

Contextual Confluence

Contextual Confluence:

Media, Text and Traditions

Edited by

Elisabetta Marino and Ajit Kumar

Foreword by Prof. Emerita Maxine Chernoff

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FOREWORD

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Contextual Confluence: Media, Text, and Traditions carries chapters on the variety of themes united by a common interest in especially examining the virtual introspection over media, text, and cultural traditions across different historical and contemporary social contexts. All of these chapters explore the unique facets of this broad theme, the collection as a whole underscores how textual forms shape, challenge, and preserve traditions in diverse societies. The volume adopts a more thematic approach and it functions as a collective exploration into the various ways it challenges to survive, adopt and maintain.

Textual aspects transform traditional forms of society, however, going deep into this it clarifies how textual analysis can reveal the complex relationship between social representation and cultural heritage. It further highlights the flow of traditions in the face of changing social substances and provide a nuanced perspective on the role of texts in mediating and preserving human traditions, calling for a deeper understanding to engage with different perspectives on the central themes of cultures, modernity, literary aesthetics of a text and media.

Thus, *Contextual Confluence* offers a rich exploration of how media and textual representations get mixed with each other and make reflected the substantial realities of social traditions, values, and cultural narratives. The narratives on gender identities—womanhood, highlighting masculinities, and the power dynamics. It confronts the paradoxes of human experience, where myth and reality intertwine, and examines the layered experiences of pain, pleasure, destruction, and trauma. Through the analysis of both media and text, the book underlines how these parts shape the societal perceptions and cultural understandings, often revealing the perspectives between tradition and modernity, reality and representation. It further provides a multifaceted analysis of how media and textual forms not only reflect but also represent and transform the very substance of cultural and

social realities. The brilliant introduction clarifies the many ambitions to inform the reader about new ways of reading in our technical, analytical, complex times.

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This volume would not have been possible without the significant contributions, intellectual involvement, and academic commitment from a varied group of authors and scholars. We like to express my profound appreciation to one and all for enriching this project with their unique perspectives and all forms of support needed for the project.

We would like to express our genuine gratitude to Prof. Emerita Maxine Chernoff, San Francisco State University, San Francisco, California for her comprehensive and insightful Foreword. Her intellectual generosity and meticulous writing have greatly enriched the depth of this project.

We extend our appreciation to all the eminent contributors for their significant contribution and ongoing assistance. Their professionalism and collaborative approach significantly improved our efforts. Their unwavering involvement and patience improved the academic spirit of this project.

We are very grateful for the essential insights and astute guidance provided by our colleagues and academic mentors throughout this editing project. Their intellectual contributions and constructive advice have been important in establishing the cohesion and academic rigour of this anthology.

We would like to express our gratitude to the peer-review committee for their systematic evaluations of the submitted works, which have significantly improved the anthology.

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Editors
Elisabetta Marino
Ajit Kumar

INTRODUCTION

Literature has been an effective tool for reflecting the complexities of human existence, addressing themes of identity, oppression, and culture and society. It shows how power has a big role to play in the cultural exchange and representation of different times. Derrida rightly says, “In principle the power to say everything, to break free of the rules, to displace them, and thereby to institute, to invent and even suspect the traditional difference between nature and institution, nature and conventional law, nature and history” (Derrida 1992, 48). Literature highlights the real aspects of different periods and ages. It embodies the representation of human values and realities. Hillis Miller underlines the true essence of literature. He says, “literature refers to the real world [...] and though reading is a material act, literature uses such physical embedment to create or reveal alternative realities” (Miller 2002, 20).

Literature has been a medium of expression for the experiences of individuals and communities across various societal parts, with works by writers, scholars, and thinkers exploring the intersections of race, gender, class, and identity. The literary narratives represent the psychological state of people and their different cultural and social circumstance. Sarup underlines that “Both psychoanalysis and literature are concerned with narrative, with telling stories” (Sarup 1992, 161). All the textual embodiments of representations clearly show the meaning existence of connectivity between literature and text. Holland says, “consciousness is continually being imagined (imagined, in-formed) by the metaphors in the very text it is writing or reading” (Holland 1990, 42). The work of art and text has a deep-rooted connection. Both can explain the meaning of each other. Cathy Caruth highlights that, the main question is always to establish and elucidate a connection between a text and a work of art. The connection, however, is more or less remote, more or less meaningful; therefore, according to the circumstances it will have to be considered from a different angle, and at a different level (Caruth 1996, 7-8). “The crisis at the core of many traumatic narratives...often emerges, indeed, as an urgent question: Is the trauma the encounter with death, or the ongoing experience of having survived it?” (7-8). Blues and jazz, for example, have been instrumental in capturing the painful histories and existential struggles of African descendants in America. Whereas women’s portrayal

in literature serves as a critical examination of their struggles for agency, identity, and self-affirmation within patriarchal and racially stratified societies. The theme of visibility, particularly through post-colonial lenses, is also explored. Literature also provides a critical lens through which we can examine how societal expectations shape individual identities, particularly concerning gender. Widdowson in *Literature* tells that it is a “working term for the kind of written discourse I believe has some irreplaceable uses in our society, without which our cultural lives would be impoverished and diminished” (Widdowson 1999, 93).

Films, like eco-cinema, engage with societal structures and trauma, fostering awareness of ecological crises and encouraging emotional and intellectual transformations. The evolution of literary adaptation in the context of film also reflects the continued interplay between literature and cinema. Literature offers individuals and communities to find expression, resistance, and renewal. By engaging with various literary and artistic traditions, literature inspires change, challenges societal norms, and offers hope for transformation and healing.

In this volume, first in the series, Dokubo Melford Goodhead’s chapter highlights that Langston Hughes’ poem “Railroad Avenue” uses blues and jazz to explore the history and existential aspects of black people in America up to the early 20th century. It demonstrates that Hughes’ interpretation of the black condition in America up to the Harlem Renaissance is more complex when these metaphors are not isolated to “Railroad Avenue” but are incorporated into other blues poems. Next, Tyler Akeem Anderson’s study highlights the contributions of queer black feminist thinkers to producing positive outcomes for black African descendants worldwide. However, the outcomes of these leaders have not been as successful. To better support these leaders and prevent negative outcomes, it is essential to pay respect and homage to them and resist distance from our affective relationships with them. This chapter focuses on queer black women’s relationship to black community building in Germany, specifically Audre Lorde, May Ayim, and Erika Hugel-Marshall. The essay argues that their dedication to black activism intensified their disabilities and structural impediments. While black community may have been a saving grace for people like Lorde, it couldn’t save Ayim and Hugel-Marshall. Engaging with the poetry, poetic prose, and scholarly production of these thinkers is crucial to keep them alive.

Shahin Fatma examines Zora Neale Hurston, a distinguished 20th-century Afro American writer, who has written about the Black dignity and self-

fulfillment. Hurston's writings depict the plight of subjugated Black women who undergo various tribulations in white patriarchal society. Her most acclaimed novel, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, portrays the emotion of an innocent girl seeking physical passion and love within the patriarchal structure. Hurston's aim is not only to free her community from external prejudices but also from internal menaces. It further highlights the collective indebtedness to queer black feminist thinkers and encourages rethinking academic relationships and ethics of care towards community organizers. Cyrine Kortas' study explores the issue of visibility versus invisibility in postcolonial discourse, focusing on Nawel Saadawi's novel *Zeyna* and its implications for Egypt's modernization and independence. The research questions whether (in)visibility is a quest for Sadaawi as an expression of self-inscription and origination within a more comprehensive artistic realm and political engagement.

Wei H. Kao's chapter analyses how the body is saturated with social expectations and internalizes codes and rules that discipline its gendered subject. This internalization results in normative masculinity performing with its added values, regardless of one's awareness of its consequences. In Northern Ireland, the naturalization of hegemonic and patrilineal masculinities reinforces male power but suppresses what appears to be feminine or less masculine, including women, the ageing, and those who refuse to participate in acts of violence. Owen McCafferty's *I Won't Dance, Don't Ask Me, The Waiting List, and Cold Comfort* explore the experiences of males as abject in domestic and public spheres. The playwright deconstructs the historical power structure that predominantly benefits only a handful of patriarchal elites, physically and mentally subordinating potential enemies within their reign of power.

Elisabetta Marino's essay focuses on some Italian pieces by Constance Fenimore Woolson, namely her 1880 short-story "Miss Grief" and some other stories and travel sketches published in the two posthumous collections entitled *The Front Yard and Other Italian Stories* (1895) and *Dorothy and Other Italian Stories* (1896). As will be shown, far from indulging in escapist fantasies and rituals of entertainment common among British and American expatriates, Woolson employed the Italian scenario to ponder two issues that are also strikingly crucial in her 1880 collection *Rodman the Keeper: Southern Sketches*: the struggles of nations in transition (the US after the Civil War, Italy after the Unification) and the *reconstruction, refashioning* of the concept of womanhood, beyond the strictures of patriarchy.

In her chapter, Rahat Alishova discusses the role of Kyrgyz folk poet Tumonbai Baizakov in Kyrgyz literature and the song “Kyrgyz land”, which became the second national anthem. He compares American poet Robert Frost’s work, arguing that Frost’s best poems combine metaphysics with nature’s beauty and truth. Both poets share similarities in their worldviews of nature, forest, water, land, and environment, making them commonalities in eco-poetry.

Oran Ryan’s study examines T.S. Eliot’s *Wasteland*, a famous long poem that depicts the cultural and personal devastation caused by the First World War. Heidegger’s “being towards death” is used to depict the decline of humanity. Both Eliot and Heidegger were deeply concerned with the realities of time and history, addressing the world as it is subjectively experienced by everyone. They also addressed the deepest problems of life, such as human unhappiness and the inevitability of death. Both works highlight the idea that all meaning and culture can only authentically occur within the ultimate horizon of history, the terminal status of our time on Earth. Sukriti Bhukkal highlights in her study that from the time of its conception in the early 1990’s and its acknowledgment as a prominent academic field of study, ecocriticism has expanded beyond the realm of literary analysis to include the study of other forms of cultural production, including music, photography, virtual environments, and film. Additionally, the term “eco-cinema” has gained prominence to describe films that deal with environmental concerns either by studying specific environmental justice issues or, more generally, by making “nature,” from landscapes to wildlife, a central theme. As a sub-category of media, eco-cinema cuts across genres and modes of production, encompassing full-length and short fiction, documentary, and experimental films/videos that proactively seek to inform viewers about, as well as engage their participation in, addressing issues of ecological importance. In this context, the proposed chapter underscores Kartiki Gonsalves’ *The Elephant Whisperers* and Shaunak Sen’s *All that Breathes*. *The Elephant Whisperers* narrates a personal story of conservation and coexistence of an Indian indigenous community, Kattunayakan tribe and the wildlife, especially the Asian elephants, in the picturesque Mudumalai forests in the Nilgiris. *All That Breathes* follows two brothers who run a bird hospital dedicated to rescuing injured black kites, a staple in the smog choked skies of one of the world’s most populated cities, New Delhi. Both highlight the visual elements that portray the interconnectedness of the natural world, human life and the balance between the two. These films attempt to play a subtle but substantive role in the depiction of fostering relationships, environmental awareness, transformation and renewal. The chapter shall also highlight

that the Indian eco-cinema is also trying to encompass those films that in a broader, more philosophical way compels us to introspect about what it means to inhabit the planet and more importantly, to garner an understanding of the relevance of this community in a systemic and non-hierarchical way.

Next, İsmail Onur Sonat's research uses a hauntological framework to analyze Jane Schoenbrun's psychological horror film *I Saw the TV Glow* (2024). Hauntology refers to the persistent influence of the past on the present, with the "specter" representing the intangible impact of a past event. The film, set in the 1990s, follows two high school students, Owen and Maddy, who bond over a fictional television show called *The Pink Opaque*. The film engages in a metaphorical séance with its predecessor, Buffy the Vampire Slayer, examining its limitations and potentialities, particularly in queer representation.

Mehmet Ali Çelikel highlights E.M. Forster's ambivalent attitude in *A Passage to India*, a novel that explores social dynamics in India during the emergence of Indian nationalism seeking independence from British rule. Forster's writing style highlights the challenges of reconciliation and the precarious nature of peace in colonial India. The novel's dual perspective sheds light on mutual prejudices and mistrust between the British and Indians, with cultural surprises evenly distributed between colonizers and colonized.

Madhumita Majumdar in her research explores that the Victorian Age was a paradox, with Queen Victoria being an icon of domesticity and women being kept away from public spheres. However, this Age saw the beginning of the suffrage movement, the arrival of the "new woman", and the "woman question". It highlights how Charles Dickens exposes the social perspective of Victorian Society especially towards women. Dickens portrays an array of strong women characters, such as Estella and Miss Havisham (*Great Expectations*), who stand out by not being the typically suffering types. A third category that needs to be added is the disabled woman, twice "othered"—as a woman and then as a disabled. Dickens carries his social perceptive and observations in his shorter works, such as Doctor Marigold, a story of a street peddler who finds happiness with his adopted deaf-mute daughter. In a society where domesticity and marriage were central to womanhood, the disabled female body was taken to be non-marriageable, especially insofar as these characters were depicted as vulnerable to their emotions.

Khushi Khandelwal shows that by its very nature of representation; documenting history has been an exclusionist and gendered enterprise. The tawaifs, early feminists who are highly intellectual patrons of art, played a significant role in India's pre-independent social and cultural life. However, the cultural distortion and Bollywood have turned tawaifs into subalterns. In the present times, tawaif has become a euphemism for sex workers. *Tawaifs* such as Azizun Nissa and Begum Hazrat Mahal, contemporaries of Rani Lakshmbai, played a pivotal role in the 1857 Revolt. However, because of their professional identity, their political contributions are rarely mentioned in history. This chapter explores Kenize Mourad's novel *In the City of Gold and Silver* (2013), based on the life of Begum Hazrat, to interrogate the partial approach of historiography and nationalist narrative while attempting to trace the systematic annihilation of tawaifs from the volatile public memory.

Sharmistha Chatterjee highlights that while gruesome murders in literature often trace themselves to a dark and dismal weather, many do foreground a setting bleaker and ominous, evidently augmenting and throwing into relief what the witches in *Macbeth* would chime, "fair is foul and foul is fair". Conan Doyle's *The Hound of the Baskervilles* takes on the Gothic tradition, a brand of narrative that highlights the bizarre and unexplained. The Eco-Gothic examines the construction of the Gothic body through a more inclusive lens, asking how it can be more meaningfully understood as a site of articulation for environmental and species identity. The chapter also seeks to explore how the moor and the hound express the complexities of class, gender, and economic conflicts inherent in the Baskerville Hall and the nearby Grimpen Mire, which result in deaths and attempted murders.

Thus, via studies of media, text and traditions, the anthology explores human interconnectedness, resistance, and evolution across time, geography, and identity. It explores themes such as mutuality, highlighting the voices historically silenced or sidelined, metamorphoses and temporality, identity, masculinity, and ecological belonging. It restores hope, healing, and interdependence through Indian eco-cinema. It explores the layered terrains of colonial trauma, bodily otherness, and cultural marginalization. With the sense of growth among the modes of literature, art and cinema, it meticulously aims at emphasizing the mutuality as a mode of survival, healing, and transformation, extending the central introspection of living with and for one another across borders, wounds, and histories.

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PART I

INTERACTIONS:
MUTUALITY AND ALTRUISM

CHAPTER I

THE CITY OF BLUES AND JAZZ: READING LANGSTON HUGHES'S "RAILROAD AVENUE"

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The post-Reconstruction period, leading to the turn of the nineteenth century, was characterized by a massive movement of African Americans from the South to cities of the North, from about 1910 to 1970, a movement now known as the Great Migration. Anita Patterson writes of the period: "In the postbellum South slavery was replaced by other forms of racial subjection: indentured servitude, black codes, the contract system, vagrancy statutes and lynching" (Patterson 2000, 65). These developments, as Patterson rightly observes, were what led to the Great Migration of African Americans to the cities of the North. The train became the most important conveyor of ordinary African Americans. As a result of this mass movement, the railroad and its environs, and the train itself, came to acquire great significance in the black community. In the words of Houston Baker, the railroad junction, the junction where folk go in and come out of the train station as a result of their movement from one place to the other, very often in search of better conditions of existence, came to be a "place betwixt and between" and the junction a "way-station of the blues" (Baker 1984, 7). Indeed, in *The Big Sea*, Hughes talks of this central role of the train station to the blues, where he refers us to a famous blues song. He writes: "I'm goin' down to de railroad, baby,/Lay ma head on de track./I'm goin' down to de railroad, babe,/Lay ma head on de track—/But if I see de train a-comin',/I'm gonna jerk it back" (Hughes 1986, 209). The figure of the train appears again and again in his poetry, especially his blues and jazz poetry, which he uses to deftly explore the social issues of the time. This paper focuses on a poem in which Hughes uses both blues and jazz elements to explore these social issues. The poem, "Railroad Avenue," goes beyond the use of the recurrent figure, the train, in his blues poetry to one of the constituent parts of the train, the box car,

to explore issues of race and the existential conditions of African Americans, especially the common black folk, who form the subject of his poetry, in the world of the early decades of the twentieth century, the world of *de jure* Jim Crow in the South and *de facto* Jim Crow in the North, where even without the black codes that created the Jim Crow condition in the South, African Americans found that they were still second-class citizens with limited opportunities to make progress in life.

As such, the migrants to the cities of the North quickly realized that there was no reprieve from the blues for them there. They had reached anything but the El Dorado that they had left everything behind in the South to seek. This period of the 1920s, the period of the Harlem Renaissance, from which this poem emerges, was a period when black writers hoped that they could use their art to fight the social obstacles to full black citizenship and progress. In his edited volume on the Harlem Renaissance, David Levering Lewis emphasizes this point. He writes that for black writers, such as Hughes, “art was the means to change society in order to be accepted into it” (Lewis 1994, xxi). However, “Railroad Avenue” is not just a social poem. It is one of his most compelling civil rights poems, where his social concerns find expression not just in the stylistic patterns of the blues and jazz but in their subject matter and content as well. In the few lines of this poem, Hughes tells the story of black America and of America itself in ways that reach deep into the African cultural heritage of black America and the formation of Western modernity. The train, the box car, the railroad avenue, the social spaces on the avenue and the kind of activities that take place on the avenue and in the social spaces tell this story in the very concise language of the blues and jazz. At the turn of the 19th Century into the first three decades of the 20th Century, America was well on its way to becoming the most industrialized and richest nation on earth due to the explosion of industrial activities and spectacular technological achievements in the country. These achievements were headlined by events such as Charles Lindbergh’s solo intercontinental flight of May 20-21, 1927, an event that Toni Morrison, in a similar vein to Hughes’ use of the train, employs in *Song of Solomon* to draw attention to the *de facto* and the *de jure* Jim Crow policies still prevalent in many parts of the country before the Civil Rights Revolution of the 1950s and 1960s. Like Hughes, Morrison critiques the racial situation of the time and the curtailment of black opportunity and rights by referencing America’s rapid industrial revolution. In Morrison’s novel, the tension from living under these conditions, which Hughes describes as tautness in the poem, a point we will come to shortly, find expression, unlike in the poem, in suicide, with

an insurance agent jumping from the roof of a Jim Crow hospital to his death in order to integrate the hospital (Morrison 1977/2004, 3-9).

While Morrison uses Lindbergh's historic trans-Atlantic flight to draw attention to America's rapid industrialization and technological advancement against the backdrop of its laws and customs that reduced black Americans to second-class citizens, a racial caste with few opportunities for advancement, Hughes does not use the figure of the plane but the train, the most popular form of transportation at the time and the most common mode of transportation for the poor black folk that he wrote about in his literary work. As a transporter of goods and labor over the length and breadth of the country, the train stood as a figure of industrial and technological progress, like the Spirit of St. Louis that Lindbergh flew across the Atlantic, from New York to Paris. In the poem, he situates the abandoned box car right "In the middle of the/Block" (Hughes 1994d, 84, lines 7-8), to metaphorically make a statement about the abandonment of black America after the collapse of Reconstruction by its train, America, and how the problems of black America are in plain view of the nation. In doing so, he mobilizes the trope of invisibility in a very economical manner that allows him to make his point with plain imagery and the minimum number of words required to make his point in the manner of the blues and the jazz. The problems of black America, post-bellum and post-Reconstruction joblessness and racial discrimination, are in plain sight for all to see, in fact, right in the shadow of both the dome of the Capitol and Wall Street, the nation's political and financial capitals, but they are "invisible" to the mainstream public. This trope, as we know, gained notoriety with Ralph Ellison's elaborate employment of it in the *Invisible Man* (1952). Hughes is economical, using what Karl Henzy describes as a "metaphysics of simplicity" (Henzy 2011, 915), a complex style that looks deceptively simple, yet fully does the work that it is required to do, in this instance, drawing attention to the "invisibility" of black America's problems to the nation through telling images such as fish joints and pool rooms, sites where black Americans constitute an alternative public to articulate their dire existential condition as well as mount a critique of the nation. I use the term "alternative public" here as a counterpart to the notion of the public in Jurgen Habermas's *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, where he maps the birth of democratic modernity in the West through public discourse in places like salons and tea houses as well as the discussion of public affairs in private letters and expressions of public opinion in newspapers. In America, this public, the main public, is not open to black America, hence the term "alternative public," since the discursive spaces where African Americans engage in such discussions

about the state of affairs of the nation and their plight have the same intent—the use of discourse as an instrument of critique of public affairs and the society.

The train—America—has moved on, leaving the box car behind. “Shaking the lights in the fish joints,/Rolling white balls in the pool rooms,/And leaving untouched the box car/Some train has forgotten” (Hughes 1994d, 84, lines 25-28). Juxtaposed to the abandoned and untouched box car are the fish joints, the site of the alternative public, where, as pool balls fly across pool tables and bar patrons dance away their blues, discussions around the abandoned box car—black America and its problems—erupt from the patrons. As Portia K. Maultsby reminds us, many African Americans in the South at the time “could not find even menial jobs and, as a last resort, worked as sharecroppers on the land they had farmed as slaves” (Maultsby 2004, 64). When African Americans found jobs, the jobs were often of the type that gave no room for upward mobility. The flight from sharecropping in the South sometimes ends with lack of opportunity or one that is markedly circumscribed in the North. Hughes elaborates on this state of affairs—abridgement of black civil rights and endemic unemployment, conditions that generate the blues—in “Six-Bits Blues” (Hughes 1994e, 211). Here, though Hughes mobilizes the entire train into service, it seems to me that it will be more accurate to say that the reference is to a Jim Crow car on a train heading somewhere, presumably to a Northern city. The speaker is anxious to move from the place of lack of opportunity to a place of opportunity and pointedly says:

Gimme six-bits' worth o' ticket
 On a train that runs somewhere.
 I say six-bits' worth o' ticket
 On a train that runs somewhere
 I don't care where it's goin'
 Just so it goes away from here. (211, lines 1-6)

The speaker ends the poem by saying, “I got to roll away” (211, line 13) to indicate forward movement or progress to where he/she can find something to do. Sometimes, the train does roll into a city where the black job seeker does find a job but it is almost always a certain kind of job, a job where career advancement is impossible. Maultsby addresses this issue, when she writes that, “Discriminatory practices ... restricted their [black] employment possibilities to such menial roles as domestic servants, janitors, chauffeurs, and delivery boys” (Maultsby 2004, 64). Hughes takes on this issue, with a slightly more complex employment of the figure

of the box car in the “Elevator Boy” (Hughes 1994a, 85). Here, the speaker has a job but he is worried that he is going nowhere with the job. Thus, the elevator, a mobile box car, going nowhere assumes the status of the abandoned box car. In the post-bellum world of the swinging twenties, which Hughes gives a cue to in the following lines in the poem, “Shaking the lights in the fish joints, Rolling white balls in the pool rooms” (Hughes 1994d, 84, lines 26-27), black cultural contributions in cultural productions such as gospel songs, blues, jazz, rag time, are sweeping through America, giving an indication of what a people could do if the doors of opportunity are not shut in their faces, black unemployment as a result of racial discrimination is a major problem, in fact, one that along with racial segregation led to the formation of black ghettos in the cities of the North.

As such, the North as a kind of job Eldorado and civil rights for African Americans actually turned out to be a site of black blues, like the South, because of racial inequality. In “Langston Hughes and the ‘Nonsense’ of Bebop,” John Lowney teases out this state of affairs from Hughes’s poetry. He writes: “Hughes locates this African American ‘dream deferred’ within a geography of broken promises, a geography both separate from and contained with the social inequities of Manhattan and, by extension, the national postwar world” (Lowney 2000, 357). In “Evenin’ Air Blues” (Hughes 1994b, 225), Hughes takes up the issue in a manner that more explicitly takes on the figure of the abandoned box car and its use as a signifier for the abandonment of African Americans following the collapse of Reconstruction. He again uses the blues idiom, with the speaker speaking in dialect and engaging in a monologue in a manner that deliberately mimics the linguistic style and structure of the blues. The speaker says:

Folks, I come up North
 Cause they told me de North was fine.
 I come up North
 Cause they told me de North was fine.
 Been up here six months –
 I’m about to lose my mind.

This mornin’ for breakfast
 I chewed de mornin’ air.
 This mornin’ for breakfast
 Chewed de mornin’ air.
 But this evenin’ for supper
 I got evenin’ air to spare.