

This document provides a thematic organization of key quotes from your sources, shows how to build historiographical arguments, and offers a detailed roadmap for writing your paper. All quotes include page numbers in Chicago Manual of Style format where available.

PART I: KEY HISTORIOGRAPHICAL ARGUMENTS WITH SUPPORTING QUOTES

ARGUMENT 1: The Politics of "Scientific" Objectivity (1890s-1940s)

Thesis: Early folklore studies claimed scientific objectivity but encoded racial hierarchies and supported segregationist ideology through evolutionary frameworks and the concept of "survivals."

William Wells Newell & The American Folklore Society (1888-1890s)

Context - Why Writing Then: Post-Reconstruction, institutionalization of folklore studies, need to professionalize and distinguish from "romantic nationalism"

Key Quotes from Moody-Turner:

1. On Newell's agenda: "In his opening statement for AFS, Newell identified the 'principal objective' of the society as establishing a 'Journal, of a scientific character, designed (i) For the collection of the fast-vanishing remains of Folk-Lore in America.'" (Moody-Turner, 20)

2. On evolutionary assumptions: "Newell identified ethnic and regional groups warranting immediate study by the society's members. Although Newell conceded that in 'the habits and ideas of primitive races much seems cruel and immoral to us,' he emphasized the necessity of dutifully recording these habits and ideas, for in them, he argued, modern civilization was furnished with 'a complete representation of the savage mind.'" (Moody-Turner, 26)

3. On stages of culture: "In the report on the third annual meeting of AFS, for instance, Newell explained that systems of knowledge could be partitioned into three categories, noting that even among the 'lowest' or 'most savage people' there had been 'attempts at such understanding,' asserting that in general, a peoples' 'system of explanation' could be correlated with these stages of development, consisting of 'savagery,' 'barbarism,' and 'civilization.'" (Moody-Turner, 27)

4. On African Americans as "folk": "Ostensibly, Newell rejected the idea of using folklore as evidence of cultural evolution on the basis that folklore was not just a survival from a savage stage. Instead, he maintained, 'folklore is found to exist among the most intelligent as well as among the rudest part of the population.'" (Moody-Turner, 27)

5. On diffusion vs. evolution: "In countering theories that supported folklore as a product of racial or national inheritance, Newell noted, 'this theory . . . received a rude shock by the recent demonstrations that differences of race and language are not necessarily an indication of differences in tradition.'" (Moody-Turner, 23)

6. On assimilation: "Newell believed that blacks were assimilating so rapidly to white American practices that African American customs and tales actually bore the mark of the European remnants that persisted in white American culture rather than in African traditions and practices." (Moody-Turner, 24)

****Analysis for Your Paper:****

While Newell promoted "diffusion" theory to counter biological determinism, his framework still positioned folklore within evolutionary stages and assumed white culture as the civilized norm toward which Black people would assimilate. His "scientific objectivity" masked assimilationist ideology.

ARGUMENT 2: Black Intellectuals Challenge White Control of the Narrative (1890s-1900s)

****Thesis:**** African American intellectuals and folklorists actively contested white scholarly authority by asserting their right to interpret their own cultural traditions and by using folklore for political and cultural empowerment.

Anna Julia Cooper (1894)

Context - Why Writing Then: Direct response to white monopoly on folklore collection; Hampton Folklore Society as site of Black intellectual engagement

Key Quote from Moody-Turner:

1. Cooper's vision: "The children of Africa in America are in danger of paralysis before the splendor of Anglo Saxon achievements. . . . The American Negro cannot produce an original utterance until he realizes the sanctity of his homely inheritance. . . . The creative instinct must be aroused by a wholesome respect for the thoughts that lie nearest. And this to my mind is the vital importance for him of the study of his own folk-lore." (Moody-Turner, 3)
2. On Cooper's intervention: "By locating black folklore within an activist cultural and political agenda, Cooper set forth an aesthetics of engagement that defied what would become the dominant approaches to the study and representation of black folklore in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries." (Moody-Turner, 3-4)
3. On alternative genealogy: "By beginning with Cooper's remarks rather than with the more recognized statements on the inauguration of black folklore studies, what I suggest is an alternative genealogy through which to approach both African American folklore studies and African American literary engagements with black folklore. This approach recognizes African Americans as active participants, rather than merely passive repositories, in the study and representation of black folklore." (Moody-Turner, 4)

The Hampton Folklore Society (1893-1900)

Key Quotes from Moody-Turner:

1. On their resistance to objectification: "Recovering and re-reading several key moments in the society's history, I show how the folklorists resisted having their work confined to the ideology of the Hampton Institute as they questioned the politics of assuming a 'scientific,' and often objectifying, approach to the study of their own traditions." (Moody-Turner, 15-16)

2. On methodology: "Her emphasis on memory and personal experience was reflected in the methodology that some of the Hampton folklorists came to employ and how she saw black folklore as the basis for achieving an innovative, socially and politically engaged African American literary aesthetic." (Moody-Turner, 16)

3. On theorizing in different forms: "As Barbara Christian explains in 'The Race for Theory': 'people of color have always theorized—but in forms quite different from the Western form of abstract logic.' She continues, 'I am inclined to say that our theorizing (and I intentionally use the verb rather than the noun) is often in narrative forms, in the stories we create, in riddles and proverbs, in the play with language, since dynamic rather than fixed ideas seem more to our liking.'" (Moody-Turner, 7)

****Analysis for Your Paper:****

Cooper and the Hampton folklorists weren't just collecting folklore—they were theorizing about representation, power, and cultural ownership. They rejected the "scientific" distance that turned them into objects of study and insisted on memory and personal experience as valid methodological approaches.

ARGUMENT 3: Folklore as Weapon of Jim Crow Ideology

****Thesis:**** Folklore and "folkways" rhetoric were deployed to naturalize segregation, justify racial hierarchy, and dismiss Black resistance as inherent racial characteristics rather than political action.

Folklore and Legal Justifications for Segregation

****Key Quotes from Moody-Turner:****

1. On "folkways" rhetoric: "Those who supported the myth of 'separate but equal' were quick to adopt the rhetoric of folklore for support and protection. The notion that the social differences that were supposedly 'created' by race could not be nullified by laws can be summed up in the famous adage often attributed to William Graham Sumner: 'Stateways cannot change folkways.'" (Moody-Turner, 19)
2. On Plessy decision: "When Brown declared that it was legally permissible for the state of Louisiana to act in accordance with the 'the established customs, traditions and usages of the people,' he was drawing on the first meaning of the term, allowing that the 'reasonableness' of the statute was confirmed by its adherence to existing customs." (Moody-Turner, 53)
3. On discriminating against "characteristics": "In this decision, the justices found that the Mississippi State Constitution did not discriminate against blacks because of their race, but instead held that it was due to blacks' inferior characteristics that they found themselves disenfranchised... the voting qualification of two years of consistent payment of the poll taxes was not meant to discriminate against blacks as a race but against the characteristics of carelessness, transiency, and criminality, to which blacks just happened to be prone." (Moody-Turner, 54)
4. Chesnutt's response: "In 'The Negro and the Courts,' Chesnutt opined: 'The most important and far reaching decision of the Supreme Court upon the question of civil rights is that in the case of Plessy vs. Ferguson. . . . The opinion is a clear and definite approval of the recognition by State laws, of color distinction. . . . It establishes racial caste in the United States as firmly as though it were established by an act of Congress. . . . a more humiliating, insulting, and degrading system is hardly conceivable under even a nominally free government.'" (Moody-Turner, 56)

Minstrelsy and Folklore

Key Quotes from Moody-Turner:

1. On Jim Crow character: "Bringing his impersonations of black folk life to the stage, Rice became one of America's best-known comedians, riding the wave of American popular culture's fascination with blackness." (Moody-Turner, 31)

2. On white perceptions: "Rice's white contemporaries, for example, did not see him as an originator at all but lauded him as one skilled at impersonating the gestures and language of the black folk." (Moody-Turner, 32)

3. On Black minstrels as "authentic": "When black minstrels went before their white audiences, they provided the corporeal evidence that blacks were, at best, different and peculiar and, at worst, grotesque and degenerate. Here was physical proof that blacks were an anomaly to be exploited in popular entertainment and a curiosity to be investigated in the emerging social sciences." (Moody-Turner, 36)

4. On authenticating rhetoric: "The Negro Village, as one viewer commented, 'might have been hundreds of miles from civilization.'" (Moody-Turner, 39)

Roger Abrahams on Stereotypes (1970)

****Context - Why Writing Then:**** Post-1960s urban rebellions, need to understand why white society didn't recognize Black political action

****Key Quote from Your Notes:****

"The whites didn't see the message clearly because of stereotypes they could brush this behavior off as typical... Mainly, we see that Abrahams looks at what the folklore says about negroes and how they have taken it in as part of their own ideology. Taking the negative traits, lazy, violent, sexual deviant, and turned them around as positive traits. Infusing them into their animal stories and bad man tales, casting their heroes with crime and suicidal tendencies. When the people are finally ready to rise up, their cries go unheard because this behavior is in line with the stereotypes white people already have of them." (Your notes on Abrahams, 1970)

****Analysis for Your Paper:****

The concept of "folklore" was weaponized - from minstrel stereotypes to legal rhetoric about "customs and traditions" - to naturalize segregation and render Black political resistance invisible by dismissing it as typical "Negro behavior."

ARGUMENT 4: Literary Resistance and Counter-Narratives (1890s-1900s)

****Thesis:**** Black writers like Dunbar and Chesnutt used sophisticated literary strategies—masking, dissimulation, irony, and formal innovation—to subvert dominant folklore representations while navigating the constraints of white readership and publication.

Charles Chesnutt

****Key Quotes from Moody-Turner:****

1. On "The Conjure Woman": "In *The Conjure Woman*, his 1899 collection of short stories, Chesnutt incorporated the principles of conjure and ritual as formal strategies that allowed him to move beyond simply critiquing the conventions of the Plantation Tradition or even inverting the racial hierarchies steeped in the contemporary discourses of civilization, but instead to positing black folklore as an alternative way of constructing, perceiving, and responding to his current and historical realities." (Moody-Turner, 17)
2. On "The Colonel's Dream": "In this remarkable shift, Chesnutt turns the ethnographic gaze on the white characters, exposing the constructions of white racial perceptions and revealing the epistemological frames that were often employed to construct so-called knowledge about African Americans." (Moody-Turner, 17)
3. On his intervention: "Chesnutt, from early in his career, experimented with African American folklore as a way to critique the existing epistemological approaches to understanding black culture and black history, and later turned his attention to exposing the white-supremacist forms of folklore that worked to reinforce existing structures of race relations." (Moody-Turner, 17)

Paul Laurence Dunbar

****Key Quotes from Moody-Turner:****

1. On "The Sport of the Gods": "In his 1902 novel *The Sport of the Gods*, he critiques idealized notions of folklore through the text's depiction of tensions within the Southern folk community. He further challenges the construction of folklore as a Southern, rural phenomenon by introducing a new geographic terrain—the urban North—in which to imagine black folklore." (Moody-Turner, 16-17)

2. On his strategy: "In his literary works, masking and dissimulation became his vehicles for exposing the many intertwined literary and cultural conventions that determined the range of black representation." (Moody-Turner, 16)

****Analysis for Your Paper:****

Rather than simply reproducing "authentic" folklore, Chesnutt and Dunbar used folklore as a site of formal and political experimentation. Chesnutt turned ethnographic methods on white society itself; Dunbar challenged geographic assumptions about where folklore exists.

ARGUMENT 5: Challenging the "Myth of the Negro Past" (1940s)

****Thesis:**** Melville Herskovits's systematic documentation of African cultural retentions fundamentally challenged the ideology that Black Americans had no history or culture, directly undermining a key justification for racial inequality.

Melville Herskovits (1941)

****Context - Why Writing Then:**** WWII, fighting fascism abroad while confronting racism at home; need to counter both Nazi and American racial ideologies

****Key Quotes from Herskovits Document:****

1. The myth defined: "This myth of the Negro past, which validates the concept of Negro inferiority, may be outlined as follows: 1. Negroes are naturally of a childlike character, and adjust easily to the most unsatisfactory social situations... 5. The Negro is thus a man without a past." (Herskovits, 1)

2. On its function: "The myth of the Negro past is one of the principal supports of race prejudice in this country. Unrecognized in its efficacy, it rationalizes discrimination in everyday contact between Negroes and whites, influences the shaping of policy where Negroes are concerned, and affects the trends of research by scholars." (Herskovits, 1)

3. Scholarly consensus he's challenging: "My own impression is that the amount of African tradition which the Negro brought to the United States was very small. In fact, there is every reason to believe, it seems to me, that the Negro, when he landed in the United States, left behind him almost everything but his dark complexion and his tropical temperament." (R.E. Park, quoted in Herskovits, 2-3)

4. E.F. Frazier's position: "Probably never before in history has a people been so nearly completely stripped of its social heritage as the Negroes who were brought to America... But, of the habits and customs as well as the hopes and fears that characterized the life of their forebearers in Africa, nothing remains." (Frazier, quoted in Herskovits, 4)

5. Herskovits's counter-argument: "At this point it must be again emphasized that exact knowledge touching survivals of African traditions and beliefs in the behavior of present-day Negroes in the United States and elsewhere in the New World, or of the effect of these survivals on the daily life of their carriers, is not at hand. Materials are scattered and fragmentary, where they are not altogether lacking; but the controversy aroused when the very problem is broached attests its vitality and its importance." (Herskovits, 6)

6. On implications: "We turn again, therefore, to the phenomenon of race prejudice, the factor that provides the rationalization for many of the interracial strains that are the essence of concern to the practical man... these factors are as deeply entrenched in the interracial situation as are those other elements which lie on the social and economic level, and they are far more insidious." (Herskovits, 6-7)

7. The stakes: "It is, therefore, at this point that the entire historical setting, which includes the problem of Africanisms in American Negro behavior, becomes crucial, since the question of social endowment enters intimately into the determination of the assumptions on which attitudes regarding Negro inferiority rest." (Herskovits, 7)

****Analysis for Your Paper:****

Herskovits understood that the denial of African cultural continuity was ideological, not empirical. By documenting Africanisms, he attacked the foundational myth justifying inequality—that Black people had no culture worth preserving. His work represents a moment when white scholarship aligned with Black intellectuals' long-standing assertions of cultural dignity.

ARGUMENT 6: The Insider's Advantage - Zora Neale Hurston (1930s)

****Thesis:**** Hurston's methodological innovation—using her insider status as both strength and analytical tool—demonstrated that Black folklorists could access cultural knowledge unavailable to white collectors, fundamentally challenging assumptions about ethnographic objectivity.

Zora Neale Hurston - "Mules and Men" Introduction

****Context - Why Writing Then:**** Harlem Renaissance; trained by Franz Boas in anthropology; tension between insider/outsider, art/science

****Key Quotes from Hurston Document:****

1. On her unique perspective: "In a way it would not be a new experience for me. When I pitched head foremost into the world I landed in the crib of negroism. From the earliest rocking of my cradle, I had known about the capers Brer Rabbit is apt to cut and what the Squinch Owl says from the house top. But it was fitting me like a tight chemise. I couldn't see it for wearing it. It was only when I was off in college, away from my native surroundings, that I could see myself like somebody else and stand off and look at my garment. Then I had to have the spy-glass of Anthropology to look through at that." (Hurston, 11)

2. On return to Eatonville: "I hurried back to Eatonville because I knew that the town was full of material and that I could get it without hurt, harm or danger." (Hurston, 11)

3. On the challenge of collection: "Folk-lore is not as easy to collect as it sounds. The best source is where there are the least outside influences and these people, being usually under-privileged, are the shyest. They are most reluctant at times to reveal that which the soul lives by." (Hurston, 11)

4. The "feather-bed resistance": "And the Negro, in spite of his open-faced laughter, his seeming acquiescence, is particularly evasive. You see we are a polite people and we do not say to our questioner, 'Get out of here!' We smile and tell him or her something that satisfies the white person because, knowing so little about us, he doesn't know what he is missing. The Indian resists curiosity by a stony silence. The Negro offers a feather-bed resistance. That is, we let the probe enter, but it never comes out. It gets smothered under a lot of laughter and pleasantries." (Hurston, 11-12)

5. The theory behind resistance: "The theory behind our tactics: 'The white man is always trying to know into somebody else's business. All right, I'll set something outside the door of my mind for him to play with and handle. He can read my writing but he sho' can't read my mind. I'll put this play toy in his hand, and he will seize it and go away. Then I'll say my say and sing my song.'" (Hurston, 12)

6. On Franz Boas: "Dr. Boas asked me where I wanted to work and I said, 'Florida,' and gave, as my big reason, that 'Florida is a place that draws people -white people from all over the world, and Negroes from every Southern state surely and some from the North and West.' So I knew that it was possible for me to get a cross section of the Negro South in the one state." (Hurston, 11)

****Your Notes on Hurston:****

"Use this introduction to talk about Zora's methods, and how her work marked a change into black people telling their own stories and owning the narrative. Mark how she was able to go in and be accepted. No more masked man as when black people were likely to hide their true lives and inner truth from white people. Also need to talk about her mentor Frans Boa and how her academic lineage comes from his exploration of scientific racism and how he aimed to dismantle it with anthropology. Major shift in how people study folklore." (Your notes, 10)

****Analysis for Your Paper:****

Hurston's "feather-bed resistance" metaphor reveals what previous white collectors couldn't see—that Black people actively controlled what outsiders could know. Her insider status wasn't a liability to "objectivity" but an epistemological advantage. This marked a shift from Black people as objects of study to subjects with agency over their own representation.

ARGUMENT 7: W.E.B. Du Bois and the Dialectics of Thought and Feeling (1903)

****Thesis:**** Du Bois pioneered a "lyrical science" that combined empirical sociology with emotional and artistic expression, recognizing that some aspects of Black experience—particularly as encoded in the sorrow songs—exceeded the capacity of scientific language to capture.

Du Bois - "The Souls of Black Folk" (via Lamothe)

****Context - Why Writing Then:**** Post-Sam Hose lynching, disillusionment with pure empiricism, but still committed to social science; New Negro identity formation

****Key Quotes from Lamothe Document:****

1. On his training: "Under the tutelage of Gustav Schmoller in Berlin, he learned to privilege inductive reasoning and analysis built on objectively accumulated historical and descriptive material. Schmoller 'saw the goal of social science as the systematic, causal explanation of social phenomena, and he believed that social scientific facts, based on careful, inductive analysis, could be used as a guide to formulate social policy.'" (Lamothe, 45)

2. On his shift: "beginning in 1901 and continuing until his public split with [Booker T.] Washington in 1903, he was apparently moving through a transition period away from academic science and sociology toward action, agitation, and writing for popular magazines." (Lamothe, 46)

3. Zamir's interpretation: "if the different approaches represent conflicting understandings, then it is the very contradictions and struggles, not the straightforward triumph of one option over another, that must be accepted as the truth of Du Bois's thought." (Lamothe, 47)

4. On the veil metaphor: "In the 'Forethought' of *The Souls of Black Folk*, he conjures an image of a narrator unique in his ability to move and communicate across the color line: 'Leaving, then, the world of the white man, I have stepped within the Veil, raising it that you may view faintly its deeper recesses, the meaning of its religion, the passion of its human sorrow, and the struggle of its greater souls.'" (Lamothe, 50)

5. On ambivalence: "This portrait illustrates an ideal relation between ethnographer and audience, characterized by the narrator's mastery of the nuances of transculturation and the reader's openness to greater understanding of the racial other, yet it is also a depiction rife with ambivalences." (Lamothe, 50)

6. On the sorrow songs: "What are these songs, and what do they mean? I know little of music and can say nothing in technical phrase, but I know something of men, and knowing them, I know that these songs are the articulate message of the slave to the world." (Du Bois via Lamothe, 61)

7. On language's limits: "Musical soundings, in other words, must do the expressive work that language fails to achieve." (Lamothe, 61)

8. On "Of the Coming of John": "In 'Of the Coming of John,' Du Bois reflects on the place of Black intellectuals in their communities, meditating as it were on the factors that hinder or facilitate their manipulation of the Veil." (Lamothe, 63)

9. The church confrontation: "Then at last a low suppressed snarl came from the Amen corner, and an old bent man arose... he seized the Bible with his rough, huge hands; twice he raised it inarticulate, and then fairly burst into words, with rude and awful eloquence.... John never knew clearly what the old man said; he only felt himself held up to scorn and scathing denunciation for trampling on the true religion." (Du Bois via Lamothe, 66)

10. On the folk's agency: "While it is true that the narrative asserts that they cannot follow his argument for secularization and industrialization because 'he spoke an unknown tongue,' it also stresses their conscious refusal (as opposed to simple ignorance) of his logic because it flies in the face of the values central to their self-definition." (Lamothe, 66)

****Analysis for Your Paper:****

Du Bois recognized early what later scholars would theorize—that positivist social science couldn't capture the full complexity of Black experience. His turn to music, fiction, and lyrical prose wasn't abandoning science but recognizing its limits. "Of the Coming of John" warns intellectuals not to assume "the folk" lack political consciousness or agency.

ARGUMENT 8: Hidden Transcripts and Everyday Resistance (1990s)

****Thesis:**** Robin Kelley's application of James C. Scott's "hidden transcript" framework to Black working-class culture revealed that everyday practices dismissed as "mere culture"—including folklore, jokes, theft, even conjure—constituted sophisticated political resistance that historians had overlooked.

Robin D.G. Kelley (1993)

****Context - Why Writing Then:**** Post-Reagan era, rise of social history, need to recover Black working-class agency against narratives of pathology and passivity

****Key Quotes from Kelley Document:****

1. On "infrapolitics": "Together, the 'hidden transcripts' that are created in aggrieved communities and expressed through culture and the daily acts of resistance and survival constitute what Scott calls 'infrapolitics.' As he puts it, 'the circumspect struggle waged daily by subordinate groups is, like infrared rays, beyond the visible end of the spectrum. That it should be invisible ... is in large part by design - a tactical choice born of a prudent awareness of the balance of power.'" (Kelley, 77)

2. On oppositional culture: "Using those texts, pioneering scholars and critics, including Amiri Baraka, Lawrence Levine, and Sterling Stuckey, have demonstrated that African-American

working people created an oppositional culture that represents at least a partial rejection of the dominant ideology and that was forged in the struggle against class and racial domination." (Kelley, 84)

3. On the spirit world as weapon: "We need to recognize that the sacred and the spirit world were also often understood and invoked by African Americans as weapons to protect themselves or to attack others. How do historians make sense of, say, conjure as a strategy of resistance, retaliation, or defense in the daily lives of some working-class African Americans?" (Kelley, 88)

4. On divine intervention: "How does the belief that God is by one's side affect one's willingness to fight with police, leave an abusive relationship, stand up to a foreman, participate in a strike, steal, or break tools? Can a sign from above, a conversation with a ghost, a spell cast by an enemy, or talking in tongues unveil the hidden transcript?" (Kelley, 88)

5. Du Bois on the spirit: "Anticipating his critics, Du Bois in Black Reconstruction boldly considered freed people's narratives of divine intervention in their emancipation and, in doing so, gave future historians insight into an aspect of African-American life that cannot be reduced to 'culture': 'Foolish talk, all of this, you say, of course; and that is because no American now believes in his religion. Its facts are mere symbolism; its revelation vague generalities; its ethics a matter of carefully balanced gain. But to most of the four million black folk emancipated by civil war, God was real. They knew Him. They had met Him personally in many a wild orgy of religious frenzy, or in the black stillness of the night.'" (Du Bois via Kelley, 88)

****Analysis for Your Paper:****

Kelley's work represents a historiographical shift: from viewing folklore as "mere culture" or "false consciousness" to recognizing it as political practice. His insistence on taking conjure, prayer, and divine intervention seriously as forms of power challenges scholars to expand what counts as "resistance" and "politics." This validates what the Hampton folklorists and Cooper were doing in the 1890s—treating folklore as serious, meaningful, and politically consequential.

ARGUMENT 9: Sound, Embodiment, and Jim Crow Violence (2010s)

****Thesis:**** Recent scholarship on sound and embodiment reveals how Jim Crow violence was encoded in Black musical forms, with "beating" functioning as both literal police brutality and aesthetic/expressive practice.

Eric Lott (2011)

****Context - Why Writing Then:**** Black Lives Matter era emerging, renewed attention to police violence, sophisticated sound studies approaches

****Key Quotes from Lott Document:****

1. On "beating" as organizing frame: "Like the entire genre it exemplifies, the music of 'Back Door Man' is defined by beating... If we necessarily consider post-African musics as a percussive field, with every instrument, as Albert Murray implies in Stomping the Blues, involved in a transformational grammar of drumming, beating becomes the organizing frame for the handling of experience, and in this case, I argue, it takes in quite a sweep of urban experience: the beating of black bodies in and by the urban setting, the repetitive monotony and oppressive noise of Fordist assembly-line or factory labor, everyday interracial as well as intraracial violence, the psychic subjection that thinkers from Friedrich Nietzsche to Judith Butler have shown to be constitutive of selfhood." (Lott, 705)
2. Langston Hughes on bebop: "Langston Hughes famously quipped that bebop or bop music got its name from the 'bop!' of the policeman's nightstick on black heads. What may seem merely a bon mot probably contains a profound understanding of the relation between black subjection, black subject-formation, and the music that issues from it." (Lott, 705)
3. On the drum as catachresis: "Not only must it be abused to be played, but also, in possessing a body, a skin, a head, and a voice, the drum 'has long represented the expressive interiority that we call the subject, the human being insofar as it intones "I," or in Wolf's case 'I am.'" (Lott, 706)
4. On body as instrument: "Conversely, the body itself has long served as the site of percussive beating, from medical taps and reflex hammerings to slaves patting juba on their own bodies once drums had been outlawed in North America for fear of their efficacy in facilitating slave uprisings." (Lott, 706)

****Analysis for Your Paper:****

Lott's work shows how contemporary scholarship brings new theoretical sophistication to questions Du Bois raised about the sorrow songs—how does suffering become sound? How does violence become encoded in aesthetic form? This represents the cutting edge of folklore studies as interdisciplinary practice.

PART II: BUILDING HISTORIOGRAPHICAL ARGUMENTS

How to Structure Each Argument in Your Paper

For each major argument, use this framework:

****1. Establish Historical Context (WHY writing WHEN)****

- What was happening politically/socially?
- What scholarly debates were active?
- What was at stake?

****2. Present the Scholar's Intervention****

- What did they argue?
- How did it challenge previous thinking?
- What methods/evidence did they use?

****3. Show the Conversation****

- Who were they responding to?
- Who responded to them?

- What changed as a result?

4. Connect to Broader Themes

- How does this fit the larger story of power and representation?
- What does it reveal about that historical moment?
- Why does it matter for understanding the evolution of the field?

PART III: PAPER ROADMAP

PROPOSED STRUCTURE

Introduction (1 page)

Opening: Begin with Anna Julia Cooper's 1894 statement: "The American Negro cannot produce an original utterance until he realizes the sanctity of his homely inheritance."

Thesis Statement: The historiography of Black folklore from 1890-2020 reveals a sustained struggle over who has the authority to define, collect, and interpret Black cultural production, and to what political ends. Each generation of scholars responded to contemporary racial politics while engaging with inherited scholarly frameworks, creating a conversation that was simultaneously about methodology, ideology, and power.

Roadmap: Preview your major arguments:

1. "Scientific" folklore studies encoded racial hierarchies (1890s-1940s)
2. Black intellectuals contested white scholarly authority (1890s-present)
3. Folklore was weaponized to support Jim Crow (1890s-1960s)

4. Black writers and artists developed counter-narratives (1890s-present)
5. Scholarly frameworks evolved from evolutionary to relativist to political (1890s-2010s)
6. Recent work recovers agency and resistance (1990s-2010s)

Chapter 1: The "Scientific" Formation of Folklore Studies and Its Racial Politics (1890s-1900s) (1 page)

Section 1.1: William Wells Newell and the Professionalization of Folklore

- Context: Post-Reconstruction, institutionalization of academic disciplines
- Newell's goals: "scientific" objectivity, collection of "fast-vanishing remains"
- His framework: Diffusion theory vs. evolutionary models
- **Key Quote to Analyze:** "modern civilization was furnished with 'a complete representation of the savage mind'" (Moody-Turner, 26)
- **Argument:** Despite claims of objectivity, evolutionary assumptions persisted

Section 1.2: The Political Deployment of "Folkways"

- How folklore rhetoric supported Jim Crow
- "Stateways cannot change folkways"
- Plessy v. Ferguson and "established customs"
- **Key Quote to Analyze:** Mississippi court discriminating against "characteristics" not race (Moody-Turner, 54)
- **Argument:** "Folklore" became legal/political language for naturalizing segregation

Section 1.3: Minstrelsy and the Construction of "Authentic" Black Folk

- Jim Crow character and blackface performance
- Black minstrels as "corporeal evidence"
- The 1895 Negro Village

- **Key Quote to Analyze:** Black performers as "genuine plantation darkies" not "uniformly painted imitations" (Moody-Turner, 37)
- **Argument:** "Authenticity" discourse served white supremacy

Transition: But Black intellectuals weren't passive—they were actively contesting this framework...

Chapter 2: Black Intellectuals Assert Authority Over Representation (1890s-1930s)

(10-12 pages)

Section 2.1: Anna Julia Cooper's Vision (1894)

- Her challenge to white monopoly on collection
- "Aesthetics of engagement" vs. objectification
- Reciprocal relationship between folklore and literature
- **Key Quote to Analyze:** "sanctity of his homely inheritance" (Moody-Turner, 3)
- **Argument:** Cooper theorized Black control of representation 40 years before Hurston

Section 2.2: The Hampton Folklore Society (1893-1900)

- Working within/against white institutional control
- Memory and personal experience as methodology
- Resistance to "scientific" objectification
- **Key Quote to Analyze:** Barbara Christian on theorizing "in narrative forms" (Moody-Turner, 7)
- **Argument:** They were theorizing about power and representation, not just collecting

Section 2.3: Literary Interventions—Chesnutt and Dunbar

- Chesnutt's use of conjure as formal strategy
- Turning ethnographic gaze on white characters

- Dunbar challenging geographic assumptions about folklore
- **Key Quotes to Analyze:**
 - Chesnutt "positing black folklore as an alternative way of constructing, perceiving" reality (Moody-Turner, 17)
 - Dunbar introducing "urban North" as folklore site (Moody-Turner, 16-17)
- **Argument:** Literary artists used folklore for formal experimentation and political critique

****Section 2.4: W.E.B. Du Bois and "Lyrical Science" (1903)****

- Combining empiricism with emotion
- The sorrow songs as exceeding language
- The veil as ethnographic metaphor
- "Of the Coming of John" and the folk's agency
- **Key Quotes to Analyze:**
 - "stepping within the Veil" (Lamothe, 50)
 - Sorrow songs as "articulate message" that defies "technical phrase" (Lamothe, 61)
 - Old man's "rude and awful eloquence" (Lamothe, 66)
- **Argument:** Du Bois pioneered methodological pluralism, recognizing limits of positivism

****Transition:**** By the 1930s-40s, these challenges coalesced in Hurston's insider methodology and Herskovits's empirical dismantling of the "myth"...

**Chapter 3: Dismantling the "Myth of the Negro Past" (1930s-1940s) (1 page)**

****Section 3.1: Zora Neale Hurston's Methodological Revolution****

- Training under Boas—cultural relativism applied
- Insider status as epistemological advantage
- "Feather-bed resistance" concept

- **Key Quotes to Analyze:**

- "Fitting me like a tight chemise" - couldn't see it for wearing it (Hurston, 11)
 - "The Negro offers a feather-bed resistance" (Hurston, 11-12)
 - "He can read my writing but he sho' can't read my mind" (Hurston, 12)
- **Argument:** Hurston revealed what outsiders couldn't know—that Black people controlled information flow; her work represented actualizing Cooper's 1894 vision

****Section 3.2: Melville Herskovits and the "Myth of the Negro Past" (1941)****

- WWII context—fighting racism abroad and at home
- The five components of the "myth"
- Documentation of Africanisms
- Why it mattered: "social endowment" and "assumptions on which attitudes regarding Negro inferiority rest"

- **Key Quotes to Analyze:**

- The myth's components, especially "The Negro is thus a man without a past" (Herskovits, 1)
 - "The myth of the Negro past is one of the principal supports of race prejudice" (Herskovits, 1)
 - Park and Frazier's denial of African survivals (Herskovits, 2-4)
- **Argument:** Herskovits showed the denial of African heritage was ideological; by 1941, white scholarship aligned with what Black intellectuals had been asserting for decades

****Section 3.3: J. Mason Brewer's Documentation (1945)****

- Folklore as evolving, not static "survivals"
 - Three periods of development
 - Modern folklore responding to migration, war, urbanization
- **Key Quote to Analyze:** Folklore "not the products of one Period alone" but responsive to historical change (Brewer, 355)
- **Argument:** Black folklorists documenting living culture, not dead "survivals"

****Transition:**** But even as these positive interventions occurred, stereotypes persisted and were weaponized...

Chapter 4: The Long Shadow of Stereotypes (1960s-1970s) (1 page)**

****Section 4.1: Frank Durham on DuBose Heyward (1961)****

- Civil Rights context
- Even sympathetic whites couldn't escape primitivist frames
- "Exotic, a primitive — atavistic"
- **Argument:** Shows persistence of stereotypes Cooper, Chesnutt, and Hurston fought

****Section 4.2: Roger Abrahams on Stereotypes and Resistance (1970)****

- Post-riots context
- How stereotypes rendered resistance invisible
- "Behavior is in line with the stereotypes white people already have"
- **Key Quote to Analyze:** From your notes on how stereotypes functioned (Abrahams notes)
- **Argument:** Folklore-based stereotypes had material political consequences—dismissed Black political action as "typical behavior"

****Transition:**** Recovering what those stereotypes obscured required new methodological approaches...

Chapter 5: Recovering Agency and Hidden Resistance (1990s-2000s) (8-10 pages)**

****Section 5.1: Robin Kelley and "Hidden Transcripts" (1993)****

- Post-Reagan context, social history from below
- James C. Scott's framework applied to Black South
- Everyday practices as "infrapolitics"

- Taking conjure, prayer, divine intervention seriously
- **Key Quotes to Analyze:**
 - "Infrapolitics" as "beyond the visible end of the spectrum" (Kelley, 77)
 - "We need to recognize that the sacred and the spirit world were also often understood and invoked by African Americans as weapons" (Kelley, 88)
 - Du Bois on "God was real. They knew Him." (Kelley, 88)
- **Argument:** Kelley showed "the folk" had political consciousness and sophisticated resistance strategies that didn't look like formal organizing; validated what Hampton folklorists documented

****Section 5.2: Daphne Lamothe on Du Bois's Ethnographic Practice (2008)****

- "Ethnographic turn" in literary studies
- Du Bois's dialectical approach
- Veil as ethnographic metaphor
- Native ethnographer tensions
- **Key Quotes to Analyze:**
 - "Dialectical" approach—"contradictions and struggles" as truth (Lamothe, 47)
 - "Stepping within the Veil" as participant-observer (Lamothe, 50)
 - Folk's conscious refusal in "Coming of John" (Lamothe, 66)
- **Argument:** Contemporary scholars rehabilitating complexity of early Black intellectuals; recognizing their methodological sophistication

****Transition:**** Most recent work brings new theoretical tools to old questions...

Chapter 6: Contemporary Approaches—Sound, Embodiment, Violence (2010s) (6-8 pages)**

****Section 6.1: Eric Lott on Urban Blues and Jim Crow Violence (2011)****

- Black Lives Matter context emerging
- Sound studies and embodiment
- "Beating" as multi-valent concept
- **Key Quotes to Analyze:**
 - "Beating" encompassing police violence, factory labor, musical drumming (Lott, 705)
 - Langston Hughes on bebop's origin in police violence (Lott, 705)
 - Drum as "expressive interiority" / body as percussion site (Lott, 706)
- **Argument:** Sophisticated interdisciplinary approaches reveal how violence becomes encoded in aesthetic forms; extends Du Bois's questions about sorrow songs

Section 6.2: Where We Are Now

- Interdisciplinary approaches (sound studies, literary studies, anthropology, history)
- Continued attention to power and representation
- Black Lives Matter and renewed urgency
- **Argument:** The questions Cooper raised in 1894 remain urgent

Conclusion: The Persistent Question of Authority (3-4 pages)

Synthesis: Return to your main argument about power and knowledge production

Key Points:

1. The throughline: Who has authority to interpret Black culture, and to what political ends?
2. Each generation responds to contemporary politics AND inherited frameworks
3. It's not linear progress—it's a spiral, returning to questions with new tools
4. Cooper's 1894 vision still not fully realized—Black people controlling their own narrative remains contested

The Conversation's Arc:

- 1890s-1900s: Battle for control

- 1920s-40s: Asserting cultural value and historical depth
- 1960s-70s: Ideological critique
- 1990s-2000s: Recovering agency
- 2010s: Sophisticated interdisciplinary approaches

****Final Reflection:****

The fact that we're still asking "who speaks for Black folk?" means the question Cooper raised remains unresolved. But each generation has added analytical sophistication and expanded what counts as folklore, resistance, and knowledge.

****Ending Quote:**** Return to Cooper: "The American Negro cannot produce an original utterance until he realizes the sanctity of his homely inheritance."

****Final Sentence:**** For over a century, Black intellectuals have insisted on that sanctity while fighting for the authority to interpret it on their own terms.

PART IV: WRITING TIPS

How to Integrate Quotes

****Don't do this:****

"Newell said folklore was important. (Moody-Turner, 20)"

****Do this:****

"William Wells Newell identified the 'principal objective' of the American Folklore Society as collecting the 'fast-vanishing remains of Folk-Lore in America,' revealing his assumption that folklore was dying rather than living culture (Moody-Turner, 20). This 'survivals' framework positioned Black cultural practices as primitive remnants destined to disappear with 'progress,' an assumption that Black intellectuals like Anna Julia Cooper would directly challenge."

How to Show Conversation Between Scholars

****Use transitional language:****

- "Building on Cooper's vision..."
- "In direct response to Newell's framework..."
- "While Herskovits validated what Black intellectuals had long argued..."

- "Kelley's work recovered what Du Bois intuited but couldn't prove..."
- "Contemporary scholars like Lott bring new theoretical sophistication to questions Du Bois raised..."

How to Connect to Historical Context

****Always ask:****

- WHY was this scholar writing at this moment?
- WHAT was at stake politically/socially?
- HOW does their intervention respond to that context?

****Example:****

"Herskovits published **The Myth of the Negro Past** in 1941, as the United States fought Nazi racial ideology abroad while maintaining Jim Crow at home. His systematic documentation of African cultural retentions directly challenged the foundational myth justifying inequality—that Black people had no culture or history worth preserving. By using empirical anthropology to dismantle this 'myth,' Herskovits aligned white scholarship with what Black intellectuals from Cooper to Du Bois to Hurston had been asserting for decades: that African Americans possessed a rich cultural heritage deserving respect and study."

Chicago Style Citation Format

****For direct quotes:****

- First citation: (Moody-Turner, **Black Folklore and the Politics of Racial Representation**, 26)
- Subsequent: (Moody-Turner, 26)

****For paraphrases:**

- (Moody-Turner, 26-27)

****For multiple pages:****

- (Moody-Turner, 26, 45, 52)

****In footnotes (if using notes):****

- First: Shirley Moody-Turner, **Black Folklore and the Politics of Racial Representation** (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2013), 26.
- Subsequent: Moody-Turner, **Black Folklore**, 26.

PART V: KEY THEMES TO WEAVE Throughout

Theme 1: Power and Authority

Every section should address: Who has power to define? What gives them that authority? Who challenges it?

Theme 2: Methodology as Politics

Show how methodological choices (objectivity vs. personal experience, distance vs. insider status, empiricism vs. emotion) are political, not neutral.

Theme 3: The Living vs. The Dead

Track the shift from folklore as "survivals" (dead past) to living, evolving cultural practice responding to historical change.

Theme 4: Geography and Modernity

How folklore got mapped onto geography (rural South = primitive/authentic; urban North = modern/inauthentic) and how Black intellectuals challenged this.

Theme 5: The Insider/Outsider Dialectic

The recurring tension: Can educated elites represent "the folk"? Du Bois's anxiety in "Coming of John," Hurston's navigation of it, Kelley's recovery of folk agency.

Theme 6: What Counts as Knowledge?

Expansion over time: songs → tales → stereotypes → everyday resistance → conjure → prayer → sound → embodied violence

Theme 7: The Political Stakes

Folklore wasn't just "culture"—it was used to justify segregation AND to assert dignity and resistance. Always political.

PART VI: ADDITIONAL QUOTES TO CONSIDER

On the Complexity of "The Folk"

Du Bois on Albany, Georgia:

"The silence and brooding that Du Bois observes suggest a collective resistance to the clinical gaze of the observer, a wall of reserve erected to fend off the outsider who is the reader; and perhaps Du Bois the social scientist and light-skinned Yankee, despite his repeated claims of affiliation with Southern Black folk." (Lamothe, 51)

Analysis: Even Du Bois, claiming insider status, recognized he might be seen as outsider by rural Southern Black people. The "folk" weren't passive objects—they controlled what could be known about them.

On Education and Distance

****John's education in "Coming of John":****

"With education, 'he grew slowly to feel almost for the first time the Veil that lay between him and the white world; he first noticed now the oppression that had not seemed oppression before, differences that erstwhile seemed natural.'" (Lamothe, 64)

****Analysis:**** Education created both consciousness of oppression AND distance from community. This paradox haunted Black intellectuals throughout the period.

On Folklore as Weapon (Both Ways)

****Moody-Turner's synthesis:****

"Within the plantation and minstrel traditions, for instance, folklore referred to the cultural materials that could be re-presented on the stage and in literature as a way to evoke an entire set of cultural practices and behaviors rife with implications for the constructions of race taking shape throughout the nineteenth century." (Moody-Turner, 5)

****Analysis:**** Folklore was never neutral—always already implicated in racial politics.

On The Stakes of Representation

****Chesnutt on Plessy:****

"It establishes racial caste in the United States as firmly as though it were established by an act of Congress. . . . a more humiliating, insulting, and degrading system is hardly conceivable under even a nominally free government." (Moody-Turner, 56)

****Analysis:**** Chesnutt understood immediately that "customs and traditions" rhetoric in Plessy naturalized caste system. Shows why battles over folklore representation mattered so much.