THE DUALITY OF JOEL CHANDLER HARRIS: THE PRESERVATION OF FOLKLORE AND THE PRESENTATION OF VIOLENCE IN THE JIM CROW SOUTH

by

NATALIE MARIE KHOURY

(Under the Direction of AMANDA GAILEY)

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the presentation of mob violence and lynching in Joel Chandler Harris's fiction. It will first address Harris's childhood and discuss how his adolescent experiences would later lead to his position at the Atlanta *Constitution* and greatly influence his writings. Next, it will reveal the presence and depiction of mob violence and lynching in his first published collection of stories, *Uncle Remus: His Songs and His Sayings*, both in the written text and illustrations. Finally, this thesis will examine one of Harris's last projects, the *Uncle Remus's Magazine*, to see how these patterns developed. In addition to his contribution to American fiction and culture by his preservation of American Folklore, as well as providing one of the more authentic depictions of an African-American character to its date, this thesis will suggest that Harris should also be credited for being one of the germinal figures in exposing lynching in American fiction.

INDEX WORDS: Joel Chandler Harris, Mob Violence, Lynching, Duality, Double Consciousness

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NATALIE MARIE KHOURY

B.A., Georgia College and State University, 2004

M.L.I.S., The University of South Carolina, 2006

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NATALIE MARIE KHOURY

Major Professor:	Amanda Gailey
Committee:	Richard Menke
	Douglas Anderson

Electronic Version Approved:

Maureen Grasso
Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Georgia
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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my two best friends, Ashley Bowden and Ross Ridgewell.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The topic of race permeates discussions and debates about author Joel Chandler Harris. Scholars have repeatedly argued that Harris used the character of Uncle Remus as a mouthpiece for his opinions about race and class. Some critics argue that Harris created a wistful portrait of a time gone by, a nostalgia for pre-Civil War years when all the elements of the world seemed to be in their correct order and place. From this point-of-view, Uncle Remus serves as an exemplar for "the devoted slave, happy if the scene was laid in days of slavery, the guardian of his white folks if the grimmer post-war South was the period of the story" (Tourgée 409). [1] In contrast to the clichéd subservient lackey, the other portrait of African-Americans in both society and American fiction was one of "the confused freedman who usually was rescued from semi-ludicrous predicaments by the white people to whom he once had belonged" (Tourgée 409). The freedman was also commonly associated with the dangerous and predatory minstrel black man, an even more negative stereotype. It seemed that all black men were either the "villain or saint" as Theodore Gross states in his article, "The Negro in the Literature of Reconstruction" (6). As William Brundage notes in his book, *Lynching in the New South: Georgia and Virginia, 1880-1930*, while "Americans elsewhere turned to judging self-worth according to notions of dignity and decorum, southerners steadfastly retained a code of honor. . . . The obverse side of white honor was the pervasive racist stereotypes of blacks as degraded and dishonorable" (5). In *Uncle Remus: His Songs and His Sayings*, Harris creates a more humane portrayal of an African-

[1] Quoted from Tourgée from Gross. Gross, "The Negro in the Literature of Reconstruction" p 6. Tourgée, "The South as a Field for Fiction." *The Forum*, VI (December 1888): 409.

American, one that had been largely missing in both U.S. literature and society. Some critics protest that Uncle Remus is not as realistic as they would like, and that both the tales and the characters fall into stereotypes. While there is evidence to support this view, I believe that Harris's works are best read not through the lens of Southern nostalgia or racism, but as early texts in the corpus of lynching literature that sought to argue against the rise of mob violence in the New South.

In addition to Uncle Remus, a discussion about race and class in his works must treat the narrative text, the tales, the illustrations, and include an examination of the social environment in which Harris was writing. Previous scholarship has touched on all of these components, but what has not been fully exposed is the representation of violence in Harris's tales, specifically the depiction of mob violence and lynching. While there are conflicting elements in Harris's work, one can make a compelling case for his realistic depiction of the Jim Crow South. Studying Harris's treatment of violence reveals the influence of his contemporary culture. In addition to his contribution to American fiction and culture by his preservation of American Folklore, as well as providing one of the more authentic depictions of an African-American character to its date, Harris should also be credited for being one of the germinal figures in exposing lynching in American fiction.

Background on Lynching in America

The subject of lynching in American history and literature is a controversial topic that still resonates today. Even though the United States elected Barack Obama as its first black President in 2008, just a decade earlier three white men lynched forty-nine year old James Byrd in Jasper, Texas: "They beat him senseless, chained him to the rear bumper and dragged him to his death, severing his head and an arm in the process" ("Race, Memory, and Justice" 14). Even

as I write, the FBI in Walton County, Georgia, are still trying to solve the last mass lynching in the United States, which took place less than fifty miles from Harris's home town of Eatonton, Georgia.[2] These cruel acts date back centuries, and the first use recorded by the *Oxford English Dictionary* of the word *lynch* appears in 1836 with Davy Crockett's *Exploits & Adventures in Texas* ("Lynch" O.E.D.) As William Brundage states, before "the Civil War, whites, not blacks, were the preferred victims of mobs" (5). Lynching outside of the American West and in relation to the treatment of African Americans began after the Civil War. Prior to 1865, African American slaves were considered "property," and while there were brutal punishments meted out upon them, they were usually not killed, if only for monetary reasons. Killing a slave would be losing valuable property, and in most cases a slave would be sold if their owner was not satisfied with him or her.

The time after the Civil War, the Reconstruction Era, was a very complex period, with a strong Northern presence dictating the rules of Southern livelihood. However, the post-Reconstruction South could be a brutal and violent place. Unsatisfied with a government that many felt was cold and removed, bitter about a lost war, and angered by the presence and then sudden absence of a system of law and order during Reconstruction, the South was left with little else to turn to for guidance other than its traditions and codes of honor. As William Brundage notes, the "abandonment of federal intervention in southern affairs and the withering of the Republican party's commitment to protect black rights during the 1870s go far to explain the diminishing protection against extralegal violence that blacks received in the New South" (7). Brundage goes on to state that the "central peculiarity of southern culture, the persistence of the notion of honor long after it had withered elsewhere in the nation, created a climate particularly

[2] For a complete description of this account, please see Laura Wexler's *Fire in a Canebrake: The Last Mass Lynching in America*, 2003.

prone to ritualized affirmations of traditional values. Lynchings, in one fell swoop, confirmed inherited, inflexible attitudes toward blacks, women, and patriarchal rule" (11). In fact, all too often there was no "honor" in the manner by which people justified their actions, and a structured system of regulation was replaced by unstable notions of proper etiquette and social/class customs. During this time in history, one could not find any consistency regarding what was "right" or "wrong" in the South, and what was permitted in one town or state could easily be punished in another. Even the justifications for certain punishments as a consequence of a particular crime varied, and the same offense committed in one town would be punished by a whipping or jail time while the same offense in another place would be punished by brutal, painful, and often humiliating acts of lynching.

William Brundage explains: "Between 1880 and 1894, mobs in Georgia claimed the lives of one hundred and eleven people. The annual toll of mob violence rose from two lynchings in 1882 to fifteen at the end of the period, leaving virtually no region of the state unscarred. It was during the early 1890s that mob lawlessness peaked outside of the heartland of lynching in Southern Georgia and the Cotton Belt" (192). However, the problem of lynching and unjust law did not end at the turn of the twentieth century. The extreme violence that seemed to peak in the 1890s would continue, and not even begin to decline until after the 1930s, resonated through the 1960s and 1970s, and as mentioned previously, still surfaced in the 1990s. In their book, *A Festival of Violence: An Analysis of Southern Lynchings 1882-1930,* Stewart Tolnay and E.M. Beck analyze Southern lynchings that occurred at the turn of the twentieth century. In their preface, they state:

> Through several years of research we have identified 2,805 victims of lynch mobs killed between 1882 and 1930 in ten southern states. Although mobs murdered

> almost 300 white men and women, the vast majority—almost 2,500—of lynch victims were African-American. Of these black victims, 94 percent died at the hand of white lynch mobs. The scale of this carnage means that, on the average, a black man, woman, or child was murdered at least once a week, every week between 1882 and 1930 by a hate-driven white mob. (ix)

Tolnay and Beck's research is sound, and they provide detailed analysis of lynching acts that occurred between 1882 and 1930. While they state that the lynching of African Americans did not begin in 1882, they acknowledge that there is no reliable data prior to this date: "We have no systematic information on lynchings for the five-year period between 1877-1881, or for the Reconstruction period from 1865-1877, even though there were certainly black lynchings before 1882, especially during the early period of Reconstruction as southern whites resisted the increasing voice of blacks in society and politics" (53 Note 34).[3] It is evident that lynching was occurring before 1880, even though there are no reliable national statistics for this period to date.[4]

Lynching in American Fiction

While both recorded and unreported lynching acts repeatedly occurred after 1865, there are very few instances of American works of fiction that depict lynching until the 1890s. While it is not necessarily accurate to declare that the themes of American fiction fully parallel their

[3] Tolnay and Beck provide an Appendix for further explication of their reasoning and justification for limiting their study to the limited dates. They gathered their information about lynching from sources such as the NAACP, the Chicago *Tribune*, and the Department of Records and Archives at Tuskegee University. The NAACP published *Thirty Years of Lynching in the United States, 1889-1918*, which includes a list of all known victims of lynching from 1889 through 1918. Tolnay and Beck gathered their lynching statistics for the dates from 1882-1918 (some statistics overlapping) from the Chicago *Tribune*, that published an annual inventory of lynch victims in one of the first issues of the paper each year. Finally, the information from Tuskegee University, in the majority, came from their publication, *Amid the Gathering Magnitude: The Story of Lynching in America. A Classified Listing.* All three of these major resources were collected, cross-referenced and then either confirmed or denied by checks in contemporary newspaper sources.

[4] The *Historical Statistics of the United States* database also begins its survey in 1882.

society and culture, it is surely *one* important factor. Between 1865 and 1880, when Harris's *His Songs and His Sayings* was first published, there are very few American fiction texts that approach the subject of lynching: J. T. Trowbridge's *Cudjo's Cave* (1864); Frances Harper's "Minnie's Sacrifice" (1869); Mark Twain's "Only a Nigger" (*Buffalo Express* piece, 1869), and *Roughing It* (1872); Edward Eggleston's *The Circuit Rider: A Tale of the Heroic Age* (1874); Bret Harte/Mark Twain: *Ah Sin* (1877); and Albion Winegar Tourgée's *A Fool's Errand By One of the Fools* (1879). These few texts are representative of the coverage of mob violence and lynching in American Fiction prior to the late 1880s. **(see Appendix A at the end of this document for further detail.)**

Furthermore, it would be almost a decade after *Uncle Remus: His Songs and His Sayings* was published in 1880 that another significant work of fiction would address lynching. As actual occurrences of lynching in America reached their peak in the 1890s, the most well-known works discussing this topic also began appearing. Anne Rice begins her study *Witnessing Lynching: American Writers Respond* in 1899. She includes works such as Charles Chestnutt's "The Sheriff's Children" (1889), Frederick Douglass's "Lynch Law in the South" (1892), Frances Ellen Watkins Harper's "An Appeal to My Countrymen" (1896), Ida B. Wells-Barnett's *Mob Rule in New Orleans* (1900), and Pauline Elizabeth Hopkins's *Contending Forces* (1900). Rice claims that by this time "it would have been hard to find anyone in America who was not well aware of lynching. Lynchers did not try to hide their actions or cover their faces. They took out ads in newspapers and circulated flyers announcing upcoming murders. Special excursion trains were chartered to allow thousands of spectators, including reporters from national papers, to attend events" (Rice 5). Rice is correct that it would be hard to find anyone in American who was not well aware of lynching during the 1890s, but it also would have been just as hard to find

someone ignorant of mob violence in the 1870s. However, mob violence and lynching would have been less of an issue of public discussion and debate in the 1870s compared to the 1890s. Harris's publication in 1880 addresses these issues much earlier than he is accredited, and this new knowledge suggests that the study of lynching of African Americans in American fiction should begin much earlier. While Harris is one of the few to address these horrors in his fiction, there was no shortage of printed information about lynching in America.

Lynching in Newspapers

Working at a national newspaper, the Atlanta *Constitution*, which was probably the largest Southern newspaper at the time, Harris would have been exposed to these horrendous reports from his colleagues and articles in the newspaper. [5] Between January 1, 1882 and July 3, 1908, 24,600 results appear by searching *lynch** throughout the *Constitution*. [6] Even by limiting a search to finding references to *lynch** in the citation and abstract of the articles (providing results that are in the majority about lynching), 6,713 results appear.

However, there are numerous references to lynching in the Atlanta *Constitution* prior to 1882, even though national statistics do not reflect these reports. A search of lynching in the Atlanta *Constitution* between the dates of 1865-1880 produces 3,228 results, and 224 specifically about lynching in the citation and abstract.[7] Prior to the publication of *His Songs and His Sayings*, from 1876-1880 while Harris worked at the newspaper, there are 1,433 results for a general search of *lynch**, and 126 results specific to lynching. The following excerpt from the front page of the October 16, 1878 issue of the *Constitution* is one of hundreds of similar articles

[5] Because of the many name changes of the *Atlanta Journal and Constitution,* including *The Daily Constitution* and *The Atlanta Constitution* while Harris worked there, the newspaper is referred to at the Atlanta *Constitution* in this paper.

[6] Date of Harris's death to the beginning of the "lynching era."
The * is a form of truncation used in electronic searching. Truncation allows you to search the "root" form of a word with all its different endings. Therefore, with a truncated search of lynch*, results will be retrieved for lynch, lynches, lynchings, lynched, etc.

[7] Date after the Civil War to the publication of *Uncle Remus: His Songs and His Sayings*.

printed by the newspaper that Harris would have seen. The article begins by stating that several black prisoners were inside of a jail in Cincinnati as a mob quickly formed around them at night:

> At ten o'clock at night a hundred masked men marched into the jail, overpowered the guards and were soon inside. Here they found another door between them and the four victims, while old Harris lay wounded in the hall beneath them. The work of breaking open the cell went on, but in the meantime Harris' groans attracted attention. Without a word he was seized, a hand clutched around his throat to stiffly any scream and a knife. PLUNGED INTO HIS HEART. In five minutes his body was cut in pieces like a hog, head, arms, legs all separated, and the sickening mass of human flesh flung into the privy. In a few minutes more the lock gave way, and the other four victims were soon swinging from the trees in the courthouse yard. Here they swung, and the procession moved on, leaving the bodies swinging in the air. (1)

This example is just one of hundreds that Harris could have been exposed to while living and working in Atlanta. It is clear that Harris was submerged in a time plagued by horrible acts of lynching, and that his environment directly affected his writing. As Richard Gray notes about Southern writers in his book *Writing the South: Ideas of an American Region*, "[g]enerations of Southerners have, I believe, been engaged not so much in writing about the South as in writing the South; they have, whether they have known it or not (and as a matter of fact, many have known it) been busy reimagining and remaking their place in the act of seeing and describing it" (xii). In *Uncle Remus: His Songs and His Sayings*, Harris was writing "his" South. In addition to the actual day-to-day aspects of racial prejudice that Harris would have witnessed in person while living in Atlanta, he would have been exposed constantly, if not daily, to accounts and

reports of lynching acts while working at the Atlanta *Constitution.* Given that there is little representation in national statistics or works of fiction prior to 1880 of a problem that was rampant in the United States, Harris is one of the initial figures of American fiction to expose the horrible acts of lynching to the public. From this point-of-view, it is also easy to see the parallels between the actions in these stories and the justice, or injustice, which occurred during the 1880s in Georgia and the South. The depiction of brutal acts of mob violence and lynching as seen in these stories resonate with the actual occurrences that were all too common in Southern states at this time.

The background information provided in this section will provide a foundation for the rest of this thesis. I will first address Harris's childhood and discuss how his adolescent experiences would later lead to his position at the Atlanta *Constitution* and greatly influence his writings. Next, I will study the presence and depiction of mob violence and lynching in his first published collection of stories, *Uncle Remus: His Songs and His Sayings*, both in the written text and illustrations. Finally, I will examine one of Harris's last projects, the *Uncle Remus's Magazine*, to see how these patterns developed. From this point-of-view, I will show how the issues Harris so openly addressed in the last years of his life formed at the beginning of his writing career. Moreover, the time that Harris first began to publish these complex texts was still a decade before his contemporaries would begin to address the behaviors occurring in the South in fiction. While Harris's content is not as explicit as those texts published in the 1890s or later, the context he was writing in would suggest that his works still address an issue that had not been given a proper voice, and possibly helped led the way for his contemporaries to follow.

Chapter 2: Double Consciousness and Duality

The subject of lynching was a very controversial topic in American between 1865 and 1880, even though these violent acts were occurring at a rampant rate. The treatment of such a topic in American fiction could exacerbate fresh wounds from the War and would demand a delicate hand, which Harris seems to have understood. Not only did Harris grow up and live within one of the most violent states during the lynching era, Georgia, but he also suffered humiliation and disregard—though never the violence of lynching—from white society because of the circumstances surrounding his childhood. The treatment Harris and his mother received early in his life led to Harris developing a type of double consciousness (as W.E.B. Du Bois would later call this) as he grew up. This led to him having an uncertain identity that would inspire the duality in his texts. This chapter will explore the type of double consciousness that Harris may have felt, the reasons behind it, and how this experience would affect his fiction. This section will also discuss how this complexity and multiplicity is revealed through the origins of the *Uncle Remus* tales, several of his characters, specifically Uncle Remus and Brer Rabbit, and Harris's personal life. The combination of these factors led to Harris exploring the topic of mob violence in an extremely provocative manner.

Biographical Background: The "Other Fellow"

Most scholars agree that Harris's divide within himself began early, and that his humble social stature throughout his childhood and adolescence allowed him to empathize with African Americans who were of a similar lowly stature. Shortly after his birth, Harris was abandoned by

his father, and his mother raised him by herself, supporting them by opening a seamstress shop. Both Harris and his mother, Mary Harris, were shunned by upper white society for their nontraditional family, and were cast off from Mary's family (Bickley 15-16). In his biography of Harris, Bickley claims that "the circumstances surrounding Joel Chandler Harris's birth had profound effects on both his personality and his art." (15). Bickley notes how modest Harris was as a child, that he had a slight speech impediment, and how he "stubbornly clung to an old-fashioned style of dress and insisted on wearing a hat indoors when he worked" (15). It is not surprising that Harris often provides the perspective from those, like himself, who have been rejected by white society. As Bickley notes about Harris, "an inveterate practical joker himself and an avid supporter of the underdog, Harris also identified instinctively with the dazzling improvisational style of his rabbit-hero" (64). While Bickley's theory of the "rabbit-hero" is over simplistic, his suggestion of Harris's identification with an "underdog" character is accurate. In *The Life and Letters of Joel Chandler Harris*, Julia Harris (Harris's daughter-in-law) notes that "Joel was an awkward country-bred boy of about nineteen, painfully conscious of his social deficiencies, handicapped by his tendency to stutter, [and often . . .] the butt of many rough jokes" (69). Joel Chandler Harris once wrote to a friend at nineteen: "My history is a peculiarly sad and unfortunate one . . . I have been without sympathy a good portion of my life" (Julia Harris 78, 81). It is not difficult to comprehend how Harris could have empathized with African Americans.

In addition to the outcast feeling that both Harris and African Americans felt, Harris had another connection, a more positive one, with African Americans. When Harris was an adolescent, he spent a great deal of time on a farm between Eatonton and Milledgeville working for Joesph Addison Turner, who had started a weekly newspaper, the *Countryman*. When

Harris's work was completed, he would often be found sitting in the slave quarters listening to old slave stories and songs: "The slave quarters to the west of the house drew Joe night after night for long chimney-corner visits with Uncle George Terrell, Old Harbert, and Aunt Crissy, the Turner slaves who were the prototypes for Uncle Remus, and Aunt Tempy, and other figures" (Bickley 19). [8] This time not only provided an inspiration for his fiction, but also a sense of camaraderie that he probably had rarely felt before. Bickley notes that "Harris spent hundreds of hours in the 'quarters' during his years at Turnwold [plantation]. . . . Joel felt less self-conscious around the patient and indulgent older slaves; and as Jay B. Hubbell suggests, his own humble background probably gave him insight into the mind of the black field hand" (23). The influence of Harris's early experiences working on the *Countryman* newspaper and living on the plantation cannot be overstated, and even once Harris secured a job writing for the Atlanta *Constitution*, remnants from his past, both good and bad, would surface throughout Harris's lifetime.

Much later in his life, Harris's popularity grew to a national scale, but he remained shy and introverted. He did not like reading his works aloud (perhaps because of his speech impediment as a child) and was always embarrassed about his red hair, conveniently covered by his hats. As Bickley suggests about Harris as a school boy, "it was evident that Joe was always going to be self-conscious in large groups of his peers or in structured social situations. Not surprisingly, young Harris looked outside the classroom for ways to assert himself, and he is remembered by his companions as a great prankster and mischief maker" (17). It is not difficult to see how Harris's personal life as a "trickster" influenced his fiction; however, Harris still remained shy and self-conscious even into his adult life. It does not take a psychological expert to see a type of defense mechanism at work: Harris and his mother were outcasts from upper

[8] Joe was Harris's nickname as a child.

white society when he was a young boy, and later in life he would "act out" before anyone could act against or judge him first. Harris seemed to always have a struggle with his own identity and fame.

Harris's popularity blossomed from a local newspaper writer for the Atlanta *Constitution* to a national author and celebrity soon after the publication of *Uncle Remus: His Songs and His Sayings* in 1880. The distinction between Harris and Uncle Remus began to fade for many readers, and even Harris admitted to having another "self." In addition, Both R. Bruce Bickley Jr. and Wayne Mixon, among others, have noted Harris's struggle with the "other fellow." Additionally, Bickley also notes the struggle that Harris seemed to have felt dealing with his "journalistic" self versus his "literary" self. According to Bickley, when Harris retired from working at the *Constitution* on September 5, 1900, "he had at last earned the right to be the 'other fellow' whenever he chose" (Bickley 54). Bickley also suggests that as Harris "deemphasized his journalistic self, he felt happier and found a more authentic style of life and work. His youthful impulse to become an accomplished creative writer was apparently the healthiest one, psychologically, all along" (Bickley 53). Wayne Mixon also remarks on Harris's complex nature: "Like Remus, Harris was not always what he seemed to be. Beset by emotional insecurity and constrained by his public responsibilities as the editor of a major newspaper, he made what he called the 'other fellow' write the fiction" (Mixon 474). Regardless of whether one believes Harris was indeed happier as a fiction writer than as a journalist, it is true that even Harris noted the divide within himself:

> As for myself—though you could hardly call me a real, sure enough author—I have anything but the vaguest ideas of what I am going to write' but when I take my pen in my hand, the rust clears away and the "other fellow" takes

> charge. *You know all of us have two entities, or personalities*. . . . Now, I'll admit that I write the editorials for the paper. The "other fellow" has nothing to do with them, and, so far as I am able to get his views on the subject, he regards them with scorn and contempt; though there are rare occasions when he helps me out on a Sunday editorial. He is a creature hard to understand, but, so far as I can understand him, he's a very sour, surly fellow until I give him an opportunity to guide my pen in subjects congenial to him; whereas, I am, as you know, jolly, good-natured, and entirely harmless.
>
> Now, my "other fellow," I am convinced, would do some damage if I didn't give him an opportunity to work off his energy in the way he delights. I say to him, "Now, here's an editor who says he will pay well for a short story. He wants it at once." Then I forget all about the matter, and go on writing editorials and taking Celery Compound and presently my "other fellow" says sourly: "What about that story?" Then when night comes, I take up my pen, surrendering unconditionally to my "other fellow," and out comes the story, and if it is a good story I am as much surprised as the people who read it. (*emphasis mine*) (Julia Collier Harris, *Life and Letters* 384-86)

This alter-ego that Harris possessed would heavily influence his writing, particularly *Uncle Remus: His Songs and His Sayings*. Later, when Harris was editor of *Uncle Remus Magazine,* he wrote under at least four personas. Harris's battle within himself contributed to the complexity and multiplicity in his fiction, and this type of double consciousness that was projected upon him is particularly evident in his creation of the characters of Uncle Remus and Brer Rabbit, his presentation of mob violence, and the creation of the tales themselves. However, the idea of

double consciousness was not a fictional concept, as it was an all too familiar feeling for many African Americans.

W.E.B. Du Bois and Joel Chandler Harris

The theme of the "other fellow" resonates with a contemporary of Harris who actively fought against the unjust treatment of African Americans. W.E.B. Du Bois's theory of the "double consciousness" of African Americans describes the psychological divide within blacks. According to Du Bois, African Americans' perceptions of themselves could not only be formed by their own point-of-view. White stereotypes and culture influenced how African Americans should or should not act, and they were often excluded from mainstream society. Blacks always faced an internal conflict of being Black and American simultaneously. In *The Souls of Black Folk*, Du Bois argues that the African American "ever feels this two-ness—an American, a Negro: two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings, two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder" (Du Bois 3). While Harris's inner struggle between fiction author and journalist, or poor country boy and renowned writer are not comparable in severity, the *idea* of the strife is analogous. Harris's own uncertainty of his identity would influence a complexity and duality that extends throughout many aspects of his fiction. Harris does not present extremely violent content in a political pamphlet or propaganda piece, but in a collection of folktales. Furthermore, the origins of the tales themselves, the description of Uncle Remus and Brer Rabbit, and the presence of mob violence are all presented in a multifaceted manner attesting to the complexity of Harris's fiction, as well as his writing talent.

Harris and his tales became so famous that Du Bois decided to meet Harris in person. In April of 1899, Du Bois headed toward downtown Atlanta to the office of the Atlanta

Constitution with two letters in hand. The first letter was for the editor of the newspaper in response to the recent controversial murder of a white man named Alfred Cranford by a black farm laborer named Sam Hose (Bernstein 45).[9] The second was an introduction letter for Joel Chandler Harris. However, Du Bois never delivered either letter because as he was walking downtown, he was told that Hose had already been lynched and that his knuckles were on display in the window of a grocery store further down the street. In his *The Autobiography of W.E.B. Du Bois*, he reflects upon this incident and how shocked he was as a result. "I turned back to the university," writes Du Bois. "I began to turn aside from my work. I did not meet Joel Chandler Harris nor the editor of the *Constitution*" (222).[10] The act of lynching on this fateful day kept these two men apart, and unfortunately, Du Bois and Harris never met.

Although these two men sometimes had opposing ideas about how to solve "the Negro problem," and Du Bois criticized some of Harris's methods (such as Harris's more separatist opinions or his ideas about "educating" African Americans), they had some of the same goals in mind. Both publicly addressed the racial injustices of the South, and both suggested ways of improvement and change. Both men, growing up and as adults, questioned their identity and society's versions of right and wrong, acceptable and unacceptable behavior, and vindicated and

[9] Patricia Bernstein provides detailed analysis of the lynching of Sam Hose in *The First Waco Horror: The Lynching of Jesse Washington and the Rise of the NAACP*. There are several versions, which vary drastically. Several wealthy African Americans hired a Chicago detective named Louis Le Vin to find out what really happened. His report was published in the *Richmond Planet*, and also reprinted in a pamphlet by Ida B. Wells-Barnett (a contemporary of Harris) titled *Lynch Law in Georgia*. Much more exaggerated and erroneous reports were printed in local white newspapers, including the Atlanta *Constitution*. Bernstein claims that Du Bois was concerned with the consistency of the facts being reported by the Atlanta *Constitution*, which led him to write the subsequent letter to the editor that was never delivered.

[10] In his autobiography, Du Bois states that not only did this event disturb him, but was a pivotal moment in his life: "Two considerations thereafter broke in upon my work and eventually disrupted it: first, one could not be a calm, cool, and detached scientist while Negroes were lynched, murdered and starved; and secondly, there was no such definite demand for scientific work of the sort that I was doing, as I had confidently assumed would be easily forthcoming" (222). It is apparently after this moment that Du Bois began his dedication to the betterment of African Americans in earnest.

un-vindicated acts of injustice. Society's dance around the lines drawn between its social norms is mirrored in Harris's creation of his complex text and characters in his fiction.

Origins of the *Uncle Remus* Tales

All of the duality surrounding Harris is clearly reflected in his fiction, beginning with the origin of the tales themselves. In the preface to *His Songs and His Sayings,* Harris himself relays the debates concerning the origins of his tales. Harris notes that J. W. Powell suggests the stories originate from North American Indians, while Herbert H. Smith proposes the tales derive from South American Indians. Then Harris explains that there are similar stories coming from Egyptian culture as well (Harris *RCLGA*). The primary "origin" of the tales is still debated today. However, as Harris clearly states in his preface, "[o]ne thing is certain. The animal stories told by the negroes in our Southern States and in Brazil were brought by them from Africa. Whether they originated there, or with the Arabs, or Egyptians, or with yet more ancient nations, must still be an open question" (Harris *RCLGA*). While some critics and readers believe that the unclear heritage of the Uncle Remus tales hinders their authenticity and importance to American culture, this assessment disregards the value of the tales' universal appeal and their ability to reach across cultural barriers. In fact, the multiplicity of the tales' origins directly parallels America's diversity and the varied cultures that comprise its own citizens. One of the United States' mantras is that it is a "melting pot"; therefore, the legitimacy of the Uncle Remus tales as a representation of both Southern and American culture is completely apropos. In addition to the popularity in America of the first edition, *Uncle Remus: His Songs and His Sayings*, as well as the other eight collections, "*Uncle Remus* has become one of the world's most widely translated literary works, now available in over twenty foreign-language editions" (Bickley 145). These stories reach a wide audience, and their immense popularity worldwide suggests that those who

disregard the stories as simply “children’s literature,” humorous folktales, and/or providing only a stereotypical white perspective of the American South, overlook a great component of what makes these works significant and priceless.

The Character of Uncle Remus

The multiplicity and duality is continued with the character of Uncle Remus. As Robert Cochran notes, Uncle Remus “is a remarkably complex character. . . .his smiling surfaces and apparent orthodoxy may have misled nineteenth-century readers, leading to their complacency, just as the author intended. The same smiles then misled twentieth-century readers, leading to their displeasure, though Harris of course could not have anticipated this” (23). In Harris’s first edition of these tales, *Uncle Remus: His Songs and His Sayings*, the complex character begins to take shape in the mind of the reader, with help from the illustrations and the narrative descriptions. Harris’s “A Story of the War” presents a vivid picture of the former slave:

> Turning, Miss Theodosia saw at her side a tall, gray-haired negro. Elaborating the incident afterward to her friends, she was pleased to say that the appearance of the old man was somewhat picturesque. He stood towering above her, his hat in one hand, a carriage-whip in the other, and an expectant smile lighting up his rugged face. She remembered a name her brother had often used in his letters, and, with a woman’s tact, she held out her hand, and said:
>
> “Is this Uncle Remus?” (Harris *RCLGA*)

The above passage is a respectful portrayal of a kind old black man. Contrary to many historical accounts of the time, Miss Theodosia, a young white woman, does not appear to be frightened or affronted by the presence of Uncle Remus.

However, this description does play into the stereotypical role of the "contented darkey," a trope all too familiar in American culture. Furthermore, many people view "A Story of the War," as well as other stories by Harris as supporting Harris's nostalgia of the past. Some critics, such as Robert Bone in his article, "The Oral Tradition," goes so far as to suggest that "Uncle Remus, the creation of Joel Chandler Harris, is one of many masks employed by the Plantation School to justify the restoration of white supremacy," and that Uncle Remus "gave form to the white man's fantasy of being loved by his slaves" (Bone 139,137). However, there was a fine line drawn between the stereotype of an African American male as a subservient slave versus a menacing threat. As Sterling Brown states in his book, *The Negro in American Fiction,* "the Negro was established as contented slave, entertaining child a docile ward, until misled by 'radical' agitators, when he became a dangerous beast" (50). Brown's assertion is stemming from a social dogma that caused much of the racial angst in the South between the 1880s-1940s: "White women, regardless of class, were enshrined on the pedestal of ladyhood and became the symbol and repository of white racial purity. The defense of a white feminine virtue, especially against sexual aggression by black men, was at the heart of southern honor" (Brundage 5). When Harris first describes the meeting of Miss Theodosia and Uncle Remus, descriptions of "a tall, gray-haired negro . . . towering above her, his hat in one hand, a carriage-whip in the other"—which could even be used violently—would evoke the impression of a "sexual predator" (Harris *RCGLA*).

Yet, the comment that Miss Theodosia makes revealing that she knew of Uncle Remus before meeting him suggests an alternative to the stereotypical "dangerous darkey" of a Southern Negro. Uncle Remus was significant enough to the Huntingdon family to be included in personal letters exchanged among family members. Furthermore, Miss Theodosia seems

perfectly at ease after meeting Uncle Remus compared to the anxious state that the reader first finds her in: “The bells of several locomotives were ringing, a number of trains were moving in and out, and the porters and baggage-men were screaming and bawling to such an extent that for several moments Miss Huntingdon was considerably confused; so much so that she paused in the hope that her brother would suddenly appear and rescue her from the smoke, and dust, and din” (Harris *RCLGA*). However, it is not her brother who rescues her from her harried state, but the comforting Uncle Remus. He is trusted to escort “Mars John’s” sister alone through the busy streets of Atlanta to his home in the country, not just as a servant but as an equal replacement. In this one passage, Harris complicates conventional notions of the interactions and relationships between white women and black men, and perhaps instead of reading this as merely perpetuating a black stereotype, one could also approach it as a gentle lesson to white readers to be respectful.

Harris continues this pattern as one reads the narrator’s observations of Miss Theodosia and Uncle Remus. As Uncle Remus is driving the carriage through the busy streets of Atlanta, Miss Theodosia “took advantage of the opportunity to study the old negro’s face closely, her natural curiosity considerably sharpened by a knowledge of the fact that Uncle Remus had played an important part in her brother’s history” (Harris *RCLGA*). Uncle Remus’s importance to the family cannot be overstated. Not only did Uncle Remus play an important part of Master John’s history, but the entire family. During the war Uncle Remus was left to defend the plantation, and as Robert Cochran notes,

> the Yankee soldier confronted by the interracial domestic tableau on the Abercrombie plantation fails, of course, prefiguring generations of readers both Northern and Southern, to understand the scene before his eyes. He stresses Remus’s age, calling him ‘ole man,’ dismisses his own vision of blood on

> Remus's axe with a laugh, and soon leaves after failing to locate the livestock and food Remus has carefully hidden. Remus, once again, is triumphant, this time as master of the plantation. (32)

Cochran's assessment of Uncle Remus being "master of the plantation" cannot be overstated. Remus acts as "master" during the war, and protects the family as his own. Furthermore, Uncle Remus continues this role throughout the tales, as a white male figure is rarely present for the little boy that he tells his stories to.

Not only did Uncle Remus serve as a threat against "Yankee predators," in "A Story of the War" it is revealed that Uncle Remus shot a Union soldier in order to protect the Huntingdon family. When questioned as to whether he understood that he shot the Union soldier, who was fighting for his freedom, Uncle Remus replies "Co'se, I know all about dat, ... en it sorter made cole chills run up my back; but w'en I see dat man take aim, en Mars Jeems gwine home ter Ole Miss en Miss Sally, I des disremembered all 'bout freedom" (Harris *RCLGA*). Uncle Remus protects the family as if they were his own.

Yet, an even more interesting aspect of this section is when Uncle Remus claims to be responsible for the alliance between Miss Sally and the Yankee soldier that he shot. After shooting the soldier, Uncle Remus and Miss Sally nurse the Yankee back to health, until Uncle Remus says that Miss Sally kept on nursing him herself. Furthermore, it was Uncle Remus, not Miss Sally's white brother, who gave her up to be married: " 'I gin 'im dem,' said Uncle Remus, pointing to Mrs. Huntingdon, 'en I gin im' deze'—holding up his own brawny arms" (Harris *RCLGA*). Uncle Remus not only provided a wife for the Union solider, but also agreed to help the now handicapped man with physical labor. It is Uncle Remus who not only serves as a surrogate father for Miss Sally, but also condones the "mixing" of a Southern woman and a

Northern man. Uncle Remus clearly states that "all Ole Miss's chilluns call me daddy" and it is clear that Uncle Remus serves as both master and father to the family (Harris *RCLGA*).

One has to acknowledge, though, that Uncle Remus's devotion to his former master's family does provide fodder for the assertion that Uncle Remus's character aids in nostalgia for slavery. He is protecting his owners from the forces sent to free him. Furthermore, Uncle Remus is still often viewed as a "contented servant," even though there are several times in the text, such as the instance described above, when Harris complicates this notion and presents an African-American as an *individual person* with his own thoughts, and not as an attachment to a Southern family. Uncle Remus's thoughts on life are revealed in the frame narrative of the story, and they comment on the unclear lines between right and wrong and the injustices of life: "In dis worl', lots er folks is gotter suffer fer udder folks sins. Look like hit's mighty onwrong; but hit's des dat way" (57). Uncle Remus's outlook on life is neither contented nor bitter but fully aware of its realities.

Another realistic aspect of Uncle Remus is his concern for his own well being instead of just the betterment of the white family. He tries to negotiate a trade of stories for treats from the house, not as a trickster, but as a means of fair trade. Uncle Remus also refuses to be the producer of tales at the little boy's whim, and he often scolds the little boy when he behaves badly, just as a father would. In "Mr. Fox is Again Victimized," Uncle Remus refuses to tell the little boy the conclusion to "Mr. Rabbit Grossly Deceives Mr. Fox" because of his recent unacceptable behavior:

> "I ain't tellin' no tales ter bad chilluns," said Uncle Remus curtly.
>
> "But, Uncle Remus, I ain't bad," said the little boy plaintively.

> "Who dat chunkin' dem chickens dis mawnin'? Who dat knockin' out fokes's eyes wid dat Yallerbammer sling des 'fo' dinner? Who dat sickin' dat pinter puppy atter my pig? Who dat scatterin' my ingun sets? Who dat flingin' rocks on top er my house, w'ich a little mo' en one un em would er drap spang on my head?"
>
> "Well, now, Uncle Remus, I didn't go to do it. I won't do so any more. Please, Uncle Remus, if you will tell me, I'll run to the house and bring you some tea-cakes."
>
> "Seein' um's better'n hear'in' tell un um," replied the old man, the severity of his countenance relaxing somewhat; but the little boy darted out, and in a few minutes came running back with his pockets full and his hands full. (Harris *RCLGA*)

While at first Uncle Remus's refusal to tell the boy stories seems to stem from his concern about the boy's behavior, toward the end of the conversation one might wonder if his rationale was completely selfless. Even though it is the little boy who first offers to "pay off" Uncle Remus with tea cakes for his mischievous deeds, Uncle Remus accepts the boy's offer. Furthermore, the boy never apologizes for his supposed crimes; he only states that he did not "go" to do them and will not do so anymore.

If the relationship between Uncle Remus and the Huntingdon family is as congenial as "A Story of the War" suggests, then Uncle Remus could just ask for tea cakes. Also, Uncle Remus later remarks that the boy's mother will surely note the missing tea cakes but hopefully will determine that their absence is due to the thievery of rats. This complicated scene reveals the complexity of the relationship between Uncle Remus and the boy. From one perspective,

Uncle Remus is trying to instill core values in the young man. On the other hand, condoning an act of thievery and keeping that act "between the two of them" might undermine the moral guidance that Uncle Remus seems to be trying to instill in the boy. Still yet another perspective is that through their "mischievousness," a bond will be established that is stronger than the racial divides of black and white. The complex relationship between the young boy and Uncle Remus reveals their humanity: they are two people who have a resilient bond despite differences of age, color, and class.

Most of the scenes involving Uncle Remus and the young boy reveal a positive and healthy influence. Furthermore, the complexity of Uncle Remus's character does not suggest that he is either the hero or the villain of the frame story, or that he is somehow an example or mold of the perfect black ex-slave or the Minstrel sexually aggressive bitter black man. Instead, despite Harris's strategic use of stereotypes, he is ultimately depicted as one of the more realistic African-American characters presented in American fiction up to the 1880s. As Robert Cochran notes in "Black Father: The Subversive Achievement of Joel Chandler Harris," "Remus asserts his control, his assumption of the paternal role" (25). There are many contradictions and flaws within his character, but those qualities make him all the more real, and provide a unique insight into both life on a plantation and Reconstruction in Georgia and most of the South: "Again and again Harris, the child whose father omitted himself, revenges himself by undermining and omitting the fathers—Mars John, the unnamed husband of Ole Miss, the father of Joe Maxwell. And with the dismissal, the patriarch's authority and hierarchy are likewise undone" (Cochran 25). The unique perspective that Harris provides is not just limited to his portrayal of Uncle Remus, but also his most famous character, Brer Rabbit.

The Character of Brer Rabbit

The duality and complexity of *Uncle Remus: His Songs and His Sayings* continue within the text in the animal stories. The main character of these tales is Brer Rabbit, who at times serves as the hero of the stories, but other times the villain. Throughout the majority of the stories, Brer Rabbit uses his skills as "trickster" to manipulate his way out of almost any situation. Usually, the sticky situations that Brer Rabbit is trying to escape from involve his predators Brer Fox, Brer Wolf, and Brer Bear. Contrasting the true animal world in which the predator is not retaliated against, the smaller "prey" or "victims" in the animal world of the Uncle Remus tales seek revenge over the larger "predators" or "assailants." Many critics have suggested that the seemingly weaker Brer Rabbit, as well as Brer Terrapin, represent the black community while the more dominant animals represent white society. As Bickley notes, Harris "did see in the urbane and resourceful trickster-figure of Brer Rabbit a projection of the Negro's desire to realize power or prowess in a world controlled by a stronger race" (64). Robert Cochran also notes, "when Brer Rabbit outwits and eventually destroys Brer Wolf, Brer Bear, and Brer Fox, his victories are interpreted as supplying at least vicarious pleasure and at most pragmatic advice to black audiences whose position in the world is appreciated as deeply analogous" (21). However, this is just one perspective on how the character of Brer Rabbit functions in the fiction, and limits other possible perceptions.

The first several stories in *Uncle Remus: His Songs and His Sayings* support Brer Rabbit's role as both the victim and hero. In "Uncle Remus Initiates the Little Boy," "The Wonderful Tar-Baby Story," "How Mr. Rabbit Was Too Sharp for Mr. Fox," "Mr. Rabbit Grossly Deceives Mr. Fox," "Mr. Fox Is Again Victimized," and "Mr. Fox is 'Outdone' by Mr.

Buzzard," (six out of the first eight stories) Brer Rabbit humorously plays the "trickster" hero to escape danger while simultaneously tricking the other larger animals. However, in "Miss Cow Falls a Victim to Mr. Rabbit" the heroic colors of the "protagonist" begin to fade in the eyes of both the little boy and the reader.

In "Miss Cow Falls a Victim to Mr. Rabbit," Miss Cow does not seem to be a threat to Brer Rabbit compared to the other cruel acts that Brer Fox, Brer Wolf, and Brer Bear commit towards Brer Rabbit. The only thing that Brer Rabbit has against Miss Cow is that she constantly refuses to share her milk, but the victimization of Miss Cow by Brer Rabbit hardly seems justified. Nevertheless, as Brer Rabbit is happily skipping along the road, he spots Miss Cow and determines that it is about time she gives up some of her milk. Fulfilling his role as "trickster," Brer Rabbit devises a plan to trick Miss Cow so that he can steal her milk. Brer Rabbit asks Miss Cow if she can knock on the trunk of a persimmon tree with her head and horns so that the fruit would fall to the ground. Miss Cow agrees; however, Brer Rabbit is well-aware that the persimmon fruit is not ripe and will not fall. It appears that Miss Cow is not privy to this information, and continues with determination in her attempt to knock down the fruit. Unfortunately for Miss Cow, her horns get jammed into the persimmon tree, and after Brer Rabbit informs her that he cannot assist her in getting out, but will go tell her husband Mr. Bull, he instead proceeds into his plan of stealing her milk:

> [E]n wid dat Brer Rabbit put out fer home, en 'twan't long 'fo here he come wid his ole 'oman en all his chilluns, en de las' wunner de fambly wuz totin' a pail. De big uns had big pails, en de little uns had little pails. En dey all s'roundid ole Miss Cow, dey did, en you hear me, honey, dey milk't 'er dry. De ole uns milk't en de young uns milk't, en den w'en dey done got nuff, Brer Rabbit, he up'n say,

> sezee: I wish you mighty well, Sis Cow. I 'low'd bein's how dat you'd hatter sorter camp out all night dat I'd better come en swaje yo' bag,' seze" (Harris *RCLGA*)

Not only does Brer Rabbit not seek help for Miss Cow as he promises and gathers all his family with pails to pilfer her milk, he also tries to justify his actions by saying that the least he could do was to come and "assuage" her bag and relieve her of her burden. The actions committed by both Brer Rabbit and his family are neither heroic nor commendable. In fact, they reveal a sexual violence that is as disturbing as the mob violence depicted in the other tales.[11] However, this story ends like so many others as Miss Cow finally escapes the tree, and chases Brer Rabbit seeking revenge, but is never compensated: "En wid dat, Miss Cow tuck down de road like de dogs wuz atter 'er, en Brer Rabbit, he des lay down dar in de brier-patch en roll en laff twel his sides hurtid 'im. He bleedzd ter laff. Fox atter 'im, Buzzard atter 'im, en Cow atter 'im, en dey ain't kotch 'im yit" (Harris *RCLGA*). While this first act depicting Brer Rabbit as unheroic may appear light-hearted and humorous to some, his acts of villainy and violence continue throughout the tales and become increasingly brutal. Brer Rabbit, like Uncle Remus, is a complicated character, and reflects the duality of Harris.

While Harris felt a separateness between the "other fellow" and himself, trying to "turn off" his journalist ego when he wrote these folk tales, it seemed almost impossible to separate the two. Like so many other aspects of his writing, especially in *Uncle Remus: His Songs and His Sayings*, there is a duality that is not "either/or" but "both/and." Uncle Remus is neither the confused and sexually-charged freedman nor the contented, submissive servant; Brer Rabbit is

[11] The description of "milking" as a form of sexual violence resonates much later in African American fiction, especially in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*: "After I left you, those boys came in there and took my milk. That's what they came in there for. Held me down and took it" (25). The character Beloved is raped (implied through the text, but never stated explicitly) and her rapists also suck out her milk from her breast, which she feels is a direct link to her motherhood, her most valuable resource.

neither the mischievous hero nor the manipulative villain; and Harris was neither the hardcore journalist nor the passive folklorist. All three constantly possessed a duality that embodied both sides of their personalities and made them all the more complex and interesting.

Chapter 3: Mob Violence and Lynching

Harris's awareness of the problems of injustice and brutality toward African Americans resonates with his repeated depictions of mob violence and lynching in his first collection of published tales, *Uncle Remus: His Songs and His Sayings*. Because a study of Harris's representation of brutality and lynching is crucial to the greater understanding of both his works and Harris himself, such a task deserves particularly careful consideration. It is the purpose of this chapter to trace these patterns of violence from their beginnings, as they appear in Harris's first collection of Uncle Remus tales. This chapter will first highlight a disregarded anti-lynching editorial written by Harris in January 1880,[12] then present the aspects of lynching as it appears in the written texts of *Uncle Remus: His Songs and His Sayings*, and finally examine the illustrations in the text, all published that same year. The most frequent acts are beating, burning, tarring and feathering, drowning, hanging, skinning, infanticide, and one story depicts death by scalding**.** As one begins to re-examine these texts, the portrayal of lynching is paramount.

"The Gallows of 1879"

In addition to the many articles and books written about Joel Chandler Harris on the issue of race and his position on the lawlessness of the South, one pivotal piece of information has been largely overlooked: Harris wrote an anti-lynching editorial in the Atlanta *Constitution* on

[12] The only mention of this editorial I could find is in Harris's daughter-in-law's work: *Joel Chandler Harris: Editor and Essayist,* 102-103. However, only a few lines of the actual editorial are reprinted.

January 4, 1880, ten months before *Uncle Remus: His Songs and His Sayings* was published in November 1880. In addition to the evocation of lynching in his fictional text, this editorial provides hard evidence that Harris opposed the violent injustices that permeated the South. Titled "The Gallows of 1879," Harris begins his editorial by stating the national statistics for those people who were executed legally the past year. Harris reports that from the "hangman's record . . . 101 men were judicially put to death in this country during the year" ("Gallows" 2). He provides a breakdown of the executions state by state, as well as the manner of death. The next section of the editorial, however, discusses the prevalence of mob violence in America in 1879:

> Sad as the record is, [of legal executions] there is still a sadder one to come. Seventy-four men were lynched in this country in the same period of time—in Kentucky, 8; Colorado, 9; California, 6; Louisiana, 5; Texas, 5; Tennessee, 5; Georgia, 4; Mississippi, 4; Dakota, 3; Nebraska, 2; Wyoming, 2; Illinois, 2; New Mexico, 2; West Virginia, 2; Alabama, 2, Iowa, 1; Ohio, 1; Maryland, 1; Indiana, 1; Kansas, 1; South Carolina, 1; Montana, 1. *These figures are a disgrace to this country.* Let no one think that the men who committed these outrages are the only guilty parties—not by any means. As part of this aggregated crime rests upon the incompetent, corrupt or cowardly officers who permit murderers to escape, a part upon those sentimental judges and juries who put mercy before justice, and a part upon a public sentiment that winks at murder and murderers. Judge Lynch should be utterly driven from the older states at least. He should have no more excuse to show his head in Georgia, one of the original thirteen, than in England or in any other civilized state. This dangerous and demoralizing species of barbarism

> should be banished from the state from this time, henceforth forever. (italics mine)

Although this editorial is anonymous, the absence of Harris's name allows him to be more direct and explicit about his opinion of lynching; Harris's disgust with the lawlessness and brutality of lynching is clear. While Harris's depiction of lynching is much more subtle and subliminal in his fictional work, it is still evident that this topic weighed heavily upon his mind while he was writing these tales. In fact, on the same page, "Miss Cow Falls a Victim to Mr. Rabbit" first appears just one column over from this editorial. However, the story is retitled as "Miss Cow Falls a Victim to Brer Rabbit's Deceit," appearing even darker and more negative in the newspaper than the title published in the collected works .

Mob Violence and Lynching in the Stories

While there are tricks, manipulative deceptions, and even violent acts throughout the tales usually described in a humorous manner, there are also a great number of stories that depict mob violence and lynching. Twelve of the first thirty-five stories all contain some form of lynching, and even multiple types within a single story. The most frequent acts are beating and burning, as they each appear in six of the tales. Three stories discuss tarring and feathering, and three stories contain an attempted drowning. Two stories contain hangings, one story depicts skinning, one story contains infanticide, and one story depicts death by scalding**. (see Appendix B at the end of this document for further detail.)**

"Mr. Wolf Makes a Failure"

For the first eight stories, the violence in the text is comparably mild. Up until this point in the collection, Brer Rabbit's main concern has been avoiding Brer Fox. However, in "Mr. Wolf Makes a Failure," Brer Fox and Brer Wolf team up to try and outmaneuver Brer Rabbit.

Brer Fox and Brer Wolf decide to fake Brer Fox's death and trick Brer Rabbit into coming into Brer Fox's house when he pays his respects to the dead. However, Brer Rabbit, as usual, is ever skeptical of the presence of these two creatures, and when he attempts to confirm Brer Fox's condition, he tricks Brer Fox into jumping off his death bed and chasing him out the door. Brer Rabbit does escape, but narrowly. However, more important to this story is not the reinforcement of Brer Rabbit's perceptiveness, but the introduction of the rift that has now widened between Brer Wolf and Brer Rabbit, which will ultimately result in the Wolf's demise.

"The Awful Fate of Mr. Wolf"

In "The Awful Fate of Mr. Wolf," the Wolf's desire to "get" Brer Rabbit increases, and the Wolf turns his vengeance on Brer Rabbit's children. As Uncle Remus informs the young boy that Brer Wolf is not "mindin' un his own bizness" and continues to pursue Brer Rabbit, the boy exclaims, "Goodness, Uncle Remus! I thought the Wolf let the Rabbit alone, after he tried to fool him about the Fox being dead" (Harris *RCLGA*). Uncle Remus informs the boy that Brer Wolf did not, in fact, leave Brer Rabbit and his family alone, but instead:

> Brer Rabbit ain't see no peace w'atsumever. He can't leave home 'cep' Brer Wolf 'ud make a raid en tote off some er de fambly. Brer Rabbit b'ilt 'im a straw house, en hit wuz tored down; den he made a house outen pine-tops, en dat went de same way; den he made 'im a bark house, en dat wuz raided on, en eve'y time he los' a house he los' wunner his chilluns. Las' Brer Rabbit got mad, he did, en cust, en den he went off, he did, en got some kyarpinters, en dey b'ilt 'im a plank house wid rock foundashuns. Atter dat he could have some peace en quietness. (Harris *RCLGA*)

There is no doubt that Brer Wolf's infanticide is cruel and disturbing; however, at no time does Brer Rabbit report Brer Wolf's heinous acts to the authorities (if there are any) or to the other animals to seek help for the punishment of these crimes. Instead, Brer Rabbit tries to resolve the problem on his own, by building different homes to try to protect his family. Brer Rabbit does succeed in having a "plank house wid rock foundashuns" built and finally could feel at ease about the safety of his children.

Nevertheless, though his children and family are safe, when an opportunity arises for Brer Rabbit to punish Brer Wolf for his previous crimes, he does so swiftly, without consulting the opinion of any other animal, including his wife. Brer Rabbit takes it upon himself to determine the punishment of Brer Wolf's sins based only on the means available to him at that given moment. No pre-determined punishment has been conceived or decided upon. The terrible fate that falls upon Brer Wolf is solely a result of the passion of the moment.

One day after Brer Rabbit has successfully built his new protective house, with a "hiding room" for his young bunnies, he hears a loud commotion coming from up the road, and suddenly Brer Wolf rushes into Brer Rabbit's home begging for help: "Oh, do please save me, Brer Rabbit! Hide me some'rs whar de dogs won't git me" (Harris *RCLGA*). The cunning wit of Brer Rabbit is immediately revealed, and Brer Rabbit tells Brer Wolf to jump into a chest and make himself at home. Brer Wolf obliges, and as soon as Brer Rabbit has locked Brer Wolf in the chest, "Brer Rabbit went ter de lookin'-glass, he did, en wink at hisse'f, en den he drawd de rockin'-cheer in front er de fier, he did, en tuck a big chaw terbarker" (Harris *RCLGA*). Brer Rabbit's acknowledgement to himself of his success is suggested by his wink to his reflection in the mirror. Not only is he satisfied with his present achievement of locking Brer Wolf into a chest, but he also seems completely at ease concerning the violent acts that are soon to follow.

Once Brer Wolf is securely in the chest, Brer Rabbit begins his plan to exterminate Brer Wolf. Brer Rabbit tells Brer Wolf that he is preparing a cup of tea for the wolf and drilling holes in the chest so that he could breathe, but Brer Rabbit really puts on a kettle of water over the open fire and drills holes so that he can pour the hot water over Brer Wolf to scald him to death. Next, Brer Rabbit goes and fetches all of his children from the cellar, and when Brer Wolf asks why, Brer Rabbit responds so that he can tell all his children what a nice man Brer Wolf is. Brer Wolf asks Brer Rabbit about every action he is committing, and every time Brer Rabbit lies to Brer Wolf and informs him that whatever he is doing is for the betterment of Brer Wolf. Once all of the children have gathered in a mob-like fashion around Brer Wolf's wooden casket:

> "W'at dat I feel, Brer Rabbit?'
>
> "You feels de fleas a bitin', Brer Wolf.
>
> "Dey er bitin' mighty hard, Brer Rabbit.'
>
> "Tu'n over on de udder side, Brer Wolf.'
>
> "W'at dat I feel now, Brer Rabbit?'
>
> "Still you feels de fleas, Brer Wolf.'
>
> "Dey er eatin' me up, Brer Rabbit,' en dem wuz de las' words er Brer Wolf, kase de scaldin' water done de bizness." (Harris *RCLGA*)

With all of his children clearly watching, Brer Rabbit scalds Brer Wolf to death in the chest, which is ultimately turned into a casket. The children do not seem shocked by what occurs; they even have to cover their mouths to keep from laughing (Harris *RCLGA*). While the crimes that Brer Wolf committed are cruel and evil, the question arises: Does one act of violence justify another? Furthermore, the scene that is described of Brer Rabbit's children gathered around in a circle and witnessing Brer Wolf's death is comparable to a lynch mob scene. Such a disturbing

image is hidden beneath the humorous façade of the animal tale, the eye-dialect, the "trickster" nature of Brer Rabbit, and the prey/predator relationship that is reversed. While Harris does not directly answer this question of what is a "just" crime, he does present this disturbing and complicated dilemma right into the middle of his "children's stories." Brer Wolf seeks protection, and Brer Rabbit agrees to protect Brer Wolf, but instead deceives him. Brer Rabbit takes advantage of the situation and seeks revenge on the Wolf. However, the punishment that Brer Wolf receives is not based on a preexisting set of rules or laws, but delivered in the heat of the moment. There is no clear measure to determine whether the penalty that Brer Wolf receives is justified for the crimes he committed.

"Mr. Rabbit and Mr. Bear"

Another disturbing lynching scene occurs in the tale "Mr. Rabbit and Mr. Bear." In this story, Brer Fox has set up a trap to catch the thief who has been stealing his goobers (peanuts) from his garden. There are several devices a person can build to protect his or her crops from being eaten or stolen; however, of all of the options that Brer Fox could utilize, he decides to create a "loop-knot" to catch his thief. Brer Rabbit does get caught in Brer Fox's trap, and a clear image of Brer Rabbit swinging from a tree with a noose around his neck mirrors one of many lynching scenes of an African American in the 1880s. However, the story becomes more disturbing when Brer Rabbit "tricks" Brer Bear into getting into the noose to replace Brer Rabbit. Brer Rabbit has informed Brer Bear that he is acting as a scarecrow as a favor to Brer Fox: "Brer B'ar 'low dat he take de job, en den Brer Rabbit show 'im how ter ben' down de saplin', en twan't long 'fo' Brer B'ar wuz swingin' up dar in Brer Rabbit place" (Harris *RCLGA*). No sooner does Brer Bear slip the noose around his neck when Brer Rabbit yells for Brer Fox to come to catch the thief hanging in his garden. Not only does Brer Rabbit frame Brer Bear for his

own thievery, but Brer Rabbit also encourages Brer Fox to take his stick and " 'Hit 'im in de mouf, Brer Fox; hit 'im in de mouf'" (Harris *RCLGA*). Harris creates a clear image of Brer Bear being both hung by a noose and beaten.

"The Wonderful Tar Baby Story" and "How Mr. Rabbit Was Too Sharp for Mr. Fox"

One of the most violent of the first thirty-five tales is a story surrounding the Tar-Baby told in "The Wonderful Tar Baby Story" and continued in "How Mr. Rabbit Was Too Sharp for Mr. Fox." In these two anecdotes alone, tarring-and-feathering, burning, hanging, drowning, and skinning are all possible punishments that await Brer Rabbit. Brer Fox devises a plan to catch Brer Rabbit by making a "Tar-Baby" (a figure made of tar) for Brer Rabbit to be tricked into getting stuck in. As Brer Rabbit bounces along the road, tries to greet the new stranger, and receives no response, Brer Rabbit says, "I'm gwineter larn you howter talk ter 'specttubble fokes ef hit's de las' ack,' sez Brer Rabbit, sezee. 'Ef you don't take off dat hat en tell me howdy, I'm gwineter bus' you wide open,' sezee" (Harris *RCLGA*). Even though Brer Rabbit is the obvious victim of violence in this tale, even he supports "busting someone wide open" as a consequence of social indifference. However, when Brer Rabbit does try to teach the Tar-Baby how to talk to respectable folks, he gets his paw stuck in the tar. Brer Rabbit continues to fight with the stranger until all four of his paws and head are stuck in the black goo.

Uncle Remus does not reveal the fate of Brer Rabbit in this tale, but discloses the ending two tales later in "How Mr. Rabbit Was Too Sharp for Mr. Fox," leaving both the little boy and the reader waiting to hear the outcome for the Rabbit. Once Brer Fox has Brer Rabbit captured, he contemplates how to dispatch Brer Rabbit so he can barbecue him. Brer Fox considers burning, hanging, drowning, and finally skinning Brer Rabbit to death, all obvious forms of lynching. After these propositions of means of death are suggested, Brer Rabbit says that any

way is favorable than to be thrown into the brier patch. Brer Fox decides to choose what seems to be the worst and most cruel punishment for Brer Rabbit, highlighting the cruelty of Brer Fox. However, his choice of malicious punishment is spoiled, as Brer Rabbit exclaims several minutes later, “Bred en bawn in a brier-patch, Brer Fox—bred en bawn in a brier-patch!' en wid dat he skip out des ez lively ez a cricket in de embers” (Harris *RCLGA*). Brer Rabbit has once again successfully outwitted his enemy, and happily hops away.

“Mr. Fox Tackles Old Man Tarrypin”

Brer Rabbit is not, however, the only animal who uses his cleverness to escape a sticky situation. In “Mr. Fox Tackles Old Man Tarrypin,” Brer Tarrypin also uses his wits to escape the clutches of Brer Fox. Unfortunately for Brer Tarrypin, Brer Fox is out for revenge because of a previous misunderstanding that actually was the fault of Brer Rabbit. Nevertheless, Brer Fox is out to punish Brer Tarrypin. When he does manage to capture the turtle, he proposes three very violent means of disposing of Brer Tarrypin—beating, burning, and drowning. As in the “Tar-Baby” tale, all of these means that Brer Fox threatens are forms of lynching:

> Brer Tarrypin beg en beg, but ’twan’t no use. Brer Fox done bin fool so much dat he look like he ’termin’ fer ter have Brer Tarrypin haslett. Den Brer Tarrypin beg Brer Fox not fer ter drown ’im, but Brer Fox ain’t makin’ no prommus, en den he beg Brer Fox fer ter bu’n’ im, kaze he done useter fier, but Brer Fox don’t say nuthin’. Bimeby Brer Fox drag Brer Tarrypin off little ways b’low de spring-’ouse, en souze ’im under de water. Den Brer Tarrypin begin fer ter holler. (Harris *RCLGA*)

Like Brer Fox who believes he is choosing the cruelest form of punishment for Brer Rabbit, Brer Bear chooses what he considers to be the most brutal fate for Brer Tarrypin, drowning. Also

similar to the "Tar-Baby" story is Brer Tarrypin's uses of wit to allow his escape from Brer Fox's clutches. Once he is in the water, Brer Tarrypin begins to holler that he is drowning. While Brer Fox believes that he is drowning the turtle, all that actually occurs is that Brer Fox hears a "kerblunkity-blink" as Brer Tarrypin swims off safely in his aquatic home.

"The Sad Fate of Mr. Fox"

Another disturbing tale is of course "The Awful Fate of Mr. Wolf," as described previously, containing both infanticide and a fatal scalding, and in contrast to most tales, Brer Rabbit is not the victim but the villain. In another tale, "The Sad Fate of Mr. Fox," Brer Rabbit does not commit the violent acts himself, but tricks Brer Fox into a fatal position. Brer Rabbit passes by Brer Fox's house one day and notices that he is cooking some nice portions of beef. When Brer Rabbit inquires as to where Brer Fox acquired the beef, Brer Fox said that he would show him the next day. As promised, Brer Fox takes Brer Rabbit the following day to a nearby field where a man has a herd of cattle. Brer Fox informs Brer Rabbit that if he says "Bookay" the cow will open his mouth and allow him to go inside and cut out the desired portion of meat. Both Brer Fox and Brer Rabbit go inside the animal and begin to cut, and Brer Fox warns Brer Rabbit to get whatever meat he wants, but not to cut the cow's haslett (entrails, usually internal organs) but as Brer Rabbit is collecting his meat, he cuts the haslett, and he kills the cow. When Brer Rabbit asks what they should then do, Brer Fox says that he will hide in the maul (ear) and that Brer Rabbit should hide in the gall (gall bladder).[13] They do so, and then when the owner of the cow discovers that his cow has died, he splits open the cow and Brer Rabbit crawls out of the gall and says "Mister Man! Oh, Mister Man! I'll tell you who kill yo' cow. You look in de maul, en dar you'll fine 'im,'" (Harris *RCLGA*). Before Brer Fox has time to react,

[13] *OED*: maul: from malleus, the outermost of the three ossicles of the mammalian ear
gall: the gall bladder

> Wid dat de man tuck a stick and lam down on de maul so hard dat he kill Brer Fox stone-dead. W'en Brer Rabbit see Brer Fox wuz laid out fer good, he make like he mighty sorry, en he up'n ax de man fer Brer Fox head. Man say he ain't keerin', en den Brer Rabbit tuck'n brung it ter Brer Fox house. Dar he see ole Miss Fox, en he tell 'er dat he done fotch her some nice beef w'at 'er ole man sont 'er, but she ain't gotter look at it twel she go ter eat it. (Harris *RCLGA*)

While the "nice beef" that Brer Rabbit brought as a gift is brewing on the stove, Brer Fox's son, Tobe, looks into the pot and realizes that his mother is cooking his father's head. Tobe and his mother, Miss Fox, both began to chase Brer Rabbit, and Miss Fox declares that she is going to kill him, but as with the other "binds" that Brer Rabbit gets caught in, he manages to manipulate his way out of danger.

After Uncle Remus tells the conclusion to "The Sad Fate of Mr. Fox," the little boy asks if "that was the last of the Rabbit, too" (Harris *RCLGA*). Uncle Remus replies,

> Don't push me too close, honey . . . . don't shove me up in no cornder. I don't wanter tell you no stories. Some say dat Brer Rabbit's ole 'oman died fum eatin' some pizen-weed, en dat Brer Rabbit married ole Miss Fox, en some say not. Some tells one tale en some tells nudder; some say dat fum dat time forrer'd de Rabbits en de Foxes make frien's en stay so; some say dey kep on quollin'. Hit look like it mixt. Let dem tell you w'at knows. Dat w'at I years you gits it straight like I yeard it. (Harris *RCLGA*)

"The Sad Fate of Mr. Fox," is the last tale in the first series of the *Uncle Remus* tales, and Harris ends the collection with a situation that mirrors his contemporary social dilemma. Sometimes the different creatures made friends, and sometimes they kept quarrelling. It is easy to make the

parallel of the animal social circle to humanity's divide over black and white. As Uncle Remus suggests in this passage, during the turn of the century, some blacks and whites were able to move past the differences of race and prejudice and live harmoniously while others lived in a world filled with hatred and fear. As Robert Cochran suggests,

> Working in exactly this way, proceeding by "cunning glimpses" and covert insinuations, Harris not only violates the ultimate taboo of Old South racial codes, but presents the violation in positive terms, as a tranquil domestic scene. The ostensibly separate races are mixed at every level, from the allegory of Brer Rabbit marrying Miz Fox, to the figurative language of Mars Jeems and his sister calling Remus "Daddy," to the vast crowd of "merlatters" who generalize this state of affairs in "Why the Negro Is Black," to the mythic origin story where all humanity are "niggers tergedder." (28)

The "cunning glimpses" that Cochran suggests are embedded within Harris's text are not only seen in his text, but in the illustrations which also provide a deeper insight into questions that Harris raises about race and justice.

Mob Violence and Lynching in the Illustrations

In addition to the depiction in the narrative text, the illustrations of Harris's text also fully demonstrate the darker side to his fiction. As Richard Gray notes in *Web of Words*, Southern authors create "word pictures" and "[a]s they draw with their voices, they show us the making of a southern community—a South, not the South." (6). It is not only in his writing that Harris's perception of the South is revealed, but also in his images. Of the twelve stories that depict lynching, seven are illustrated and four of those visually display the act of lynching. (**see Appendix C and Figures 1-7 at the end of this document for further detail.)**

In “The Wonderful Tar Baby Story,” one will see Brer Rabbit with fisted hands preparing to punch the “Tar Baby.” In “Mr. Fox Tackles Old Man Tarrypin,” Brer Fox, with his sharp claws and devilish look in his eyes, is hovered over a shriveled and terrified Tarrypin. “Mr. Rabbit and Mr. Bear” depicts Brer Bear swinging from a noose strung to a tree with Brer Fox standing beside him with his stick preparing to beat him. Finally, one of the most disturbing images appears in “The Awful Fate of Mr. Wolf.” In addition to the clear description in the narrative text, a clear image of a lynch mob is illustrated. Brer Rabbit sits happily on top of the chest that Brer Wolf is trapped in, pouring boiling hot water into the holes, surrounded by steam, while his children all surround the box watching intently (and some smiling), as Brer Wolf is killed. In later editions of *His Songs and His Sayings* other stories are illustrated, and in the majority these are lynching scenes.

For example, in the 1895 edition of *Uncle Remus: His Songs and His Sayings*, there are a variety of violent illustrations in the book. The 1880 edition was illustrated by Fredrick S. Church and J. H. Moser, and the 1895 edition was illustrated by Arthur Burdette Frost. Frost was highly regarded by Harris for his talent, so much so that he dedicated the 1895 edition to Frost saying, “The book was mine, but now you have made it yours, both sap and pith. Take it, therefore, my dear Frost” (Harris, *Complete Tales* xxxii). In both the 1880 and 1895 edition “The Wonderful Tar Baby Story,” “Mr. Fox Tackles Old Man Tarrypin,” and “Mr. Rabbit and Mr. Bear” the acts of lynching are illustrated. However, the lynching scenes of “Mr. Fox Gets into Serious Business” and “Mr. Rabbit Nibbles Up the Butter” are illustrated in the 1895 edition by Frost, and not the 1880 publication. It is interesting to note that one of the most violent stories, “The Awful Fate of Mr. Wolf” is illustrated in the 1895 edition, but the image of the little rabbits surrounding the box as Mr. Wolf is scalded to death as seen in the 1880 edition is

removed. All that is illustrated is Brer Rabbit drilling holes on top of the box. Furthermore, this omission perhaps suggests that later publishers thought the image was too gory to include.

The illustrations of the 1895 publication by Frost are detailed, and it is interesting to note that some of the same lynching scenes are still illustrated fifteen years after the first edition. Furthermore, as stated earlier, the 1890s were the height of the lynching era, and it would seem that the context of these images would be all the more apparent to contemporary readers. However, no objections seemed to have been made to this collection of stories, in any edition, as a propaganda piece against (or for) lynching. Furthermore, in the *Uncle Remus Museum* in Eatonton, Georgia, several of these lynching scenes have been made into woodcarvings showcased around the walls in glass. Even in the present day, the significance of these scenes and stories reflecting the mob violence again African Americans that occurred during the 1880s and 1890s has yet to be recognized.

One might begin to wonder why the violent and disturbing nature of these texts and illustrations has been overlooked for over a hundred years. What is perceived as violent through the lens of one person may not be so to another. Furthermore, these tales are set in what appears to be a happy plantation locale in the South, have been categorized by so many as "children's' stories," and have the majority of the narrative text written in eye-dialect. The audience is removed three-fold by these complicated layers, and what now appears obvious through one perspective is completely ignored by another. As Robert Cochran suggests, Harris "produce[s] analogously tensioned Brer Rabbit tales and Uncle Remus frames that manage at one and the same time to satisfy (even as they also criticize) Southern readers, reassure (even as they sometimes rebuke) Northern ones, and celebrate the deeply personal sense of interracial 'family'

that is Harris's own best purchase on childhood's prelapsarian security" (33). The duality of Harris's text cannot be overstated.

Still, yet another reason these tales have been overlooked may be in the context in which these tales are written, as Richard Gray noted, "the moment a book is written is just as important as when it is set" (Gray, "Maybe Nothing"). As noted earlier from the absence of statistics and texts about lynching, it seems that the United States had not fully addressed the acts of violence as a problem. Or, people could have become so accustomed to reading about similar acts of violence that they became numb when reading about them in a different context. Present-day readers of Harris live in a time when lynching is much less prevalent, and our perspective leads us to read these merely as humorous folktales preserved by an American author. Many Americans had these stories read to them by their parents as children without ever noticing these violent descriptions and images. This oversight supports the complexities and subversiveness of this text.

Regardless of why the presence of mob violence and lynching has not been explored previously, there is no denying how it permeates Harris's *Uncle Remus: His Songs and His Sayings*. While this pattern may continue throughout later tales, it is important to first examine the primary set of tales that began Harris's and Uncle Remus's immense popularity. These tales were the most popular when Harris was alive, and they are also the most well-known throughout the last century. Harris claimed in his introduction to these stories that his goal was to preserve the integrity of a culture that was fading, and commonly misunderstood:

> I *am* advised by my publishers that this book is to be included in their catalogue of humorous publications and this friendly warning gives me an opportunity to say that however humorous it may be in effect, its intention is perfectly serious;

> and, even if it were otherwise, it seems to me that a volume written wholly in dialect must have its solemn, not to say melancholy, features. With respect to the Folk-Lore series, my purpose has been to preserve the legends themselves in their original simplicity, and to wed them permanently to the quaint dialect—if, indeed, it can be called a dialect—through the medium of which they have become a part of the domestic history of every Southern family; and I have endeavored to give to the whole a genuine flavor of the old plantation. (Harris *RCLGA*)

It is clear that Harris was serious in his intentions when he wrote *Uncle Remus: His Songs and His Sayings*. Harris succeeds in preserving the stories, legends, and culture of both the African-American and Southern heritage. However, not only is he preserving a type of history, he also is reporting the contemporary news events that occurred during the 1880s and would continue to transpire for the remainder of his lifetime. Through his editorials, works of fiction, and illustrations, Harris exposed the mass American audience to these horrors much earlier than has been noted, and with a clever subtlety that that has far too long been ignored.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

While Harris was deliberately trying to preserve the folk tales of African-Americans and Southern plantation life, his alter-ego as a journalist was also recording all of the disturbing violent lynching acts occurring on almost a daily basis. Harris could have easily been personally exposed to such acts in Atlanta, but what is known definitively is that while he was working at the Atlanta *Constitution*, reports of such acts were rampant, and often found their way into the newspaper. Harris's own editorial discussing the dramatic increases of lynchings in 1879 clearly attests to Harris's awareness of this problem. Living in Atlanta and working at a large Southern newspaper in the Jim Crow South influenced both his journalistic work and his fiction. While some of Harris's suggestions concerning this dilemma in his personal writings are at times varied and controversial, they were important enough for him to address these issues both implicitly in his earlier texts and explicitly in his later work. As one reads the text and maneuvers through the many layers, one will discover what a unique portrait of the Southern landscape Harris subtly and carefully painted amongst the pages.

While the folklore of these tales has remained the focus of scholarship, the violence represented in these tales is just as prevalent. While one element may be more apparent, it does not make the other any less significant. All of the multiplicity in these stories attests to the richness of Harris's tales, but admittedly there are some shortcomings to his fiction. While he was progressive in several respects, at times some of his ideas were racist or unprogressive. Some scenes describing Uncle Remus are completely stereotypical of the "contented darkey"

image. Also, Harris was in the majority a separatist, and believed in "separate but equal" opportunities, especially on the topics of education and employment. Du Bois once stated in an interview with Ralph McGill that Harris "had no question in [his mind] about the status of the Negro as a departed, lesser citizen. [He] unhesitatingly lived up to a paternalistic rose, a sort of *noblesse oblige*. But that was all" (McGill 79). However, as Wayne Mixon states, "that was *not* all. Throughout his life Harris's mind was filled with questions about the status of the black man. Like Du Bois, Harris knew that progress in race relations depended primarily upon improvement in white attitudes" (Mixon 457). Harris's act of tracing and recording lynching in the South in *His Songs and His Sayings* adds a unique perspective to one of the most complex and unstable times in American history, and his more explicit involvement later in his life with his articles and *Uncle Remus's Magazine* clearly reveal his passion about the plight of African Americans.

Living in Atlanta, Harris put himself at risk of physical violence—threatening both his life and his family's—much like that depicted in the tales by writing these and other stories. As W.E.B. Du Bois noted in 1903 in *The Souls of Black Folk*, not only "is Georgia thus the geographical focus of our Negro population, but in many other respects, both now and yesterday, the Negro problems have seemed to be centered in this State" (111). Harris could also possibly be jeopardizing his literary and journalistic career by addressing such controversial issues in such a chaotic state. Harris would have recognized the delicate nature of the subject matter, and what influence he had, and would continue to have, as his popularity grew.

Harris's solution was to continue the humor, write the stories about animals, in eye-dialect and seemingly target children as his audience. He aimed at a younger generation, one untainted with the bitterness of prejudice, to try and "work hard and live right." In an 1895

edition of *Uncle Remus: His Songs and His Sayings*, Harris writes a dedication to the new illustrator, Robert Frost. In this dedication, Harris writes "I seem to see before me the smiling faces of thousands of children—some young and fresh, and some wearing the friendly marks of age, but all children at heart—and not an unfriendly face among them" Harris later addresses all of the thousands of letters that he has received from children, and "men and women who have not forgotten how to be children" ("Preface and Dedication," Harris *RCLGA*). Harris dedicates his new edition to children and those adults who have kept their innocence living in an even more violent time, as fifteen years after the first publication of *Uncle Remus: His Songs and His Sayings*, America was at the height of the lynching era. Harris wrote that he was glad to make other people happy with his fiction, and this feat was certainly difficult given the time that he was writing.

Even though Harris might have longed for a more innocent time, he constantly said that things needed to change and openly addressed the "Negro Problem." Three articles directly speak to this issue were printed in the *Saturday Evening Post*: "The Old Time Darkey," January 2, 1904; "The Negro of To-day," January 30, 1904; and "The Negro Problem," February 27, 1904.[14] In addition to these articles, Harris also wrote a piece entitled "How Education will Solve the So-called Negro Problem" for the *New York Journal* on January 3, 1901. When addressing this issue, Harris claimed that some people (he called them "sentimentalists") proposed the answer to the so-called negro question would not be resolved until "everybody and his brother insisted on taking the negroes home to dinner with them" (Julia Harris, *Life and Letters* 501). However, Harris did not see the progress of equality for African Americans was as important socially as it was economically: "The idea is more singular when we bear in mind the fact that both negroes and white men would rather have a fair and free opportunity to earn their

[14] These articles are reprinted and discussed in Julia Collier Harris's *Joel Chandler Harris: Editor and Essayist.*

own dinners, than to receive casual and occasional invitations to partake of meals earned by other people; would rather have parlors of their own to sit in rather than to make a practice of sitting in the parlors of others" (Julia Harris, *Life and Letters* 501). While some of Harris's proposals on issues of race and equality were not as progressive as other civil rights advocates, and sometimes his ideas were narrow-minded and un-visionary, he realized the value of working for oneself and supporting one's family and home on his or her own. Harris supported the betterment of life for not only blacks, but whites alike.

Therefore, beginning with *His Songs and His Sayings,* one can begin to see how the treatment of African Americans influenced Harris's works throughout the rest of the *Uncle Remus Tales,* in his daily work at the Atlanta *Constitution,* and finally developing into a clearly stated life mission. As the severity and number of lynchings increased, Harris's opposition to such violence became more active and overt. As Bickely notes, and as is more fully elaborated by Harris's daughter-in-law, Julia Harris, Harris took very seriously his influence as a writer. In a column that Harris wrote in the *Weekly Gazette* in 1878 about newspaper editors, he clearly notes the influence that the print world has on the mass audience:

> An editor must have a purpose. He must have in view some object beyond the mere expression of opinion or publication of a newspaper. . . . I shudder when I think of the opportunities the editors in Georgia are allowing to slip by. It grieves me to see them harping steadily upon the same old prejudices and moving in the worn ruts of a period that was soul-destroying in its narrowness. . . . There never was a time when a editor with a purpose could accomplish more for his state and his county than just at present. What a legacy for one's conscience to know that

> one has been instrumental in mowing down the old prejudices that rattle in the wind like weeds. (Julia Harris, *Life and Letters*, 139)

Over two decades later, Harris would have such an opportunity. After successfully securing himself a position as a respectable newspaper journalist and a nationally-recognized fiction author, Harris would decide to create a magazine and become the editor-at-large.

Harris's depiction of mob violence first began subtly and intrinsically; however, later in his life he would openly address the problem and seek solutions for it. One of his last endeavors was the creation of the *Uncle Remus's Magazine*, and he stated that "improvement of race relations would be a major goal of the journal" (Mixon 477). In order to make this goal financially achievable, Harris wrote a letter to Andrew Carnegie asking for monetary support. Harris asked for a financial basis

> that will enable me to carry out certain policies that I have in mind with respect to the negro question. These policies cannot be successfully exploited in a daily newspaper, where they would fly in the face of the schemes of the politicians. I am sure that I shall be able to smooth over and sooth [*sic*] and finally dissipate all ill feelings and prejudices that now exist between the races. At my time of life I have no higher ambition; in fact, it is the only ambition I have ever had, the only line of policy that I have ever deliberately mapped out in my own mind. Will you help me in this? There is no sort of doubt about the financial success of the magazine if it can weather the financial pinch that has come upon the country almost without warning; and I think its success will mean more to the people of the whole south, white and black, then any work of purely local philanthropy. I have it in my mind to fit the magazine to such gentle and sure policies of

> persuasion with respect to the negro question, which is also the white man's question, that honest people cannot resist them and, in the main, the people of the south are both honest and kindly. This, briefly, is the great work that I have set before me. I do not say that I am the only man who can carry it on, but no other man is in a better position to do it, provided the magazine weathers the financial crisis that seems to have struck the whole country. You see, I am not asking any financial aid for myself. If the magazine is doomed, I have other things to turn to. What I am anxious for you to do is to join hands with us, so that the policies and principles I have in mind—the obliteration of prejudice against the blacks, the demand for a square deal, and the uplifting of both races so that they can look justice in the face without blushing—may be definitely carried out. (Harris, "Letter")

The disgust that Harris anonymously stated in his 1880 editorial is openly stated here, and now includes a means of addressing and solving the problem. The steadfast dedication Harris clearly possessed toward the end of his life began much earlier in his career, but was portrayed in a much more indirect way.

The plight of Harris's dream, his *Uncle Remus's Magazine*, is exceptionally summarized by William F Mugleston in his article, "The Perils of Southern Publishing: a History of *Uncle Remus's Magazine*." Mugleston provides a well-documented examination of the magazine from its conception to its unfortunate ending. He states that "the publication was dedicated to the cause of sectional and racial reconciliation" and included a variety of authors, most notably Don Marquis, James Whitcomb Riley, Paul Tietjens, and Ludwig Lewisohn (516-17). The first issue of 125,000 copies that appeared in June 1907 sold out in five days, and by the end of the year

there were subscribers in every state, including President Theodore Roosevelt, as well as Brazil, England, France, Germany, Panama, India, and the Philippines. By August 1908, circulation had increased to 240,000 (516). However, despite an increase in circulation, the magazine still struggled. As Mugleston notes, "it would appear that in order to get the magazine on a stable basis and increase circulation, these was a deliberate effort to make it a popular and non-controversial organ for general house consumption. The first half-dozen issues consisted mostly of fiction, poetry, and book and theater reviews [and] topics with which few could argue" (517). However, a potentially controversial item appeared in a ten part series on the Reconstruction Ku Klux Klan, titled, "What I Know of the Ku Klux Klan."

These articles relay the personal experiences of John C. Reed, a former Klan official, and depict a more political and less violent opinion of the group. Reed stated that he wanted an "efficient organization to protect our homes and families" (24) and that "it was our [the Klan's] policy to appear very strong to both white and black" (25). Furthermore, Reed seemed determined to clarify any stereotypes that had been created about the Klu Klux Klan of the 1860s and 1870s, as this article appeared in 1908. He stressed that the Klan did not wear white or pointed hoods, but black calico, and that their presence was more for political enforcement. However, Reed does describe the "thrashing of Negros" who did not comply with their social norms (a black man writing a white woman a marriage proposal) and comments like "saving the South from Africanization" and opposing "negro rule" are clearly violently racist and polemical (24, 26).

While this type of content does not coincide with the goals that Harris had in mind when creating the magazine, the realities of keeping the journal afloat were pressing, and as Mugleston states "the immediate need was to get the publication on a sound financial basis" (517). Yet, an

equally anti-Klan article ran alongside Reed's article, titled, "Night Rider Against Trust" by J. Slaughter Carter. [15] This article describes the violent raids of the current Klan against tobacco farmers and tobacco-based towns in Kentucky. Carter reports a testimony of a local county judge (Wells) declaring that

> no citizen was safe throughout all these weeks [of the raids]. . . . I have direct and definite information from the riders themselves that before the moon changes they shall swoop down on Murray. . . and burn her property and continue to beat her citizens and beat and bruise the farmers, and burn their property, because, forsooth, they did not obey their mandates. (11)

The judge encouraged the citizens of the area to prepare themselves to defend themselves against these "midnight marauders by exercising the God-given right of self-defense" (11). The judge's lead was correct, and on December 7, 1907 the horrific raid occurred.

The article states that 300 masked men, heavily armed marched into the town at two o'clock in the morning. Some went directly to the tobacco warehouses, and others took control over the fire, telegraph, telephone, and police headquarters. The remainder "employed the idle moments in 'shooting up' the town. The well-drilled army soon became a howling mob" (29). By the end of the night, the town was utterly destroyed. However, as Carter states, "one or two arrests were made, but no indictments were returned;" the citizens remained in a state of terror, and before the excitement had subsided from the first raid, another quickly occurred in a nearby town (29-30). Governor Wilson of Kentucky pleaded to the Federal Government for aid and support from the "Night Riders," as he declared state to be in a state of complete anarchy (30). The end of the article concludes that Congress was working on several suggestions for the

[15] A section of the "Night Rider" article even appeared on the same page directly above a section of the "Ku Klux Klan" article in the May 1908 publication.

problem of regulating tobacco distribution and selling, as well as some way to protect citizens against the night raids of the Klan (31). These articles present two completely different opinions about one of the most racist organizations in American history, the Ku Klux Klan. However, while the more controversial one was given more space in the magazine, it is important to keep in mind that the majority of the Southern audience that the magazine was aimed at was "still dedicated to white supremacy" (Mugleston 521).

Upon Harris's death in July 1908, the role of editor was given to Harris's son, who had been working on the periodical since its conception. The goal that Harris had in mind for the magazine clearly had not been achieved, and he passed the torch to Julian with these last wishes: "He wanted no monument to himself other than the magazine, which he urged Julian to keep 'clean and wholesome and fresh. . . Never let it become a money-making machine'" (Mugleston 517). Although some of the advertisements that the young Harris chose to run through the magazine are more controversial than those that ran when his father was alive, the quality of the content of the magazine increased.[16]

As Mugleston notes in his article, significant changes occurred to the magazine after 1908. Julian Harris's wife, Julia, contributed book reviews and selections on art. Overall, fewer pieces of fiction appeared, but those that did rose in quality with stories by Jack London and O. Henry. Furthermore, more contemporary social and political articles began to appear:

> Under his [Julian] editorship, articles appeared on convict leasing and mob violence, including an account of the bloody and destructive 1908 race riot at Springfield, Ill. There was also a series on "The Menace of the Mask," dealing

[16] There is only one advertisement degrading African American while Harris was editor, and it is of an African American woman in a "do" rag promoting Louisiana Tea. After his death, probably for profit's sake, more of these stereotypical advertisements began to appear. For a thorough examination on this topic, please see Amanda Gailey's forthcoming article on Joel Chandler Harris's work on *Uncle Remus Magazine*, unpublished at the time of this writing.

> with the night riding and lawlessness in the Reelfoot Lake area of northwestern Tennessee the same year. . . . From his father he inherited an abhorrence of mob violence and a respect for orderly processes of law. In the 1920s Harris was to win a Pulitzer Prize for his journalistic crusade again the Ku Klux Klan. (518)

As one might expect, a Southern publication that was so openly against Southern social norms quickly lost subscription holders, and in 1913, the magazine published its final issue. However, Julian should not be condemned for the demise of the magazine, as he stood up for what he believed in. Julian possessed his father's abhorrence of mob violence and lawlessness, but Julian was completely overt about his opinions, while Harris clearly had a talent for presenting his beliefs in a much more subversive manner.

As Robert Cochran notes in his article, Harris "knew perfectly well that a straightforward expression of skepticism toward prevailing segregationist orthodoxy or open acknowledgement of substantial mixed-race populations in an era of anti-miscegenation legislation would be greeted with hostility (if published at all)" (30). The subversive manner in which Harris's fiction addresses mob violence is a "sophisticated model of encoded discourse" (Cochran 30). Like his two most famous characters, Uncle Remus and Brer Rabbit, Harris himself always seemed to be one step ahead of his contemporaries. His representation of the violent times that inundated the South remind readers, both past and present, how brutal, unjust, complex, and dangerous the Jim Crow South was, and how desperately it was in need of change.

Harris succeeded as a thriving author in two distinct ways. On the surface, he provided his readers with humorous folklore tales, and preserved the culture of African Americans in a unique manner. Harris was able to make a living off his writings and maintain a comfortable lifestyle, and his reputation reached a national level, so much so that when he died he was second

in popularity only to Mark Twain. Twain himself said that "Mr. Harris ought to be able to read the negro dialect better than anybody else, for in the matter of writing it he is the only master the country has produced" (Twain, "America's Immortally" 54). In a lecture at the University of Georgia on March 26, 2009, Jerome Loving noted Twain's gift as a humorist and his "tragic laughter" and "grim, ironic humor" that he produced in his works, yet the same can be said for Harris (Loving, "Mark Twain"). Underneath the sunny surface lay a dark and complex narrative that was overlooked by most of his contemporaries and even current readers of his fiction. One of the darkest aspects of his fiction is his portrayal of mob violence and lynching, and he did so much sooner than many of his contemporaries ever dared to.

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Appendix A: Lynching in American Fiction Before 1880

A brief summary of each author and his or her work is listed below to provide a sense of how limited the coverage of lynching appears prior to 1880.

J. T. Trowbridge's *Cudjo's Cave* (1864)

John Townsend Trowbridge (1827-1916) was born in New York State but spend most of his literary life in Boston, Massachusetts. Trowbridge is known for writing works with a Northeastern viewpoint about his region of America or about issues in the South, especially race. He was respected by his contemporaries, including Mark Twain, who read him as a child. *Cudjo's Cave* is one of Trowbridge's numerous works against slavery and was widely read. The novel is about two escaped slaves, Cudjo and Pomp, and their struggle to survive in the wilderness during the Civil War ("John Townsend Trowbridge" 1). There are many instances of mobs and mob violence in Trowbridge's *Cudjo's Cave*; a sample of them is below:

> In short, it was a chase; and Carl, glancing backwards, saw long-legged Silas Ropes, one of the ringleaders of the *mob,* taking appalling strides after him, across the open field. (10)
>
> "I can control the *mob*, — I can save him, if it is not too late." (53)
>
> Virginia thought of the hapless victim of the *mob* in the kitchen yonder, and smiled politely. (64)
>
> Whether they were there to protect the venerable Unionist from *mob-violence,* or to prevent his escape, Penn could only conjecture. (151)
>
> Would he be retained a prisoner, like the rest, or delivered over to the *mob* that sought his life? He had time to decide upon a course which he hoped might gain him some favor. (187)

> Since the escape of the arrested Unionists through his cellar, he had been an object of suspicion; and last night his house had been attacked by a *mob*. He had managed to escape, and was now hiding in the woods to save his life. (492)

Frances Harper's "Minnie's Sacrifice" (1869)

Francis Ellen Watkins Harper (1825-1911) was born in Baltimore, Maryland to free parents. She was orphaned at three, and she was raised by her uncle, a teacher and radical civil rights advocate. Harper attended the William Watkins Academy for Negro Youth in Baltimore and was educated as a teacher. She became a professional lecturer, activist, suffragette, poet, essayist, novelist, and the author of the first published short story written by an African-American. She contributed to national and international abolitionist periodicals. Her work spanned more than sixty years ("Frances Ellen Watkins Harper" 342-43, Sutherland 1). Harper's "Minnie's Sacrifice" addresses issues concerning women's rights and racial identity.

> "And while I would not throw a straw in the way of the colored man, even though I know that he would vote against me as soon as he gets his vote, yet I do think that woman should have some power to defend herself from oppression, and equal laws as if she were a man." (78)
>
> "But, really, I should not like to see you wending your way through rough and brawling *mobs* to the polls. Because these *mobs* are rough and coarse I would have women vote. I would soften the asperity of the mobs, and bring into our politics a deeper and broader humanity." (78)
>
> "Must they wait till murder was organized into an institution, and life and property were at the mercy of the *mob*? And, if so, would not such a government be a farce, and such a civilization a failure?" (86)

Mark Twain's "Only a Nigger" (*Buffalo Express* newspaper piece (1869), and *Roughing It* (1872)

Mark Twain (1835-1910) was born in Missouri and is often viewed as one of America's greatest fiction authors as well as one of its best humorists. Two of Twain's famous works are *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876) and *Life on the Mississippi* (1883), which capture both his Missouri memories and depictions of the American landscape. Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884) is probably his most well-known work, and like Harris, Twain explores race relations while simultaneously capturing the culture and dialect of a specific American region, the South. Later Twain would write a more satirical piece on race relations in the South, *The Tragedy of Pudd'nhead Wilson and the Comedy of Those Extraordinary Twins* in 1894.

"Only a Nigger" is a *Buffalo Express* editorial piece that reports the lynching of "only a nigger" who may or may not have been falsely accused of committing rape against a white woman. Twain's satire is crystal clear, and he condemns the "chivalric" and "gentlemen-like" behavior of which white Southern men boasted:

> Only "a nigger" killed by mistake—that is all. Of course, every high toned gentleman whose chivalric impulses were so unfortunately misled in this affair, by the cunning of the miscreant. Woods is as sorry about it as a high toned gentleman can be expected to be about the unlucky fate of "a nigger." But mistakes will happen, even in the best regulated and most high toned mobs, and surely there is no good reason why southern gentlemen should worry themselves with useless regrets, so long as only an innocent "nigger" is hanged, or toasted or knonted [sic] to death, now and then.

While *Roughing It* is published three years after "Only a Nigger," its focus is not on the American South, but the West. This work is a semi-autobiographical piece that chronicles Twain's travels through the West during the years 1861–1866. One of the more interesting portrayals of lynching is committed by Captain Ned Blakely of a white man (Bill Noakes) for his killing of a black man, Blakey's mate:

> Ned called in all the sea-captains in the harbor and invited them, with nautical ceremony, to be present on board his ship at nine o'clock to witness the *hanging* of Noakes at the yard-arm!
>
> "What! The man has not been tried."
>
> "Of course he hasn't. But didn't he kill the nigger?"
>
> "Certainly he did; but you are not thinking of hanging him without a trial?"
>
> "*Trial*! What do I want to try him for, if he killed the nigger?" (71)

This scene continues, and Noakes is lynched by hanging. There are also other mentions of mob violence or lawless executions occurring throughout the book. In addition to the written text, there are also two images of lynchings.

Edward Eggleston's *The Circuit Rider: A Tale of the Heroic Age* (1874)

Edward Eggleston (1837-1902) grew up in Indiana and was a Methodist preacher and circuit rider for many years before leaving the profession due to health reasons. Afterwards he began writing, and one of his more popular books, *The Circuit Rider: A Tale of the Heroic Age* (1874) dramatizes Midwest frontier life and the hardships of circuit riders. The references to lynching in this book are more akin to the lawlessness of the American West, although its publication in the 1870s would have made the content resonate with the lynchings occurring all over the country ("Edward Eggleston" 165-66).

> "Well!" said Lumsden, excitedly, but still with his little crowing chuckle; "so Wheeler's took the Methodists in! We'll have to see about that. A man that brings such people to the settlement ought to be *lynched.* But I'll match the Methodists. Where's Patty? Patty! O, Patty! Bob, run and find Miss Patty." (92)
>
> They could abide no refinements. The terribleness of Indian warfare, the relentlessness of their own revengefulness, the sudden *lynchings,* the abandoned wickedness of the lawless, and the ruthlessness of mobs of "regulators" were a background upon which they founded the most materialistic conception of hell and the most literal understanding of the Day of Judgment. (104)
>
> Morton was conducted three miles down the river to a log tavern, that being a public and appropriate place for the rendering of the decisions of Judge *Lynch*, and affording, moreover, the convenient refreshments of whiskey and tobacco to those who might become exhausted in their arduous labors on behalf of public justice. (147)
>
> It seems a trifle to tell just here, when Morton and Patty are in trouble—but you will want to know about Brady. He was at Colonel Wheeler's that evening, eagerly telling of Morton's escape from *lynching*, when Mrs. Wheeler expressed her gratification that Morton had ceased to gamble and become a Methodist. (182)

Bret Harte/ Mark Twain: *Ah Sin* (1877)

Ah Sin is a collaborative play written by Bret Harte (1836-1902) and Mark Twain (1835-1910). Bret Harte, while not as recognized as Twain, wrote several canonical works. The play is based

off of Harte's popular poem, "The Heathen Chinee" published in 1871. The poem is a parody, and Truthful James and Bill Nye start a card game with Ah Sin, a Chinese man, hoping to trick him into losing his money. However, Ah Sin ends up deceiving the two men instead. Some view this poem as a social criticism against Chinese labor. Regardless, it was immensely popular, and when Harte was struggling to produce something credible, he decided to join up with Twain to produce a play version of the poem, *An Sin.* The play was not near as a success as the poem (Francis) Bret(t) Harte" 1). Lynching is mentioned several times in the play as a form of quick justice:

> 45: "Drag him out---*Lynch* him, etc." [Referring to Ah Sin]
>
> 69: YORK.
>
> [*excitedly*] At least, I must know the authority by which I am arrested?
>
> FERGUSON.
>
> [*gravely*] Certainly, by order of the highest authority in the land---Judge Lynch!
>
> 85: "Broderick's a dog! Kick him out! *Lynch* him!" (Harte)

There are several other references to hanging and killing in the play as well, as well as many slurs against the Chinese.

Albion Winegar Tourgée's *A Fool's Errand By One of the Fools* (1879)

Albion Tourgée's (1838-1905) *A Fool's Errand* explores the experience of a "carpetbagger" and his struggle against the inequality and violence in the South. Tourgée supported the betterment of African Americans, especially education, and was openly against Southern social norms and institutions that were hindering the welfare of blacks, particularly the Klu Klux Klan. Tourgée became a lawyer and worked in North Carolina. He would accept blacks as his clients just as he would whites, and was often criticized for his willingness to accept blacks as equals. He wrote *A*

Fool's Errand. By One of the Fools (1879) about his own experiences as a Northerner living in the South, and discusses many of the problems of Reconstruction in his novel, a topic that was rarely explored in fiction at the time. *A Fool's Errand* was also made into a play with the collaboration of Steele MacKaye in 1881. Both were extremely successful and made Tourgée very wealthy (Kulshrestha 1). Although the word "lynch" is not used in either of these texts, there are several references to mobs and mob violence.

From the novel:

> Many openly approved the course of the *mob*; others faintly condemned; and no one took any steps to prevent the consummation of the outrage threatened. (87)

> Others had helped fugitive slaves to escape to freedom, with the terrors of Judge *Lynch's rope* and fagots before their eyes. (137)

> And after having been threatened by an armed *mob* who demanded his withdrawal from the canvass on the ground that any one who asked the support of colored men as against a Democratic nominee was precipitating a race-conflict. (513)

From the play:

> SERV. [Servosse] Gentlemen---If you came here in the name of the law, my house and all in it should be at your service, but to the *lawless violence of a mob*, I will never surrender a single inch! (61)

> BROWN [down c.].Which reminds me, thet as I'm a magistrate in this yer county, I've got something to say. Ye've come here to take Jerry Hunt; hes eny of you got a warrant fer him?

> BILL. Sho now, that thur nigger's killed Mr. Burleson er helped ter du it, an' the peple of this county ain't a gwine ter stan' no nonsense about warrants. We haven't got none, an' don't wane none, nuther!
>
> BROWN. You're a nice lot of law-abidin' citizens you are. Ef I done my dooty, I'd issue a warrant and arrest the whole kit an' bilin' on you myself! (61-2)

All of these works address lynching in the context of the American West, immigrants (specifically the Chinese), and African Americans. However, the discussion of all cases is limited. Therefore, when one compares Harris's *Uncle Remus: His Songs and His Sayings* to any of these previous works that depict lynching, it becomes clear how much more open Harris was in addressing mob violence towards African Americans, the worst cases occurring at the time, in fiction. Although the word "lynch" is never used in his text, the references to lynching acts, mob violence, and illustrations of these acts clearly provide a gruesome insight into the horrors of the American South.

Appendix B: Stories That Depict Lynching

Beating

1. "The Wonderful Tar Baby Story"
2. "Mr. Terrapin Appears upon the Scene"
3. "Mr. Fox Tackles Old Man Tarrypin"
4. "Mr. Rabbit and Mr. Bear"
5. "Mr. Fox Gets into Serious Business"
6. "The Sad Fate of Mr. Fox"

Burning

1. "How Mr. Rabbit Was Too Sharp for Mr. Fox"
2. "Mr. Rabbit Grossly Deceives Mr. Fox" (continuation of Tar Baby story)
3. "Mr. Fox Tackles Old Man Tarrypin"
4. "Mr. Rabbit Nibbles Up the Butter"
5. "Mr. Rabbit Meets His Match Again"
6. "Mr. Bear Catches Old Mr. Bull-Frog"

Tarring and Feathering

1. "The Wonderful Tar Baby Story"
2. "Mr. Rabbit Grossly Deceives Mr. Fox" (continuation of Tar Baby story)
3. "How Mr. Rabbit Was Too Sharp for Mr. Fox"

Drowning

1. "How Mr. Rabbit Was Too Sharp for Mr. Fox"
2. "Mr. Fox Tackles Old Man Tarrypin"
3. "Mr. Bear Catches Old Mr. Bull-Frog"

Hanging

1. “How Mr. Rabbit Was Too Sharp for Mr. Fox”

2. “Mr. Rabbit and Mr. Bear”

Skinning

1. “How Mr. Rabbit Was Too Sharp for Mr. Fox”

Killing Children

1. “The Awful Fate of Mr. Wolf”

Scalding Water

1. “The Awful Fate of Mr. Wolf”

Appendix C: Illustrations That Depict Lynchings

Stories Illustrated:	**1880**	**1895**
1. "The Wonderful Tar Baby Story"	yes	yes
2. "Mr. Terrapin Appears upon the Scene"	yes, not of lynching	yes, not of lynching
3. "Mr. Fox Tackles Old Man Tarrypin"	yes	yes
4. "Mr. Rabbit and Mr. Bear"	yes	yes
5. "Mr. Fox Gets into Serious Business"	no	yes
6. "The Sad Fate of Mr. Fox"	no	yes, not of lynching
7. "How Mr. Rabbit Was Too Sharp for Mr. Fox"	no	yes, not of lynching
8. "Mr. Rabbit Grossly Deceives Mr. Fox" (continuation of Tar Baby story)	no	yes, not of lynching
9. "Mr. Rabbit Nibbles Up the Butter"	no	yes
10. "Mr. Rabbit Meets His Match Again"	yes, not of lynching	yes, not of lynching
11. "Mr. Bear Catches Old Mr. Bull-Frog"	yes, not of lynching	yes
12. "The Awful Fate of Mr. Wolf"	yes	yes, not of lynching

"The Wonderful Tar Baby Story"

1880

1895

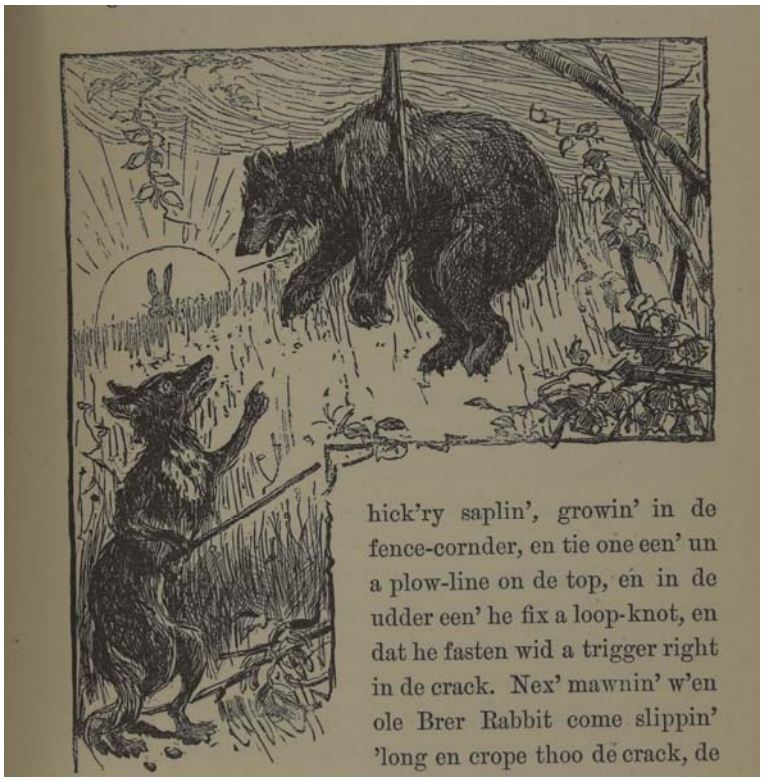
Figure 1

"Mr. Fox Tackles Old Man Tarrypin"

1880

1895

Figure 2



"Mr. Rabbit and Mr. Bear"

1880

1895

Figure 3

"Mr. Fox Gets into Serious Business"

1895

Figure 4

"Mr. Rabbit Nibbles Up the Butter"

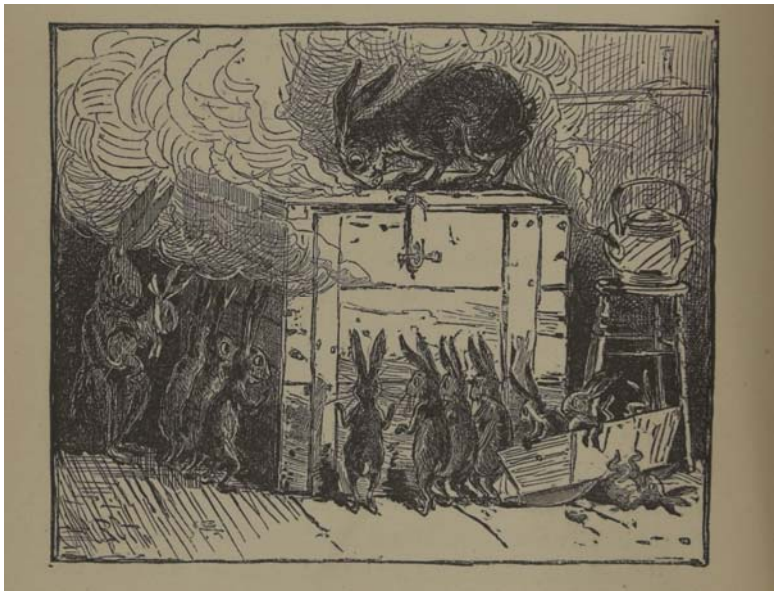
1895

Figure 5

"Mr. Bear Catches Old Mr. Bull-Frog"

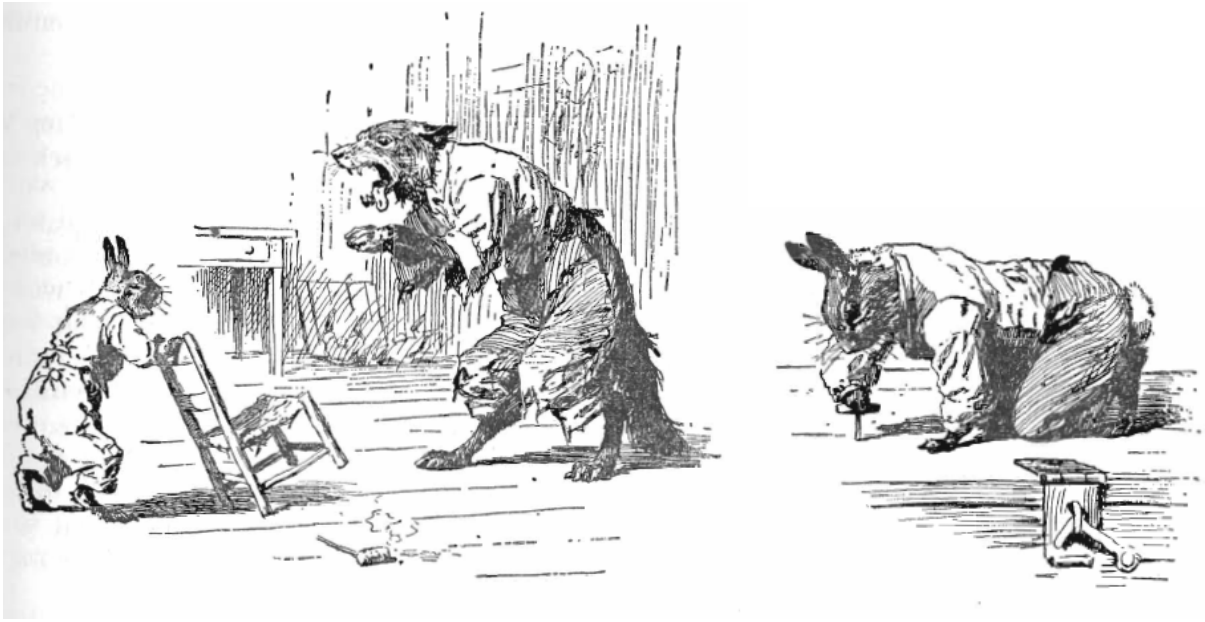
1895

Figure 6



"The Awful Fate of Mr. Wolf"

1880



1895

Figure 7