dislike childbirth even more.

Furthermore, even the women, who are mothers view this idea of motherhood with pity. During their conversations, these women discuss others who are busy bearing children. Making such comments as "[s]o soon?"... "[f]ive only... but five, that's a houseful...and two dead" (141). As mothers, these women see not only the initial pain of childbirth but the future consequences of having many children. They know, too well, the immense amount of work that raising many children entails. Other comments such as, "[t]hree a-cryen under foot and one in the arms. And Lenie dragged out till she looks like a buzzard" show that they truly pity mothers (157). This mixed combination of resentment of childbirth on Ellen's part and pity from the other women create for Ellen a picture of motherhood that will be with her long after she has her own children.

Consequently, Ellen's view of her own motherhood is contradictory as she attempts to maintain both the potential bond between mother and child and deal with the fact that she has no choice but to have many children. Her role as a mother creates a divided and often conflicting loyalty, a conflict between loyalty to the children and loyalty to the self. After the birth of her first child, she would "look at his flesh, at his eyes, his hair, his motions, another being that he was apart from her and beyond her reach, and what did he want in life? What would Henry John want beyond what she wanted, and how could he want differently or more?" (322). Ellen ponders how her son will surpass her own desires in life, desires that she perhaps did not achieve. She sees in him the potential to achieve more in life than she has because, as a male, her son will have more opportunities than Ellen.

However, Ellen does not have long to enjoy her first child, for soon many more are added to the family. The addition of two more mouths to feed causes Ellen to realize the limits of her loyalty to her children. Lack of proper nourishment causes the children “to become hollow-eyed, and thin” (331). When she realizes that one of them may die, she tries “to build an indifference about her helplessness” (331). As a mother, Ellen has no power to save these beings she brought into the world. She confesses “[s]he could not help it, the matter; she could not then care” (331). As an attempt to distance herself from the fear of losing a child, she tries to build indifference and, in this indifference, calls to the same self loyalty that sustained her when she was younger. While engrossing herself in each daily task she encounters, her inner voice calls out to her: “[s]uddenly a soft whisper came to her lips, as she looked, as she penetrated the moving mass, a whisper scarcely breathed and scarcely articulated, as would say, ‘Here...I am...Ellen...I’m here’” (331-2). She turns to this inner voice of selfhood in a moment of great need. As the toils of motherhood weigh her down, coupled with her helplessness regarding her children, Ellen seeks her inner strength to carry on. This realization of selfhood, or Ellen’s calling to her inner self, occurs less and less as the novel progresses. The more children she bears, the fewer times she calls to her inner self for strength.

Shortly after she calls to her selfhood, she learns that she is pregnant with a fourth child. Roberts says, “Ellen could not go to the church many times more, for another child would come, a child she did not want” (332). Ellen realizes the limits of her loyalty to the children; they continuously take from her and do not seem to give back. She explains this:

she saw the children, the three born, and the one unborn, as men and women, as they would be, and more beside them, all standing about the cabin door until they darkened

the path with their shadows, all asking beyond what she had to give, always demanding, always wanting more of her and more of them always wanting to be (333).

Ellen views these children as darkening her path and “always wanting more of her” (333). In this section, she fully realizes the extent of how much of her selfhood is lost to her children. In her moment of retrospect, she sees that her children will always demand of her; she cannot escape them. She concludes the moment by saying, “[o]ut of me come people forever, forever” (333). Ellen feels that her motherhood is a betrayal of her self loyalty. Wendy Pearce Miller explains, “[s]he seems to feel betrayed by her body when she realizes during her fourth pregnancy still more unwanted children will be born” (par. 16). The betrayal Miller discusses is a betrayal of the self: Ellen does not want to have more children, even as she realizes that this fourth child will not be her last. Victor Kramer argues that Ellen’s “life gradually becomes one of saying yes, a life of acceptance” (775). Her realization about having even more children proves this point. She does not battle the truth, but accepts it. As she turns to this life of acceptance, she loses her self identity. Ellen becomes more of a fluid character. Roberts explains, “and her listlessness would give her each picture as something remote and unrelated to her own being, as felt through a veil, until the little children would float in an unreality so entire that they seemed to be any children, belonging to some other woman in some remote house” (353). This level of distancing herself from her reality becomes the only defense she has for her life of acceptance. She cannot change her situation, so she concentrates on distancing herself from it. Ellen’s view of motherhood reflects Adrienne Rich’s definition of the “*institution*” of motherhood (13). As Ellen is forced to continuously bear children, she loses her own identity to the patriarchal concept of self-sacrificing motherhood. Perhaps because Ellen does not have a choice concerning her maternity,

she does not recognize Rich's potential mother-child bond. Roberts's portrayal of motherhood aligns to nineteenth century ideologies concerning the female's submissive role in the family.

Consequently, Ellen's loyalty to her children supersedes her self loyalty because she learns just to accept various aspects of her life. She acknowledges the betrayal of her body yet realizes how helpless she is to change it. She will continue to have children, though she does not want them, and they will continue to take from her. Ellen loses her inner voice as she gradually adopts this role of acceptance.

Clearly, Ellen loses her self loyalty through her loyalty to her husband and children. She views the romantic imagination that was once a part of her self identity mockingly after she has children. As Ellen sits and reflects on her life, she wonders what seeing Tessie West would be like. She says that if she saw Tessie she would "say what a durned fool woman that is, to talk eternally about tom-foolery, God knows!" (382). Ellen has clearly lost this romantic element of the self. Wendy Pearce Miller notes that "Ellen has forgotten her dreams and childhood aspirations of reading books and visiting foreign locales. She has lost her inquisitive nature and is actually surprised when her childhood hopes, long forgotten, resurface in her son Dick" (par.19). Miller's point notes the extent that Ellen has given up on the early aspects of her self loyalty. As a grown woman with children, she can look back at Tessie West as a fool. Ellen has accepted her life and lost the greater part of her own identity.

Roberts elaborates the loss of identity by connecting it with Ellen's memory of her mother:

Ellen would merge with Nellie in the long memory she had of her from the time when she had called from the fence with so much prettiness, through the numberless places she had lived or stayed and the pain she had known, until her mother's life merged into her

own and she could scarcely divide the one from the other, both flowing continuously and mounting (381).

This clearly shows a loss of identity because Ellen loses herself. She merges with her mother Nellie. Victor Kramer points out, “Ellen is closer, therefore, to her imminent assumption of the role of wife and mother, as symbolically expressed by her taking Nellie’s chair” (780). This taking of Nellie’s chair shows yet another way their lives have merged into one life.

Furthermore, Ellen realizes that something of herself is lost when she views her own daughter Nannie’s budding into womanhood. Ellen would look at Nannie with a “feeling that she had forgotten something but caring little for any lost recollections, living lightly and freely with the passing days, identified with Nannie, merged with her in the lightness of limb” (376). Ellen has forgotten her self loyalty, though she confesses that she does not really care for “lost recollections” (376). Ellen merges with her daughter as well as her mother. She gains parts of their identities to replace the identity she has lost through wifedom and childbearing. Ellen’s loyalty to the self is lost to her family. Like Danny Miller’s mountain woman, she has sacrificed herself for the family. The question then becomes, is she happy with the sacrifice?

At the end of the novel, Jasper is once again accused of burning down a barn. Men come during the night, stealing Jasper from his bed and whipping him. Ellen places herself between the men and Jasper, taking the whip upon her own shoulders. After the men leave, Ellen refuses to involve the children, saying “that this was her own matter, hers and Jasper’s” (389). When Jasper proposes that he leave alone and then send for them, Ellen says, “[n]o, I’d go with you, Jasper, wherever you see fitten to go. I couldn’t nohow see my way to stay behind. I’d go where you go and live where you live, all my enduren life” (392). This comment shows the extent of her loyalty to Jasper. Her unwillingness to let Jasper leave without her does not seem to have any

connotation dealing with her lack of trust for him. She does not want Jasper to leave without her because she is completely loyal to him. Furthermore, as the entire family packs up and leaves during the night, Roberts concludes the novel with “[t]hey asked no questions of the way but took their own turnings” (395). The conclusion seems to show a loyalty to the family; they leave together and do not question or protest the fact that they must go.

Critics differ on the final meaning of the novel. Anne K. McBride believes that “[t]heir constant journeying is the final image as it emphasizes that the movement of life must always be forward” (par. 28). However, Wendy Pearce Miller does not see the family’s moving in such an optimistic line: “[e]ven though Ellen successfully endures hardship and appears optimistic at the novel’s close, we have no reason to believe that life will improve for her or the Kent family....the Kents pack their belongings and leave...with no plan and no destination” (par. 19). One thing is indisputably clear; Ellen comes to terms with her loss of self loyalty. Her fervent loyalty to Jasper during the closing scenes of the novel proves the extent that she adopts the role of loyal wife. She willingly takes the lashes meant for Jasper upon her own back. Her loyalty to the children overwhelms her self loyalty which is finally proven by her merging with Nellie and Nannie. She loses her own identity and becomes a part of theirs.

This early example of loyalty shows that Ellen did not meekly acquiesce to the roles of wife and mother. Though she is fiercely loyal to Jasper, she maintained her self loyalty through refusing completely to trust him. She comes to terms with the betrayal of her body and the fact that she will have many children. In the end, she loses her self loyalty and merges with the identities of her mother and daughter. Although Ellen falls under the category of a more traditional mountain woman, in terms of loyalty, one can clearly see that she does not willingly and without question accept these roles.

CHAPTER 3

THE DOLLMAKER

Harriette Arnow wrote The Dollmaker to reflect a very interesting trend in mid-twentieth century Appalachia. Gertie's story is one that speaks for many Appalachian people of the time. Urban migration, a situation where numerous Appalachians left their southern homes for northern factory jobs, created huge dilemmas for the Appalachian way of life. Roger Guy argues that for Appalachian women, "[m]any aspects of life were altered in the city. Women experienced a great amount of change adapting to the urban environment. There was increased danger and a different racial climate" (46). However, despite the dangers of an urban environment, Guy believes that urban migration was better for Appalachian women because by moving north they gained freedom, responsibility, and were more adaptable than men (40). Gertie Nevels shows a different point of view. Barbara Baer points out that "[e]verything is taken from her [Gertie] by the outside world" (27). Clearly, Gertie's move to Detroit does not result in the freedom or adaptation that Guy describes. However, Arnow's depiction of Gertie's journey from Appalachia to, and experiences in, Detroit details a wider social trend of the time.

The Dollmaker details Gertie Nevels's experience of urban migration. The novel shows how moving to Detroit affects Gertie and her family. More important, it chronicles Gertie's struggle with loyalties. Nancy Carol Joyner explains:

Gertie is in tension with her culture, which tells her that she must go with her husband to Detroit while he works in a factory, although she wants to stay in Kentucky and farm. She is in tension with her husband, toward whom she remains silent about her wishes, discovering only too late that he shares her dream of a farm. She is in tension with her

children in multiple ways, most tragically in her guilt at the death of her child Cassie (718).

Gertie's tensions are rooted in loyalty conflicts. She wants to remain loyal to herself, buying the land in Kentucky. However, she is forced to be loyal to her husband, move to Detroit and eventually betray her loyalty to her children, Reuben and Cassie. Unlike Ellen, Gertie tries to maintain her loyalty to the self to a much greater degree; however, outside forces cause her to desert that loyalty. Gertie's struggle in loyalties is shown through her decisions about land and her decisions in Detroit.

Loyalty to Self

Gertie's loyalty to the self is rooted by two visible characteristics: her desire for land and the block of wood. Carole Ganim argues that "[f]or Gertie, identity can be found only in her specificity of place" (268). Gertie's identity is defined by the Kentucky land, more specifically in her desire to own the Tipton Place. Owning the Tipton Place represents Gertie's loyalty to self because her own identity is tied to the land. To buy this land, Gertie had saved money for years: "[f]ifteen year, mighty nigh- an we've got more'n half enough to pay fer th Tipton Place" (35). Gertie desires this land because it would free her from living the sharecropper's subsistent life that Ellen experienced in The Time of Man. Danny Miller argues that "her dream of independence, which the farm symbolizes, is based on the desire for complete freedom and independence, even from Clovis" (Wingless Flights 152). In fact, Gertie desires the land so dearly that she keeps the money from Clovis who never knows that she has been saving for years. When she realizes that she can afford the place, she is overjoyed because "[s]he wouldn't have to depend on Clovis" (The Dollmaker 69). Clearly, Gertie's desire for freedom is

paramount and shows that, early in the novel, she is loyal to herself, for she wants the land more than anything else.

In fact, for the land, she would willingly betray Clovis. She places her loyalty to the self above her loyalty to Clovis. She waits to buy the land until Clovis leaves for the army. As he prepares to leave, he worries about the family having enough food to last while he is gone. Gertie “felt guilty, and tried not to want to tell him of all the money she had saved” (78). Moreover, Arnow even tells why Gertie keeps the money a secret: “[i]n another minute she’d be telling him about the money she had, and of how she meant to buy the Tipton Place. Then he’d want the money for a bigger better truck....He might even want her to use up all his army pay, quit farming, and live in Town while he was gone” (78). She does not trust Clovis with the money, for she believes that he will waste it on another truck. Gertie is far more loyal to her desire for land than to her husband. Roberta Teague Roy accurately sums up: “Gertie wants her land” (72). For this land, she would willingly betray Clovis, though as Roy points out, she does consider the betrayal: “[b]elieving that she really shouldn’t make a business transaction without her husband, Gertie nevertheless buys property from Uncle John” (72). Gertie’s desire for the land obviates any doubt she may have about the propriety of purchasing it without consulting Clovis. Where Ellen may wrestle with her loyalties to the self, Gertie clearly asserts her self loyalty above the loyalty to her husband.

Gertie’s self loyalty also manifests itself in the block of cherry wood that she has been carving for years. The faces she sees in the wood reflect her feelings of loyalty to the self and her betrayals of that loyalty. Glenda Hobbs notes that “discovering which man is hidden in the wood will reveal to Gertie her own moral strength or weakness” (857). Her loyalty to the self shows through the faces she sees in the wood. When Gertie prepares to buy the land, Arnow describes

Gertie's feelings: "[b]ut when Clovis was gone and she was settled on the farm, she would work again on the block of wood....She had her land-- as good as had it-- and the face was plain, the laughing Christ" (76). Because she is being loyal to herself by buying the land, Gertie sees the happy Christ in the block of wood. After she tells Uncle John that she can afford to buy the Tipton Place from him, she again affirms, "[i]t was Christ in the block of wood after all. Soon he would rise up out of his long hiding into the firelight, the laughing Christ" (121). Likewise, if she sees the laughing Christ in the wood at times when she is loyal to herself, he disappears from her artist's vision when she betrays that loyalty. Gertie learns that despite purchasing the Tipton Place, she must move to Detroit. When she realizes the news, Arnow says, "[Gertie] had always known that Christ would never come out of the cherry wood. Seemed like all week he'd cried for her knife in the firelight, and now he was gone" (139). In this moment of reflection, Gertie thinks that it was never possible for her to own that land. The laughing Christ had called out to her when she was moving to the Tipton Place; however, now that she cannot own the land, she realizes that this Christ will not come from the wood. Furthermore, Gertie refuses to part with the block of wood during the move to Detroit. She spends a great deal of money to have the wood sent to her in Detroit. When reflecting on the money spent, which she feels is a waste, she sees Judas, the great betrayer: "remembering the good money she had spent to bring the block of wood- Judas wood it seemed now. Jesus would never come from it" (144). For Gertie, the block of wood represents her loyalty. At times when she betrays herself or her children, she sees Judas in the wood.

It is important to realize that Gertie, more so than many female Appalachian characters of the time, attempts to be loyal to herself. Through buying the Tipton Place, Gertie would gain her heart's desire, the one thing she wants more than anything else. Her loyalty to the self is

manifested in her desire to own the land. The block of wood sometimes shows this loyalty. When buying the land, Gertie can see laughing Christ in the wood for the first time. However, when the land is taken from her, she once again sees Judas in the wood.

Loyalty to Husband

Initially, by buying the Tipton Place, Gertie seeks to be loyal to herself; however, her mother forces her to be loyal to Clovis. It is important to realize that, at this point, Gertie had already purchased the Tipton Place and begun moving her family to the farm. Gertie does not choose to leave the farm for Detroit. Her mother is responsible for forcing Gertie's loyalty to her husband through guilt and manipulation. Her mother uses the Bible for support: "oh Lord, she's turned her own children against their father. She's never taught them th Bible where it says, 'Leave all else an cleave to thy husband.' She's never read to them th words writ by Paul, 'Wives, be in subjection unto your husbands, as unto th Lord'" (135). The mother even goes to Uncle John and shames him about his part in making the land deal with Gertie. He gives Gertie the money back only after her mother forces him through guilt. Uncle John explains his change of heart, "I cain't let a piece a land come atween a woman an her man an her people" (140). Gertie does not intend to move to Detroit, and her mother is solely responsible for the forced loyalty that causes Gertie to leave the Tipton Place. Lewis A. Lawson sums up that "[t]here is no real option for Gertie; she must act the dutiful wife, and if that role were not sufficient to dictate her behavior, her mother's nagging, concocted of guilt and sentimentality, would be enough of a force" (71). Hence, Gertie becomes loyal to her husband, not through her own choosing, but through her mother.

Clearly, Gertie attempts to be loyal to herself above her husband. This single act of choosing the land over Clovis seriously challenges traditional loyalty conventions. Gertie is an

example of how loyalty is beginning to change in Appalachian literature. As Arnow proves, female authors are becoming more concerned with the portrayal of women during the mid-twentieth century, especially in literature. This presentation of Gertie, a character who willingly places her self loyalty above her husband, shows that at least for Appalachian authors, traditional ideologies are being challenged. Unlike Ellen, whose loyalty to her husband never wavers, Gertie's loyalties are clear. However, after the forced loyalty to her husband, the audience sees a different side of Gertie. In Detroit, she is loyal to her husband in much the same way that Ellen is loyal to Jasper, though Gertie's loyalty to Clovis is unique.

Before Clovis leaves for the army, Gertie shows a contention of loyalties between the self and Clovis. She bemoans, "[w]hy couldn't Clovis and she have wanted the same things?" (121). Gertie realizes that her husband's love of machinery stands in tension with her desire and love for the land. Additionally, Arnow describes Clovis in the home with imagery suggesting that he represses Gertie. On the morning Clovis leaves for the army, Arnow explains Gertie's waking: "[s]he struggled against the choking weight, reached for it, found Clovis's hand, half open, limp in sleep, the back of it flung like a dead weight across her neck, high up against her throat" (73). Arnow describes Clovis's hand as choking Gertie, which gives the impression that his presence in the bed suffocates her. Likewise, when Clovis actually leaves, the reader is shown the extent of their affection for each other: "[a]s she poured the last of the water, he gave her a hard quick hug, and a quick kiss that might have touched her lips had she not at that moment turned her head to see about the radiator cap" (81). Clovis and Gertie clearly are not portrayed as having a strong bond. Carole Ganim explains, "[h]er relationship to Clovis, her husband, is never a strongly committed one but rather an assumed duty and status" (269). Any vocalization of loyalty like in The Time of Man, where Ellen tells Jasper that she would follow him all her life,

is absent from The Dollmaker. Instead, Arnow portrays the loyalty to Clovis, like Ganim says, in terms of duty and not with affection.

Despite this unique portrayal of loyalty in Kentucky, Gertie is in fact fiercely loyal to Clovis. When Gertie and the children arrive in Detroit, Sophronie Meanwell, the neighbor, shows up at their door in a night gown. After Sophronie leaves, Gertie says to the children, “I was jist thinken Mom was right. I ought to be up here with yer daddy. An that nightgown--a wearen a night-gown this time a day. A body could see right through it an-” (178). Clearly, Gertie does have enough feelings for Clovis to be a little jealous when she realizes that Detroit women wear such night-gowns in plain sight.

Furthermore, Gertie reiterates her loyalty to Clovis many times in Detroit. Clovis gets into a fight due to union business and cannot go to work because he is sorely beaten. Gertie willingly calls in to work for him and lies. Moreover, Gertie seems truly worried about his health: “[s]he timidly went up to him and felt his forehead; it was hot, and some of her fear of the future dimmed in the face of her immediate concern for him” (538). Furthermore, when Gertie realizes that Clovis killed another man with her knife, she stands by him. Lewis A. Lawson argues that “[h]owever much she may detest Detroit, Gertie tries to abide by Clovis’ views” (75). Like Ellen, Gertie is loyal to her husband even though she does not agree with his actions.

In Detroit, Gertie’s loyalty to Clovis causes her to desert her loyalty to the self. Gertie truly believes that after the war her family will move back to Kentucky. In order to afford the move, Gertie tries to save money. Clovis spends a great deal of that money and constantly pushes the family further and further into debt. Gertie quietly acquiesces to this spending. When Clovis spends more money on the children’s clothes, Gertie notes, “[i]t came to her that instead of stomping around in angry silence last Saturday when Clovis came home with her money spent

and the car half full of new clothing she ought to have thanked him” (190). Gertie does not begrudge the spending of her money to keep the children warm during the Detroit winter. Clovis eventually discovers that Gertie is trying to save his wages. When Clovis confronts her, Gertie sees “Clytie [daughter] listening behind her father, interested, and accusing, too, as if the saving of a dollar were a sin. How much could she lie? She had to have something more than the money she’d saved for the land ahead when they went back home” (267). Gertie is still partly loyal to herself because even as he accuses her of saving money, she tries to decide how much she can lie to save what money she has for land. Clovis, however, gets his wages that Gertie had saved and spends all the money for Christmas. Looking at all the things that she thought were a waste of money, Gertie “tried to smile” (272).

Gertie sits passively as Clovis spends more money and places the family in large debt. When the children are not satisfied with their Christmas presents, Gertie tries to explain to Clovis: “[l]ots a grown people never git an never know what they want. They spend money, hopen it’ll satisfy em, like a man hunten matches in a strange dark house” (273). In her own way, Gertie tries to tell Clovis that this needless spending does not satisfy the children. However, he continues to spend money, and she continues to allow the family to go further into debt.

Gertie forsakes the self because she eventually gives up the possibility of owning land. After Gertie’s youngest child Cassie dies, she gives all the money she had saved for land to Clovis. He spent it all in burying Cassie, and Gertie fully realizes and accepts this loss of self loyalty. Lawson points out that “Gertie had also felt so out of her element that she had deferred to the judgment of her husband Clovis, whose only claim to superior wisdom derives from his membership in the male sex” (70). Her succumbing to Clovis’s judgment shows the true extent

of her loss of self loyalty. She is out of her element in Detroit, and Clovis quickly becomes the dominating factor of Gertie's life.

Gertie is unique because she initially is completely intent on being loyal to the self. She buys the Tipton Place, knowing that Clovis will not approve. Gertie can see the laughing Christ in the block of wood after the land purchase because she is being loyal to herself. Clearly, Gertie had no intentions of moving to Detroit to be with Clovis. Her mother creates Gertie's forced loyalty. Once in Detroit, Gertie becomes loyal to Clovis, standing by him even when he commits murder. Steve Mooney notes that "an important subject of *The Dollmaker* is the terrible cost of human acquiescence" ("Agrarian Tragedy" 38). One of the costs for Gertie is the loss of her self identity. In many ways, this loss of self identity will damage her loyalty to her children as well.

Loyalty to Family. Gertie is loyal to her children above all else. Arnow directly portrays this loyalty in the opening scene of the novel. Gertie's son Amos is deathly ill. To save her son, she places herself in front of a moving car to stop the vehicle in order to take the boy to the hospital. When she realizes that the child will suffocate before they get there, she cuts a slit in this throat and inserts a hollowed out twig for the child to breathe through. Hence, the opening chapter of The Dollmaker proves that Gertie is willing to do anything for her children.

Furthermore, she often places her children above her husband Clovis. Gertie allows Reuben to hunt on Sunday, something that Clovis is strictly against. Arnow says, "Clovis was put out, Gertie realized, by her unreligious ways in letting Reuben hunt on Sunday. Still, she had no heart to forbid the boy to go" (41). Even in Detroit, Gertie tries to remain loyal to the children. When the neighborhood kids get into a vicious snowball fight, Gertie intervenes, despite advice to stay out of the children's business. Gertie argues, "'I cain't stand an see em half killed' Gertie cried. She shoved open the storm door and jerked Cassie inside just as a snowball

whizzed past her outthrust head” (243). Furthermore, it is only for her children that Gertie will willingly spend money. She whittles for money to feed them when Clovis is out of work. In the end, she sacrifices her beloved block of wood for money to feed the children. Kathleen Walsh accurately sums up: “Gertie’s choice of her family as her top priority is so consistent and unlabored as to admit no conflict” (101). Clearly, Gertie will do anything for her children.

However, the pressures of Detroit cause her to betray her children. Initially, the pressure of Gertie’s mother to go to Detroit creates the first betrayal. Reuben wants the Tipton Place just as much as Gertie, and he views her inability to stand up to her mother as a betrayal. While Gertie has no voice to fight her mother, Reuben tries. He defends Gertie’s choice to the woman: “She bought us a place a our own” (135). He tells her that the Tipton place is “a good house” (136). Arnow notes that during his argument he “looked to his mother for help, but Gertie stood and looked like Cassie when somebody caught her in a piece of meanness” (136). Furthermore, Gertie betrays Clytie in this scene as well. The girl is returning from a friend’s house, walking down the lane singing. Gertie “wanted to cry out to Clytie that her grandmother watched, but could not” (136). Gertie does not have the ability to warn her daughter of the dreadful events taking place. When Clytie tries to reason with Gertie over the move to Detroit, she has no answer. Hence, Gertie’s first betrayal of her children is her silence. She does not have the ability to stand up to her mother, even when she realizes that moving is not what the children want either.

Furthermore, her initial betrayal of Reuben in Kentucky is only made worse by her actions in Detroit. Arnow says, “Reuben came [home], but instead of eating the cooked supper he ate bread and milk” (263). Gertie sees how much milk he is drinking and considers the cost of milk, then asks him, “cain’t you eat th supper I’ve cooked? It’ll be all to throw out” (263). After

the incident, Gertie questions her actions here: “What had she thought? To save on Reuben’s food?” (263). This slight incident shows only one of the small ways the hard life of Detroit causes her to betray the children. The turmoil of Detroit magnifies this betrayal. As Reuben’s resentment grows, Gertie realizes just how much she is to blame for his feelings. After he runs away back to Kentucky, Gertie can view his situation retrospectively. She notes, “she knew that most of the trouble with Reuben was herself- her never kept promises, her slowness to hide her hatred of Detroit” (370). With Reuben gone, Gertie can fully contemplate the extent of her betrayal. She believes that “[h]er love had ever been a burden, laying on him false hopes that, dead, weighed down still more the burden of his misery” (370). The false hope she refers to is land. Gertie had transported her own desire for land to her oldest son Reuben. Consequently, when he runs away from her and Detroit to return to Kentucky, she confesses, “[s]he missed him, but could never tell him how she missed him most. She hated herself when she lied, trying to make herself believe she missed him the way a mother ought to miss a child” (370). Her feelings do not reflect any lack of love on her part. Gertie realizes that Reuben is better off in Kentucky. In fact, Reuben has done what she desires more than anything: he has returned to the land. Hence, her betrayal of Reuben comes full circle. Gertie’s initial betrayal is her inability to stand up for herself and keep the land. By moving to Detroit, she has betrayed not only her self loyalty, but her loyalty to her children. Glenda Hobbs notes that “Reuben, who views her compromises as betrayals, runs away, back to the land that nurtures rather than stunts him” (857). Consequently, though she betrays Reuben in Detroit, the betrayal gives him the land.

Gertie’s betrayal of her daughter Cassie has far more devastating consequences. Cassie has an imaginary friend, Callie Lou. In Kentucky, Gertie overlooks Cassie’s friend. However, as Clovis points out, Cassie’s eccentric behavior in Detroit causes the other children to make fun of

her. Clovis forces Gertie to tell Cassie that she must give up Callie Lou. Initially Gertie is concerned about the presence of Callie Lou in Detroit. Gertie “often looked at the little girls and wished Cassie were among them. But in pretty weather, when all the others were outside Cassie preferred to be indoors with Callie Lou” (375). Gertie worries that Callie Lou causes Cassie not to make friends. However, Gertie tells Cassie, “[k]eep her Cassie. Keep Callie Lou. A body’s got to have somethen all their own” (380). This advice to her youngest daughter shows that Gertie is remaining loyal to Cassie. However, Gertie cannot stand up to Clovis when he demands that the imaginary friend leave. Arnow describes Gertie’s feelings: “Gertie would listen, [to Cassie speaking to Callie Lou] smiling but feeling guilty in remembering what she had promised Clovis- and herself. The alley jeers of, ‘Cuckoo, cuckoo, talks to herself,’ had to go” (372). Gertie forces Callie Lou to leave, and immediately notices a change in Cassie. Arnow points out the change: “Cassie’s almost untouched plate of food troubled her [Gertie], but she mustn’t let herself think it had anything to do with Callie Lou, or that some strange lonesomeness that hung about the overcrowded little place, as when they had first come, was there because the witch child had gone away” (382). Glenda Hobbs explains this change: “Callie Lou is more to Cassie than an imaginary friend: she betokens Cassie’s individuality, her ebullient creativity, and her love for her Kentucky, where Callie Lou was born” (858). Callie Lou is much more important to Cassie than Gertie realizes. The imaginary friend’s excommunication has dire consequences. Gertie’s forbidding Callie Lou to be in the house directly relates to Cassie’s death. Since the imaginary friend cannot live in the house, she lives on the train tracks, and Cassie spends a great deal of time at this dangerous place. As a train gets closer to Cassie, Arnow notes that “Cassie stood between the main line and the fence, one hand holding Callie Lou’s hand” (403). After

Cassie is killed by the train, Gertie fully realizes her betrayal: “[s]he, Gertie, had killed her” (419). Gertie believes that by taking Callie Lou from Cassie, she caused the death of the child.

Lastly, Gertie’s betrayal of her two children appears in the block of wood that so closely parallels her own identity. Hobbs points out that “[a]lthough she had little choice but to go to Detroit, she feels that she had betrayed the two of her children who loved the Kentucky Hills: twelve-year-old Reuben and the younger Cassie. She begins to fear that the hidden man will be the Judas that increasingly haunts her mind” (856). Close to the end of the novel, Gertie concludes, “‘A body cain’t aluus give back-things,’ Gertie said, filled suddenly with a tired despair; the wood was Judas after all” (586). Gertie sees Judas in the wood when she realizes what her self betrayal has caused: the loss of Reuben and Cassie.

The novel ends with Gertie sacrificing the block of wood to feed her children. As she learns that she will have to split the wood herself, she has a moment of reflection: “she was still, considering; while the children, troubled, gathered round, and looked first at the wood and then at her. She was so still; it was as if by steadfastly looking at the wood, she too, had changed into wood” (599). In this final sacrifice of her loyalty to self, Gertie proves the extent of her identification with the wood. Her loyalty, even her identity is ingrained in the block of cherry wood. In the end, she decides the face could have been anyone’s: “[t]hey was so many [faces] would ha done; they’s millions and millions a faces plenty fine enough-fer him” (600). This concession shows that Gertie has lost part of her identity. She no longer sees Judas in the wood; however, she no longer sees the laughing Christ either. Gertie completely abandons her loyalty to the self, which is manifested in the wood. The loss of the land causes the first loss of self loyalty and this final sacrifice of the cherry wood shows her concession of selfhood. She has betrayed her self loyalty and even her loyalty to the children for Clovis. Rodger Cunningham explains,

“[s]he has spent the whole narrative trapped in a double-bind between her mother and her husband, trapped in an untenable space between these two degenerate, alienated gender-organizations of space” (138). The trap that her mother and husband create is responsible for these betrayals.

Hence, much like Ellen in The Time of Man, Gertie’s life becomes one of acceptance. Gertie gives up the land and sacrifices the block of wood for her children. Critics differ on the meaning this loss of selfhood creates. Glenda Hobbs maintains that Gertie “cannot recover from losing two of her children as well as the Kentucky farm she saved for fifteen years to buy” (859). This bleak outlook suggests that Gertie will continue to suffer because of her lost loyalty. However, Carole Ganim believes that Gertie “finds she has the strength to join the disparate parts of her world together. She learns that she can live somewhat peacefully in the industrial, male-dominated world around her without surrendering her own identity totally” (269). Ganim bases this argument on Gertie’s confession that any face might do for the wood. Ganim believes that Gertie’s neighbors have helped her to create a new identity. Whatever new identities Gertie may create do not change the fact that she betrays her original self and her loyalty to that self. Gertie’s surrender of the block of wood and the land shows that she betrays her self loyalty.

In the end, Gertie’s loyalty conflicts show how loyalty trends are changing. She is initially adamant about being loyal to herself, which is shown through her decision to buy the Tipton Place. This portrayal of self loyalty proves that she willingly places her own desires above her loyalty to Clovis. Ganim points out that “Gertie’s relationship with the land is obsessively important to her” (269). Gertie’s willingness to betray her loyalty to Clovis proves this point. However, Gertie is forced to be loyal to her husband and the result is her loss of identity. Joyce Lemaster notes that “[l]oss of identity affects Gertie Nevels, Arnow’s Dollmaker”

(101). The loss of identity is a betrayal of her self loyalty. The betrayal is magnified through Gertie's vision of Judas in the cherry block of wood. After she loses the land, Gertie sees Judas, the great betrayer, in the wood instead of laughing Christ.

Furthermore, Gertie's own self betrayal causes her to betray her loyalty to the children. Through succumbing to her mother and Clovis, she betrays Reuben, who desires the land as much as she. Also, her loyalty to Clovis in forcing Cassie to give up Callie Lou betrays the child. In the end, her loyalty to Clovis causes her to betray both herself and her children. The contentions between Gertie's three loyalties of self, husband, and children are shown through the disastrous consequences of allowing one loyalty to dominate the others. Her forced loyalty to Clovis negatively affects her loyalty to the self and to the children.

CHAPTER 4

STORMING HEAVEN

Elizabeth S.D. Engelhardt argues that “[a]s feminism has evolved from its early days of recovering lost women, it has continued its commitment to politicized scholarship- a belief that academic writing, conversation, and support for activism can make the world a more socially just place” (Beyond Hill and Hollow 7). Denise Giardina shows a commitment to this type of literary scholarship. Her novel, Storming Heaven, focuses “on the conflict between the coal mine owners and the miners” in early 1900s Southern West Virginia (Lindberg 667). Tim Boudreau argues, “[t]hough her book is fiction it is based on fact” (9). The events that Giardina details in Storming Heaven are largely true accounts of the miner’s struggle for unionization.

However, Giardina surpasses the intent of cataloging the injustices of coal mining. Carrie Bishop, Giardina’s leading lady in the novel, is not a meek, submissive female. Because of the time the novel was written (after the 1960s feminist movement), Giardina creates a strong feminine character that is completely loyal to the self. Carrie’s loyalty to self is manifested by her loyalty to the union cause. This loyalty she places before her loyalty to family, and in some ways, even to her husband. Carrie’s contentions in loyalty are shown because she chooses to be loyal to the self above all else and that loyalty creates strains for her other loyalties, namely to her family. While Ellen in The Time of Man may slowly surrender her self loyalty, and Gertie in The Dollmaker is forced to give up her self loyalty, Carrie Bishop marks a dramatic change in the Appalachian female because she maintains her self loyalty despite the problems that this loyalty creates. Carrie’s struggle to maintain self loyalty can be seen by first examining the extent of her self loyalty and then exploring the hardships of maintaining it in combination with her family loyalty and her loyalty to her husband. Giardina tells the story from four narrative

perspectives: C.J. Marcum, Rondal Lloyd, Carrie Bishop, and Rosa Angelelli. Since Carrie Bishop is the lead heroine in the novel, this discussion of loyalty will focus on her and the chapters that she narrates.

Loyalty to Self

Carrie's initial loyalty to self is manifested in her desire for education. She explains this love of knowledge, "[w]hen I was ten years old, Ben Honaker lent me his copy of *Wuthering Heights*. I loved it" (30). Carrie values learning at a very young age. When she is forced to stay home from school to help the women cook, Carrie says, "I thought of my neglected books lying in the loft and burned with resentment" (62). At this young age, Carrie can be forced to stay home from school despite her desire to learn. However, her loyalty to the self wins over the obstacles of her life. Carrie wants an education, and she gets one. Her brother Miles pays for her to go to nursing school. Carrie knows that being an educated woman is not something generally valued by her society. Her father reflects this society. She says, "[w]hen I mentioned it [going to nursing school] to Daddy he laughed. I knew it meant nothing to him, but I also knew he wouldn't oppose it as long as he didn't have to pay for it" (63). Carrie knows that her father does not approve of her education, but she does not care. She places her desire for knowledge above her desire to please her family.

Her education places her outside the traditional nineteenth-century portrayals of mountain women. Conway argues, "Carrie is in some ways typical of a feisty mountain girl and in other ways bolder, wiser and more educated" (148). As Conway points out, Carrie's education places her outside the traditional feminine sphere. Furthermore, her education gives her independence from the patriarchal system. After she finishes nursing school, she works for Miles, who is the superintendent of the Pond Creek mines. Miles tries to assert control over her, telling her that she

should not live alone. She notes that “[w]hen I lived with him he was insufferably bossy” (90). Carrie’s education helps to make her fiercely independent. She tells Miles, “I been on my own for three year of school, nobody telling me what to do” (91). Her education has extended her independence to the point that she tells Miles that she will move away if he does not leave her alone: “I’ll go somewheres else. They’s a need for nurses anywhere I choose to go. I might go to New Orleans or New York. Or Paris, France, or Peking, China. You dont know where I might run off to” (91). Clearly, Carrie’s independence is part of her self loyalty. She does not want to answer to a man, and her education affords her the ability to be completely loyal to the self, doing whatever she may want to do.

The nature of Carrie and Miles’ argument tells far more about Carrie’s loyalty than her desire for independence. The argument is based on the fact that she does not want to live in Miles’ elegant house. She says, “I was uncomfortable living there, for we had not known chandeliers and crystal drinking glasses on Grapevine [later called ‘Homeplace’]” (90). Carrie more closely associates herself with the miners instead of Miles because he is a coal superintendent. She wants to live among people she is familiar with. Carrie sees that Miles tries to build a distinction between himself and the miners who work for him: “Miles worked hard at being dignified” (92). However, Carrie does not like this distinction. She is more closely related to the workers because they are the same type of people she knew as a child growing up at Grapevine. After one of Miles’ business trips, she tells him, “while you was having Baked Alaska, we was having typhoid” (93).

Her concern and association with the miners during this sickness begins her loyalty to their cause. Miles, her brother, is clearly on the other side of the battle; he is a mining superintendent. Carrie tries to help these people through Miles: “[h]e wrote, after much prodding

on my part, and asked permission to install new sanitary facilities at Vulcan” (93). The location of the privies were causing the typhoid outbreaks. Carrie could have easily remained in Miles’ home, separate and distinct from the miners. However, she chooses to leave his home and take up the miners’ cause. Her independence and loyalty to the self motivate her to help these miners. When Miles can do nothing about the privies, Carrie tries to contain her anger: “[h]e was my brother, so I said no more, tried to smother my anger. Two more typhoid cases died. I was silent. Each of us has our price, I thought bitterly” (94). Carrie believes that Miles has deserted his loyalty to the people. Terry Easton notes that “the class divide between Miles and Carrie increases as Miles moves further away from ministering to the needs of miners and their families” (156). She, in contrast, adopts their cause, which creates a contention in loyalties for Carrie. She wants to be loyal to herself, helping these miners; however, she wants to be loyal to her family, namely her brother who does not help the miners. More importantly, Carrie’s education and independent nature cause her to adopt the miner’s cause; she becomes loyal to the cause, which is a reflection of her self loyalty. This loyalty to the cause and in effect to herself dominates all of her actions throughout the novel.

In summation, loyalty to the self is manifested through Carrie’s loyalty to the miners. After marrying, Carrie and her husband move to a mining camp. Carrie confesses, “[a]ll I did was cook, wipe away coal dust, and worry about where the money would come from” (165). She continues, “I wanted to nurse those sick” (165). Carrie clearly announces that she wants to help the miners. She is bored being a housewife and feels that she can contribute to the cause. Lindberg notes, “we see her [Carrie] just as gentle and compassionate and committed to healing as she is fierce and brave when she encounters violence and injustice” (669). This quote gives two reasons why loyalty to unionization is loyalty to the self for Carrie. First, Carrie wants to

help people. Her desire to be a nurse and the fact that, when not nursing, she is unhappy prove that part of her self loyalty is helping others. Second, Carrie has a strong sense of righteousness, which is seen in her earlier struggle with typhoid cases at Miles' mine.

Lastly, like Gertie Nevels, Carrie's connection to the land also shows her loyalty to self. During difficult times of her life, Carrie always returns to Grapevine, her home place, in order to restore her spirit. Growing up, Carrie believes that "[h]eaven would be a place very much like Grapevine, lacking only an angel of death" (37). Carrie clearly has a deep connection to the land. Roberta Teague Roy argues that "[t]he female...is stereotyped as a being who enjoys a mystical relationship with the land" (68). Although Carrie breaks stereotypes in her loyalty to the self, she seems to have this connection to the land. She explains, "[i]t was the boundary of the Homeplace, a mystical boundary. I feared to cross, feared I would be cast out...with no place of my own" (48). Carrie has a strong bond with the land that she maintains even after she has left it. More importantly, coming back to the Homeplace during times of need restores her spirits and reaffirms her loyalty to the self. When Carrie and Miles finally have their inevitable falling out, she returns to Grapevine. The combination of not having Rondal's love and losing her loyalty to her brother emotionally hurts her a great deal. It is while at the Homeplace that Carrie comes to terms with Rondal's lack of affection and agrees to marry Albion.

Furthermore, when Carrie is shot she returns home to heal both physically and mentally. She says of her return, "[a]fter an initial period of strangeness the Homeplace had begun to assume magical proportions, as though I had never seen any of it before, as though it were a mythical kingdom I had stumbled upon after years of weary wandering" (223-4). Carrie also returns to the Homeplace after her husband dies. Additionally, she brings Rondal back to the Homeplace after he is shot. Throughout the entire novel, Carrie maintains that the land has some

type of mythical quality that restores her. She ends the novel by saying, “[t]he mountains are conjurers, ancient spirits shaped by magic past time remembered. The dead walk abroad in the shaded coves, or writhe in their graves, pushing up with strong arms and legs, waiting for the day” (291). Clearly, the Homeplace and Carrie’s constant return to it show an element of loyalty. Her mythical connection to the land proves that, like Gertie, she identified it with her self loyalty.

Carrie’s self loyalty then consists of many different things. First, her independence creates a base component. Second, her desire to heal the sick and help the miners creates another level of self loyalty. Then, her sense of righteousness, as seen in her struggle against the typhoid outbreak, shows her loyalty to the cause. And, last, her connection to the land creates loyalty to the self. Moreover, Carrie’s self loyalty causes her to be dedicated to unionization. She desires to help the sick and is greatly appalled by the situation of the coal miners. Her loyalty to the self then becomes manifested through her loyalty to unionization. Her loyalty to the cause, and in effect herself, is also a dominating factor when Carrie marries.

Loyalty to Husband

Carrie’s loyalty to her husband creates an interesting struggle for her. She is loyal to two men: Rondal, her first lover, and Albion, her husband. Being loyal to two men creates a contention in that loyalty. However, her loyalty to both of these men is aligned with her loyalty to the self because they all three fight for the same thing: unionization.

Carrie meets Rondal when he comes to the doctor’s office with a crushed foot. She immediately likes him: “[a] week passed without me speaking with Lloyd Justice [Rondal Lloyd], but he had taken up residence in my daydreams” (99). Her heart is clearly touched by Rondal. Conway points out that “Carrie’s voice embraces themes commonly associated with

Appalachian women: the Homeplace, the family, the mountains, and the desire for a lover” (141). The level of connection with earlier nineteenth-century Appalachian women could be Giardina’s attempt to create a strong, yet believable Appalachian woman who fits into the historical period that she is writing about. Carrie quickly falls in love with Rondal. However, part of her rapidly created loyalty to Rondal stems from the extent that he can help the miners: in other words, how he aligns with her loyalty to the self. Carrie concludes, “I decided Lloyd Justice [Rondal] and Miles must become friends....Lloyd could give Miles a firsthand account of the miners’ health problems. Miles would explain how trouble-some the Bostonians were, but Lloyd possessed a great deal of charm and would convince him at last” (99). Part of her budding loyalty to him comes from this idea that Rondal can help her cause saving the miners. Rondal, however, is well aware of her self loyalty. He says to her, “[y]ou look to me like you’re too independent,....You wouldnt take to a man bossing you around” (106). Despite this knowledge, he has an affair with Carrie. When he leaves, Carrie accuses herself of being a fallen woman. However, she says, “I said it without conviction for I loved him” (111). Carrie’s loyalty to Rondal will not allow her to think too negatively of him. Even though he abruptly leaves her with no promise of ever seeing her again, she remains loyal.

Carrie’s loyalty to Rondal causes her break in loyalty to her brother Miles. Even after Carrie learns that Rondal is a union organizer, and that Miles must fire all men associated with him, she still gives him money. As Rondal leaves, she cries, “I love you!” (115). After Carrie learns that Rondal is a union organizer, she becomes much more devoted to him because he is dedicated to her cause. Once Rondal leaves, she tells Miles that she hates him and never wants to see him again. Her shift in allegiance from family to lover hinges on her self loyalty. She is

faithful to the cause of the miners. Rondal follows that faithfulness while Miles does not. Hence, she breaks her loyalty to Miles and becomes fiercely devoted to Rondal.

Carrie maintains her loyalty to Rondal even after she marries Albion. She tells Albion after they first begin seeing each other, “[t]hey’s a part of me that will allays belong to him [Ronal]. Hit’s a part you wouldnt never share. I cant help it” (139). She acknowledges that she will always have feelings for him. When Carrie sees Rondal again at a barn dance, she says, “I love you. I allays have. I’d a married you in a minute ifn you’d asked me” (146). Rondal, however, does not want Carrie. She tells Albion that Rondal will not have her, and Albion proposes to her. It is only after Albion tells Carrie of his plans to move to the mines and become a miner in order to help their cause that she agrees to marry him. Through moving to the mines, Albion becomes loyal to Carrie’s cause. Carrie concludes, “[Rondal] makes me feel alive,....But I’m at home with you. I want to go with you” (149). By marrying Albion, and going with him, Carrie once again has the chance to be loyal to her cause. She is showing her self loyalty by marrying Albion because she will be able to help the miners.

After their marriage and move to the mines, Carrie is still loyal to her cause and to Rondal. She says, “I wanted to nurse those sick” (165). Her education in nursing is the only way she can be loyal to her cause and, hence, to herself. The doctor she works for knows Rondal Lloyd, and whenever they talk about him, Carrie says to herself, “I thought no woman on earth knew as much about Rondal Lloyd as I did. But the knowledge gave me shame as well as pleasure, for I was a married woman and I loved my husband” (167). Her loyalty to Rondal creates a contention because Carrie is also loyal to her husband. She has difficulty trying to divide her loyalty between two men. Interestingly, when Rondal discovers Carrie’s marriage, and Albion’s dedication to her cause, Rondal questions, “does he do it for the love of God or the

love of Carrie Bishop?” (173). Rondal clearly understands how important the cause is to Carrie. He questions Albion’s motives because he perhaps believes that Carrie would not have married the man had he not been dedicated to her cause. Rondal’s question shows the extent of Carrie’s allegiance to herself. Additionally, Carrie agrees to help Rondal unionize the mine because of her love and devotion to him. After she agrees to transport messages between the mines, she tells Rondal, “I love my husband. But I love you too” (174). Carrie is trying to strike a balance in her allegiance because both men in her life are devoted to her cause of helping the miners. Albion plays an instrumental role in helping Rondal organize the miners.

To some extent, her devotion to Rondal in helping organize the miners resolves her loyalty conflict between the two men. She can now be faithful to both of them without forsaking her husband. Conway argues, “[a]fter resolving this conflict of intimacy in her romantic quest, she actively joins the resistance and struggles for justice in her quest for individuation” (154). Resolving, to some extent, the conflict of her allegiance to two men, Carrie is able to pursue her personal loyalty through helping the miners. Carrie can fully immerse herself in the cause. This is shown by her complete and total identification with the miners: “[t]he gun thugs called us rednecks. It was a name we accepted with pride” (200). Her becoming one of the “we” shows that she now has fully realized her loyalty to the miners and to herself. It is a loyalty that she maintains throughout the novel.

Carrie’s loyalty to the cause never wavers. Though she has difficulty in being faithful to two men, she resolves the problem in such a way that she can be devoted to both while still being loyal to herself. Stephen D. Mooney concludes, “she spends the rest of Rondal’s life trying to help him in his quest to improve conditions for central Appalachia’s miners” (“Beyond Measure”

10). Carrie becomes loyal to herself through the cause. However, to reach this level of loyalty to the self, Carrie must battle her loyalty to the family.

Loyalty to Family. Early in life, Carrie must battle her loyalty to the family in order to maintain her loyalty to the self. Her father, Orlando Bishop, opposes her creation of an identity. As a young girl, Carrie says, “I longed to go hunting, but Daddy only laughed when I mentioned it” (34). Her father believes that women’s hunting is unladylike and tells Carrie that they “were raised better than that” (34). Miles allows Carrie to go hunting secretly; she is able to maintain her loyalty to the self and identity, by doing what she really wants, which is hunting. As Carrie becomes more independent in spirit, her father’s discontent grows. Carrie explains, “[h]e told me he didn’t expect me to find a husband, I was not ‘defferin’ enough, my tongue was too sharp and I was too forward in my ways” (61). Because of this comment, Carrie distances herself from her father. She realizes that she cannot change, but her father’s words affect her greatly. She says, “I held myself distant from him and from other men who might treat me the same” (61). Her father’s negative comment has an interesting affect on her self loyalty. Instead of conceding to his point, the comment causes her to create a protective shield from all men who might try to repress her independent nature. She concludes to distance herself from all men who would agree with her father. The resolution reinforces her self loyalty through protecting her independent nature.

Despite her father’s repressive force in her life, Carrie has women in her family who reinforce her self loyalty. Aunt Jane and Aunt Becka help Carrie become the independent and headstrong girl that can be fiercely loyal to unionization. Aunt Jane tells Carrie, “[a]s for you, you just be like your own self” (36). Carrie can draw strength to be loyal to herself from Aunt Jane’s advice. Beyond the woman’s advice, Carrie gains strength from her example. After her

father's comment, Carrie reasons, "Aunt Jane was not 'deferrin' and she had been married. Most of the women I knew on the creeks were strong and feisty and they all had men" (61). Carrie observes that the women in her family and community are strong willed just as she is, and this gives her a source of strength. Cecelia Conway concludes, "[a]lthough her dad's patriarchal talk undermines her sense of herself as a girl and hurts her feelings, she is mentored by the women of the family" (142). The women of the family help Carrie to break her loyalty to her father and become more loyal to herself.

Carrie will also break her loyalty to the family through deserting Miles, her brother, for her loyalty to the cause. As previously noted, she confesses to Miles that she hates him after discovering that Rondal is a union organizer. This breach in family loyalty will never be completely healed. After the break in loyalty she sees Miles again, and tells him, "I dont talk civil no more. I dont act civil. I'm a troublemaking red agitator out to tear down civilization and that's what I act like these days. You want civil talk, you go home to that mealymouthed wife of yourn" (212). She clearly associates herself with the miners, which causes a break in her family loyalty. She considers Miles an enemy because of his position as a mining superintendent. Still, she tries to reason with him: "[b]ut your people, as you call them, still aint got money for food. And they aint your people, Miles. They aint your kin. They are their own people. A miner shouldnt have to fret over whether his boss is a good man or not. Hit's all up to you whether that man freezes or keeps warm" (213). Carrie shows through this conversation the extent of her loyalty to the miners over her loyalty to family. She concludes, "I got a husband on strike, and I got sick people to tend" (213). She clearly chooses her loyalty to the cause, and self, over her loyalty to family. Laurie Lindberg points out, '[d]evoted as she is to family and grateful as she is

to her brother for sending her to nursing school, she repudiates Miles when she realizes that he has ‘sold out’ to the company” (669). Carrie chooses to be loyal to her cause over her family.

In fact, Carrie’s loyalty to Rondal causes her final and most devastating betrayal of Miles. When Rondal is wounded, Carrie decides that they must return to the Homeplace. She secures their passage on a company train with the help of Miles. She says to him, “I need your help, Miles. I need it real bad” (283). Carrie convinces Miles to lie for them and get their passage on the train. By telling the men on the train that he is a union man, Rondal betrays Miles. This causes Miles to lose his position. Carrie tries to console him: “You can be here with us,.... You could work in the bank. You could start up a store. You could teach at a school, or run for office” (286). Carrie realizes that her loyalty to Rondal and unionization causes Miles to lose his position. Clearly, she places her loyalty to these two above her loyalty to him.

In the end, Carrie remains loyal to herself despite consequences. Some of the women in this study struggle to maintain their loyalty to self but, in the end, sacrifice that loyalty. Ellen loses her self loyalty through her life of acquiescence. Gertie is forced to give up the land, which represents her self loyalty. Carrie Bishop, however, shows a dramatic change in loyalty. She remains loyal to herself throughout the entire novel, sacrificing her loyalty to family to maintain her freedom. Terry Easton points out that “Giardina makes clear the forces that divide families when Carrie aligns herself politically with Rondal Lloyd, a union organizer fervently opposed to the practices associated with Miles’ coal company” (154). Carrie betrays her loyalty to the family because of her self loyalty to the cause.

Furthermore, Carrie’s loyalty to the men in her life also reflects her loyalty to the cause and herself. She does not agree to marry Albion until she knows that he too will fight for unionization. Rondal even points out this distinction when he questions why Albion is so fiercely

loyal to the cause. Additionally, Carrie finds a way to maintain loyalty to both her first lover Rondal and her husband Albion through her loyalty to the cause.

Carrie's loyalties mark a dramatic change in loyalty trends. Though she may have faced contentions in her loyalty to self, husband/lover, and family, she clearly chooses the self above all other loyalties. Carrie asserts her independence in a way that previous female characters in this study have not. This turning point in loyalty trends can be further proved by looking at novels published after Storming Heaven. More recent literary characters will portray this same type of self loyalty.

CHAPTER 4

PRODIGAL SUMMER

Carrie Bishop, in Storming Heaven, shows a dramatic change in feminine Appalachian loyalty trends. Authors continuing the Appalachian writing tradition follow this pattern of changing loyalties. Barbara Kingsolver creates strong feminine Appalachian characters that do not fall into traditional loyalty patterns. Mary Jean DeMarr, in discussing Kingsolver's works, generalizes, "[f]eminist novelists have made significant use of a reworked vision of the *Bildungsroman*...to show women moving from weakness and victimization to strength" (91). She concludes that Kingsolver's fiction achieves this type of feminist bildungsroman because her characters are "strong women who become role models for others who are trying to achieve control over their lives and circumstances" (91). Kingsolver, like Giardina, shows the effects of the 1960s feminist movement through the creation of strong female literary characters. For example, The Time of Man is a non-feminist bildungsroman because it portrays Ellen as a victim in many ways. She becomes submissive to her life because she feels as though she has no choice other than continuing to have children. In stark contrast, Kingsolver's characters become stronger versions of earlier female Appalachian characters. Deanna Wolfe and Lusa Landowski in Prodigal Summer both seek to define their identities like Ellen's early efforts in The Time of Man. However, these women proclaim their selfhood and remain loyal to that assertion. Like Ellen, these women fight with the complexities of being loyal to self, family, and husbands/lovers. However, like Carrie, they more closely align their loyalties to the self.

Prodigal Summer, published in 2000, tells the story of two women. Though they live in close proximity to each other, they never meet. Their element of commonalty is their loyalty to selfhood. Deanna Wolfe seeks isolation to maintain her loyalty, and Lusa Landowski seeks to

preserve her selfhood when obstacles demonstrate that it would be easier to adjust. Both of these women deal with loyalty issues. However, each woman maintains her loyalty to the self despite the complications that the loyalty creates. Studying Deanna Wolfe and her complications in loyalty to the self, family, and lover shows that her loyalty to the self wins the battle. Likewise, Lusa Landowski also battles with loyalties to the self, family, and husband. Lusa tries to find a balance, being loyal to all three, and most importantly maintaining her selfhood.

Loyalty to Self

Deanna seeks isolation on Zebulon Mountain because she does not feel that she fits in with other people. Amanda Cockrell explains, “Deanna Wolfe is a late-forties, divorced biologist, come home to Virginia to work for the Forest Service” (par. 40). Deanna spends a great part of her life trying to become what other people want her to be, namely what her husband believes is the ideal wife. Kingsolver notes that Deanna had “told her husband (*ex-* already by then), when he asked her why, that she was moving up onto the mountain so she wouldn’t have to cut her hair. Apparently it was a rule for women in their forties: the short, perky haircut” (54). Deanna does not want to be grouped with all women in their forties. She is a unique person who refuses to succumb to traditional ideologies. Deanna “just hadn’t liked the rule, hadn’t wanted to look her age, or *any* age” (54). Deanna refuses to accept what she believes are meaningless unspoken rules of propriety. Moreover, Kingsolver continues to tell why Deanna did not succeed in her marriage: “[i]n her lifetime she’d met very few men who could keep up with her natural gait. *Like you’re always leaving the scene of a crime*, that was how her husband had put it. *Can’t you just stroll like other women do?*” (59). Deanna confesses that she could not, and Kingsolver even discusses why: “[f]eminine was a test like some witch trial she [Deanna] was preordained to fail” (14). Clearly, Deanna does not view herself in

traditional feminine terms. She says, “[n]obody ever taught me to be a proper lady, that’s the tragedy” (171). Deanna largely fails at her attempts to fit into society, and she confesses that she was never taught how to adjust to society’s feminine roles. Meredith Sue Willis argues that Kingsolver’s fiction contains “an abiding hatred of oppression” (Barbara Kingsolver 81). Deanna’s character proves this assertion because she adamantly detests these unspoken rules of feminine propriety.

Instead of continuing to stumble through a life obviously outside of her defined self, she chooses isolation. Kingsolver notes the contrast of Deanna’s life before coming to the mountain: “[t]hat was the only kind of woman she had ever known how to be, in Zebulon county and later on as a schoolteacher and attempted wife in Knoxville. Up here in the woods, finally, she could be the only kind of woman there was” (54-5). The kind of woman Kingsolver describes is one who advocates nature above all else. It is in the wild, in nature, that Deanna’s loyalty to self becomes apparent. The first chapter of the novel examines Deanna’s love of nature. Kingsolver describes that Deanna “loved the air after a hard rain, and the way a forest of dripping leaves fills itself with a sibilant percussive that empties your head of words. Her body was free to follow its own rules” (1-2). Deanna feels comfortable in the mountains; she does not have to cater to traditional feminine ideologies. Kingsolver again points out that Deanna’s “limbs rejoiced to be outdoors” (2). A great deal of description is offered to show how being physically on the mountain makes Deanna’s body happy. Furthermore, Deanna finds peace in this isolation that she never could find during her marriage. Kingsolver explains Deanna’s feelings:

The divorce hadn’t been her choice, unless it was true what he said, that her skills and preference for the outdoors were choices a man had to leave. An older husband facing his own age badly and suddenly critical of a wife past forty, that was nothing she could have

helped. But this assignment up on Zebulon, where she'd lived in perfect isolation for twenty-five months--yes. That was her doing. Her proof, in case anyone was watching, that she'd never needed the marriage to begin with (19).

Kingsolver first notes that Deanna does not view the failed marriage as her fault. She clearly prefers the outdoors, and this preference she could not, or rather would not, change to accommodate her husband. Secondly, Deanna does take responsibility for her life of isolation on the mountain. She says she wants to prove that she can live independently without a man; however, her own desires to be in nature motivate this move. Kingsolver says Deanna "needed to listen to this: prodigal summer, the season of extravagant procreation. It could wear out everything in its path with its passionate excesses, but nothing alive with wings or a heart or a seed curled into itself in the ground could resist welcoming it back when it came" (51). Nature provides comfort for Deanna. She continues to note that the wood thrush's song helps her in "naming her place in the forest" (53). She obviously is at home in nature and feels like she belongs there.

On the mountain, Deanna is free to be loyal to another aspect of the self: her education. Perhaps more important than the solace nature gives her, Deanna gains something else from Zebulon mountain: coyotes. Deanna's true loyalty lies in her graduate studies in wildlife biology, specifically on coyotes. She creates the job on Zebulon Mountain because of a belief that the animals are migrating from the west. Kingsolver notes Deanna's belief: "[o]ne day she'd lay eyes on wily *Canis latrans* in the wild, right here in her own home range, on an animal path cross-stitched by other trails to the paths she'd walked in her childhood. It would happen" (59). Deanna's faith that she will find coyotes on her mountain keeps her searching for two years. When she finally sees the coyotes, Kingsolver notes, "[w]ithout self-consciousness her body

become a child's, her teeth holding her braid in her mouth for silence and her hands on her chest to keep her heart from bursting" (203). Deanna's constant tracking of this coyote family finally pays off, and she is overwhelmed with joy and excitement over seeing live coyotes on her mountain. Her loyalty to education is seen by her devotion to finding the coyotes. Furthermore, part of that loyalty to finding the coyotes connects with her loyalty to nature because coyotes balance the ecosystem. Cockroll explains, "the plant-eaters rebound... with frightful speed, with no one left to eat them. Deanna's coyotes are here to take care of that" (par. 41). One of the most important aspects of Deanna's search for coyotes is her knowledge that they will balance the ecosystem. As predators, coyotes will eat all the animals that have previously overpopulated nature because of an imbalance in the food chain. This reason for wanting to find the coyotes shows that Deanna is truly loyal not only to nature but to natural processes as well.

In summation, Deanna's self loyalties are clear: she is loyal to nature and to the coyotes she spent years studying. Her choice of leaving her life in the city behind for isolation on the mountain proves the extent of her self loyalty. She would rather live in isolation than try to fit into society's definition of a woman in her forties. Throughout her marriage, Deanna is loyal to herself, refusing to give up her love of nature for a husband who does not feel that it is ladylike. On the mountain, Deanna lives in peace and searches for the coyotes that she has dedicated her life to find.

Likewise, Lusa Landowski remains loyal to herself when society dictates that she should conform; her loyalty manifests itself in both her heritage and her education. After marriage, Lusa tries to remain loyal to herself when her husband and in-laws want her to conform to their traditional beliefs. For example, Lusa lives in a house that has belonged to her husband's family for years. All of her efforts to make this home her own and a reflection of herself fail. Kingsolver

notes, “[p]iles of Lusa’s books on the floor were shoved halfway out of sight behind this old over-stuffed chair, the only spot in the house she had claimed as her own” (30). Lusa claims only a small area for herself because when she tries to change other parts of the house, her in-laws change it back. Kingsolver explains that Lusa “wished she could say how hard it really was-how it felt to live among people who’d been using her kitchen appliances since before she was born. How they attacked her in unison if she tried to rearrange the furniture or hang her own family pictures. How even old Mrs. Widener haunted this kitchen, disapproving of Lusa’s recipes and jealous of her soups” (111). Lusa cannot change the house to reflect her own tastes. Though her attempts may be unsuccessful, Lusa does try to make the house her own. She brings her family’s china which has “delicately tinted botanical paintings of flowers and their pollinators” and serves food on the beloved dishes (40). She notes that Cole’s family is shocked by the dishes because they have bugs painted on them. Cole’s sister Mary Edna, most specifically, finds the dishes appalling. Lusa defends herself when Cole jokes about his family’s rejection of her dishes: “[i]t was the wing of a sphinx moth. A *painting* of a sphinx moth. I would not have china with black widows on it. And [Mary Edna] she didn’t scream, she laid down her fork and crossed her hands like a corpse and has refused my invitations ever since” (41). Lusa clearly tries to incorporate her own identity into the house through her dishes. Mary Edna’s rejection of the dishes proves that Lusa is not accepted in Cole’s family. Furthermore, Lusa has her own way of living on a farm that her in-laws find disapproving. She refuses to milk the cow twice daily and explains, “[i]f they’d spent their girlhoods as slaves to the twice-daily milkings, that was not Lusa’s problem. She had her own ways of doing a thing. She’d neatly mastered the domestic side of farming in less than a year” (34). Lusa does not believe in doing things according her in-law’s old ways. She asserts her own methods and refuses to succumb to their ridicule of it.

Despite obstacles like family, Lusa remains loyal to the self by promoting her education and her work in a PhD program instead of hiding it. Lusa tells her husband, Cole: “I’m *sorry* my education didn’t prepare me to live here where the two classes of animals are food and target practice” (35). Like Deanna, Lusa is highly educated; she studies moths and confesses of her marriage, “[f]or this I spent twenty years of my life in school” (35). Clearly, Lusa feels like she has wasted her education on marriage. Lusa, however, does not abandon her education: “Lusa had wanted to be different. She’d craved to shock people with her love of crawling things and her sweat” (42). Like Deanna, Lusa knows that her love of bugs is something that sits outside of traditional social gender roles, and like Deanna, Lusa embraces the distinction because she does not try to hide her passion for bugs in order to fit in. Kingsolver notes, “[b]efore Lusa herself ever set foot in the Kroger’s or the hardware store, she was already known as a Lexington girl who got down on all fours to name the insects in the parlor rather than squashing them” (39). Lusa does not try to hide her education and desire to study insects, though it causes her not to fit into society.

Furthermore, Lusa’s loyalty to the self also is manifested in her pride in her heritage. She explains, “[m]y mom’s Palestinian and my dad’s a Polish Jew, and *never*, before I came here, did I think that was anything to be ashamed of” (298). Lusa asserts her family heritage even though she knows Cole’s family does not approve. She complains to Cole that they refuse to accept her heritage: “Lois evidently told Oda Black my maiden name was Zucchini” (40). She notes that Cole’s family refuses to acknowledge her name or even the fact that she did not change her name when she married. She says that she “had kept her own name when they married, but it hadn’t mattered: everyone called her Mrs. Widener, as if there were no Lusa at all” (40). When the family does acknowledge her name, one of her sisters-in-law replies, “[o]h, well, I thought so.

That it was foreign” (308). While her in-laws note the distinction of her heritage in negative terms, Lusa remains loyal to it. Her heritage is a great comfort to her after her husband dies. She listens to the rain fall and is reminded of “[h]er grandfather Landowski’s game: he used to tap out unexpected rhythms with his fingertips on her bony knees, inventing mysterious Balkan melodies that he’d hum against the beat” (102). This memory resurfaces as the rain falls, and it gives Lusa comfort. When her in-laws interrupt the music, she thinks, “Grandfather Landowski’s rhythm section was fading out. She needed to empty the buckets and start them over again. She wished these men would go away” (107). Lusa wants to be left alone with the music of her grandfather because it comforts her.

Lusa is loyal to herself by maintaining her education and heritage when her in-laws and society disapprove of both. Amanda Cockrell accurately sums up: “Lusa Landowski is an entomologist with a bone-deep yen for the farms her Jewish grandfather and Palestinian mother lost in wars” (par. 40). Cockrell points out Lusa’s two loyalties: her education and her heritage. She tries to incorporate her identity into her home and is unsuccessful. However, she does not hide her education and preference for bugs even though she knows that her in-laws ridicule her for it. Moreover, Lusa is not ashamed of her heritage and refuses to deny it even though it causes Cole’s family to view her as an outsider.

Loyalty to Husband/Lover

Deanna’s relationship with Eddie Bondo, her eventual lover, proves why she seeks isolation in the first place because his presence on the mountain creates problems in both her loyalty to herself and to her family (nature). When he first comes to the mountain, she tries to define him in the terms that her life in nature has created: “[s]he measured the silence by the cloud that crossed the sun, and by the two full wood-thrush songs that rang suddenly through the

leaves and hung in the air between herself and this man, her-- prey? No, her trespasser. *Predator* was a strong presumption” (5). His initial presence already creates problems for Deanna. He disturbs her tracking of the coyotes and, furthermore, brings desires to her mind that she had long forgotten.

These desires create the greatest tensions in her loyalty. The first of these obstacles can be explained in terms of mind and body. Deanna is used to being loyal to her mind. Two years in isolation searching for coyotes places her loyalty clearly in the realm of the mind. Eddie Bondo’s presence, however, awakens her body. The contention is initially shown through her pistol. Kingsolver writes that Deanna “went to bed with Eddie Bondo all over her mind and got up with a government-issue pistol tucked in her belt” (6). Deanna seeks to protect her loyalty to the mind over her loyalty to the body. It is important to note that her loyalty to the mind, to her knowledge and search for coyotes, represents her loyalty to the self. She continues to explain, “*I have a gun. He can’t hurt me*, but she knew as she thought these words that some other tables had turned. He’d come back. She had willed him back to this spot” (7). The tables that she mentions show that her loyalty to the self is losing the battle. When he returns, Kingsolver reasons that Deanna “was not sure she could bear all the hours of an evening and a night spent close to him in her tiny cabin, wanting, not touching” (21). Deanna’s body wins over her mind. The mind’s final surrender in this battle is shown when she “arched her back and slid her weapon gently out and away across the floorboards” (24). She surrenders her weapon to her body’s desires. Kingsolver says, “[i]t was the body’s decision, a body with no more choice of its natural history than an orchid has, or the bee it needs, and so they would both get lost here, she [Deanna] would let him in, anywhere he wanted to go” (24). She betrays her loyalty to the self for her body. However, Deanna does not fully understand the consequences until after she begins the affair. Eddie Bondo

has come to Zebulon Mountain to hunt coyotes, the same creatures that she has dedicated her life to studying and protecting.

Her affair with Eddie Bondo continues to create a tension in self loyalty. First, Deanna spends time with Eddie that her mind wants to spend finding the coyotes: “[t]his day was going. Was gone already, she might as well say it: to *him*, her time and all the choices she thought she’d made for good” (97). Deanna realizes that she sacrifices time that is dedicated to nature for Eddie. Here, she seems to question her choice. After this incident, Deanna tries to motivate Eddie to leave through arguing with him. Kingsolver notes of Deanna that, “[s]he’d done her best to run him off, flying into her rage at him up in the chestnut long, yet he persisted in her territory” (168). Despite her efforts to remain loyal to the self and nature, Eddie continues to distract her.

A second aspect of her loyalty contention is the fact that Eddie Bondo comes to the mountain to hunt coyotes. Deanna must try to remain loyal to the coyotes while her body controls her decisions. She tells Eddie, “[y]ou’re a good tracker, but I’m a better one. If you find any coyote pups around here and kill them, I’ll put a bullet in your leg. Accidentally” (182). This warning is a clear indication that Deanna wants to remain loyal to the self, to the coyotes. However, despite her desire to be loyal to the animals, she cannot force Eddie to leave. While Eddie remains on the mountain, Deanna forces herself to stay away from the coyotes. She does not want accidentally to lead him to her beloved animals; however, they soon see the coyote pups, and Deanna must choose, for she cannot remain loyal to both Eddie and the coyotes. Kingsolver notes that the coyotes “had the strange combination of one protector and one enemy. She [Deanna] didn’t trust her power to bargain for their safety. In the six weeks of her acquaintance with Eddie Bondo, including both his presence and his absences, she’d hedged and

evaded” (201). Deanna realizes that she cannot protect the coyotes from Eddie. She tries to sway his opinion of the animal. She says to him, “I’m going to change your mind or die trying” (323). She asks him to read her masters thesis in order to change his mind, but Deanna realizes that Eddie will continue to want to kill the coyotes. She also realizes that she must choose between her two loyalties. Kingsolver questions, “[w]hen a body wanted one thing wholly and a mind wanted the opposite, which of the two was *she*, Deanna?” (363). Deanna does not have to choose because Eddie leaves of his own accord; however, Deanna must deal with the fact that she does not change his mind: “[h]e’d left with his mind unchanged. If anything hurt Deanna, it was that she’d made no dent, and never altered his heart to make room in it for a coyote” (432). Deanna tries to convince Eddie to adopt her own loyalty; however, her efforts clearly fail to convince him.

In the end, Deanna does not choose between her loyalties. He leaves, and she can seemingly remain loyal to the coyotes. However, Deanna learns that she is pregnant with Eddie’s child, and her loyalties must now change. She realizes that she cannot bear the child on the mountain in isolation. Kingsolver notes that Deanna must “step somehow from the realm of ghosts she’d inhabited all her life to commit herself irrevocably to the living” (386). In summation, her clash of loyalties does not come from remaining loyal to the coyotes as well as Eddie Bondo. Deanna realizes that she will never be alone again. She realizes that the isolation she sought on Zebulon Mountain is lost and concludes “that *solitude* was the faultiest of human perceptions” (434). The summer storm that Deanna experiences on the mountain teaches her that “[*t*]here is no safety here,” and Deanna realizes that the solitude she sought on the mountain can no longer offer her protection (434). She can now leave the mountain. Her loyalty to the coyotes is fulfilled. The pups will survive, and Deanna must take care of her unborn child. Amanda

Cockrell notes that Prodigal Summer is really about reproduction. She says, that “it doesn’t matter how we reproduce ourselves, as long as we do” (par. 45). Deanna protects coyote reproduction and will now produce her own child. Her loyalties change not to accommodate Eddie Bondo, but because of what he gave her: a child.

Likewise, Lusa’s loyalty to her husband Cole creates problems between her self loyalty and her loyalty to him. Her loyalty to the self is basically the root of their marital problems. Kingsolver discusses Lusa’s feelings: “[i]t stirred up her impatience with these people who seemed determined to exterminate every living thing in sight[,]” which includes her husband Cole (32). Many of their arguments revolve around this fact. Cole suggests to her “[w]hy don’t you write the garden column for the newspaper, Lusa?...Think of all you could teach us sorry-ass bumpkins” (34). Clearly, Lusa’s self loyalty to nature and her education create a tension in her marriage. She criticizes Cole and the other farmers for their methods, and in return, Cole feels that her criticism is aimed directly at him. Lusa uses her biology background to try to explain their marital problems: “[i]n many species of moths, Darwin had observed, *the males prefer to inhabit more open territory, while the females cling under cover*. She and Cole were a biological cliché, was that it? A male and female following their separate natures?” (35). Lusa’s education makes it difficult for her to follow Cole.

Furthermore, Cole also creates an obstacle in Lusa’s loyalty to her heritage. She often curses him in different languages. He says to her, “[i]f my Ay-rab mama had taught me to swear, I wouldn’t be proud of it” (45). Lusa takes this criticism offensively and Kingsolver concludes, “Ay-rab Mama, Polack daddy- he held this against her too, apparently, along with the rest of his family” (45). Much in the same way that Lusa believes her in-laws are against her, she also believes that Cole is against her. Kingsolver says that Lusa “felt like a frontier mail-order bride,

hardly past her wedding and already wondering how she could have left her city and beloved career for the narrow place a rural county holds open for a farmer's wife" (46). It is not just Cole who causes her conflict in loyalty but the entire rural lifestyle that dictates Lusa is as an oddity because of her knowledge of nature and her heritage.

Because Lusa remains loyal to herself, despite Cole's displeasure, she does not really learn her husband's personality until after his death. She explains, "I'm having this retrospective marriage, starting at the end and moving backward, getting acquainted with Cole through all the different ages he was before I met him" (163). As she gets to know her dead husband, Lusa discovers that they have more in common than she originally imagined. She learns that Cole had experimented with better farming techniques when he was younger. She learns about Cole through people's stories and memories of him. Kingsolver notes that "in the absence of Cole, in the house where he'd grown up, she [Lusa] was learning to cohabit with the whole of his life" (437). It is only after his death that Lusa realizes the complexity of her husband because she no longer has to battle between loyalties to herself and loyalties to him. After he dies, she is free to leave and return to her studies; however, she remains loyal to him by staying in the house. During his life, her loyalties create many marital problems, yet after his death, she is free to be loyal to both herself and Cole. Kingsolver concludes, "Cole was not to be a husband for whom one cooked, with whom one sat down to meals. He would be a second childhood to carry alongside her [Lusa's] own, the child becoming the man for all the years that had led up to their meeting" (437). Lusa notes that she will not have a traditional relationship with her husband but learn about him as she continues to grow.

In summation, while Cole is alive, Lusa remains loyal to herself. This loyalty causes great problems in her marriage because it clashes with her loyalty to him. After his death,

however, Lusa is free to be loyal to herself without consequences. Ironically, it is only after Cole's death that Lusa becomes loyal to him, learning of his life and why he made certain decisions that clash against her loyalty to the self.

Loyalty to Family. Any discussion of family concerning Deanna Wolfe is complicated, at best. She lives in total isolation on Zebulon Mountain; hence, one might believe that Deanna is without a family. However, the forest itself comprises Deanna's family, and she is fiercely loyal to all her forest kin. She explains, "[t]here's people I love. But there's so many other kinds of life I love, too. And people act so hateful to every kind but their own" (175). Deanna's true affinity is for nature; she lives on the mountain in order to preserve nature. Kingsolver notes, "[t]wo years after her [Deanna's] arrival, one of the most heavily poached ranges in southern Appalachia was becoming an intact ecosystem" (59). She does her best to protect all life forms on the mountain. When she saw the den of coyotes for the first time "[s]he wondered if there was anyone alive she could tell about these little dogs, this tightly knotted pack of survival and nurture. Not to dissect their history and nature; she had done that already. What she craved to explain was how much they felt like family" (203). So much of Deanna's life has been spent studying these creatures, and trying to prove their existence on Zebulon Mountain, that she develops kindred ties with them. Moreover, her desire to protect the wildlife on Zebulon manifests itself in her response to phoebes nesting on the edge of her cabin. She watches the nest constantly and is very careful never to startle the mother bird away from the chicks during the evening because the bird cannot find its way back to the nest at night. Despite Deanna's efforts, the mother bird loses its babies. After a second hatching, Deanna is even more concerned: "[n]ow her brain settled on phoebe worries: they might have scared the mother off of her nest before dark, or a baby might have fallen out, something that had already happened twice" (327). Deanna keeps a constant check on

the phoebe family, and her loyalty to that family presents just one example of her family loyalty to nature.

However, this family loyalty to the phoebes creates a conflict for Deanna between loyalty to the self and loyalty to the family (nature). Deanna's original loyalty to self in nature contains a complete understanding of natural processes, namely the food chain. Her graduate studies in wildlife biology teach her the importance of the ecosystem. Encompassed in this loyalty to nature, Deanna is loyal also to her education in biology. She understands that some animals, including animals that she may have an affinity for, must become food for other animals. Part of her loyalty to the coyotes connects with her understanding of this ecosystem. However, her loyalty to family (nature) makes accepting this fact difficult. The same night she worries about the phoebe chicks, she goes to check on them. Instead of finding the baby birds in their nest, she "passed over and then came back to what looked like a pile of black tubing. Studied it. Found the small, round wide-set eyes shining back at her perched smugly on top of the partially coiled body. She swept the light very slowly down the dark body until she found them: four discernible lumps" (329). The phoebes that Deanna has watched over all summer fall prey to a black snake. Ironically, Deanna is aware of the snake's presence on her roof all summer, but she decides to leave him alone because she does not want to interfere with nature. She says this snake, "was her familiar, the same blacksnake...she had defended as a predator doing its job" (329). When the snake eats her beloved phoebes, Deanna cannot help but be upset. She says, "[b]ut not the babies,....Not these; they were mine. At the end of the summer the babies are all there will be" (329). Deanna is clearly torn between her loyalty to the self, which includes accepting *all* natural processes, and her loyalty to family, which is shown through the phoebes. Kingsolver shows how greatly this loss of life affects Deanna: "[s]he didn't understand how far her emotions were

running away with her until she felt the coolness of tears running down her face” (329).

Deanna’s loyalties to both her self and her family are difficult.

A further difficulty in this loyalty to her family (nature) is seen through her inability to become a part of nature. Though she is loyal to her family, she is not a part of it. She explains, “I’m an outsider, I’m just watching” (258). Deanna realizes that she could never be a part of this nature. Deanna concludes, “[t]he world was what it was, a place with its own rules of hunger and satisfaction. Creatures lived and mated and died, they came and went, as surely as summer did. They would go their own ways, of their own accord” (365). This abstraction applies to much more than the wildlife on Zebulon Mountain. This statement clearly aligns Deanna’s loyalties to herself. She understands natural processes, and, in the end, this knowledge wins over her desire to help the forest family. She realizes that they will survive with or without her.

Deanna’s loyalty to family is the most unique view of family loyalties discussed in this study. Her loyalty to nature does create a tension in the self. She wants to save certain animals because she dearly loves them; however, she must accept that some animals will die to feed others. Her loyalty to self wins over her loyalty to family because she accepts this fact. Amanda Cockrell points out that “Deana is a biologist, not a sentimentalist” (par. 42). Cockrell is accurate because Deanna privileged her training in biology over her sentimental attachment to the phoebes. By pushing her background in biology over her attachment to the animals, she is being loyal to herself. Her background in biology and her desire to study coyotes is what motivates her to live on Zebulon Mountain in the first place. Deanna’s training forces her to see that she cannot interfere with natural process beyond keeping human disturbances away, which oftentimes includes herself.

Lusa Landowski's loyalty to family also creates an obstacle in her loyalty to the self. Initially, Lusa is loyal to herself over her in-laws. She does not care that they disapprove of her education and heritage. However, the majority of Lusa's story details how she finds a way to become part of her husband's family after his death. The question is why would Lusa want to be a part of Cole's family when they so fervently disapprove of her? Mary Jean DeMarr points out that a main concern of Kingsolver is discussing "the ways in which people help themselves and others survive" and concludes that an important factor in this concern is "family, friendship, and community" (60-1). The entire family suffers the loss of Lusa's husband Cole; however, it is not until after his death that Lusa gains perspective about his family.

After Cole's death, Lusa realizes that his sisters do not mean as much harm as they seem. Lusa hosts a cookout for Cole's family at her house. At the cookout, Lusa comes to realize that Cole's family is not as malicious as she originally believes. Kingsolver says, "Lusa watched the sisters volley, surprised that they could be as mean about their own husbands and each other as they'd ever been toward her" (225). As Lusa befriends Cole's youngest sister Jewel, she learns that many of his family's offenses were unintentional. Jewel explains why people call Lusa "Mrs. Widener": "[n]obody meant any harm honey. It's just normal to take your husband's name around here. We're just regular country people with country ways" (126). Jewel's explanation shows that the family does not intentionally seek to offend her by never using her name. Later, another sister, Hannie-Mavis, confesses to Lusa that they did not say her name because they were "scared of getting it wrong" (308). As Lusa discovers that the offenses of Cole's family were mainly unintentional, her desire to be a part of Cole's family begins.

Her desire to be a part of Cole's family creates a major challenge to her self loyalty. After Cole dies, Lusa has the opportunity to return to her studies. Kingsolver notes Lusa's realization:

“it was that she could leave this place, be anybody she wanted anywhere at all” (71). The prospect of leaving Zebulon County excites Lusa, yet she does not leave. Kingsolver explains Lusa’s feelings:

For the hundredth time Lusa tried and failed to imagine how she was going to stay here, or why. When she tried to describe her life in words, there was nothing at all to hold her in this place. And words were all she could offer over the phone to her father, to Arlie and her other friends, to her former boss: ‘Less than a year,’ she was starting to say, ‘I’ll be out of here’ (239).

Lusa is well aware that she will have trouble finding her own niche in Cole’s family. While they are not against her to the extent that she originally believed, they are still far from completely accepting her. They expect her to leave and hope that she gives them the farm. However, Lusa cannot leave. She explains what holds her to the farm, “[t]here were the odors of honeysuckle and freshly turned earth, and ancient songs played out on the roof by the rain” (239). Lusa begins to identify the farm with her self loyalties. She can hear her heritage through the rain’s song; she relates the odors of the farm to moths and their ability to communicate through smell. As she questions why she does not leave, she becomes more attached to the place and to Cole’s family.

Lusa develops loyalty to Cole’s family while she maintains her self loyalty. She explains to Jewel’s daughter Crys why the family seems so disapproving of her: “[b]ecause I’m different from them. Because I wasn’t born here. Because I like bugs. You name it. Because your uncle Cole died and I’m still here, and they’re mad because life’s not fair. I don’t know exactly why; I’m just guessing. People don’t always have good reasons for feeling how they do” (298). This quotation proves that Lusa remains loyal to herself. She realizes why Cole’s family disapproves of her, yet she does not attempt to change. Lusa still hunts bugs, and she does not leave when the

family believes that she will. Furthermore, Lusa develops an affinity for Jewel's children that causes her to ask for custody of them when Jewel reveals that she is dying. She tells Jewel, "I love Crys and I love Lowell. I'm not sure I'd be the greatest mother, but I think I could learn on those two" (381). Lusa develops a loyalty to Cole's family through Jewel's cancer. In the end, she asks for Jewel's children, which is a definite indication that she will remain on the farm.

Lusa's loyalty to family is unique because she does not become loyal to them until after Cole's death. She learns that the family does not despise her as she had originally believed. Helping the sisters cope with Jewel's cancer is the major reason Lusa adopts this family loyalty. She tells Hannie-Mavis, "I'm your sister now, you're stuck with me" (308). Clearly, Lusa has come to identify with Cole's family. As Lusa becomes more loyal to Cole's family, however, she maintains her self loyalty. She tells Crys why the family thinks she is odd, yet she makes no effort to change, which shows that she is loyal to herself.

In the end, Lusa does not choose her self loyalty above her loyalty to family; instead, she learns that the two loyalties can coexist together. Her knowledge of bugs and wildlife helps create a bond with Jewel's daughter Crys. Lusa believes that her individuality and loyalty to the self help her relate to Crys, the child who does not seem to fit in with the family either. Lusa will rely on her loyalty to the self as she raises Crys and Lowell, yet, at the same time, she has chosen to be loyal to Cole's family through raising the children.

In conclusion, both Deanna Wolfe and Lusa Landowski remain loyal to themselves. Charlotte Wright notes that "Kingsolver's writings, although they all develop thematically along similar lines, are by no means simplistic. There are no easy answers for the world's problems; there are lots of complex questions. But an individual...can make a difference" (510). Deanna Wolfe makes a difference through remaining loyal to herself, which allows her to save the

coyotes. Lusa Landowski remains loyal to herself, which allows her to become a positive influence for both Crys and Lowell, Jewel's children who Lusa will raise. Both of these characters have a strong sense of self, and their loyalties to that self are apparent through their actions.

Deanna Wolfe's self loyalty is rooted in her education and loyalty to the coyotes. To remain loyal to herself, she seeks isolation on Zebulon Mountain in order to be the only woman she knows how to be, a woman outside of traditional propriety. Moreover, in isolation, Deanna remains loyal to the only family she has on the mountain, the wildlife. Her education forces her to accept certain facts about that family, namely that some must die in order to preserve the food chain. Deanna remains loyal to herself above her family because she accepts this fact. Furthermore, Deanna's major contention in loyalty deals with her body, which goes against her mind. Her body wins, and she has an affair with Eddie Bondo.

Similarly, Lusa Landowski remains loyal to the self that emerges from her education and heritage. She refuses to change these aspects of herself when she knows that her in-laws do not agree or will not accept what they feel is odd. Lusa remains loyal to herself, even during her marriage, despite the marital problems it causes. Lusa, who by virtue of her heritage and education, creates a special affinity for the home and stays there, motivated by a self-loyalty compatible with loyalty to Cole's family.

As Mary Jean DeMarr notes, Barbara Kingsolver's Prodigal Summer presents a new version of the bildungsroman. While both of these women seek to define themselves throughout the novel, they remain loyal to their sense of self. For both ladies, that sense of self is deeply rooted in their educations; they value knowledge as can be seen in their prospective graduate

studies. Furthermore, both women refuse to sacrifice their self loyalty for families, lovers, or husbands. They clearly align their self loyalties as the priority in everything they do.

CHAPTER 6

THE MIDWIFE'S TALE

Denise Giardina and Barbara Kingsolver both create heroines that have evolved outside the traditional loyalty trends of nineteenth century Appalachian characters. Gretchen Moran Laskas carries on this new tradition through her character Elizabeth in The Midwife's Tale. Taking place in West Virginia during the early 1900s, The Midwife's Tale chronicles the life and struggles of Elizabeth, a trained midwife who comes from a long line of midwives. George Brosi argues that “[m]idwives are caught between traditional culture and mainstream medicine, and West Virginians in general are also often caught between a traditional regional way of life and the mainstream” (11). This comment directly relates to Elizabeth's main struggle, that between tradition and the self.

Caught in a world of tradition, Elizabeth seemingly has no choice but to be a midwife. The plot of the story revolves around her choices and how she seeks to define herself, whether it be breaking tradition or reinforcing it. Meredith Sue Willis notes that “Laskas's book is more about the power of women than the oppression of women” (“Examining the Truth” 21). Hence, while Elizabeth may “grapple passionately with important issues of life and death,” she never has to battle issues of oppression (“Examining the Truth” 21). It is important to note that Laskas creates a novel full of strong feminine characters. Though she fights tradition in many aspects, Elizabeth is a strong literary character who makes decisions for herself. Hence, in many ways Elizabeth is unlike characters discussed earlier in this study, namely Ellen and Gertie. Oppression is never a struggle for Elizabeth, which more closely aligns her with Deanna Wolfe and Lusa Landowski.

Consequently, Elizabeth's main contention in loyalty lies in matters of choice. To become loyal to herself, Elizabeth will abandon her traditional role as a midwife on several occasions. However, as time passes, she learns that her loyalty to the self is much more encompassing than she originally believed. Loyalties in The Midwife's Tale are more intricately connected than in previous novels. As Elizabeth learns her loyalty to the self, she realizes that family creates a pivotal part of that loyalty. Furthermore, she learns that her loyalty to the man she loves is not a part of her self loyalty as she originally believes. For Elizabeth, The Midwife's Tale is the story of her discovering loyalty to the self through the many experiences of her life. Loyalties to family and lover help Elizabeth to define her self loyalty. Elizabeth's journey to the self is discovered by studying how her original loyalty to the self is changed, modified, and reinforced by her loyalties to her family and lover.

Loyalty to Self

Elizabeth's loyalty to the self is a process of discovery rather than one of defining. Tradition dictates that Elizabeth should be a midwife; however, her loyalty to the self creates a contention in that role. At the beginning of the novel, Elizabeth identifies herself as a midwife: "I come from a long line of midwives, from my great-granny Denniker to Granny Whitely to Mamma to me" (1). She defines herself in terms of tradition; she is a midwife because all the women in her family before her were midwives. Sandra Lee Barney explains this tradition: "[a]s a number of historians have documented, midwives were the standard of care throughout much of the United States until the first decades of the twentieth century" (9). Barney notes the importance of midwives in history because of the care they provided, and the capability of mountain midwives proves their importance in traditional culture. Furthermore, even when modern medicine became available to women in the mountains, they generally refused it in favor

of traditional midwifery methods: “[o]ften unfamiliar with the few physicians who did practice in their counties and wedded to a female-centered model of birth and delivery that was family anchored in the community, many Appalachian women saw little reason to reject traditional midwifery in favor of scientific medicine” (Barney 116). Elizabeth’s traditional role as a midwife is important not only to her but to her community as well. Much like Carrie in Storming Heaven, Elizabeth’s identity is coupled with selflessness in helping people.

Furthermore, as Elizabeth performs her first birthing, she is happy in her role: “[m]y body hummed and stirred like one who has witnessed a great joy- and I had, as Sarah’s baby had been a big boy” (7). However, as Elizabeth learns the darker side of being a midwife, a contention between herself and her traditional role is created. Her mother explains the midwife’s mercy, which is when the midwife kills an unwanted baby. Elizabeth is immediately appalled and faces the first great trial of her life. She says that she will never perform the midwife’s mercy: “‘You can’t make me,’ I told her, saying words I never would have dreamed I’d say to my own mama” (9). Willis explains that Elizabeth is “troubled in a way of many young people by the shifting of the border between right and wrong, and perhaps even by the idea that the women- the women in labor as well as the midwives and the women’s own mothers and sisters- should hold the power of life and death, and sometimes decide that death is best” (Examining the Truth 24). Elizabeth is not ready to shift her definitions of right and wrong. Instead, she clearly defines that killing a child is wrong and goes against her traditional role to assert that belief.

Elizabeth runs away from her mother but soon discovers that she cannot run away from her traditional role as a midwife. She goes to live with her Granny who tells her, “[y]ou were born to be a midwife” (18). Her grandmother works hard to assert tradition over Elizabeth’s sense of right and wrong. As Elizabeth continues to proclaim that she does not want to be a

midwife, her grandmother tries to prove that Elizabeth has no choice. Her grandmother says, “you don’t change who you are just by wishing” (23). The point that her grandmother tries to make is that being a midwife is much more than a profession. It is part of an identity. Elizabeth believes that she is being loyal to herself by choosing not to be a midwife; however, her grandmother knows that such a choice cannot be made. She teaches Elizabeth herbal medicine, and Elizabeth confesses “but even the healing gift of herbals seemed too close to the life my mama lived. A life I didn’t want” (25).

Even though Elizabeth may not want the life of a midwife, she does not have the power to deny someone who needs her help. She delivers another child and resumes her traditional role. Elizabeth’s loyalty to her traditional role even leads her to perform the midwife’s mercy despite her belief that it is wrong: “I pressed the new pillows bought by a man who was not the baby’s father into the child’s face. The little boy never cried, but I did” (70). Elizabeth’s performance of the midwife’s mercy shows that she accepts her traditional role.

Another aspect of Elizabeth’s loyalty to the self lies in her desire to have children. She explains, “I was a woman, with a woman’s body. I was made to be having babies, not just delivering them” (134). While Elizabeth remains loyal to her traditional role as a midwife, she desperately wants to have children of her own. She tells Alvin “I wanted this baby so badly that I couldn’t tell you. I prayed for this baby” (137). Having a child is Elizabeth’s own greatest personal desire. The years she spends delivering babies only heightens her desire to have a child of her own. Elizabeth has listened to women talk of their pregnancies for many years, never being able to discuss her own pregnancy. She explains, “[f]or years I had listened to other women, and now I was the one who had something to say. I wanted to proclaim it from the mountain- to run down the streets of Philippi shouting my good news” (134). When she believes

she is pregnant, Elizabeth is overcome with excitement. Part of her self loyalty is defined by her desire to bear her own children. Ellen in The Time of Man views bearing children as a betrayal of self loyalty. In contrast, Elizabeth views bearing children as an extension of her self loyalty. The distinction here is partly explained by Elizabeth's association with delivering children as a midwife. Years of delivering babies heightens her desire to have one of her own.

Elizabeth's desire to have children presents a view contradictory to Ellen in The Time of Man. Where Ellen views having children as a loss of identity, much like many women in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Elizabeth views motherhood as an extension of her identity. As discussed in the introduction, Elizabeth values Rich's "*potential relationship*" that a mother experiences with her child, rather than the "*institution*" of motherhood that creates patriarchal restraints that oppress women (13). Elizabeth is well aware of the sacred bond between mother and child, having seen it again and again in her profession; she desires this bond. Also, incredibly important to the contrast between Elizabeth's desired motherhood and Ellen's submission into motherhood is the matter of choice. Ellen's life quickly became one of acceptance as she discovers that she has no choice but continuously to bear children. On the other hand, because of her grandmother, Elizabeth is well aware of herbal remedies to prevent conception. Elizabeth has the choice to have children while Ellen does not.

However, her excitement over gaining her greatest desire, a child, is defeated when she learns that she will never bear children. Elizabeth discovers from her mother that she is going through menopause and is not really pregnant. Because of her great disappointment over never having children, she once again abandons her role as a midwife. She says, "I'm not midwifing any more. I can't do it- holding those babies in my hands when I know I'll never hold my own" (144). Once again, Elizabeth seeks to protect herself from the personal pain not having children

causes her. She explains, “I never really wanted to be a midwife, but I did it because I had to” (144). Elizabeth confesses that she abandons her loyalty to the self that never wanted to midwife in order to be loyal to her traditional role. However, her decision not to deliver babies again is one she cannot keep. In a time of need, she takes up her old training: “[t]hen the woman on the bed let out a howl and I went to her. The years seemed to melt away. I might have been sixteen standing there, or twenty, or twenty-five. My fingers moved about the girl’s body, taking note of what might go wrong. Granny had known me so well. I would always be a midwife- not because of what I did, but because of who I was” (224). Elizabeth comes to the final realization that part of her loyalty to the self is being a midwife. Her Granny is correct in asserting that being a midwife is part of an identity rather than a profession.

Throughout the novel, Elizabeth seeks to define her loyalty to the self. On two occasions, she quits being a midwife in order to be loyal to herself. First, she chooses to quit because she feels that the midwife’s mercy is wrong. Second, she quits when she realizes that she will never have her own children. However, as Elizabeth constantly returns to her profession, she realizes that being a midwife is part of her self loyalty. She discovers that her grandmother is right. Elizabeth may not have wanted to be a midwife, but she could not deny that part of herself. She confesses that she will always be a midwife because it is part of who she is. Hence, Elizabeth learns that her loyalty to the self is a loyalty to her traditional role as a midwife.

Loyalty to Husband/lover

Elizabeth originally believes that she is being loyal to herself with her love for Alvin. First, growing up, Elizabeth wants Alvin’s love. She asks her grandmother, “[y]ou know an herb that will make a man fall in love with you?” I asked. For I’d seen Alvin Denniker that day, coming out of Switzer’s store” (20). Elizabeth loves Alvin and has loved him from a young age.

Elizabeth remembers falling in love with Alvin. As a child, she has a bad dream and runs from the house. Alvin finds her in the woods and comforts her by telling her stories of the mountain. She explains that as a child she thought “Alvin and I could build a little house with a thick door to shut out the buffalo and bears” (29). Even after Alvin leaves home and returns with a wife, Elizabeth still loves him. She explains, “Denniker men love only one woman.... Wasn’t just the men-folk who loved their women- I was part Denniker, too” (47). Elizabeth notes that she loves only one man: Alvin. She believes that because she is part Denniker that she loves just as fiercely and loyally as the men in the family do. Clearly, Elizabeth believes that she is being loyal to herself through her love for Alvin.

Alvin is an imperative part of Elizabeth’s return to being a midwife. He comes to her and asks for her help because his wife is delivering their child. Elizabeth explains why she goes: “[f]or so long now I had longed for a chance to show him I was woman enough for him. I could not deny him anything. Even this” (32). Elizabeth returns to being a midwife to prove herself to Alvin, even though he is married and she will deliver his child. As she assists in delivering the baby, she notes, “whatever jealousy I’d carried was lost in the heat of the battle. I knew her [Alvin’s wife] in the way a woman knows a woman and will never know a man” (34). Elizabeth overcomes her jealousy of Ivy, Alvin’s wife, while she assists in the delivery. Her loyalty to the self wins over her loyalty to Alvin. Elizabeth’s loyalty to being a midwife overcomes her feelings for Alvin. Here a loyalty to the women she helps overcomes her loyalty to the man she loves. Elizabeth successfully overlooks her love for Alvin in order to be a midwife to the woman who might be considered her enemy. However, after the birth, her feelings return: “[w]hen I watched the way he looked at her, how they moved together, the sadness came over me again” (42). She loves Alvin dearly, but she realizes that he loves another woman.

After Ivy dies, Elizabeth goes to the mountain to live with Alvin, still believing that her love for him is a manifestation of her self loyalty. She says, “[t]hat I had chosen Alvin was public knowledge now” (97). Elizabeth believes that having Alvin, her heart’s desire, will be her dream come true: “I’m all right, Mama. I was right to go [with Alvin]. We’ll be a family” (102). However, Elizabeth soon learns that her love for Alvin is not what she really wants because he will never return her love. She says, “[h]ere I was, where I’d always wanted to be, and I’d never felt more alone” (105). Elizabeth believes that she is being loyal to herself by going to live on the mountain with Alvin; she has loved this man since she was a child. However, the reality of the situation shows her that her loyalty to Alvin is a sort of waste. She explains, “[w]ithin a few months of living with Alvin, I knew that he never saw anything beyond the brown paper wrapping” (108). Though Elizabeth may spend the majority of her life loving Alvin, he does not return her love. His lack of affection hurts her a great deal, for she has spent her entire life loving him, never realizing that he may not return her love.

Later in life, Elizabeth will bitterly view her love for Alvin as a waste, especially when she meets a man who does love her. She explains,

Here, where I had loved and lost another man [Alvin], believing that I would ever love another took more than my imagination could give. If I reached down to where I held my love for Lauren, for Ivy, for Mama, and even the love I’d wasted on Alvin, there seemed no more to be spared. I’d given away all I had to them, and only Mama was with me still (202).

Elizabeth believes that she wasted her love on Alvin and strongly feels that she has no more love to give. She marries David despite these feelings and must grapple with the consequences. She says, “I wanted David, but I love him not” (202). Elizabeth’s loyalty to Alvin, Lauren, and

Meribeth consumes all of her emotions. She feels that she has nothing to give David. Her loyalty to her family and Alvin seems to have overwhelmed her. Elizabeth, at this point, perhaps chooses to remain loyal to herself by keeping her love from David. She seeks to protect herself from further pain. She notes that out of all the people she has loved, only her mother remains. She feels that all her love has been wasted on people who do not truly appreciate it, particularly Alvin.

In summation, Elizabeth is loyal to herself through her lovers. She believes that she is loyal to herself by going with Alvin, for she had loved him her entire life. Elizabeth thinks her loyalty for him is a manifestation of her identity. However, she learns that her love for Alvin is not actually part of that loyalty to the self. When she looks back on the mistake bitterly, she tries to withhold her love from David in order to protect her real self loyalty. Her mistaken belief that identity is reflected through her love for Alvin causes her to attempt to protect her real loyalty when another man offers his love. Through denying David her love, she seeks to remain loyal to the self that she discovers throughout the novel. This distinction between what she believes is self loyalty and what actually is self loyalty is shown through her inability initially to trust David. Elizabeth has learned that her love for Alvin was never part of her identity. In consequence, this lesson makes loving David difficult.

Loyalty to Family. Family for Elizabeth creates a bond that is almost infused with loyalty to the self; Elizabeth's mother is so closely identified with her that she seems a part of Elizabeth's identity, which closely resembles Rich's definition of the "*potential relationship*" between mother and child (13). In many instances, Elizabeth describes her mother Meribeth as an extension of her own body. Elizabeth explains,

The heat from Mama's body mingled with my own and for a moment it was hard to know where Mama let off and where I began. The arms around me could have belonged to either of us, the blood pumping through our bodies coursing through both our veins. Mama and me, together. This is how we once were, I thought, my ear listing to the gurgle of her belly. And how, in part, we would always be (72).

Elizabeth consistently connects to her mother both physically and emotionally. The physical connection is portrayed as a sort of mythical bond that serves as an extension of this emotional connection. The mythical bond between mother and daughter is most starkly portrayed during times of emotional anguish. Meribeth is portrayed as part of Elizabeth when Elizabeth struggles with emotional turmoil. Barbara Matz notes that "[t]he mountain family is a closely knit one, not because of the shared activities which are usually done with the reference group, but because of emotional dependence" (220). It is quite likely that part of Elizabeth's attachment to Meribeth deals with emotional dependence. Matz explains that emotional dependence "comes partly from the fact that people are evaluated by who they are, i.e., what family they belong to, rather than in terms of what they can do. The individual is constantly reminded of the origins and the achievements and shortcomings of the family" (220). Because the culture defines people based on their family origins, members of the family come to depend on each other for emotional support. Society defines Elizabeth in the same terms as her mother: she is a midwife. Part of Elizabeth's emotional dependence comes from this identification. The above quoted fusion between mother and daughter occurs after Elizabeth has performed the midwife's mercy for the first time. The mythical connection they share partly comes from their similar identification, an identification made by both society and the characters themselves.

Likewise, in other areas of the novel, Elizabeth and Meribeth fuse into one character during times of emotional trial. After Elizabeth realizes that she will never have a child, she notes that “[m]y going through the change [of life] had aged her, too. I loved her fiercely then, even in my own hurt. I tried to claw my way through my pain- to reach her and ease her suffering- but the journey was too great and I was too weak”(145). During her time of anguish, Elizabeth tries to reach for her mother. Willis notes that the “mother-daughter dyads support each other through illness and emotional hard times” (“Examining the Truth” 26). Elizabeth and Meribeth merge during times of difficulty. Their emotional dependence is embodied by the mythical physical connection they have. For example, when her mother dies, Elizabeth explains, “I slept that night beside her, waking to find her body still. I thought for sure I would know the moment that it happened. That I’d feel something, somewhere, in my body to let me know she’d gone. But I didn’t” (229). Elizabeth’s belief that she would know the moment her mother dies stems from the almost mythical physical bond they share that is based on their emotional dependence. Laskas portrays the characters as having a mythical bond in terms of the physical connection mother and daughter share to prove the extent of their emotional dependence. They are portrayed as physically connecting during times of great emotional anguish, such as when Elizabeth performs the midwife’s mercy or when she realizes that she cannot have children. The physical bond serves to strengthen the emotional connection they share.

Elizabeth seems clearly loyal to her mother; however, it is a loyalty that she fights in her youth. As Elizabeth grapples with her own issues of loyalty in terms of her traditional role as a midwife, so too does she rebel against her loyalty to Meribeth. Elizabeth explains when she leaves her mother that “[b]y going to stay with Granny, Mama would not only know how upset I was, but she might also feel a little bit of pain, too. This last thought shames me most” (11).

Elizabeth wants her mother to experience the turmoil that she felt when she discovers that Meribeth performs the midwife's mercy. Elizabeth's own conflicts in creating her identity cause her to betray her loyalty to her mother because the two are so closely identified. As Elizabeth realizes that being a midwife is part of her identity, she joins her mother in this mystic bond. After Elizabeth resumes being a midwife, she notes this special bond with her mother: "I reached out my hand and took both of hers. Even when she was safe upon the other side, I kept holding them, letting the firm flesh settle around my own. My mother's hands, I thought. My hands, too" (37). She associates her hands with her mother's hands because she has resumed her traditional role as a midwife. Clearly, her bond with Meribeth is associated with her self loyalty. Hence, in being loyal to herself, she is also loyal to Meribeth.

Elizabeth also has a special bond with her adopted daughter Lauren. This child brings Elizabeth back to being a midwife and turns out to be a "miracle baby" because she was born dead and came alive without any help from the midwife (36). Lauren is responsible for Elizabeth's return to being a midwife and her recognition that this traditional role is a part of her self loyalty. Immediately a bond is created between Elizabeth and the infant named after her: "[m]y name baby. And I would be there, watching her grow to see what her life would become. I promised her this. I would think of her not only as Ivy's, but part mine, too" (41). Though Elizabeth is not the mother of the child, she clearly develops a strong bond with the girl from infancy. After Lauren's mother dies, Elizabeth takes over the role of mother: "Lauren started to cry then and I hugged her close, whispering to her as I had done since she was a baby. Ivy would have wanted me to have her" (95). As Elizabeth raises Lauren, their bond becomes stronger.

Despite their strong attachment to each other, Elizabeth betrays her loyalty to Lauren for her loyalty to the self twice. When Elizabeth realizes that she cannot have children, she also

realizes that Lauren has a mystical healing gift. As earlier discussed, part of Elizabeth's loyalty to the self lies in her great desire to give birth to a child. Elizabeth views bearing children as an extension of herself. The strong emotional bond that she shares with her mother reinforces the belief that children are an extension of the self. The fact that the emotional bond is embodied through a mythical description of physical merging shows the extent that Elizabeth believes having children is a part of self identity. She says to Lauren, "[y]ou healed Herman. Why not me?" (143). Elizabeth continues, "do you think I wouldn't do the same for you?"(143). Elizabeth overlooks that she places this much pressure on a child because she desires to have a baby of her own. Her desire for a child causes her to abandon her loyalty to Lauren by pressuring the girl to perform a miracle. Elizabeth explains, "[f]or a moment I had forgotten I was the mother and she was just a child" (143). The pressure she places on Lauren shows the betrayal of her family loyalty. Clearly, Elizabeth's desire for a child overcomes her loyalty to Lauren. Elizabeth places her loyalty to the self, which is manifested in her desire to bear a child, above her loyalty to Lauren.

Again, after Lauren is a grown woman, Elizabeth will place a great amount of pressure on her daughter by asking for her help. After Meribeth dies, Elizabeth cannot understand why Lauren did not heal her. Elizabeth takes for granted that Lauren will help Meribeth: "[y]ou can help her, Lauren" (217). Now that Lauren is older, she can explain to her mother that she has no choice in who she heals. She tells Elizabeth: "[s]he has to want me to heal her. And she doesn't" (229). On this second occasion where Elizabeth again pressures Lauren to help her, Lauren is older and can be honest with her mother. However, the fact that Elizabeth pressures Lauren to heal on two occasions shows that Elizabeth is loyal to herself. Elizabeth cannot hide her feelings, even though they hurt her daughter: "[y]ou healed that baby. You heal strangers. You heal

everyone but those who love you” (231-2). Elizabeth’s bitterness over Lauren’s inability to heal both her mother and herself show that she is loyal to herself above her daughter.

The mother-daughter relationships in The Midwife’s Tale are very important parts of Elizabeth’s self loyalty. She consistently views her mother as an extension of herself. Furthermore, Elizabeth’s realization that being a midwife is part of her self loyalty only further proves the connection between Elizabeth and her mother because Meribeth is part of that tradition. This portrayal of motherhood in positive terms, unlike earlier Appalachian characters like Ellen, shows another distinct view of maternity that encompasses the potential bond between mother and child. Both Meribeth and Elizabeth do not view motherhood in terms of the patriarchal institution that oppresses women. Fiona Joy Green points out that the idea that “motherhood is simultaneously oppressive and potentially liberating, is reflected in my own experience as a feminist mother” (emphasis added 126). Hence, by Laskas’s portrayal of motherhood outside of patriarchal constraints shows that Laskas is, at least, indirectly influenced by feminist writings. Laskas’s creation of a literary character intent on being loyal to herself offers further proof of feminist influences on her writing.

Elizabeth has a strong connection with her daughter Lauren; however, it is not examined in terms of the mystical bond she shares with her mother. Perhaps because this mystical bond does not exist, Elizabeth can pressure Lauren to heal both herself and her mother. Through this pressure, Elizabeth seeks to be loyal to herself, first in asking to be healed in order to have a child, and second by asking for her mother’s healing. These requests prove that Elizabeth seeks to be loyal to herself above her family.

Loyalties in The Midwife’s Tale are interconnected. As Elizabeth learns that her loyalty to the self is manifested in her traditional role as a midwife, her mystical bond with her mother

grows. Being loyal to Meribeth is an extension of her self loyalty. She is loyal to herself above her daughter, which is proven by the pressure she places on Lauren for her healing and her mother's healing. Furthermore, her relationship with Lauren is not truly mended until the girl does heal Elizabeth and give her the ability to bear her own child. Lauren confesses that she came home to heal Elizabeth, and Elizabeth notes their bond: "[h]er hand was before me- the rough edges of her skin, the ragged nails I had known all the years of this girl's life. I was Lauren's mama. Nothing in this world was strong enough to keep me from taking that hand in mine" (233). With Lauren's healing, the relationship between this mother and daughter is also healed. Moreover, the healing also allows Elizabeth to give David the love that she felt she no longer had. By having the child, Elizabeth gets her greatest desire. The healing fulfills her self loyalty, and she can now be loyal to David. The Midwife's Tale chronicles Elizabeth's journey to discovering her self loyalty. As she learns what it means to be loyal to herself, she maintains the loyalty.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

For each female protagonist in this study, the search for identity is different. Every character seeks to discover and define her identity in different ways. Ellen's definition of identity is rooted in her community surroundings. Tessie West, as well as the men who find her beautiful, help to create an identity for Ellen that is a great source of strength during difficult times. Ellen relies on this created self during times of great anguish, such as when she fears one of her children may die. In contrast, Gertie, in The Dollmaker, knows her identity from the beginning of the novel. Her struggle is not portrayed as an attempt to discover her identity but in her efforts to remain loyal to her identity. Like many Appalachian characters, Gertie's identity is strongly connected to the land: it is her greatest desire. Gertie seeks to remain loyal to the self by buying the land. Carrie Bishop, in Storming Heaven is like Ellen because her identity is also rooted in the community. Her adoption of the unionization cause becomes part of her loyalty to the self. Carrie's greatest desire is to help the people of her community. Yet, like Gertie, she is also connected to the land. Deanna Wolfe is well aware of her identity from the beginning of Prodigal Summer. She seeks isolation to protect her identity because she does not fit into societal rules of propriety. For Deanna, as well as Lusa Landowski, education creates a great part of their identities. Both women are loyal to their educations and refuse to abandon these particular parts of themselves when society disapproves. Lastly, Elizabeth, like Carrie and Ellen, creates her identity on the basis of her community. Elizabeth learns that being a midwife and helping people is part of her identity.

While each woman in this study has a unique identity, the loyalty of each to that identity varies. Ellen loses her identity as she has children. As the novel progresses, Ellen becomes part

of her mother, Nellie, as she adopts the role of mother. Ellen's merging with Nellie shows a loss of self loyalty. Gertie Nevels, on the other hand, shows a slight progression of self loyalty. She *tries* to remain faithful to the self, as can be seen in her attempt to buy the Tipton Place. Gertie chooses her self loyalty over her devotion to Clovis. Although, in the end, Gertie is forced to remain steadfast to her husband, her efforts to maintain self loyalty create an important point in the progression of loyalty trends. Gertie does attempt to be faithful to herself, even though her effort fails. Carrie Bishop shows a marked change to self loyalty trends. Carrie is faithful to herself which in turn is manifested in her dedication to unionization. It is important to note that her self loyalty closely aligns with her allegiance to her husband. While Carrie remains devoted to herself, the loyalty does not create dramatic contentions with her husband. However, her self loyalty does create a family conflict. Carrie goes against her allegiance to the family for her self loyalty. Here, the progression of loyalty trends meets its first major conflict where loyalty to the self is triumphant. When Gertie meets the major confrontation of her self loyalty against her faithfulness to her husband, she meekly acquiesces; unlike Gertie, Carrie maintains her self loyalty. Carrie is the first example of loyalty to the self being triumphant over one of the two other types of loyalty: children and husband. Both Deanna and Lusa maintain loyalty to the self. For Deanna, her loyalty to the self wins over her devotion to her husband and lover. She chooses to remain loyal to herself, living on the mountain in isolation after her marriage fails. Furthermore, Deanna continues to maintain self loyalty through the coyotes, who she protects from her lover Eddie. Lusa remains loyal to herself over her husband and family. She refuses to deny her education and heritage for Cole and his family. As Lusa becomes a part of Cole's family, she continues to assert her education and heritage. Lastly, as Elizabeth discovers her identity, she becomes loyal to it. Part of The Midwife's Tale is Elizabeth's search for identity.

She learns that part of her identity lies in her traditional role as a midwife. In the end, she accepts this identity and remains loyal to it.

Clearly, a progression of loyalty trends shows the extent to which these women maintain their self loyalty. The novels, discussed as chronologically written, show that self loyalty has evolved to become an imperative aspect of the feminine in Appalachian literature. Women have become increasingly more loyal to the self in Appalachian literature. Many reasons for this change in loyalty trends exist. Though the novels discussed are not the sole examples of this change in loyalty trends, they create a representative sample. Likewise, they also point to some causes for this change.

The most obvious reason for this evolution of loyalty patterns stems from the 1960s feminist movement. The result of this movement was a new critical realm of study that brought the woman's experience onto the center stage of critical debate. Diane L. Fowlkes and Charlotte S. McClure note that

[s]ince the 1960s, a resurgence of concern about the role and status of women has occurred. Scholars have been asking how much is really known about the nature and experience of women, about the structure of the family, about the development of "femininity" and of "masculinity," about the effect of male-oriented curriculum on the development of individuals and their civilization, and about the effects of diverse cultural aspects associated with race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status on all these questions (8).

By raising questions about women's experience, both in history and presently, old ideologies about women's statuses, roles, and beliefs have been challenged. In Appalachian studies, however, these questions about women did not surface until the 1990s. Barbara Ellen Smith

believes that “[c]areful feminist scholarship, attentive to gender, sexuality, and race as well as to class, promises to transform Appalachian historiography” (“Walk-Ons” 22). Smith, already noted for strongly declaring that the feminine experience has been largely overlooked in Appalachian history, notes that feminist interpretations will be frugal in creating a complete history of Appalachia. Elizabeth S.D. Engelhardt adds that “despite women’s presence in Appalachian studies, they have garnered surprisingly little conversation apart from their relation to the men with whom they associated” (Beyond Hill and Hollow 4). Both women call for specific study of women that explores traditional assumptions about female subordination to men in Appalachia.

The novels discussed here addresses these issues, albeit through fiction. For example, Mary Jean DeMarr notes that “feminism” is one of the “political sympathies” that has “appeared particularity in her [Kingsolver’s] fiction” (20). Kingsolver addresses feminist concerns in Prodigal Summer through her creation of Deanna and Lusa, literary characters who remain loyal to themselves, and through doing so, challenge traditional domestic ideologies generally accepted in Appalachian literature and history. Gretchen Moran Laskas, too, has been influenced by feminism and Appalachian studies. Meredieth Sue Willis notes that “Laskas...came of age in a time when there were vital cultural institutions like Appalachian literature courses at universities and the Appalachian Writers Workshop at the Hindman Settlement School in Kentucky” (“Examining the Truth” 20). Laskas’s Appalachian and feminist influences, like Kingsolver, show through her literary characters because Elizabeth seeks to remain loyal to herself, like Deanna and Lusa. Denise Giardina also has similar influences. Stephen Mooney notes that “Giardina encourages open-mindedness and tolerance with regard to race, ethnicity, sexuality, and gender” (“Beyond Measure” 13). Clearly, Giardina has the same concerns as

Smith and Engelhardt in showing the experience of women and the many aspects that influence that experience. Yet, Giardina also shows her feminist influences by creating Carrie Bishop, a literary character loyal to herself above her husband and family.

A second seemingly remote cause for this change is the transforming Appalachian economy. In The Time of Man the Appalachian economy is still based on subsistence farming. Simply stated, the bulk of work is done to harvest food or to trade farm products for food. This system of livelihood has major consequences for the feminine gender roles in Appalachian literature. At the beginning of the novel, Roberts tells the reader that Ellen's father will not allow his wife to work, though he will work his daughter (11). In this system of living, women are more closely associated with the home and not with earning a livelihood. Melissa Walker and Rebecca Sharpless note that "[f]arm women, like other women, often focused their identities on the home and family, seeing their work as primarily directed at the welfare of those families" (44). The specificity of this identity is limiting. In this viewpoint, it is easy to see how Ellen loses her self loyalty to her family because her family is her only responsibility. Furthermore, Barbara Ellen Smith points that historically "[w]omen have been extras, hidden behind quilts and sunbonnets in tradition-bound domestic roles that supported their husbands, sons, and fathers" (Walk-Ons 5). Because of the economy, women's roles have been more closely associated with domestic roles.

However, as the Appalachian economy changes, women take more responsibility. In Appalachia, the economy changes as men move from farming to wage earning. However, the work wages in Appalachia are so low at this time that the women must take the added responsibility of growing food in order to sustain the family. Smith notes that "[t]he economic survival of working-class households has *never* depended exclusively on the wage labor of men"

(“Walk-Ons” 12). Women’s economic contributions in growing food, for example, were crucial to the survival of the wage-earning family. The Dollmaker shows this economic shift. Clovis is a wage earner even when the family lives in Kentucky. Sharecropping, traditionally a man’s role, becomes Gertie’s responsibility. Part of her loyalty to the land can be explained through her ability to get what she needs from it. By owning the Tipton Place, Gertie will be able to provide for her family through her own hard work and ability to grow things. The novel is very specific in pointing out that Clovis does not make enough money to support the family and that Gertie’s ability to grow food feeds the children. In Detroit, Gertie loses her position as provider, and consequently, the entire family suffers. Many parts of the novel chronicle the difficulty Gertie endures when the family does not have enough money to buy food. Joyce Compton Brown and Les Brown point out the effects of this change: “[t]he demise of the agrarian routine as well as the changing roles of women...imposed a different sort of burden on Appalachian working-class women from that of their previous subsistence-farming existence” (316). First, as noted in the quote, this change in economy results in new roles for women. For example, Gertie adopts the role of provider. Perhaps as a provider with more responsibility, Gertie gains the ability to push her self loyalty. Unlike Ellen, she is outside of the limited sphere of the house.

The second major change this shift in economy brought, as noted above, is the creation of a working-class Appalachian woman. The role of a working-class woman is seen in Storming Heaven. Immediately after Carrie’s marriage to Albion, they move to a mining community. Carrie discusses how they both suffered because her husband’s wages were not high enough to feed the family, even though the family includes just the two of them. Carrie works as a nurse to make the needed income to feed the family. By working and contributing to the household, Carrie gains a great deal of responsibility. Like Gertie, her role is not limited to the home. Again,

perhaps this adoption of roles outside the home helps to create independence and foster, for these women, the ability or desire to remain loyal to themselves.

Another factor for this evolution of loyalty trends is education. Danny Miller notes that in traditional culture Appalachian women “were most often considered completely devoid of intelligence” (“The Mountain Woman” [Part I], 54). While in literature many women are not portrayed as “devoid of intelligence,” they do lack higher education (54). Ellen knows how to read and write, but no type of higher education is mentioned; the same is true for Gertie. However, Carrie Bishop shows a marked change in this trend. She goes to college to be a nurse, and the result of her education is freedom. She tells Miles that she could go anywhere and work, which is a clear indication of how education has freed her from patriarchal society constraints. Likewise, both Deanna and Lusa are highly educated, and their education creates a part of their identity. For Deanna, part of her loyalty to the self lies in her loyalty to the coyotes that she dedicates years to study. The community views Lusa’s education as an oddity, but she does not attempt to change her loyalty. She remains loyal to her education. Some may argue that Elizabeth, as a midwife, is not highly educated. However, Danny Miller notes that “the mountain midwife was as capable as many a doctor; if the infant mortality rate was high in the mountains, it was not due to the childbirth difficulties in most cases, but to epidemics and poor economic conditions” (“The Mountain Woman” [Part III], 19). Elizabeth’s education as a midwife is an important part of her identity, as it is with Carrie, Deanna, and Lusa. Education is an important factor for loyalty trends because it creates some element of independence. Also, like the shift in economy, it removes the woman from the limited sphere of home and hearth and gives her greater responsibility. For example, both Carrie and Elizabeth define their self loyalties through

helping their communities. They are loyal to helping people, and that loyalty is directly related to their educations.

The economy, education, and 1960s feminist movement are not the only factors in the changing loyalty trends of Appalachian females. However, they are very important factors. As the economy changed and women became part of the work force, part of the idea of a patriarchal society was challenged. Through education, women gained freedom and responsibility. The 1960s feminist movement emphasized studying these changes in research and critical interpretation. Consequently, as women's issues came to the center state of study, the movement influenced female Appalachian authors, and these influences are reflected in the strong literary characters they create. The five novels of this study point to these factors as being imperative in the changing loyalty trends.

Furthermore, the issues of loyalty raised in this argument reflect current concerns of American society. Even today, sociologists and psychologists study female identity in connection to husband and children. For example, in 1997 Rosemary Gillespie performed a study on women who choose to remain childfree. Gillespie found that “[r]ather than motherhood constituting fulfillment of their [childfree women’s] identity, several [women] associated motherhood with a loss of identity” (131). Gillespie cites several interviews where modern women associate motherhood with losses of freedom and identity. This study shows that many women today associate motherhood with Rich’s defined “*institution*” that confines female identity and supports patriarchal society (13). Clearly, even women today are concerned with maintaining their loyalty to the self, and many of them choose not to bear children because of that loyalty.

Another study by Jan E. Stets and Peter J. Burke, published in 2005, explores identity in marriage. Stets and Burke argue that “[s]ignificant others such as spouses, friends, and parents communicate their reactions and evaluations [of identity] verbally and nonverbally, and this influences the way people see themselves” (160). These communications create identity verification, where how others surrounding a person affect how that person views his or her own identity. They maintain that “lack of identity verification will threaten not only established identity meanings but also the perception of control over the environment (Cast and Burke 2002; Swann 1983, 1990, 1996)” (161). Stets and Burke offer many conclusions on the idea of identity verification in marriage, such as “people become less intimate with their spouses when their spouses perceive them differently than they perceive themselves (De La Ronde and Swann 1998; Ritts and Stein 1995; Swann, De La Ronde, and Hixon 1994)” (161). Clearly, identity is an important aspect of marriage; if the spouse does not recognize the identity of the significant other, problems in the marriage will ensue. The study proves that issues of maintaining an individual identity in marriage is a concern not just for Appalachian literary characters but for society in general.

In summation, as the feminine in Appalachian literature continues to change and grow, so will the loyalty trends of that character. Joyce Dyer questions, “[h]ow can we shed the common notion that Appalachian women are a homogeneous group of dependent, submissive females, small filler beads in extended families, victims of intensely patriarchal men?” (1). The answer is through a literature that reflects quite a different opinion of Appalachian women. The change in loyalty trends throughout Appalachian literature shows that women are no longer meekly accepting these patriarchal roles. Their loyalty to the self proves that a new type of Appalachian woman has been created in twentieth and twenty-first century literature. Characters like Carrie,

Deanna, Lusa, and Elizabeth show that loyalty to children and husband are no longer blindly accepted. As shown in this thesis, more recent Appalachian literature reflects a high dependence on the self. Women choose to be loyal to themselves over nineteenth century traditional loyalties.

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