Dialect, Victorian Poetry, and the Voices of Print

Is published dialect poetry an oral form mediated by print or a textual form inspired by oral culture? The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics submits an alternative: "It may be more helpful to think of dialect poems generically, as recognizable kinds of writing meant to signal identifiable modes of speaking."[1] This suggestion imagines dialect poetry to evoke rather than to transcribe oral forms; to be more creation than collation. It might help to counter some common misimpressions. Tom Paulin's worry that the word "dialect" gives the feeling of "a certain archaic, quaint, over-baked remoteness" could be eased by noticing that dialect poetry's relation to marginal or disappearing speech forms is as much emblematic as it is archival.[2] This in turn would tell against the familiar but impossible measure of accuracy sometimes used to assess dialect poems—impossible because text is only ever an imperfect record of speech. Dialect poems do not always have to be imagined as remnants of oral tradition that need to be rescued from print by means of their continued re-voicing. Instead, they can be seen to achieve a distinct and specific coherence derived from their unique position at the intersection of spoken and material cultures.

In what follows, I show how an appreciation of dialect poetry's textuality alters our understanding of its nineteenth-century heyday in British literature. Helped by the expansion of print, by increases in literacy, and by urban growth, especially in the north of England, the mid-Victorian period saw labouring-class dialect writing become a publishing phenomenon. Nearly forty dialect almanacs were produced yearly in the West Riding of Yorkshire alone by the 1870s; twenty thousand copies of the Lancashire dialect writer Edwin Waugh's poem "Come Whoam to Thi Childer an' Me" sold within a matter of days when it was published as a broadside in 1856.[3] The same period saw the appearance of William Barnes's three collections of Dorset dialect poems (in 1844, 1859 and 1862), volumes that built Barnes's

reputation in his own day, and for which he continues to be celebrated as the best-known English dialect poet. Inspired partly by Barnes, several major poets of the period also experimented with regional dialect in their writing, including Alfred Tennyson and Gerard Manley Hopkins.

All this occurred in the context of the flattening of regional variation brought about by the increased provision of elementary schooling, and also of the spread of prescriptivist notions of a spoken national "standard" free of local accent.[4] Dialect poetry's success ran counter to these trends, but the ideology of the standard was also what made its celebration of linguistic difference possible. In popular form, the genre called upon what sociolinguists term the "covert prestige" of non-standard language varieties (as opposed to the "overt prestige" attached to standard varieties).[5] While for some Victorian poets the appeal of dialect was owed primarily to an interest in the development of language, popular uses of dialect in poetry depended upon solidarities of class and region. Here, the prevalence of ideals of correctness created the conditions in which low-status or stigmatized varieties of language forms were prized for denoting marginalized social identities.

Dialect poetry's mid-Victorian rise to prominence has usually been seen to represent the emergence of an oral tradition into print. Poets continued to make an appeal to orality in both form and performance: composition to popular airs crossed the permeable boundary between poetry and song, while local public readings fulfilled a bardic function for the age of mass print. At the same time, the mobility of print meant a dialect poem's readers were often spread well beyond its imagined community of speech, especially when poets published in book form. The regional and class feeling displayed in Barnes's 1844 Poems of Rural Life, in the Dorset Dialect—a volume, he asserts, "not written for readers who have had their lots cast in town-occupations of a highly civilized community" but for "a reader of that class in whose language it is written"—identifies it as the realization of his desire to "see the rustic

population of England […] supplied with a poetry of their own."[6] Even so, the book's dual publication in London and Dorchester, at a price beyond most labouring-class readers, renders his declared wish that the poems "should engage the happy mind of the dairymaid with her cow, promote the innocent evening cheerfulness of the family circle on the stone floor, or teach his rustic brethren to draw pure delight from the rich but frequently overlooked sources of nature within their own sphere of being" largely gestural.[7] Barnes exemplifies a situation in which dialect poetry's book readership was more varied in its social class and more scattered in its place than the ideal audience imagined by its authors.

Victorian dialect poetry's life in print has usually been viewed ambivalently. Print is acknowledged to drive the remarkable growth of dialect writing in the mid-century, but also seen to uproot dialect from its authentic environment. Martha Vicinus's classic study The Industrial Muse (1974) cites "the temptations of a mass readership" as the cause of dialect writing's "debasement" towards the end of the nineteenth century.[8] Brian Hollingworth's landmark anthology Songs of the People (1977) gathered together Lancashire dialect poetry of the industrial revolution; his 2013 article on this body of verse sees the status it achieved in print culture as both "its curse and its blessing": print ensured for dialect poetry a wide readership, but also meant "it was beginning to lose some of its more intimate connections with its roots in the oral tradition—it was moving from voice towards print. Perhaps it was losing its spontaneity and its verve."[9] Similar misgivings frame T. L. Burton and K. K. Ruthven's recent suggestion that dialect poetry might be delivered from its current obscurity by having "professional actors […] perform dialect poems from scripts scored by philologists with expertise in diachronic phonetics." This would, they suggest, liberate dialect poetry from "the opacities of typographical embodiment."[10]

I start here from a different premise: that rather than imprisoning dialect poetry, textuality is constitutive of its forms. Of particular significance here is what I call the

"compound dialect poem": a poem in dialect that denotes but also departs from traditions of local speech, engaging at the same time other language varieties or conventions. In the Victorian period, this category encompasses poetry intended to register or exemplify disappearing oral forms, but which at the same time simplifies dialect orthography or makes adaptations to language as a result of devices of sound or formal choices. It also includes obvious deviations from actually existing speech patterns, as for instance in the poems in Scots in Robert Louis Stevenson's Underwoods (1887), in which Stevenson "simply wrote my Scots as well as I was able, not caring if it hailed from Lauderdale or Angus, from the Mearns or Galloway" and "when Scots was lacking, or the rhyme jibbed, I was glad (like my betters) to fall back on English."[11] Literary Scots is, in this context, a singular case: even setting aside the vexed question of whether or not it forms a separate language from English, that Scots is a non-standard variety with the prestige of a national tradition makes it special in Victorian poetry. I risk its inclusion in this essay alongside dialect poetry from regions of England not only because of the popularity and prevalence of poetry in Scots in the period, but also because of the well-recognized difference between its written forms and its spoken varieties. Scots poetry from the eighteenth century onwards, as Leith Davis and Maureen N. McLane observe, deploys "orality-effects" rather than "'orality' per se"; I suggest this is also how we should think of English dialect poetry of the same period.[12]

The compound dialect poem summons forms of local speech but is shaped for print. This will appear an unhappy development when dialect writing is viewed through the lens of "authenticity." If understood as at once more stylized and more textual, however, departures from accuracy can be considered as innovations and not transgressions. The poets surveyed in this essay—Ralph Ditchfield, William Barnes, and Janet Hamilton—were of contrasting status and locality, but all three originated forms of dialect writing that at once appeal to what Ivan Kreilkamp calls "the charisma of speech" and are at the same time shaped for mass

circulation.[13] These poets reveal that dialect poetry's textuality can be primary and creative. This is not to deny the importance of orality to their poetry; instead, my suggestion is that we encounter here another version of what Kreilkamp describes as "oral authenticity generated in the nineteenth-century regime of print literacy."[14] All three poets aimed to represent and document varieties of non-standard speech. Just as importantly, however, they also took advantage of the new inventions of voice that the mediation of print made possible.

I. Ralph Ditchfield's textual conventions

Victorian dialect literature has its exemplary figures, most obviously William Barnes and Edwin Waugh, both of whom first published in newspapers before going on to circulate their work in book form among a widely dispersed readership. Most dialect poetry, however, never made it into book form, and was restricted to the local newspaper, often being published anonymously, especially when poems focused on contemporary social issues.[15] This poetry shared a common purpose with that of newspaper poetry generally: "The most significant function of the local newspaper for Victorian poetry," Andrew Hobbs and Claire Januszewski suggest, "was its ability to deliver verse about local places, people, and events, by local poets, to a local audience."[16]

What did this mean for the status of the voice in printed dialect poetry? In the absence of non-local influence, we might anticipate close faithfulness to actual speech types. Take this Lancashire dialect poem, "Buried," about the death of a child, which appeared in the Blackburn Times in 1876, and is in the monologue form traditional to Lancashire dialect poetry:

Aw diden'd expect him to dee,

Aw thowt he wor shur to come rayend:
Bud that wor wod heden’d to be,
Un na he’s i’th cowd silent grayend.

Aw oft thowt he’d hed quite enough
When he axt me for summot to hayet:
Id motent be th’ reet sooart [o] stuff,
Or may be he wanted moor mayet;

Or happen moor air—aw dor’d know,—
He seldom went hayet o me seet,
For fear he’d be run o’er or fo,
Or ged his things drabel’t i’th weet.

Aw think aw’s neer hev no moor pleasure!
Aw slap’t him for cryin one day;
Aw wornd fit to hev sich a treasure,
Un soa he’s bin teken away.

Poor Bobby: That’s his little cheer;
There’st merks us he made wi his feet,
Aw korn’d do to look at id theer,
Aw’l teke id upstairs hayet ut seet.

Bud this’l nod do—aw mon bake;

Ar John'l be wantin his tay,
Un the's nothin ith hayese bud a cake—
Aw done nowt but keep cryin o day.[17]

Of all Victorian regional literatures, Brian Maidment suggests, Lancashire dialect literature in its mid-nineteenth-century golden age "penetrated furthest into national consciousness."[18] This fact is most obvious in the fame of its major figures, particularly Waugh, the extraordinary success of whose "Come Whoam to Thi Childer an' Me" brought wide recognition.[19] "Buried," however, is a more entirely local creation. It is the work of Ralph Ditchfield, probably a tailor by profession, and a participant in Blackburn's thriving mid-century verse culture, notable for the sociability that existed between poets as well as for the steadfast patronage of local newspaper editors.[20] Ditchfield does not appear to have published outside of the Blackburn press. Few details survive of his life. He remained entirely a newspaper poet until an anthology of Blackburn poets was published by subscription in 1902, featuring a handful of his works, by which time he was supposed by the volume's editor no longer to be living.

"Buried" has the family and domestic setting typical of much sentimental Lancashire dialect writing; it also relies on the same notion of poverty seen in Waugh's work: the idea, as described by Patrick Joyce, "[t]hat struggle brought the poor close to the realities of the hardness, also the fleetingness, of life, and so ennobled them, making them uniquely privy to the knowledge that all life was struggle."[21] What is more distinctive is Ditchfield's spelling. As Hollingworth notes, there was in nineteenth-century Lancashire dialect poetry "quite wide variations in spelling for what is basically the same word according to which part of Lancashire the poet comes from" and individual poets themselves were not always consistent.[22] Even so, by the time Ditchfield's poem was printed in the mid-1870s, the

prestige and standing of Waugh's writing, along with that of another famed Lancashire dialect poet, Samuel Laycock, meant that some spellings were conventional. A sense of how "Buried" departs from these conventions can be gained by examining how the poem was tidied up when it was reproduced in the 1902 anthology of Blackburn poets. Where the Blackburn Times version of the poem has "Un na" (for "and now"), the anthology has the more usual "An' neaw"; where the newspaper has "summot" (for "something"), the anthology has "summat," again more typical; where the newspaper has "mon" (for "must"), which is ordinarily the Lancashire dialect word for "man," the anthology revises this to "mun"; where the newspaper has "Ar" (for "our"), the anthology returns to the more familiar "Eawr"; and so on. Nearly every line in the anthology version includes a spelling conventionalized. That the purpose of these changes was to render the poem easier to navigate as text is manifest in the addition of apologetic apostrophes ("cryin" and "wornd" revised to "cryin'" and "worn'd" respectively), and in emendations that offer visual clues as to meaning: the alteration of "korn'd" (for "can't") to "corn'd" is one example.[23] "Buried" is not an isolated instance, despite the editor's insistence that he had preserved original spellings in the anthology: another of Ditchfield's poems to appear, "Bosco' Fowd," has been similarly tidied up, as are poems by other writers first published in the Blackburn Times.[24]

If dialect poetry is held to embody voice, such changes in their accommodation of textual convention will be thought to represent print's corruption of the oral. When seen as more stylized and textual, however, these changes instead manifest nuances in the genre's relation to print culture. Significantly, they are not alien to Ditchfield's own practice. He knew the conventions to which "Buried" was later adapted: a prose story Ditchfield had published in the Blackburn Times in the previous month to "Buried" retains the orthography made familiar by Waugh and Laycock (including "summat" for "something" and "eawr" for "our"); it also includes fewer phonetic spellings ("I" and "sure" are among the words

rendered in dialect in the poem but given in standard English spelling in the prose story, as they are also in Waugh and Laycock).[25] Rather than mere inconsistency of practice, that the differences between "Buried" and the story occur between poetry and prose texts seems evidence of Ditchfield's facility in moving between varieties of language—a facility also demonstrated in a different way in his publication, earlier that year, of poems in a conventionally elevated form of literary English in the same newspaper.[26] Seen in this context, his orthography in "Buried" seems likely to be played off against the codification of Lancashire dialect literature then occurring because of the popularity of Waugh and Laycock. The effect is to suggest a closer approximation of speech, and also of particular locality, than appears in other Lancashire dialect poems, but this is only made possible by print's mediation of voice: Ditchfield essentially refreshes one set of textual conventions by way of another. The difference between the poem's newspaper and book versions is not between authentic or inauthentic renderings of dialect, but between two instances of the phenomenon described by Kreilkamp, in which "Victorian print culture grants special authority to forms of writing that pay homage to, or even pass themselves off as, transcriptions of that voice whose death knell was supposedly sounded by print."[27] Even in this most local of Victorian dialect poetry, then, we encounter the sign rather than the record of non-standard speech. That rather than a loss or deficiency, this fact reveals the flexibility within dialect poetry's possible identifications, becomes evident when we turn to a much better-known and widely read figure: the Dorset poet William Barnes.

II. The Dialects of William Barnes

Linguists today use the term "dialect" neutrally, to indicate the different varieties of a language, both standard and non-standard. From this perspective, "standard English […] is

just as much a dialect as any form of English," and its distinction from other varieties is social rather than linguistic: "it does not make any kind of sense to suppose that any one dialect is in any way linguistically superior to any other."[28] William Barnes had a quite different perception of dialect: for Barnes, English regional (especially rural) dialects were to be championed because they represented the language in its best form. His writing of poetry in the Dorset dialect, then feared to be disappearing from use, was most obviously an expression of solidarity with marginalized regional and class identities: "To write in what some may deem a fast out-wearing speech-form may seem as idle as the writing of one's name in the snow of a spring day," Barnes observed in 1862. "I cannot help it. It is my mother tongue and it is to my mind the only true speech of the life that I draw."[29] It was also, however, bound up with an idea of language change that Will Abberley terms "language vitalism," in which "Meaning was conceived […] as an organic essence derived from a primordial epoch of creation": for vitalists such as Barnes, "this imagined linguistic past represented a source of spiritual and semantic renewal."[30] Barnes held to the Romantic conviction that language embodies the character of a nation, and was anxious that modern English had been corrupted by foreign influence. His poetry was allied to his larger, often eccentric campaign to rid the English language of "Latinish and Greekish wordings" and return it to what he considered its original Anglo-Saxon strength and solidity—strength and solidity that Barnes held the Dorset dialect to exemplify.[31]

This was a project fostered in the context of a linguistic science—the new philology—that took advantage of new opportunities for the analysis of non-western languages opened by European imperial expansion. In his profession as a Dorchester schoolmaster, Barnes, who was largely self-taught, offered his pupils instruction not only in Latin and Greek, as well as French, Italian, and German, but also—with an eye to the opportunities his pupils might have to serve British rule over the Indian subcontinent—

Hindustani and Persian.[32] As an amateur philologist, Barnes ranged widely in search of linguistic comparison: A Philological Grammar (1854) refers to more than sixty languages, ranging from Breton to Mongolian to Māori.[33] As Joseph Errington has shown, such linguistic analysis was also a form of control, making "alien ways of speaking into objects of knowledge, so that their speakers could be made subjects of colonial power."[34] More specifically, Barnes's preoccupation with English's Anglo-Saxon origins and its kinship with "Teutonic" (Germanic) languages was framed in imperialist terms, sometimes quite explicitly, as when Barnes described himself in the preface to The Elements of English Grammar (1842) as "one of a class […] of Englishmen" who "from the pride of belonging to a branch of that bold and great race of mankind whose kindred are treading on free ground from Iceland to Australia, and from Austria to America, have conceived a wish that the Saxon body of the English language should be better understood, so that it might not be further corrupted if it cannot be enriched from its own Gothic resources."[35]

Barnes's first Dorset dialect poems, cast in the genre of the pastoral, and drawing on classical models, were published in a newspaper. Later, these poems appeared in book form, gaining a national as well as local audience. Here, they were overtly tied to his efforts in the study of language: the first volume of Barnes's Dorset poems, gathered from his newspaper poems and published in 1844, appeared prefaced by a substantial "Dissertation on the Dorset Dialect of the English Language" and accompanied by a glossary.[36] Poetry and philology were here a joint venture, but Barnes would subsequently open a gap between poetic and dialectological ambitions when, beginning to know literary success, he adapted his representation of the Dorset dialect. Poems were written (and poems from his first volume rewritten) with a simplified system of spelling that was easier of approach but provided less exact phonetic cues; some grammatical features were also changed. These alterations were not enough to overcome the difficulties non-local readers had comprehending his poems:

Barnes faced repeated appeals along the lines of that made by his publisher Alexander Macmillan in a letter of 1862, who requested that Barnes should "render the bulk of your poems into more general English and give those, who stumble at dialect, a chance of knowing that there is another genuine poet in England."[37] He was eventually persuaded by such appeals to produce versions of his Dorset dialect poems in what he termed "common" or "national" English—a variety of literary English that can be considered "standard" in the sense described by Dennis Taylor, as "a subdivision of the standard language, […] a set of ways of writing judged appropriate to various genres," the specific genres in Barnes's case being the pastoral lyric and eclogue.[38]

The "common" or "national" English versions of Barnes's poems have never been thought particularly successful. It is instead in the form adopted in his final revision of the poems in dialect in 1879, with a simplified system of phonetic spelling, that we have become used to reading his work. According to the editors of the new three-volume Oxford University Press edition of Barnes's collected poems (2013-), this is unfortunate: they advocate a return to what they call the "broad form" versions of the first collection of 1844, which retain the denser phonetic spelling and grammatical features of the earlier poems. In the first collection, Burton and Ruthven assert, "Barnes had not been willing to sacrifice the specificities of his native dialect in order to accommodate the expectations of readers in other parts of England, especially its metropolitan centre"; his earlier and more local intention for his poems was, they suggest, also his best intention.[39]

If we follow a Barnes poem through its various rewritings, the point becomes clear. "The Drove" first appeared in the Dorset County Chronicle in 1840 in the "broad" form of the dialect. Although not included in the 1844 volume, it was later revised to accord with the simplified spelling system adopted in the second and third collections, and later still into "common English" as "The Grove." We see in this poem how the change from the "broad"

form to the so-called “modified” form of the dialect eases the path to a form of standard literary English. Here is the poem in “broad” form:

’Twer there in zummer, in the drove,
Where I an’ Fanny used to rove,
Down wher the gravel-bedded brook,
  A-shiaded by the hangen boughs,
Did trickle roun’ the quiet nook,
  An’ lie in pools var thirsty cows.

There be the very stuones she trod
Upon to cross the stream dryshod;
Here be the leaves, a-lyen dead,
  Down roun’ the lofty elem tree
That then wer waggen auver head,
  Al bright an’ lively, jis’ lik’ she.

Now while, by moonlight, night winds keen
Do shiake the ivy bright an’ green,
By thick wold wall; an’ keckses dry
  Da rottle by the leafless tharn,
Here I da stroll about where I
  Once stroll’d wi’ she, now al vorlarn.[40]

The version of the poem (of uncertain date) that Barnes made in what his editors call the "modified" form of the dialect is as follows:

’Twer there in zummer, in the drove,
Where I an’ vo’k a-lost did rove,
Down where the gravel-bedded brook,
A-sheäded by the hangèn boughs,
Did trickle roun’ the quiet nook,
Or lie in pools vor thirsty cows.

An’ there be still the stwones we trod
As we did cross the stream, dry-shod;
An’ here be leaves, a-lyèn dead,
About the lofty elem tree
That then did quiver over head
All playvully alive as we.

While now by moonlight night-winds, keen,
Do sheäke the ivy, ever green,
By theäse wold wall, an’ kexes dry
Do rattle by the leafless thorn,
I still can fancy vo’k be by
That be agone, and I’m vorlorn.[41]

Finally, here is the version that appeared in Poems of Rural Life in Common English in 1868 as “The Grove”:

’Twas there in summer down the grove
That I and friends were wont to rove,
Where then the gravelbedded brook,
O’ershaded under hanging boughs,
On-trickled round the quiet nook,
Or lay in pools for thirsty cows.

And here are still the stones we trod
In stepping o’er the stream dryshod,
And here are leaves that lie all dead,
About the lofty-headed tree,
Where leaves then quiver’d overhead,
All playfully alive as we.

While now, by moonlight, nightwinds keen,
May shake the ivy, ever green,
By this old wall, and hemlocks dry
May rattle by the leafless thorn,
I still can fancy people by
That I have lost, to live forlorn.[42]

The most obvious change between the versions is that a poem initially nostalgic for individual courting—for roving with Fanny between the hedgerows—was made over into one about time spent with a general "vo'k" or "friends" or "people." Also notable, however, is that which occurs between the "broad" and "moderate" form versions. The Dorset dialect versions are of course closer to each other than to the "common English" version; indeed, the latter shows Barnes's difficulty in moving a dialect poem into "common English" in its abandonment of the dialectal auxiliary "do" ("Do shiake the ivy bright an' green," "Da rottle by the leafless tharn") for the metrically necessary but otherwise perplexing "May" ("May shake the ivy, ever green," "May rattle by the leafless thorn"). But in several respects the "modified" form version is a staging post on the way to Barnes's "common English": in the smoothing of elements of the poem's language (as when the leaves "That then wer waggen auver head" in the "broad" form become "That then did quiver over head" in the "modified" form version); in its the making more elegant of the poem's phrasing (as with the brook that no longer just "Did trickle roun' the quiet nook, / An' lie in pools var thirsty cows" but, with "Did trickle roun' the quiet nook, / Or lie in pools vor thirsty cows," now has options); and also in the easing of dialectal specificity, with, for example, the replacement of the reduced "al" (one "l"), with its likely unrounded pronunciation, from the close of the second stanza, and its disappearance entirely from the poem's final line.

In his preface to Poems of Rural Life in Common English (1868), Barnes remarked: "As I think that some people, beyond the bounds of Wessex, would allow me the pleasure of believing that they have deemed the matter of my homely poems in our Dorset mother-speech to be worthy of their reading, I have written a few of a like kind, in common English; not, however, without a misgiving that what I have done for a wider range of readers, may win the good opinion of fewer."[43] The evidence of "The Drove" is that the same misgiving might apply here: the spelling and grammar of the "modified" form version of the poem are more

accessible but also less distinctive; Barnes flattens dialectal representation in a process of accommodation to standard literary forms that the "common English" version of the poem would later make complete. We encounter here the limits of Barnes's expansion of literary English. In one way, his dialect writing can be taken as evidence of a broader trend in which (as Sylvia Adamson describes) "Post-Romantic literature opens itself to include the varieties of English spoken by many different groups, whether defined by ethnic or regional origin, social class, age, gender, or trade […] and increasingly treats these varieties not merely as comic relief or aberrations from a literary Standard, but as legitimate competitors for its status and functions."[44] In another way, the creation of alternative versions of his poems indicates the difficulty Barnes had in realizing this same expansion while also trying to accommodate the preferences of his geographically dispersed readership.

The thinning out of the dialectal particularity of "The Drove" validates the call made by the editors of the new OUP edition to return to Barnes's first, "broad" form versions, as against his later revisions. But where does this leave the many poems Barnes wrote only in the "modified" form of the Dorset dialect? These include his best-known work, "My Orcha'd in Linden Lea," made famous in the musical setting by Ralph Vaughan Williams that appeared in 1902, but first published in 1856, with later revisions in 1859 and 1862. Here is the poem in its final version:

> 'Ithin the woodlands, flow'ry gleäded,
>
>   By the woak tree's mossy moot,
>
> The sheenèn grass-bleädes, timber-sheäded,
>
>   Now do quiver under voot;
>
> An' birds do whissle over head,
>
> An' water's bubblèn in its bed,

An’ there vor me the apple tree
Do leän down low in Linden Lea.

When leaves that leätely wer a-springèn
  Now do feäde ’ithin the copse,
An’ païnted birds do hush their zingèn
  Up upon the timber’s tops;
An’ brown-leav’d fruit’s a-turnèn red,
In cloudless zunsheen, over head,
Wi’ fruit vor me, the apple tree
Do leän down low in Linden Lea.

Let other vo’k meäke money vaster
  In the aïr o’ dark-room’d towns,
I don’t dread a peevish meäster;
  Though noo man do heed my frowns,
I be free to go abrode,
Or teäke ageän my hwomeward road
To where, vor me, the apple tree
Do leän down low in Linden Lea.[45]

Vaughan Williams’s setting of “Linden Lea” has been described as, in musical terms, “midway between folk song and art song.”[46] This parallels the mixed quality of Barnes’s poem, which combines folk elements and intricate formal patterning. Its refrain, a common feature of Barnes’s poems, associates “Linden Lea” with oral and song tradition and yet also,

in the Welsh poetry-inspired vowel-chiming of "vor me, the apple tree / Do lëan down low in Linden Lea," renders unmistakable the mediated nature of the poem's regional dialect. Indeed, as Burton has noticed, the earlier part of the refrain includes a usage actually illegitimate by the principles of Barnes's own Dissertation on the Dorset Dialect: "vor me the apple tree" gives an internal rhyme between "me" and "tree," but the grammar of the dialect (as prescribed in the Dissertation, and as held to in other Barnes poems) requires "var I."[47] Burton rightly remarks that "'Linden Lea' works as it stands, because that is how it was composed"; but in what manner, and with what significance?[48]

From one perspective, Barnes's departures from his earlier codification of the Dorset dialect undermine the integrity of his poetry as a literary-linguistic project. Seen more flexibly, however, the change takes advantage of the creative possibilities opened by dialect poetry's textuality. It is still the case that speech forms define this written poem's affirmation of the virtues of bucolic life, especially in the closing stanza, which turns a paean to rural contentment into a proud assertion of rusticity: "Though noo man do heed my frowns, / I be free to go abrode," with its auxiliary "do," follows the pattern in Barnes described by Marcus Waithe, in which "the modal forms of the dialect infuse verbs of action with an insistent 'doing'" (compare, in this respect, Vaughan Williams's more understated rendering of the text in his song setting as "Though no man may heed my frowns"; emphasis added).[49] The ardency of the poem's closing declaration is made possible by the Dorset dialect's distinctive way with verbs. At the same time, however, Barnes altered what had been "da" throughout the newspaper version of "Linden Lea" to "do" when the poem was published in book form; this was one of the spelling changes he described as giving "the lettered Dialect more of the book-form of the national speech."[50] A Dorset dialect speaker of Barnes's locality may have known to pronounce "do" in the manner indicated by "da" in the newspaper version (phonetically /də/); but visually, on the page, "do" appears identical to the long-vowel form

shared with non-localized "Received Pronunciation" (phonetically /duː/; this is also the pronunciation of the Dorset dialect form when the word is stressed, always spelt "do" by Barnes).[51] Additional emphasis is created by the change: the vowel in "do" might be interpreted as elongated and so more prominent, and a visual likeness now appears in the refrain ("Do leän down low in Linden Lea"; emphasis added). Such changes matter in lines characterized by their exceptional verbal intricacy. A speech form is in this way reshaped through its contact with the written.

The return made by Barnes's current editors to the more distinctly dialectal versions of his Dorset poems asks that we view Barnes's primary audience not just as initially, but also as most vitally, local and regional, recognizing the force of his appeal as social portraitist and linguistic advocate for a community experiencing the marginalization of its traditional ways of life and speech. The risk here is that an emphasis on class and region obscures the national politics of Barnes's language choices when the social and regional affiliations of his Dorset poems are in fact intertwined with his larger campaign against what he called "the Englandish of our days" and in favour of Anglo-Saxon word stock.[52] Barnes's commitment to regional dialect was always more than regional: it also needs to be seen within the context of his "linguistic vitalism" and of nineteenth-century efforts to define nationhood linguistically, particularly the emergence of what Eric Hobsbawm terms "philological nationalism": "the insistence on the linguistic purity of the national vocabulary."[53]

In this respect, the compound nature of "Linden Lea" and other Barnes poems that are adapted to text even as they evoke the aura of voice indicates the complexity of dialect as a cultural sign. The regional particularity of Barnes's writing is inescapable in the difficulty of its voicing by the non-local reader. Even in the case of a compound dialect poem such as "Linden Lea," any abstraction of poetic emotion from local conditions cannot rely on the actualization of the speaking voice associated with idealized lyric subjectivity. The poem

instead instances what David Nowell Smith describes as the “strange double-bind by which vernacular writing is predicated on future voicing, but, embedded [within] the politics of accent, will refuse to be voiced by many of [its] readers.”[54] At the same time, regional particularity stands in Barnes’s poetry for the national essence. His initial dialect publications had come in the form of a pastoral dialogue poem, the eclogue, and featured named speakers addressing agricultural upheavals of the 1830s and 1840s. Signifying orality but shaped for print, the language of “Linden Lea” is more obviously synthetic. With its imprecise scenario and temporality, the poem also implies a less socially particularized mode of feeling than do Barnes’s eclogues—an aspect of “Linden Lea” that in its Vaughan Williams-inspired fame is curiously reflected in the fact that this invented place-name has been adopted for locations not just in Dorset, but also north London.[55] The difference of pieces including “Linden Lea” from the situatedness and sociality of the eclogues is what allowed Barnes to be read in his own day as more abstractly concerned with “the lyrical interpretation of such simple emotions as arise out of the simple drama of an average country life” (as Francis Hastings Doyle put it in his Oxford poetry lectures of 1867).[56] Regional dialect features in this reading of Barnes as the token of an unchanging and organic rural order that could itself be held to encapsulate the authentic character of the English nation. The use of dialect “sort of guarantees the spontaneousness of the thought,” Gerard Manley Hopkins commented of Barnes: “His poems used to charm me also by their Westcountry “instress”, a most peculiar product of England, which I associate with airs like Weeping Winefred, Polly Oliver, or Poor Mary Ann, with Herrick and Herbert, with the Worcestershire, Herefordshire, and Welsh landscape, and above all with the smell of oxeyes and applelofts.”[57] “It is his naturalness that strikes me most,” Hopkins later remarked of Barnes: “he is like an embodiment or incarnation or manmuse of the country, of Dorset, of rustic life and humanity.”[58]

Barnes's fame and intense literariness make him exceptional among Victorian dialect poets. Even so, what his compound dialect poetry makes clear is that the adaptability of dialect as a cultural sign in this period was more than simply the product of a poet's reception; it could also form part of a creative method. "Linden Lea" arrives at distinctive verbal effects of cynghanedd and internal rhyme through the stylized use of the Dorset dialect: its intricacy is made possible by the fact that Barnes's language in the poem evokes rather than transcribes regional voice. Instead of regretting the adaptations Barnes made to his representation of the Dorset dialect, it is more productive to see such changes as indicating the two-way interaction between writing and orality in Victorian dialect poetry. The mediation of print is here fundamental not just to the circulation and reception of dialect poetry, but also to its making.

III. Janet Hamilton's "printit mither tongue"

While print culture created the conditions for dialect poetry to thrive in mid-nineteenth century Britain, its literary inspiration came overwhelmingly from the Scots poetry of Robert Burns. English regional dialect poets were routinely heralded as Burns's inheritors or English equivalents (William Barnes was called the "Dorset Burns," and Edwin Waugh the "Lancashire Burns," while William Wright styled himself the "Yorkshire Burns," and even took to wearing a tam o'shanter cap to encourage the association). Although the risk with such tags, as Burton and Ruthven note, is that a given poet is "type-cast as a mere imitator of an alleged predecessor," they also attest to how Burns opened the way for English dialect poetry's nineteenth-century flourishing.[59] His influence was also entirely dominant in nineteenth-century Scots poetry. Indeed, by force of Burns's example, Scots poetry remained Victorian Britain's most established and respected form of non-standard language poetry,

even if the reputation of Scottish poetry more generally in the nineteenth century has suffered badly since. There existed at the time an oft-repeated claim that Scotland had more local and provincial poets than any other country in the world, and so could boast a unique working-class poetic culture; indeed, “the sense of Scotland’s working-class poets as her glory was remarkably persistent and highly influential” throughout the period.[60] The importance of Scots to Scottish emigrants and the extent of settler colonialism meant it was also the form of non-standard language poetry that circulated most widely in the period.[61] These facts would already make Scots poetry essential to any consideration of non-standard language in Victorian poetry, but its particular significance for this essay is that, in contrast to English dialect poetry, differences between written and spoken Scots were both generally acknowledged and embedded in poetic practice. That orality effects were appreciably conventional in literary Scots offered unique possibilities for experimentation with other, more idiomatic varieties which gave a closer impression of actual speech. These varieties did not have the overt prestige of literary Scots—this was a period in which “the spoken Scots of contemporary life was somehow perceived as different from and less worthy than the written language […] of the past”—but their association with speech could instead stand as a marker of specific regional and class identities.[62] Such variation again demonstrates the adaptability of non-standard language as a cultural sign in the period.

I focus here on Janet Hamilton, who has major status within what has usually been a minor category: that of Victorian working-class women poets. Her reputation is based largely upon her writing in Scots. Florence Boos grants Hamilton twice the number of pages of any other poet included in her pioneering volume Working-Class Women Poets in Victorian Britain (2008); all of the poems by Hamilton featured are in Scots.[63] Hamilton’s first published poems, however, were in stylized, literary English: it was not until she had begun to establish herself as newspaper poet and essayist that she turned to Scots, and then only in

certain publication venues.[64] Poems in English predominate in the three volumes Hamilton went on to publish in her lifetime, Poems and Essays (1863), Poems of Purpose (1865) and Poems and Ballads (1868), not least because she retained a strict division of genres. Sacred and memorial poems, for instance, were always composed in literary English; ballads were in Scots.

As this suggests, Hamilton's decisions about language were self-conscious, something all too easily obscured by the romanticising of her late arrival at a literary career. She did not learn to write until about the age of fifty and her first known appearance in print did not occur until she was fifty-five, facts quickly sentimentalised in her lifetime by reviewers keen to assert the ingenuousness of her candour as "a genuine antique of the strong-headed, warm-hearted, quick-witted auld Scottish wife" (as Gerald Massey described Hamilton in the Athenaeum in 1863).[65] An introductory paper to the 1880 memorial edition of Hamilton's works admires that "The self-taught simply record the contact between their own genius and Nature's works."[66] The reality is of course more complex. Hamilton's familiarity with English poetry was such that she could, as a parlour game, produce "cento" verses combining lines drawn from Lord Byron, William Cowper, Thomas Gray and others; she was also deeply invested in a Scottish national literary tradition that encouraged and authenticated her turn to Scots.[67] While, as Kirstie Blair notes, "it was very unusual for English working-class women to write dialect poems" in the Victorian period, the situation was different in Scotland.[68] In Burns and the Scots vernacular revival, Hamilton inherited a poetic tradition in which her native Lowland Scots was both valorized and recognized to take written forms that evoked but were also distinct from their spoken equivalents. She also followed a familiar dual track for the self-taught Scottish Victorian poet in wishing equally to demonstrate her facility in conventionally elevated forms of literary English.

Most Scots literature of the nineteenth century recalls old-time traditions of ballad and song.[69] The period's familiar name for this form of writing when used in poetry—"Doric"—elevates it by way of classical analogy. Hamilton's praise for Scots in her poems sees it to have issued from traditional culture, but as now sustained largely (though also precariously) by print. "A Plea for the Doric" (1865), a poem anxious for the future of Scots, opens with a show of remorse for Hamilton's own linguistic infidelity:

> Forgi'e, oh, forgi'e me, auld Scotlan', my mither!
> Like an ill-deedie bairn I've ta'en up wi' anither;
> And aft thy dear Doric aside I hae flung,
> To busk oot my sang wi' the prood Southron tongue.[70]

What follows lauds Scots for its embodiment of national character and history. At risk in its current decline, according to Hamilton, is a tradition that combines text, speech and song. Her literary example is Burns's "The Cotter's Saturday Night" (1786), its title rendered by Hamilton into Scots, in a conversion of printed language into a representation of speech: "Just think gif the 'Cottar's ain Saturday Nicht' / War stripped o' the Doric, wi' English bedicht." The change to the title brings orality to the fore, but elsewhere in the poem Hamilton is equally focused on written Scots. The poem has earlier worried "that our bairns winna ken / To read mither tongue on that mither's fire en'." Less sentimentally, Hamilton goes on to complain about the economics of print culture:

> I'm wae for Auld Reekie; her big men o' print
> To Lunnon ha'e gane, to be nearer the mint;
> But the coinage o' brain looks no a'e haet better,

Though Doric is banish'd frae sang, tale, and letter.[71]

The criticism of Edinburgh's "big men o' print" gathers energy from the stanza's juxtaposition of different cultural forms. Placed next to "sang" and "tale", "letter," with its suggestion of the handwritten, appears as traditional as the oral forms it features alongside, in contrast to the profitable but delusive creations of those "To Lunnon [...] gane." At the same time, Hamilton recognizes print to be essential if Scots literature is to be sustained in her contemporary moment. "Auld Mither Scotland," another poem that appears in Poems of Purpose (1865), again identifies a combination of oral and written elements to Scots as it deplores the waning of its use and comprehension:

Nae mither! nae; we maunna pairt!
  E'en tho' they say thou's deein';
That speech is gaun, they say thy face
  We'll sune nae mair be seein'.
But oh! I fear the Doric's gaun,
  For, mang baith auld an' young,
There's mony noo that canna read
  Their printit mither tongue.[72]

In common with "A Plea for the Doric," "Auld Mither Scotland" gives prestige to speech as the time-honoured medium for Scots but also sees print as necessary to its continued life—hence Hamilton's arrival at the phrase "printit mither tongue," a styling of printed Scots that is revealingly contrary in attributing a textual form with the features of primal orality.

Hamilton's use of Scots varies widely between poems. "A Plea for the Doric" and "Auld Mither Scotland" incline towards a literary Scots, having many of the features identified by J. Derrick McClure as characteristic of this type of usage: "a more or less recondite vocabulary, containing words from a wider range of times and places than could be found in 'colloquial' writing; an avoidance of distinctively local forms in grammar and orthography […]; and of course the presence in some degree of figurative and allusive language and formal versification."[73] In other poems, however, Hamilton adopts a Scots that departs from more familiar literary varieties in order to indicate local and regional difference. Take Hamilton's most anthologized work, "Oor Location" (1863), a temperance piece. The poem begins:

> A hunner funnels bleezin', reekin',
> Coal an' ironstane, charrin', smeekin';
> Navvies, miners, keepers, fillers,
> Puddlers, rollers, iron millers;
> Reestit, reekit, raggit laddies,
> Firemen, enginemen, an' Paddies;
> Boatsmen, banksmen, rough and rattlin',
> 'Bout the wecht wi' colliers battlin',
> Sweatin', swearin', fechtin', drinkin',
> Change-house bells an' gill-stoups clinkin',
> Police—ready men and willin'—
> Aye at han' when stoups are fillin',
> Clerks, an' counter-loupers plenty,
> Wi' trim moustache and whiskers dainty—

Chaps that winna staun at trifles,

Min' ye they can han'le rifles

'Bout the wives in oor location,

An' the lasses' botheration,

Some are decent, some are dandies,

An' a gey wheen drucken randies[.][74]

"Oor Location" marks the transformation of Hamilton's native Lanarkshire from traditional rurality into industrial heartland. The poem's Scots is vividly and densely demotic. The density inheres first of all in the frequency of the present participle ending "-in" (as opposed to the Standard English "-ing"), here conventionally accompanied by the so-called "apologetic apostrophe," an apostrophe that signals that a Scots word is without a sound that would feature in its Standard English equivalent. Many of the poem's rhyme words have the Scots present participle ending, and they also dominate Hamilton's pulsating list, given in drum-like trochaic tetrameter, of the sights, sounds and labour that now dominate her "location." In addition, numerous other words are spelt in a way that answers to spoken pronunciation, presenting a contrast with the more obviously literary Scots used in other poems. In her title, Hamilton opts for the "oor" form seen in certain of her Scots poems over the standard "our" form that appears in others. The poem's subsequent castigation of "drucken fock" enlists a form rare in her writing (she usually prefers "folk"); "whatfor," also used later, makes its only appearance in her poetry in "Oor Location." The word "cums" in the line "Frae whence cums misery, want, an' wo," is another to take various forms in her writing (one of Hamilton's prose sketches recalls her grandfather "exclaiming in gude braid Scotch, 'Cum awa' man; we ha'e been ower lang here'").[75]

Hamilton, according to Kaye Kossick, had “a chameleonic talent for verbal shape-shifting”; the flexibility within her use of Scots is part of that talent.[76] While the Scots of “A Plea for the Doric” is traditionally literary, “Oor Location” trades in the appearance of oral immediacy. Literary Scots was in the period’s poetry habitually made the vehicle of nostalgia for pre-industrial rurality; Hamilton’s effort to give a closer impression of speech forms in “Oor Location” makes use of the established capacity of Scots to act as a token of class identity while also shaping it to the new conditions of her locality. The agility in her use of Scots is made possible by the fact that it represents the sign rather than the record of speech. Of particular significance in this respect is the “Rhymes for the Times” series, from the 1860s. These poems offer Hamilton’s familiar warning against the ills of alcoholism; they also range across contemporary topics including the role of women, the death of Lord Palmerston, Sabbatarianism, and the dangers of Anglo-Catholicism. Their consequent distance from the ballad, song and tale tradition Hamilton associated nostalgically with what a prose sketch calls “the peasantry of Scotland in the olden times” licenses a flamboyantly compound language.[77] This is the case even as Hamilton deploys traditional Scots-literary satiric energies, as in these lines from “Rhymes for the Times IV,” on the American Civil War:

> Oor Premier has promised to stan’ for reform;
> The Fins an’ the Yankees are brewin’ a storm,
> They’re swallin’ an’ frothin’ wi’ bunkum an’ bosh,
> But they daurna come near oor bit islan’ sae cosh.[78]

The combination of Scots (some of which derives from current speech, as in “daurna,” for the English “dare not,” largely a mid-nineteenth-century form) and formal and slang English (as

in “bunkum” and “bosh”) is incongruous enough to remove any illusion of oral authenticity. Non-standard language is instead a means for Hamilton to place herself within established conventions of assertive poetic speech, and so authenticate her public and political expression as a working-class woman poet: she is able to pronounce with such vehemence on international affairs because clearly affiliated to a national literary tradition. The contrast with English regional dialect poetry, according to Susan Zlotnick “an almost exclusively male province” beholden to the discourse of domesticity, is stark.[79]

Elsewhere, the “Rhymes for the Times” poems mix what Hamilton is usually careful to separate: formal literary English and Scots speech forms. In one way, this appears a rare and significant departure from the hierarchy of genres and languages to which Hamilton otherwise keeps. That these compound poems still retain some striking internal divisions, however, again indicates the importance of generic and literary convention to Hamilton’s political writing. “Rhymes for the Times V,” which laments the problems of the moment, ends by taking consolation in Britain’s global dominance and commitment to progress:

> We hae muckle that’s ill, but mair that is gude;
> Oor place ’mang the nations is weel unnerstude—
> Improvement in knowledge, in science an’ art—
> The van of progression, oor post, an’ oor part.[80]

The abruptness of Hamilton’s code-switching here, especially the jolt into formality of “Improvement in knowledge, in science an’ art,” in which the insertion of a single Scots form (“an’”) sits oddly and tokenistically, renders it difficult to imagine the poem as the reproduction of embodied speech. This might perplex vocal performance but does not simply represent the dominance of print over orality: Hamilton’s Scots, her “printit mother tongue,”

continues to draw on the appeal of the oral, which here again legitimates her forthright political expression in its styling as a form of straight talk typical of the Scots tradition.

Hamilton's shifts of language instead indicate the stylized nature of such talk. "Rhymes for the Times V" laments contemporary social ills but celebrates British global supremacy, with Queen Victoria's honouring of the Ottoman sultan during his 1867 visit taken to show the success of Britain's international alliances. In contrast to earlier stanzas densely marked with tokens of speech, this part of the poem carries only a thin trace of Scots orthography:

> O Sov'reign Victoria! bless'd and belov'd,
> On the deck of the Albert thy mission was proved;
> Thy han' grac'd the Sultan wi' garter an' star,
> And opened for freedom a pathway afar.

It is not that the change to a more or less gestural use of Scots indicates a rift between Hamilton's Scottish national identity and her wider British and imperial identity. There is little indication she found these difficult to reconcile, a fact which is not unusual given that, as Richard Finlay remarks, "mid-century ideas of Scottish identity were a mass of contradictions, which, though making little sense to us today, were relatively unproblematic to contemporaries": "This was the era when a campaign to create a monument to William Wallace coexisted with the propensity of the Scottish press to term the nation 'England'."[81] What the alteration in Hamilton's representation of Scots instead underlines is the close dependence of her political writing on conventions of genre and topic. Her criticism of "the times" is wedded to the satiric energies of the Scots poetic tradition, and to its association of orality with plain truth-telling; her praise for monarch and empire, on the other

hand, requires a more decorous and restrained form of Scots, which makes minimal claim on the aura of the oral. When seen through the lens of "authenticity," Hamilton's lexical mixing, and its consequent troubling of the relation of person to voice, might seem to represent a dead end in non-standard language poetry. Viewed more positively, it is an innovation that facilitates Hamilton's political expression, and so is fundamental to the contrast her writing presents with familiar critical impressions of working-class women's poetry of the period, too often "brushed aside as apolitical and sentimental versification."[82] Her compound language, in short, again requires us to see textuality as inherent and not artificial to the genre of dialect poetry. Rather than an abandonment of the duty to embody ways of speech, the stylization of orality undertaken by Hamilton and other poets was a fertile creative act undertaken within the conditions of print culture, and capable of being adapted to multiple forms of identity and affiliation.

To show textuality to be integral to the creation of dialect poetry may seem to undermine its most cherished characteristic: the facility to convey oral and folk culture. Silent or subvocalized reading was and is the least valorized of the ways in which this poetry has been encountered. That its voice should be perceived as living and human appears in one way basic to its social politics. Dialect poems in their preference for sociolects over idiolects denote a linguistic community even when written in individualized mode. The notion that poetry involves the abstraction of voice would seem to compromise their aesthetic of representation. This is especially so in the case of Victorian dialect poetry, much of which is thematically conservative, such that (as Annmarie Drury remarks) "it makes sense to recognize aurality as a Victorian dialect poet's sphere for social agency."[83]

Even so, a full acknowledgement of dialect poetry's writtenness requires that we forgo the idea that it embodies voice. What Drury identifies as the "specimen-attitude" to Victorian dialect poetry, already the prevalent nineteenth-century response, situates the genre

as an external importation into the realm of the literary by way of a folkloric project of phonetic transcription.[84] Whether in Barnes and Ditchfield's orthographic innovations, or in Hamilton's mixing of linguistic registers, the example of the poets discussed here shows otherwise. Recent theorizations of the work of sound in poetry have preferred "voicing" to "voice" to describe its animation by readers, partly because "voicing" is more active, suggesting the agency of readers, and also because more plural (the possibility of "voicings") and provisional, and so less vulnerable to critiques of aural interpretation as involving the idealization of lyric subjectivity.[85] Dialect poetry cuts across the distinction sometimes made here between poetry, as Angela Leighton puts it, "whose logical end is the live audience rather than the solitary reader," and which is heard "through a memory of their powerful rendition in song or chant by the poets or performers themselves," and so is associated with a single voice; and that which "in a sense, stays silent on the page while shaping the labor of the ear through which it might, nevertheless, be heard," resulting in multiple and contingent voicings.[86] In its wide circulation in the nineteenth century, Victorian dialect poetry often carried the aura of performed utterance without the memory of its rendition; even now, it asks to be heard as voice while largely, and usually laboriously, allowing only voicings. My suggestion has been that such a situation, frequently claimed to result in a process of ossification, in fact opened new creative possibilities. This poetry of speech is able to draw powerful effects from the difficulty of its being spoken.

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[1] M. C. Cohen, "Dialect Poetry," in The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics, 4th ed., ed. Roland Greene and others (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2012), 355.

[2] Tom Paulin, introduction to The Faber Book of Vernacular Verse, ed. Tom Paulin (London: Faber, 1990), xi.

[3] Patrick Joyce, Visions of the People: Industrial England and the Question of Class, c. 1848-1914 (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1991), 259; Martha Vicinus, The Industrial Muse: A Study of Nineteenth Century British Working-Class Literature (London: Croom Helm, 1974), 210.

[4] On prescriptivist ideals in the period, see Lynda Mugglestone, Talking Proper: The Rise of Accent as Social Symbol (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 7-49.

[5] See for this distinction, William Labov, Sociolinguistic Patterns (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1972), 249.

[6] William Barnes, Poems of Rural Life, in the Dorset Dialect: With a Dissertation and Glossary (London and Dorchester: John Russell Smith, 1844), 36; [William Barnes], “Provincial Dialects of England,” Gentleman’s Magazine (May 1841): 511.

[7] Barnes, Poems of Rural Life, in the Dorset Dialect, 37.

[8] Vicinus, The Industrial Muse, 228-29.

[9] Brian Hollingworth, “From Voice to Print: Lancashire Dialect Verse, 1800-70,” Philological Quarterly 92.2 (2013): 304-05.

[10] T. L. Burton and K. K. Ruthven, “Dialect Poetry, William Barnes and the Literary Canon,” ELH 76.2 (2009): 327, 325.

[11] Robert Louis Stevenson, note to Underwoods (London: Chatto and Windus, 1887), xi.

[12] Leith Davis and Maureen N. McLane, “Orality and Public Poetry,” in The Edinburgh History of Scottish Literature, ed. Ian Brown and others, 3 vol. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), 2:125.

[13] Ivan Kreilkamp, Voice and the Victorian Storyteller (Cambridge, Cambridge Univ. Press, 2005), 20.

[14] Kreilkamp, Voice and the Victorian Storyteller, 29.

[15] As Simon Rennie observes, “The choice of anonymity in poetry publication was the default for a variety of social groups throughout the nineteenth century, but this was especially prevalent in occasional, ‘amateur’ verse commenting on the contemporary social situation”: I cite from Rennie’s “[Re-]forming Cotton Famine Poetry – Some Implications,” Journal of Victorian Culture 27.1 (2022): 155.

[16] Andrew Hobbs and Claire Januszewski, “How Local Newspapers Came to Dominate Victorian Poetry Publishing,” Victorian Poetry 52.1 (2014): 80.

[17] Ralph Ditchfield, “Buried,” Blackburn Times, 12 August 1876: 2.

[18] Brian Maidment, The Poorhouse Fugitives: Self-Taught Poets and Poetry in Victorian Britain (Manchester: Carcanet, 1987), 231.

[19] As Taryn Hakala remarks, given the recognition he achieved in his lifetime, Waugh's subsequent "disappearance from literary histories outside of Lancashire demonstrates not only the loss of interest in regionalism but also a substantial narrowing of our literary canon": see her "A Great Man in Clogs: Performing Authenticity in Victorian Lancashire," Victorian Studies 52.3 (2010): 392.

[20] On the conditions and personalities of Blackburn's verse culture, see Andrew Hobbs, "The Poet, the Newspaper Editor, and Working-Class Local Literary Culture in Victorian Blackburn," Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, 168 (2019): 93-116. The particularity of Blackburn within Lancashire dialect culture more generally is discussed in Hobbs's A Fleet Street in Every Town: The Provincial Press in England, 1855-1900 (Cambridge, UK: Open Book Publishers, 2018), https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0152; see chapter 8, "Class, Dialect and the Local Press: How 'They' Joined 'Us'".

[21] Patrick Joyce, Democratic Subjects: The Self and the Social in Nineteenth-Century England (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1994), 68.

[22] Brian Hollingworth, "A Note on Reading Dialect Poetry," in Songs of the People: Lancashire Dialect Poetry of the Industrial Revolution, ed. Brian Hollingworth (Manchester: Manchester University Press 1977), ix.

[23] George Hull, ed., The Poets and Poetry of Blackburn, 1793-1902 (Blackburn : J. & G. Toulmin, 1902), 188.

[24] George Hull as editor of the anthology reports being unable to find "Bosco' Fowd" in the Blackburn press, requiring him to source a copy from another Blackburn poet, but it appeared with more unconventional spelling (and titled "Dick") in Blackburn Times, 22 July 1876: 2. For another example, see the differences between in the versions of "Factory Lad," by John Walker ("Laon"), given in Hull's anthology and that in Blackburn Times, 14 January 1865: 3.

[25] Ralph Ditchfield, "Th' Loom-Heawse Ghost," Blackburn Times, 8 July 1876: 2.

[26] See his 'May Day Song' and 'Ode to Sir Walter Scott', which appeared in the Blackburn Times in May and June of 1876 respectively.

[27] Kreilkamp, Voice and the Victorian Storyteller, 6.

[28] Jack K. Chamers and Peter Trudgill, Dialectology, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1998), 3.

[29] William Barnes, "Preface," in Poems of Rural Life in the Dorset Dialect: Third Collection (London: John Russell Smith, 1862), iii.

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[30] Will Abberley, English Fiction and the Evolution of Language, 1850–1914 (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2015), 6.

[31] William Barnes, An Outline of English Speech-Craft (London: Kegan Paul, 1878), 88. The fullest treatment of this topic more generally is Chris Jones, Fossil Poetry: Anglo-Saxon and Linguistic Nativism in Nineteenth-Century Poetry (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 153-65.

[32] See on Barnes's teaching, Trevor W. Hearl, William Barnes, 1801-1886: The Schoolmaster (Dorchester: Longmans, 1966).

[33] William Barnes, A Philological Grammar (London: John Russell Smith, 1854).

[34] Joseph Errington, Linguistics in a Colonial World: A Story of Language, Meaning, and Power (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2008), vii.

[35] William Barnes, The Elements of English Grammar, With a Set of Questions and Exercises (London: Longman, 1842), iii-iv.

[36] William Barnes, Poems of Rural Life, in the Dorset Dialect: With a Dissertation and Glossary (London and Dorchester: John Russell Smith, 1844).

[37] Letter from Alexander Macmillan to William Barnes, 3 March 1862, William Barnes Archive, Dorset County Museum, Dorchester, B. 216, MSS no. 120.

[38] Dennis Taylor, Hardy's Literary Language and Victorian Philology (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 20.

[39] T. L. Burton and K. K. Ruthven, "General Introduction," in The Complete Poems of William Barnes, ed. T. L. Burton and K. K. Ruthven, 3 vol. (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2013-), 1:lxvi.

[40] William Barnes, "The Drove," in Complete Poems of William Barnes, ed. Burton and Ruthven, 1:201-02.

[41] William Barnes, "The Drove," in Complete Poems of William Barnes, ed. Burton and Ruthven, 2:425.

[42] William Barnes, "The Grove," in The Poems of William Barnes, ed. Bernard Jones, 2 vol. (London: Centaur Press, 1962), 2:748

[43] William Barnes, "Preface," in Poems of Rural Life in Common English (London: Macmillan, 1868), v.

[44] Sylvia Adamson, "Literary Language," in The Cambridge History of the English Language: Volume 4: 1776–1997, ed. Suzanne Romaine (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press), 599.

[45] William Barnes, "My Orcha'd in Linden Lea," in Complete Poems of William Barnes, ed. Burton and Ruthven, 2:4.

[46] Michael Kennedy, The Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1964), 77.

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[47] T. L. Burton, "What William Barnes Done: Dilution of the Dialect in Later Versions of the Poems of Rural Life," The Review of English Studies 58:235 (2007): 350.

[48] Burton, "What William Barnes Done," 350.

[49] Marcus Waithe, "William Barnes: Views of Field Labour in Poems of Rural Life", in The Oxford Handbook of Victorian Poetry, ed. Matthew Bevis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013): 468. The setting by Ralph Vaughan Williams was first published in The Vocalist, 1 (1902).

[50] William Barnes, "Preface" in Hwomely Rhymes: A Second Collection of Poems in the Dorset Dialect (London: John Russell Smith, 1859), iv. The newspaper version of the poem appears in the Dorset Country Chronicle, 20 November 1856: 313.

[51] I take the information about pronunciation here from T. L. Burton's invaluable The Sounds of William Barnes's Dialect Poems, 3 vol. (Adelaide: University of Adelaide Press, 2013-2017), 2:29.

[52] William Barnes, An Outline of Rede-Craft (Logic): With English Wording (London: Kegan Paul, 1880), vi.

[53] E. J. Hobsbawm, Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1992), 56.

[54] David Nowell Smith, On Voice in Poetry: The Work of Animation (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 121.

[55] London's Linden Lea is the name of a street dating from the 1930s and located in the Hampstead Garden Suburb.

[56] Francis Hastings Doyle, Lectures Delivered Before the University of Oxford, 1868 (London: Macmillan, 1869), 63.

[57] Gerard Manley Hopkins, Letter of 14-21 August 1879 to Robert Bridges, The Collected Works of Gerard Manley Hopkins, Vol. 1: Correspondence 1852–1881, eds. R. K. R. Thornton and Catherine Phillips (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2012), 364.

[58] Gerard Manley Hopkins, Letter of 6 October 1886 to Coventry Patmore, The Collected Works of Gerard Manley Hopkins, Vol. 2: Correspondence 1882–1889, eds. R. K. R. Thornton and Catherine Phillips (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2012), 809.

[59] Burton and Ruthven, "General Introduction," in Complete Poems of William Barnes, ed. Burton and Ruthven, 1:cix.

[60] Kirstie Blair, Working Verse in Victorian Scotland: Poetry, Press, Community (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2019), 22.

[61] See Jason R. Rudy, Imagined Homelands: British Poetry in the Colonies (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 2017), 75-106.

[62] J. Derrick McClure, "English in Scotland," in The Cambridge History of the English Language: Volume 5: English in Britain and Overseas: Origins and Development, ed. Robert Burchfield (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1994), 42.

[63] Florence S. Boos, Working-Class Women Poets: An Anthology (Ontario: Broadview Press, 2008).

[64] See on Hamilton's publication venues, Florence S. Boos, "The 'Homely Muse' in Her Diurnal Setting: The Periodical Poems of 'Marie,' Janet Hamilton, and Fanny Forrester," Victorian Poetry 39:2 (2001): 255-286.

[65] [Gerald Massey], review of Hamilton's Poems and Essays, Athenaeum, May 23 1863: 675.

[66] George Gilfillan, "Janet Hamilton: Her Life and Poetical Character," in Janet Hamilton, Poems, Essays, and Sketches, ed. James Hamilton (Glasgow: James Maclehose, 1880), 19.

[67] For the "cento" poem, see Hamilton, Poems, Essays, and Sketches, 38; the poem is discussed by Kirstie Blair in "'He Sings Alone': Hybrid Forms and the Victorian Working-Class Poet," Victorian Literature and Culture 37.2 (2009): 523-41.

[68] Kirstie Blair, "Dialect, Region, Class, Work," in The Cambridge Companion to Victorian Women's Poetry, ed. Linda K. Hughes (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2019), 135.

[69] J. Derrick McClure, Language, Poetry and Nationhood: Scots as a Poetic Language from 1878 to the Present (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2000), 20. A significant exception is vernacular prose in the popular press: see William Donaldson, Popular Literature in Victorian Scotland: Language, Fiction and the Press (Aberdeen: Aberdeen Univ. Press, 1986).

[70] Hamilton, "A Plea for the Doric," in Poems, Essays, and Sketches, 177-78.

[71] Hamilton, "A Plea for the Doric," in Poems, Essays, and Sketches, 177-78.

[72] Hamilton, "Auld Mither Scotland," in Poems, Essays, and Sketches, 159-60.

[73] J. Derrick McClure, Scots and Its Literature (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1995), 174.

[74] Hamilton, "Oor Location," in Poems, Essays, and Sketches, 75-76.

[75] Hamilton, Poems, Essays, and Sketches, 417.

[76] Kaye Kossick, "'And aft Thy Dear Doric aside I Hae Flung, to Busk oot My Sang wi' the Prood Southron Tongue': The Antiphonal Muse in Janet Hamilton's Poetics," in A History of British Working Class Literature, ed. John Goodridge and Bridget Keegan (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2017), 210.

[77] Hamilton, Poems, Essays, and Sketches, 413.

[78] Hamilton, "Rhymes for the Times IV," in Poems, Essays, and Sketches, 241-42.

[79] Susan Zlotnick, "'A Thousand Times I'd Be a Factory Girl': Dialect, Domesticity, and Working-Class Women's Poetry in Victorian Britain," Victorian Studies 35.1 (1991): 8.

[80] Hamilton, "Rhymes for the Times V," in Poems, Essays, and Sketches, 258-260.

[81] Richard Finlay, "National Identity, Union, and Empire, c.1850– c.1970," in Scotland and the British Empire, ed. John M. MacKenzie and T. M. Devine (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2011), 286.

[82] Florence Boos, "Class and Victorian Poetics," Literature Compass 2:6 (2005): 4.

[83] Annmarie Drury, "Aural Community and William Barnes as Earwitness," Victorian Poetry 56.4 (2018): 447.

[84] Drury, "Aural Community," 434.

[85] See especially Nowell Smith, On Voice in Poetry; and Jonathan Culler, Theory of the Lyric (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 2015), 35.

[86] Angela Leighton, Hearing Things: The Work of Sound in Literature (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 2018), 18.