

RADICAL TEACHER

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“I Took My Babies and Put Them Where They’d Be Safe”: African American Women and the Continuum of Reproductive Justice Activism

by Shelby Pumphrey

LOVE
AND
SOLIDARITY
NOW!

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The title of this article comes from Toni Morrison's novel *Beloved*, which is based on the life of Margaret Garner, an enslaved African woman who committed infanticide in 1856 after escaping enslavement in Boone County, Kentucky. Morrison's passage suggests the horrific truth that Garner's children would be safer dead than living under enslavement. Garner's story, like many of the stories of African birth givers, holds instructive lessons for those living under white supremacy. 1 It highlights the varied ways the state has intruded in the lives of African birth givers, but it also highlights distinctive methods of resistance, which is a prominent theme in each of the courses I teach. When *Roe v. Wade* was overturned in June 2022, I was preparing a syllabus for a course I have dreamt of teaching since I was in graduate school: "African American Women and the History of Reproductive Justice." I intentionally designed the course around the concept of *sankofa* or the belief that to move forward, we must look back at our past (Karanga 2010, 65). Through *sankofa*, my students and I embarked on two projects, both of which were designed to deepen their understanding of reproductive justice and envision our collective reproductive futures. Over the course of the semester, we met weekly for regular class meetings where we discussed historical topics related to reproductive justice. As students became more familiar with the concepts and language related to the course, they began to share contemporary connections to the historical examples we encountered in the assigned materials.

As I continue to build new courses, I am constantly looking back to my training in African Studies and Women's Studies, both of which center lived experience and practically useful knowledge that serves community needs. It is with this understanding that I have worked to build community with students, faculty, and staff across campus as well as the vibrant communities in which the university is situated. As the community components of the Fall 2022 and Spring 2023 sections of the course, I designed the Reproductive Justice Community Altar (RJCA) and the Community Herbal Gathering (CHG). The community component of my courses typically involves community building activities focused on the questions of race, gender, sexuality, class, and ability. Students served as organizers and participants on both projects. The RJCA was an altar space, housed at the Women's Center at the University of Louisville, where students, staff, faculty members and folks from the surrounding community could gather to celebrate, grieve, and meditate on how reproductive autonomy has impacted their lives. Similarly, the Community Herbal Gathering offered a space for African community members to learn about African methods of healing through hands-on medicine making sessions with a trained herbalist. I intentionally included the RJCA and CHG to help students understand how the information they learn in the classroom impacts their lives and the lives of those in their communities. As an African Women's historian, whose training is at the intersections of African Studies and Women's Studies, this connection is central to my disciplinary backgrounds, but also helps bring the engaged pedagogical space I've envisioned for my classrooms into fruition.

This article opens with a brief description of how and why reproductive justice was established as an organizing framework. It moves on to explore how I designed my "African American Women and the History of Reproductive Justice" course in the immediate aftermath of the removal of protections surrounding abortion in the United States. This section includes a description of key readings, concepts, and assignments. It closes with how altar work and community engagement functioned as transformational pedagogical tools for teaching reproductive justice. As reproductive justice organizers have pointed out for decades, while access to abortion is an important medical issue, there are multiple compounding issues facing African birth givers, including access to adequate healthcare before, during, and after pregnancy, affordable housing, and safe communities free from police violence.² Without acknowledging these inequities, scholars and activists ignore both the historical and contemporary examples of state violence against African communities. This article calls attention to this violence and highlights ways that altar work and community engagement can play important roles in Women's Studies and African Studies classrooms.

Reproductive Justice as Concept and Practice

In 1994, twelve African activist women coined the term reproductive justice at a pro-choice conference on health care reform in Chicago (Ross 2017, 290). While working in the reproductive health and rights movement, they found that it did not meet the needs of their communities (Ross 2017, 290). They felt that a myopic focus on access to abortion obscured many of the issues facing non-white birthing people, especially those who were multiply marginalized. Co-founder and scholar activist, Loretta Ross shared, "While abortion is one primary health issue, we knew that abortion advocacy alone inadequately addressed the intersectional oppressions of white supremacy, misogyny, and neoliberalism" (Ross 2017, 290). In its earliest iteration, reproductive justice was centered around three tenets: (1) the right to have children; (2) the right not to have children; (3) the right to parent those children in safe and healthy environments. Over time, the concept of reproductive justice has evolved to include the protection of gender identity and pursuit of sexual autonomy and pleasure (Ross and Solinger 2017, 9).

Using an intersectional lens, reproductive justice addresses the variety of obstacles that impact reproductive decision making and demands that legislation and support services at the local and federal levels do as well. By recognizing that each of our reproductive capacities are influenced by intersecting factors, like race, gender, ability, class, sexuality, and nationality, early reproductive justice activists demanded a more inclusive and holistic framework (Ross and Solinger, 2017, 65 – 66).⁵ Reproductive justice brings together the reproductive rights and human rights frameworks to demonstrate how reproductive violence is a direct infringement on human rights. Reproductive justice

activists Loretta Ross and Rickie Solinger noted, “Reproductive justice connects the dots between many social issues that seem unrelated to reproductive rights and to traditional view of reproductive politics” (Ross and Solinger 2017, 169). Even though reproductive justice was developed by African American women, the concept is not limited to use exclusively by African American women. As a concept, reproductive justice centers the lives and experiences of communities that have been marginalized historically and endorses the idea that when the most vulnerable people and communities are cared for, our society is a better place for all. It is a theoretical and organizing framework meant to empower all people to pursue and protect reproductive autonomy, defined as the right to make informed decisions free from coercion, manipulation, and material obstacles.

Designing the Course: Looking Back to Move Forward

My position as a Black feminist educator heavily influences my pedagogical practices. My interdisciplinary background in Africana Studies and Women’s Studies has nurtured my belief in knowledge in service of and in collaboration with community. As both Africana Studies and Women’s Studies emerged out of political struggle, I encourage my students to investigate these histories and understand education as a political act (Bernard-Carreño 2009; hooks 1994; Hull and Smith 1981; Karenga 1993). Further, my training as an Africana women’s historian has provided me with a deep understanding of the importance of Africana women’s historical narratives both to Africana women and our communities, but also for the important lessons they hold for those outside of African-descendant communities. These experiences and truths are at the center of this course, which I designed to illuminate the tangible and sometimes imperceptible harms that white supremacy has enacted on Africana birthing people and their communities historically. In alignment with Black feminist pedagogy, this course is firmly rooted in Africana women’s unique experiences and functions as a “pedagogy of liberation, a pedagogy of protest” (Henry 2005, 91).

I taught “African American Women and the History of Reproductive Justice” in Fall 2022 and Spring 2023 as a graduate and upper-level undergraduate course, cross-listed in the Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Department (WGSS), the Pan-African Studies Department (PAS), the Healthcare Ethics Master’s Program (Applied Philosophy – Philosophy Department), and the Law School at the University of Louisville. ³ I designed the course around four primary objectives:

1. To expose students to reproductive justice as a concept that is historically grounded in intersectional feminist activism;
2. To discuss foundational differences between the reproductive justice movement and the reproductive rights movement;

3. To explore how African American women’s reproductive experiences fit within a larger national narrative;
4. To help students make connections between the African American women’s experiences in the historical past to the contemporary moment.

As I am a historian by training, I organized the course chronologically apart from the opening module, where I introduced the concept of reproductive justice, including the historical development of the term and foundational definitions of how reproductive justice functions as an intersectional feminist activist framework. Over the course of the semester, we moved through four interconnected modules, each building on the previous to provide a multi-dimensional view of African American women’s complex relationship to reproductive justice across time and space. Module two explored African American women’s experiences during enslavement, including sexual assault, forced breeding, and medical mistreatment. It also emphasized the individual and collective ways African American women resisted these violations and intrusions on their personhood through physical violence, herbalism, and spiritual practices. I made this decision so that students would have a model for the myriad ways that Africana people could resist even under the extremely harsh and inhuman circumstances of enslavement. Module three described scientific definitions of Black womanhood during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century as well as the various discourses surrounding birth control for African American women at that time. The fourth module focused on the experiences of African American women political prisoners, like Assata Shakur. Like examples discussed earlier in the semester, Shakur’s story demonstrates the intrusive reach of state power and how African American women ingeniously responded by creating detailed counternarratives, advocating for themselves, and building community wherever and whenever possible. Strong undercurrents of resistance are embedded in each of these modules as they forcefully assert Africana women’s consistent and multi-layered response to their subjugation.

Highlighting the important work of scholar activists, like Loretta Ross, we discussed how reproductive justice was designed to move beyond the pro-choice/pro-life binary to address the diversity of human experiences. Ross’ work is an apt place to begin the course not only because of her role in the development of the framework, but also due to her deep and unyielding commitment to using her experiential knowledge as a pedagogical tool. Her individual experiences with sexual assault, sterilization and other forms of violence frame her call to action around collective violence. In contrast to Ross’ early publications, like “A Personal Journey from Women’s Rights to Civil Rights,” her more recent work, “Reproductive Justice as Intersectional Feminist Activism,” focuses on the evolution of reproductive justice as an organizing framework. It both describes the multiple ways that various forces impact reproductive decision-making, while also holding space for conversations of the individual right to determine one’s gender identity and to experience sexual pleasure.

For the first assignment, I asked students to describe a personal experience related to reproductive justice. In their responses, many students admitted that before engaging with the assigned materials, they saw access to abortion, birth control and other methods of contraception as the entirety of reproductive justice. I intentionally coupled Ross' readings with this opening assignment. In doing so, I created space for students to reconcile the difference between their previous knowledge of reproductive justice and a historically grounded conceptualization of reproductive justice as an organizing framework and theoretical lens. Through the diversity of the examples they shared, there was an acknowledgement of how the reproductive justice framework could be more broadly applied to include a variety of individuals and life experiences. For example, one student described growing up in a predominately African American neighborhood, where there were extremely limited options for fresh fruits, vegetables, and non-genetically modified foods. They complained that residents had to travel far outside of the neighborhood, making it more difficult to provide healthy meals for themselves and their families. In their reflection, the student unpacked how they now understood food justice as a reproductive justice issue as it could directly impact a community's quality of life, including their ability to make informed decisions about their reproductive capacity.

To best understand Africana women's reproductive experiences in the United States, I intentionally moved to readings related to Africana women's lives during enslavement. This invasive relationship perpetrated by white enslavers, and upheld by state authorities, provided a rich and complex historical context. While terror and oppression occupied many enslaved Africana women's lives, resistance, joy, and community were also present. Ensuring this dialectical relationship remained a prominent theme in the course was a deep ethical concern for me as, in some cases, students learn about the horrors of enslavement without a full understanding of how Africana people resisted in various ways to assert their humanity and autonomy. Leaning into this one-sided narrative both reifies the lack of power they experienced in life and is also fundamentally ahistorical (Bauer and Bauer 1947; Camp 2004; Davis 1971; White 1985). By discussing the importance of resistance methods, like pan-toting, and "stealing time," students gained a better understanding of the unique ways enslaved Africana women challenged authority.⁴ Focusing on the work of scholars, like Dorothy Roberts, highlighted this dialectical relationship. Roberts' *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty* is an incisive and thorough history of how Africana women have experienced reproduction in the United States from enslavement through the twenty-first century. Her attention to how African American women have responded to intersecting forms of violence historically is key to how I hope students will understand African American women's agency as a continuum. Further, literary works, like Toni Morrison's *Beloved* provide invaluable insight into enslaved Africana women's complex resistive actions during this time.

Coverage of enslaved Africana women's experiences would be incomplete without including their significant roles in the development of gynecology and obstetrics in the United States. Deirdre Cooper Owens' *Medical Bondage: Race, Gender, and the Origins of American Gynecology* made an important contribution to this dialogue as it considers the injustices enslaved women, like Lucy, Betsy, and Anarcha, faced as well as the labor they performed. Cooper Owens dubbed Lucy, Betsy, and Anarcha the mothers of gynecology in contrast to J. Marion Sims, a prominent nineteenth century physician whose legacy has come under great scrutiny in the past decade for his unethical practices and treatment of enslaved Africana women (Cooper Owens 2017, 25). Cooper Owens argued that white medical men, like Sims, viewed Black women as medical *superbodies*, no more than experimental material devoid of feeling, impervious to pain and undeserving of respect (Cooper Owens 2017, 109). Her counternarrative serves as an important touchstone for scholar activists organizing around the contemporary Black maternal mortality crisis.⁶ Similarly, Sharla Fett's *Working Cures: Healing, Health, and Power on Southern Slave Plantations* explored the power dynamic between white male doctors and enslaved Africana women during this time, arguing that Africana people were distrustful of white doctors. Further, she provided a detailed history of Africana doctoring women, midwives, and nurses, who performed daily sick care for enslaved Africana people within the plantation system (Fett 2002, 112, 118). She argues that white medical men wrested power from enslaved medical workers to control Africana people's reproduction and maintain authority despite the deft skills and extensive knowledge of these enslaved medical workers.

Using Dorothy Roberts' *Killing the Black Body*, we discussed the origins of the American Birth Control Movement in the early twentieth century and its connection to eugenics. When the study of eugenics emerged in the United States, it was immediately imbued with notions of white supremacy and was used as a tool to maintain the status quo. Similarly, Margaret Sanger's American Birth Control League worked with eugenicists to reach "groups whose high fertility rates were thought to threaten the nation's racial stock and culture" (Roberts 1997, 75). Roberts described the diversity of perspectives held by influential Africana men, like W.E.B. DuBois and Marcus Garvey, exemplifying the opposing perspectives that grew from this debate. Roberts argued that DuBois' endorsement of birth control was a symbol of his support of "the dual themes of Black people's economic emancipation and women's independence from their traditional childbearing role" (Roberts 1997, 84). In contrast, Garvey was a staunch critic, who viewed birth control as a threat to Africana communities. These competing perspectives illuminate how Africana birth givers' choices were understood within the context of patriarchal nation building. We also discussed the devastating impacts of Norplant and other contraceptive methods that were pushed on Africana communities to better understand how scientific progress has often come at the expense of the health and wellbeing of Africana people. Both of Roberts' examples demonstrate the

concerted interest in Africana births during the twentieth century and how Africana women organized to make informed decisions about their reproductive lives.

We closed with Assata Shakur's autobiography, a harrowing example of state violence against Africana birth givers. Shakur is an activist, who is best known for her activism during the 1970s and membership in the Black Liberation Army. After facing numerous charges, including first degree murder, Shakur was sentenced to life in prison, and later escaped to Cuba, where she remains. It is worth noting that despite all that is now known about the federal government's efforts to disrupt, quash, and kill Black activists during this time, Shakur remains on the FBI's Most Wanted list with a \$1,000,000.00 bounty. While those reading Shakur's story often focus in on the brutality she faced from various law enforcement officers and the deplorable living conditions she faced in numerous facilities, our primary focus was on her decision to birth a child while incarcerated and her decision to protect that pregnancy despite the consequences. In *Assata: An Autobiography*, Shakur remembers being excited about the birth once it was confirmed. She wrote:

I spent the next few days in a virtual daze. A joyous daze. A person was inside of me. Someone who was going to grow up to walk and talk, to love and laugh. To me it was the miracle of all miracles. And deeply spiritual. The odds against this baby being conceived were so great it boggled my mind. And yet it was happening. It seemed so right, so beautiful, in surroundings that were so ugly...Already, i was deeply in love with this child (Shakur 1987, 123).

Shakur admits that during this time, she "talked to it and worried about it and wondered about how it was feeling" (Shakur 1987, 123). Given the shoddy medical care the prison provided to incarcerated people, at Shakur's behest, her lawyers fought to secure an Africana gynecologist, who would guide her through a successful pregnancy. Towards the end of *Assata*, Shakur reflects on the difficulty of parenting her daughter, Kakuya, while incarcerated. Despite familial support, Kakuya struggled to understand why her mother could not go home with them and blamed Assata Shakur at times, even accusing her of not wanting to go home with them. Shakur's story is at once a narrative of triumph and hardship as she navigates the obstacles of the carceral state. In including her story, I hope to illuminate the extremely personal nature of state violence against Africana birth givers and emphasize the varied ways to strike back, challenge and resist. Further, Shakur's story highlights how carceral violence negatively impacts Africana families and communities.

This collection of readings offered a slice of how African American women have fought for reproductive autonomy in the United States. Collectively, the readings call attention to a historical relationship framed by force, coercion, and violence, but they have also brought resistance, healing, and survival into focus. By highlighting these experiences, I hope students can better understand the complex dimensions of reproductive autonomy, how these dimensions have functioned in the past and morphed into contemporary issues. The following section describes

two of the major projects my students and I completed together. Both projects encouraged students to participate in collectively envisioning a just reproductive future and invited them to engage in collaborative work with community partners.

The Reproductive Justice Community Altar

The RJCA was designed as a sacred space for our community, including students, faculty, staff, and residents from the surrounding area, to communally celebrate, grieve, and meditate on how reproductive autonomy has impacted their lives. It was housed at the University's Women's Center, which offered an easily accessible location. The altar space started with a table covered with clean white fabric, a bowl of water and flameless candles.⁷ To the left of the altar were large pillows for participants to use in their meditation, prayer, chant, or other spiritual practice. A free book exchange was on the opposite side of the room, and participants were invited to share books related to reproductive justice.

Various spiritual traditions include the use of altars; the use and maintenance of altars is a common spiritual practice.⁸ The instructor developed this project in connection with multiple African and African diasporic practices, including the Dagara tradition from Burkina Faso, West Africa, and the Ifa spiritual tradition of the Yoruba people from Nigeria, West Africa, but especially the African-based Hoodoo tradition practiced by African Americans.⁹ Altar work can include meditation, prayer, manifestation, and communication with various spiritual energies, and for ancestor veneration, or to honor one's ancestors. ¹⁰ Altar work is therefore a starting point for connection with self through another plane and is a direct through point to communication with individual and collective ancestors. I asked participants to consider the following questions when making offerings:

- How has reproductive autonomy impacted your life and the lives of those around you? What feelings does that bring up for you?
- How/do the historical figures discussed in the course speak to you? Do you see connections between their experiences and the contemporary moment?
- What lessons have you learned about bodily autonomy from our readings and discussions? Who in your community could benefit from these lessons?
- Who shaped your earliest ideas/feelings/emotions around bodily autonomy and reproductive justice? Are there ancestors, elders or others who have influenced how you understand reproductive justice and body sovereignty?
- How do you envision your individual reproductive future? What about our collective reproductive future? What does body sovereignty look/feel/smell/taste like to you?

- What types of objects/ideas/practices have you used to safeguard your reproductive autonomy?
- How have you helped others secure reproductive autonomy already? How can you help others secure reproductive autonomy moving forward?

In this context, the RJCA as a meeting place, where altar co-workers could commune with the reproductive justice foremothers we discussed in the course, while introducing individual ancestors and figures as well. Altar work as a pedagogical practice invites each person, student, and instructor, to bring their full self into the classroom. This self includes their experiences, struggles, and perspectives about the world.

Community Herbal Gathering

The Community Herbal Gathering (CHG) was a community-engaged project designed to bring Africana community members from West Louisville together for a two-day medicine-making workshop focused on the Africana tradition. The CHG was not a required part of the course, but numerous students eagerly volunteered their time to support this initiative. As a continuation of the course and the RJCA, the CHG encouraged participants to take ownership of their wellness practice by engaging with traditional Africana healing modalities. Overall, the students who participated in the CHG found it fulfilling and instructive. Multiple students revealed that they learned more about herbalism, community engagement, and the historical context around these important topics, which they plan to share with family and friends.

The CHG connects to the reproductive justice framework by empowering individuals, especially Africana people, to divest from the medical industrial complex, a system that historically has failed them and their communities. Students from the “African American Women and the History of Reproductive Justice” course served as organizers and volunteers in collaboration with our community partner, Play Cousins Collective (PCC). PCC is a local organization striving to “build a village around socially and economically vulnerable children and families in West Louisville, Kentucky, through juvenile justice, mental health, and community development projects in historically and predominately African American neighborhoods.”¹¹ Targeted towards Africana people living in West Louisville, this workshop series encouraged participants to tap into ancestral ways of healing and empowered them to be more active in their wellness practices. Our primary objectives were to:

- Empower participants to tap into existing resources related to herbalism, home remedies and other wellness practices;
- Share individual stories and experiences surrounding wellness and healing;
- Foster understanding around body autonomy and the historical context surrounding healing modalities within the Africana tradition.

During the first session, registrants, many of whom identified as Africana, women, and caregivers, participated in a “healing circle.” During this initial activity, they shared their varying levels of experience with herbal remedies and other healing modalities. This exchange honored the knowledge each participant brought to the experience and served as a resource-sharing activity. Emphasizing the importance of each person’s experiential knowledge and connections to generational wisdom was at the center of this event. After the first workshop on the first day, a trained Africana woman herbalist led the medicine-making sessions, where participants made two herbal infusions (tisanes) and an herbal chest rub. On the second day, we opened the session with lunch and discussed herbs from the first session, including how participants used the herbal remedies over the past week. We then moved to the medicine-making session, where the herbalist led participants in making two tinctures and an herbal steam. During this session, participants also made fire cider, an immunity-boosting drink that can be made with an apple cider vinegar base, various fruits, vegetables, and herbs.

The CHG provided a unique space for Africana folks to gather, learn and share together. It provided some tools for participants to begin taking control of their bodily autonomy. As a pedagogical tool, it reminded students of the importance of these healing traditions as practiced by Africana people before them. Collaboration with community through engaged projects, such as the CHG, is an effective teaching tool that demonstrates the stakes of practical knowledge and moves students toward understanding the political nature of education.

Conclusion

In the wake of the Supreme Court overturning *Roe v. Wade*, activists, organizers, and community members began looking for ways to comfort and care for birthing people and caregivers in need. This care looked different for everyone as it forced us to look outside of the systems and protections that were no longer in place. Similarly, it required that educators think more broadly about how we could engage our students, our institutions, and our communities in more thoughtful and communal practices. Through anonymous course evaluations and direct conversations with students, I found that many of the students enjoyed both the RJCA and CHG, because for many of them, this type of learning was unfamiliar to them. One student described taking the course as an “eye-opening” experience that helped them better understand the connections between Africana women’s history and our contemporary moment. Further, they explained how they now understand reproductive justice as a broad umbrella that is relevant to multiple parts of our lives, not just those typically associated with reproductive rights or abortion. Together, through the Reproductive Justice Community Altar and the Community Herbal Gathering, my students and I engaged in the important work of *sankofa*; we began the process of looking back to the past to collectively envision a new future.

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Notes

1. Author uses Africana and Black interchangeably. Africana refers to people of African descent. Author uses African American to describe the unique experiences of Africana people living in the United States.
2. In Saidiya Hartman's *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route* (2007), she addresses how Africana people continue to experience an ongoing continuum of violence, which she terms the afterlives of slavery (6). The connection between the violence of the historical past and our contemporary future is especially salient when considering how various Africana people experience the compounding forms of violence in our lives. Hartman's concept of the afterlife of slavery offers Africana people's experiences as a model to understand how the state acts on marginalized individuals and communities through impoverishment, lack of access to quality education and healthcare, and harassment by police, immigration enforcement, and other state forces.
3. For additional information about how Kimberlé Crenshaw operationalized the term intersectionality, see "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color," *Stanford Law Review*, Vol. 43, No. 6 (Jul., 1991). In her article, Crenshaw employs an intersectional approach, or an approach that seriously considers the impact multiple intersecting identities have on individual lived experiences, to understand how violence impacts the lives of women of color.
4. Both the Healthcare Ethics Program and Law School reached out to WGSS, one of my home departments, to request space in the course for their respective students. While unplanned prior to registration, adding these students provided an exciting opportunity for a more interdisciplinary discussion around the legal and ethical aspects of African American women's historical connections to reproductive justice.
5. Pan-toting is how enslaved people reclaimed resources from enslavers without permission. They commonly took food, clothing, raw materials, and other items to help sustain themselves, their families and other community members. Stealing time refers to the reclamation of enslaved people's time and included work stoppages, feigning illness, and escape for long and short periods of time (Davis 1971).
6. The Black maternal mortality crisis refers to the increased rates at which Black birthing people die both during and after pregnancy. A 2021 CDC study found the maternal mortality rate for Black women was 2.6 times higher than the maternal mortality rate for white women (Hoyert 2023).
7. Due to restrictions related to where the RJCA was housed, we were unable to use live candles.
8. In various traditions, like the Dagara, an altar may be referred to as a shrine.

9. Author recognizes Hoodoo as a continuation of African diasporic spiritual traditions, carried to North America through the Maafa (Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade), continued by Africana people during enslavement and recognized through contemporary practice. For more information about the distinct characteristics of Old Traditional Black Belt Hoodoo, see Katrina Hazzard-Donald's *Mojo Workin': The Old African American Hoodoo System* (2013).
10. Spiritual energies refer to nature as well as any deified entities of a specific tradition.

11. <https://playcousinscollective.wildapricot.org/About-us>

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