Rhetorics of Literacy

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notes

Introduction

1. Charles Battell Loomis, "The Dialect Store," *Century* 53.6 (April 1897): 958–59.

2. "This Is Why Not. Literary Man Should Not Write Dialect Verse Because He Can't," *Baltimore American,* 26 June 1909, 11.

3. L. B. Fletcher, "Dialect Spelling," *The Writer* 4 (Feb. 1890): 26.

4. Mrs. George Archibald, "Dialect Spelling," *The Writer* 3 (March 1889): 50.

5. Jennifer DeVere Brody, *Punctuation: Art, Politics, and Play* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 6.

6. Edward Bok to James Whitcomb Riley, 14 March 1890, James Whitcomb Riley Collection, Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.

7. "Literary Notes," *Appleton's Journal,* 31 May 1873, 733.

8. "The Pike Poetry," *The Galaxy* 12 (Nov. 1871): 638.

9. George Merriam Hyde, "A New Crop of Dialect," *The Bookman* 6 (Sept. 1897–Feb. 1898): 56.

10. Ibid.

11. Although David Henkin addresses a period earlier than the one covered by this book, his exploration of the ways in which ephemeral printed texts circulated in the modern city provides a model by which we can understand the consumption of dialect poetry in both public and private arenas a few decades later, when modern advertising methods were even more developed and public print even more prevalent. As Henkin points out, public reading practices have been neglected as a subject of study partly because of "the persistently powerful image of the private reader," who was most often a novel reader. Henkin does not discuss poetry reading practices, but I would argue that poetry reading in the mid- to late nineteenth century happened both publicly *and* privately to an extent far greater than either sign reading on one hand or novel reading on the other, to give two examples. *City Reading: Written Words and Public Spaces in Antebellum New York* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 6.

12. Caroline Levine, "Strategic Formalism: Toward a New Method in Cultural Studies," *Victorian Studies* 48 (2006): 626; Monique Morgan, "Productive Convergences, Producing Converts," *Victorian Poetry* 41 (2003): 502.

13. Qtd. in Virginia Jackson, *Dickinson's Misery: A Theory of Lyric Reading* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 56.

14. Susan Stewart, *Crimes of Writing: Problems in the Containment of Representation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 74, 90.

15. Shira Wolosky, "Poetry and Public Discourse, 1820–1910," in *The Cambridge History of American Literature, Volume 4: Nineteenth-Century Poetry, 1800–1910,* ed. Sacvan Bercovitch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 147, 148.

16. John Shoptaw, "Lyric Cryptography," *Poetics Today* 21 (2000): 239; Garrett Stewart, *Reading Voices: Literature and the Phonotext* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

17. Sumner Ives points this out in his landmark essay on literary dialect, "A Theory of Literary Dialect," *Tulane Studies in English* 2 (1950): 137–82.

18. Charles Bernstein, "Poetics of the Americas," in *Reading Race in American Poetry: "An Area of Act,"* ed. Aldon Lynn Nielsen (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 117–18.

19. Tess Chakkalakal, "To Make an Old Century New," *American Quarterly* 62.4 (2010): 1001.

20. James Weldon Johnson, *The Book of American Negro Poetry* (1931; San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1983), 41.

21. Henry Louis Gates, Jr., *Figures in Black: Words, Signs, and the "Racial" Self* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 190.

22. "Pike Poetry," 636–37.

23. Ibid., 638.

24. Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London: Methuen, 1982), 115.

25. Philip Collins, "'Agglomerating Dollars with Prodigious Rapidity': British Pioneers on the American Lecture Circuit," in *Victorian Literature and Society: Essays Presented to Richard D. Altick,* ed. James R. Kincaid and Albert J. Kuhn (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1983), 7.

26. Ibid., 8.

27. Ong, *Orality,* 115–16.

28. Lee Soltow and Edward Stevens, *The Rise of Literacy and the Common School in the United States: A Socioeconomic Analysis to 1870* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 51.

29. Elizabeth McHenry, *Forgotten Readers: Recovering the Lost History of African American Literary Societies* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 5.

30. Shirley Brice Heath, "Standard English: Biography of a Symbol," in *Standards and Dialects in English,* ed. Timothy Shopen and Joseph M. Williams (Cambridge: Winthrop, 1980), 28.

31. Joan Shelley Rubin, "Making Meaning: Analysis and Affect in the Study and Practice of Reading," in *A History of the Book in America,* vol. 4 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 518.

32. John Harrington Cox, "The Poem and the Printed Page," *English Journal* 3.7 (Sept. 1914): 405.

33. Lisa Gitelman, *Scripts, Grooves, and Writing Machines: Representing Technology in the Edison Era* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 52.

34. What I am calling mechanical complexity corresponds most closely with what George Steiner terms "tactical difficulty" in his essay "On Difficulty," an obscurity that "has its source in the writer's will or in the failure of adequacy between his intention and his performative means." "On Difficulty," in *On Difficulty and Other Essays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 33.

35. Oliver Wendell Holmes, "Notes," *Book News* 13 (Oct. 1894): 53.

36. "The Decay of 'Dialect Poetry,'" *Cincinnati Commercial,* 24 July 1871, 4.

37. James Russell Lowell, "The Five Indispensable Authors (Homer, Dante, Cervantes, Goethe, Shakspere)," *Century* 47 (Dec. 1893): 223.

38. Janice Radway, "The Aesthetic in Mass Culture: Reading the 'Popular' Literary Text," in *The Structure of the Literary Process: Studies Dedicated to the Memory of Felix Vodicka,* ed. Peter Steiner et al. (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1982), 424–25.

39. William Charvat, *The Profession of Authorship in America, 1800–1870: The Papers of William Charvat,* ed. Matthew J. Bruccoli (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1968), 105.

40. Margaret Linley, "Conjuring the Spirit: Victorian Poetry, Culture, and Technology," *Victorian Poetry* 41 (2003): 537.

41. Ivan Kreilkamp, "Victorian Poetry's Modernity," *Victorian Poetry* 41 (2003): 608.

42. Gary Scharnhorst, "Ways That Are Dark: Appropriations of Bret Harte's 'Plain Language from Truthful James,'" *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 51 (1996): 377.

43. James Smethurst, *The African American Roots of Modernism: From Reconstruction to the Harlem Renaissance* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 26.

44. Bernstein, "Poetics," 125.

45. Bruce Andrews, *Libretto from White Dialect Poetry* (N.p.: /ubu editions, 2006), accessed March 15, 2012, http://www.ubu.com/ubu/unpub/Unpub_002_Andrews_Libretto.pdf; Bruce Andrews, *WhDiP, a sequence* (N.p.: /ubu editions, 2006), accessed March 15, 2012, http://www.ubu.com/ubu/unpub/Unpub_001_Andrews_Whdip.pdf.

46. Frederich A. Kittler, *Discourse Networks, 1800/1900,* trans. Michael Metteer, with Chris Cullens (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 224–25.

Chapter One

1. Interestingly, Samuel Kirkham's *English Grammar in Familiar Lectures* gives "ort" as a "provincial" pronunciation of "ought" to be avoided, originating in Pennsylvania. Many of Kirkham's Pennsylvanian "improper" pronunciations can be found in Riley's poetry.

2. Dennis E. Baron, *Grammar and Good Taste: Reforming the American Language* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 91.

3. Brander Matthews, "As to 'American Spelling,'" *Harper's* 85 (July 1892): 284.

4. William Dean Howells, "Mark Twain," *Century* 24 (Sept. 1882): 781.

5. H. L. Mencken, *The American Language: An Inquiry into the Development of English in the United States,* 4th ed. and the two supplements, abridged, with annotations and new material by Raven I. McDavid, Jr. (New York: Knopf, 1974), 493.

6. Mencken would likely find this pairing with Matthews comical; in a letter to Theodore Dreiser, Mencken calls his elder "an old ass." Qtd. in Susanna Ashton, "Authorial Affiliations, or, the Clubbing and Collaborating of Brander Matthews," *symploke* 7.1–2 (1999): 172.

7. Walter Blair, introduction to *The Mirth of a Nation: America's Great Dialect Humor,* ed. Walter Blair and Raven McDavid (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), xxiii.

8. William Wanless Anderson, "The Craze for Wrong Spelling," *Dial* 19 (1895): 173.

9. Gavin Jones, *Strange Talk: The Politics of Dialect Literature in Gilded Age America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 24.

10. In 1892, the former superintendent of Dayton, Ohio, schools (he served from 1874–1884) and friend of Riley's remarked, "Thirty years ago (in those primitive times), spelling was the branch of instruction that received most, and in some schools almost exclusive, attention." W. H. Venable, *John Hancock, PhD* (Cincinnati: C. B. Ruggles & Co., 1892), 145.

11. "Pike Poetry," 635.

12. "The Decay of 'Dialect Poetry,'" 4.

13. T. Edgar Pemberton, *Bret Harte: A Treatise and a Tribute* (London: Greening & Co., Ltd., 1900), 11.

14. "Stories of Famous Poems: Francis Bret Harte," *Charlotte* [NC] *Observer,* 13 Aug. 1911, 2.

15. "Pike Poetry," 635.

16. Ibid.

17. As Gavin Jones writes, "Boston parents became anxious when their children broke out with deep southernisms at the breakfast table—evidence of a secret consumption of dialect stories late at night." *Strange Talk,* 1.

18. P. R. S. [Peter Remsen Strong], "A Recipe for a Poem 'In Dialect,'" in *"Awful," and Other Jingles* (New York: Putnam, 1871).

19. Elizabeth Davey, "Building a Black Audience in the 1930s: Langston Hughes, Poetry Readings, and the Golden Stair Press," in *Print Culture in a Diverse America,* ed. James P. Danky and Wayne A. Wiegand (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1998), 230.

20. Richard Grant White, *Every-Day English: A Sequel to "Words and Their Uses"* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1880), 107–8.

21. Cox, "The Poem and the Printed Page," 404–5.

22. Shirley Brice Heath, "Literacy and Language Change," in *Languages and Linguistics: The Interdependence of Theory, Data, and Application,* ed. Deborah Tannen and James E. Alatis, Georgetown University Roundtable on Languages and Linguistics 1985 (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1985), 285. In a history of reading in a small Iowa town during the late nineteenth century, Christine Pawley, too, notes that "oral reading in the schools was giving way to a new emphasis on silent, private reading, focusing on understanding, information, and enjoyment, in contrast to a view of literacy as an aid to rhetoric." These changes were happening even earlier in less rural areas. "What to Read and How to Read: The Social Infrastructure of Young People's Reading, Osage, Iowa," *Library Quarterly* 68 (1998): 280.

23. Nila Banton Smith, *American Reading Instruction* (1934; International Reading Association, 2002), 149–50, 156. It seems more than a little coincidental that the year that saw the publication of *The Waste Land* and *Ulysses* and has long stood chronologically for the ushering in of modernist literature should have also seen a flowering of publications about how to approach texts in a way that excluded oral reading.

24. Lillian Gray, *Teaching Children to Read,* 3rd ed. (New York: Ronald Press, 1963), 50–51; Edmund Burke Huey, *The History and Pedagogy of Reading, with a Review of*

the History of Reading and Writing and of Methods, Texts, and Hygiene in Reading (New York: Macmillan, 1916), 81.

25. Dale D. Johnson and James F. Baumann, "Word Identification," in *Handbook of Reading Research,* vol. 3, ed. P. David Pearson (1984; New York: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2002), 585.

26. A dialect poem published in the *Hartford Courant* teases Riley for this honor. The author worries that, now that Riley will be "doctorin' other fellers' liter'toor," he "may be won't get through / Re'bilitatin' rhymin' stuff that rolls in like the sea / In time to write a word or two for common folks like me."

27. Elizabeth Van Allen, *James Whitcomb Riley: A Life* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 269.

28. Merle Johnson, *You Know These Lines! A Bibliography of the Most Quoted Verses in American Poetry* (New York: G. A. Baker and Company, 1935), v. Although Riley was always treated as a "poet of the people," his reputation suffered during the first half of the twentieth century; he was seen as an overly sentimental, second-rate writer whose humility could not make up for his lack of artistry. In 1913, a reader of the *Nation* complained in a letter to the editor about finding Riley's verse in the magazine—"Doubtless there are many persons who tolerate or even enjoy such barbaric puerilities, but surely few of them are among the regular readers of the *Nation*"—but another reader responded to this letter to defend Riley's appearance in the magazine as a "sane appreciation of a valuable form of literary expression." Burt G. Wilder, "Is 'Hoosier Poetry' Appropriate in the 'Nation'?," *The Nation,* 23 Oct. 1913, 383; Bertrand Shadwell, "Dialect Poetry," *The Nation,* 13 Nov. 1913, 457.

Even as early as 1901, James L. Onderdonk writes that Riley is "in many respects . . . the most artificial of our more conspicuous singers of this realistic era." Riley's work continued to be popular among public readers in the first half of the twentieth century, but Joan Shelley Rubin demonstrates how a newly forming canon was beginning to exclude Riley. In a survey conducted by Rubin, a "respondent who, between 1931 and 1934, had relied on a compilation entitled *One Hundred and One Famous Poems,* was forcibly introduced to categories of taste when a university professor downgraded him for performing a selection from James Whitcomb Riley in a recitation contest." Onderdonk, *History of American Verse, 1610–1897* (Chicago: A. C. McClurg, 1901), 351; Rubin, "'They Flash upon That Inward Eye': Poetry Recitation and American Readers," *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 106.2 (1996): 283.

This is not to say that the negative assessment of Riley's work was only retrospective. In one of many articles attacking Riley and his fellow dialect poets, Ambrose Bierce writes, "I am something sick of the pignoramus crew of malinguists, cacophonologists and apostropographers who think they get close to nature by depicting the sterile lives and limited emotions of the gawks and sodhoppers that speak only to tangle their tongues." Even if Bierce uses these neologisms to mock "this blessed blatherhood of illiteracy bumpkins," his punning comes very close to the types of punning that are intrinsic to dialect writing. "Prattle," *San Francisco Examiner,* 17 Dec. 1892, 16.

29. Jonathan Culler, "Why Lyric?," *PMLA* 123 (2008): 205.

30. Walter Barnes, *The Children's Poets: Analyses and Appraisals of the Greatest English and American Poets for Children* (New York: World Book Company, 1925), 195.

31. Edgar Dale and Jeanne S. Chall, "The Concept of Readability," *Elementary English* 26 (1949): 23.

32. Frank Luther Mott, *Golden Multitudes: The Story of Best Sellers in the United States* (New York: Macmillan, 1947), 225. In a 1924 history of American literature,

Bruce Weirick writes that Riley wanted his poetry "to be read at country schools, or chautauquas, or sewing circles." It seems likely that his poetry circulated frequently in all of these venues and beyond. *From Whitman to Sandburg in American Poetry: A Critical Survey* (New York: Macmillan, 1924), 50.

33. Lesley Wheeler, *Voicing American Poetry: Sound and Performance from the 1920s to the Present* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), 5.

34. Jones, *Strange Talk,* 48.

35. Ibid.

36. Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1974; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 175–76.

37. Ibid., 168.

38. For example, Edith Wyatt writes in 1917, one year after Riley's death, that "[p]eople have always been cutting [Riley's poems] out of newspapers and reciting them at ice cream sociables and church benefits." This quotation demonstrates that the assumption that the literate practice of reading newspapers and the oral practice of poetry recitation would be at odds is antithetical to the phenomenon of dialect poetry, which depends greatly upon both sides of this literary reception at once. *Great Companions* (New York: D. Appleton, 1917), 185.

39. Angela Sorby points out that, in addition to the nostalgic themes presented in Riley's poetry, his rhyme and meter "had in themselves come to constitute the shape of nostalgia." *Schoolroom Poets: Childhood, Performance, and the Place of American Poetry, 1865–1917* (Lebanon: University of New Hampshire Press, 2005), 186.

40. As the 1921 pamphlet *Riley Readings with Living Pictures* suggests, "The name Riley alone is a big drawing card, and people of all classes enjoy an entertainment of this kind." Laura Christine Wegner, *Riley Readings with Living Pictures* (Chicago: T. S. Denison, [c. 1921]), 9.

41. W. D. Howells, "The New Poetry," *The North American Review* 168 (May 1899): 588.

42. Paul H. Gray, "Poet as Entertainer: Will Carleton, James Whitcomb Riley, and the Rise of the Poet-Performer Movement," *Literature in Performance: A Journal of Literary and Performing Art* 5.1 (Nov. 1984): 1.

43. Charles Holstein, Letter to Riley, 29 Dec. 1892, James Whitcomb Riley Collection.

44. Martha Vicinus, *The Industrial Muse: A Study of Nineteenth Century British Working-Class Literature* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1974), 190.

45. Richard Brodhead, *Cultures of Letters: Scenes of Reading and Writing in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 122.

46. Although Alan Trachtenberg includes Riley in a list of authors for whom "the low remained low, subordinated by plot and other devices of social designation to what can be called a discourse of respectability," I question whether the sort of monologic dialect poem Riley typically writes is stratified in the manner he describes. *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age* (1982; New York: Hill and Wang, 2007), 189.

47. Sorby, *Schoolroom Poets,* 105. Harte's "Plain Language from Truthful James" is similarly imitative, appropriating the form of a poem of elite status. He modeled his meter after Algernon Swinburne's *Atalanta in Calydon* because "it whimsically occurred to him that the grand and beautiful sweep of that chorus was just the kind of thing which Truthful James would be the last man in the world to adopt in expressing his views." Pemberton, *Bret Harte,* 74–75.

48. William Carey, Letter to Riley, 20 Aug. 1897, James Whitcomb Riley Collection.

49. Riley, Letter to William Carey, 24 Aug. 1897, James Whitcomb Riley Collection; W. W. Ellsworth, Letter to Riley, 7 Aug. 1897, James Whitcomb Riley Collection.

50. Riley, Letter to William Carey, 26 Aug. 1897, James Whitcomb Riley Collection.

51. Riley, Letter to W. C. Corthill, 12 Dec. 1890, original emphasis, James Whitcomb Riley Collection; William L. Alden, "London Literary Letter," *New York Times,* 23 April 1898, BR266.

52. Riley, *The Rubaiyat of Doc Sifers* (New York: Century Co., 1897), 21.

53. Cawein, Letter to Riley, 9 Aug. 1892, James Whitcomb Riley Collection.

54. Richard Brodhead writes:

> In the years between 1860 and 1900, the *Atlantic Monthly,* the *Century Magazine,* and *Harper's Monthly Magazine* achieved an identification as the three American "quality journals." This means that these three journals produced the same high and distinguished zone in the literary realm that the classical museum or symphony orchestra produced in art or music, a strongly demarcated high-status arena for high-artistic practice. And though actual audiences are notoriously hard to establish there is reason to think that they produced literary writing toward a similarly constituted social public. (*Cultures of Letters,* 124)

55. Although Riley published more poems in the *Century* than in any other magazine, he did not publish much in the *Atlantic Monthly* or in *Harper's Monthly.* As Meredith Nicholson writes, "The only poem he ever contributed to the *Atlantic* was 'Old Glory,' and I recall that he held it for a considerable period, retouching it, and finally reading it at a club dinner to test it thoroughly by his own standards, which were those of the ear as well as the eye. When I asked him why he had not printed it he said he was keeping it 'to boil the dialect out of it.'" Nicholson, *The Man in the Street: Papers on American Topics* (New York: Scribner, 1921), 44–45. Riley's sense of the inappropriateness of his dialect writing in a magazine such as the *Atlantic Monthly* is revealing. In addition, *Harper's Monthly* printed only one poem of Riley's during his lifetime but, according to Anthony J. Russo and Dorothy R. Russo's bibliography, printed dozens of uncollected poems and letters after his death.

56. Mayo Williamson Hazeltine, *Chats about Books: Poets and Novelists* (New York: Scribner's, 1883), 299, 288.

57. Sorby, *Schoolroom Poets,* 100.

58. Lawrence W. Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 233.

59. Charvat, *Profession of Authorship,* 107.

60. Hamlin Garland, "Real Conversations—IV, A Dialogue between James Whitcomb Riley and Hamlin Garland," *McClure's* 2.3 (Feb. 1894): 228. A June 12, 1877, letter from Lee O. Harris compliments Riley on this doggerel, saying, "I did not think that I would ever offer anyone congratulations on an advertizing [*sic*] poem but yours is simply immense—The best thing of the kind I ever saw." From the start of his career, Riley finds for himself a niche between verse and non-verse, being neither. In fact, an early *Scribner's* rejection illustrates this in-betweenness: "Your writings show good poetic feeling but as yet we fear they fall short of literature." Letter to Riley, 22 Jan. 1878, James Whitcomb Riley Collection.

61. Garland, "Real Conversations," 228.

62. Van Allen, *James Whitcomb Riley,* 198, 112.

63. Henry Van Dyke, "James Whitcomb Riley as a Person," *The Book News Monthly* (March 1907): 429.

64. Qtd. in Sorby, *Schoolroom Poets,* 114.

65. Hamlin Garland, *Roadside Meetings* (New York: Macmillan, 1930), 100.

66. Garland, "Real Conversations," 220.

67. Harold K. Bush, "'Absorbing the Character': James Whitcomb Riley and Mark Twain's Theory of Performance," *American Literary Realism* 31.3 (1999): 43.

68. Sorby, *Schoolroom Poets,* 114–15.

69. Wolosky, "Poetry and Public Discourse," 327.

70. Garland, "Real Conversations," 220, 232–33.

71. Hamlin Garland, *Commemorative Tribute to James Whitcomb Riley* (New York: American Academy of Arts and Letters, 1922), 5.

72. Fred C. Kelly, "James Whitcomb Riley's Start," *New York Times,* 21 May 1911, X5.

73. Mabel Potter Daggett, *In Lockerbie Street: A Little Appreciation of James Whitcomb Riley* (New York: B. W. Dodge & Company, 1909), 20, 18.

74. Qtd. in Gary Scharnhorst, *Bret Harte: Opening the American Literary West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2000), 96.

75. C. Lewis Hind, *Authors and I* (New York: John Lane Company; London: John Lane, The Bodley Head, 1921), 120, 122.

76. Qtd. in Scharnhorst, *Opening,* 80.

77. Ibid., 97.

78. Garland, "Real Conversations," 220; Daggett, *Lockerbie Street,* 19.

79. Scharnhorst, *Opening,* 101.

80. Roy F. Hudson, "The Contributions of Bret Harte to Western Oratory," *Western American Literature* 2 (1967): 217.

81. This move signified to him that now "he was in his proper sphere among the Brahmin poets." Scharnhorst, *Opening,* 67.

82. Gary Scharnhorst, "'I Do Not Write This in Anger': Bret Harte's Letters to His Sister, 1871–93," *Resources for American Literary Study* 26.2 (2000): 206. In a letter to Bret Harte, Schuyler Colfax, former vice president of the United States, makes a suggestion to Harte that he worries might be "intrusive and unacceptable":

> . . . while very much interested last night in your Lecture & its brilliant passages, I regretted very much & I find the regret shared by our best people, that you had not incorporated into it some of the "dialect" prose & poetry. I can understand very well that you are tired of hearing of the poem which achieved so much celebrity, exactly as [actor Joseph] Jefferson tires of performing Rip Van Winkle, tho' the public insist on it, & continue as enthusiastic about it as ever. (Qtd. in Scharnhorst, "'I Do Not Write This in Anger,'" 207)

Colfax's comparison of Harte's performances to those of an actor must have irritated Harte, considering his desire to *not* inhabit his characters during readings.

83. Van Allen, *James Whitcomb Riley,* 74. Riley, in general, modeled his practice as dialect poet in part after Harte. Meredith Nicholson remembers that Riley "owed much" to Harte, and that "Harte's use of dialect in verse probably strengthened Riley's confidence in the Hoosier speech as a medium when he began to find himself." Harte was also "his expressed favorite writer of fiction." Nicholson, *Man in the Street,* 36; Edward Eitel, "A Close-Up of James Whitcomb Riley," James Whitcomb Riley Collection.

84. Wegner, *Riley Readings,* 13.

85. Alice Moore Dunbar-Nelson, ed., *The Dunbar Speaker and Entertainer* (Naperville: J. L. Nichols & Co., 1920), 14.

86. For example, as Sorby points out, Riley rarely performed the few poems he wrote in "black dialect," perhaps because his performance depended upon a convincing assumption of the total character of the poem's speaker, with more chance of success when the speaker resembles Riley himself (white, male, etc.).

87. Charlotte Canning suggests that the many words used to describe Chautauqua readings "indicate a continuing struggle to avoid any identification with theatre." Philip Collins makes a similar claim, extending it to include public performances of literature in the Victorian era generally, in both England and America: "certainly much of the attraction of readings lay in their being regarded as permissible by the many respectable people who objected to theatres as immoral." Canning, "The Platform Versus the Stage: The Circuit Chautauqua's Antitheatrical Theatre," *Theatre Journal* 50 (1998): 313; Collins, *Reading Aloud: A Victorian Métier* (Lincoln: The Tennyson Society, 1972), 20–22.

88. Alison Byerly, "From Schoolroom to Stage: Reading Aloud and the Domestication of Victorian Theater," in *Culture and Education in Victorian England,* ed. Patrick Scott and Pauline Fletcher (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1990), 136.

89. Karen Halttunen, *Confidence Men and Painted Women: A Study of Middle-Class Culture in America, 1830–1870* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 122.

90. Mott, *Golden Multitudes,* 225. Mott classifies Riley's 1883 *The Old Swimmin' Hole and 'Leven More Poems* as a best seller, meaning that it "is believed to have had a total sale equal to one per cent of the population of continental United States . . . for the decade in which it was published," amounting to 500,000 in Riley's case (303).

91. Howells, "The New Poetry," 588. In a review of a collection titled *An American Anthology,* Oscar Lovell Triggs writes, "Recently there have been signs of a shifting emphasis. Longfellow is losing importance, and writers like Riley are gaining. In Longfellow's sense of poetry, Riley has not written poetry so much as in a new and more democratic sense he has depicted life. In some way life has got into a book, but is known like a person. The humanization of poetry may count for more in the twentieth century than Longfellow's poetization of humanity." "A Century of American Poetry," *The Forum* 30 (Jan. 1901): 633. (See also Charvat, quoted above, for his distinction between Longfellow and Riley.)

Countless contemporary reader reviews—or, more accurately, reminiscences—of "Little Orphant Annie" on the website Americanpoems.com testify to the fact that he is still read, particularly among the elderly. These reminiscences frequently mention grandparents' reading the poems aloud, most "by heart," and many recall reading the poem in primary school in the 1940s and '50s. A typical respondent who posted on May 20, 2008, remembers her mother reciting the poem sixty years earlier, "at bedtime and to the accompaniment of a flickering coal oil lamp. . . . [C]ertainly no Hollywood movie could possibly be so entertaining and so touching." Riley's influence also extended to England, where a respondent (posting on September 29, 2005) working in a nursing home found that one of the residents, "a wonderful lady of 95 years[,] recited the first three verses of Little Orphant Annie (word perfect)." "Analysis and Comments on 'Little Orphant Annie' by James Whitcomb Riley," accessed Jan. 1, 2012, http://www.americanpoems.com/poets/James-Whitcomb-Riley/13510/comments.

92. Nellie Frances Milburn, "An Open Letter to James Whitcomb Riley," *The Literary World* 31 (May 1900): 104.

93. Scharnhorst, *Opening,* 52–53.

94. Riley's correspondence with Selig, however, dates back to at least 1910 (when the short film *There Little Girl Don't Cry*, an adaptation of his "A Life Lesson," was produced), and includes a December 21, 1912, letter from W. B. Selig acknowledging the filming of footage of Riley, sent to his home along with a projectionist to assist with his viewing of it.

95. Review of *Little Orphant Annie, Variety,* 6 Dec. 1918, 39.

96. Although a silent film viewing would not have been a silent experience, considering that most were viewed with musical accompaniment, it was still usually a non-verbal experience.

97. Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 4.

98. Kamilla Elliott, *Rethinking the Novel/Film Debate* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 93, 99.

99. Timothy W. Galow, "Literary Modernism in the Age of Celebrity," *Modernism/Modernity* 17.2 (2010): 313–29.

100. Daggett, *Lockerbie Street,* 13–14. The lines indented in the original text are modeled after the best-known lines of "Little Orphant Annie."

101. Ibid., 16–17.

102. Eitel, "A Close-Up," 10.

103. In a note to the book, editor and illustrator Art Young claims that "[t]he sketches in this volume showing characteristic attitudes of the authors represented are the illustrator's individual impressions from life. They were made by him from pencil sketches drawn while observing the authors read or recite, or from his recollection of the various poses assumed. Some of the original sketches in lead pencil were made at public readings. Others were made in private." "Illustrator's Note," in *Author's Readings* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1897), iii.

104. Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations,* ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken, 1968), 238.

105. Elizabeth Van Allen, "The Signifier and the Signified," *Traces of Indiana and Midwestern History* 11.1 (Winter 1999): 29.

106. Benjamin, "The Work of Art," 220; John M. Picker, *Victorian Soundscapes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 123.

107. Jason Camlot, "Early Talking Books: Spoken Recordings and Recitation Anthologies, 1880–1920," *Book History* 6 (2003): 148.

108. "Records Taken of Riley's Voice. Poet Consents After Years to Read Choice Poems for Talking Machine Company. Noted Writer of Verse Hears 'Proofs' of Selections with Manifest Interest," *Indianapolis Star,* 6 July 1912, 1. John M. Picker mentions that the elderly Tennyson's response to this new technology was also marked by amusement and interest: "the new machine so intrigued him that he willingly committed many of his famous works to wax." According to Picker, this desire to record oneself "may seem strikingly modern as an act of mechanical reproduction, yet it was in keeping with the aims of his poetic project: to express the plurality of selves that constitutes the self" (126). Although it may seem odd to compare the two Victorian poets, Riley's poetry, like Tennyson's, depends upon the production of multiple voices necessary to dramatic monologue.

109. Harry O. Sooy, *Memoir of My Career at Victor Talking Machine Company* (1909), 49–51, accessed Jan. 1, 2012, http://www.davidsarnoff.org/sooyh-maintext1909.html. This account differs greatly from that given in a promotional document titled "A Close-Up of James Whitcomb Riley" (presumed to be written by Edward Eitel). Eitel claims that

> the supreme annoyance of his life came when he was inveigled into making records of his poems for the Victor people. He had suffered from the stroke that later proved fatal, and it required a lot of persuasion to get him to even consider the attempt. He was unfit to make the trip to Camden, so the operatives, with their paraphranalia [*sic*], came to him at his home in Indianapolis.
>
> In the first place, he didn't want to do it, and could be most emphatically decided, especially in his later years. He would consent to record only the poems of his own selection, regardless of their length, and he didn't propose to omit any of the verses, even for the convenience of a "talking contraption."
>
> After an endless amount of patience on the part of everybody, a record was completed. "Out to Old Aunt Mary's" was rounded out and everything was fine; but when he had finished the last line, he settled back in his chair, and exclaimed in a grateful tone "I hope that suits you, by Jingo!" Of course this was faithfully recorded and the long, tedious ordeal had to be gone through with once more. (10–11)

110. Camlot, "Early Talking Books," 154.

111. Ibid., 148.

112. Theodore Dreiser, *A Hoosier Holiday* (New York: John Lane Company; London: John Lane, The Bodley Head, 1916), 373.

113. Charles W. Hibbitt, "Poetry and Speech," *Frontier and Midland* 17.3 (Spring 1937): 160.

114. Riley writes, "All day yesterday and today I've been setting up my (not *Gram*-ophone, but) *Zon*-o-phone, which the Co. says is by no means so complicated. Well, at last, I've mastered it; and with *ten* introductory disks—and *one* from your duplicates, I am now giving a great show, and all we Lockerbie people wish you-all were of our enthusiastic audience. *Your* disk holds favorite, though we have *one* phenomenal one which I'll order duplicate of forwarded your way at once" (emphasis original to letter). Riley, Letter to Joel Chandler Harris, 8 May 1900, James Whitcomb Riley Collection.

115. E. W. Scripture, *Researches in Experimental Phonetics: The Study of Speech Curves* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Institution, 1906), 3.

116. William Lyon Phelps, "As I Like It," *Scribner's* 88.5 (Nov. 1930): 547.

117. James Whitcomb Riley, *The Boys of the Old Glee Club* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1907).

118. Picker, *Victorian Soundscapes,* 123; Ivan Kreilkamp, *Voice and the Victorian Storyteller* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 185.

119. Review of *The Boys of the Old Glee Club* by James Whitcomb Riley, *The Independent,* 2 April 1908, 756.

120. Minnie Mitchell, *James Whitcomb Riley, as I Knew Him: Real Incidents in the Early Life of America's Beloved Poet* (Greenfield, IN: The Old Swimmin' Hole Press, 1949): 150–51.

121. Ibid., 149–50.

122. Qtd. in Sorby, *Schoolroom Poets,* 99.

123. Riley writes, "I am half sorry that we were not alone yesterday for I could have talked like a phonograph." Letter to Theodore C. Steele, c. 1879, in *Letters,* 22.

124. Camlot, 158, 166.

125. Riley, Letter to the Holsteins, 24 May 1900, James Whitcomb Riley Collection.

126. Kittler, *Discourse Networks,* 236.

127. Qtd. in Picker, *Victorian Soundscapes,* 127.
128. Picker, 123.
129. Camlot, "Early Talking Books," 163–65.
130. Tim Brooks, *Lost Sounds: Blacks and the Birth of the Recording Industry, 1890–1919* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 197, 263.

Chapter Two

1. A famous example is James Joyce's "The Dead"; the name of Joyce's protagonist comes from Harte's *Gabriel Conroy.*

2. Margaret Duckett, "Plain Language from Bret Harte," *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 11.4 (1957): 241.

3. Jones, *Strange Talk,* 37. One set of Harte's readers that would have recognized the satire were readers of the *Overland Monthly,* the magazine Harte edited and in which the poem appeared. As Tara Penry argues persuasively, the magazine's history of articles on the Chinese in California made the *Overland*'s position clear, such that "established readers could hardly have missed Harte's intended tone" and even "new readers . . . would have found a few clues directing them to a satiric reading of the poem" in the issue's otherwise genteel contents. "The Chinese in Bret Harte's *Overland:* A Context for Truthful James," *American Literary Realism* 43.1 (2010): 74.

4. Jones, *Strange Talk,* 37.

5. Henry B. Wonham, *Playing the Races: Ethnic Caricature and American Literary Realism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 48.

6. "Stories of Famous Poems: Francis Bret Harte," 2.

7. Scharnhorst, *Opening,* 57.

8. Bret Harte, "Plain Language from Truthful James," in *Poems* (Boston: James R. Osgood and Company, 1871), 79–83. Axel Nissen cites one such example: "'We will be ruined by Chinese cheap labor' was in fact a favorite phrase of the boss truckman Dennis Kearney, the 'Sandlots Orator,' when he spoke about the dangers Chinese immigration represented." *Bret Harte: Prince and Pauper* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2000), 110.

9. The "Bill Nye" of Harte's poem precedes the career of the humorist Bill Nye, who toured with James Whitcomb Riley (the two were compared to Chang and Eng, the Siamese twins, by Mark Twain). David B. Kesterson writes in "The Literary Comedians and the Language of Humor" that "Edgar Wilson Nye capitalizes on the notoriety of Bret Harte's card shark Bill Nye from 'Plain Language from Truthful James,' by adopting the 'Bill' as his first name." "The Literary Comedians and the Language of Humor," *Studies in American Humor,* new series, 1 (1982): 45.

10. Scharnhorst, *Opening,* 55.

11. Bret Harte, "The Rise of the 'Short Story,'" in *The Luck of the Roaring Camp and Other Writings* (New York: Penguin, 2001), 257.

12. John O. Rees, "Some Echoes of English Literature in Frontier Vernacular Humor," *Studies in American Humor,* new series, 1 (1983): 158.

13. Qtd. in Scharnhorst, *Opening,* 48.

14. Ibid., 147.

15. Jones, *Strange Talk,* 43.

16. Edward Eggleston, *The Hoosier School-Master: A Story of Backwoods Life in Indiana* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1928), 7; Mark Twain, *Mark Twain in Eruption,* ed. Bernard DeVoto (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1940), 263.

17. Warren Cheney, "Francis Bret Harte," *Overland Monthly* 1.1 (Jan. 1883): 72. It is worth noting, however, that Cheney's 1883 article appeared in the *Overland Monthly,* a magazine once edited by Harte.

18. Henry Childs Merwin, *The Life of Bret Harte, with Some Account of the California Pioneers* (Detroit: Gale Research Co., 1967), 325–26.

19. George Philip Krapp, *The English Language in America,* vol. 1 (1925; New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1960), 244–45.

20. J. C. Heywood, *How They Strike Me, These Authors* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1877), 197–98.

21. Some of the most interesting parodies of "Plain Language from Truthful James" I have come across include one written in German dialect, one attacking the flirtatious "Girl of the Period" in place of the "Heathen Chinee," and a broadside poem titled "The Ho[w]ly Elder" attributed to "Ah Sin-[ner]." All can be found at the American Antiquarian Society. Riley himself published a poem in the *Greenfield Commercial* in the style of Harte's poem, titled "An Unexpected Result," and signed it "Brat Heart." Mitchell, *James Whitcomb Riley,* 134.

22. In *Bret Harte: A Bibliography,* Gary Scharnhorst points out that the attribution of this poem to Harte by its inclusion in a collection of his poetry is disputed by Jacob Blanck, who says that the poem is "almost certainly not by Harte." *Bibliography of American Literature,* 9 vols. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955–91): 3: 458.

23. Brodhead, *Cultures of Letters,* 137.

24. Jones, *Strange Talk,* 193.

25. Michael Toolan, "The Significations of Representing Dialect in Writing," *Language and Literature* 1.1 (1992): 42.

26. Michael Kowalewski writes that, in nineteenth-century Western writing, "[w]ith certain groups of people—especially the Chinese and Native Americans, whose members often spoke little English—what was actually available for quotation were pidgin hybrids or 'jargons' that are sometimes made to sound degraded or nonsensical in western texts, whatever the actual complexity of such languages might have been in the context of frontier communication"; however, "[a]s often as not, Chinese and Indian characters in these works appear in degraded silence, with no speech at all." "Quoting the Wicked Wit of the West: Frontier Reportage and Western Vernacular," in *Reading the West: New Essays on the Literature of the American West,* ed. Michael Kowalewski (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 87–88.

27. Bret Harte, "The Latest Chinese Outrage," in *The Poetical Works of Bret Harte* (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1899), 142–45.

28. Scharnhorst says the poem did not "strike a chord with readers; indeed the poem was virtually ignored." *Opening,* 214.

29. "The London Spectator on Bret Harte," *Every Saturday: A Journal of Choice Reading,* 27 May 1871, 486.

30. Osgood qtd. in Scharnhorst, *Opening,* 71, 55. A strange and crudely drawn ephemeral edition of the poem illustrated by H. Palmieri (Philadelphia: Porter Coates, 1871) exhibits the poem's unspoken violence in reverse: Ah Sin is the aggressor, walking into the distance triumphantly in the last illustrated panel, while Truthful James assists a limping, swollen-faced Bill Nye in the foreground. These illustrations apparently led one reviewer to claim that "Ah Sin himself is the narrator" (despite the fact that Harte's text is not altered) and that he "proves how completely 'that truth-telling James' has calumniated him." "Notes on Books and Booksellers," *American Literary Gazette and Publishers' Circular,* 15 April 1871, 250.

31. Jacqueline Romeo, "Irony Lost: Bret Harte's Heathen Chinee and the Populariza-

tion of the Comic Coolie as Trickster in Frontier Melodrama," *Theatre History Studies* 26 (1996): 117–18.

32. "Personal," *Cincinnati Daily Gazette,* 22 April 1871, 2.

33. The illustrations from this edition can be found in Stephen Railton's online archive, "Mark Twain and His Times" at http://etext.virginia.edu/railton/roughingit/map/chiharte.html. In what appears to be another similar "edition" published by the Chicago, Rock Island, and Pacific Railroad and "dedicated to the traveling public," Harte's poem is reprinted along with an anonymous poem titled "An Old-Fashioned Couple." This poem was clearly written for the express purpose of advertising the railroad line's "Palace Cars," which are admired by the poem's eponymous elderly couple for their "silver fixin's" and "paintin's." As they observe the passing landscape on their visit "out West" to see their son John, they decide that "the West has far more charms" than the East, providing a fitting versified prologue to Harte's poem. *The Old-Fashioned Couple and Heathen Chinee,* Chicago: J. J. Spalding & Co., 1873.

34. Yopie Prins, "Robert Browning, Transported by Meter," in *The Traffic in Poems: Nineteenth-Century Poetry and Transatlantic Exchange,* ed. Meredith L. McGill (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2008), 209.

35. Tom D. Kilton, "The American Railroad as Publisher, Bookseller, and Librarian," *Journal of Library History* 17.1 (1974): 61.

36. Duckett, "Plain Language," 37.

37. Even decades later, the *Columbia* [SC] *State* prints a dedicatory poem that ends with the following quatrain: "He wrote in verse as well as prose, / And be it here confessed— / That many of us know and love / His 'Heathen Chinee' best." "Today in History: Anniversary of the Birth of Bret Harte in 1839," 25 Aug. 1919, 4.

38. Noah Brooks, "Bret Harte: A Biographical and Critical Sketch," *Overland Monthly* 40.3 (Sept. 1902): 206; Fred Lewis Pattee, *A History of American Literature since 1870* (New York: The Century Company, 1915), 398.

39. Pemberton, *Bret Harte,* 73; Taliesin Evans, "History of the 'Heathen Chinee,'" *Overland Monthly* 40.3 (Sept. 1902): 229. In a much reprinted 1910 article, the *New York Times* pointed out that "packs" should most likely read "jacks," but that misprint—"the only instance in literature where a grossly patent error . . . has persisted"—was initially missed by the author:

> . . . the busy Bret Harte let the proofs go down to the printer, and it was not until some time later that he recalled having overlooked an error in it. He hurried down to the press, but already several hundred copies had been struck off and were being distributed about the city to the morning subscribers. Bret Harte, attaching no importance to the fugitive verses, which had merely oozed from his pen the afternoon previous, made no effort at correction then. When, however, the eastern press enthusiastically copied it, and publishers and illustrators rang all manner of comic changes on it, he tried to substitute the correct phrase, but without avail, and 'The Heathen Chinee' has persisted in its original form through numberless editions ever since. ("Bret Harte's 'Heathen Chinee,'" *New York Times,* 13 Nov. 1910, SM5)

A similar story of misprint surrounds Riley's most famous poem. "Little Orphant Annie" was supposed to read "Little Orphant Allie."

40. Garland, "Real Conversations," 233.

41. Walter Barnes writes, "Riley, as all the world knows, is extremely fond of dialect—Hoosier dialect in his verse for grown-ups, child dialect in his verse for growing-

ups. *Little Orphant Annie, The Raggedy Man, The Bumblebee, The Boy Lives on Our Farm, The Squirt-Gun Uncle Maked Me, The Runaway Boy, The Pet Coon,* are all typical child-dialect pieces." Barnes, 185. A glimpse at some of Riley's book titles clearly demonstrates his reliance on this mode: *The Riley Baby Book: Autograph Verses Reproduced in Facsimile, The Book of Joyous Children, Riley Child Rhymes, Rhymes of Childhood, Riley's Child Verse, A Child-World,* etc.

42. James Whitcomb Riley, "Schoolboy Silhouettes—No. 1" (unidentified newspaper clipping), James Whitcomb Riley Collection.

43. For example, *wuz* (perhaps the most commonly used word in eye dialect) seems closer to a phonetic representation than *was* does. Mark Balhorn, "Paper Representations of the Non-Standard Voice," *Visible Language* 32 (1998): 60.

44. Noah Webster, *Dissertations on the English Language* (1789; Menston, England: The Scolar Press Limited, 1967), 397.

45. Charles Read, *Children's Creative Spelling* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971), 28.

46. James Whitcomb Riley, "Lisping in Numbers," in *The Complete Poetical Works of James Whitcomb Riley* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 757–78.

47. The British Simplified Spelling Society, for example, published a book in 1911 called *Simplified Spelling: An Appeal to Common Sense.* The rules for using this simplified spelling include, "Drop silent letters when this does not involve a change of pronunciation," such as the *gh* in *bright,* but "[d]o not adopt *brite,* which is contrary to the spelling *ie* suggested for this diphthong in the scheme." It appears that spellings such as "brite" are counterproductive to the simplifying endeavor: "This kind of spelling, by means of a mute *e* following a consonant, is for various reasons unacceptable." *Simplified Spelling: An Appeal to Common Sense* (London: Simplified Spelling Society, 1911), 59, 44.

48. Hibbitt, "Poetry and Speech," 159–60.

49. Dale B. J. Randall, "Dialect in the Verse of 'The Hoosier Poet,'" *American Speech* 35 (1960): 48.

50. As Lee Soltow and Edward Stevens point out, "It was common for both reading and schooling to be used as part of the setting for children's stories or poems, the moral examples contained therein presumably attractive enough to make an impression upon young minds." *The Rise of Literacy,* 64.

51. James Whitcomb Riley, "Almon Keefer," in *A Child-World* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1896), 51.

52. James Whitcomb Riley, "A Session with Uncle Sidney," in *The Book of Joyous Children* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1902), 112–15.

53. For Riley's difficulty with spelling, see Richard Crowder, *Those Innocent Years: The Legacy and Inheritance of a Hero of the Victorian Era, James Whitcomb Riley* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1957), 42.

54. James Whitcomb Riley, "Some Boys," *Century* 41.2 (Dec. 1890): 317.

55. Letter to Benjamin S. Parker, 29 Aug. 1887, qtd. in *Complete Works of James Whitcomb Riley,* vol. 6, 407–8.

56. Letter from Bobbs-Merrill Company to multiple recipients, c. 1915, James Whitcomb Riley Collection.

57. "The Indiana School Journal Teachers' Club—Announcement," James Whitcomb Riley Collection.

58. Bernard Lootens, Letter to Riley, n.d.; Charles Franklin, Letter to Riley, 6 Sept. 1915, James Whitcomb Riley Collection.

59. *St Nicholas,* Letter to Riley, 1 Aug. 1889, James Whitcomb Riley Collection.

60. Riley, Letter to Carey, 27 Aug. 1894, James Whitcomb Riley Collection.

61. Riley, Letter to R. U. Johnson, 14 [?] June 1890, James Whitcomb Riley Collection.

62. Riley, Letter to R. U. Johnson, 15 July 1890, James Whitcomb Riley Collection.

63. *Scribner's* (E. L. Burlingame), Letter to Riley, 6 Jan. 1899, James Whitcomb Riley Collection.

64. Carey, Letter to Riley, 18 July 1895, James Whitcomb Riley Collection.

65. Garland, *Roadside Meetings,* 232.

66. Clara Laughlin thinks Riley's dialect so accurate that future generations may use his notebooks recording dialect speech as valuable resources in studying late nineteenth-century Indiana speech. On the other hand, Fred Lewis Pattee argues that Riley's "dialect does not ring true" and that "Riley must be dismissed as artificial and, on the whole, insincere." Riley's own "Dialect in Literature" defends the use of dialect in literature generally, and Nicholson cites Riley's defense of his own inconsistencies specifically: "He complained to me bitterly of an editor who had directed his attention to apparent inconsistencies in dialect in the proof of a poem. Riley held, and rightly, that the dialect of the Hoosier is not fixed and unalterable, but varies in certain cases, and that words are often pronounced differently in the same sentence." Laughlin, *Reminiscences of James Whitcomb Riley* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1916), 108; Pattee, *History of American Literature,* 326, 328; Nicholson, *Man in the Street,* 40.

67. Donald M. Scott, "Print and the Public Lecture System, 1840–60," in *Printing and Society in Early America,* ed. William Leonard Joyce et al. (Worcester, MA: American Antiquarian Society, 1983), 280.

68. "Ade's Literary Map of Indiana," *Bellingham* [*WA*] *Herald,* 17 May 1905, 7.

69. A few of the most interesting turn-of-the-century non-dialect poems about spelling bees I have encountered include Henry H. Johnson's "The Old-Time Spelling-School" (included in *Ballads of the Farm and Home* in 1902), Benjamin F. Taylor's "Going to Spelling School" (originally published in *Scribner's Monthly* in 1874, and in a review said to be "well known all over America"), William Caswell Jones's "The Spelling School" (included in his *Birch-Rod Days, and Other Poems,* published in 1892), Earl Marble's "The Amateur Spelling-Match" (originally published in *Appleton's Journal* in 1877 and reprinted many times in recitation books and anthologies), and Kate Tannatt Woods's "Grandfather Grey" (in *Grandfather Grey,* published in 1892). A *Time* magazine article from February 19, 1940, cites a group of poems titled "Lincoln Lyrics," by Edwin Markham of "The Man with the Hoe" fame, written in 1925 but "never before published or broadcast" until the Staten Island Chamber of Commerce played a recording of them on the radio in honor of Lincoln's birthday. One of them depicts a spelling bee in which Abraham Lincoln allows his sweetheart to beat him. Coincidentally, young Lincoln "stands pat on . . . Phthisic" ("Radio: Spelldown," 47).

In addition, the June 1898 issue of *Primary Education* includes a much-cited poem titled "The Spelling Match." Because the poem includes misspelled words in its narrative, the editor's note asks, "Is it pedagogically wrong to give these verses to the children?" Another educational journal, an 1896 issue of *American Annals of the Deaf,* found the poem useful in combating bad spelling, as "after the first couplet, the class comprehended the 'joke,' and was then interested in watching for the mistake in each succeeding stanza." *Primary Education* 6 (June 1898): 239; *American Annals of the Deaf* 41 (1896): 187–88.

70. Bret Harte, "The Spelling Bee at Angel's (Reported by Truthful James)," *Scribner's* 17.1 (Nov. 1879): 38–40.

71. In fact, Seth Lerer writes, "But if there is one word that emblematizes region, dia-

lect and distance in this passage it is *phthisic*. . . . By the mid-nineteenth century in England, the word seems to have evaporated, but in regional American, it flourished." Lerer cites the *Dictionary of American Regional English* entry, which explains that the word's "peculiar orthography made it a favorite in old-time spelling bees." That "phthisic," as Lerer points out, "makes us palpably aware of speech as a physical activity—and, as a consequence, of dialect itself as something laborious for the uninitiated to pronounce," makes it especially suitable, I argue, for both the public and social environment of the spelling bee and the alienating and difficult experience of dialect poetry reading. *Inventing English: A Portable History of the Language* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 201.

72. The title of Wister's book lampoons the first line of Isaac Watts's poem "Against Idleness and Mischief": "How doth the little busy bee." The poem was printed in *Divine Songs Attempted in Easy Language for Children* in 1715, and was a popular recitation piece and well-known poem frequently used in spellers.

73. Owen Wister, *How Doth the Simple Spelling Bee* (New York: Macmillan, 1907), 61.

74. Ibid., 62. Wister also responds to this argument in a *New York Times* piece, in which he writes, "It is difficult for school-children. Here is truly a solemn indictment. Can we keep our faces straight? This difficulty does not somehow seem to have prevented various children all along through the years from growing up and writing Hamlet and Ivanhoe and Vanity Fair and Robinson Crusoe and The Scarlet Letter—in short has not prevented English from producing the greatest Literature the world has ever seen, and also the widest number of readers of this Literature." As far as foreigners are concerned, he sarcastically exclaims, "Poor dears! So difficult that English has steadily spread through every nation, and is now the dominant language of the civilized world, and growing more so every day." "What Is True Spelling? One of the Foremost of our Younger Writers Does Not Think It Is the Kind Recommended by the Simplified Spelling Board," *New York Times,* 5 Oct. 1906, BR614.

75. Webster, *Dissertations,* 394–95.

76. A word derived from the hook hanging above the hearth upon which pots were hung, a "pot-hook" is a rudimentary effect of penmanship; young students who couldn't write properly would produce letters that resembled pot-hooks.

77. David Simpson, *The Politics of American English, 1776–1850* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 143.

78. Allen Walker Read, "The Spelling Bee: A Linguistic Institution of the American Folk," *PMLA* 56 (1941): 504.

79. Eggleston, *Hoosier School-Master,* 79.

80. Webster, *Dissertations,* 108–9.

81. J. E. Worcester, *A Pronouncing Spelling-Book of the English Language* (Boston: William Ware and Company, 1879), 9.

82. Suzanne de Castell and Allan Luke, "Models of Literacy in North American Schools: Social and Historical Conditions and Consequences," in *Literacy, Society, and Schooling: A Reader,* ed. Suzanne de Castell, Allan Luke, and Kieran Egan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 94.

83. As Charles Carpenter writes, "Not so much importance is attached to the ability to spell correctly at present as there was in the nineteenth century. It has been pointed out many times that spelling was over valued at the expense of other studies during the nineteenth century, and that this criticism is justified cannot be denied." *History of American Schoolbooks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1963), 158.

84. Eggleston, *Hoosier School-Master,* 54, 79.

85. "Spelling," *Littell's Living Age,* 19 Feb. 1876, 510–11.

86. White, *Every-Day English,* 100.

87. Qtd. in Read, "The Spelling Bee," 500. Although the term "spelling bee" was preceded by "spelling-school," "spelling-match" and related terms as early as the late eighteenth century, "spelling bee" appears to have emerged in the nineteenth century, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary,* and appears to be of American origin. Read writes, "Sir Charles Reed, chairman of the London School Board, visited America . . . , and reported that the spelling bees had 'done a great deal to improve the popular knowledge of English.' . . . They reached England in the winter season of 1875–6, attracting much attention, but they soon died down there" (508–9). In the United States, however, spelling bees have been popular, on and off, for two centuries.

88. Shirley Brice Heath, "Toward an Ethnohistory of Writing in American Education," in *Writing: The Nature, Development and Teaching of Written Communication, Vol. 1: Variation in Writing: Functional and Linguistic-Cultural Differences,* ed. Marcia Farr Whiteman (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1981), 35.

89. Venable, *John Hancock,* 145.

90. Eggleston, *The Hoosier School-Master,* 53.

91. Joaquin Miller, "The Slump in Poetry, Further Discussed by the Poets," *Critic* 46 (April 1905): 350.

92. Mitchell, *James Whitcomb Riley,* 74.

Chapter Three

1. Paul Laurence Dunbar, "Welcome Address to the Western Association of Writers," in *The Collected Poetry of Paul Laurence Dunbar,* ed. Joanne M. Braxton (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1993), 307.

2. In 1900, an article from the *Augusta Democrat* declared that "[n]either from the picturesque South or the cultured North come specimens of negro talent, but from the vigorous hurrying West," and cited Dunbar as one example. Untitled, *Augusta* [GA] *Democrat,* 14 Feb. 1900 [?], n.p., The Paul Laurence Dunbar Collection, Ohio Historical Society, Dayton, reel 5.

3. It is worth noting that the subtitle of Dunbar's poem "James Whitcomb Riley" is "From a Westerner's Point of View." Although the poem's speaker is the said "Westerner," speaking in Hoosier dialect, the "Westerner's Point of View" is also that of Dunbar himself, who shares with the poem's speaker a passionate admiration for Riley's verse.

4. Jay Martin and Gossie H. Hudson, eds., *The Paul Laurence Dunbar Reader* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1975), 410.

5. "The Colored Poet Paul Laurence Dunbar in the City on His Way East," *Indianapolis News,* 26 Oct. 1900, n.p., The Paul Laurence Dunbar Collection, Ohio Historical Society, Dayton, reel 5.

6. James Whitcomb Riley, *The Letters of James Whitcomb Riley,* ed. William Lyon Phelps (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1930), 168.

7. Paul M. Pearson writes that Dunbar's "books have always sold well; better, indeed, than any books of recent verse except those of Riley and of Field," a fact cited by many critics of the period. *Paul Laurence Dunbar: A Tribute* (n.p: n.p., [c. 1906]), 8.

8. Consider, for example, Walter C. Bronson's *A Short History of American Literature, Designed Primarily for Use in Schools and Colleges* (Boston: D. C. Heath & Co.,

1900), which lists Dunbar alongside Joel Chandler Harris and Thomas Nelson Page as a writer of "literature which has sprung up in that region," heralding a "literary New South" (287).

9. For instance, Gavin Jones writes that Dunbar's "We Wear the Mask" is an example of "his exploration of black vernacular masking" and that "[t]he subtle mouthing in Dunbar's poem clearly refers to the black rhetorical masking which . . . maintains subversive meaning under conventional or nonsensical forms." (See also Henry Louis Gates's discussion of Dunbar in *Figures in Black: Words, Signs, and the "Racial" Self.*) The centrality of Dunbar's "We Wear the Mask" to his oeuvre prompts readers of Dunbar to call upon the mask metaphor in describing his general poetics, with the mask standing for his inauthentic dialect orthography. In attempting to subvert readings of Dunbar's poetry as simply reactionary, Jones writes that "there is much that is seemingly inauthentic in Dunbar's representation of dialect, especially his use of conventional dialect spelling and of a demeaning vocabulary of racist clichés. Yet there is also a politically subtle use of black vernacular techniques *beneath this orthographic mask*." *Strange Talk,* 189–90, 207, emphasis added.

10. Smethurst, *The African American Roots of Modernism,* 33.

11. Gene Andrew Jarrett, *Deans and Truants: Race and Realism in African American Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 37; Wonham, *Playing the Races,* 8.

12. Jarrett, *Deans and Truants,* 32.

13. Edward H. Lawson writes in 1906 that "there will be no such southern Negro speech" in fifty years, and "if this . . . dialect is to become a dead language, may God bless Paul Dunbar for having saved it to us in his immortal lyrics!" Over a decade later, *Half Century Magazine* writes that Dunbar's poetry "will preserve . . . the optimism of the colored people while at the same time it keeps . . . the odd phrases of a by-gone day." Lawson, "Paul Laurence Dunbar," *Alexander's Magazine* (March 1906): 49; qtd. in E. W. Metcalf, *Paul Laurence Dunbar: A Bibliography* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1975), 116. As Michael North points out, the myth of the "disappearing Negro" was the "central trope of the movement." He argues:

> It functioned as wish fulfillment, revealing the barely submerged hope that the freed slaves would simply die off. It served as a metaphor of the temporal reversal of the post-Reconstruction period, taking readers imaginatively back in time as the South was being taken politically back in time. And it fed nostalgia for a time when racial relationships had been simple and happy, as least for whites, suggesting that they might be simple and happy again if southern whites were simply left alone to resolve things themselves. (*The Dialect of Modernism: Race, Language, and Twentieth-Century Literature* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1994], 22–23)

14. Untitled, *Atlanta Sunny South,* 4 May 1901, n.p., The Paul Laurence Dunbar Collection, Ohio Historical Society, Dayton, reel 4.

15. See J. Martin Favor's *Authentic Blackness: The Folk in the New Negro Renaissance* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999).

16. Peter Revell, *Paul Laurence Dunbar* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1979), 63.

17. Richard La Galienne, "Paul Laurence Dunbar: Diversity of Talent and Genuine Inspiration in the Poetry of One of the Leading Singers of His Race," *New York Times Magazine,* 18 Jan. 1914, 17.

18. One of many articles mentioning Riley's influence was written by the African American poet (and Riley protégé) James David Corrothers, who writes that "[i]t is probable . . . that Dunbar used Riley's style as the model for his earlier efforts, for the delightful spirit of the author of 'When the Frost is on the Pumpkin' breathes through many of the quaint negro melodies of the colored man, and it is quite evident that no one enjoys the fact more thoroughly than does the good Hoosier poet himself." "An Afro-American Poet," *Chicago Journal* [?], n.d., n.p., The Paul Laurence Dunbar Collection, Ohio Historical Society, Dayton, reel 4.

19. Of the poem "Speakin' o' Christmas," Revell writes, "To read this poem alone is to realize how thoroughly Dunbar had absorbed Riley's style and sentiment. It is not always appreciated how much some of Dunbar's more popular pieces owe to this source" (81).

20. Dunbar's perceived lack of authenticity in some of his poetry and fiction leads Jarrett to call him a writer of "anomalous" texts that "unsettle[d] the models of racial realism" forwarded by the "deans" of the African American literary tradition. Jarrett, *Deans and Truants,* 2.

21. Carrie Tirado Bramen, *The Uses of Variety: Modern Americanism and the Quest for National Distinctiveness* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 119.

22. W. D. Howells, introduction to *Lyrics of Lowly Life* by Paul Laurence Dunbar (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1896), xvi. *The Bookman* claims that the dialect pieces show "how clever and original [Dunbar] can be when he is thoroughly spontaneous and natural" and "how comparatively feeble and ineffective he will always show himself when he is merely imitating the Caucasian." Dialect writing is said to be, in the *Critic,* "the best way the Negro can express himself" and, in a *New York Times* review, "the natural expression of the Negro race in its least exalted aspects." H. T. Peck, "An Afro-American Poet," *The Bookman* 4.6 (Feb. 1897): 568; qtd. in Metcalf, *Paul Laurence Dunbar,* 148; Review of *Li'l Gal* by Paul Laurence Dunbar, *New York Times,* 26 Nov. 1904, 817.

23. The *Colored American Magazine* says Dunbar's dialect poetry is best; the *Southern Workman,* too, prefers dialect. Qtd. in Metcalf, *Paul Laurence Dunbar,* 110, 114. *The AME Church Review,* though, is an exception, writing of the dialect poems: "We prefer to let these things go for the titillation they will occasion among folk-lore fanciers and soda-fountain drinkers. . . . Editors with the commercial side well developed will besiege him for a copy in a 'minor' view, but we shall wait." H. T. Kealing, review of *Majors and Minors* by Paul Laurence Dunbar, *AME Church Review* 13 (Oct. 1896): 256–59.

24. Dickson D. Bruce, Jr., *Black American Writing from the Nadir: The Evolution of a Literary Tradition, 1877–1915* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press, 1989), 99, 102. J. Saunders Redding agrees that dialect writing "was not altogether a failure in appealing to the black [audience]," and attributes its interest to "the heaven-sent capacity for recognizing and finding amusing the limitations dialect suggested. This audience's amusement derived from its knowledge that whites were incapable of perceiving the essence and the spirit which underlay the dialect. It was in-house amusement, coterie humor, nurtured by an ironic perception." *A Scholar's Conscience: Selected Writings of J. Saunders Redding, 1942–1977* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1992), 205–6.

25. Lorenzo Thomas, *Extraordinary Measures: Afrocentric Modernism and Twentieth-Century American Poetry* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2000), 193.

26. He wrote in a letter to Helen Douglass, Frederick Douglass's widow, that he saw his poetry as an attempt to "differentiate dialect as a philological branch from the burlesque of Negro minstrelsy." Letter to Helen Douglass, 22 Oct. 1896, The Paul Laurence

Dunbar Collection, Ohio Historical Society, Dayton, reel 1. However, as Bruce points out, for Dunbar's dialect poetry, "a key source undoubtedly was the plantation tradition itself" (58).

27. Jarrett, *Deans and Truants,* 41.

28. Langston Hughes writes that "[t]he quaint charm and humor of Dunbar's dialect verse brought to him, in his day, largely the same kind of encouragement one would give a sideshow freak (A colored man writing poetry! How odd!) or a clown (How amusing!)." Dunbar himself expressed concern that about this, writing, "I hope there is something worthy in my writings and not merely the novelty of a black face associated with the power to rhyme that has attracted attention." "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain," in *Within the Circle: An Anthology of African American Literary Criticism from the Harlem Renaissance to the Present,* ed. Angelyn Mitchell (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), 57; Martin and Hudson, *Dunbar Reader,* 412.

29. As Gavin Jones points out, "blacks were never so free to impersonate other ethnic groups as were, say, Jewish or Irish Americans." *Strange Talk,* 196.

30. "Paul Dunbar Heard," *Toledo Bee,* n.d., n.p., The Paul Laurence Dunbar Collection, Ohio Historical Society, Dayton, reel 4.

31. Jones, *Strange Talk,* 182. Riley once wrote to an aspiring writer, Lucy S. Furman, that she should "[i]n dialect be as conscientious as in your purest English—seeing to it always, with most vigilant minuteness, that your unlettered characters are themselves in thought, word and deed. . . . The work must appear positively veracious." *Letters,* 178.

32. J. Saunders Redding, *To Make A Poet Black* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1939), 52, 63.

33. Bruce, *Black American Writing,* 61–62.

34. Revell, *Paul Laurence Dunbar,* 82.

35. Ibid., 56–57.

36. Bruce, *Black American Writing,* 106–7.

37. The "pure African blood" of some writers was often emphasized (as it was in McKay's case, discussed in this book's final chapter) in order to disprove arguments that their talents were somehow attributable to their white ancestry.

38. W. D. Howells, review of *Majors and Minors* by Paul Laurence Dunbar, *Harper's Weekly,* 27 June 1896, 630.

39. Alice Dunbar-Nelson, "The Poet and His Song," *AME Church Review* 31 (Oct. 1914): 124.

40. James Weldon Johnson, *Along This Way: The Autobiography of James Weldon Johnson* (1933; New York: Penguin, 1990), 160.

41. Pearson, *Tribute,* 8.

42. His famous poems "received the heartiest applause during readings, while those 'of deeper note' were accorded only polite, condescending recognition." Addison Gayle, *Oak and Ivy: A Biography of Paul Laurence Dunbar* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1971), 43.

43. Daniel Borus, *Writing Realism: Howells, James, and Norris in the Mass Market* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 108.

44. After gaining the hearing, Dunbar wrote to James Weldon Johnson, "now they don't want me to write anything but dialect." Johnson describes the predicament of the African American dialect poet at the turn of the century as follows:

> I could see that the poet writing in the conventionalized dialect no matter how sincere he might be, was dominated by his audience; that his audi-

> ence was a section of the white American reading public; that when he wrote he was expressing what often bore little relation, sometimes no relation at all, to actual Negro life; that he was really expressing only certain conceptions about Negro life that his audience was willing to accept and ready to enjoy; that in fact, he wrote mainly for the delectation of an audience that was an outside group. And I could discern that it was on this line that the psychological attitude of the poets writing in the dialect and that of the folk artists faced in different directions: because the latter, although working in the dialect, sought only to express themselves, and to their *own group*. I have frequently speculated upon what Dunbar might have done with Negro dialect if it had come to him fresh and plastic. (*Along This Way,* 159–60)

45. Following one of Dunbar's readings, one reporter wrote, "He certainly has the same dramatic perception, graceful delivery and sympathetic voice which add so much to the readings of the Hoosier poet." "Paul Dunbar's Reading," *Toledo Blade,* 10 Dec. 1898, n.p., The Paul Laurence Dunbar Collection, Ohio Historical Society, Dayton, reel 4.

46. I am excluding, of course, the lecture circuit, especially that associated with the abolitionist movement, with renowned lecturers such as Frederick Douglass, because the generic difference (entertaining versus didactic) and difference in intended audience are so significant. As Gene Andrew Jarrett writes, "More than any other writer during the American realism movement . . . , Dunbar negotiated, exploited, and suffered from the ideological force of minstrelsy." *Deans and Truants,* 36.

47. Johnson, *Along This Way,* 162. It is worth noting that Dunbar's cakewalk performance to Rosamond Johnson's adaptation of his poem comes three years after Dunbar's collaboration with Will Marion Cook on *Clorindy, or the Origin of the Cakewalk*.

48. Virginia Cunningham, *Paul Laurence Dunbar and His Song* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1948), 219.

49. Pearson, *Tribute,* 8.

50. Benjamin Brawley, "Dunbar Thirty Years After," *Southern Workman* 59 (April 1930): 190.

51. Johnson, *You Know These Lines!,* v.

52. Thomas D. Pawley argues that "Dunbar had an inherent sense of the dramatic," claiming that "[t]he fact that so many of his poems are still in the repertoire of dramatic readers would seem to support this assessment." "Dunbar as Playwright," *Black World* 24.6 (1975): 71. And, as Jay Martin and Gossie H. Hudson write, "Though not known literally as a dramatist, Dunbar, in fact, was engaged in dramatic writing during his whole career, and the influence of his dramatic work upon his poetry is evident." *Dunbar Reader,* 265.

53. The last poem mentioned by Gates, "Sympathy," is non-dialect, but if inclusion in anthologies is any indication, this poem does not appear to have been popular until the periods of the Harlem Renaissance and especially the Black Arts Movement, when its message was more consistent with the valued literature of the periods. Relatively unpopular in anthologies prior to the Black Arts Movement, "Sympathy" appears in nearly half of the anthologies published after 1967 including more than one poem by Dunbar (according to E. W. Metcalf's *Paul Laurence Dunbar: A Bibliography*).

54. Henry Louis Gates, foreword to *In His Own Voice: The Dramatic and Other Uncollected Works of Paul Laurence Dunbar,* ed. Herbert Woodward Martin and Ronald Primeau (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2002), xi. In the conventional sense of the

word, too, Dunbar's black Southern dialect poems were "anthologized" as frequently as, if not more frequently than, his poems in standard English; his other dialect poems were generally unrepresented. According to Keneth Kinnamon's survey of selected popular anthologies published before 1968, seven of the twenty-nine include Dunbar, and the majority are his poems in dialect. Despite the consensus that there is a greater disparity in quality between Riley's non-dialect and dialect verse—with the former generally inferior in quality to the latter—than there is between the two modes in Dunbar's work, Dunbar's dialect poetry is given disproportionate weight. More recent generations "anthologize" (to use Gates's term) Dunbar's standard English poems more frequently than did earlier generations educated in the 1910s, 1920s, and 1930s. From the peak of his popularity to the 1940s, Dunbar's presence in anthologies diminished until the 1950s, when "Dunbar had faded from the memories of anthologists." Social changes of the post-Civil Rights Era and the Black Arts Movement reasserted the importance of the African American literary tradition, however equivocal the reception and appraisal of Dunbar's dialect. The tendency to favor the non-dialect pieces continues among critics of African American literature even today: the *Norton Anthology of African American Literature* includes twenty pieces by Dunbar, but only six feature dialect. And, in fact, this selection more accurately reflects the distribution of Dunbar's literary output: less than half of Dunbar's poetry is in dialect. "Three Black Writers and the Anthologized Canon," in *American Realism and the Canon,* ed. Tom Quirk and Gary Scharnhorst (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1994), 143–53.

The partiality for Dunbar's non-dialect verse among many contemporary critics and anthologists of African American literature might profitably be traced back to James Weldon Johnson's resistance to Dunbar's representations of speech as "mere mutilation[s]." Instead, Johnson identifies Langston Hughes and Sterling Brown as the leading practitioners of a successful dialect poetry: their language "is not the dialect of the comic minstrel tradition; it is the common, racy, living, authentic speech of the Negro in certain phases of real life." Authenticity and sincerity—Johnson praises Brown's sincerity, claiming that there isn't a "false note" in his poetry—continue to be emphasized in evaluations of dialect writing. *Book,* 41, 4, 247.

55. Claude McKay uses the epistolary dialect form perhaps most notably in "School-Teacher Nell's Lub-Letter" and "Nellie White (An Answer to the Foregoing)," published in *Songs of Jamaica,* and Hughes in "Letter from Spain" and "Postcard from Spain."

56. Dunbar's epistolary dialect poems differ in this way from, for example, those by Robert Burns. Unlike Burns, whose poems function as letters, Dunbar assumes characters in his epistolary dialect poems.

57. The private exchange I am describing is an idealized one, and one that did not always apply in nineteenth-century America, when many letter recipients were unable to read the letters they received. Although the intermediation of a third party was often necessary, Dunbar depicts the presence of these third parties as a dramatic intrusion into the idealized space of private communication. In "A Love Letter," an illiterate speaker has a letter from his beloved recited to him, but the literate courtship ritual must end there, because "dey's t'ings dat I's a-t'inkin' date is only fu' huh eahs." Letters in Dunbar's poems are often kept between two individuals even if one of them cannot read. In "A Letter," for example, the letter writer adds a postscript telling his beloved Lucy, "Ef you cain't mek out dis letter, lay it by erpon de she'f / An' when I git home, I'll read it, darlin,' to you my own se'f."

58. These poems were unpublished in book form until 2002, when they were included in *In His Own Voice.*

59. Paul Laurence Dunbar, "Happy! Happy! Happy!," in *In His Own Voice,* 266.

60. These commas are not found in the manuscript, but they occur in the typescript.

61. Halttunen, *Confidence Men,* 119.

62. Eliza Leslie, *Miss Leslie's Behaviour Book: A Guide and Manual for Ladies* (Philadelphia: T. B. Peterson & Brothers, 1859), 166.

63. "Pleasure," along with the words and phrases related to it in this poem, provides us with a way of reading Julius's supposed misunderstanding. If his being "*non grata*" is the result of Mandy's "[h]aving mounted in position," his response to her letter—he is "fill[ed] . . . / Wid de sugar-drip of pleasure"—could reflect sexual desire, as being "*non grata*" is interpreted by him as a necessarily pleasurable or pleasured state. In fact, "*grata,*" etymologically, points to "pleasure," meaning that Mandy means to offer him something like unpleasure.

64. For example, Gavin Jones writes that, in the poem "Appreciation," Dunbar "places tremendous emphasis on the conventional status of language by writing in an indeterminate dialect." *Strange Talk,* 197.

65. All citations to this collection refer to a microfilm copy of the Dunbar Collection.

66. This poem should not be confused with Dunbar's published poem also titled "A Letter."

67. The lines cited above come from one typescript of the poem found in the Ohio Historical Society microfilm of the Paul Laurence Dunbar Collection. Three discrete versions of the poem—two typed, one handwritten (incomplete)—reside there, and the version in *In His Own Voice* appears to have been reproduced from one of the typescripts. There are several inconsistencies between the three versions; however, there are errors printed in *In His Own Voice* that are not supported by any of the Ohio Historical Society copies: there should be a stanza break between lines 24 and 25, "tings" in line 10 should read "t'ings," "give" in line 19 should read "gin" [given], "behind" in line 32 should read "behin'," etc.

68. Dunbar, "Goin' Back," in *Collected Poetry of Paul Laurence Dunbar,* 316–17.

69. This is an estimate; Dunbar's poem is undated.

70. North, *Dialect of Modernism,* 112.

71. Jones, *Strange Talk,* 195.

72. Review of *Li'l Gal,* 817.

73. To be sure, both possibilities result in awkward lines, but these usages are not unprecedented. Poet Eliza Ann Horton uses "full well" in this manner in "Life's Web" ("The weaving is full well done"). The sense of "for well" that I suggest here is, I believe, supported by the availability of the phrase "for well and good," a phrase that implies interchangeability between the components "for well" and "for good"; a contemporary use of this common phrase can be found, for example, in a novel by Charles Felton Pidgin ("she should leave town for well and good"). Horton, *The Poems of Annie Hawthorne,* ed. E. Jay Hanford (New York: The Grafton Press, 1910), 114; Pidgin, *Quincy Adams Sawyer and Mason's Corner Folks, A Novel: A Picture of New England Home Life* (Boston: C. M. Clark Publishing Co., 1900), 330.

74. Mark Twain famously claimed to have been the first author to submit a typescript of a novel to his publisher, but he dictated it.

75. In response to a questionnaire asking "How does the verse-form come to you?" among other questions, Riley says that his poem "The Cost of a Song" came to him first as a couplet of lines that "were to [him] a kind of music that led to other music, and allowing the second feeling to express itself, I began striking the words on the typewriter

'over and over and over.'" Being only a catalyst, the initial inspirational "music" did not end up in the final poem, but the words "over and over and over," typed by a seemingly entranced Riley, end up as the poem's opening and repeat throughout the poem. Although the first music comes to the poet through a typical experience of poetic inspiration, the second music comes as an experience of poetic inspiration facilitated by new technology. J. E. Wallace Wallin, "Researches on the Rhythm of Speech," *Studies from the Yale Psychological Laboratory,* ed. E. W. Scripture, vol. 9 (New Haven: Yale University, 1901), 139.

76. Davis W. Clark, *Paul Laurence Dunbar Laurel-Decked* (Dayton: Paul Laurence Dunbar Scholarship Fund, 1909), 7.

77. Charles Olson, "Projective Verse," in *The New American Poetry, 1945–1960,* ed. Donald Allen (1960; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 393.

78. Bruce, *Black American Writing,* 66.

79. Paul Laurence Dunbar, "Negro Society in Washington," *Saturday Evening Post,* 14 Dec. 1901, 9.

80. Dunbar, "The Tuskegee Meeting," in *In His Own Voice,* 187.

81. Martin and Hudson, *Dunbar Reader,* 453.

82. Robert Stepto, "Distrust of the Reader in Afro-American Narratives," in *Reconstructing American Literary History,* ed. Sacvan Bercovitch, Harvard English Studies 13 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986), 300.

83. Although the writer of the article is often racist and conservative in his suggestions, most of the respondents are extremely reactionary in their derision of the project of African American education. Typical responses include, "When left to an exclusive association with his own people, there is a powerful inclination on the part of the Southern negro to revert to all of the distinctive features of his African ancestors," with the respondent suggesting that the assumption of African "features" would represent a regression equivalent to devolution, and "One of the discouraging features in the character of the young Southern negro is that apparently he has inherited but a small share of the steadiness and industry which were acquired under compulsion by his fathers," with the respondent essentially forwarding the familiar argument that blacks were better off as slaves. W. T. Harris, "The Education of the Negro," *Atlantic Monthly* 69 (June 1892): 723, 725.

84. Lida Keck Wiggins, *The Life and Works of Paul Laurence Dunbar: Containing His Complete Poetical Works, His Best Short Stories, Numerous Anecdotes and a Complete Biography of the Famous Poet* (Naperville, IL: J. L. Nichols and Company, [c. 1907]), 113.

85. Cunningham, *Paul Laurence Dunbar and His Song,* 245.

86. Brawley, "Dunbar Thirty Years After," 189.

87. Paul Laurence Dunbar, "Negro Life in Washington," *Harper's Weekly,* 13 Jan. 1900, 32.

88. Dunbar writes, "I believe I know my own people pretty thoroughly. I know them in all classes, the high and the low, and I have yet to see any young man or young woman who had the spirit of work in them before, driven from labor by a college education." "Is Higher Education for the Negro Hopeless?," *Philadelphia Times,* 10 June 1900, n.p., The Paul Laurence Dunbar Collection, Ohio Historical Society, Dayton.

89. Howells, review, 630.

90. Emeka Okeke-Ezigbo, "Paul Laurence Dunbar: Straightening the Record," *CLA Journal* 24 (1981): 492.

91. Ibid., 481.

92. Jean Wagner, *Black Poets of the United States: From Paul Laurence Dunbar to Langston Hughes* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1973), 110.

93. Charles T. Davis, *Black Is the Color of the Cosmos: Essays on Afro-American Literature and Culture, 1942–1981* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1982), 121. Burton Raffel argues that "Riley was a driven man, and what drove him was the same pair of American gods that impelled most of his countrymen in his own lifetime and impel them still: money and success." As Okeke-Ezigbo suggests, "Dunbar apparently learned from Riley, or shared with him, the tendency to hanker after public approval." Raffel, *Politicians, Poets, and Con Men: Emotional History in Late Victorian America* (Hamden, CT: Archon, 1986), 137; Okeke-Ezigbo, "Paul Laurence Dunbar," 483.

94. Joan R. Sherman, *Invisible Poets: Afro-Americans of the Nineteenth Century* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1989), 166. In addition, Cotter wrote a poem titled "On Hearing James W. Riley Read (from a Kentucky Standpoint)," which appears in Joan R. Sherman's anthology of nineteenth-century African American poetry. Its first stanza describes an emotional reaction to a performance by Riley:

> To tell the truth, each piece he read
> Set up a jingle in my head
> That bumped and thumped and roared about,
> Then on a sudden just crept out,
> Gently and slowly at the start,
> Then made a bee-line for my heart.
> (Joan R. Sherman, ed., *African-American Poetry of the Nineteenth Century: An Anthology.* [Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992], 330–31)

95. A fragment titled "Farmer Spittle's Spellin' Bee" can be found in the Dunbar Collection. It is unclear whether this was an early draft of "The Spellin' Bee" or a new poem, but the fragment as it stands shares little with "The Spellin' Bee."

96. Revell, *Paul Laurence Dunbar,* 81.

97. Dunbar, "The Spellin'-Bee," in *The Collected Poetry of Paul Laurence Dunbar,* 42–45.

98. Read, "The Spelling Bee," 500–501.

99. George Bernard Shaw, *Pygmalion: A Romance in Five Acts* (1913; London: Penguin, 1957), 131.

100. J. E. Carpenter, *The Popular Elocutionist and Reader* (London: Frederick Warne and Company, 1894), 7.

Chapter Four

1. Dunbar's first two collections, *Oak and Ivy* (1892) and *Majors and Minors* (1896), were self-published.

2. Paul Laurence Dunbar, "The Poet and His Song," *Current Literature* 21 (Feb. 1897): 102.

3. A. Robert Lee, "The Fiction of Paul Laurence Dunbar," *Negro American Literature Forum* 8 (1928): 166.

4. To cite metaphors by just two nineteenth-century predecessors with which Dunbar likely would have been familiar, John Keats's "When I Have Fears" describes books

containing "like rich garners the full-ripen'd grain" and Henry David Thoreau, similarly, writes, "Instead of cultivating the earth for wheat and potatoes, [authors] cultivate literature, and fill a place in the Republic of Letters." Keats, *Complete Poems* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 166; Thoreau, *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* (Boston: Osgood, 1873), 104.

5. Martin and Hudson, *Dunbar Reader,* 431. Dunbar also uses "cultivation" in a letter to Dr. James Newton Matthews in a manner that falls somewhere between the second and third senses: "If there is anything in me, the fact that you have taken such pains to help me, and that others are interested in my career will spur me on to its highest cultivation" (415).

6. Shelley Fisher Fishkin, "Race and the Politics of Memory: Mark Twain and Paul Laurence Dunbar," *Journal of American Studies* 40 (2006): 299.

7. For example, J. A. Macon published 36 pieces, most in dialect, between 1881 and 1892, according to Cornell University's *Making of America* database, http://cdl.library.cornell.edu/moa/. Macon's perspective, Jean Wagner claims, is "that of a collector whose good faith is unquestionable." Wagner, *Black Poets of the United States,* 65.

8. African American writers James Corrothers and James Weldon Johnson would follow him just a few years later with *Century* publications of their own, influenced by Dunbar.

9. Jarrett and Morgan, *The Complete Stories of Paul Laurence Dunbar* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2005), xxxvi.

10. Michael Cohen, "Paul Laurence Dunbar and the Genres of Dialect," *African American Review* 41 (2007): 252.

11. Brander Matthews, "On Working Too Much and Working Too Fast," in *The Tocsin of Revolt and Other Essays* (New York: Scribner's, 1922), 212.

12. Edward Bok, *The Americanization of Edward Bok: The Autobiography of a Dutch Boy Fifty Years After* (1920; New York: Scribner's, 1921), 114.

13. De Certeau, *Practice of Everyday Life,* 174.

14. This advertisement can be found in the Paul Laurence Dunbar Collection, Ohio Historical Society, Dayton, reel 3.

15. Martin and Hudson, *Dunbar Reader,* 424.

16. Martin and Hudson, *Dunbar Reader,* 416; Edward Bok, "The Modern Literary King," *Forum* 20 (Nov. 1895): 335.

17. Martin and Hudson, *Dunbar Reader,* 442. The slang sense of "hustle," to mean "To sell or serve (goods, etc.), esp. in an aggressive, pushing manner" (OED) was current in 1897.

18. Rebekah Baldwin, "An Unpublished Letter Written to Paul Laurence Dunbar, 1894," ed. Gossie Harold Hudson, *Journal of Negro History* 55 (1970): 217.

19. The irony, of course, is that if Riley didn't "rhyme / for money," no one did; he was the best-selling poet of the era and, in a single year (1903), made $23,000 in royalties from his poetry. Charvat, *Profession of Authorship,* 106.

20. Dunbar, "James Whitcomb Riley," in *The Collected Poetry of Paul Laurence Dunbar,* 287.

21. Martin and Hudson, *Dunbar Reader,* 415. The phrase "on flow'ry beds of ease" comes from an eighteenth-century hymn by Isaac Watts titled "Am I a Soldier of the Cross?" The verse reads, "Must I be carried to the skies / On flowery beds of ease, / While others fought to win the prize, / And sailed through bloody seas?" In other words, suffering through this world and laboring—to "bear the toil" and "endure the pain,"

as the hymn continues—is noble and will be rewarded. It's a sentiment expressed frequently in Dunbar's poems (for example, in "Not They Who Soar" and "Keep a-Pluggin' Away"): the value of steadfastness and of struggle.

22. Paul Laurence Dunbar, "The Dilettante," *Century* 50.3 (July 1895): 480.

23. Lawrence Buell, *New England Literary Culture: From Revolution through Renaissance* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 58.

24. Rolf Engelsing popularized the terms "intensive reading" and "extensive reading." The former, as Cathy N. Davidson defines it, refers to "rereading over the course of a lifetime the same few precious books and incorporating those books into life's most intimate and portentous activities"; the latter describes "rapidly consuming more and more books while placing increasingly less significance" on the reading material. "Towards a History of Books and Readers," *American Quarterly* 40 (1988): 12.

25. In fact, Riley-as-excavator may have inspired one of the iterations of the "humble little motto" driving Dunbar's "Keep a-Pluggin' Away": "Delve away beneath the surface, / There is treasure farther down." *Collected Poetry of Paul Laurence Dunbar,* 46.

26. Charles S. Johnson, "The Rise of the Negro Magazine," *The Journal of Negro History* 13.1 (Jan. 1928): 21. This article was adapted from a speech delivered in October 1927. The article appears only two months before Johnson, one of the fathers of the Harlem Renaissance, would resign as editor of *Opportunity,* one of the formative magazines of that movement.

27. Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 87, 88, 92.

28. Ellery Sedgwick, "Magazines and the Profession of Authorship in the United States, 1840–1900," *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 94 (2000), 422; Roger Burlingame, *Of Making Many Books: A Hundred Years of Reading, Writing and Publishing* (New York: Scribner's, 1946), 249. David Perkins differs from most literary historians in his argument that short lyric poems, for which writers were paid, on average, "five to twelve dollars" were not an insignificant source of income. He cites the example of Madison Cawein, who claimed "that his returns from 'magazine verse from the year 1900 were about $100 per month,' at a time when the salary of university professors was likely to be $1500 to $2000 per year." But, compare, for example, William Dean Howells's earnings from prose: "Gilder and Howells concurred that a story for the *Century* would sell at . . . $2,250 for thirty pages" or seventy-five dollars per page. To be sure, Howells was not typical, but neither was Cawein. Perkins, *A History of Modern Poetry, Volume One: From the 1890s to the High Modernist Mode* (1976; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 98; John W. Crowley, *The Dean of American Letters: The Late Career of William Dean Howells* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999), 34.

29. This letter is included in the Paul Laurence Dunbar Collection, 1892–1902, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library.

30. Henry Collins Brown, *In the Golden Nineties* (Hastings-on-Hudson: Valentine's Manual, 1928), 233; Earnest Elmo Calkins, "The Hazen Era," *Advertising & Selling* 37 (May 1944): 42.

31. William Webster Ellsworth, *A Golden Age of Authors: A Publisher's Recollection* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1919), 12.

32. Dunbar, "Of Negro Journals," The Paul Laurence Dunbar Collection, Ohio Historical Society, Dayton, reel 4.

33. Bok, *Americanization,* 153.

34. "The Lounger," *Critic,* 7 June 1890, 286.

35. Bok, "The Modern Literary King," 334, 340.

36. Susanna Ashton, "Authorial Affiliations, or, the Clubbing and Collaborating of Brander Matthews," *symploke* 7 (1999): 165–66; Brander Matthews, "Literature as a Profession," in *The Historical Novel and Other Essays* (New York: Scribner's, 1901), 198.

37. Bok, *Americanization,* 295.

38. W. D. Howells, "The Man of Letters as a Man of Business," *Scribner's* 14 (Oct. 1893): 432.

39. During the antebellum period, "no American poet, not even Longfellow, was able to live comfortably or with any sense of security on his income from verse." Charvat, *Profession of Authorship,* 106.

40. Howells, "The Man of Letters," 445.

41. Charvat, *Profession of Authorship,* 133.

42. Matthew Gartner's essay revolves specifically around artisanal work (the labor of "master craftsmen") as it is presented in Longfellow's poetry. "Becoming Longfellow: Work, Manhood, and Poetry," *American Literature* 72 (2000): 63.

43. Ibid., 61–62.

44. W. D. Howells, "Editor's Study," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 83 (Nov. 1891): 966.

45. Martin and Hudson, *Dunbar Reader,* 430–31.

46. Ibid., 410.

47. Kevin K. Gaines, *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 184.

48. As Howells writes, "our literature has always been distinguished by two tendencies, apparently opposite, but probably parallel: one a tendency toward an elegance refined and polished, both in thought and phrase, almost to tenuity; the other a tendency to grotesqueness, wild and extravagant, to the point of anarchy." "Editor's Study," 964.

49. Johnson, *Book,* 35–36.

50. Martin and Hudson, *Dunbar Reader,* 428.

51. See, for example, Ellen Gruber Garvey's *The Adman in the Parlor: Magazines and the Gendering of Consumer Culture, 1880s to 1910s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).

52. My observations here do not take Dunbar's prose fiction and nonfiction into account, for which he appears to have had a different marketing strategy. In letters written to his literary agent, Paul Revere Reynolds, Dunbar complains of his failure to get the *Century* interested in his fiction. On September 15, 1900, he writes, "I have so often tried them with my stories but I can only get them to handle verse," and, on December 20, 1900, "Mr. [Robert Underwood] Johnson took three poems and as usual sent the stories back." (This letter is included in the Paul Laurence Dunbar Collection, 1892–1902, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library.)

Dunbar published much of his prose fiction in *Lippincott's,* and his relationship with this magazine may explain why they also published fourteen of his poems between 1900 and 1905, putting the magazine second only to the *Century* in number of Dunbar's poems published; conversely, Dunbar was "one of *Lippincott's* chief poets." Although *Lippincott's* is usually not counted among the "elite" magazines with high subscription rates, it cost twenty cents—twice as much as *Munsey's*—and was the "only [magazine] of high grade that Philadelphia could boast" (even though "it was on the decline" by the 1880s). In addition, Jarrett and Morgan speculate that, "in the last few years before his death, the magazine . . . represented one of the few and last places where he could write

on his own terms." Mott, *Golden Multitudes,* 400, 87; Jarrett and Morgan, *Complete Stories,* xxxviii.

53. Burlingame, *Of Making Many Books,* 217.

54. Paul Laurence Dunbar, "Early Struggles of a Negro Poet," *Argus* [Albany, NY], 9 March 1902, The Paul Laurence Dunbar Collection, Ohio Historical Society, Dayton, reel 4; Benjamin Brawley, *Paul Laurence Dunbar: Poet of His People* (Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1967), 21; Cunningham, *Paul Laurence Dunbar and His Song,* 56.

55. Janet Gabler-Hover, "The North–South Reconciliation Theme and the 'Shadow of the Negro' in *Century Illustrated Magazine,*" in *Periodical Literature in Nineteenth-Century America,* ed. Kenneth M. Price and Susan Belasco Smith (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1995), 240.

56. Reynolds J. Scott-Childress, "Paul Laurence Dunbar and the Project of Cultural Reconstruction," *African American Review* 41 (2007): 368.

57. Cunningham, *Paul Laurence Dunbar and His Song,* 207.

58. Arthur John, *The Best Years of the Century: Richard Watson Gilder, Scribner's Monthly, and the Century Magazine, 1870–1909* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981), 137, 256.

59. Brawley, *Paul Laurence Dunbar,* 55; Cunningham, *Paul Laurence Dunbar and His Song,* 57.

60. R. U. Johnson, Letter to Dunbar, 8 Dec. 1894, The Paul Laurence Dunbar Collection, Ohio Historical Society, Dayton, reel 1.

61. His references included Brigadier Major-General Thomas J. Wood, James Whitcomb Riley, and James Newton Matthews. Cunningham, *Paul Laurence Dunbar and His Song,* 118.

62. [Frank H. Scott], "The Modern Magazine," *Critic,* 26 May 1894, 364. This article consisted of a transcript of an address delivered by Scott earlier that month.

63. The magazine "received 1,700 manuscripts in 1873, 2,000 in 1874, 2,400 in 1875, and 3,200 in 1876." Matthew Schneirov, *The Dream of a New Social Order: Popular Magazines in America, 1893–1914* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 66.

64. Perkins, *History of Modern Poetry,* 99. Early in his career, Dunbar lamented the fact that it was "so hard to get a hearing for a new voice in the literary world." Martin and Hudson, *Dunbar Reader,* 417.

65. Martin and Hudson, *Dunbar Reader,* 428.

66. Gayle, *Oak and Ivy,* 37.

67. John compares the *Century*'s "In Lighter Vein" department to *Harper's* "The Editor's Drawer," calling the former "[m]ore elastic in content," allowing it to serve "as a vehicle for early experiments in dialect verse and story." *Best Years of the Century,* 257, 20.

68. Garland, *Roadside Meetings,* 182–83.

69. Mott, *Golden Multitudes,* 30.

70. Frank Presbrey, *The History and Development of Advertising* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1929), 381.

71. Culler, "Why Lyric?," 205.

72. Janice Radway, "Learned and Literary Print Cultures in an Age of Professionalization and Diversification," in *A History of the Book in America, Vol. 4: Print in Motion: The Expansion of Publishing and Reading in the United States, 1880–1940* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 212–13.

73. Garvey, *Ad Man in the Parlor,* 76.

74. Antony Easthope, *Poetry as Discourse* (London: Methuen and Co., 1983), 65.

75. I base the likelihood of Dunbar's having read this issue (May 1882) on the fact that a volume of the *Century* dated only one year later (November 1883–April 1884) is collected among Dunbar's possessions at the Paul Laurence Dunbar House.

76. Martin and Hudson, *Dunbar Reader,* 444.

77. Ibid.

78. I use the term "lowly" as Dunbar uses it in the title of his poetry collection, *Lyrics of Lowly Life.*

79. Dickson D. Bruce articulates the charges of many critics in his claim that "despite Dunbar's professed interest in folk life, the folk Negroes whose lives his dialect poems evoked were not the black people he most admired," pointing to Dunbar's 1901 essay "Negro Society in Washington" in which Dunbar "praised the black elite's distinctive love of pleasure" (9).

80. Dunbar, "Negro Society in Washington," 9.

81. Martin and Hudson, *Dunbar Reader,* 437.

82. A *Boston Herald* review cited on a poster advertising an 1899 reading in Albany called Dunbar "a cultivated young man" who reads with "cultivated expression." (This advertisement is included in the Paul Laurence Dunbar Collection, 1892–1902, at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library.)

83. "Like Return of a Hero Was Visit of Paul Laurence Dunbar, the Colored Poet, to the N.C.R. Works Where a Few Years Ago He Was Employed on the Force of Janitors—An Enthusiastic Reception Accorded Him by the Employees," *Dayton Evening News,* 7 Jan. 1904, n.p. Thank you to NCR archivist Jeff Opt for this transcription.

84. The third line of this stanza, as printed in *Majors and Minors,* reads "Mockin' bird was singin, fine," but I am assuming that the comma following "singin" is a typographical error and should be an apostrophe.

85. Dunbar's later poems do not show this degree of variation.

86. Paul Laurence Dunbar, undated letter to the editor, The Century Company Records, 1870–1924, New York Public Library.

87. Hamlin Garland, *A Son of the Middle Border* (New York: Macmillan, 1923), 412.

Chapter Five

1. However, it appears to have been fairly common—judging from collections reprinted as part of the *Schomburg Library of Nineteenth-Century Black Women Writers* series and the *African-American Women Writers, 1910–1940* series (both edited by Henry Louis Gates, Jr.)—for women poets of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to include one or two dialect poems in a collection otherwise comprised of standard English poems.

2. Caroline Gebhard, "Inventing a 'Negro Literature': Race, Dialect, and Gender in the Early Work of Paul Laurence Dunbar, James Weldon Johnson, and Alice Dunbar-Nelson," in *Post-Bellum, Pre-Harlem: African American Literature and Culture, 1877–1919,* ed. Barbara McCaskill and Caroline Gebhard (New York: New York University Press, 2006), 172.

3. Martin and Hudson, *Dunbar Reader,* 428. Moore wrote to Dunbar with the following response: "I frankly believe in everyone following his best. If it is so that one has a special aptitude for dialect work, why it is only right that dialect work should be made

a specialty. But if one should be like me—absolutely devoid of the ability to manage dialect—I don't see the necessity of cramming and forcing oneself into that plane because one is a Negro or a Southerner." Pamela Newkirk, ed., *Letters from Black America* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2009), 272. She apparently observed a difference between the type of Southern dialect represented in Dunbar's and others' poetry, and the Creole dialect she used occasionally in her prose fiction.

4. Susan Zlotnick, "'A Thousand Times I'd Be a Factory Girl': Dialect, Domesticity, and Working-Class Women's Poetry in Victorian Britain," *Victorian Studies* 35.1 (1991): 9.

5. An interesting example of an often-anthologized dialect poem by a woman who fits neither category (neither black bourgeois nor white working-class) is "How Persimmons Took Cah ob der Baby" by Lizzie W. Champney, published originally in *St. Nicholas*. But, as Janet Gray writes, "[d]ialect fades in and out of the narrative, sometimes appearing in quotes, as if to signify that the narrator merely imitates colloquial speech to enliven the poem's diction." Although Champney's social status would have allowed her more liberty to write in dialect without consequence, she still avoided writing a monologic dialect poem. *Race and Time: American Women's Poetics from Antislavery to Racial Modernity* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2004), 223.

6. Harper had a significant audience, but Johnson was probably "a coterie poet, producing entertaining verse . . . for her own crowd." The Stone Printing and Manufacturing Company of Roanoke, Virginia, which printed her second book, was "the largest and most modern printing establishment in the South," having "developed a broad niche market in the production of high quality, short-run publications for private clients and well-established publishers." Paula Bernat Bennett, "Rewriting Dunbar: Realism, Black Women Poets, and the Genteel," in *Post-Bellum, Pre-Harlem,* 151; Rand Dotson, *Roanoke, Virginia, 1882–1912: Magic City of the New South* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2007), 178, 182.

7. Elizabeth McHenry, "Toward a History of Access: The Case of Mary Church Terrell," *American Literary History* 19.2 (2007): 383.

8. Ibid., 382.

9. McHenry writes, "Given their attention to texts associated with the genteel tradition, the extent to which [they] embraced Dunbar's so-called dialect poems is also striking. Praising these poems in particular as 'remarkable . . . masterpieces of their kind,' the editors of the *Women's Era* reprinted Dunbar's 'When De Co'n Pone's Hot' in the fall of 1896." *Forgotten Readers,* 234.

10. "Miss Lois C. Simmons Entertains," *Chicago Defender,* 3 Jan. 1914, 6.

11. Howells, "The Man of Letters," 438.

12. In *Golden Multitudes: The Story of Best Sellers in the United States,* Mott lists several books by dialect writers that according to his formula qualify as best sellers between 1870 and 1900, including Bret Harte's *The Luck of Roaring Camp and Other Stories;* Edward Eggleston's *The Hoosier School-Master;* Mark Twain's *Tom Sawyer, Life on the Mississippi* and *Huckleberry Finn;* Joel Chandler Harris's *Uncle Remus;* James Whitcomb Riley's *The Old Swimmin' Hole and 'Leven More Poems;* Opie Read's *The Jucklins;* and Edward Noyes Westcott's *David Harum.* With the exception of books by children's authors (Louisa May Alcott's *Little Men,* John Habberton's *Helen's Babies,* Margaret Sidney's *Five Little Peppers and How They Grew,* and Frances Hodgson Burnett's *Little Lord Fauntleroy*), an author of detective fiction (Anna Katharine Green's *The Leavenworth Case*), and a Christian author (Edward Payson Roe's *Barriers Burned*

Away and *Opening a Chestnut Burr*), these books account for most of the fictional books by American authors on the list. The others are Lew Wallace's *Ben Hur,* Paul Leicester Ford's *Janice Meredith,* Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward,* Archibald Clavering Gunter's *Mr. Barnes of New York,* and Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage.*

13. Martyn Lyons, "New Readers in the Nineteenth Century: Women, Children, Workers," in *A History of Reading in the West,* ed. Guglielmo Cavallo and Roger Chartier (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999), 323–24.

14. Melba Joyce Boyd, *Discarded Legacy: Politics and Poetics in the Life of Frances E. W. Harper, 1825–1911* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1994), 150.

15. Ibid., 151, 150.

16. Redding, *To Make a Poet Black,* 42–43.

17. Elizabeth A. Petrino, "'We Are Rising as a People': Frances Harper's Radical Views on Class and Racial Equality in *Sketches of Southern Life,*" *American Transcendental Quarterly* 19.2 (2005): 140.

18. Boyd, *Discarded Legacy,* 150.

19. Gloria T. Hull, "Rewriting Afro-American Literature: A Case for Black Women Writers," in *Politics of Education: Essays from* Radical Teacher, ed. Susan Gushee O'Malley et al. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), 101.

20. Paul Lauter, *Canons and Contexts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 119.

21. Boyd, *Discarded Legacy,* 155. Although, as James Christmann argues, Harper generally "privileges 'standard' speakers" of the younger, bourgeois generation in *Iola Leroy,* the fact that she also dedicates a series of poems to representing the dialect voice of an older-generation character proves her commitment to the population Aunt Chloe represents and her belief that non-dialect speakers are not necessarily the group that stands for the promising future of the race. "Raising Voices, Lifting Shadows: Competing Voice-Paradigms in Frances E. W. Harper's *Iola Leroy*," *African American Review* 34.1 (March 2000): 10.

22. Frances E. Watkins Harper, "Learning to Read," in *Sketches of Southern Life* (Philadelphia: Ferguson Bros. & Co., 1891), 17–19.

23. Frederich A. Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 7.

24. Patricia Bizzell, "'Stolen' Literacies in *Iola Leroy,*" in *Popular Literacy: Studies in Cultural Practices and Poetics,* ed. John Trimbur (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2001), 144.

25. De Certeau, *Practice of Everyday Life,* 25–28, qtd. in Bernstein, "Poetics," 120.

26. Bernstein, "Poetics," 120.

27. Heather Andrea Williams, *Self-Taught: African American Education in Slavery and Freedom* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 20.

28. Harper, *Iola Leroy, or Shadows Uplifted,* ed. Frances Smith Foster (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 44–45.

29. Boyd, *Discarded Legacy,* 164.

30. Janet Cornelius writes, "Historians of education have drawn a distinction between 'Bible Literacy,' whose prime motive was the conservation of piety, and 'liberating literacy,' which facilitates diversity and mobility. The majority of owners who taught slaves were concerned with Bible literacy, and connected their instruction with Christian worship and catechization. The traditional nature of this teaching is shown by the number of slaveowners who gave slaves religion-associated instruction in reading but not in writing, a practice which recalled the early Protestant insistence that even the poor and

powerless should be able to read the word of God for themselves, but that teaching them to write would threaten the social order." "'We Slipped and Learned to Read': Slave Accounts of the Literacy Process, 1830–1865," *Phylon* 44.3 (1983): 171.

31. See Henry Louis Gates's *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of Afro-American Literary Criticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).

32. Paula Bernat Bennett, *Poets in the Public Sphere: The Emancipatory Project of American Women's Poetry, 1800–1900* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 90.

33. P. Gabrielle Forman points out that Harper's essays, however, such as "Women's Political Future," often reject "fixed theories of literacy as an absolute good." "'Reading Aright': White Slavery, Black Referents, and the Strategy of Histotextuality in *Iola Leroy,*" *Yale Journal of Criticism* 10.2 (1997): 333.

34. See, for example, Boyd's *Discarded Legacy,* Gray's *Race and Time* (both cited in full above), and Frances Smith Foster's *A Brighter Coming Day: A Frances Ellen Watkins Harper Reader* (New York: The Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 1990).

35. Christmann, "Raising Voices," 13.

36. Harper, *Iola Leroy,* 276.

37. Ibid., 9.

38. Ibid., 22.

39. The desire to keep literacy from slaves is similarly put in moral terms as contrary to "goodness" in Douglass's *Narrative.* After being taught to read by Mrs. Auld, Douglass finds his progress obstructed by her husband, who insisted that literacy was not "good" for slaves: "it could do him no good, but a great deal of harm. It would make him discontented and unhappy." Recognizing Mr. Auld's lack of goodness, Douglass decides to operate according to the reverse of his moral compass, deciding "[t]hat which to him was a great evil, to be carefully shunned, was to me a great good, to be diligently sought." *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave,* ed. Deborah E. McDowell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 39.

40. Harper, *Iola Leroy,* 146.

41. Foster, *Brighter Coming Day,* 126.

42. Gray, *Race and Time,* 141.

43. Foster, *Brighter Coming Day,* 126–27.

44. Ibid., 11.

45. Mary Loeffelholz, *From School to Salon: Reading Nineteenth-Century American Women's Poetry* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 97.

46. Carla L. Peterson, *"Doers of the Word": African-American Women Speakers & Writers in the North (1830–1880)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 22.

47. Foster, *Brighter Coming Day,* 15; "The Woman Suffragists," *Lancaster Daily Intelligencer,* 22 Feb. 1890, 6.

48. "Council of Women. The Varied Subjects of Interest Discussed in Washington. Complimenting President Willard," *Baltimore Sun,* 25 Feb. 1891, 3.

49. Peterson, *"Doers of the Word,"* 22.

50. Michael Bennett, "Frances Ellen Watkins Sings the Body Electric," in *Recovering the Black Female Body: Self-Representations by African American Women,* ed. Michael Bennett and Vanessa D. Dickerson (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2001), 20.

51. Frances E. W. Harper, "Free Labor," in *Complete Poems of Frances E. W. Harper,* ed. Maryemma Graham (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 25.

52. "Pulpit and Platform," [Chicago] *Daily Inter Ocean,* 9 May 1888, 6.

53. Richard J. Powell, "Sartor Africanus," in *Dandies: Fashion and Finesse in Art and Culture,* ed. Susan Fillin-Yeh (New York: New York University Press, 2001), 222.

54. Boyd, *Discarded Legacy,* 150–51.

55. Clara Ann Thompson, "Uncle Rube to the Young People," in *Songs from the Wayside* (Rossmoyne, OH: n.p., 1908), in *Collected Black Women's Poetry,* vol. 2, ed. Joan R. Sherman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 52.

56. Siobhan B. Somerville, "'The Prettiest Specimen of Boyhood': Cross-Gender and Racial Disguise in Pauline E. Hopkins's *Winona,*" in *Skin Deep, Spirit Strong: The Black Female Body in American Culture,* ed. Kimberly Wallace-Sanders (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002), 201–2.

57. Tavia Nyong'o, "Hiawatha's Black Atlantic Itineraries," in *Traffic in Poems: Nineteenth-Century Poetry and Transatlantic Exchange,* ed. Meredith L. McGill (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2008), 93–94.

58. The poem is included in *From My People: 400 Years of African American Folklore* and *Honey, Hush!: An Anthology of African-American Women's Humor* (both edited by Daryl C. Dance).

59. Ajuan Maria Mance, *Inventing Black Women: African American Women Poets and Self-Representation, 1877–2000* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2007), 35.

60. Ibid.

61. Maggie Pogue Johnson, "What's Mo' Temptin' to the Palate," in *Virginia Dreams: Lyrics for the Idle Hour. Tales of the Time Told in Rhyme* (N.p.: John M. Leonard, 1910), in *Collected Black Women's Poetry,* vol. 4, ed. Joan R. Sherman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 29–30.

62. As Zlotnick writes regarding nineteenth-century English working-class men—a claim that I would argue could obtain for African American working-class men in the postbellum South—the domestic sphere held a false nostalgic appeal in the face of the increasing difficulties of the social world outside the home and was "imaginatively transformed into a paradise for husbands." She claims that "it is not surprising that working men would wish to seek refuge from the workaday world of the factories, even if that refuge took the form of poetic fantasies." "'A Thousand Times I'd Be a Factory Girl,'" 10, 11.

63. Maggie Pogue Johnson, "The Drunkard's Dream," in *Six Poets of Racial Uplift: Effie T. Battle, Gertrude Arquene Fisher, Myra Viola Wilds, and Others,* intro. by Gayle Pemberton (New York: G. K. Hall & Co., 1996), 310. Compare "The Drunkard's Child," one of Harper's temperance poems, in which the father's reform comes tragically too late; it is only when he visits his son's deathbed that the child's "smile reached to his callous heart" and he feels "guilt, remorse and shame."

64. Waltye Rasulala (Johnson's granddaughter), in discussion with and e-mail message to the author, 28 Aug. 2011 and 18 Aug. 2011.

65. Johnson dedicates one of her poems ("Poet of Our Race") to Dunbar, and many of her poems, both dialect and standard English, are modeled after his ("Meal Time," for example, is a near copy of his "In the Morning," with "Liza!" replacing "'Lias!").

66. Johnson, "Krismas Dinner," in *Virginia Dreams,* 12–14.

67. Johnson, "De Men Folks ob Today," in *Virginia Dreams,* 44.

68. As Paula Bernat Bennett observes, Johnson's speakers are often "curious about new fashions for women and men, but slyly mocking of them as well." "Rewriting Dunbar," 152.

69. Johnson, "De Wintah Styles," in *Virginia Dreams,* 40–41.

70. Although frock-coats were occasionally abbreviated as "frocks," the term "frock" most frequently referred to women's dresses (and sometimes to monk's attire, men's military uniforms, loose tunics, and children's clothes).

71. Johnson, "I Wish I Was a Grown Up Man," in *Virginia Dreams,* 7.

72. Waltye Rasulala, in discussion with the author, 28 Aug. 2011.

73. Johnson, "Aunt Cloe's Trip to See Miss Lisa Kyle," in *Six Poets of Racial Uplift,* 316–23.

74. Harryette Mullen, "Off the Top," in *Trimmings* (New York: Tender Buttons, 1991), n.p.

75. Bruce, *Black American Writing,* 194.

76. Christmann, "Raising Voices," 6.

77. Deborah E. McDowell, *"The Changing Same": Black Women's Literature, Criticism, and Theory* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 40.

78. A similar preface introduces an 1887 book of poetry titled *Amusement of Idle Hours,* whose author, S. Attwood Butterfield, only "compl[ies] with the request of a few friends . . . but if what I have written here shall cause one human being to be better or happier I will feel myself rewarded for my labor, which has been resorted to only as a favorite amusement for idle hours." *Amusement of Idle Hours* (Indianapolis: C. S. Butterfield, 1887), n.p.

79. Compare Myra Viola Wilds's *Thoughts of Idle Hours* (1915), or C. Augustus Haviland's *A Lawyer's Idle Hours* (1902), or even Byron's 1807 collection of juvenilia *Hours of Idleness.* The subtle change of preposition in Johnson's titles allows her to imagine a shared moment of leisure between author and reader, rather than pointing only to the verse as the product of the author's idleness.

80. Frank Lincoln Mather, ed., *Who's Who of the Colored Race: A General Biographical Dictionary of Men and Women of African Descent,* vol. 1 (Chicago: n.p., 1915), 157.

81. This information comes from Rita B. Dandridge's review of *Black Female Playwrights: An Anthology of Plays before 1950* in *MELUS* 19 (1994): 142; and from Waltye Rasulala, in discussion with the author, 28 Aug. 2011.

82. For open-armed images of the *alma mater,* see, for example, the statues at the University of Havana, Columbia University, and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

83. Johnson, "The Negro Has a Chance" and "The V.N. and C.I.," in *Virginia Dreams,* 15, 8.

84. This is not to say that Johnson and other female dialect poets who valorize "great men" do not also express feminist ideals in their poetry. Johnson's "What Task Must the Woman Fulfill" demonstrates her commitment to the pursuit of woman's rights and equality: "Yea! woman in by-gone years, / Thou wert not recognized."

85. Johnson, "James Hugo Johnston," in *Virginia Dreams,* 55.

86. G. F. Richings, *Evidences of Progress among Colored People* (Philadelphia: Geo. S. Ferguson Co., 1905), 463.

87. Booker T. Washington, *Up from Slavery,* ed. William L. Andrews (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 32.

88. Dunbar, "Representative American Negroes," in *Dunbar Reader,* 51, 55. In an essay about schoolteachers in *Iola Leroy* and Charles Chesnutt's *Mandy Oxendine,* Cassandra Jackson presents a historical view that corresponds with Dunbar's perspective: "Because black educators were hailed as leaders, to be a black teacher was more than a profession. It was to be a representative, a litmus test for the future of the race. Even

outside black communities, black teachers were often viewed as specimens to gauge the potential of black Americans." "'I Will Gladly Share with Them My Richer Heritage': Schoolteachers in Frances E. W. Harper's *Iola Leroy* and Charles Chesnutt's *Mandy Oxendine,*" *African American Review* 37.4 (2003): 555.

89. Kenneth Warren, panel titled "Paul Laurence Dunbar: The Racial Politics of the Nadir," accessed Jan. 1, 2012, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=07Y01f1NcSQ.

90. Identifying as a "schoolmaster" was apparently acceptable to Longfellow, as it was "a role that could set up no social barrier between him and the common reader." Charvat, *Profession of Authorship,* 129.

91. Johnson, "To Professor Byrd Prillerman," in *Virginia Dreams,* 52–53.

92. Johnson, "Poet of Our Race," in *Virginia Dreams,* 51. Although most popular in the mid nineteenth century, the language of flowers was still culturally resonant decades later when Johnson was writing. For example, Henry Davenport Northrop's *The College of Life, or Practical Self-Educator: A Manual of Self-Improvement for the Colored Race,* published in 1896, contains a chapter titled "The Language and Sentiment of Flowers," which serves as a brief floral dictionary.

93. Along with Dunbar, Washington is featured in several of Johnson's poems, such as "The Lad without a Name," included in her 1915 *Thoughts for Idle Hours*. She claims in a note appended to the poem as it appears in her later *Fallen Blossoms* that it consists of "facts put to poetry after reading his life story," such as the erroneous "fact" that "[h]is mother called him Booker / Just because of books he's fond." Johnson also wrote an elegy for Washington, titled "Tuskegee's Sorrow." In *Six Poets of Racial Uplift,* 352–55.

94. Johnson, "To See Ol' Booker T.," in *Virginia Dreams,* 34–36.

Chapter Six

1. Bernstein, "Poetics," 120.

2. Gavin Jones also discusses Hughes's work as a "continuation of work already begun by Dunbar," but his claim depends instead upon their shared "oscillation between vernacular and 'standard' English." *Strange Talk,* 186.

3. Arnold Rampersad, along with many other scholars, has emphasized the influence of Whitman upon Hughes, calling Hughes "a spiritual and poetic child of the good grey poet," and pointing to such poems as Hughes's "I, Too, Sing America" as evidence of this influence. *The Life of Langston Hughes, Vol. 1, 1902–1941: "I, Too, Sing America"* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 28, 95.

4. See, for example, Whitman's "Slang in America" and *An American Primer* for his views on the peculiarity of American English and its use in poetry. In 1894, Hamlin Garland writes that Whitman and Riley represent two phases of what he identifies as a "veritist" (because of the "indiscriminate" use of the label "realist" among his contemporaries) school of poetry, one that is "a closer approach to the passionate speech of modern men." "Productive Conditions of American Literature," *Forum* 17 (Aug. 1894): 690, 697.

5. Okeke-Ezigbo argues that "Dunbar probably inherited his dislike of Whitman from Riley, who, hating 'free verse with uncompromising ardor,' declared that Whitman's poetry 'has positively refused, and still refuses, my applause.' Riley cherished poetry of *heart* appeal, and discredited Whitman for being 'more of a poet at soul than at heart.'" Dunbar's dislike for Whitman is featured in Ishmael Reed's poem "Paul Laurence Dunbar in the Tenderloin." "Paul Laurence Dunbar," 483.

6. Johnson, *Along This Way,* 159.

7. Ibid., 161.

8. Alain Locke, review of *The Weary Blues* by Langston Hughes, in *Critical Essays on Langston Hughes,* ed. Edward J. Mullen (Boston: G. K. Hall and Company, 1986), 44.

9. One year after the publication of the review cited above, in a pamphlet titled *Four Negro Poets,* Alain Locke calls Hughes the "Dunbar of his generation," thereby undermining his previous claim that Hughes is doing the work that Dunbar could not. Locke, ed., *Four Negro Poets,* The Pamphlet Poets Series (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1927), 6.

10. Kenneth Fearing, "Limiting Devices," *The New Masses* (Sept. 1927): 29.

11. Charvat, *Profession of Authorship,* 109–10.

12. Langston Hughes, "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain," in *Within the Circle,* 56.

13. Emily Bernard, ed., *Remember Me to Harlem: The Letters of Langston Hughes and Carl Van Vechten* (New York: Vintage, 2001), 36.

14. Michael Fultz, "'The Morning Cometh': African-American Periodicals, Education, and the Black Middle Class, 1900–1930," in *Print Culture in a Diverse America,* ed. James P. Danky and Wayne A. Wiegand (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998), 140.

15. Sterling Brown, "Our Literary Audience," in *Within the Circle,* 70.

16. Henry Louis Gates, preface to *Langston Hughes: Critical Perspectives Past and Present,* ed. Henry Louis Gates, Jr., and K. A. Appiah (New York: Amistad, 1993), xi.

17. Langston Hughes, "Our Wonderful Society: Washington," *Opportunity* 5.8 (Aug. 1927): 226.

18. Raymond Wolters describes student reaction to the anachronism of the moral values enforced in historically black colleges and universities of the 1920s:

> Black students naturally objected to regimentation on the campus, but the discipline was tolerable in the late nineteenth century when it was thought to be prompted by Christian piety and was applied to white students as well as blacks. Yet the tradition of piety remained in force at the black schools long after the leading white colleges had deemphasized their concern for moral uplift and had begun to stress secular scholarship. Thus many blacks suspected that the extraordinarily strict regulations still in force in their schools during the 1920s were prompted by a racist belief that Negroes were particularly sensuous beings who could not discipline themselves and were not prepared to exercise free will. (*The New Negro on Campus: Black College Rebellions of the 1920s* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975], 13)

Apparently, Hughes's views reflected those of many students at historically black colleges and universities during this period.

19. Langston Hughes, "Cowards from the Colleges," *Crisis* 41.8 (Aug. 1934): 226–28.

20. Ibid., 228.

21. Qtd. in Steven C. Tracy, *Langston Hughes & The Blues* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 44.

22. Babette Deutsch, "Four Poets," *The Bookman* 65 (Apr. 1927): 221.

23. See, for example, R. Baxter Miller's "Framing and Framed Languages in Hughes's *Ask Your Mama: 12 Moods for Jazz,*" *MELUS* 17.4 (1991–92): 3–13.

24. Countee Cullen, review of *The Weary Blues* by Langston Hughes, in *Langston Hughes: Critical Perspectives Past and Present,* 4.

25. Langston Hughes, "The Cat and the Saxophone (2 A.M.)," in *The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes,* ed. Arnold Rampersad (New York: Vintage, 1994), 89.

26. Bernard, *Remember Me to Harlem,* 26.

27. In the review mentioned above, grouping Hughes with Pound, Ransom, and Van Doren, Deutsch claims that "[t]he dialect pieces fairly sing themselves when read aloud, and the others show craftsmanship of a high order." She does not associate craftsmanship with the dialect poems. "Four Poets," 221.

28. Ong, *Orality,* 150.

29. Bernard, *Remember Me to Harlem,* 36.

30. Langston Hughes, promotional letter, 13 Oct. 1931, in *The Prentiss Taylor Papers, 1885–1991,* Smithsonian *Archives of American Art,* Series 10, reel 5921, frame 714, accessed Jan. 1, 2012, http://www.aaa.si.edu/collectionsonline/taylpren/container258041.htm.

31. Gerard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 334.

32. Langston Hughes, "The Big-Timer," in *The Negro Mother and Other Dramatic Recitations* (New York: Golden Stair Press, 1931), 14.

33. Kittler, *Discourse Networks,* 6.

34. Bruce Kellner, "Working Friendship: A Harlem Renaissance Footnote," in *The Lithographs of Prentiss Taylor: A Catalogue Raisonné,* ed. Ingrid Rose and Roderick S. Quiroz (Bronx, NY: Fordham University Press, 1996), 13.

35. Edward Burns, ed., *The Letters of Gertrude Stein and Carl Van Vechten, Vol. 1: 1913–1935* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 246.

36. Davey, "Building a Black Audience," 224.

37. Hughes states that "because it was depression times—even a dollar was a lot to some people—I prepared a smaller booklet of some of my newer poems to sell for a quarter." *I Wonder as I Wander: An Autobiographical Journey* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1956), 47.

38. Rampersad, *Life of Langston Hughes 1,* 222.

39. Rampersad calls the offensive title of *Fine Clothes to the Jew,* a title suggested by Carl Van Vechten and taken from the title of one of Hughes's poems, "unfortunate," saying that "no one alerted Hughes to the effect his title would have on sales, which proved to be the opposite to the result of Van Vechten's own crudeness" in the title of his *Nigger Heaven. Fine Clothes to the Jew* preceded the publication of *The Negro Mother* by only four years, when the disappointing sales and reception of the former must have been a factor in the presentation of the latter. Bruce Kellner, however, believes that "the possibility of actually realizing some income on [*The Negro Mother*] must have come as a shock, especially when a fourth printing seemed inevitable because of the tour," because, Kellner claims, "[n]either Hughes nor [illustrator Prentiss] Taylor had ever thought of *The Negro Mother* as a commercial venture." Rampersad, *Life of Langston Hughes 1,* 138; Kellner, "Working Friendship," 13–14.

40. I am assuming here that most people buying *The Negro Mother* would do so in order to read it, but I am grateful to Arlene Keizer for pointing out motivations for purchasing the book that I had overlooked: the book could have value as an object for non-reading purposes (for example, to appreciate the illustrations, which take up as much space in *The Negro Mother* as the text). As Leah Price points out, "literary critics tend to act as if reading were the only legitimate use of books. They forget that the book can take

on a ritual function (even, or especially, for nonliterates)." I would add that racial pride and historical importance might also drive people to purchase a book as an artifact or souvenir during one of Hughes's readings. "Reading: The State of the Discipline," *Book History* 7 (2004): 305.

41. Hughes, *I Wonder as I Wander,* 48; Rampersad, *Life of Langston Hughes 1,* 222.

42. Hughes, *I Wonder as I Wander,* 47.

43. McHenry writes, "Much has been written about the absence of literacy skills among African Americans. . . . [T]he singular identification of African American culture as 'oral in nature' has helped to push aside facts surrounding other language uses—especially those related to reading and writing." *Forgotten Readers,* 4–5.

44. Elizabeth McHenry and Shirley Brice Heath, "The Literate and the Literary: African-American Readers as Writers, 1830–1940," *Written Communication* 11.4 (1994): 429.

45. Carl F. Kaestle et al., *Literacy in the United States: Readers and Reading since 1880* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), 25.

46. Penelope L. Bullock, *The Afro-American Periodical Press, 1838–1909* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981), 9.

47. Davey, "Building a Black Audience," 226.

48. Henry Allen Bullock, *A History of Negro Education in the South: From 1619 to the Present* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), 173.

49. Hughes, *I Wonder as I Wander,* 55.

50. Hughes, *Shakespeare in Harlem* (New York: Knopf, 1942), n.p.

51. Davey, "Building a Black Audience," 233–34.

52. Hughes, *I Wonder as I Wander,* 50.

53. Hughes, "The Negro Mother," in *The Negro Mother and Other Dramatic Recitations,* 17.

54. Genette, *Paratexts,* 269.

55. The speaker's sentiment echoes that of W. E. B. Du Bois in a piece appearing in the *Crisis:* "We return from the slavery of uniform which the world's madness demanded us to don to the freedom of civil garb. We stand again to look America squarely in the face and call a spade a spade. We sing: this country of ours, despite all its better souls have done and dreamed, is still a shameful land." "Returning Soldiers," *Crisis* 18.1 (May 1919): 14.

56. Hughes, "The Colored Soldier," in *The Negro Mother and Other Dramatic Recitations,* 1–3.

57. The Hughes poem that resembles those of *The Negro Mother* most closely visually, at first glance, is *Ask Your Mama.* The notes alongside this text, unlike those to *The Negro Mother,* give precise instructions for musical accompaniment; they rarely stray into the kind of interdependent parallel narratives that I find in "The Colored Soldier" and "The Big-Timer." R. Baxter Miller writes that "[t]hough the verbal script (the framed language at the center of the page) discloses the voice of the personal narrator who retells history, the musical marginalia (the outer frames) provide the sonorous *complement* of a communal narrative" (emphasis added). There is no information, in other words, in the marginalia that is not intended to support the main text (in this case, musically). However, what would be closer to the equivalent of the notes to the *Negro Mother* are the "Liner Notes" to *Ask Your Mama,* appended to the text. In a challenge to Arnold Rampersad's claim that the "Liner Notes" are "a literal explanation of the poems they refer to," Meta DuEwa Jones writes that "[t]hey resist paraphraseable or explanatory statement and implicitly challenge the mainstream aesthetic notion that the poem must describe,

narrate, or explain. Thus, the note for the poem 'Bird in Orbit' contains sentences that are syntactically logical but are *not* simple declarative statements." They, therefore, like the notes to *The Negro Mother,* produce related but ultimately distinct narratives; they are parallel poems. Miller, "Framing and Framed Languages," 3; Jones, "Listening to What the Ear Demands: Langston Hughes and His Critics," *Callaloo* 25.4 (2002): 1149.

58. "The Colored Soldier" is almost completely in standard English: the only dialect word is "'cause," a clipping that is highly readable. "Broke" and "The Big-Timer" are in dialect; "The Black Clown," "The Negro Mother," and "Dark Youth of the U.S.A." are not in dialect. As James Edward Smethurst points out, the title poem employs "a 'high' literary diction, despite the fact that the poem's speaker is explicitly the ur-mother of the African-American folk whom one would expect to speak in some representation of African-American vernacular after the fashion of the speaker in Hughes's 'Mother to Son.'" *The New Red Negro: The Literary Left and African American Poetry, 1930–1946* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 95.

59. Cary Nelson, *Revolutionary Memory: Recovering the Poetry of the American Left* (London: Routledge, 2001), 202.

60. Byerly, "From Schoolroom to Stage," 139.

61. See Byerly's "From Schoolroom to Stage," Collins's "'Agglomerating Dollars" (both cited in full above), and Mark Morrisson's *The Public Face of Modernism: Little Magazines, Audiences, and Reception, 1905–1920* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2001).

62. Hughes, "The Negro Mother," "The Black Clown," and "Dark Youth of the U.S.A," in *The Negro Mother and Other Dramatic Recitations,* 16–18, 8–11, 19–20.

63. Stanley Schatt, "Langston Hughes: The Minstrel as Artificer," *Journal of Modern Literature* 4 (1974): 115.

64. Steven C. Tracy, for example, quotes Phyllis Brooks Bartlett's 1951 *Poems in Process,* in which she writes that Hughes rarely revises: "The only problem that puzzles him is the arrangement of the lines—where to break them so that their appearance on the page will indicate to the reader how they should be read." What is interesting about Bartlett's observation is that the only revision she finds points to the text's orality, to her own preconceived notion of Hughes's concern about scoring the text. In any case, Tracy disagrees: "Hughes employed revisions to help smooth out dialect, paying close attention to words and punctuation and altering structure for literary purposes" (244–45).

65. Carl Van Vechten, introduction to *The Weary Blues* by Langston Hughes (1926; New York: Knopf, 1947), 13.

66. Jesse S. Crisler, Robert C. Leitz, III, and Joseph R. McElrath, Jr., eds., *An Exemplary Citizen: Letters of Charles W. Chesnutt, 1906–1932* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 292.

67. Fowler D. Brooks, *The Applied Psychology of Reading: With Exercises and Directions for Improving Silent and Oral Reading* (New York: D. Appleton, 1926), 132, 54.

68. Herbert G. Lull and H. B. Wilson, *The Redirection of High-School Instruction* (Philadelphia, London, Chicago: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1921), 39.

69. Walter Jekyll, preface to *Songs of Jamaica* by Claude McKay (1912; Miami: Mnemosyne Publishing, 1969), 9.

70. Claude McKay, "Boyhood in Jamaica," *Phylon* 14 (1953): 142.

71. North, *Dialect of Modernism,* 100, 103. Wayne Cooper notes that, "[i]n a recording made near the end of his life, he still retained, after an absence of more than thirty years, the 'quaint' accent of a Jamaican hill countryman." *Claude McKay: Rebel*

Sojourner in the Harlem Renaissance (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1987), 27.

72. Heather Hathaway, *Caribbean Waves: Relocating Claude McKay and Paule Marshall* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 35.

73. Bernstein, "Poetics," 120.

74. Max Eastman, introduction to *Harlem Shadows: The Poems of Claude McKay* by Claude McKay (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1922), ix.

75. Jekyll, preface, 5.

76. North, *Dialect of Modernism,* 19.

77. Jekyll, preface, 7.

78. Michael North points out (citing Tony Crowley's *Standard English and the Politics of Language*) that alongside arguments that dialectal differences were compromising and tainting the "purity" of the language were arguments that "[d]ialect . . . was 'purer' than the standard written language because it was less affected by printing, education, and 'elocution masters'" (19).

79. North, *Dialect of Modernism,* 106.

80. Bernstein, "Poetics," 120.

81. McKay, "Heartless Rhoda," in *Songs of Jamaica,* 94.

82. Jekyll, preface, 14.

83. Robert Stepto, *From Behind the Veil: A Study of Afro-American Narrative* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1979), 10.

84. Claude McKay, "Author's Word," in *Harlem Shadows,* xix.

85. Claude McKay, *Banana Bottom* (New York: Harper & Row, 1933), 140.

86. Claude McKay, *A Long Way from Home* (New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1969), 12–13.

87. Ibid., 13, 66.

88. Hathaway, *Caribbean Waves,* 35.

89. Toolan, "Significations," 34.

90. Balhorn, "Paper Representations," 68–69.

91. Bernstein, "Poetics," 125.

92. Lee M. Jenkins, *The Language of Caribbean Poetry: Boundaries of Expression* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004), 23.

93. "This Is Why Not," 11.

94. McKay, "To E.M.E.," in *Songs of Jamaica,* 51.

95. Donald Wesling, *Bakhtin and the Social Moorings of Poetry* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2003), 64.

96. Claude McKay, "Author's Word," in *Harlem Shadows,* xxi.

97. Ezra Pound, "A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste," *Poetry* 1.6 (March 1913): 201.

98. McKay, "A Dream," in *Songs of Jamaica,* 98.

99. For example, in "Standard Language and Poetic Language," Jan Mukarovsky asserts that "the theory of poetic language is primarily interested in the *differences* between the standard and poetic language" (emphasis added). Paul Kiparsky, also, reveals his assumptions about the distinctiveness of literary language in a critical response to Stanley Fish's essay, "How Ordinary is Ordinary Language?" Kiparsky claims that one of the qualities that distinguishes literary language from ordinary is ambiguity: if an ordinary sentence "happens to have several meanings, only one is relevant, and as part of interpreting the sentence one must find the intended meaning. In poetry, however, ambiguity is a constitutive element, and all meanings of an ambiguous expression become relevant to its interpretation." Both Mukarovsky and Kiparsky assume that poetic language is at one end of a continuum, with ordinary and prosaic language on the other.

Mukarovsky, in fact, uses dialect writing as a parallel to poetic language, in its ability to define itself against the standard, but never really equates them. He proposes, "Let us, for instance, visualize a work in which . . . distortion is carried out by the interpenetration of dialect speech with the standard; it is clear, then, that it is not the standard which is perceived as a distortion of the dialect, but the dialect as a distortion of the standard. . . . The violation of the norm of the standard, its systematic violation, is what makes possible the poetic utilization of language; without this possibility there would be no poetry." Mukarovsky, "Standard Language and Poetic Language," in *A Prague School Reader on Esthetics, Literary Structure, and Style,* selected and translated by Paul L. Garvin (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1964), 17–18; Kiparsky, Commentary, *New Literary History* 5 (1973): 181.

100. Stanley Fish, "How Ordinary Is Ordinary Language?," *New Literary History* 5 (1973): 45.

101. Cary H. Plotkin, *The Tenth Muse: Victorian Philology and the Genesis of the Poetic Language of Gerard Manley Hopkins* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1989), 87.

102. As E. A. Levenston points out, elisions like "o'er" are "common from the Augustan to the Victorian age, but did not survive the First World War." McKay is the exception that proves this rule. *The Stuff of Literature: Physical Aspects of Texts and Their Relation to Literary Meaning* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 37.

103. Otto Jesperson, *Growth and Structure of the English Language* (1905; Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1912), 230–31.

104. Daniel T. McGee, "Dada Da Da: Sounding the Jew in Modernism," *ELH* 68 (2001): 508.

105. Hathaway, *Caribbean Waves,* 35–36.

106. McKay, "Old England," in *Songs of Jamaica,* 64.

107. McKay, "A Dream," in *Songs of Jamaica,* 96–97.

108. Smethurst, *The New Red Negro,* 96.

109. Plotkin, *Tenth Muse,* 88.

110. Hathaway, *Caribbean Waves,* 37.

111. Cooper, *Claude McKay,* 27.

112. Bernstein, "Poetics," 120.

113. McKay, "Strokes of the Tamarind Switch," in *Songs of Jamaica,* 113.

114. North writes that "the notes . . . expose, by their very existence, a metatextual situation that their content tries to obscure. The Buccra to whom Quashie addresses his warning is also the white reader unfamiliar with black Jamaican life. As the first poem in the collection, 'Quashie to Buccra' assumes the traditional role of addressing itself to the reader, in this case warning the white reader in particular against a superficial reading of what's to follow" (*Dialect of Modernism,* 106).

115. Cooper, *Claude McKay,* 37.

116. Gates, *Figures in Black,* 188.

117. Kittler, *Discourse Networks,* 219.

Conclusion

1. Charles A. Greathouse, *Suggestions and Materials. Riley Day Programs* (Indianapolis: n.p., 1915), 5.

2. Roy Harvey Pearce, *The Continuity of American Poetry* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), 255–56.

3. Davidson, "Towards a History of Books and Readers," 10.

4. Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste,* trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), 2.

5. Ambrose Bierce, "Prattle," *San Francisco Examiner,* 17 Dec. 1892, 16.

6. Harryette Mullen describes a similar reader response in a different context in "Imagining the Unimagined Reader: Writing to the Unborn and Including the Excluded," *boundary2* 26.1 (1999): 198–203.

7. Aldon Lynn Nielsen, *Black Chant: Languages of African-American Postmodernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 9.

8. Dorri Beam, *Style, Gender, and Fantasy in Nineteenth-Century American Women's Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 2.

9. S. S. Curry, *Browning and the Dramatic Monologue: Nature and Interpretation of an Overlooked Form of Literature* (Boston: Expression Company, 1908), 225, 227.

10. Wonham, *Playing the Races,* 46.

11. John Timberman Newcomb, *Would Poetry Disappear? American Verse and the Crisis of Modernity* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2004), xxv, xix.

12. Donald Hall, introduction to *The Oxford Book of Children's Verse in America,* ed. Donald Hall (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), xxxv.

13. Scharnhorst, *Opening,* 60, 68, 63.

14. Virginia Jackson, "American Victorian Poetry: The Transatlantic Poetic," *Victorian Poetry* 43 (2005): 159.

15. Linley, "Conjuring the Spirit," 539.

16. Ibid., 537.

17. Loomis, "The Dialect Store," 959.

18. Janice Radway and Perry Frank, "Verse and Popular Poetry," in *Handbook of American Popular Literature,* ed. M. Thomas Inge (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988), 305–6, 299–322.

19. Van Dyke, "James Whitcomb Riley as a Person," 430.

20. Harryette Mullen, "Sleeping with the Dictionary," in *Sleeping with the Dictionary* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 67.