Rudolph Fisher : An Annotated Bibliography

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RUDOLPH FISHER: AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

by

Craig Gable

A Thesis

Submitted to the Department of English of the

State University of New York, College at Brockport,

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

1998
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Preface

Since this work is bibliographic rather than biographical, I direct readers interested in learning about Fisher’s life to John McCluskey’s introduction to *The City of Refuge: The Collected Short Fiction of Rudolph Fisher* and, though difficult to procure copies of, Calvin Sinnette’s “Rudolph Fisher: Harlem Renaissance Physician-Writer” in the spring 1990 issue of *The Pharos* and Melvin Tolson’s master’s thesis, “The Harlem Group of Negro Writers” (Columbia U, 1940). Unfortunately, ardent students of Fisher will be disappointed to discover how very little is known about the specifics of Fisher’s life and literary career.

I wish to thank the following institutions and their staffs for their assistance and generosity: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University; Drake Memorial Library, State University of New York at Brockport; E. H. Butler Library, State University of New York at Buffalo; Fenwick Library, George Mason University; John Hay Library, Brown University; Library of Congress; Lockwood Memorial Library, University at Buffalo; Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University; New York Public Library (main branch); Rochester Public Libraries (various branches); Rush Rhees Library and Edward G. Miner Library, University of Rochester; and Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library. Additionally, I am especially grateful to those many institutions nationwide who responded to my numerous inquiries and resource requests.

It should be pointed out, too, that an inordinately large portion of the credit for my success in completing this project is due to the staff and resources of Drake Memorial Library at the State University of New York at Brockport. In particular, I am forever in
the debt of interlibrary loan librarians Bob Gilliam and Diana Faire, both of whom were perfectly inspirational in their unflagging (and uncomplaining!) dedication over the past year to servicing my increasingly taxing weekly requests for materials and information both near and far. In truth, there was no one I came to rely on more for assistance and no one I could trust more to succeed on my behalf. Without them I and my project would have surely floundered most miserably. Would that every library be so blessed with professionals such as they.

I must also thank Drs. David G. Hale, Yuko Matsukawa, and Mara McFadden for their unqualified commitment to my project, genial administration thereof, and, along the way, helpful suggestions, thoughtful criticisms, timely proddings, etc.

Finally, I would like to extend special gratitude to Sandra Holinbaugh Beltz, Mary Ann Giglio, Diana Pask, Marcella Esler, Bernice Graham, Jean Gravelle, Nancy Kuhl, Richard Deming, and Adrienne Furness—whose quiet hospitality and unsolicited moral support stand in testament to their devotion to my professional growth and general well being in the world.
Rudolph John Chauncey Fisher (1897-1934), though a physician by profession, is better known as an acclaimed African-American fiction writer of the Harlem Renaissance, the African-American arts movement of the 1920s-30s. Born in Washington, DC on May 9, 1897 and raised in Providence, RI, Fisher received degrees in English and biology from Brown University (1919, 1920) and a medical degree from Howard University (1924). By 1926 Fisher had moved to New York City, living in Harlem and working later as a roentgenologist (x-ray specialist). While still in medical school, he published his first short story, "The City of Refuge," in the prestigious *Atlantic Monthly*, a feat which gained him instant notoriety and respect from his literary peers in the African-American community and beyond. In the following ten years Fisher would go on to publish fourteen more short stories and two novels. While generally prized more for the gritty realism of his short fiction and his consistently unbiased panoramic portrayal of authentic 1920's-30's Harlem life, Fisher's first novel, *The Walls of Jericho*, was likewise well received while the latter work, *The Conjure-Man Dies*, marked the debut in African-American literature of the "black" detective/mystery novel. Regrettably, Fisher's untimely death in 1934, at the age of 37, cut short what appeared to be a promising career as a writer, a loss which has latterly been identified as one of the defining moments in the demise of the Harlem Renaissance itself.

Coincidentally, 1997, the year I conceived of and commenced working on the Fisher bibliography, marks the one hundredth anniversary of Rudolph Fisher's birth—a seemingly significant fact that failed to occur to me until the latter stages of this project.
over a year later... Devotees of the likes of Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, and other African-American literary notables would hardly let such a traditionally auspicious occasion go unnoticed much less uncommemorated. Yet the Fisher centennial slid silently—nay, invisibly—by not only the general public (to whom Fisher is well nigh nonexistent) but the literary establishment (of whom we could say the same, notwithstanding a select few whose interests specifically encompass the Harlem Renaissance) and, sadly, even myself (who should know better). And even while both in the United States and England Fisher’s two novels have recently been reissued and his short stories collected and published, Fisher and his works appear to remain as obscure as ever and his contributions to the Harlem Renaissance and African-American literature at large scarcely known and largely unfelt.

My own experiences with respect to preparing to write a critical analysis of Fisher’s *The Conjure-Man Dies* (which was originally what this thesis was to consist of) led me to discover that my initial searching for secondary sources was hampered by the fact that bibliographies for Fisher were largely outdated and tended to include inaccurate, incomplete, inconsistent, and/or erroneous citations. Even Fisher scholar Leonard’s J. Deutsch’s “Corrected Bibliography” (*Bulletin of Bibliography*, 1978—item 416 in the bibliography), which purports to serve as a correcting mechanism for repairing longstanding errors, only manages to create more problems than it resolves. Moreover, no extant bibliography can lay claim to being comprehensive much less definitive. although Deutsch’s (above) and Margaret Perry’s (in *The Short Fiction of Rudolph Fisher*, 1987—item 423 in the bibliography) are genuinely helpful insofar as they develop and update the bibliographic record, especially with regard to secondary sources. What
remained to be accomplished, therefore, was the creation of a dependable (if not
authoritative) updated comprehensive record of primary and secondary sources for
Rudolph Fisher. Accordingly, this is what I have attempted herein.

This bibliography is intended to provide researchers with an updated, accurate,
and thorough listing of primary and secondary sources relating to Rudolph Fisher. While
certainly the most comprehensive gathering of Fisher-related materials to date, it must be
admitted that time constraints have forced its completion prior to exhausting all possible
avenues of research. Of primary concern, for example, is the existence and whereabouts
of some of Fisher’s several elusive and otherwise unseen unpublished manuscripts
believed to be held by his estate. As far as secondary sources are concerned, there still
remain numerous African-American periodicals dating from the 1920s and 30s which,
due to their relative unavailability, remain altogether untouched by Fisher scholars.
Nevertheless, despite these lingering needs, it is likely that any future explorers will not
unearth treasures of great wealth but rather will only dig up trinkets of minor value at
best.

The chief goal of this project since its inception has been to attend to the matter of
Fisher bibliography and its outstanding history of errors, inaccuracies, inconsistencies,
and omissions. Toward this end I have taken it upon myself to verify information
firsthand rather than rely on information provided for me by preexisting printed sources,
bibliographic databases, or library catalogs. Ultimately my hope is that this work will
succeed in exorcising the specter of confusion and misinformation that for over half a
century has haunted Fisher studies.
The contents of the following bibliography are divided into two major alphabetically arranged sections, primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include short and long fiction (including inscribed editions of novels), non-fiction, reviews (by Fisher), correspondence, and unpublished writings. Secondary sources include critical articles, parts of books (there being to date no single book-length work devoted exclusively to examining Fisher), unpublished criticism (i.e., dissertations, master theses, etc.), reviews and notices, correspondence, biographies and death notices, and bibliographies. Additionally, following the bibliography proper is a separate listing entitled “Miscellanea” which includes entries and annotations documenting archival holdings, primarily materials relating to Fisher’s collegiate life as well as photographs of Fisher and of the Lafayette Theatre’s production of *The Conjur Man Dies*.

Annotations herein are designed to be as brief as necessity warrants. In general, secondary source annotations are intended to identify 1) which specific Fisher works are discussed, 2) a thesis or major point/issue, 3) new or unique information, 4) erroneous information, 5) length and/or depth of a given source, and, on a few occasions, 6) value judgments about the quality of information. In rare instances—such as the case with anthologized editions of Fisher’s writing—annotations have been deemed unnecessary. Items which I have been unable to see and/or read firsthand (e.g., master’s theses, articles written in foreign languages, unpublished materials held by Fisher’s estate) have been identified accordingly.
Documentation used herein generally adheres to MLA usage (Joseph Gibaldi, *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 4th ed., MLA, 1995). Nevertheless, in the interests of fully assisting users of this bibliography, I have chosen to depart from standard MLA practice by including page number references at the end of citations for secondary source books. In most cases such references merely duplicate those found in indexes of individual books; however, since some books contain incomplete and/or inaccurate page number references, omit subject and/or name indexes, or, in the case of some alphabetically-arranged works, provide inadequate cross references, I thought it best to include this additional research aid.

Frequently annotations include boldfaced numbers (bibliography identification numbers), which serve as cross-references to related items contained in the bibliography. (Note: In order to avoid needless confusion, page references appearing within annotations are prefaced with "page(s)," "p." or "pp.") Furthermore, a standardized set of abbreviations has been adopted and included in this bibliography for the purposes of identifying works by Fisher referred to in primary and secondary sources—a key for which appears on page xiv.

The rationale underlying the selection of materials, both primary and secondary, included in this bibliography has primarily been guided by a spirit of liberality. Given how little is generally known about Fisher’s private and public life, and given how difficult it is to make accurate assessments about Fisher as an individual, physician, and author without first undergoing extensive and time-consuming research, my goal throughout this project has been to gather as much relevant material about Fisher as possible in order to release fellow and future scholars of Fisher from the unhappy task of
locating and selecting materials. Researching Fisher provides students and scholars with unique difficulties given Fisher’s general obscurity since most of the criticism and commentary about Fisher appears in bits and pieces in various books and articles which are otherwise devoted to larger issues of the Harlem Renaissance, African-American literature, and/or literature in general. Accordingly, this bibliography is liberally constructed insofar as it includes items—death notices and obituaries, for example—which ultimately may prove of little or no practical use to researchers. In such cases, however, I have purposely avoided making suppositions about what researchers may or may not find useful and, in the main, excluded only those sources which I deemed too superficial or redundant to warrant inclusion.

I should add a few words about the presence in this work of items relating to the Lafayette Theatre’s 1936 production of *The Conjur Man Dies*, a posthumous dramatization of Fisher’s second novel. While I am not unaware of the debate surrounding the authorship of the dramatization (i.e., in short, whether Fisher is wholly, partly, or not at all responsible for its creation), my research led me ultimately to consider the dramatization to be inextricably tied to Fisher studies and therefore not deserving exclusion.

Finally, aside from the bibliography proper, this work includes in the introductory section a chronology of Fisher’s publications as well as key events in his life and an outline for the bibliography. At the end of this work, in addition to the endnotes and a brief appendix, are two indexes. The first is an index of people’s names—authors and non-authors alike—which appear in the bibliography as well as the “Miscellanea” section. The second index lists periodical titles which appear in the bibliography.
Abbreviations Used in This Work

Air  “Across the Airshaft”
Back  “The Backslider”
Blades  “Blades of Steel”
City  “The City of Refuge”
CMD  The Conjure-Man Dies: A Mystery Tale of Dark Harlem
CMDd  The Conjur Man Dies (drama)
Common  “Common Meter”
CR  The City of Refuge: The Collected Stories of Rudolph Fisher
Caucasian  “The Caucasian Storms Harlem”
Complex  “The Complexion of Negro Night Clubs”
Cynthie  “Miss Cynthie”
Dust  “Dust”
Ezek  “Ezekiel”
EzekG  “Ezekiel Goes to School”
EzekL  “Ezekiel Learns”
Fire  “Fire by Night”
Guard  “Guardian of the Law”
Golden  Golden Slippers
JP  Joy and Pain
Lindy  “The Lindy Hop” (a.k.a. “The Lindy-Hop”)
Losf  “Lost Love Blues”
Nose  “John Archer’s Nose”
Pass  “The Man Who Passed” (a.k.a. “Passing for Black,” “False Face,”
      “Incident in Harlem,” and “Perryn Joel Passes”)
Perfect  “The Perfect Understanding”
Prom  “The Promised Land”
Ring  “Ringtail”
Shadow  “The Shadow of White”
SF  The Short Fiction of Rudolph Fisher
Skeeter  “Skeeter”
South  “The South Lingers On”
Vestiges  “Vestiges: Harlem Sketches”
Vici  The Vici Kid
Wages  “One Month’s Wages”
War  “War Hero” (a.k.a. “The Soldier”)
WJ  The Walls of Jericho
Yaller  “High Yaller”
Chronology of Events


1915 Graduates from Classical High School in Providence, Rhode Island.


1926 Wife gives birth to their first and only child, Hugh.

1927 Works as roentgenologist at Mt. Sinai and Montefiore hospitals in New York.


1929 Superintendent for International Hospital in New York (through 1932).

1930 X-ray technician for New York City Health Dept. (through 1934).


1934 Undergoes surgery for stomach disorder in March, October, and December. Dies in the Edgecombe Sanitarium in New York on 26 December.


1936 The Conjur Man Dies, dramatization of second novel, debuts at Harlem’s Lafayette Theater.

1987 Published short fiction collected in two separate posthumous collections.
Chronology of Publications

1925

February

March

May
“Ringtail” *(Atlantic Monthly)*.

October/
November
“High Yaller” *(Crisis)*.

1926

March
“Action of Ultra Violet Light upon Bacteriophage and Filterable Viruses” *(Proceedings of the Society of Experimental Biology and Medicine)*.

1927

January
“The Promised Land” *(Atlantic Monthly)*.

March
“The Resistance of Different Concentrations of Bacteriophage to Ultraviolet Rays” *(Journal of Infectious Diseases)*.

August

December
“Fire by Night” *(McClure’s)*.

1928

August

1929

May
Review of DuBose Heyward’s *Mamba’s Daughters* *(Book League Monthly)*.

August
Review of Vera Caspary’s *The White Girl* *(Opportunity)*.
# Outline of the Fisher Bibliography

1. Primary Sources
   A. Short Fiction
   B. Collected Short Fiction
   C. Novels
   D. Non-Fiction
   E. Professional Publications
   F. Anthologized Writings
      i. “Blades of Steel”
      ii. “The Caucasian Storms Harlem”
      iii. “The City of Refuge”
      iv. “Common Meter”
      v. *The Conjure-Man Dies*
      vi. “Dust”
      vii. “High Yaller”
      viii. “An Introduction to Contemporary Harlemese: Expurgated and Abridged”
      ix. “Miss Cynthie”
      x. “The South Lingers On”
      xi. *The Walls of Jericho*
   G. Reviews
   H. Unpublished and Archival Writings
      i. Short Fiction
      ii. Novel
      iii. Non-Fiction
      iv. Drama
   I. Correspondence

2. Secondary Sources
   A. Articles
   B. Parts of Books
   C. Dissertations, Masters Theses, and Honors Papers
   D. Reviews and Notices
      i. “Blades of Steel”
      ii. “The City of Refuge”
      iii. *The City of Refuge: The Collected Stories of Rudolph Fisher*
      iv. *The Conjure-Man Dies*
      v. *The Conjur Man Dies* (Play)
      vi. “Fire by Night”
      vii. “Miss Cynthie”
      viii. *The Short Fiction of Rudolph Fisher*
      ix. “The South Lingers On”
      x. *The Walls of Jericho*
   E. Correspondence
   F. Biographies and Death Notices
   G. Bibliographies
1. Primary Sources

A. Short Fiction


Eben Grimes, after having his church membership revoked on account of his unseemly behavior, temporarily forsakes faith and God in favor of championing a life of sin and selfishness. Soon thereafter Eben learns—though not without the aid of a worldly wise cabaret singer—that his faith remains intact and that his judges, primarily the allegedly reformed Deacon Crutchfield, are merely hypocrites who lack the true faith he himself possesses. Includes two illustrations by Herbert M. Stoops.


A grudge between "Eight Ball" Eddie Boyd and the mean spirited, knife-wielding Dirty Cozzens escalates until, at the story’s climax, the two finally face off. Eight Ball wins, though not without the cunning assistance of his companion, Effie Wright.


King Solomon Gillis—a naïve newcomer to Harlem recently arrived from Waxhaw, North Carolina—strikes up a supposed friendship with Mouse Uggams, also from Waxhaw. The latter quickly dupes Gillis into working as a drug distributor for him, soon thereafter resulting in Gillis’s arrest.¹

Bus Williams and Fess Baxter, rival band leaders at the Arcadia ballroom, are introduced as competitors in an upcoming jazz contest and, more importantly, for the heart of Jean Ambrose, a beautiful young Arcadia hostess and long-time acquaintance of Bus. Part I concludes with Fess with the apparent romantic advantage and much miscellaneous discussion of the Bus-Fess rivalry. Contains numerous typos.


Part II opens with the onset of the jazz competition. By sabotaging Bus’s drums and planting paid supporters in the audience, Fess manages to edge out Bus for first place. However, the audience and Jean are both on Bus’s side—especially after they discover Fess’s treachery—and declare Bus the winner of both the loving cup and Jean Ambrose. Includes one anonymous illustration.


Pard, driven by prejudice and hungry for revenge, metes out violent justice against white motorists in the Connecticut countryside in his recklessly driven black-and-silver roadster. But much to his surprise and consternation, though, his latest victim turns out to be black rather than white.


The story’s namesake, a young rural Georgia boy only recently transplanted to the strange and wonderful urban world of Harlem, undergoes a moment of
crisis in which he must weigh the importance of desire and popularity against responsibility and faithfulness. Includes two illustrations by E. Simms Campbell.


This "sequel" to Ezek features a more street-wise protagonist whose quick acclimation to city life enables him to silently rescue a friend from the vengeful treachery of Spink, a bitter rival. Includes three illustrations by Kurt Wiese.


Rusty Pride, a down-on-his-luck World War I veteran whose disenchantment with the world leads him away from his father and Roma Lee, a love interest, twice faces-off with the ill-natured Stud Samson. On the second occasion Rusty rescues Roma from Samson's clutches and, in escaping, inadvertently seeks refuge in the entranceway of his father's house, apparently a sign of better things to come. Includes six illustrations by Kerr Eby.


Sam, a rookie police officer, is lured into a trap by Grip Beasley, formerly a candidate for Sam's position who now plots Sam's downfall. Luckily, Grammie, Sam's loving and spirited grandmother, suspects trouble and comes to her grandson's assistance.


Evelyn Brown, a young fair-skinned African-American woman, schemes with her friend Jay Martin to dispel rumors suggesting she consciously
...prefers light-skinned acquaintances. This half of the story concludes with Evelyn and Jay mistakenly mistreated for being an inter-racial couple—an error in judgement also made by a sinister stranger loitering on the street.

Part I includes only sections 1-2 of story.

(12) "High Yaller" (Part II). *Crisis* Nov. 1925: 33-38.

Following parallel dream sequences in which Evelyn and Jay debate with their consciences, the former disappears in the wake of her mother’s death, leaving Jay to believe she decided to "pass." In her absence Jay is arrested for allegedly dating a white woman and, by way of learning his lesson, is beaten by the police. At story’s end, in a sobering, ironic scene, Jay’s suspicions about Evelyn are confirmed firsthand. Includes one illustration by Laura Wheeler.

(13) "John Archer’s Nose." *Metropolitan* Jan. 1935: 10-12, 47-50, 52, 67, 69-71, 73-75, 80-82. After relating to Detective Perry Dart the story of his recent failure to save a child’s life thanks to superstitious parents, Dr. John Archer and his companion are called to the sight of the murder of Sonny Dewey. After sifting through of the various clues as well as the suspects’ alibis and motives, Archer figures out who the murderer is thanks to a persistently familiar smell at the murder scene which he eventually connects with the aforementioned medical case. Though seemingly all of the family members are implicated in the murder, it turns out that the distraught father (Solomon Bright) of the deceased child has vowed to avenge himself on the Dewey...
family since it was Ma Dewey's magic charm which, in his mind, cursed his child rather than saved it. Includes two illustrations by an unidentified artist.


Miss Cynthie, a conservative, God-fearing grandmother from the South, comes to New York City to visit her prosperous grandson, Dave Tappen. Though her lifelong wish for Dave has been that he take up a respectable profession, preferably in medicine, she discovers to her initial horror that he is instead a vaudeville performer. In the end, Dave convinces her of his and his profession's respectability by singing a song on stage especially for Miss Cynthie, one that she herself taught Dave as a child.


Mammy, an elderly conservative Southern woman recently moved to Harlem, laments the mutual hostility growing up between her two grandsons, Sam and Wesley. Blaming their altered personalities on the unpleasant influences of urban life and its attendant evils (chiefly the loss of respect for God and religion). Mammy temporarily prevents them fighting over a woman only to soon thereafter have Sam accidentally cause Wesley to fall to his death in a dispute over the same woman.


Cyril Sebastian Best, an overly proud, slightly self-deluded immigrant from the British West Indies. succeeds in revenging himself on Punch Anderson
who, after assaulting Cyril on the street, adds insult to injury by dating the woman Cyril wants for himself.


Contains five independent Harlem vignettes which together touch on the following issues: urban-rural/North-South cultural conflicts, religious values and their persistence/demise in the urban North, and intergenerational relationships and conflicts. Includes one photo by Lewis W. Hine.\(^5\)

**B. Collected Short Fiction**


Stories are divided into two sections—first eight in "Quest" and remaining seven in "The New Land"—and arranged in the following order: City, Ring, South, Ezek, EzekL, Prom, Guard, Cynthie, Yaller, Dust, Back, Fire, Blades, Common, Nose. Includes an introduction (232) and a primary source bibliography (422). Concluding ten paragraphs of Common omitted.


Stories arranged in the following order: Cynthie, City, Ring, South, Ezek, EzekL, Prom, Guard, Yaller, Dust, Back, Fire, Blades, Common, Nose. Concluding ten paragraphs of Common omitted. Includes a one-page biography and Fisher's lexicon of "Harlemese." "High Yaller" is misspelled ("Yeller") in the biography. Cover photo by Sharron Wallace.


Stories arranged in the following order: City, Ring, Yaller, South, Prom, Blades, Back, Fire, Common, Dust, Guard, Cynthie, Nose, Ezek, EzekL.

Also includes four editorial essays (235, 236, 237, 241), a publication chronology (pp. 26-27), and a primary-secondary source bibliography (423).

C. Novels


Dr. John Archer, an intellectual Harlem physician with an insatiable curiosity, and Detective Perry Dart work together to solve the mystery of who killed N’Gana Frimbo, a Harlem “psychist” and graduate of Harvard University who is actually a king of an African nation. Curiously enough, Frimbo himself returns to life in the midst of the investigation, claiming that his body was merely in a state of animated suspension while his mind was elsewhere. This apparent returning from the dead only serves to further confuse matters as well as the investigators. Circumstantial evidence implicates Jinx Jenkins in the murder, though other suspects include Bubber Brown (Jenkins’s companion), Doty Hicks (a drug user who confesses to attempting to kill Frimbo through his own conjuring), Spider Webb (a well known Harlem number-runner), Easley Jones (a railroad porter), Aramintha Snead (a devout Christian whose alcoholic husband abuses her), and Martha Crouch (Frimbo’s landlady)—all of whom were in Frimbo’s apartment at
the time of the crime. After much sifting through of clues, it is discovered that it is Frimbo's manservant, N'Ogo Frimbo, who was mistakenly killed by Easley Jones. Jones soon thereafter kills Frimbo himself. As it turns out, Jones is actually Samuel Crouch, Martha's jealous husband who has learned that she and Frimbo are having a love affair. Dust jacket design by Charles H. Alston.

Inscribed editions of *CMD* held as follows: 1) Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale U, New Haven, JWJ Zan F536 932c (with jacket) [For my friend Carl Van Vechten / this experiment with / a technique / “Bud” / New York / July 14 1932]; 2) Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York, Sc Rare C 81-27 (with jacket) [For Sally & Eric / — two of the few whose / existence really matters — / this volume in inscribed / with affection / “Bud”]; and 3) Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York, Sc Rare C81-27 (remains of jacket glued to inside of back cover) [To Bill King / feature Editor of the / Evening Post / with the compliments of / Rudolph Fisher / New York [?] / 26 VII 32].


Includes introduction by Stanley Ellin (209).


Includes introduction by Stanley Ellin (209).


Joshua "Shine" Jones, a furniture-mover who lives life according to his own code of streetwise skepticism and bravado, along with his comical coworkers, Bubber Brown and Jinx Jenkins, are hired by Fred Merrit, an exceptionally fair-skinned African-American lawyer who despises whites and is moving into an exclusively white neighborhood merely out of spite. In the process, all four men are briefly introduced to Linda Young, an attractive young woman who works as a maid for Merrit’s neighbor Agatha Cramp, a well-meaning yet ignorant and hopelessly shortsighted on-again, off-again social uplifter. Henry Patmore, a successful bootlegger and owner of a popular Harlem pool hall, temporarily wins Linda’s attentions at a dance through a ruse but is later driven off by Shine, whom Linda had previously brushed off. Shine and Linda tentatively begin a relationship, followed by her being hired by Merrit (whom Shine instinctively distrusts due to his social status) as a maid. The couple soon afterwards have a falling out but are somewhat reunited through a near fatal accident at Merrit’s house. Later that same night Shine discovers that Linda has been attacked and believes Merrit responsible. Though intent to punish Merrit, Shine unexpectedly discovers him weeping amidst the charred ruins of his home and decides instead to delay seeking his vengeance. After a visit with Linda in the hospital, in which Shine and she both finally cast off their
pretenses and admit their affection for one another. Shine accidentally discovers that Patmore (who holds a long-time grudge against Merrit) is in fact responsible for the arson and the attack on Linda. Ultimately Shine discloses everything to Merrit who, out of gratitude, good will, and racial solidarity, offers to set up Shine in his own furniture moving business. Dust jacket design by Aaron Douglas.

Inscribed editions of *N* held as follows: 1) Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale U, New Haven, JWJ Zan F536 928w c. 1 [For Carlo, my friend, / a good boogy if / ever there was one — / Bud]; 2) Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale U, New Haven, JWJ Zan F536 928w c. 2 [For James Weldon Johnson / in appreciation of a / word of encouragement / long ago — / Rudolph Fisher]; 3) Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale U, New Haven, JWJ Zan F536 928w c. 3 [For Walter White — / my friend — with the / hope of attaining some / measure of his success — / Rudolph Fisher / “Bud”]; 4) Moorland-Spingarn Research Center (Library Division), Howard University, Washington, DC, M813.5 Fisher F53w (with jacket) [For Arthur B. Spingarn, / with the author’s best / wishes — / Rudolph Fisher MD / New York / 15 · X · 28]; 5) Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York, Sc Rare C 81-31 (with jacket) [For Sallie & Ern [?] — / my friends, — / “Bud”]; and 6) Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York, Sc Rare Fic (rebound, without jacket) [With best wishes from / the author / Rudolph Fisher / New York City / 12/16’30].
Includes introduction by William H. Robinson, Jr. (245).

Includes introduction by William H. Robinson, Jr. (245).


[22d] London: X, 1995.9
Includes introduction by Justin Wokoma (259) and one-page biography. “High Yaller” is misspelled (“Yeller”) in the biography. Omitted from the text are Fisher’s dedication to his mother, the epigraph, and the six section designation titles.

Cover photo by Sharron Wallace.

D. Non-Fiction

A contemplative essay—sometimes reminiscence, sometimes social commentary—examining the frenzied interest of white New Yorkers in Harlem’s cabarets. Gives colorful descriptions of several prominent cabarets, past and present, as well as those who frequent(ed) them, employees and customers alike. Also reviews African-American contributions to theatre and music in the context of how it affected and was affected by popularity with white audiences at home and overseas. Concludes with the hope that such an interest in Harlem’s culture will breed more inter-cultural understanding.
E. Professional Publications


F. Anthologized Writings

i. “Blades of Steel”


ii. "The Caucasian Storms Harlem"


Omits sections four and five of the original essay.


iii. "The City of Refuge"


[38] *Der Hammer* Oct. 1926: 3-6.
Not read. Translated by W. Abrams, B. Fenster, and M. Olgin. Possibly only an excerpt. Issue also includes translated works by Zora Neale Hurston, Bruce Nugent, Langston Hughes, Jean Toomer, and James Weldon Johnson.

Includes seven questions for discussion.


iv. "Common Meter"


Includes introduction (198).

v. *The Conjure-Man Dies*


Excerpt includes all of chapters one and two.

vi. "Dust"


vii. “High Yaller”


viii. “An Introduction to Contemporary Harlemese: Expurgated and Abridged”


ix. “Miss Cynthie”


   Alternately titled *The Best Short Stories by Negro Writers: An Anthology from 1899 to the Present.*


   Contains only an excerpt—titled “Miss Cynthie’s Arrival”—which includes all of the first section of story (i.e., up to first section break).


   Includes photograph.


Includes post-reading materials under the following headings on pp. 113-16: Questions for Discussion, Building Vocabulary, Setting, Thinking and Writing, and About the Author.


**x. “The South Lingers On”**


A facsimile reproduction of story as it appears in *Survey Graphic*.16


Only includes fifth vignette from story—titled “Revival” in accordance with Locke's version in *The New Negro* (66). Footnote mistakenly credits Locke's anthology with first publishing the story.

A reprinting of South given new title of "Vestiges: Harlem Sketches."
Locke omits the second of the five original vignettes and subtitles the remaining four as follows: I – “Shepherd! Lead Us”; II – “Majutah”; III – “Learnin’”; and IV – “Revival.” Includes artwork by Winold Reiss.

xi. The Walls of Jericho

Excerpt includes all of chapter eighteen.

Excerpt includes majority of chapter one.

Excerpt includes all of chapter nine save the opening sentence and a majority of chapter ten.

Excerpt includes majority of chapter ten.

Excerpt includes all of chapter five and majority of chapter ten.
G. Reviews


Declares this novel to be the best of the author’s so far thanks to an added dimension of “philosophical beauty” hitherto missing in Heyward’s earlier works. Fisher also notes the book’s “social courage” insofar as it presents a protagonist who challenges mainstream (white) expectations for behavior, thought, motivation, etc. of African Americans.


Identifies novel’s theme as the demise of the New Negro but is uncertain over what point ultimately the story intends to communicate. Thinks Paul Arbian is the single “engaging” character, but finds him “too lightly drawn” by the author. In closing, suggests that Thurman’s own work fails to raise the allegedly fallen spirit of the New Negro.


 Defines the book as a sociological text rather than a novel proper. Overall approves of and enjoys the story, but takes minor issue with some overly convenient coincidences of plot as well as with Schuyler’s failure to better disguise his “vehemence.” Fisher’s name is misspelled (“Fischer”) at the article’s head and in the issue’s index.

[75] “Revealing a Beauty That Is Black.” Rev. of One Way to Heaven, by Countee
Believes Cullen’s novel succeeds thanks to the author’s skillful portrayal of authentic black characters who, thanks to this authentic representation, reveal the “black beauty” of their souls. Makes note of Cullen’s unbalanced treatment of upper and lower classes, unsympathetically caricaturing the former while “gently and delicately” delineating the latter.


Describes novel as entirely devoid of aesthetic and artistic merit as well as being uninteresting, uninspired, and generally unworthy of attention.


Condemns novel as a “psychological fairy-tale” which falls flat thanks to unconvincing characters, a poorly conceived plot, and “the author’s ignorance of black-white psychology.” A thorough (sometimes humorous and probably well deserved) trouncing.


Observes the following about the novel: “The pace...is leisurely, the writing simple and unaffected, the descriptions clear-cut with occasional touches of poetry, and the depictions of home life unexciting enough to be entirely credible.” Only outstanding complaint regards inappropriateness of Harlem restaurant scene, believing it out of place in a novel which professes to not concern itself overtly with issues of race.

[79] “White, High Yellow, Black.” Rev. of *Gingertown,* by Claude McKay. *Books*
Specifically praises the first of the five stories in the book, all of which focus on complexion-related themes and contain "by far the most dramatic scenes of the collection." Describes remaining seven as relating difficulties which happen to African Americans but which involve general issues not specific to the race. Overall, the collection is invested with typical McKaysian "robust vigor." Includes reproduction of jacket design.

H. Unpublished and Archival Writings

i. Short Fiction

“Across the Airshaft.” Ts. Brown, Providence.

19-page typescript.

Rip Halliday, a rent-collector who has just lost his day’s collection to a mugger, notices a depressed young woman through her apartment window across the intervening airshaft. Betty Green, the woman, receives a visit from Mrs. Devlin, her landlady, who demands the overdue rent but, seeing Betty has no money, insinuates that she can work it off instead through prostitution. Hearing all this, Rip takes his few remaining bills and tosses them across the airshaft and onto the unwitting Betty’s bed. Once she discovers the money Devlin returns with Buck Martin, a self-confessed bootlegger and hijacker of rent-collectors who is soon thereafter driven out of the room by Rip—now with gun in hand—and forced to leave his $500 behind. Betty then escapes with the money into Rip’s apartment via a
clothesline, after which the two of them retreat to an unnamed restaurant where Betty offers Rip the $500 (which he'll use to cover the money he previously lost) and Rip informs Betty that he can get her a bookkeeping position at the realty company's office because the present bookkeeper is retiring.

Carbon copy of 25-page typescript. Contains over 700 words later removed by Fisher in addition to missing a minimal amount of text later added for final version of story (3). Notably, story ends differently than final version: with Gillis being arrested and then immediately shot (and killed?) by the nameless West Indian character, who is quickly apprehended by police on the scene. Probably written in late 1923 or early 1924. Fisher Family Papers, Box 1 (2), SCM 94-6.

[82] "Ezekiel Goes to School." Location/existence unknown.
According to Perry (236) and Deutsch (147), this story was accepted by American Junior Red Cross though never published.

13-page incomplete manuscript. Contains only the following pp.: 1-6, 17, 17a, 20, 21 (?), 22, 24 (two separate pages bear the p. 24 designation).

25-page typescript with handwritten corrections. Cover page bears two handwritten comments, one which reads "Bad end" and the other (which is
only partially readable) which describes the dance hall scene as "confused."

Written some time from 1929 to 1932 (bears International Hospital address).

Story divided into three sections.

Tillie, a twenty year old who's bound to win a hostess position at the Arcadia, defies her grandmother's ruling and sneaks out that night to compete in the Arcadia's dance contest. Grammie soon chases after her, concerned that Tillie will end up dead at an early age ("burnt up with ragtime") like Tillie's mother. Bucky—a favorite of Grammie's despite demonstrating only an ambivalent interest in Tillie—is also at the dance but appears to forsake Grammie in her time of need. Tillie and her partner, Solo, take their turn on the dance floor, but Solo performs so poorly that Tillie eventually flees the dance floor into the waiting arms of Grammie.

Back at home, after Tillie swears off the Arcadia, Bucky reveals to Grammie that he secretly gave Solo a "drink" before the dance—which turns out to be mince flavoring.


23-page typescript with handwritten corrections. Story title now includes a hyphen. Bucky's name is changed to Pepper (or Pep) though one instance of Bucky still appears on p. 22. Written no earlier than September 1932 (bears Long Island address).

Dance hall scene has been drastically rewritten such that Grammie and Pepper now impulsively join the dancers, effectively stopping the show and winning the day with their bizarre yet fascinating dance-floor
improvisations: a performance finally ended with Grammie's collapse. Tillie, though angered at first by her grandmother's antics, quickly comes to understand the depth of Grammie's sincerity of concern and love, ultimately being won over by the woman's heedless risk of her own life for the sake of a loved one.


46-page typescript. Story divided into three sections.

Cinnamon and Jed are married newcomers to Harlem from Waxhaw, Georgia who, at the story's outset, get into an augment over Jed's being fired for arguing with his boss. Cinnamon angrily departs but soon regains her composure and buys a lodestone and special powder designed to give luck and happiness from a fakir she meets up with. Meanwhile, Strut Sim—in whose apartment Cinnamon and Jed rent a room—schemes to set up Jed in order to obscure his own bootlegging activities. Specifically, Strut fears Blue Berry, a recent customer who has sworn vengeance because he believes Strut's liquor killed his son. Meanwhile, Strut's jealous wife, Addie, believes her husband is scheming to eliminate Jed so he can have Cinnamon for himself. Strut ends up convincing the now intoxicated Jed to become a partner in the business, after which Berry makes an appearance and is convinced through Jed's drunken words that he is responsible for the son's death. Later, Jed becomes violently ill after eating some stew in which Cinnamon placed the magic powder. Addie, more convinced than ever about Strut, exposes what Cinnamon has done and suggests she
poisoned Jed and makes known her suspicions about Strut. Jed attempts to strangle Cinnamon but is stopped by being shot by Berry. Following Jed’s recovery, he denounces his wife, but not before overhearing Strut admit to setting Jed up and poisoning him. A fight ensues. Cinnamon and Addie look on as Jed eventually overpowers Strut, sparing his life only thanks to Cinnamon’s singing of the “Lost Love Blues.” Jed and Cinnamon then quickly and happily reunite.


24-page typescript with handwritten corrections. Title is typed but crossed out, replaced with handwritten title “False Face” which is also crossed out; a scarcely legible second handwritten title believed to be “Incident at Harlem” is also crossed out. Story divided into seven sections.

Perryn Joel, a dark-skinned white reporter, is sent by his editor to infiltrate Harlem as an African-American newcomer named Joel Perry. He is soon befriended and taken in by Tom Edwards and his family. Edwards and his associate Bent are actually drug peddlers and highly suspicious of Joel for fear of being discovered. Roanna, Edward’s unsuspecting and otherwise innocent daughter, is advised to discover Joel’s secret—which she does, but later overhears her father plotting Joel’s demise. Later, at a saloon, Joel is mistaken for a white policeman who shot Eight-Ball (whose death, Edwards relates earlier, his comrades swear to avenge) but escapes injury thanks to Roanna’s calling the police. Afterwards, Roanna reveals to Joel that she knows his secret.

22-page typescript with handwritten corrections. Notable alteration involves removal of David and Ruth’s attempt to convince Miss Cynthie they are married (pp. 10-11). Written some time from 1929 to 1932 (bears International Hospital address). (See 14).

“One Month’s Wages.” Ts. Privately held by Fisher family.21

Not seen.

“The Perfect Understanding.” Ts. Privately held by Fisher family.

Not seen. Some sources omit the article in the title.


According to Pearl Fisher (419), this item was bought but never published by Survey Graphic in December 1927. (Note: Pearl Fisher is Rudolph’s sister.)

“Skeeter.” Ts. Privately held by Fisher family.

Not seen. Perry titles this story “Skeetes” (possibly merely a typographical error).

“War Hero.” Ms. Privately held by Fisher family.

Not seen. Pearl Fisher says the following of this unfinished story (388):

“Even during his last illness in December of 1934, whenever his strength permitted, he worked on a story which had been requested by Esquire depicting the exploits of a Negro soldier during World War I.” Perry erroneously titles story “The Soldier” on one occasion (239).
ii. Novel


224-page typescript of *WJ* (22) sent to John Hay Library by Pearl Fisher on 29 April 1957. Contains miscellaneous handwritten corrections, most of which are minor. Notable corrections include the following: 1) removal of full paragraph from chapter eight (p. 105 in typescript; p. 135 in American editions of *WJ*) elaborating on Aura [sic] Byle's reason for revealing Merrit's race to Agatha Cramp; 2) removal of three full paragraphs from chapter sixteen (p. 139 in typescript; beginning on p. 183 in *WJ*) describing Tod Bruce and detailing his relationship with his parishioners, especially women. Typescript missing pp. 1-2, 7, and 140-42.

iii. Non-Fiction

[95] "Harlem, the Negro Metropolis." Ts. Privately held by Fisher family.

Not seen. Deutsch (147) describes this item as "apparently intended as an address."

[96] "The Emancipation of Science." Ts. Privately held by Fisher family.

Not seen. Speech given at commencement day services on 18 June 1919 at Brown University. McCluskey (232) describes speech as "focusing on the development of science through the ages of religious dominance and social upheaval." Typescript is at least eight pages long.
iv. Drama


105-page typescript dramatization of *CMD.* Includes minor plot alterations and is potentially confusing in places due to spoken references to action and/or dialogue included in novel but not in play. Prefixed with a cast list with “tentative” choices for actors and actresses. Divided into three acts as follows: Act I, four scenes; Act II: five scenes; Act III: six scenes.

Typescript: Sc Rare 812-F; microfilm: Sc Micro R-1428.

[98] *Golden Slippers.* Location/existence unknown.

According to McHugh (169), this is a “Negro musical extravaganza”—a mixture of light opera, revue, musical comedy, and melodrama—“with the action occurring on several stages. All the plots, counter-plots, the choreography and divertissements, will be synchronized in the finale of each act. A noted Russian designer is at work upon the sets.”

[99] *The Vici Kid.* Location/existence unknown.

According to McHugh (169), Fisher was preparing *Vici* for Philip Goodman for production on Broadway in autumn 1930. He adds that “[i]ts central character is not a prizefighter, but a slick-haired small-time gambler.”

I. Correspondence

One-page manuscript. Thanks Du Bois for sending the first page from a copy of *Yaller* read and annotated by H. G. Wells. Refers to Charles Chesnutt’s response to story as “illuminating.”


One-page typescript. Expresses thanks to Gurney for sending a “clipping” about *WJ*. (Note: Gurney was Brown University’s Alumni Secretary.)


One-page typescript. Letter of congratulations, probably on the occasion of Hughes’s publication of *Not Without Laughter*. Body of letter reads as follows: “I shall not be presumptuous enough to say ‘Welcome’, since you are already, in another branch, a veteran, but I do say ‘Praise the Lord!’ for another sinner has come into the fold.”


Two-page manuscript. Informs Locke he cannot see him as planned because he has promised to help Carter Marshall, a friend, whose father has just died. Asks Locke to send a note to reschedule their meeting. (Fisher knew Marshall from Howard University. The latter’s name appears on another letter [104] with the designation as secretary of the Alpha Chapter of Phi Sigma Pi.)

[104] Letter to Alain Locke. 10 Nov. [1921]. Alain Locke Papers. Moorland-Spingarn
Research Center. Howard U, Washington:

One-page manuscript. Invites Locke to an "informal dinner" to be held by the Alpha Chapter of Phi Sigma Pi at the Whitelaw Hotel on 19 November. Fisher denotes himself as president of the chapter.


Three-page manuscript. Likely written in 1924. Confesses he "awaited [Locke's] approval not without apprehensions" in reference to an already received letter. Adds that he must speak with Locke about a suggestion by editors at Atlantic Monthly that he write "another story" about West Indian-African-American relations. Assures Locke that his "influence" is in City even if not immediately visible and mentions an unnamed play he will speak with Locke about in person.


Four-page manuscript. Likely written in 1924. Informs Locke he has three more "sketches"—"light ones" compared to the one "about the migrant" Locke already read—but adds that he can't work in any of Locke's "suggestions." (Possibly the three are South, Ring, and Yaller.) Hopes that these "will give the major coda as desired." Plans to meet Locke to give them to him. At the letter's outset, Fisher appears upset by an "outrageous" note sent him by Locke and also some personal comments.

[107] Letter to Alain Locke. 3 July 1924. Alain Locke Papers. Moorland-Spingarn

Two-page manuscript. Explains to Locke that he sent “an awful looking typescript” to Survey Graphic in anticipation of Locke’s arrival though not realizing that the latter wouldn’t be there yet. Fisher adds that “I want to make sure my [?] important corrections didn’t fall short.”


Two-page manuscript. Probably written around October 1924 since Fisher suggests Locke read an article by [Konrad] Bercovici in an October issue of Harper’s (“The Black Blocks of Manhattan,” October 1924, pp. 613-23). Announces the enclosure of a letter from [Hugh] Birkhead and asks Locke to take an unnamed manuscript already in his possession and “wave it under Mr. Mencken’s nose.” Adds that he has received and returned proofs from Atlantic Monthly.


One-page manuscript. Likely to have been written when Fisher is living in New York (as early as October 1925). Inquires about visiting Locke after learning of his being in town.


Two-page manuscript. Informs Locke that City will be republished in O’Brien’s The Best Short Stories of 1925 and that Cosmopolitan has sent
him letters of inquiry. Also describes his call on Jessie Fauset and how he “captivated her by playing dance-music.” See reproduction of manuscript in 243.


One-page manuscript. Written in or after 1927 (the letter features Fisher’s professional letterhead from his Seventh Avenue practice). Announces he has sent along a “roll of toilet paper” to Locke, thanking him for “the experience” but wondering why the patient in question (someone referred by Locke?) “just take a laxative and be done with it?” Adds that he’ll send some unnamed manuscripts to Locke after he’s finished revising them.


One-page typescript. Informs the Alumni Association that he would like to send some “personal announcements” on behalf of Knopf to his fellow classmates concerning the publication of WJ and requests permission to send someone to Brown to get a list of names for him.

[113] Letters to Dorothy Peterson. James Weldon Johnson Memorial Collection of Negro Arts and Letters. Yale U, New Haven.27

Not seen. At present these letters are off limits to researchers by order of the executor of the Peterson estate (probably due to their intimate nature). According to library records, the Fisher-Peterson correspondence consists of fourteen letters dating from 1919-1920. Chasson (263) is the only
secondary source which includes excerpts from and commentary on this correspondence.

[114] Letter to Carl Van Vechten. 10 Aug. 1925. James Weldon Johnson Memorial Collection of Negro Arts and Letters. Yale U, New Haven. Two-page manuscript. Describes himself as "persistent as a mosquito." Referring to his winning the Crisis's Spingarn Award for Yaller, Fisher says the following: "I recall, vaguely, having submitted a story, tho [sic] I can't recall what impelled me to do so, since the story had wandered quite around the editorial world without finding permanent lodging. Perhaps the Crisis took pity on it."


[116] Letter to Carl Van Vechten. 28 Sept. 1925. James Weldon Johnson Memorial Collection of Negro Arts and Letters. Yale U, New Haven. Three-page manuscript. Refers to having taken the New York board exams—possibly the "personal emergency" referred to in previous letter (115). Expresses regrets for missing their last meeting and hopes to make amends "when New York becomes, in a month or two, my final resting-
place.” Mentions that Van Vechten’s publisher sent him Macfall’s The Wooings of Jezebel Pettyfer and Garnett’s The Sailor’s Return. Asks if Van Vechten will read “a five-thousand-worder” which Fisher deems “quite worthless” (probably either Prom, Blades, Back, or Fire).


One-page manuscript. Thanks Van Vechten for sending him something (?) and says hasn’t yet taken advantage of the advice about copyrights. Mentions that he had been “called home” due to an illness of his sister’s but has since returned.


One-page manuscript. Apparently Fisher enclosed something for Van Vechten that he neglected to give him, leaving it forgotten in his pocket.


One-page manuscript. Accepts an invitation from Van Vechten.


One-page manuscript. Asks Van Vechten to endorse a bank note on his behalf for Pearl Fisher in the amount of $500.

One-page manuscript. Thank you note. Says he called Van Vechten three or four times without luck.


One-page manuscript. Informs Van Vechten about payment of bank note. (See 120.)


Two-page manuscript. Informs White that City was accepted a year ago and is only now appearing in print. Announces the enclosure of a manuscript (Yaller) and asks White to send it to H. L. Mencken (American Mercury) per Robert Bagnall's suggestion. Congratulates White on the success of his novel, Fire in the Flint.


Three-page manuscript. Thanks White for his assistance and for making contacts, adding that James Weldon Johnson has sent him "a gratifying note." Announces his intention to send White a second (unnamed) story soon and asks him to send Yaller manuscript to Harper's if H. L. Mencken can't use it because Margaret Deland asked permission to show it to her editors at Harper's. Says he is too busy to travel to New York but admits that he wishes to eventually practice medicine in or around New York City.

[125] Letter to Walter White. 15 Feb. 1925. NAACP Collection. Library of Congress,
Washington.

One-page manuscript. Informs White that H. L. Mencken returned Yaller manuscript, claiming it to be too long. Adds that Margaret Deland is giving it to someone she knows at Harper's and asks White to write to Frederick Lewis Allen there.


Two-page manuscript. Thanks White for the note from H. L. Mencken (357) but admits that he isn’t interested in writing non-fiction. He adds that Atlantic Monthly has likewise asked him to write an essay and that he has written to Mencken about the possibility of writing the article about Negro physicians.


Two-page manuscript. Announces he is returning Yaller manuscript to White and asks him to send it to Carl Van Doren (Century). Congratulates White on the dramatization of his novel, Fire in the Flint, and praises him for his article published in Survey. Informs him that H. L. Mencken has given him (Fisher) through summer to write the suggested article on Negro physicians.
2. Secondary Sources

A. Articles


Reports that Fisher has nicknamed his new baby “the New Negro.” (Note: This item and the following six are all from Bennett’s “The Ebony Flute” column.)


Reports that Fire and Back have been accepted for publication by *Cosmopolitan.* (Note: both stories eventually appeared in *McClure’s.*)


Announces January publication date of Prom and anticipated publication of Blades, both in *Atlantic Monthly.*


Reports that Fisher is “at work on a novel.”


Reports that Fisher has WJ half completed and is under contract with Knopf for it.


Responds to a demeaning comment by H. L. Mencken regarding African-American short fiction writers by naming Fisher and Eric Walrond as two who “have been well received and criticized by white writers who are not hacks.”

Reports that Fisher has finished his manuscript and has named it *The Walls of Jericho*.


Explores Fisher's use of blues and jazz as vehicles for expressing significant elements of African-American culture, especially how the two musical forms reflect emotions relating to life in a primarily white American society.


Discusses *WJ* and *CMD* in context of understanding Harlem as symbolic home for all African Americans.


Names Fisher as one of many notables who spoke on subject of "what the Negro should write about" at a *Crisis* dinner given for writers on 12 August. Includes photo of Fisher with W. E. B. Du Bois, Heywood Broun, James Weldon Johnson, Walter White, and Leslie Pinckney Hill.

Names Fisher in passing as one of the best illustrators of Harlem life (along with Claude McKay) who largely withstood influence of Van Vechten school, but who still “accented the instinctual, hedonistic, and peculiar.”


Suggests Fisher based Frimbo character from *CMD* on D. Alexander, a genuine former Harlem “mystic” who passed away two years previously. Identifies other prominent African practitioners and praises Fisher’s knowledge of and authentic reproduction of this character type.


Compares/contrasts Fisher’s glossary of “Harlemese” with Carl Van Vechten’s in *Nigger Heaven* and briefly discusses it in larger context of language and literature. Advises that such words will do nothing “to raise the race in the estimation of the better class whites.”


Likens Fisher to Ring Lardner and calls him the “most able craftsman among Negro novelists.” Mentions *WJ* and City.


Reports that Fisher was interviewed on 16 January on a local radio program, WINS’s “Meet the Author.” Relates some of Fisher’s comments about his working in genre of detective fiction.
"Mystery Novel Writer Is Interviewed over the Radio." [Source unknown.] Primarily a transcript of 16 January, 1933 on-air interview of Fisher by Miss Blizard, host of WINS's "Meet the Author" radio program. Explains why Fisher wrote CMD, why he enjoys writing detective fiction, the relation of African-American subject matter to the genre, and the inspiration for various characters. Thus Spake the Prophet is named as a second mystery novel already under way whose plot involves "the prompt, mysterious deaths of those who make utterance against a certain evangelist." Fisher admits he knows of no other black-authored detective novels and names Jinx and Bubber as his favorite characters in the novel.


Davis, Allison. "Our Negro 'Intellectuals.'" Crisis Aug. 1928: 268-69, 284-86. Identifies Yaller as exemplifying trend of "sensationalism" in African-American literature and numbers Fisher among those who capitalize on presenting cultural primitivism (i.e., a member of the "cabaret school").

Groups Fisher with other notable post-World War II African-American fiction writers who focus on proletarian characters. Includes mainly overgeneralizations and shortsighted observations about Fisher and his peers regarding characterization and intent (cf. "No attempt is made to emphasize the best in Negro culture, but stress is placed upon the dirty and vulgar aspects of their life."). Fisher is not excluded from being deemed propagandistic and is described, along with Claude McKay, as "malign[ing] the educated and refined Negroes who approximate white norms."

Summarizes plot of four of Fisher’s unpublished stories (Air, Pass, Lost, and Lindy). Includes brief discussions relating to quality and aesthetics of individual stories.

Pleads the case for collecting Fisher’s short fiction on the basis of his being "the principal historian and social critic of the Harlem Renaissance period.” Examines all published short stories in terms of their similarities as well as their characters, themes, settings, etc. Contains some exaggerated enthusiasm for CMD (cf. "seems not at all dated").

Reports that 300 theatre-goers were turned away from a capacity-filled performance of CMDd.


Explains how in Common Fisher pits two “color-coded’ antagonists” against one another as a means for presenting color (blackness) as positive and triumphant, thereby reversing accepted cultural connotations associated with good (white) and evil (black). Fisher’s first name misspelled in text also.


Offers one-paragraph summary of thematic and aesthetic concerns of WJ.

Views novel as a “curious blend of lyricism and documentary writing” whose narrative is executed “with rare humor, insight, and imagination.”


Not read.

Includes Blades as evidence of barbershop as a "scene for confrontation." one of several social functions within the microcosmic setting of barber shops.


[157] ---. "These Bad Negroes: A Critique on Critics." *Pittsburgh Courier* 9 Apr. 1927, sec. 2: 1. Reports that Washington, DC's elite African-Americans would prefer Fisher to write about the "decent folks" he knows rather than those sorts who appear in City. Second of a two-part article. See 155 and also similar argument in 156.31
Not read.

Takes issue with those African Americans who complain that white publishers demand, and will only publish, African-American writing featuring that culture's "lower" classes. Fisher's WJ is listed along with five others as works which feature the "lower" classes, though the author admits that WJ is a borderline case.32

Briefly considers WJ in terms of its literary use of African primitism.

Announcement of prize winners in Amy Spingarn Contest in Literature and Art. Fisher awarded first prize of $100 for Yaller. Includes comments from judges—positive ones from H. G. Wells and Sinclair Lewis; admiration from Charles W. Chesnutt, though he gives the story second place; and none credited to Mary White Ovington.

One-paragraph excerpt from letter from René Maran detailing his choice for winning fiction entry in Amy Spingarn Contest. Awards first place to Yaller, but cites its length as its "one great defect."

Considers *CMD* a "refreshing tour de force" thanks chiefly to its departure from the generally serious subjects treated in African-American literature.


Asserts *WJ* is one of three most significant literary events of 1928 in African-American literature because it demonstrates the development in fiction of social criticism. Includes photo.


Likes Fisher's talent to that of Maupassant and O. Henry. Counts him among the younger generation of writers who represent "a new aesthetic and a new philosophy." Fisher's first name misspelled ("Rudolf"). Essay later expanded as "Negro Youth Speaks" (231).


Specifically examines role of grandmother figure in *South, Prom, Guard, Cynthie*, and two versions of *Lindy* insofar as she functions as a means for protecting youthful newcomers to the urban north. Shows progressive development of grandmother character in above stories and compares them with *City and Ring*, two short stories without grandmother figure in which the brutality of Harlem life remains unchecked.

[167] ---. "Healing Songs: Secular Music in the Short Fiction of Rudolph Fisher." *CLA*
Explores how Fisher uses secular music (i.e., blues and jazz) to achieve various literary ends—including establishing tone; reinforcing theme, mending cultural riffs, etc.—thereby fulfilling James Weldon Johnson’s call for an increased and maturer handling of black vernacular culture in African-American literature. Primarily focuses on Yaller, Prom, Common, Blades, and Cynthie.


Notes attendance record of New York City production of *CMD*.d.


Presents Fisher as a good natured, humorous, easy going family man who deftly balances professional medical and literary pursuits. Explores Fisher’s publishing history, works in progress—specifically two plays, *Vici* and *Golden*—and aesthetics as well as his reception by critics. Presents a rarely seen personal side of Fisher.33


Mentions Fisher’s presence at *Crisis*’ August 12 dinner for Negro authors and reports that he announced the publication of *CMD*, declaring it “the first and best Negro detective novel.” (See also 137.)

Carl Van Vechten, in his response to a set of proffered questions, supports Fisher’s use of “lower strata of race” in stories such as Ring and Yaller.


Two-paragraph treatment of Fisher’s long and short fiction. Likens Fisher to Claude McKay and claims he demonstrated “more power of penetration and wit than most of his contemporaries.”


Reports that a CMDd revival featuring most of the original cast is planned for the summer and “will play the various open air theatres throughout the metropolitan area.”


Reports that CMDd earned an average of $275 per night.


Names Fisher as winner of Crisis fiction contest and gives location of ceremony.


Mentions Fisher in passing as having genuine talent and whose literary products would have flourished without impetus of Harlem Renaissance.

Credits Fisher and a few other notables as presenting the “most rounded pictures of Afr.american life” as opposed to the majority of black and white authors who portray the race stereotypically and/or unrealistically.


Includes at end of article a listing of WPA plays for 1936 and their respective number of performances. *CMDd*, with 24 performances, appears in ninth place out of seventeen plays.


Examines Harlem’s Black-Black and Black-White social relations as presented by characters in *WJ*. Also examines *CMD* and Nose (the latter much more briefly) in context of their adherence to S. S. Van Dine’s rules governing the construction of detective fiction, specifically highlighting clues given to assist readers in solving each of the two mysteries.


Primarily identifies prominent character types in Fisher’s published and unpublished fiction and assesses how they function within the stories. Some attention also given to settings and themes (the latter in a single paragraph in which Fisher’s fiction is grouped into five general thematic categories). Includes a primary-source bibliography of Fisher’s published and unpublished short fiction (426).

[181] Turpin, Waters E. “Four Short Fiction Writers of the Harlem Renaissance—Their

Devotes article's third section to demonstrating title character in Cynthie as an archetypal grandmother whose values are reconciled with those of the younger generation. In fifth section of article, refers to story as "representative of the best short fiction...of the Harlem Renaissance."

Also contains other summary comments in this latter section.

[182] Van Vechten, Carl. "'Moanin' Wid a Sword in Ma Han':" *Vanity Fair* Feb. 1926: 61, 100, 102.

Names Fisher as "one of the most promising" and "gifted" African-American writers and supports his use of "squalid Negro life" in his fiction.


Calls City "the finest short story yet written by a man of Negro blood, except for Pushkin" and identifies Fisher as first African-American author since Charles Chesnutt to utilize irony. Regards Vestiges as "[i]nferior work."


Philip Brogdon, professional collector of black detective fiction, claims City boasts of first fictional appearance of a black, uniformed police officer.

Uses deaths of Fisher and Wallace Thurman to lament scarcity of quality African-American writers and speculates that absence of commercial market for African-American literature is partly responsible.

B. Parts of Books

Examines critical reactions to *CMD* as well as the production’s success, shortcomings, and thematic concerns (specifically superstition as part of African-American culture).

Includes one-page assessment of Fisher (210), in particular noting his unique narrative style. Otherwise mostly brief or passing comments on miscellaneous subjects.

Covers various elements relating to Fisher's writing in numerous alphabetically arranged entries. Omits separate entry for *CMD*.

Discusses *CMD* and *Nose*. Also notes that Jamaican-born Walter Adolphe Roberts precedes Fisher as black detective novelist with his *The Haunting Hand* (1926) and *The Mind Reader* (1929), though Roberts includes only minimal black character presence in either novel.


Discusses *WJ*'s use of social milieu and the objectivity of presentation of characters across racial and social boundaries. Compares Fisher with Claude McKay, George Schuyler, and Wallace Thurman.


Devotes attention to *WJ* and *CMD*, specifically declaring the latter as constituting Fisher's major contribution to the African-American novel. Also points out that Fisher, unlike George Schuyler and Wallace Thurman, deals with prejudice with humor rather than anger. Fisher compared with Chester Himes, Dorothy West, Clarence Major, and Ishmael Reed.


Demonstrates how *WJ* exemplifies Fisher’s desire through the novel to eradicate “intracaste prejudice.” Devotes most attention to characters of Shine and Merrit. Fisher compared with Zora Neale Hurston and Claude McKay.
Consists of a brief biography plus extracts from various critical and biographical secondary sources included in this bibliography (148, 166, 167, 180, 191, 195, 221, 238, 290, 349, 391).

Admits positive audience response to CMDd, but believes play has "little intrinsic merit:" Reports (probably erroneously) that play was also produced by the Brattleboro Theatre at the St. Felix Street Playhouse in Brooklyn. No date given, but names principal players.

Considers Fisher, Zora Neale Hurston, Claude McKay, and Arna Bontemps "minor figures" in short fiction and claims Fisher's over-reliance on local color diminishes his fiction. Speculates (perhaps recklessly) about Fisher's relationship with his father and its impact on the fiction in that Fisher's characters represent his own subconscious "conforming and rebelling" selves. Believes overall point of Fisher's art is "to bind the social classes in a racial confraternity."

Bontemps, Arna, ed. *The Harlem Renaissance Remembered.* New York: Dodd,
Considers Fisher's short fiction as presenting a more serious view than his novels. Contains several miscellaneous brief comments, including relating Fisher to Wallace Thurman and Frank Horne. Photo in spread on page opposite 87.


Devotes primary attention to *WJ* and a lesser amount to *City*. Claims novel "fuses sensory, communal, and aesthetic playfulness with a profound critique of Harlem's deceptive culture." Relates Fisher's writing to that of Elia W. Peattie, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ralph Ellison, and Frank Norris.


Praises Fisher's ability to authentically and vividly reproduce the atmosphere and goings-on of 1930s-style "musical jousting contests"


Briefly compares City to Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*.


Comments briefly on the success of *CMDd* production.

Brief but largely positive comments relating to Fisher's long and short fiction.


Credits Fisher with inaugurating full-fledged realism movement in fiction in African-American literature during 1920s.


Comments positively on inclusion of proletariat in WJ and McKay's Home to Harlem.


Labels Fisher a comic realist and praises him for his balance of humor and seriousness. Refers to CMD as Fisher's "most famous book" and notes that Dr. Calvin Sinnette of Howard University is working on collecting Fisher's short fiction for publication. (Note: the Perry and McCluskey collections predate this anthology by six years.)


Specifically examines City, South, Cynthie, and Yaller as well as both novels. Claims Fisher demonstrates more skill in short fiction than Claude
McKay, Countee Cullen, and Langston Hughes, but believes WJ "lack[s] the controlled intensity, the suggestiveness, the subtlety, and overall artistry" of his short stories.


Fisher named with other writers who were "merely competent" and who succeeded chiefly thanks to popularity rather than authentic ability.


Examines City, WJ, and CMD. Also relates Fisher to Langston Hughes and Carl Offord.


Largely consists of excerpts from the following secondary sources: 148, 150, 195, 201, 205, 238, 329, 347. Also includes a suggested reading list and an introduction which discusses Fisher's life, literary achievements, and aesthetics.

Begins with a brief biography and an introduction to social issues followed by a discussion of detective fiction focusing on the genre's stereotypical portrayal of African Americans and the new realism of Dashiell Hammett. Ellin declares Fisher's novel an important "social document" in the manner of Hammett though still retaining various elements of classical detective fiction.


Same as item 209 above.


Not read.


Discusses social issues addressed by *WJ* (including prejudice and white-black intermingling) and examines Fisher's treatment of white characters as well as his presentation of significant African-American characteristics. Concludes that the novel is ultimately about the race problem. Erroneously refers to Merrit as a doctor and consistently misnames Agatha Cramp ("Camp").

Makes passing comments about *CMD* production.


Considers major characters in *WJ* (Merrit, Shine, Bubber, and Jinx) generally represent “black outsiders” in American society, a mutual characteristic from which they can derive strength and, ultimately, a sense of unity. Also claims that Fisher partially fulfills need for a “synthesis of the thought of the conservative writers and that of the radicals....”

Contains other miscellaneous comments.


Comments briefly on success of *CMD* production. Includes photo of backstage preparation by actresses.


Believes Fisher in *WJ* “handles racial issues with independence and objectivity” and, furthermore, that his “preoccup[ation] with humanity, rather than race” promotes dispassionate narratorial point of view. Briefly comments on *CMD*.


College Park: McGrath, 1968. 53-54.
Provides a five-step lesson plan outline for using Fisher’s writing as an example of Negro fiction. Plan includes examining Fisher’s biography, analyzing the structure and style found in his long and short fiction, and comparing the writing with Van Vechten’s *Nigger Heaven*, McKay’s *Home to Harlem*, and the endings of O. Henry’s stories. Names only City and Vestiges.


Observes that Fisher, in his short fiction, “humanizes the corrupt as well as the innocent figures” and that he maintains an “ambivalent” narrative point of view.


Examines *WJ* (“the only novel of the decade that exposed class antagonism among Harlem blacks”) and compares it with Van Vechten’s *Nigger Heaven* and McKay’s *Home to Harlem* and *Banjo*. Also relates Fisher to Wallace Thurman and Paul Lawrence Dunbar.


Briefly explores how City exemplifies author’s notion of a “blues narrative.”

[221] Ikonné, Chidi. *From Du Bois to Van Vechten: The Early New Negro Literature*,

Examines Yaller, City, and Vestiges in order to disprove notion that Van Vechten heavily influenced Fisher.


States that the novel explores issue of “blackness” through Fisher’s imagined confrontation of Western science and African spirituality.


Believes Cynthie is custom made for adaptation to the stage. Relates story to Bill “Bojangles” Robinson’s dancing.


Briefly compares Fisher to other Harlem Renaissance writers in terms of burlesque and humor.


Reveals that Fisher was given an advance copy of Van Vechten’s *Nigger Heaven* in order to give the novel “a last check for authenticity and factual accuracy.”


Contains general introductory information in numerous entries relating to Fisher, his writing, connections with other Harlem Renaissance notables, and the posthumous production of CMDd.


Believes Fisher's short fiction more seriously addresses the issues presented in the literature. Misspells Cynthie ("Cynthia").


Assesses that WJ "upset [W. E. B.] Du Bois as much as it heartened [Wallace] Thurman." Also suggests that Fisher's and Claude McKay's fiction inspired the publication of the radical literary magazine Harlem.


Considers WJ "one of the most thematically successful and enduring works of the Harlem Renaissance...." Also contains miscellaneous comments plus photos of Fisher and wife.

Notable if only for its condemnation of WJ as “trash: heavy-handed. and crude” which achieves little more than making “all Harlem seem a silly costume ball.”


Makes three passing references to Fisher, twice in conjunction with other notable literary peers. Observes that Fisher “adds the terseness and emotional raciness of Uncle Remus to the art of Maupassant and O. Henry.

Essay is expanded version of “Youth Speaks” (231).


Essay divided into an opening biographical section followed by two sections which consider Fisher’s short and long fiction. Biography is noteworthy for including new anecdotes and observations gained through personal interviews with Fisher friends and associates. Second section groups short fiction into four categories for discussion: 1) struggles of Harlem newcomers (City, Ring, Prom, South, Ezek, EzekL, Pass); 2) struggles of elders to impart a “sense of integrity” to the younger generation (Prom, Guard, Cynthie, Lindy); 3) violence as a threat to individual and social solidarity (Common, Back, Blades); and 4) problems relating to class and caste (Yaller, Fire, Dust). Final section includes a four- and five-page discussion of WJ and CMD respectively plus a brief discussion of Nose.

[233] Metzger, Linda; ed. *Black Writers: A Selection of Sketches from Contemporary...*
Abbreviated version of 251 below.


Frequently quotes from Fisher (mainly short stories and *WJ*) to cite examples (albeit fictional ones) pertaining to African Americans’ urban experiences, their attitudes about whites and each other, and the “New Negro.”


Devotes majority of attention to exploring Fisher’s writing (only the three opening paragraphs are exclusively biographical). Discusses issues of style, language, characters, and themes (in particular, a preoccupation with “color consciousness”) in addition to highlighting Fisher’s major shortcomings, his occasional authorial obtrusiveness and heavily formulaic narrative structures. Briefly examines elements of short stories, giving extended attention to Cynthie and City.


Describes stories as “little moral tales” designed to enlighten a primarily young white readership. Notes that Fisher’s literary *modus operandi* holds firm here despite shift to children’s literature genre.

[237] ---. “Editor’s Introduction to ‘John Archer’s Nose.’” *Fisher SF* 173-77:
Examines structure of story with respect Fishér’s adherence to standard detective genre formulae.

Shortened adaptation of Perry’s introduction to *SF* (235). Intended to partially address the need in African-American literary criticism for more attention being paid to short fiction and, in particular, stories written by Fisher.

Reveals that Fisher’s family possesses copy of final unpublished story worked on by Fisher, “The Soldier,” a story elsewhere referred to by Perry and others as “War Hero.”

Examines *WJ* and, to a lesser extent, *CMD* as well as City and Cynthie.
Names Fisher as “the master Harlem Renaissance craftsman of the short story” and prefers his more “balanced,” “sane” approach compared with the literary extremes featured by most of his peers. Also briefly mentions
Fisher in relation to Wallace Thurman, Carl Van Vechten, and Arna Bontemps.


Briefly examines motifs as well as strengths and shortcomings of four of Fisher's unpublished stories: Pass, Lost, Airshaft, and Lindy.


Provides information relating to productions of CMD in New York and Cleveland. Credits Arna Bontemps and Countee Cullen with creating dramatization of CMD.


Gives cursory examination of themes and motifs in Fisher's short fiction. Includes photo and reproduction of one page from a letter to Alain Locke (107).

[244] Poupard, Dennis, ed. Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism: Excerpts from Criticism of the Works of Novelists, Poets, Playwrights, Short-Story Writers; and Other Creative Writers Who Lived between 1900 and 1960, from the First Published Critical Appraisals to Current Evaluations. Vol. 11. Detroit: Gale, 1983.
Expansion of entry found in 251; generally more similar in scope and contents to 208. Largely consists of excerpts from the following sources: 148, 150, 181, 186, 195, 201, 205, 209; 216, 245, 283, 304, 329, 337, 347.

Also includes a suggested reading list and an introduction which discusses Fisher’s life, literary achievements, and aesthetics. Includes two photos.


Discusses social backdrop of Harlem Renaissance and relates Fisher’s personal and publication history. Assesses the novel as “especially comprehensive” for its skillful inclusion of all of Harlem’s social strata and treatment of numerous relevant African-American literary themes.


Same as 245 above.


Examines City as a “model text” which exemplifies several prominent features in African-American migration novels. Also explores Gillis’s character vis-à-vis Victor Turner’s concept of liminality and Robert Park’s concept of the “marginal man” as well as considering Toni Morrison’s notion of “ancestor.” Also relates Fisher to Ralph Ellison and Frederick Douglass.

Briefly compares Fisher's presentation of Harlem to that of Carl Van Vechten, claiming Fisher gives a more "comprehensive view" of African-American life in the United States. Jean Toomer and Countee Cullen also mentioned.


[250] Soitos, Stephen F. The Blues Detective: A Study of African American Detective Fiction. Amherst: U of Massachusetts P, 1996. ix, 3, 5, 32, 41, 47, 48, 50, 92, 93-124, 125, 128, 150, 151, 162, 183, 189, 203, 222-23. Devotes all of chapter four to examining CMD (with minor attention paid to Nose). Compares/contrasts Fisher and CMD with other black detective authors and their works—especially his recently discovered predecessors, J. E. Bruce (Black Sleuth) and Pauline Hopkins (Hagar's Daughter)—and explores how Fisher utilizes classic detective tropes while simultaneously investing in new ones. Specifically notes Fisher's exploitation of "double conscious detection" as it is exemplified through the novel's four black
detectives. Also discusses how CMD makes use of issues such as cultural development, spirituality (Hoodoo), and African Americans' African heritage. Majority of attention to characters given to Archer and Frimbo.

Provides personal, educational, professional, and literary information relating to Fisher. Includes primary and secondary bibliographies as well as general assessments about Fisher's fiction.36

Gives personal, educational, and professional information about Fisher in addition to briefly surveying his short and long fiction, including unpublished stories held at Brown University. Contains two pictures of Fisher as well as reproductions of the original WJ title page and a two-page letter written to Alain Locke (243).

Thoroughly investigates how presence of sacred (spiritual) and secular (blues) musical elements are used on various levels to highlight social, economic, religious, sexual, cultural, and moral issues as they relate to the transplanted African-American southerners in Harlem and perceptions of the urban North as a "promised land." Includes Fisher photo and partial reproduction of cover from CR.


Contains miscellaneous comments about Fisher, three of which appear in reprinted writings included in this bibliography (171, 182, 183).


Details 1925 correspondence between Fisher and Walter White with respect to publishing Yaller and, more generally, the publishing industry. Highlights White's enthusiastic support and encouragement for Fisher. Other notables involved include Carl Van Doren, H. L. Mencken, James Weldon Johnson, and Carl Van Vechten. Contains other miscellaneous comments.

Contains miscellaneous comments, though most notable for comments relating to Nella Larsen's relationship with Fisher.


Explores humor in *WJ* and praises Fisher for presenting proletarian humor in a respectable, serious manner rather than cheaply and meanly (as many others did). Identifies Fred Merrit character as a trickster mulatto figure who "symbolize[s] the humor and assertiveness of the New Negro," a character type not found elsewhere in writing or other Harlem Renaissance artistic mediums.


Contains miscellaneous comments which generally relate Fisher to other individuals.


Identifies Fisher's use of Biblical reference as "a metaphor for racially divided America" and concludes by noting relevance of this theme to contemporary Britain as well.

Supplies general information about CMD production, including critical reception. Identifies the play as a "late substitute" for Macbeth. Also claims that Fisher began the script but that Arna Bontemps and Countee Cullen completed it for Fisher after his death (a fact contradicted elsewhere in this same source). Also includes separate entries for key actors from production.

C. Dissertations, Masters Theses, and Honors Papers


Devotes majority of attention to grandmother characters in Guard, Cynthie, and Prom. Grammie and Miss Cynthie display "humor, durability, and resourcefulness" as a means for adjusting to life in the urban North while Mammy is more realistic as a representative of "the diminishing power of the legendary grandmother." Cynthie also noted for its touching on serious social issue involving legitimization of secular music in conservative African-Americans' hearts and minds. WJ cited as one of few Harlem Renaissance stories to include a black Southern female character who wishes to improve herself through education, and CMD discussed briefly with respect to extramarital affairs and character of Aramintha Snead.
Relates Fisher to Zora Neale Hurston, Countee Cullen, and Langston Hughes.


Primarily focuses on Fisher's treatment of white characters in *WJ*, especially Agatha Cramp. Notes that Fisher is one of the first African-American writers to forsake propaganda and speculates that "his ability to laugh at white people helped him to portray them in a truthful light."

Contains several separate miscellaneous comments.

[263] Chasson, Kate. "Dr. Rudolph Fisher, M. D. Examines His Patient, Harlem: A Literary Biography of the Writer." Honors paper. Macalester Coll., 1995. 65-page synthesis of printed information relating to life and literature of Fisher. Contains some critical exploration of literature but primarily focuses on presenting biographical information. Notable for its inclusion of excerpts from three of Fisher's letters to Dorothy Peterson as well as a photocopied reproduction of a rarely seen Fisher photograph (437). In general, poorly written and sometimes awkwardly organized; useful only for the few previously unlisted sources cited in-text and/or appearing in its bibliography (415).

Describes interclass prejudice in *WJ* as an "unfavorable tendency in Negro life" and identifies Fisher's propaganda as directed against both intra- and inter-race prejudice. Believes *CMD* to be "a deliberate attempt to acquaint the reading world with new types of Negro character" (specifically a black detective) and to prove that intelligent blacks have nothing to fear from the likes of Frimbo's dark arts. The latter novel is compared to Holmes's *Elsie Venner* and the former to McKay's *Home to Harlem*.


Primarily explores themes and techniques in four of Fisher stories (City, Prom, Blades, Cynthie) and both novels as a means for demonstrating Fisher's objective, all-inclusive portrayal of northern urban experience of living in Harlem ("a real living, breathing, Harlem in all its glories and faults").


All of chapter three ("The Struggle to Overcome Cultural and Class Boundaries in *The Walls of Jericho*") devoted to examining class conflicts and cultural prejudices as presented in *WJ*. Specifically focuses on Joshua Jones and Fred Merrit—their (mis)perceptions about their culture and their
psychological and philosophical evolution throughout the course of the novel. Some attention also given to Linda, Patmore, and Miss Cramp.


Defends Fisher as important figure in Harlem Renaissance and attempts to rescue him from semi-obscurity by demonstrating merits of his short fiction. Examines thirteen of Fisher’s stories with respect to the following three criteria: urban jungle (City, Fire, Guard, South, Blades, Prom, Ezek, EzekL, Back), inter- and intraracial prejudice and intolerance (City, Ring, South, Yaller, Dust), and religion (Prom, Back, Fire, South, Cyrithie). Also explores Fisher’s overall technique in terms of character consistency, development, and depth, plot construction, language and dialogue, style, and comic and tragic elements. In general, defines Fisher as a naturalist writer who largely maintained an amoral, objective perspective in his fiction, presenting problems yet resisting commenting on them or providing solutions. Notably, briefly explores Fisher’s “experimental” style by suggesting Ring can be interpreted as a six-scene drama easily adapted to the stage (a supposition supported by Fisher’s later partly unfulfilled forays into playwriting).

[269] Holmes, Kenneth Malcolm. "A Process Approach to Teaching Reading and
Writing Using the Afro-American Short Story from Chesnutt to Hughes: A Secondary-School Guide for Instruction.” Diss. Illinois State U, 1989. Outlines a ten-step syncretic lesson plan model for teaching Cynthie as well as short stories by Charles Chesnutt, Paul Lawrence Dunbar, Zora Neale Hurston, and Langston Hughes. Promotes discussion of gender gap and race issues as relating to Cynthie and warns that contemporary readers may have difficulty understanding Miss Cynthie’s attitudes about theatre. Also provides a general introduction to Fisher, plot synopsis, and an analysis of structure, language, and character.


Not seen.


Devotes all of chapter eight to highlighting Fisher’s biography, plus giving brief critical analyses of his short fiction and two novels. The biography is most significant here since the information, some of which appears in no other source, derives from an interview with Fisher himself. Particular attention is paid to Fisher’s father’s struggles in the South during and after the Civil War.
D. Reviews and Notices

i. “Blades of Steel”


Mainly recounts plot of story. Likens Fisher’s “genius” to that of Maupassant and Poe and describes Eight Ball as a “Harlem Sir Galahad.”

ii. “The City of Refuge”


Notice. Describes story as “a good one, even if our tastes don’t naturally run to dialect.”

iii. The City of Refuge: The Collected Stories of Rudolph Fisher39


One-paragraph notice. Suggests publication of paperback will help restore Fisher to his rightful literary place.


Believes Fisher’s “vision” to be “probing, curious, and wise.” Notes prevalence of two themes, conflict and conformity, throughout fiction and the complexity of treatment of Harlem’s multifaceted society.

Presents Fisher as sensitive, understanding chronicler of black urban experience of 1930s. Largely ignores Fisher in attempt to highlight socio-philosophical background of Harlem Renaissance at large.


One-paragraph notice. Singles out Nose as especially noteworthy.


One-paragraph notice.


One-paragraph notice. Finds the stories depressing in the main, but claims Fisher “deserves to be read.”


One-paragraph notice.


Dual review for *CR* and *SF* (321). Puzzles over why two collections of Fisher’s short fiction have been simultaneously published. Mainly compares/contrasts *CR* and *SF*, paying greatest attention to the separate introductions and the arrangement of the texts rather than the stories themselves. Classifies McCluskey’s introduction as “broadly psychocultural” and describes his analysis of Fisher’s fiction as “generous but thorough.” Notes that McCluskey omits the ending to Common.

**iv. The Conjure-Man Dies**

Measures 4¼ x 2½ inches. Predicts novel to be regarded as "the most unusual mystery of the year."

Quietly praises novel but lacks outward enthusiasm; however, *WJ* is described as being "excellent." Fisher credited with presenting African Americans more realistically than white authors.

A wholly enthusiastic response to the novel and, in particular, Fisher’s capabilities with respect to his familiarity with medicine and African-American culture. Describes novel as "unexaggeratedly Negroid" and lauds it as "one of the year’s two best books written by or about Negroes."
Erroneously prices book at $2.50.

Publication notice without comment. Includes four other titles, all of which are under heading of "Mystery and Detective Stories."

Calls novel "astounding" and "neatly written." Wholly positive review consisting mainly of plot summary. Note: Charlton is pseudonym of George S. Schuyler.

[287] *Crisis* Sept. 1932: 293.
Brief but favorable review consisting mainly of plot summary. Fisher credited with being more capable than ninety percent of white writers.
Includes photo. See also advertisement (282) on facing page.
Largely devoted to plot summary, though Fisher ("a new and worth-while riddler") and his novel ("a wise investment") are briefly praised.

Reprint of Davis' review from Opportunity (290) with some slight restructuring of paragraphs.

Points out Fisher's adoption of conventional detective fiction formula but liberally praises novel for its cleverness, its "fascinatingly gruesome" quality, and the uniquely humorous contribution of Jinx and Bubber.

Misnames subtitle and misspells character name ("Percy").

One-paragraph notice. Admits some of writing is "painfully stilted" but is most notable for its vivid evocation of 1930's Harlem.

Refers to novel as a "light and exciting book." Briefly compares American and British detective fiction insofar as genre is defined by G. K. Chesterton and his literary ilk.

One-paragraph notice.

Author questions taste underlying inclusion of human gland element and believes plot to be overly complicated. Says of Fisher that he “knows his biology, his Harlem and his race” and could well make writing his vocation instead of medicine if the need arose.


Positive one-paragraph notice. On same page as 299 below.


Two-paragraph notice. Calls novel a “successful experiment” and describes the dialogue as “unusually lively and lifelike.”


Novel is deemed “a detective story of the first class” and praised for its unique and comedic elements, but is thought of as substandard fare for Fisher, wishing instead for another “masterpiece” along the lines of *WJ*.


Despite a few mild objections to various elements of the novel, regards the story as “palatable” and the plot “water tight.” Credits Fisher’s for his novel’s unique setting. On same page as 295 above.


One-paragraph notice with plot summary.

Identifies story's dependence on two mainstays of mystery fiction, returning from the dead and dual identity. Fisher rated as superior to most white fiction writers. Article proper ("Omnibus of Crime") includes reviews of three additional titles plus a comparative chart denoting how many corpses, investigators, suspects, "funny persons," investigative errors, and criminal errors can be found in each of the four books. Includes photo of Fisher with son Hugh.


v. The Conjur Man Dies (Play)


 Declares CMDd as “one not to be missed” and praises numerous actors and actresses. Reports that the audience “was unanimous in agreeing that this play...was even better than [Walk Together Chillun],” the play which preceded CMDd in the WPA Federal Theatre series.


One-paragraph notice announcing 14 March debut of Saturday matinee performances of CMDd for children.


One-paragraph notice announcing 9 March opening of CMDd.


Finds the play a “confused and gruesome [sic] piece” but is enthusiastic about the “contagious gusto” of the actors as well as the orchestra.

Includes a list of cast and crew members. Production also included in short list on same page advertising times and locations for “Welfare Plays”.

(same as 311 below).


Rates the play a success thanks chiefly to its less serious nature as compared with CMDd’s more sober predecessor, Walk Together Chillun, but considers the plot lacks continuity and clarity at times.

Declares play to be “occasionally good entertainment, but miserably bad drama and even-worse misery.” Believes plot better suited to novel form thanks to its intricate nature. Cites lack of immediately apparent motives and clues as stumbling block for audience and praises scenery and acting. Includes cast list.


Production time and location included in schedule list titled “Welfare Plays.”


Believes drama to be the exclusive domain of Harlemites theatergoers (for whom it rates as “hotsy totsy entertainment,” but for outsiders amounts to “an evening dully spent”). Praises several actors as well as the set designer but criticizes the directing, dialogue, and plot in general. Includes list of cast and crew members.


Considers production to be a “sincere dramatic effort” which can benefit from the removal of some minor scenes and excessive dialogue. Praises scenery, lighting, and acting. In general, highly positive. Includes cast list.


Reports the play’s first performance a success with its audience but makes it clear that by “Caucasian standards” it amounts to “a verbose, creaky and
none too clearly written charade." Includes a few encouraging notes about the performance, particularly regarding a few individual actors.


First of four weekly one-paragraph notices, with the others appearing as follows: 18 March, p. 65; 25 March, p. 57; and 1 April, p. 55. Notably, the 18 March notice reads “Lafayette: colored mystery play strictly for Harlem.”

vi. “Fire by Night”


Announcement of appearance of story in magazine’s December issue.
Praises authenticity of Fisher’s portrayal of African Americans. 43

vii. “Miss Cynthia”


Notice. Reveals that Fisher’s story was chosen for publication out of six thousand short story manuscripts.

viii. The Short Fiction of Rudolph Fisher


One-paragraph notice. Assesses Fisher’s writing as “having worn well since his heyday in the 1920s.”

One-paragraph notice.


[321] Skerrett, Joseph T., Jr. Resources for American Literary Study 18 (1992): 261-64. Dual review for SF and CR (281). Puzzles over why two collections of Fisher's short fiction have been simultaneously published. Mainly compares/contrasts CR and SF, paying greatest attention to the separate introductions and the arrangement of the texts rather than the stories themselves. Describes Perry's introduction as "striv[ing] to place Fisher within the American short story tradition as well as the Harlem Renaissance" and cites her bibliography as more reliable and expansive.

ix. "The South Lingers On"

The Walls of Jericho


Features WJ and Larsen's Quicksand. Includes excerpted quotes from reviews by Edwin Bjorkman, New York World (349), and New York Herald Tribune (348).


Includes excerpted quote from review by Walter White (349).


Predicts that "booklovers will gobble up [WJ] with relish." Linda misnamed as "Hilda." See also larger review on following page (336).


Asserts novel exhibits "ample mastery" of subject matter despite a "slight theatricality of tone and ostentation of style." Highlights Fisher's mature handling of local color in comparison with others who needlessly exploit such matters to their own artistic detriment.


Finds WJ a relief from the nauseating realism and bad taste of McKay's Home to Harlem and Van Vechten's Nigger Heaven and declares it "a novel of Harlem that can be read without a gas mask." Considers the novel "a great step toward the real Negro novel" which is only slightly "hobbled" by Fisher's "diplomatic shackles" applied to the writing for the sake a
white audience. Includes a brief biographical note with a photo. Says book is published on 3 August.

Notice.

Praises the Shine-Linda portion of the novel but considers Jinx and Bubber only partly successful though "certainly not humanly convincing." Takes issue with Fisher’s failure to represent his own class in his writing.

Exceptionally positive review. Brands WJ "a pleasant antidote for a lot of psychopathic slime masquerading under the name of novels" and revels in the fact that the novel consists of a "clean story," "slight" though it may be. In general, finds the story pleasant, well written, and thoroughly humorous and cites how the novel’s satiric basis in Harlem reality (not to mention the utter absence of propaganda) makes it all the more enjoyable and engaging.

One-paragraph notice. Says WJ is published on 3 August and notes that novel was written "on a bet that no one short novel could blend the extremes of Harlem society into a single integral story—successfully."
Includes one photo. Same as 350 below.

One-paragraph notice.

Praises novel highly for its general craftsmanship, use of language, and tasteful exploitation of Harlem life and believes it superior to McKay's *Home to Harlem* and, in particular, Van Vechten's *Nigger Heaven.* Appreciates Fisher's non-propagandistic approach, though wonders if perhaps the division between upper and lower classes is somewhat exaggeratedly drawn. Says book is published on 3 August and that it was written on a wager. Includes photo.


One-sentence notice. (Clipping included in Rudolph Fisher Biographical File at John Hay Library, Brown University.)


Calls the novel "fully engaging" and believes it useful for illuminating socio-cultural problems which are as real today as they were in Fisher's lifetime. Briefly takes issue with novel’s lack of fair and full representation of bourgeoisie. Agatha Cramp misspelled throughout ("Agatha Crump" and "Agnes Crump").


Considers *WJ* to be a "superior work" compared with McKay's *Home to Harlem* and Van Vechten's *Nigger Heaven.* Praises Fisher for his wit, realistic characters and dialogue, and comprehensive representation of
white-black and high-low social stratification and names Carl Van Vechten and Langston Hughes as persons caricatured in the novel. See also shorter review on previous page (325).


One-paragraph notice. Considers novel “mediocre” and “somewhat fragmentary” and would prefer there be less Bubber-Jinx dialogue.


Claims value of novel lies exclusively in its cultural aspects, without which the story would amount to little more than “stock melodrama.” Erroneously credits Fisher with publishing in Cosmopolitan. Includes reproduction of jacket design on p. 7.


Indicates the strengths of the novel lie in its “richly characteristic and forceful dialogue” as well as in the plot’s complexity of organization.


NAACP press release. Same as 341 below.


Praises novel as “immensely entertaining” but criticizes Fisher for having too light a literary hand, claiming that the “dramatic moments are blurred and never once does the pulse quicken.” Overall a positive review. Believes Fisher to be the best authentic interpreter of contemporary blacks. Same as 340 above.

One-paragraph notice.


One-paragraph notice. Describes novel as “an interesting contribution to the colour problem of the United States” in “the guise of fiction” and likens Agatha Cramp character to Mrs. Jellaby of Dickens’s Bleak House.


Labels the novel “unique” and praises Fisher’s detachment in presenting issues without attached solutions.


Largely positive one-paragraph notice. Calls novel an “illuminating commentary on the Negro problem in the United States” which contains “vigour, humour, satire, and charm.” Believes Fisher’s characters are drawn with fairness and that through them he “throw[s] subtle searchlights upon racial differences.” Takes issue with intelligibility of slang usage.


Values novel for its social commentary as well as for its literary merit. Says Fisher presents a "brilliant and cunningly diversified picture of negro character."

Believes that though *WJ* is bound to be compared with McKay's *Home to Harlem* and Van Vechten's *Nigger Heaven*, "it is nothing less than sacrilege to mention them in the same breath." Compliments Fisher's handling of multiple levels of Harlem society as well as his presentation of the "tragedy of the educated Negro classes...." Includes reproduction of Aaron Douglas' jacket design.

Includes positive comments about Fisher's short fiction as well as praise for the novel overall, especially its authentic portrayal of African Americans. In general, White is enthusiastic about the work, though he suggests Fisher should be less scathing in his treatment of affluent African Americans and takes issue with the reliability of Fisher's explanations for the origins of Harlem vernacular. See also reproduction of Aaron Douglas' jacket design in upper right-hand corner of page.

Same as 331 above.
E. Correspondence


One-page typescript. Extends a personal request to Fisher with respect to submitting material for the upcoming *Crisis*-sponsored Amy Spingarn Contest in Literature and Art.


One-page typescript. Informs Fisher about Yaller winning the Spingarn Contest and announces the enclosure of an invitation to the awards ceremony.


One-page typescript. Announces the enclosure of the first page from a copy of Yaller which bears annotations by H. G. Wells.


Four-page manuscript. Discusses personal issues involving repayment of money, the mother’s upcoming move, and other miscellaneous topics. Box 2 (2) Scm 94-6.

Announces enclosure of bibliography of Fisher's work (421) and adds that some unpublished stories not included are "packed away in a trunk [and] not available to me at the moment." Tells Van Vechten that she has long wished to have a collection of Fisher's short fiction published. Suggests the title be *Streets of Harlem* and that books should include photographs of typical Harlem locations and street scenes.


Mimeograph copy of one-page typescript. Letter of condolence from Brown Alumni Secretary to Fisher's wife on the occasion of her husband's death. Of particular note is one paragraph which reads as follows: "His record here at Brown was a splendid one. He was, as you know, a student of the first rank. He set a mark for his fellows to shoot at; and he did it quietly and modestly. He liked his studies, but he also liked books, and music, and things of the spirit as well as of the mind. He had a remarkable sense of humor. I am sure that he was a good companion and an understanding husband."


Not seen. Reports that Yaller is too long for his purposes and that he considers the "device of the devil" weak. Asserts, though, that he intends "to fetch him soon or late" and that he wrote to Fisher himself and suggested an article idea. (See 255).

Not seen. At present these letters are off limits to researchers by order of the executor of the Peterson estate (probably due to their intimate nature). According to library records, the Fisher-Peterson correspondence consists of fourteen letters dating from 1919-20. Chasson (263) is the only secondary source which includes excerpts from and commentary on this correspondence.


LC, Washington.

One-page typescript. Informs White he can’t use Yaller so soon after he published White’s own article, “White But Black,” and adds that he considers the story to be “a bit unorganized.”


Not seen. Written recommendation on Fisher’s behalf addressed to Guggenheim Foundation committee, though uncertain if it is CMD or a previously imagined but unrealized work that Fisher solicits the sponsorship. Credits Fisher as “having written the best short stories of Negro life that have been written within recent years” and describes him as “an exceedingly alert-minded and perceptive individual, blessed with a saving grace of humor.” (See 255.)

Not seen. Advises Van Vechten to read City and informs him that he has the Yaller manuscript—which he thinks to be even better than City—and that he is sending it to H. L. Mencken. Promises to send Fisher to him when next in New York if Van Vechten so desires. (See 255.)


Not seen. Informs Mencken that Fisher is from Baltimore and announces the enclosure of Yaller manuscript, asking that he consider it for publication in *American Mercury*. (See 255.)


One-page typescript. Reminds Van Doren about Fisher and asks him to consider the enclosed Yaller manuscript for publication in *Century*.


One-page typescript. Tells Fisher he has heard of him through Robert Bagnall and extends wish to visit him when he (Fisher) is next in New York. Asks Fisher to send some of his writing and offers him assistance. Fisher’s first name misspelled (“Rudolf”).

Two-page typescript. Informs Fisher that H. L. Mencken (American Mercury) has previously mentioned having a glut of material by and about African Americans, but will send Yaller manuscript to him anyway as well as to Carl Van Doren of Century. In a postscript, says he has read City and Yaller and declares them both to be "gorgeous pieces of work." Adds that he will notify Carl Van Vechten, Carl Van Doren, Sinclair Lewis, Zona Gale, and unnamed others about City and introduce them to Fisher when he is in New York. Asks for more stories and says he will send them to Van Doren and to Frederick Lewis Allen at Harper's.


One-page typescript. Announces enclosure of copies of letters he (White) sent to H. L. Mencken (362) and Carl Van Doren (363) and says he will write as soon as he receives a response from Mencken.


One-page typescript. Reiterates belief in Fisher's "very real ability" and encourages him to send another story. Reports that Van Vechten liked City and wants also to see Yaller manuscript. Also says that he is pleased to hear of Fisher's desire to practice medicine in or around New York City, adding that he believes Manhattan is the "one place in America for a writer to live...."

Congress, Washington.

One-page typescript. Says he is sorry to hear H. L. Mencken turned down Yaller but adds that he will now send it to Frederick Lewis Allen at Harper's.


One-page typescript. Announces enclosure of a note received from H. L. Mencken (357) about possibility of writing an "article on the Negro doctor" and encourages Fisher to do it.


One-page typescript. Says he will send Yaller manuscript to Carl Van Doren and thanks Fisher for praising his (White's) article in Survey Graphic. Announces enclosure of a letter dictated the day before (presumably prior to arrival of Fisher's letter of 10 Mar. 1925 [127]).


Two-page typescript. Reports he spoke about Fisher with Alain Locke, who advised against writing the article about Negro physicians. Discusses fiction writing in general. Also says that he mentioned Fisher's name to "two members of a new publishing firm" and advised them "to keep their eye on [him] for future development."

Congress, Washington.

One-page typescript. Announces enclosure of note from Carl Van Doren (359) and expresses his regret that the publication of his own article partially prompted Van Doren’s refusal. Asks Fisher if he would like to try sending Yaller manuscript to Scribner’s, though he himself doesn’t know anyone there.

F. Biographies and Death Notices


One-paragraph notice including information pertaining to Fisher’s education, awards, and publications.


Same as 373 above except that WJ is named and office address is listed.


Highlights educational and professional background and briefly discusses both novels as well as City and Blades, though doesn’t identify CMD as a
detective novel. Cites Fisher's writing as exhibiting "keen perception and a fine sense of irony."


Death notice. Gives personal, educational, professional, and literary information.


Gives personal, educational, and professional information and reviews the merits of Fisher's writing.


Four-paragraph blurb in "Our Private Affairs" (contributor biography) section chiefly consisting of humorous comments solicited from Fisher about his publishing history and alleged attendant difficulties.


Relates specifics of funeral, in particular naming 26 individuals who attended the services. Aside from presiding ministers, musicians, and military personnel, notables in attendance include Noble Sissle and Countee Cullen. Includes photo. 53


Solicited self-commentary by Fisher. Gives brief family background and educational history. Photo on p. 133.

[381] Davis, Thadious M. Nella Larsen: Novelist of the Harlem Renaissance: A
Contains miscellaneous information about Fisher. Notably, includes information relating to Larsen's social relationship and activities with Fisher and his wife, some of which cannot be found in any other source.

Briefly relates details of death and comments on professional and literary careers. Includes photo.

Highlights circumstances of deaths and literary achievements of Fisher and Wallace Thurman. Refers to *WJ* as "the finest book done by a member of the Race on Harlem life."

Provides personal, educational, and professional information plus a brief literary overview (focusing primarily on *WJ*, City, and Cynthie).

Three-paragraph death notice.

Two-paragraph death notice.

Gives facts about death as well as personal, educational, professional, and literary background.


Three-paragraph biographical notice. Refers to CMD as "a detective story in black-face," describing it as "clever and suave" and lacking the "racial self-consciousness which mars the art of many writers of his race."


Characterizes Fisher as witty, intelligent, and multitalented.

Provides standard personal, educational, and professional information in addition to making some brief comments about Fisher's literary accomplishments and style. Erroneously reports that "several" of Fisher's stories "won national prizes." Includes a reproduction of a Fisher photo with an attached biographical commentary from the 1919 *Liber Brunensis*, the Brown University yearbook.


Two-paragraph blurb in "The Author! Author! Page" section. Worth noting if only for an enclosed humorous self-commentary by Fisher on the subject of his conflicting writerly ambitions in medicine and literature.

Note 'mistakenly claims Fisher to have been born in North Carolina.


One-paragraph death notice.


One-paragraph notice listing funeral arrangements.

One-paragraph notice listing funeral arrangements.


Same as 397 above.


Provides general educational, professional, and literary information.


Gives brief biographical information relating to Fisher's personal, educational, professional, and literary background.


Offers miscellaneous comments relating to Hughes' associations with Fisher as well as Fisher's relations with other notables such as Georgia Douglas Johnson, Carl Van Vechten, and W. Somerset Maugham. Brief mention made of Fisher's involvement in O Blues!, a revue.


Eulogizes Fisher and Thurman on the occasions of their untimely deaths. Praises both for their ability to transcend pervasive racial animosity such that it never "distort[ed] their artistic perspective."

Reports circumstances of death as well as personal, educational, professional, and literary background. Notes Fisher was working on dramatization of CMD at time of his death.


Gives details of Fisher’s personal, educational, professional, and literary background.


Gives details of Fisher’s personal, educational, professional, and literary background.56


Gives standard educational, professional, and literary biographical information. Briefly discusses highlights of Fisher’s writing career. Notes that CMD played in parks in New York City.


Provides standard biographical facts plus previously unpublished information and insights into Fisher’s medical training, professional career, and private life. Includes photo.

Includes a caricature of Fisher by L. F. apley. Also a one-paragraph note about Fisher’s education, career, and literary output. Also includes similar treatment of Doris V. Evans, Howard University music professor.


Gives personal, educational, professional, and literary information.

Notably, mentions that Fisher worked at Mt. Sinai and Montefiore Hospitals.


Same as 374 above. Covers years 1930-32.


Same as 374 above except for addition of erroneous date of death (2 Jan. 1935). Fisher also named in “In Memoriam” list on p. viii. Covers years 1933-37.


Gives relevant facts about death as well as personal, educational, professional, and literary background.
G. Bibliographies


the past and update secondary source list. Contains over 45 errors, omissions, and/or inconsistencies in documentation—in particular, eleven reviews lack page numbers.


Includes non-annotated primary source bibliography including only short and long fiction and Caucasian. Contains 23 errors, omissions, and/or inconsistencies in documentation. Notably, Shadow is listed as being in the December 1927 issue of *Survey Graphic* and “Invades” is substituted for “Storms” in title of Caucasian.


Two-page partially annotated primary source bibliography arranged in chronological order. Omits South and excludes all page numbers.

Contains eight errors and/or omissions in documentation. Identifies City
and Ring as reprinted five-times each (incorrect in the latter case) and Dust as reprinted in *Journal of Negro History* (incorrect). Shadow is said to have been bought but never published by *Survey Graphic* in December 1927 and that Complex suffered the same fate at the hands of *Harper's Bazaar* (no date given). "Invades" is substituted for "Storms" in title of Caucasian. Lists the following five unpublished items: Perfect, Pass, Lindy, Air, Lost. Notes that *CMDd* was performed in parks during the summer of 1935 by a traveling WPA troupe. Presumably prepared for Brown University: 16 Apr. 1951. Rudolph Fisher Biographical File.


Five-page partially annotated primary source bibliography arranged in chronological order and prefixed with brief list of biographical data. Omits
South and excludes all page numbers. Contains four errors, omissions, and/or inconsistencies in documentation. Identifies Ring as reprinted five times (incorrect). Shadow is said to have been bought but never published by Survey Graphic. "Invades" is substituted for "Storms" in title of Caucasian. Lists the following six unpublished items: Perfect, Pass, War, Lindy, Air, Lost. War is denoted as Fisher's final (incomplete) story.


Non-annotated primary source bibliography arranged in chronological order. First bibliography ever to include Fisher's article published in Proceedings of the Society of Experimental Biology and Medicine (24) as well as his review of Caspary's The White Girl (77). Contains twenty errors, omissions, and/or inconsistencies in documentation.


Partially annotated primary and secondary source bibliography. Includes most extensive list of unpublished writings to date with thirteen items (Air, Lindy, Lost, Pass, Golden, Wages, Perfect, Skeeter, Vici, War, Complex, EzekG, and Shadow). Contains 21 errors, omissions, and/or inconsistencies in documentation.

Partially annotated primary and secondary source bibliography. Excludes medical articles but includes some unpublished materials. Contains fourteen errors, omissions, and/or inconsistencies in documentation.


Non-annotated primary and secondary source bibliography. Excludes titles of short stories in favor of citing sources (though cites only six out of nine sources). Contains nine errors and/or omissions in documentation.


Includes partially alphabetized non-annotated primary source bibliography. Lists only published and unpublished short fiction with the exception of Nose (see 180 and attached note).
Miscellanea


Brown U yearbook. John Hay Library (University Archives), Brown U, Providence. Provides specific dates for awards and scholarships Fisher received and identifies academic activities. In 1919 edition, Fisher included in class photo (p. 146, fourth from left in third row) and senior portrait with attached biographical note (p. 156).


Howard U yearbook. Moorland-Spingarn Research Center (Library Division), Howard University, Washington, DC. Contains miscellaneous information about Fisher relating to his personal and collegiate life at Howard. Fisher is reported to have played at fullback on an intramural medical student football team named the Angoras. Also, he and three of his fellow students “are planning to appear in a competitive recital…to decide who is the Champion ‘Box (piano) beater.’” Most amusing of all, a note which tells of Fisher’s professional plans: “Will specialize in Roentgenology and practice in Egypt.”

[429]  Brown University 1919 Class Day program. [Fisher Family Papers, Box 1 (2) Scm 94-6]

Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York. Program denoting events and participants in 16 June 1919 Class Day activities. Fisher listed as Class Orator and Class Day Officer.
[430] Brown University 1919 graduation exercise program.


[431] "Brown University Graduate Records." [Rudolph Fisher Biographical File]

One-page survey. John Hay Library (University Archives), Brown U, Providence. Survey filled out by Fisher (6 Aug. 1919) on which he names "The Emancipation of Science" as his sole publication.


John Hay Library (University Archives), Brown U, Providence. A moderately extensive survey filled out by Fisher which includes personal, educational, professional, and literary information. Notably, contains Fisher's wedding date and names his various memberships in professional organizations in New York City (with inclusive dates). Includes a typewritten (partially erroneous) bibliography of Fisher's publications to date (30 Jan. 1934).

[433] The Conjur Man Dies playbill. [Programs and Playbills]

Eight-page booklet. Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York. Includes cast list, production crew list; synopsis of scenes, and biographical blurbs for six primary actors. 58

[434] "Poets and Heroes" postcards. [Regina Andrews Photograph Collection, SC Photo Regina Andrews Collection, Box 7, Folder: Exhibition—Harlem on My Mind (April 6, 1969) ]
Brown University 1919 graduation exercise program.


“Brown University Graduate Records.” [Rudolph Fisher Biographical File]

One-page survey. John Hay Library (University Archives), Brown U, Providence. Survey filled out by Fisher (6 Aug. 1919) on which he names “The Emancipation of Science” as his sole publication.

Questionnaire for Historical Catalogue of Brown University, Oct. 1933. [Rudolph Fisher Biographical File]

John Hay Library (University Archives), Brown U, Providence. A moderately extensive survey filled out by Fisher which includes personal, educational, professional, and literary information. Notably, contains Fisher’s wedding date and names his various memberships in professional organizations in New York City (with inclusive dates). Includes a typewritten (partially erroneous) bibliography of Fisher’s publications to date (30 Jan. 1934).

The Conjur Man: Dies playbill. [Programs and Playbills]

Eight-page booklet. Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York. Includes cast list, production crew list, synopsis of scenes, and biographical blurbs for six primary actors.

“Poets and Heroes” postcards. [Regina Andrews Photograph Collection, SC Photo Regina Andrews Collection, Box 7, Folder: Exhibition—Harlem on My Mind (April 6, 1969) ]

[435] Rudolph Fisher photograph. [Rudolph Fisher Portrait Collection, Sc Photo Fisher, Rudolph, Sc-Cn-81-0162]


Single photograph. Photographs and Prints Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York. Often reproduced: group photograph taken on roof of 580 St. Nicholas Ave, home of Regina Andrews and Ethel Ray Nance, on the occasion of a party for Hughes. (See 394.)


[438] *The Conjur Man Dies* (play) photograph. [Conjur Man Dies Theater Stills Collection, Sc Photo Theater]


[439] *The Conjur Man Dies* (play) photographs.

The Library of Congress holds in its Federal Theatre Project Collection two folders of photographs (Photographic Prints File, 1934-39) and one folder of negatives (Photographic Negatives File). The latter item is presently off limits to researchers due to the poor physical condition of the contents; accordingly, I could not determine if all of the negatives are included in the former.

As for the photographs themselves, each folder holds 27 photographs, nineteen from the Lafayette Theatre production and eight from the Portable Theatre production held in Gravesend Park in Brooklyn. (The second of these two folders contains only duplicates of the 27 photographs in the first folder.) Since most of the photographs are identified by number—either on the front or back or both sides—I use these
numbers to identify the photographs (below) in addition to giving the respective act and scene, featured characters, and location. Notably, there appears to be two photographs labeled 18, none labeled as 20 or 23, and one without any identifying number. Additionally, the Portable Theatre photographs are labeled with two separate sets of identifying numbers (the second set of which is designated below as PT#). In some cases, due to lack of identification, I have had to make some educated guesses about information relating to those photographs. These items are enclosed in brackets.

Finally, the Fenwick Library at George Mason University holds copies of eighteen of the photographs listed below, two of which are not included in the Library of Congress’s collection of 27. These items are identified with a “GM” at the end of the entry.

1 – III.iii: Archer and Dart: Archer’s lab/office. (GM)

2 – III.ii: Frimbo: Frimbo’s black room.

3 – II.ii: Brown and landlady: stoop of private residence. (GM)

4 – II.iv: Brown, entertainer, and crowd: Forty Club Cabaret. (GM)

5 – I.i: Archer, Frimbo, Brown, and Jenkins: Crouch’s undertaking parlor. (GM)

6 – I.iii: Archer, Brown, Jenkins, Snead, and Martha Crouch: Frimbo’s waiting room. (GM)

7 – II.ii: Jones and landlady: stoop of private residence. (GM)
8 - I.i: Archer, Frimbo, Brown, and Jenkins: Crouch's undertaking parlor. (GM)

9 - II.ii: Jones and landlady: stoop of private house. (GM)

10 - III.i - Webb, girl, and man: stoop of Archer's office. (GM)

11 - II.iv: Brown and entertainer: Forty Club Cabaret. (GM)

12 - III.v: Frimbo, Brown; Jenkins, Archer, Dart, Snead, Martha Crouch, Webb, Jones, Brady, Hanks: Frimbo's black room. (GM)


14 - I.iv: Hanks: Frimbo's black room. (GM)

15 - III.i: Webb and man: stoop of private residence. (GM)

16 - I.i: Brown and Jenkins: Crouch's undertaking parlor. (GM)

17 - Backstage: actresses in dressing room putting on make-up. (PT3) (GM)

18[a] - I.ii: Archer: Frimbo's living quarters. (only at GM)

18[b] - [III.v]: Frimbo: Frimbo's black room.

19 - [III.ii]: Frimbo: Frimbo's black room.

21 - II.iv: patrons at table: [Forty Club Cabaret]. (Possibly a Portable Theatre photograph, but not identified as such.)

22 - III.v: Frimbo and others: [Frimbo's black room].

24 - Outdoors crowd shot of theatergoers. (PT8)

25 - Nighttime crowd shot of theatergoers. (PT7)
26 – Nighttime crowd shot of theatergoers. (PT5)
27 – Nighttime crowd shot of theatergoers. (PT2)
28 – Close-up crowd shot of theatergoers. (PT4)
29 – Nighttime crowd shot of theatergoers. (PT1)
[?] – II.i: Brown, landlady, and Thomas (Cop #2): at stoop of private residence. (only at GM)
1 As several sources point out, there is a discrepancy in Fisher’s stories involving the location of Waxhaw. In Ezek the title character is said to come from Waxhaw, Georgia. Likewise, Georgia is identified again in EzekL and Lost. But King Solomon Gillis in City is said to be from Waxhaw, North Carolina.

2 As it turns out, Common was originally simultaneously published in at least four African-American periodicals. See the Appendix for an explanation of this and the story’s subsequent unusual publishing history.

3 Depending on which bibliography you consult, this publication is either titled Junior Red Cross News or American Junior Red Cross News. As it turns out, the publication had used both titles; however, the former title was used exclusively from 1919 to 1924 while the latter was used from 1924 to 1969.

4 In order to avoid any bibliographic confusion, the magazine’s full title is The Metropolitan: A Monthly Review. In his introductory “To Our Readers” article on p. 4, Meeks Riley says of this “short novel” that it “is alive with characters that impress one as being humanly real.”

5 An on-line reproduction of the original text of South as it appears in Survey Graphic is available at http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/harlem/FisSoutF.html.

6 X Press’s JP and WJ (22d) both contain Fisher’s lexicon of Harlemese. Some of the text has been altered to suit British typographical and grammatical practices and to make explanations more understandable to British readers. Nevertheless, these versions
are inconsistent in usage (notably italics and quotation marks), omit words, phrases, and punctuation, and include numerous typographical errors.

7 According to the printing information in original editions of the novel, CMD went through two printings, in July 1932 and again in August 1932. An alternate title for the novel appears on the dust jacket as The Conjure-Man Dies: A Harlem Mystery (the subtitle being altered from A Mystery Tale of Dark Harlem). The descriptive blurb on the front inside flap of the dust jacket reads as follows:

A Detective story laid in Harlem is a sufficiently novel idea to recommend it, but when it is as well constructed and thrilling as this book, it is certain to attract all mystery fans who welcome a new departure in a crowded and hackneyed field. The adventures of Bubber Brown and Jinx Jenkins in clearing themselves of suspicion of murder and in helping to solve a baffling crime provide genuine humor, a series of shudders, a tricky and surprising plot, and a fascinating background. N’Gana Frimbo, the African conjure-man with a Harvard education, is the corpse in question, and Perry Dart, Negro police detective, and Dr. John Archer, his unofficial aid, are led over a fantastic trail through a little-known side of Harlem life before the astounding conclusion of the mystery of the returning corpse is reached. Rudolph Fisher’s ability as a novelist has already been proved. With his first detective story, he scores a triumph in a new field.

8 The descriptive blurb on the front inside flap of the dust jacket reads as follows:

The hero of The Walls of Jericho is a piano-mover, the heroine a housemaid; its action, for the most part, is laid in the dance-halls, and pool-
parlors of contemporary Harlem; and its vastly amusing dialogue is that currently to be heard on the sidewalks of Lennox and Seventh Avenues.

Dr. Fisher's previous fiction is well known in the magazine field; he has been a frequent contributor to *The Atlantic Monthly* and *McClure's Magazine*, as well as to the Negro periodicals.

At this date I cannot verify whether or not the three inscribed editions held at Yale University include dust jackets. The "Carlo" named in the first inscription presumably is Carl Van Vechten. The edition inscribed to James Weldon Johnson bears Johnson's signature on p. [310].

9 See note 6 above.

10 According to Deutsch (147), this essay was originally titled "The Complexion of Negro Night Clubs" and purchased but never published by *Harper's Bazaar*—all of which derives from information provided by Pearl Fisher (419). Deutsch adds that "*Harper's* went so far as to set this essay in print and to supply Fisher with a galley copy" (83). Presumably the source for this additional information is Fisher's family, though no indication is given as to whether or not the galley copy still exists.

11 Although most anthologies include general introductions to Fisher and his literary achievements—ranging anywhere in length from a few sentences to a few paragraphs to even two to three pages in some cases—I choose to forgo mentioning these introductions in the respective annotations since, regardless of length, they generally only repeat information from secondary sources or include only that information which is common knowledge with respect to Fisher's life and literary career.
The cover and spine of the anthology display the alternate title of *A Century of the Best Black American Short Stories*. This work is a revised and enlarged version of Clarke's 1966 *American Negro Short Stories*.

All three anthologized versions omit the concluding ten paragraphs of the story. See Appendix for further explanation.

This publication originally appeared as a glossary included by Fisher in *WJ*.

See note 6 above.

In addition to reprinting this story, the following primary and secondary sources included in this bibliography are also reprinted in facsimile form in Cary D. Wintz's seven volume series, *The Harlem Renaissance 1920-1940* (item: page):


Volume 5 – None.


All materials listed as being at Brown University can be found at the John Hay Library (University Archives).
18 John McCluskey, in a footnote (p. xxi) in his introduction to *CR* (232), claims that this item is held in the Brown University Library Archives. However, my own on-site research uncovered no such typescript.

19 Perry gives no source for her information. Deutsch, on the other hand, cites a Pearl Fisher bibliography (419) as his source. Nevertheless, no mention of this unpublished story is made in this or her other two bibliographies. Possibly Deutsch received the information from a Fisher family member instead.

20 Presumably this is the same Tom Edwards and Eight-Ball who appear in City and Blades respectively.

21 I rely entirely on Deutsch's assertion (147) that this and four other unpublished works (90, 92, 95, 96) are in the family's possession.

22 Copies of this typescript can also be found at the Fenwick Library at George Mason University, though some pages are missing.

Some of the more significant alterations in plot are as follows: 1) Martha Crouch is identified as a former love interest of Archer's, the loss of whom he still regrets (as partly demonstrated in his unsympathetic attitude about her husband); 2) Patmore's Pool Parlor is replaced with the Forty Club Cabaret; 3) the sidewalk murder Bubber witnesses is an attempt by Spider Webb's superiors to kill Spider, though he kills his assailant without himself being injured; 4) Bubber's fright at witnessing the sidewalk murder (rather than being chased) leads him to hide in Frimbo's basement; 5) aside from a few introductory words, the entirety of Archer's private meeting with Frimbo is omitted; 6) all jail scenes are omitted, though a small portion of some dialogue is retained and restaged; 7) Frimbo, not Archer and Dart, discovers the faulty positioning of the
thumbprint on the weapon (though the issue of how the print got there is entirely omitted); and 8) Frimbo doesn’t make an appearance masquerading as his servant, N’Ogo.

23 This letter and three others included in this bibliography from the Papers of W. E. B. Du Bois are available on microfilm under the same title. The letters are located as follows on reel 17: 100, frame 20; 351, frame 18; 352, frame 19; and 353, frame 19.


25 All of the manuscripts listed herein from the Alain Locke Papers are located in the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center’s Manuscript Division (Box 164-29, Folder 23).

26 Although there is no evidence in this letter or elsewhere identifying Birckhead, in all likelihood it is Hugh Birckhead (1876-1929), a clergyman who served as rector of Emanuel Church in Baltimore from 1912 until his death in 1929.

27 The staff at Yale University’s Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library informed me that, despite their efforts, they have failed to receive a reply from the executor of the Dorothy Peterson estate. Likewise, my own inquiries have as yet received no reply.

28 This and nine other letters contained in this bibliography (115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 355) are filed as follows: Box: Van Vechten, Letters from Blacks, E–Fiske U. Library, The Gershwin Memorial Collection, 1945; Folder: Fisher, Rudolph, 1897-1934.

29 Although originally only available at the Library of Congress, most letters from the NAACP collection listed herein are available on microfilm under the title Papers of
the NAACP: Part 2, 1919-1939: Personal Correspondences of Selected NAACP Officials–
(Ed. Randolph Boehm, University Publications of America, 1982). Specifically, the
individual letters are located as follows on reel 8 (listed in chronological order below):


Fisher to White, 5 Feb. 1925: frame 517.

White to Fisher, 6 Feb. 1925: frames 515-16.

White to Mencken, 7 Feb. 1925: location unknown.

White to Van Vechten, 7 Feb. 1925: location unknown.

White to Fisher, 10 Feb. 1925: frame 534.

Fisher to White, 11 Feb. 1925: frames 541-42.


Mencken to White, 23 Feb. 1925: location unknown.


Fisher to White, 10 Mar. 1925: frame 583-84.


White to Van Doren, 12 Mar. 1925: frame 625.

Van Doren to White, 13 Mar. 1925: frame 627.


30 A copy of this article is available on microfiche at the Schomburg Center in New York (Sc Micro F-1). Though the article bears a handwritten citation (Pittsburgh Courier, 21 Jan. 1933), this information is incorrect. Despite searching elsewhere, I have been unable to locate the article. My belief, however, is that the article appears on the given date in a weekly African-American newspaper.

Additionally, this same microfilm also includes the following items contained in this bibliography: 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 14, 23, 139, 140, 143, 272, 283, 284, 286, 288, 289, 292, 294, 296, 301, 304, 309, 327, 331, 333, 336, 340, 341, 348, 379, 349, 383, 385, 405, 409, 412, 420. There is also an undated two-page typescript which announces and describes a Fisher exhibit at the Schomburg Center. In the interest of maintaining accuracy, researchers should avoid using bibliographic information derived from the handwritten citations included in the microfilm.

31 It’s not surprising if this article is mistitled by researchers since what appears to be the article’s title (“‘Best Negroes Not Really Cultured’”) isn’t; instead, the given title appears in the inset box at the end of an editorial introduction per the editor’s explanation.


33 McHugh claims City has been reprinted five times though my research has only led me to discover three occasions of the story’s reprinting by 1930 (34, 38, 40). Sinnette also makes the same claim in his article (407); however, by 1990 City had been reprinted at least eight times. If McHugh is repeating information told to him by Fisher then either Fisher is mistaken or there are still two yet-to-be-discovered reprints of City.
Air, Lindy, Lost, Pass, and an early version of Cynthie constitute the unpublished texts discussed in this article. Tignor excludes John from her discussion and her bibliography on the basis of considering it a novelette, a fact made clear by her treatment of this story in another article of hers, "Rudolph Fisher: Harlem Novelist" (179).

It is likely that Bond is unwittingly confusing CMDd with another unnamed St. Felix Street production for two reasons: 1) he identifies a Rev. Green as a character in the play though CMDd includes no such character; and 2) he identifies a Miss Freeman as playwright, not Fisher.

This article is also available through Gale Research's GaleNet database. A one-paragraph entry for Fisher also appears in volume 107 of the Contemporary Authors series.

As Hilton notes in his introduction, his thesis excludes consideration of Nose and Common merely on account of their unavailability locally as well as through interlibrary loan. It should be noted that Hilton’s thesis predates any collection of Fisher’s fiction by nearly twenty years, although the latter story did appear in two separate anthologies (42, 43) prior to the completion of his thesis. Nevertheless, Hilton was clearly not aware of the existence of either anthologized version much less of the fact that Common did not appear in the Negro News Syndicate as he believed, a bibliographical error which would render interlibrary loan services useless. (See also note 2 above.) Additionally, even today it is generally as impossible as it was then to receive an interlibrary loan photocopy of Nose thanks to the rarity of extant originals. Finally, Hilton also includes Shadow as a third story he was unable to locate, apparently
unaware of the fact that this story is a nonentity despite its inclusion in a few bibliographies.

38 Aside from this and four other entries (317, 328, 376, 390) from Brown Alumni Monthly, this publication also includes three additional minor articles: Nov. 1928, p. 103; Oct. 1932, p. 78; and Oct. 1934, p. 72: “Among the Best Short Stories.”

39 The back cover of the paperback edition of this collection features excerpts of book reviews from three separate sources, one of which is American Literary Review. However, the editor of this publication assures me that no book review appears in any issue of the journal.

40 Due to the scarcity of this item and some last minute confusion about it on my part, I was unable to see the original print version. The text of the review, however, is available online through the EBSCOhost database.

41 This same single-line notice is repeated in subsequent issues of the World-Telegram during most of the production’s run from March 11 to April 4. In March the notices appear as follows (date: page): 13: 30; 14: 8B; 16: 15; 17: 24; 18: 30; 19: 22; 20: 35; 21: 6C; 23: 12; 24: 23; 25: 25; 26: 21; 27: 27; 28: 9C. In April the notices appear only twice: 3: 32; 4: 7C. Note that the World-Telegram had no Sunday edition.

42 R. O. is probably Roi Ottley.

43 Fisher’s name is also included on the bottom of p. 4 of this issue along with ten others, all of whom are contributors to the December issue. No story title is given.

44 In all likelihood, Diefenderfer has misinterpreted the story as non-fiction since he refers to it as an “article” and lists it under the subheading of “Methods of
Investigation,” mistaking Fisher’s imaginary recount for field observations. Given that the story appears in Survey Graphic, the reviewer’s confusion is understandable.

45 As yet I have been unable to locate a review authored by Bjorkman.


47 R. M. is probably Ralph Matthews, a regular Afro-American columnist.

48 I have been unable to verify the bibliographic information for this item due to the relative unavailability of extant copies of the publication. The Schomburg Center in New York City retains this review as a clipping (with handwritten citation) in a collection on microfiche (see note 29 above).

49 As indicated in the index, this journal is alternately titled The Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science and Art.

50 See note 23 above.

51 See note 28 above.

52 See note 27 above.

53 Although not immediately self-evident, there are actually two articles here rather than one as previous bibliographies suggest. Careful readers will note that both articles, the second appearing in the immediate right-hand column (“Rudolph Fisher, Medic and Author, Buried in Harlem”) have a New York byline, suggesting separate articles. See 405 for second article.

54 Copies of this item can also be found in the C. Glenn Carrington Papers (Subject Files Writers, Box 145-41) at the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center
(Manuscript Division) at Howard University; the John Hay Library (University Archives, Rudolph Fisher Biographical File) at Brown University; and in the James Weldon Johnson Collection (Letters to Carl Van Vechten, Folder: Fisher, Rudolph, 1897-1934) in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University. Note that the Schomburg Center appears to no longer retain the original document, relying instead exclusively on the microfiche copy.

55 This article is also available at http:\www.projo.com/special/history/fisher.htm.

56 See note 53 above.

57 See note 54 above.

58 The playbill's synopsis of scenes omits a scene from Act III. The scene in question—originally the fourth scene in the typescript, involving a brief private meeting between Archer and Frimbo—was probably dropped in production due to its relative uselessness in terms of not significantly furthering the plot. The only other option, of course, is that its omission in the playbill is merely due to a typographical error.

59 Though I am unable to recheck this photograph against those held in the Federal Theatre Project Collection, I assume it is a duplicate of photograph 3, 7, or 9 (439). It is likely that the Schomburg photograph is mislabeled since it names Louis Sharp (Samuel Crouch) and Jaqueline Andre (Landlady) as featured in the photograph when, in fact, these characters do not meet according to the CMDd typescript. Moreover, the latter's name is Jaqueline Ghant Martin according to the CMDd playbill (433).
Appendix

The Strange Case of “Common Meter”

Of the several bibliographic inconsistencies that have plagued Fisher studies over the years, none have been initially more perplexing to me than citations for Fisher’s short story “Common Meter.” Different bibliographies credit the story differently, some placing it in the Baltimore Afro-American while others citing the New York News or the Pittsburgh Courier. Moreover, to make matters all the more bewildering, several sources cite Negro News Syndicate as the story’s source when, in fact, no such periodical with this title ever existed. My first impulse, then, led me to determine which of the three “real” sources is the source for “Common Meter” and, by default, discover which bibliographies are in error. Much to my surprise, though, I discovered that ultimately the error lay not in the bibliographies themselves but rather in my casual assumption that “Common Meter” originally appeared exclusively in a single publication, which, as it turns out, is not the case.

As this bibliography reveals for the first time, “Common Meter” was simultaneously published in at least four African-American weekly newspapers (there may be more as yet undiscovered syndicated appearances), presumably through the efforts of a journalistic organization known as the Negro News Syndicate. While it is generally easy for scholars and students to procure copies of the story as it appears in the Afro-American and Pittsburgh Courier thanks to widely available bound and microfilm editions of these publications, other versions—such as those in the Houston Informer,
etc.—will prove more difficult to obtain due to the sources’ relative unavailability nationwide. Additionally, locating a copy of the *New York News*’s version requires a visit to the Schomburg Center in New York City where, to the best of my knowledge, the sole extant (fragmentary) copy is available to researchers (on microfiche [Sc Micro F-1]).

The fact that “Common Meter” was syndicated serves as still more proof of the respect and popularity Fisher garnered for himself in his lifetime as a fiction writer, brief though his career may have been. Nevertheless, what proves to be of even more interest, both anecdotally and critically, is what becomes of the story after Fisher dies. In the six decades following Fisher’s untimely demise in 1934, “Common Meter” was reprinted in three literature anthologies (1950, 1968, and 1990) and included in three separate posthumous short fiction collections (twice in 1987 and in 1996). Of course, six of Fisher’s other short stories and have also been reprinted, with “The City of Refuge” and “Miss Cynthie” topping the list at ten and thirteen times respectively. Yet what is unusual in the case of “Common Meter” is not the fact that it has been reprinted but rather how it has been reprinted—which is to say that for nearly four decades, beginning with its first reprinting in 1950, the story has been repeatedly misprinted.

How misprinted? Very simply, the story’s original concluding ten paragraphs (118 words) have been omitted from five of the six reprinted versions, Margaret Perry’s *The Short Fiction of Rudolph Fisher* containing the only correct reprinted version to date. Regrettably, of the two American collections, Perry’s is less widely available and therefore liable to reach fewer readers. (Note: McCluskey’s *The City of Refuge: The Collected Stories of Rudolph Fisher* was issued in paperback while Perry’s, the more
In the shelter of a nearby night club Bus and his girl found a secluded corner.

"But you said you didn’t mean—anything."

“I’m a awful liar sometimes. Specially when I see my girl givin’ another guy a play.”

“Giving who a play?”

“My boy, Baxter.”

“When?”

“Out on the floor that first night. Baby, you draped yourself over him like a Spanish shawl. And there wasn’t any movement to speak of.”

Her brow cleared and she heaved a sigh. “Well, they say when a guy really falls he quits using his bean.”

“He don’t go blind, does he?”

“You did. Didn’t you see that big farmer step on my foot? For a minute I thought I’d faint!”

Naturally it is remarkable that so considerable an amount of text could be overlooked by editors for nearly forty years. And while it is impossible to know how the oversight first came into being (assuming the omission to be accidental rather than purposeful), I believe that it is likely that the editors of the first anthology to reprint “Common Meter” (Nick Aaron Ford and H. L. Faggett’s Best Short Stories by Afro-American Writers 1925-1950) utilized the Pittsburgh Courier’s version of the story.
Circumstantial evidence points in this direction since, coincidentally, the second installment of “Common Meter” appears on pages eleven and twelve of the Pittsburgh Courier’s 15 February 1930 issue, with page twelve including only the story’s concluding ten paragraphs. Accordingly it would appear that someone unwittingly consulted only the first page of the second installment, unaware of the continuation of the text onto a subsequent page.

Save for one eagle-eyed book reviewer who authored a dual review of Perry’s and McCluskey’s respective collections and briefly noted the difference in the two versions of “Common Meter” (281, 321), no other commentator or critic has identified this lingering problem associated with the story. This isn’t surprising given 1) how little critical attention Fisher receives in the first place, 2) what critical attention he does receive generally focuses on his two most famous short stories and/or his novels, and 3) that the story seems to end naturally and satisfactorily enough such that no one would ever suspect anything to be amiss. Clearly the simple fact that five out of six times the incorrect version of the story has been reprinted testifies to readers’ untroubled and otherwise positive reaction to the story. (I should add here that I myself discovered the mistake purely by accident, and it was merely a function of my making it a practice of reading Fisher’s short stories in their original sources after having already read them in McCluskey’s collection that led me to the discovery.) It only remains now then for Fisher scholars to (re)familiarize themselves with the original “Common Meter” and, from there, to reexamine it and reassess its place within Fisher’s body of work.
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