5. Home Protection, Literary Aggression, and Religious Defense in the Life and Writings of Amelia E. Johnson

> We are continually bobbing and slipping out of the way of our would be repressors . . . but times are changing . . . the colored people are taking up the cudgels in our own defense, and we mean to make a genuinely even-handed fight; no mincing; no stepping back two steps when one is taken; but giving just as hard blows as the white man gives when he gives at all.
>
> —Amelia E. Johnson or "A.E.J."

> "You've Got to Move When the Spirit Says Move"
>
> —Negro Spiritual

In its 1894 first edition, the final pages of Mrs. N. F. Mossell's *The Work of the Afro-American Woman* balance its opening salvo by advertising the race's progress both literally and literarily. The opening announces: "It is worthy of note as well as of congratulation that colored women are making great advancement in literary ventures. In the year 1892 three books were given the world by this class of writers, well worthy of high consideration: Mrs. A. J. Cooper, 'A Voice from the South by a Black Woman of the South;' Mrs. F. E. W. Harper, 'Iola; or, Shadows Uplifted;' and Mrs. W. A. Dove, 'The Life and Sermons of Rev. W. A. Dove.'"[1] At the book's end, a full-page advertisement lauds Mrs. A. E. Johnson's *The Hazeley Family; or Hard but Wholesome Lessons* and *Clarence and Corrine; or God's Way,* each for sale for ninety cents.[2] Turning the page, readers find that agents are wanted to sell *Iola Leroy;* interested parties should apply to Mrs. F. E. W. Harper at 1006 Bainbridge Street. Sharing space with *Iola* and other announcements is the advertisement devoted to "Victoria Earle's" "Aunt Lindy." For fifty cents, if readers wrote to 9 Murray Street, New York, they could gather even more evidence of the work of an Afro-American woman. Finally, claiming in bold type a world audience for

the interests of Black America, the *A.M.E. Church Review,* billed as "the leading literary publication of the Colored Race," solicits subscriptions. Based in Philadelphia, the journal's reach "extends to all parts of the United States, to Europe, Asia and Africa, to Canada, Nova Scotia, Bermuda, St. Thomas, British Guiana, Hayti, San Domingo and St. Croix."[3]

Closing a volume that addresses Black women's work, this marketing of ideas displays how women and the journals that featured their writings staked claim to the terms of their own intellectual labor in the print culture of the 1890s. More than a century later, however, Amelia Johnson's work is rarely placed in the calculus of production and reception alluded to in the solicitations, announcements, and commendations represented in Mossell's *The Work of the Afro-American Woman.* Instead, because of its racially indeterminate characters, emphasis on temperance, and literary evangelism, it has been characterized as marginal to both the club women's movement that dominates gendered histories of the 1890s and to the political and representational urgencies of Black life characteristic of historians' and literary critics' work on what has come to be known as the "nadir."

In this chapter I reconsider Amelia Johnson's life and writing paying close attention to largely unmined primary sources that link her to radical reform, judicial redress, and rhetorical, religious, and literary activism. Considering "A. E. Johnson's" newspaper articles and her collaborations with her husband, renowned Baptist preacher, Baltimore civic activist, and Black nationalist author, Harvey Johnson—a partnership that has yet to receive more than a glancing consideration—illuminates the ways in which, to borrow from Johnson herself, she bobs and slips "out of the way of our would-be repressors." Both Johnsons give "our white brother a taste of the lash of criticism, which is only fair, seeing that it is ever his delight to lay it upon us," as she puts it. Johnson's language reveals her appreciation for pugilistic prose. Here she uses it to describe her husband's writing; this comes from her introduction to the now forgotten 1903 collection of his sermons, essays, and published pamphlets, *The Nations from a New Point of View,* which she signs, simply, "AEJ."[4] Johnson maps desire and delight, sarcasm and consanguine familiarity onto the body of Harvey Johnson's writing to reveal a personal, familial, and national cartography of racial relations. She calls attention to the corporeal aspects of democratic rhetoric and racial interchange, ones we can taste and feel. She admires, if not advocates, a combination of liberating postures and moves, those that allow the implied "us" to move "out of the way of our would-be repressors," and one that encourages us to snatch the whip out of our white brothers' hands and aggressively lay on the discursive beating Blacks were meant to take.

Johnson both delivers sadistic jabs and offers sentimental salve in her prose. She also stresses what might be called an authorial ethics of public engagement and care that helps readers evaluate writers' reception claims. To better understand her rhetorical choices in the novel *Clarence and Corrine,* I begin by situating Johnson in relation to her literary and cultural contributions and in the context of her role in the sustained movement for Black empowerment launched in post-Reconstruction Baltimore.

The Johnson household was a principle locus of civic, legal, and literary activism from the 1880s through the 1900s. Indeed, many challenges to Jim Crow in Maryland were launched from her home and home church. They were spearheaded, by all accounts, by the collective efforts her husband led. My analysis counters the masculinist and individualist paradigm that has characterized interpretations of Harvey Johnson's legal and civic challenges to white supremacy. Instead, I read the work of the Brotherhood of Liberty, the organization he and others founded, through a gendered lens, highlighting the ways in which women were central to their legal and grassroots campaigns—and the representations of those actions and cases. Amelia Johnson's literary status has been diminished by the scant, almost anorexic, information that has accompanied her recovery. Instead of finding meaning in Johnson's life and writings through concrete social interactions (to borrow from historian Elsa Barkley Brown), readers have a "tendency to attribute inherent meaning to certain activities" in ways that obscure rather than explain "historically specific developments of social relations between black men and black women."[5] Such reductive class- and gender-based assumptions have adhered to Johnson, who is often seen simply as "a preacher's wife" instead of being placed in the context of what Evelyn Higginbotham characterizes as the complex and also "deep horizontal comradeship" possible across genders.[6]

As this chapter progresses, Johnson's *Clarence and Corrine; or God's Way* (1890) serves as its tuning note, its symphonic "A." Building on my analysis of Harriet Wilson's *Our Nig* in chapter 2, I query how each novel's use of racially indeterminate mothers functions to aggressively challenge readers' racialized generic and cultural expectations. Johnson challenges—or, I argue, dethrones—the exalted rhetorical place of pure white womanhood in the 1890s. By situating her writing in terms of the violently anti-Black prohibition rhetoric of Rebecca Latimer Felton, the foremost white temperance activist of the South, I argue that Johnson's writing works to expose what historian Crystal Feimster calls the "rape-lynch" dynamic and its framing of the links between law, terrorist violence against Blacks, and the white protected domestic sphere.[7]

Arguing that *Clarence and Corrine's* temperance thematic offers an egalitarian racial distribution of familial disrepair (or a straightforward indictment of white slovenly behavior) helps to remap our understanding of racial indeterminacy in nineteenth-century Black women's writing. Before the twentieth century few writers focus their attention on dark-skinned female protagonists. Such writing is often characterized as being steeped in a culture of bright, light, and damned-near-white literary entitlement, as if the authors believed that light characters were the only ones worth representing, at least fully; as if readers of nineteenth-century Black women's fiction were happy to see anything in print no matter its content; and as if garnering white readers' sympathy was the most crucial cultural work worth doing. That dynamic exists, as I put it throughout this book, simultextually. Yet, I hope that examining the formal complexity of fully historicized texts that sometimes reinscribe—but as often interrupt and contest—such dynamics will help to illuminate the chiaroscuristic play and critique embodied in such writing.[8]

Public Standing and Civic Action: The Life and Legacy of Amelia E. Johnson

Fleshing out Amelia Johnson's nineteenth-century literary and social standing enlivens an understanding of her readerships and reception history. "One must be informed as to whether [an] author be sufficiently public-spirited or interested in the well-being of his fellow man to give him the right to talk as he does," Johnson writes, using a lexicon of civic interest.[9] Johnson published her first novel in 1890, thirteen years before she penned these words and so affirmed that readers should consider an authorial ethics that takes into account an author's public standing and civic action. By then she was the already established editor of the first journal for African American children, which she founded a full thirty years before Jessie Fauset and the NAACP's important *Brownie's Book.* As a predecessor to the *Woman's Era,* Johnson's journal, along with Rev. William J. Simmons's *Our Women and Children,* provided an early venue for women writers and editors of African descent. Though it is no longer extant, Johnson's eight-page journal, founded in 1887, was well-received and reviewed across regions and races.[10]

Unlike Charles Chesnutt, who published his earliest stories in the *Atlantic Monthly* during these same years, and who at first remained "raceless" as an author although his characters' Blackness was obvious, Amelia Johnson's protagonists were indeterminate while no one doubted her own racial identity.[11] Johnson was connected to a vibrant group of active Black women through

her editorial work in the late 1880s and her participation in the National Association of Colored Women (NACW), whose inaugural conferences she attended.[12] The 1896 meeting was held at Washington D.C.'s Nineteenth Street Baptist Church, pastored by Rev. Walter H. Brooks, one of the Johnsons' closest friends.[13] Sharing the platform with Frederick Douglass's daughter, Rosetta Douglass-Sprague, Brooks welcomed the "mighty company" with an address that elicited Douglass-Sprague's response that "our progress depends on the united strength of both men and women—the women alone nor the men alone cannot [*sic*] do the work."[14] Though Johnson didn't assume leadership positions in the NACW or write for its publications, her contemporaries recognized her as a leading race woman.

By the mid 1890s Amelia Johnson was obviously an author of some importance in the Black community. In 1894, the year of Mossell's first edition of *The Work of the Afro-American Woman,* Katherine Tillman's expansive article "Afro-American Women and Their Work" appeared in the *A.M.E. Church Review.* Tillman groups Amelia Johnson with the giants Frances Harper, Victoria Earle Matthews, and Anna Julia Cooper.[15] Similarly, the Amelia Johnson entry in I. Garland Penn's 1891 volume on Afro-American journalism is almost twice as long as those of many of the women featured; and she is quoted affirming the literary talent of at least one of her peers, signifying her presumably recognizable status as a commentator on, as well as contributor to, race journalism. Indeed, Penn includes excerpts from at least eleven newspapers and journals offering reviews of *Clarence and Corrine;* seven of them are "unexpected tributes" from "members of the white race." Interestingly, though Tillman, Penn, and Lawson Scruggs, who edited *Women of Distinction: Remarkable in Works and Invincible in Character* (1893), praise her contributions to the race, none mention that the characters in her novels are racially indefinite. In the context of her much-noted work as an editor and of the Baltimore campaigns associated with Harvey Johnson reported in the Black press, her racial politics, that is, her "affection for the race, and loyalty to it," as Penn puts it, was, in her times, self-evident.[16]

Indeed, Scruggs characterizes Johnson as a race warrior. Johnson's 1892 *New York Age* article in defense of Afro-American literature,[17] he says, "is sufficient to hush in *eternal silence* the *enemy* of the progress the race has made, who now bobs up and claims that our literature is not original. Mrs. Johnson gives this false doctrine such *original* blows from the gigantic intellect of an Afro-American, and pursues her enemy with such vehement logic, that she not only confuses, but, like a champion of the truth, she refutes and conquers him"[18] (emphasis in the original). Using decidedly masculine, indeed, military language, Johnson is described as shifting from a defensive posture to

an aggressive one, using both her "gigantic intellect" and ruthless ability to pursue, conquer, and silence "the enemy." Johnson's stance was shared with other women, notes historian Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, who "adopted the discourse of strident black nationalism."[19]

Johnson used her intellect and ability in the service of the race in multiple arenas. In an era when military, technological, and racial "advancement" informed rhetorical, cultural, and policy interventions, developing the potential of the "New Negro" through its youth was crucial work.[20] Black leaders considered race literature central to supporting uplift efforts and to fostering historical memory and race pride. As W. E. B. DuBois put it in *The Negro Church,* a volume he edited in 1901, "It is impossible for any race . . . to hold the influence over their offspring, unless they provide themselves with literature" to keep before their children. The Negro Baptists of this country must, he goes on, "provide literature capable of . . . increasing race pride of the rising generation or they must be entirely overshadowed by the dominant race of this country."[21] Earlier, in 1887, Professor Mary V. Cook, who had already delivered papers such as "Woman's Work in the Denomination" at Baptist conventions nationally, gave an address in Louisville, Kentucky, titled "Is Juvenile Literature Demanded on the Part of Colored Children?"[22] That year Amelia Johnson responded to the need, if not to Professor Cook's specific call, with unprecedented action. Her paper *Joy* provided verse and fiction for young Black readers, who, by 1900, ten years after the journal's run, still made up a full 60 percent of African Americans' literate class.[23] Likewise, Johnson's three novels feature young protagonists. Writers like Mossell followed Johnson's literary lead; in addition to *The Work of the Afro-American Woman,* Mossell wrote *Little Dansie's One Day at Sabbath School* (1902), a children's book whose title echoes the themes of Johnson's second novel, *The Hazeley Family* (1894).

The African American youth agenda stood at the crossroads of struggles for education and a seemingly ubiquitous focus on "home training," "home maintenance," and "mothers' meetings." As a "multiple site" of integrated secular and sacred movements that included organizing protests against employment discrimination and inadequate schools, and hosting club meetings, the Black church was almost always the meeting house standing at that intersection. In her work on gender and Black Baptist movements from 1880 to 1920, Higginbotham displaces the notion that the church is the "exclusive product of a male ministry" or male ministerial authority, and instead characterizes it as the "product and process of male and female interaction" and as a social space for public discussion.[24]

According to the few records that exist, Amelia and Harvey Johnson worked together as each spouse's mission and ministry broadened in scope

and gained national attention. Their base, Union Baptist Church, was growing remarkably in reach, numbers, and influence. Located in the upper South, Union had grown from a membership of 268 in 1872 (when Johnson became the congregation's leader) to an almost fourfold increase five years later when he married Amelia E. Hall. In 1885 Union could claim 2,000 members. That year the Johnsons hosted Frederick Douglass, who gave the inaugural speech at the three-day convention of the Mutual United Brotherhood of Liberty (which Harvey Johnson had just founded, and which he led with, I argue, what must have been Amelia Johnson's strong support).[25] Union Baptist pursued its mission in harmony with secular organizations whose memberships were drawn from its own church, from the six churches it had founded, from other denominations, and from civic and labor groups. In concert, they advanced an activist agenda and a social gospel mission. According to Amelia Johnson, their church would become the largest in Maryland by the turn of the century.[26]

As First Lady of Baltimore's Union Baptist, Johnson was engaged in the inner and public workings of one of the most radically theological and activist Black Baptist congregations in the nation. Acting as Harvey's "guide in all his business matters," Amelia was reported to have "critically read, typed and edited the numerous" articles and pamphlets that streamed from her husband's pen for over thirty years.[27] Harvey Johnson exhibited his respect for Black women through his solicitation of Amelia's feedback and his support for her own writing. In public as in private, Harvey Johnson was an advocate for his women congregants, Baltimore's female workers, and, within the American National Baptist Convention, for "black feminist theology."[28]

Black literate communities and Baptists across races would be well acquainted with the Johnsons' mutual efforts and productivity as an example of what Rosetta Douglass-Sprague might call "the united strength of both men and women."[29] Reviews of Amelia Johnson's first novel appeared in Baltimore and Kentucky papers in the same year as did reviews of Harvey Johnson's 1890 pamphlet, *The Hamite*.[30] And the next year, when his *The Question of Race* was printed, reviews of it appeared in at least two other common sources, including a paper in Brooklyn. The Johnsons' writing circulated in circles that directly and indirectly overlapped. In addition to the five papers that reviewed her novel and his published sermons and essays in 1890 and 1891, for example, scores of others noted her or his publications.[31] Amelia Johnson's articles would be featured in the *Richmond Planet* and the *New York Age* (two of the leading Black dailies), papers that regularly covered the efforts of Harvey Johnson and the Mutual Brotherhood of Liberty.[32] Indeed, when another long piece titled "Some Parallels of History" came out

in 1899, the link between them was made even more explicit. The article was by "Mrs. A. E. Johnson," under which, in smaller print, appeared "Wife of Rev. Dr. H. Johnson, Baltimore, Md."[33] While this byline might be seen as an attempt to legitimate and make respectable a woman's venture into the once-masculinized arena of historical analysis, with ten years of novel and newspaper publishing behind her, and at the end of a decade of Black women's speaking and writing, one can also envision this marital marker as a horizontal link between recognized allies in Black leadership.

The most explicit demonstration of the Johnsons' collaborative partnership is Amelia's introduction to the culmination of her husband's work, *The Nations from a New Point of View* (1903), a collection of his widely circulated and confrontational writings. By this point Harvey Johnson was a nationally known figure with connections to preeminent leaders in ministerial, legal, and academic spheres. Yet, rather than asking his close friend Walter Brooks, the influential pastor of Washington D.C.'s 19th Street Baptist Church or, perhaps, W. E. B. DuBois, whom Johnson knew, to introduce his collection,[34] he chose Amelia E. Johnson, or "AEJ," to acquaint readers with his written legacy.

Ample evidence suggests that the Johnson home was for years at least one site of Baltimore's civic activism. One of the extant photographs of Brotherhood of Liberty members was taken on the stoop of Amelia and Harvey Johnson's Druid Hill Avenue home, not at Union Baptist, the thriving church located just blocks away, straight down Druid Hill, nor at the Brotherhood office downtown on Saratoga Street.[35] The location itself doesn't seem to have been chosen for aesthetic reasons. Considering Harvey Johnson's indignant critique of whites robbing "the historical safe deposit box" of the truth of great African civilizations and history to deposit the false "rubbish and trash" that undergirds white superiority, the photograph unsurprisingly does not feature the props of Western "progress."[36] The Roman columns, for example, that appear in so many Black-produced studio photographs of professionals and "New Negroes" at the time are noticeably absent. Nor is the photograph situated inside the Johnson home where common indicators of "civilization"—Western musical instruments, books, and plush furnishings—could be exhibited. Instead, a multigenerational group of thirteen suited men with hats in hand stand arranged outside on about five narrow steps in rows of three or four.[37] On the top of the stairs, at the focal center of the photograph, stands Harvey Johnson, whose white hair is almost perfectly framed by the dark doorway of his home. Characteristic of his collective style and his individual status, he is positioned both behind the other, photographically larger, Brotherhood members, as he is also positioned dead center and above them. The Johnsons' modest middle-class home sits directly on a narrow sidewalk,

no more than three feet, perhaps, from the street itself.[38] The closely cropped image and studied pose suggest that the person who took the shot likely had equipment set up in the street itself. Hardly an easy photograph to arrange, its being taken at the portal of the Johnsons' house—that is, at the threshold between domestic and public spheres—signals both the importance of their home to the Brotherhood's public work and the ways in which the group's activism illustrates how "private" and domestic issues affected the public life of African Americans. Tellingly, however, neither Amelia Johnson nor any of the few women members of the titularly male Brotherhood are pictured.

The private papers of the DuBois Circle affirm that Baltimore's women activists as well as men gathered at the Johnsons' Druid Hill home. Women's influence in late nineteenth-century Black Baltimore's civic and political campaigns is well documented; rarely, however, do individual names appear in the public record. The DuBois Circle, however, includes some of the most recognizable names of Baltimore—although "Mrs." or "Miss" rather than "Rev." or "Mr." precede them. One of them, "Mrs. Harvey Johnson," was an early and important member. She hosted several meetings at 1923 Druid Hill Ave. Indeed, the group's first public meeting was held at Union Baptist Church. Members were "greatly pleased at [its] success" and "gave a vote of thanks to Mrs. Johnson, thru whose efforts the meeting was made possible."[39]

Founded by Black women in 1906 (the year in which women were accepted as full-fledged voting members of the Niagara Movement), the DuBois Circle of the Niagara Movement, as it was called at its founding, met bimonthly in members' homes. At the Johnsons' in November 1907, the gathered women discussed a report for school improvement and a future petition drive. The group clearly placed their civic activism in the context of national struggles. Pledging "stick-to-it-iveness," they wrote Senator Joseph Foraker to thank him for his much-lauded stance (by the Black press) during his Brownsville investigation, planned meetings with the local school board, discussed "public meetings of protest" and court cases such as *Mrs. Reed V. the Pullman Co.,* then pending in the U.S. Circuit Court in Minnesota.[40] They partnered with the leading men of the city, Brotherhood members including Reverends Harvey Johnson and G. R. Waller, and with Ashbie Hawkins, for example, to present at public addresses where members spoke out about education and suffrage.[41]

The DuBois Circle minutes not only clarify questions about the specific identities of "the most prominent colored" lady activists of Baltimore (to paraphrase from an earlier nineteenth-century source), they also provide a glimpse of the city's women activists' relational, geographical, and political contexts by naming their concerns, where they lived, and the association's relation to other groups. The records also provide additional insight into the expansive

Figure 5.1. Group portrait of Brotherhood of Liberty. Courtesy of the Maryland State Archives, Special Collections (The Dorcas and Harry S. Cummings Collection). Unknown photographer. Group portrait of African-American Lawyers and Ministers, c. 1900 MSA 5354–1–1.

definition of "literary work," the "special feature of the circle," as members decided in the organization's second year. This literary circle, like others, as Elizabeth McHenry has proven, both implicitly and explicitly "furthered the evolution of a Black public sphere and a politically conscious society."[42]

The circle was evidently named after DuBois not only because of his Niagara Movement leadership and direct relationship with Baltimore residents but also because of his literary contributions. Early meetings included time to discuss chapters from *The Souls of Black Folk*. Members also read regularly from the *Chronicle,* which seems to be their own publication.[43] Amelia Johnson recited original poems, and with others planned literary and musical programs. These details—the kind often disparaged as too domestically bourgeois, not sufficiently connected to mass or political concerns, or simply supplementary to the real organizing efforts of men—emerge side by side with the overtly and centrally important political work these women take on, often with their male counterparts and with national women's groups.[44]

In *Forgotten Readers* Elizabeth McHenry challenges scholars to "expand our perspective" and look to the "churches, private homes and beauty parlors" that have been sites for literary interaction.[45] The Brotherhood of Liberty and the DuBois Circle similarly affirm that the home, like the church, has been a site of literary and political interaction for Baltimore men and women. Though, citing her ill-health, Amelia Johnson overcame her colleagues' protests and resigned after two years, she remained, as her colleagues called her, "a faithful worker and inspiring helper."[46] Alongside DuBois himself and the Rev. G. R. Waller and the second Mrs. Waller, "Mrs. Harvey Johnson" is one of the seven "honorary members" listed on the DuBois Circle annual programs from 1914 until her death in 1922.[47] Her faithful work and the details about it provided by the DuBois Circle minutes demonstrate the Johnsons' continued and contiguous civic, literary, and domestic collaborations and the ways in which Baltimore's men and women, like the Johnsons, used their homes, churches, and organizations for mutual and collective support.

Mutual Appeals and Cross-Gendered Partnerships: Women, the Law, and Baltimore's Brotherhood of Liberty

While an emphasis on individual sacrifice and achievement often orders historical memory, we can also place the Johnsons' early activist efforts within a post-Civil War ethos of Black collective action. Churches and secret societies as well as public associations that emerged from the antebellum tradition of mutual aid groups that were "based on similar ideas of collective consciousness and collective responsibility, served to extend and reaffirm notions of

family throughout the black community. Not only in their houses but also in their meeting halls and places of worship, they were brothers and sisters caring for each other," says Barkley Brown.[48] These spaces, notes historian Jeffrey Kerr-Ritchie, were "vitally shaped by the contributions of freedwomen" whose actions "assumed a communal mantle that challenged the gendered straightjacket of male suffrage."[49] The Johnsons embody this ethos.

As we have seen, Amelia and Harvey Johnson's home as well as their church each served as a site for public discussion and civic organizing efforts. The Mutual United Brotherhood of Liberty, which became the chief civil rights force in Baltimore from 1885 to 1905, must have been the focus of much of the Johnsons' lives and energies. As the Maryland State Archives puts it in the material they produce for the public: "By the early 1880s, Johnson began to lend his reputation, his pulpit, and his finances to a burgeoning 'race' effort among black leaders nationally."[50] Harvey Johnson's biographer, A. Briscoe Koger, reports that "the entire amount" of the earliest litigation that Johnson and other emerging leaders would spearhead, "$145.00, was borne by Dr. Johnson, himself."[51] Yet this investment, just under six weeks' salary, represents a significant expenditure for the Johnson *household;* one that, despite his role as provider and head of the family, he might well have run by Amelia, "his guide in all business matters."[52]

Within both a progressive familial and collective framework, Rev. Johnson's "reputation, pulpit and finances" were not singularly his; they also belonged to his and Amelia's immediate family, to their extended kinship network, the brothers and sisters of Union Baptist, and to the nexus of church and civic activists with whom he pursued his mission. As historian Thomas Holt puts it, for recently freed communities, "autonomy was not simply personal" but "embraced familial and community relationships as well."[53] The activities in Maryland that I examine here extend the cross-gendered "communal solidarity over the collective rights of emancipation" outlined by Kerr-Ritchie and Barkley Brown in their work on Virginia—where, like Rev. Waller and his second wife, Harvey Johnson was born and where he maintained a small farm outside Richmond for much of his adult life, into at least the late 1880s.[54] Building on Black Maryland's long tradition of civic organizing and cross-gendered communal actions, "mutual" and "brotherhood" took on historically specific meanings that connected this new legal organization to a history of collective work for Black support and survival.

Despite its name, from its inception the Brotherhood spearheaded court cases and legislative challenges meant to secure rights and protection for Black women as a legal class, regardless of economic class. Frustrated with the reentrenchment of white structural power in education and employment,

furious about and deflated by growing anti-Black violence, and unwilling to accept weak-kneed Republican inaction, Rev. Johnson had decided to organize the Brotherhood and to rely upon "God and a good lawyer," as once-enslaved writer Lucy Delaney put it.[55] Founded at Harvey and Amelia's house on a long June day in 1885, the Brotherhood's inaugural act was to recruit the first Black lawyer to successfully stand before the Maryland bar.[56] After challenging the state's ban on attorneys of African descent, Harvey Johnson traveled to Washington and personally convinced a promising, freshly minted Howard law school graduate, Everett J. Waring, to join the newly organized civil rights effort in Baltimore.[57]

The Brotherhood's next legal efforts were to secure legal protection and employment for Black women. Like the Brotherhood, their new lawyer had faith in the power of marrying organizing and legal strategies. As Waring put it in his 1887 article "The Colored Man before the Law" in the *A.M.E. Church Review:*

> That there is efficacy in an appeal to law for justification and vindication may be exemplified by reference to three cases occurring in Maryland. . . . 1st. Three Baltimore ladies were denied accommodations on a steamer, sued the company, and won. 2d. A young colored girl was terribly beaten by a white man who refused to pay her wages due. . . . the girl sued and recovered heavy damages. 3rd. In Baltimore City, I had the pleasure of winning a suit against a white dry goods merchant for striking a colored lady with a yardstick. Finally, through the efforts of . . . the Brotherhood of Liberty, the obnoxious Bastardy Law has been declared unconstitutional. . . .
>
> I cite these cases to illustrate in a practical way what can be accomplished in the courts. . . . Let similar efforts be made everywhere, and when white men deny us our rights, let us call them into court and compel them to defend the wrong.[58]

Waring's words recall Harriet Jacobs's earlier resolve "to stand up for my rights" so whites would have no choice but to conclude "to treat me well. Let every colored man and woman do this," she encourages her readers, "and eventually we shall cease to be trampled under foot by our oppressors."[59] The Brotherhood understood and encouraged the dynamic relationship between collective action and individual commitment to stand up for one's rights.

The Brotherhood was both sincere and savvy in its integration of women's concerns into their legal and grassroots organizing agenda.[60] In their first cases, women served as primary actors, either as litigants or as the central beneficiaries of the Brotherhood's, and of Black Baltimore's, legal activism. When, in 1884, union member George Johnson, his wife, and three sisters were denied first-class accommodations on the steamer *Sue* despite having

paid the first-class rate, they consulted their pastor, Harvey Johnson, who secured counsel, as Waring narrates above. Only the women sued, and the case of the steamer *Sue* was reported as an instance of illegal discrimination against ladies who, denied first-class staterooms, refused to retire to the squalid second-class sleeping car.[61] Soon after, newspaper coverage reported that the Brotherhood would attempt to repeal the Bastardy Act, "which afford[ed] no protection to the virtue of Maryland colored women."[62] In renderings of their activities by members (such as the *A.M.E. Church Review* article that Waring penned), women workers, travelers, and consumers were seen as sympathetic victims and also as agents and legal partners. Waring often suggests that "they sued" or "she sued"—and won—and he uses the more exclusive "I" or "the Brotherhood" as the agent who brought the case forward.[63] As news of these cases circulated, the Brotherhood did battle on multiple fronts: it sought restitution for specific claims and succeeded in forcing major concessions from businesses supporting Jim Crow to protect their overarching segregationist aims. Finally, it challenged the larger ideological apparatus that situated white women as the sole victims of physical and sexual violence and insisted that Black men—and only Black men—were the "brutes" who preyed on the virtue of the "weaker sex."

Though its membership was overwhelmingly male, women participated in Brotherhood actions and planning both formally and informally and in ways that were both internal and external to the Black community, to borrow from Barkley Brown's analysis of gender and postemancipation political participation.[64] The Brotherhood included women, unlike the prestigious American Negro Academy, whose membership (with the exception of Anna Julia Cooper) was open only to "men of African descent." According to a list included in the pamphlet *The Brotherhood of Liberty or, Our Day in Court* (1891), four of seventy-four life members were women.[65] Among them was the first Mrs. G. R. Waller.[66] An additional sixteen of those who appear on the Brotherhood roll, like J. W. Cole or E. M. Winston, used non-gender-specific initials, as A. E. Johnson did in her own publishing.[67] In its last pages, the pamphlet's author, founding member Rev. William Alexander, also lists "contributors"; alongside the names of the Brotherhood's first lead counsel Everett Waring, and H[arry] S[ythe] Cummings, who had just become the first Black elected to the city council, are Matilda Crist, Elizabeth Reeves, and four other women.[68]

Because legal spheres were more fluid and flexible than a political arena defined by the franchise and by municipal, state, and federal political representation, Black women litigants were active collaborators, as we have seen, in more visible ways. As importantly, they were crucial to the internal workings

of the grassroots movement that fueled larger actions that attracted national attention. Barkley Brown disaggregates formal, or external, political participation—in her analysis, voting—from other forms of political participation to elucidate the manifold ways in which women's actions undergirded political activity usually coded as male.[69] Similarly, though the face of the Brotherhood and its formal leadership were made up of clergymen and lawyers, women joined in mass meetings, petition drives, write-ins, conventions, and fundraising to support its work.

Black Maryland's challenge to the Bastardy Act is one example of how the Brotherhood's legal appeals and women's grassroots activism converged. Beginning in 1860, after eighty-five years of race neutral protection for free women, the act allowed only unwed *white* women to sue the fathers of their children for support, with the assurance that jail time would ensue if fathers ignored their claims.[70] Blacks interpreted this new legal exception as a broad-based, cross-class assault not only on women but also on the broader community as yet another example of anti-Black social policy to discourage marriage.

White women and families were considered more "chaste," Black leaders argued, because the state was invested in that unit. By "converting" children born illegitimately into socially and legally recognized offspring when their parents entered "the honorable relation of lawful matrimony," "the taint and disabilities of bastardy" from "unoffending children" and women were removed, according to an 1876 decision of the Maryland Court of Appeals.[71] Without the legal equivalent of the shotgun wedding that white women could count on, Black women's mates were held less responsible for out-of-wedlock pregnancies, child support, and, ultimately, for marriage. Black women and children, in other words, were left with the continued "taint and disabilities of bastardy."

This impacted intracommunity relations (the first bastardy case the Brotherhood brought to court was between a Black plaintiff and the defendant, her Black lover) and also left Black women open as targets of white sexual predation, a fact not lost on members of either race. As a speaker at one mass meeting put it, "The white people have mingled with us in the dark, but when we want to bring the clear light of day upon such things . . . they are shocked."[72] This campaign championed the rights of working-class girls and women who were most vulnerable on the job, that is, in the homes and businesses of "villainous," obviously white, "men [who] may by deception destroy the happiness of homes of colored people without fear of being legally punished," as Rev. Alexander put it.[73]

In addition to providing a legal disincentive for men who engaged in interracial sexual coercion and rape, challenges to the post-1860 Bastardy

Code were aligned with legal efforts throughout the South to safeguard interracial families, particularly at the time of a white partner's death. Seeking equal protection under the Fourteenth Amendment, African American women sought to defend inheritance rights that were directly connected to the bastardy cases. As Blacks were seeking to revise the act in Maryland, the Georgia Supreme Court in the 1887 case *Smith v. DuBose* affirmed that "whatever rights and privileges belong to a . . . bastard white woman and her children, under the laws of Georgia, belong to a colored woman and her children, under like circumstances, and the rights of each race are controlled and governed by the same enactments or principles of law."[74]

While the Brotherhood did not advocate "social equality" by challenging antimiscegenation laws or customs, the logical extension of its equal protection arguments and sexual critiques linked the protection of all women under the bastardy laws to full marriage rights regardless of race.[75] In his 1888 *A.M.E. Church Review* article "The Unconstitutionality of the Law against Miscegenation," Aaron Mossell (brother of Rev. C. W. Mossell, a life member of the Brotherhood, and brother-in-law of Mrs. N. F. Mossell) makes that case explicitly.[76] The maintenance of white superiority, he argued, not solid constitutional interpretation, guided laws governing racial marriage, as racial intermingling in itself did not pose a problem to "promiscuous intercourse." If this were not the case, he declared, citing Maryland and Virginia statutes, "they would erase the word white from their bastard laws and thus bring the black woman under their protection."[77] Aaron Mossell's argumentation directly mirrors Maryland's rhetorical campaign to protect the sanctity and virtue of the Black home and family. Both provide a legal and economic challenge to white men's theretofore nonactionable and almost unlimited access to Black women, one often sanctioned by the state, even, on occasion, against the will of the parties involved.

The campaign to include all women in the Bastardy Act faced formidable opposition from white politicians and the legal establishment. The path toward repeal was full of labyrinthine twists and turns. After a loss in court and a dismissal from the intransigent legislative Assembly, the Brotherhood employed broad grassroots strategies to shore up its judicial tactics. When "a subscription was opened in the leading colored paper in Baltimore to defray the expenses" of an appeal to the Supreme Court, it served both to put the Assembly on public notice and to raise much needed funds. Petitions with hundreds of signatures "of colored citizens" from neighboring counties underscored the broad-based support the campaign could still gather after a protracted struggle.[78] By all accounts, the most effective pressure was brought to bear by the mass meetings held by Baltimore's women, who led what a

Brotherhood member later called an "uprising." "After the adjournment of the legislature without changing that law, a meeting of ladies was called at Samaritan Temple, headed by the most prominent colored ladies in the city. At this meeting, a strong protest was made against the law, and the appeal to the good citizens of the state to blot it out. At this meeting, the ladies resolved themselves into a Sisterhood, as an auxiliary to the Brotherhood of Liberty," reported one contemporary commentator.[79] Faced with the prospect of "two hundred or more" organized women in support of the Brotherhood's efforts, "it was at this time," literally days later, that "the new code" was "quietly accepted by the Assembly," suggests a professor at Baltimore's Johns Hopkins University in his 1890 report on the *Progress of the Colored People of Maryland Since the War.*[80]

Though history has only preserved men's names in this civic campaign to overturn anti-Black public policy, men and women clearly collaborated to recodify the Bastardy Act. John Prentiss Poe, who served as dean of the University of Maryland's law school and the Maryland attorney general, faced the fact that the Assembly's hand had been forced. He rewrote the new code by simply omitting the qualifier "white" and so allowed all women to share in the act's protections.[81] Though the later records of Baltimore's Niagara Movement women include Amelia Johnson and other women who were related to the recognized leaders in this struggle, the "most prominent colored ladies of the city" and their uprising sisters, the more than two hundred women who came together across class and denominational lines to fight the bastardy laws, remain unnamed.[82] Yet it is hard to imagine that Amelia Johnson was not among them. She was an active, outspoken, "prominent colored lady" and the respected partner of one of the leading forces, perhaps *the* leading organizing force, behind the campaign. The ethos of social gospel and civic organizing that pervaded the Johnsons' home and their place of worship would logically extend to the meeting halls where Baltimore's women gathered in their own defense and in support of the Brotherhood's efforts, as is the documented case decades later.

Black women's sexual vulnerability intersected with the challenges they confronted in employment. Facing segregationist policies that barred Blacks from professions like teaching, and belonging to families in which men were underemployed and underpaid, girls and women were forced to work as menials in the homes and businesses of white men who faced no consequences for their predation. Indeed, as white men's "special prey" when in service, as one Black mother put it, it was women who absorbed the costs of such abuse, regularly losing either their "virtue" or their job.[83] Years after one incident, another woman related how, as a new bride, she was fired be-

cause she refused to let "the Madam's husband kiss me." Looking back at her thirty years in Southern service, she summed it up in these words: "Nearly all white men take undue liberties with their colored female servants—not only the fathers, but in many cases the sons also."[84] The nexus of seeking employment opportunities and protecting families from sexual abuse linked the Brotherhood's challenge of the Bastardy Act to its subsequent efforts to ensure adequate state-sponsored schools for Black children and youth.

Education was one necessary front in the battle against poverty and the limited spheres of domestic employment. In Baltimore, graduating from high school was also directly connected to securing teaching jobs, which were coveted positions for rising Blacks, and particularly for women of the race. At the turn of the century when the term was coined, "the talented tenth" described a utopian goal, not a material reality. Despite their growing visibility and absolute numbers, between 1890 and 1910 only 1 percent of Americans of African descent enjoyed employment in "professional service." As Higginbotham points out, the "harsh realities of job discrimination and the lack of black public schools in the South" kept Blacks educationally disenfranchised and trapped at the lowest level of the labor market. Of the steady 1 percent with access to post-primary-school education, men were increasingly steered toward the ministry, medicine, and the law, all of which increasingly required professional training and academic credentialing as the nineteenth century approached its end. Though the "elite" lauded women like Dr. Susan McKinney, the first Black woman doctor in New York, and Dr. Halle Tanner Johnson, the first woman of any color admitted to practice medicine in Alabama, in 1900 a full 86.67 percent of all Black women in professional employment were teachers. In contrast only 24.4 percent of African American professional men chose teaching as a career. By the turn of the century, "teaching assumed a feminine identity."[85]

The Brotherhood's struggle for public schooling mirrored the fight for "black teachers, equitable salaries and adequate public school facilities" in Southern cities throughout the 1880s and 1890s.[86] Baltimore's decade-long struggle and eventual (if limited) success differentiated it from Virginia, Tennessee, and the Deep South in its entirety. In the late 1880s the Brotherhood, along with its education committee's spin-off, the Maryland Educational Union, and other community partners, succeeded in breaking the color barrier in public school teaching. In a multipronged and long-term campaign, they used the model of grassroots activism that had been so successful in their campaign to change the Bastardy Act while also working to secure political allies within the city council.[87] Waring, who in addition to being the Brotherhood's lawyer was the editor of the local paper, the *Star,* encouraged Blacks

across economic strata to "storm the fortress."[88] And they did, holding mass meetings and write-ins, forming women's auxiliaries, passing resolutions and urging supporters to pledge continued agitation. The combination succeeded. In 1887, the day after the mass meeting in which participants reviewed the mayor and city council members' records, the city passed the ordinance to hire Black teachers, though they would only allow this in still-segregated schools and faculties.[89]

Since Black teachers couldn't join white faculties—even in schools in which all the students were African American—the fight for public school appropriations to build much needed *additional* schools met two supplemental goals: providing additional jobs in all-Black faculties and fully integrating teachers into their students' communities.[90] The Brotherhood had pressed to grant young scholars the high school diplomas (a certification that had been denied them until 1889 even if they finished the available track) that were requisite for teaching in Baltimore. But without more facilities, children who wanted to learn were effectively kept out of that pipeline. By 1896 Harvey Johnson could take pleasure in an educational victory. Working with a Black councilman, Dr. J. Marcus Cargill, they passed an ordinance to establish a separate high school, one that did not share its facilities with the grammar school.[91] Though entrenched segregation, terrible conditions, and a pace that was hardly deliberate characterized the process of school improvements, these efforts were critical in increasing the number of Black teachers in more and better schools devoted to African American students.

The two-decade-long struggle to build an educational and employment foundation for Black Baltimore was one way in which Black protest severed Maryland from the general disenfranchisement enacted in the South. Higginbotham affirms that "as late as 1910, no southern black community could claim a single public school offering two years of high school."[92] Yet in Baltimore, the Brotherhood and its partners managed to lay a foundation for a tradition of educational excellence. In 1889, the colored high school shifted to a curriculum "so arranged as to make the school equal in every way to the State Normal School for whites." One contemporaneous commentator avers that between two thousand and three thousand people packed the Ford Opera House for the first graduation ceremony in which nine students were granted certificates long denied Black scholars. None other than Mayor F. C. Latrobe, who in the past had vetoed bills to open such educational opportunities, handed out the diplomas.[93]

Investing human and financial resources in Baltimore's struggle for educational justice paid dividends for generations. Women like Martha Eulalia Reed—mother of Cab Calloway and the daughter of Andrew and Anna Reed, most likely the "A. J. Reed" who served as the Brotherhood's president and on

its executive board in 1891—directly benefited from these efforts. She graduated from high school and went on to college before teaching in the Baltimore public schools. Cab Calloway's father, who received his initial education in Baltimore, went away to Lincoln University, and then clerked in Baltimore law offices, also benefited from the Brotherhood's work. Cabell Calloway Sr.—pool hall owner and general "hustler"—had been an early contributor to the civic group.[94] Cab Calloway himself would attend Frederick Douglass High School, which developed from the Colored High and Grammar School that started granting diplomas in 1889 as a result of the city-wide effort.[95] Indeed, by the twenties when Cab Calloway was there, fully one-third of Douglass High's graduates pursued college or normal school education.[96] Among them would be Thurgood Marshall, who would continue the work done by the Brotherhood and Baltimore men and women.

Though the historical record chronicles Baltimore's late nineteenth-century civic efforts in almost exclusively male terms, this belies the complex engagement of its Black citizens across genders. As a former teacher who continued to be committed to youth issues and racial access, as a novelist who wrote about working-class characters,[97] as one of the most "prominent colored ladies" in the city and an important early member of the DuBois Circle of the Niagara Movement, Amelia Johnson was almost surely an active participant in the struggle to empower Black teachers, women, young people, and laborers. Recovering Johnson's visible position as one of the leading women of the race and recuperating the importance of her partnership with one of the most radical church leaders involved in the era's civic and legal affairs sheds new light on her political activities and literary decisions and strategies. Moreover, as I'll argue in the next section, her tactic to place indeterminate racial characters in a temperance plot affirms the possibility that such characterization might function as a politicized representation of *white* familial depredation. To borrow from Ralph Ellison and to paraphrase from the work of literary theorist Hortense Spillers, slipping the yoke, Johnson changes the joke, that is, the assumptions about race and familial/sexual degradation that fed legal and physical violence against Black communities in the forms of lynching and bastardy laws that were so recognizably urgent for the communities that the Johnsons, collectively, were fighting to empower.

Racial Inequalities, or Snatching the Whip and Switching the Script

Clarence and Corrine, the first of three novels published by Amelia Johnson under the name Mrs. A. E. Johnson, preceded *The Hazeley Family* (1894) by four years. The now-unknown *Martina Meriden Or What Is My Motive* (1901)

followed seven years later.[98] As author of one of the very earliest works of sustained fiction by an African American woman to appear in book form, Johnson broke through a myriad of racial barriers at once. *Clarence and Corrine* was the first novel by an African American or by a "lady author" published by the powerful American Baptist Publishing Society, as the *Baptist Teacher* reports. It was also the "first Sunday School book published from the pen of a colored writer." Indeed, in I. Garland Penn's compendium of journalists of the race, he excerpts no fewer than ten reviews of *Clarence and Corrine* in Black and non-Black, secular and sacred, journals.[99] Perhaps it was Johnson's success that prompted prominent author and businessman William Still to close his introduction to Harper's new novel, published two years later, with the assertion that "thousands of colored Sunday Schools . . . will not be content to be without *Iola Leroy.*"[100]

Clarence and Corrine tells the story of dark-eyed, racially indeterminate siblings early deprived of parental guidance by way of drinking and death. Practically orphaned, poor, and without reputation, family, or prospects, they are separated and lose touch. Corrine becomes the servant of a mean-spirited mistress. Her health is broken, but she finds God and good friends along the way and is eventually adopted. Clarence encounters setbacks on his journey to economic self-sufficiency, but is never tempted by drink or degradation. As a hard worker he struggles on, eventually ending up on a farm quite close to his sister's adopted home. There, mirrored by another pair of siblings, Charlie and Bebe Reade, they all thrive. In the last chapter, Clarence has become a doctor and the siblings properly marry each other in the form of both a romantic novel and, as Ann duCille points out, a classic comedy.[101]

Clarence and Corrine; or God's Way reads as a temperance tale that delivers on its titular promises of redemption, an "all's well that ends well" story in which a preacher's wife "passionately pursues" palatable messages and "the formula of happy endings," to reformulate into one tongue twister the characterizations of Johnson's writings that Barbara Christian and Hortense Spillers offer in their introductions to Johnson's two reprinted novels. Yet contemporary readers might benefit from slowing down this teleological dash toward the narrative finish line by putting first things first as a reading process and practice, and also by placing *Clarence and Corrine* in the context of both the political culture in which its author was immersed and her larger and widely lauded literary contributions: her newspaper writings and work as the publisher and editor of *Joy.*

Amelia Johnson's novelistic strategies anticipate the tactics used in *The Power-Holding Class Versus the Public* (1900), one of the two book-length treatises that carry the Brotherhood of Liberty's name. Amelia Johnson's em-

phasis on class and seemingly neutral treatment of race are directly reflected in *The Power-Holding Class,* which (though it seems to never have been mentioned in historical accounts of the Brotherhood) is an important indicator of the rhetorical range the group embraced. *The Power-Holding Class* takes as its subject a fictionalized conversation between President McKinley and Senator Hanna that indicts the ruling class without ever explicitly mentioning race. Indeed, its only racialized indication is fulsome praise and citations of *Justice and Jurisprudence,* references that readers familiar with the Brotherhood's work would have easily recognized though they would likely have gone unnoticed by others.

The Brotherhood's earliest book, *Justice and Jurisprudence* (1889), the first full-length inquiry that argues against legal encroachments on African American rights that was produced by or at the direct behest of Black citizens, is explicit about its racial mission; its inquiry into the postwar amendments is conducted "for the advancement of the African race in America."[102] Though its authorial provenance is still undetermined, *Justice and Jurisprudence* was clearly commissioned and perhaps written by members of the Brotherhood. Its purpose was to serve as a written corollary to the legal challenges the organization launched from the late 1880s through the turn of the century.[103] This direct approach is just one tactic that the Baltimore Brotherhood and its branch in Rhode Island employed.[104] Considering Amelia Johnson's narrative tactics in connection with her situated political culture and the rhetorical range through which the Brotherhood communicated its legal and economic challenges to those in power elucidates how and what we identify (as) political rhetoric.

If, as literary critic Barbara Christian suggests, racial indeterminacy "in this country is generally translated as white,"[105] then *Clarence and Corrine*'s formal simultextual reaffirmation and challenge to that assumption anticipate the rhetorical maneuvers evidenced in *The Power-Holding Class.* It also builds on strategies we see in the novelistic narratives such as *Our Nig,* as I discuss in chapter 2. In other words, Johnson's work links to at least two African American representational traditions: to post-Reconstruction political and economic tracts and to earlier fictionalized prose, each of which is shot through with religious justice and reform rhetoric, references, and ideology.

Emphasizing the plight of poor families and abandoned protagonists, *Our Nig* and *Clarence and Corrine* (sometimes cited as the first two nonserialized novels penned by African American women) feature inadequate, racially indeterminate women—white women, following Barbara Christian's commentary—who, in a departure from the dominant literary trope of valorized white motherhood, are situated as victimizers as well as victims. Indeed, treatment of mothers in these novels—and of anti-maternal domains—are

so similar that *Clarence and Corrine* seems to raise the titillating but unlikely intertextual possibility that readers such as the Johnsons were able to track down a copy of *Our Nig* for their well-stocked libraries.[106] Like *Our Nig*'s Mag, who snarls and barks at and then abandons her young daughter Frado, *Clarence and Corrine*'s Mrs. Burton is a lazy, neglectful woman, apathetic about her own condition and indifferent to her children's need for sustenance and their desire for a better life.

Mrs. Burton's presence, like Mag's, orders and dominates the novel's initial unfolding to be abruptly jettisoned from the narrative soon thereafter. In *Our Nig,* Mag never tries to make the best of a bad situation. Rejecting both maternal and "American" values, she has no aspirations. She does not strive or scrape to make things better for her children or her local community, and, by extension, for the nation. Instead, the narrator tells us, faced with difficulties, Mag retreated to her "hut morose and revengeful, refusing all offers of a better home than she possessed . . . hugging her wrongs, but making no effort to escape."[107] *Clarence and Corrine* opens by offering a similar scenario. In contrast to the "neat vine covered homes" in the "pretty town" in which they live, the Burtons's "weather-beaten tumble-down" cottage marred the scene "like a blot upon a beautiful picture."[108] Moreover, Mrs. Burton doesn't build up her children, as it were, or even protect them from their drunken father. Rather she is a source of additional discouragement. When twelve-year-old Clarence shares his "ardent desire to possess an education" (*CC,* 9), for example, she silences him with the command "I tell you it's no use talking" and orders him to get some branches to start a fire (*CC,* 8). With her voice ringing out "sharp and harsh" (*CC,* 8), her response recalls *Our Nig*'s central scenes of abuse. Mrs. Burton's command to get branches instead of schooling aligns her son's prospects with a biblical-based trope of Southern racial subordination. If he took her advice, he would make himself content with being no more than a hewer of wood. Soon after this exchange, Corrine Burton finds her mother dead in the old rocking chair that had served, as Spillers points out, as her sole and permanent location of inaction.[109] Indeed, in *Clarence and Corrine* and *Our Nig*—as in domestic representations generally—the absent mother heightens the phantasmagorical (and in this case dark) shadow that figure narratively casts.

Amelia Johnson's narrative strategies, like Wilson's, invite readers to reflect on the relation of whiteness to the chain of private-to-public-sphere signifiers in play in each novel: mother, home, family, race, nation. Arguing for the centrality of Black women's development in 1892, Anna Julia Cooper articulated an "axiom" that she says is "so evident that it seems gratuitous to remark it": "The atmosphere of homes is no rarer and purer and sweeter

than are the mothers in those homes. A race is but a total of families. The nation is an aggregate of its homes."[110] By having Mag and Mrs. Burton—who, again, read simultextually as white women—opt out of home maintenance or nineteenth-century worthy womanhood, these novels turn the table on the centrality of motherhood in the evaluation of racial progress.

Mrs. Burton is situated as poor victim and passive victimizer at best. At worst, she is a bad mother complicit in her children's ruin. Nonetheless, *Clarence and Corrine* provides moral explanations for Mrs. Burton's squalid life and death. Her discouraged son provides the novel's sympathetic framework of understanding. "How could she live, battered and beaten, starved as she was, and by our father too; the one who could have made us all comfortable and happy," Clarence asks. "But instead of that," the boy goes on, "he's made us miserable—no, it wasn't him, either; it was that dreadful, dreadful stuff, whiskey. Yes drink ruined our father, and now it's killed our mother" (*CC,* 19). Clarence's classic anti-drink rhetoric accompanies the seemingly sympathetic stance forwarded by the narration: the "poor broken-spirited, abused woman would wake no more in this world" (*CC,* 18). Yet, the text's half-hearted conviction is hardly persuasive. When the Burtons's landlady, Rachel Primrose, proclaims "Why didn't she work and keep herself from starving; I'm sure I'd a great sight rather do that and keep myself and my children decent, than to give way and just sit down with my hands in my lap and let everything get topsy-turvey" (*CC,* 23), Primrose's position as narrative antagonist doesn't quite undermine the stinging truth of her indictment.

For readers who view Black women as both historically steady workers and as women who have consistently mothered white children as well as their own, Mrs. Burton's character, as much as her racial indeterminacy, presents her as decidedly un-Black. The fact that Mrs. Burton doesn't have the strength of character to protect—or even feed—her children signifies that she is without the good sense that God gave her, as the old folks say. From within a cultural and literary matrix that positions Black women and mothers as survivors rather than criminals, as competent protectors who haven't the luxury to passively rock away despite the range of abuse they experience, it is deprived and depraved white motherhood—not Black—that produces children and families who don't know God's way.

Black women's counter-analysis of race's relation to exalted (and depraved) notions of motherhood did not necessarily follow a racially accommodationist understanding of respectability; that is, Black women rejected, as their rhetoric also indicated that they emulated, white mothers as their models. Black women's domestic work gave them a bird's eye view of white women and their children. Underpaid in the South, even educated professionals were

often forced to take on domestic or manual work of some kind. "For some black women teachers," Higginbotham points out, "the end of the school term marked not vacation, but employment as laundresses and seamstresses in order to make ends meet."[111] According to an 1898 report, the "great majority" of Black Baptist ministers, for example, made $200 to $400 a year, "while many never see $100 in money yearly. These eke out their scanty salaries by manual labor"; and their wives most often worked.[112] An aspiring class in economic terms, even "elite" women tended to have access to inside knowledge about white people's homes and home training. In their quest for "morals and manners," for respect and respectability, Black women's personal understanding of white women's intimate lives made maternal mimicry an ambivalent process. Indeed, Black women could be highly critical of white maternal practices and values. Paradoxically, then, the simultextual pleasure of the text for *Clarence and Corrine*'s Black readers might be located in Mrs. Burton's potential *whiteness*.

One of the evening's speakers at the 1896 annual convention of the National Association of Colored Women underscored Black women's critical relation to their white peers. Holding white motherhood accountable for social ills, she announced to her audience that she was "convinced that the foundation of race prejudice, lynching, bloodshed and strife had its origin by the fireside." "If mothers," white mothers, "were more careful to teach their children properly, much of these would disappear." Shifting scenes of violence to the hearth, she brought home the point that white women were no innocents, no dewdrops just exhaled from the skies, to borrow from Frances Harper. Nor was their complicity indirect or passive. Rather, she laid the responsibility for the depraved actions of white communities at the dainty (or dirty) feet of white women themselves.[113]

Despite *Clarence and Corrine*'s "raceless" characters and ostensible associations with whiteness, contemporaneous racial politics simultaneously align the novel with Blackness. Following the racist assumptions reflected in and produced by the dominant ideological apparatus, Mrs. Burton's comfort with and insistence on leading a degraded life affirms her Blackness. *Clarence and Corrine* asserts—and also belittles—these very assumptions. The novel both produces and switches the conventional racial script. Johnson's sly simultextual indictment rests on the fact that, counter to the novel's seeming generic affiliations, in it, neither racial taxonomy, maternal responsibility, nor narrative transparency are stable or secure. In *Clarence and Corrine* as in *Our Nig,* "careless and unkempt" motherhood is at odds with the protocols of conventional domestic representation. As "racelessness" codes each mother as white, her cruelty and lack of "womanly feeling" code her—for those who follow racist hermeneutic protocols—as nonwhite.

Frances Smith Foster's assertion that "it was a literary commonplace to describe Black women as so brutalized that they had lost all intrinsic social and maternal sensibilities" but "almost without precedent in Anglo-American women's literature to speak of a white woman, especially a mother, in this manner" holds as true for Mrs. Burton as it does for *Our Nig*'s Mag, about whom Foster writes.[114] The painstakingly neat homes readers encounter in so many novels after narratively passing through the thresholds of huts whose exteriors are described as drab and rundown are meant to reflect the interior worth of the heroines who transcend their circumstances and transform their surroundings. Yet "dismal as was the outside" of the Burtons's "wretched abode, still more so was the inside" (*CC,* 6). Again, Mrs. Burton makes no effort to improve her humble surroundings. The floor is "unacquainted with soap and water"; dirty "chipped plates" are "piled in confusion on the table," and the stove is "littered with greasy pots and pans." Disorder reigns. Even Mrs. Burton's sense of proper gendered difference is called into question—at one point she is "apparently" and ineffectively attempting to darn a "tattered garment bearing but small semblance to either male or female attire" (*CC,* 6). Mrs. Burton's hardened apathy and inattention to ordered domestic space align her with temperance tropes in which a mother is temporarily victimized into apathy. It simultaneously reflects the racist renderings of Black women forwarded shamelessly by a white supremacist ideological apparatus that was churning out virulent images of a putatively incompetent race incapable of "elevation" or "improvement."

Readers unacquainted with Johnson and her previous work might have assumed that *Clarence and Corrine*'s characters were white, despite the persistent cultural associations of degraded womanhood with nonwhites. The generic expectations of conventional anti-drink stories and Johnson's history of authorship with the American Baptist Publication Society would bolster such an assumption, as would the fact that her characters don't exhibit any of the vehemently racist renderings with which postbellum Black characters were so consistently drawn. Again, Mrs. Burton's decline can certainly be accounted for by using a temperance abacus. In this case, those who discovered Johnson's racial identity through numerous national reviews in predominantly white papers might have felt as if they had been subject to literary counterfeit. Had white readers assumed that Mrs. Burton, for example, was one of their own (as they well might have), the moment of narrative and biographical merger would call for a racial recalibration. In this new formulation, the substitution of *Black* maternal depravity in the place of white maternal victimization shifts the equation. By doing so, *Clarence and Corrine* reveals the artificial values assigned to each racial category and so exposes the fragility of putative white maternal superiority.

Johnson's use of racial indeterminacy, like Wilson's before her, issues a challenge to racially resistant readers. Johnson's characters and their claims to whiteness are compromised with the revelation that they were born, as it were, to a Black woman author. Knowing this, many white readers would perceive Johnson's protagonists, at second glance, to be products of an exogamic marriage between author and characters, and so to be heirs of a bastard and miscegenous literary genealogy. This echoes *Our Nig*'s second-chapter revelation of Mag's undisputed whiteness. Had readers believed that Mag, in all her degradation, was Black as I've discussed in chapter 2, they would be confronted with their own racial assumptions.

Reproducing this strategy, Johnson rearranges the supposed signs of Black maternal depravity and provides a distorted mirror effect not present when white authors situate white heroines as absolute victims of the demon drink. The calculus of sentimental meaning production is characteristically mediated through the relation between author, character, and reader. As Jane Tompkins puts it, sentimental prose is "by women [authors], about women [characters], and for women [readers]."[115] In *Clarence and Corrine,* Johnson's authorial relationship with her reader is more direct than it is in conventional narratives and novels. In the production of meaning crucial to Johnson's audience's racial projection and identification, the lack of an explicit racialized articulation within the novel invites the substitution of her own racial identity for those of her characters. The book's consequent racial simultextuality produces the possibility of a stark recorporealizaton of "polluted" Blackness into racist readers' own putatively pure and carefully policed notion of racial and bodily identity. The shadowed doubled racial possibilities for readerly textual infusion play on racial otherness (and sameness). Again, this makes a critical difference in our assessment of the cultural, political, and literary work that *Clarence and Corrine* does.

Temperance and Bad Parental Temperaments

Temperance, the reform cause that *Clarence and Corrine* first trumpets, was "arguably the largest social movement of the nineteenth century."[116] As one of the most acceptable causes from which to launch social action at the century's end, it was so compelling for women in and before the Progressive Era that members in the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) far outnumbered those in organizations devoted to women's suffrage, though these issues increasingly overlapped. For Black radicals and reformers, male and female, temperance was as pressing a concern as other issues during and before the nadir. At the National Federation of Afro-American Women's

convention in 1896, for example, Ida B. Wells reported on resolutions that included motions on home life, temperance, education, Justice Harlan's dissent in *Plessy v. Ferguson,* the lynch law, and the convict lease system. Wells began the report by announcing that delegates were committed to holding meetings where "the mothers of our race [will] be taught the necessity of pure homes and lives." The committee's second resolution, Wells continued, was to "heartily endorse the noble work of the WCTU as an absolute necessity to the best physical, mental and spiritual uplifting of all people."[117] Anti-temperance work had the potential for collective cross-racial action. As Frances Harper put it in an *A.M.E. Church Review* temperance symposium in which Wells also participated, "Slavery was the enemy of one section, the oppressor of one race, but intemperance is the curse of every land and the deadly foe of every kindred, tribe, and race which falls beneath its influence."[118] Both women called on temperance activists to abandon white supremacist rhetoric in the fight against the demon drink.

These were not the gendered sentiments of those simply preoccupied with morals and manners. Anti-drink adherence may have been associated with class and status and secular/sacred divides, but race leaders came together across gender lines to support the cause. Martin Delany had been the recording secretary for the Temperance Society of the People of Color in the City of Pittsburgh. Frederick Douglass and Henry Highland Garnet were staunch temperance supporters.[119] T. Thomas Fortune and Harvey Johnson both broke from the Republicans to support the Prohibition Party for a time. And Wells, whom Fortune had glowingly suggested was as good at political reporting as any man, took the demon alcohol as her subject in one of her rare pieces of published fiction.[120] A serious concern even when isolated from other issues, Black leaders and lay people also highlighted the interstitial connections between anti-drink activism and rhetoric, the freighted term "home protection," enfranchisement, and movements against Jim Crow and lynching.

When Amelia Johnson employs the widely recognized temperance thematic, it both converges with reform concerns and provides a means of challenging the race-based and race-baiting policies forwarded by prohibition advocates such as Rebecca Latimer Felton. The wife of a doctor-turned-Georgia legislator and later a U.S. congressman, Felton was, like Amelia Johnson, her husband's secretary and counselor. Felton ran her husband's campaigns and emerged as one of the most powerful women, if not *the* most powerful woman, in post-Civil War Georgia. An advocate for many reform causes, she became the most popular and effective Southern speaker for the WCTU from the late 1880s into the next century. Felton lectured all over the South and in cities from Baltimore to Boston and beyond.

In the mouths of Felton and other white Southern champions, the fight against the demon drink was vehemently anti-Black. Like so many turn-of-the-century advocates, Felton linked white economic empowerment to "home protection," suffrage, and prohibition campaigns. "Home protection" was a sounding note that carried the most personal and intensely political resonances. Home signified the state, the South, and the households that Southern white women supposedly despaired to leave unattended for fear of Black men drunk with thoughts of political and sexual equality. White appeals for racially exclusive voting rights were cast in ever more stridently racist and nativist tones and recalled earlier rhetoric meant to empower white women over and against what they considered the unwashed herds, "Patrick and Sambo and Hans and Yung Tung," to borrow earlier invective from Elizabeth Cady Stanton.[121] Felton's focus on the putatively "dangerous" and "ignorant" Black men who supposedly threatened white women's bodies and the body politic after the Fifteenth Amendment offered a resonant justification for extending the franchise to include women—and for disenfranchising Black voters.

Felton's most famous speech makes explicit the ways in which improper bodily intake and association could diminish the power associated with white citizenship. Not only white women but also white men, "the bone and sinew of prosperity and patriotism," as Felton put it, were at risk if they didn't take proper precautions against liquor and lust-filled Black threats to the nation and its putatively legitimate rights bearers. Felton condemned "the corruption of the negro vote, their venality, the use of whiskey and the debasement of the ignorant and the incitement of evil passion in the vicious." White men had to stop Blacks from voting, drinking, and "ravaging" white women, she insisted. They should put an end to equalizing "themselves at the polls with an inferior race," with "lust-filled fiends in human shape." Cheered on "to the echo" by "representative men," from the podium at the gathering of the powerful Georgia State Agricultural Society, Felton thundered: "If it takes lynching to protect woman's dearest possession from the drunken, ravaging human beasts . . . then I say lynch, a thousand a week if it becomes necessary."[122]

Heard from the platform and heralded by the white press, Felton had harped on these themes for years in speeches she gave beginning in the late 1880s. She was invited to give addresses all over Georgia and throughout the nation. She also printed her beliefs in her newspaper contributions to the *Atlantic Constitution.* Felton articulated a link between Black prospects for equality at the polls and in the parlor, that is, between Black suffrage and Blacks serving as suitors to white women. Bolstered by and in accord with tracts published by Harvard professors, reports issued by respected statisticians, and speeches given by Southern senators and their Northern

converts, Felton and others asserted that white women proved irresistible to so-called depraved Black men.[123] Though Felton's nationally reported Tybee Island speech took place in 1897, racial invective and the assertion of Black criminality linked to sexual immorality and home protection had spiked dramatically as early as 1889, the year before Johnson's *Clarence and Corrine* was published.

Felton's language reflects the easy slippages between "improper" fraternity, franchise, and transgressive intimacy. In addresses to white men who had, according to Felton, abandoned their responsibility to protect their wives, sisters, and daughters from economic and physical violence, she declared, "As long as politicians take the colored man into your embraces on election day to control his vote," as long as you "make him think that he is a man and a brother . . . so long will lynching prevail because the causes of it grow and increase."[124] White men's affection for Black men, their "embrace," is the "cause" of putative African American political and libidinous excitability. Feminized, seduced, and subordinated by whites who embrace the African American man to "control his vote," Felton positions Black men as rivals as well as threats. Her language suggests that white men's choices leave white women not only politically but also sexually displaced. Her imagery is vividly, if not explicitly, erotic. Supposed Black sexual attraction/predation and its "growing" causes activate mythologies about racial physiognomy. And the "increase" of lynching, as she avers elsewhere, links directly to the "curse of slavery [that] is still following hard upon the footsteps of our nation's progress because of hybrid races of mulatto and mestizo varieties."[125] While she holds accountable the "bad white men" of the antebellum South who caused such "violations of the moral law" to occur, her concern with postbellum threats is with the increase of the "better educated more economically independent, more politically empowered" Black classes who are more likely, according to Felton, to commit the "rape" of white women.[126]

Inverting conventional racial dynamics, Johnson makes morally compromised men who could be read as white rather than Black the threat to women and girls, and so indirectly anticipates and responds to the discursive, political, and physical wave of anti-Black violence that crested during the years of Felton's prominence. Like Felton, Johnson indicts white men for abandoning families in need of protection. Yet for Felton, white men's guilt is linked to their leaving their women vulnerable to the putative danger posed by Black "fiends" plied with the alcohol that white men have provided them in exchange for their vote. When Johnson's "raceless" narrative is read as white, what emerges is a violently dysfunctional male-headed household. Unlike the scenario that Felton paints, white men do not endanger their women

indirectly by misusing liquor for its political trade value. Instead their own consumption makes them monsters. Mr. Burton's presence—not his absence as in Felton's rhetoric—causes the insecurity and fear that reigns inside the home. His wife's swollen eye, "ill usage," and lack of desire "to be decent," as she says sharply to the children, when "your father is likely to come home drunk at any time, and knock and beat a body about as he does" (*CC,* 8), stems from *white* dissipation. Significantly, the females in the household suffer most directly. In addition to his beating Mrs. Burton, young Corrine must dodge his blows, when, for instance, he raises himself out of his stupor to greet his daughter's announcement of his wife's death with a "clenched hand" and an "upraised fist" (*CC,* 18).

Read purely within a "raceless" temperance rubric, as a modified version of the very popular drunkard narrative genre, liquor and external factors, rather than the man himself, would be the target of the novel's indictment. With Johnson's authorial role engineering a cross-racial story, however, *Clarence and Corrine* enters the additionally charged arena in which Felton also operates. Elaine Frantz Parsons explains that nineteenth-century "writers chose to tell of drunkards ethnically, socio-economically, and religiously like themselves. As awkward as it made their position, they sympathized, even identified with, the drinker."[127] If readers who knew Johnson's work and race interpreted *Clarence and Corrine* within a rubric of sameness (as a Black story about same-race characters), the sympathetic politics of identification and reform that Parsons outlines would prevail here. Alcoholic binges, not Black men, would be the demon. Temperance, discipline, and a healing God would bring families back together. Told within a same-race rubric, temperance narratives posit drunkards as formerly good men whose drinking is at odds with their essential natures.

In the cross-racial retrogression narratives that rose in popularity as drunkard narratives also did, however, drinking is in concert with—it enhances—the putatively innate bestial nature of Blacks. Switching the script in *Clarence and Corrine,* Johnson offers no backstory to affirm Mr. Burton's essential goodness. Nor does she waste any narrative energy in advancing a recuperative story line.[128] As he scurries away from the death scene, leaving his children to their own devices, the narrative likewise abandons him. This literary evangelical tale suggests that he is not worthy of redemption, and so underwrites the inference that Burton, rather than the demon drink, is the real fiend. *Clarence and Corrine* functions simultextually as an instructional intraracial tale and as a cross-racial tale in which "the liquid demon," compromised manhood, "home protection," and victimization are linked to the rape-lynching threat, public funding for Black education, and disfranchise-

ment. In other words, in moving into the charged arena of drink and the racial daemonic, Johnson gives white men "a taste of the lash of criticism" that is "his delight to lay" upon Blacks.[129]

Felton linked her consistent assertion that Black education had not helped to decrease the number of lawbreakers to her thoughts on race, criminality, and its basis in the home, thereby attacking two causes—education and home reform—that were central to Black civic and club movements. "The negro's education in books has been largely unproductive of good results," Felton announced in a speech to the Georgia Sociological Association, "because it antedated the proper training of the mothers in their lewd homes. . . . These lewd homes continue to be crime-promoters. They pull down faster than book education can build up."[130] Nineteenth-century Black women were often called upon to defend their virtue. The most infamous attack was launched by John W. Jacks, the president of the Missouri Press Association, who, in 1895, specifically targeted Ida B. Wells and characterized Black women as "prostitutes" who were "natural liars and thieves."[131] Felton's speeches and articles delivered a similar punch: "Education has no more effect on them morally and intellectually than it has physically," she proclaimed in "Why I Am a Suffragist." "God made them negroes and we can not make them white folks by education." Appropriating the Hutchinson Family Singers' famous anti-slavery anthem "Get off the Track!" for a radically different purpose, Felton thundered on: "We are on the wrong track. We must turn back."[132] Women such as Johnson who were immersed in political culture and statewide legal and civic campaigns had every reason to take on the rhetoric of popular temperance activists like Felton, just as Wells and others faced off with John Jacks.

Felton uses a double-edged sword when engaged in her battle for home protection and (racial) purity. Her reactionary call to arms sometimes collided with her forward-thinking progressive advocacy. Her long-standing advocacy for Georgia's poor included a campaign for prison reform to protect women and juveniles, be they Caucasian or African American.[133] Yet, her support for individual women convicts didn't assure a sympathetic or sisterly stance on the larger issue of Black female criminality—especially when it came to the propagation of respectability. As historian Leann Whites points out, in addition to promoting lynching, Felton was prepared to demand sterilization for "erring" Black women. "Perhaps you may decide my plan is too radical," Felton declared to one audience, "but I do believe that a criminal woman should be made immune to childbearing as a punishment for her crime." Though Black women were not explicitly Felton's subjects here, Whites claims that she did have them "particularly in mind when she proposed this scheme."[134]

Felton's criminal anthropology, as we might call it, not only focuses on the physical Black body, it also views delinquency through the aperture of Black homes that captures, she asserts, a crystal clear picture of Black motherhood: "We have a problem to work out in this country—as to the best methods for the intelligent education of the colored race. . . . Until we can find clean living, as a rule, and not simply as an exception in the colored homes of this country, we are simply walking over a hidden crater. . . . The plan of prevention of crime, by making criminals immune to the propagation of their own species, would go very far towards shutting off an influx of infanticides and brazen prostitution among the ignorant and shameless."[135]

Replacing the category "homo delinquens," à la Francis Galton, with "negra delinquens," Felton's sterilization plan was a base attempt to actualize white surveillance over racial undesirables in the larger social body.[136] For Felton, Black criminality was proven by its ability to disrupt *white* homes and white clean living—the real, self-reflexive, and generative subject of Felton's concerns—that were sullied by "brazen prostitution," or more clearly, by interracial sex.

This familiar rallying cry was used to vent anger and justify the broad-based anti-Black violence against which the Johnsons organized.[137] Again positioning Blacks not only as criminal but also as romantic threats, Felton's language reveals her primary—and primal—concerns. Her goals in advocating government intervention to "protect white women and children" would "create the kind of motherhood that was critical to the larger economic, social and political well being of the [white] South."[138] Cloaked in the language of protection, Felton's twin concerns center on Black congenital criminals and consanguineous families, that is, on those with claims to white paternal legacies and protections that Felton wanted to claim for white women alone.

Black analysis and activism employed similar language about protection and motherhood to indict white men in radically different ways. African Americans understood the assaults on their persons and characters to be projections of white male predatory behavior. When home protection referred to Black homes, it was whites who needed to be monitored and held accountable for ignorant, shameless, and unclean living in their own households—where Black women were preyed upon while employed in domestic service. As the Brotherhood's legal and organizing efforts had, *Clarence and Corrine*'s simultextual use of indeterminate racial characterization—when read as white—challenges the racism of ideologues in an era where the rhetoric of white home protection translated to exclusion from protection at best and violent terrorism and abuse against Black men and women at worst.

In her introduction to the Schomburg reprint edition of *Clarence and Corrine,* Hortense Spillers asserts that even though the novel had little to do with the "urgencies of coeval Black life," for contemporaneous Black readers and reviewers who praised the novel, it "is unimportant exactly *what* and *how* Mrs. Johnson wrote, but altogether significant *that* she did."[139] They found Johnson's signal contribution as "a first" important, Spillers suggests, but otherwise, as she puts it, "its authorship is somewhat beside the point."[140] Ann duCille disagrees in part, pointing out that the issues of reform and redemption that Johnson foregrounds, the "*what*" the novel takes as its subject, were compelling, indeed urgently so, for nineteenth-century readers, whatever their race.[141] We might also reassess the "*how*" in Spillers's assertion (an "inequality" in philosophical and mathematical parlance) that "*what* + *how* Johnson wrote < *that* she wrote."[142] Instead, it is useful to change the relation and offer an equation that suggests that "*what* Johnson wrote = *that* + *how* she wrote." *Clarence and Corrine*'s formal outcomes, I am arguing, may have been viewed by her reception communities through the interplay between her specific and situated literary biography, the political communities to which she belonged + the narrative conventions she employed.

If works of African American literature are dissolved into their referents, then, like other nineteenth-century women's writing, *Clarence and Corrine*'s most "literary" moments—the places that query the connections between historical and representational epistemology—are illuminated by acknowledging the reading cartography embedded in the historically specific nexus of her life and work. Like Harriet Jacobs and Harriet Wilson before her, Johnson engages the seeming dissonance between her text's generic affiliations and its multivalent complexity.

References to Black women's protest and resistance have been obscured, disremembered, and unincorporated into public histories. Without such access, the multivalent layers of the work they produced fade and the texts seem to simplistically adopt the transparency, the "sincerity," to recall DuBois's characterization of Harper's prose, associated with the domestic fiction and popular Christian instructional literature whose generic conventions they appropriate. Attending to the multiple meanings produced by several simultaneously situated interpretative modalities is one way of accessing *Clarence and Corrine*'s more complex discursive strategies and Amelia Johnson's literary and activist sentiments.

Chapter 5

1. See Mrs. N. F. Mossell, "Introduction" in *The Work of the Afro-American Woman,* 4. The Schomburg uses the second 1908 edition for its reprint.

2. In the Schomburg reprint edition taken from the 1894 original, the novel is titled *The Hazeley Family*. In the advertisement it is followed by "*or, Hard but Wholesome Lessons.*"

3. The first edition includes these advertisements. Mossell, *The Work of the Afro-Amer-ican Woman* (1894, 1st ed.), 179. The advertisements are not paginated.

4. The introduction is signed "AEJ" which, if we cross-check it with A. Briscoe Koger's treatment of Harvey Johnson, confirms that "the introduction is written by Mrs. Johnson." Koger, *Dr. Harvey Johnson,* 21. As timely and well-written as it still is, Harvey Johnson's *The Nations* itself is rarely consulted; this is the first time in recent scholarship that the introduction is attributed to Amelia Johnson. Her other writing has not been considered in the context of the political and racial ideology she outlines there. Amelia Johnson, "Introduction," in Harvey Johnson, *Nations from a New Point of View,* 18.

5. Barkley Brown, "To Catch the Vision of Freedom," 99 n. 62.

6. Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent,* 49, points out that Blacks worked together across gender and also illuminates the ways in which this comradeship was an imagined community.

7. See Feimster, "Introduction," in "'Ladies and Lynching,'" where she coins the term "rape/lynch" discourse or narrative to better conceptualize the gendered politics and practices of what is conventionally called, simply, lynching.

8. See Introduction and chapter 2 in this text for a fuller explication of the term "simultextuality." This study illustrates how challenging, sometimes contradictory, multivalent meanings are "simultextually" available at the primary level of narrative interpretation rather than being subtextually buried beneath a reformist message of African American empowerment. Simultextual discussions disrupt narrative transparency, the ideal of a self-effacing narrative simplicity that is one key assumption about domestic fiction.

9. Amelia Johnson, "Introduction," in Harvey Johnson, *Nations from a New Point of View,* 17.

10. See Penn, *Afro-American Press,* 415–16, 418, 422–24, and Scruggs, *Women of Distinction,* 117. The careful Johnson entry included in Scruggs's book notes that "a large number of women wrote for this paper," which is called *Ivy.* It seems that the journal may have changed names, but not mission, as Scruggs refers to "a monthly of eight pages" to "guide and elevate *our own young people*" (emphasis in original). White Baptist journals reprinted its contents. Penn notes that the *National Baptist,* "one of the largest circulated white denominational journals," reproduced poems from *Joy* and also reprinted one of Johnson's stories. The *Baltimore Baptist,* another white denominational paper, reviewed *Joy.* Penn suggests that Mary Britton, of Lexington, Kentucky, who published under "Meb" and "Aunt Peggy," published in *Ivy* (which he places in Baltimore with a young readership but doesn't attribute to Johnson). Penn also refers to the folder of newspaper clippings Johnson had "testifying" to the appreciation the journal elicited. See Majors, *Noted Negro Women,* 216 and Penn, *Afro-American Press,* 415–16, 424.

11. It was not until 1900 when William Dean Howells, the dean of American letters, reviewed Chesnutt's *The Conjure Woman* and *The Wife of His Youth and other Stories of the Color Line* (1899) that Chesnutt's racial identity was revealed to the general readership.

12. See minutes, "Treasurer's Report," and "Personal Contributions," in *History of the Club Movement,* 59; and, for the following year, "Directory," 119. It reads "Maryland, Baltimore, Mrs. A. E. Johnson, delegate; tax, $1."

13. Rev. Walter Brooks joined Frederick Douglass as a featured speaker at the Brotherhood's first national meeting. More than thirty-five years later, following Harvey Johnson's arrangements for his own funeral, Rev. Brooks, still pastor of Washington D.C.'s Nineteenth Street Baptist Church, conducted the short service. See the *Baltimore Sun*'s front page byline on Johnson's death. Also see Koger, *Dr. Harvey Johnson,* 24, who describes Brooks as a "long and tried friend." See *New York Freeman,* October 31, 1885, 4.

14. Minutes from the 1895 and 1896 conventions, *History of the Club Movement,* 35–37.

15. Tillman, "Afro-American Women and Their Work," 495.

16. Penn, *Afro-American Press,* 425–26.

17. Amelia Johnson, "Afro American Literature."

18. Scruggs, *Women of Distinction,* 119.

19. Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent,* 66.

20. Though the term "New Negro" is often associated with Alain Locke's Harlem Renaissance anthology of that name, it appeared as early as 1895. See Willis, "Sociologist's Eye," 51–53. See also Gates, "Trope of the New Negro," 129.

21. DuBois, "General Summary of the Baptists in the United States," in DuBois, *The Black Church,* 115.

22. Penn, *Afro-American Press,* 372.

23. The report of the Negro Baptists in 1903 to the Eighth Atlanta Conference notes that according to the 1900 census, illiteracy in the South reached over 50 percent. They suggest that this figure may be overdrawn. "It is perfectly safe to say that 40 per cent of the colored people are illiterate and 20 per cent of those who can read and write are not fluent readers. *Sixty per cent of those who can read are youths—children.*" DuBois, "General Summary of the Baptists in the United States," in DuBois, *The Black Church,* 116.

24. Higginbotham calls the church a "multiple site" of public space open to secular and religious groups. One example of this youth emphasis was a full report featuring "the testimony of children themselves" on their feelings about the church as reported in DuBois, *The Black Church.* See Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent,* 7, 185–90, 2, 10.

25. Though H. Highland Garnet is sometimes reported to have attended the conference, only Douglass, who spoke on "Self-Made Men" (an address in which he featured Garnet) was advertised and reported as the principal speaker. Garnet died in Liberia in 1882, three years before the Brotherhood's inaugural conference. See Suggs, "Romanticism, Law, and the Suppression of African-American Citizenship," 89, reproducing the error in Koger, *Dr. Harvey Johnson,* 12–13. See *New York Freeman,* October 31,1885, 4, for full coverage of the conference. See *Baltimore Sun,* October 19, 1885, morning edition, 2, for Douglass's announcement.

26. Membership would peak in 1914 at 3,028. Amelia Johnson, "Introduction," in Harvey Johnson, *Nations from a New Point of View,* 21; Koger, *Dr. Harvey Johnson,* 3.

27. Koger, *Dr. Harvey Johnson,* 5. Growing in strength and number and economic self-sufficiency, believing that a self-supporting church was a healthy church, Johnson was poised to challenge the white Baptist establishment. He demanded full church status, recognitions of Black preachers as equals, "eligible to hold office and chairmanship of committees." When this was refused, Johnson withdrew from the larger association. His written challenge to the Baptist conventions and his insistence that either Blacks would have full recognition and equality or they would form their own denomination was reprinted in full in dailies, says Koger. Johnson also organized the Colored Baptist Convention of Maryland in 1898.

Koger was a Howard-trained lawyer and, the Union Baptist Archives chairwoman tells me, a member of Union. Interestingly, Joseph E. Briscoe was the president of the Colored Advisory Council that worked on the same antidiscrimination issues: bastardy laws, teacher representation, appropriations for colored schools, and so forth. See *Baltimore Sun,* January 30, 1886, 4. Two other Briscoes, Arthur E. and John B. (born 1891) became lawyers in the state. See Koger, *Negro Lawyer,* Appendix, "rooster of lawyers," "now deceased." Census records and the Social Security death index do not confirm a relation (on A. Briscoe Koger's mother's side, through her maiden name) between the Briscoe lawyers and activists and the lawyer who would memorialize them, A. Briscoe Koger. Ibid., 22.

28. Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent,* 147, notes that "black feminist theology won outstanding male converts. It gained the respect of such ardent race leaders as William Simmons, Charles Parrish, Walter H. Brooks and Harvey Johnson." And the Johnsons' son, Harvey Jr., when interviewed in the 1950s, reported "with pride" that "my mother was my father's best friend, and his chief comfort. . . ." Harvey Johnson Jr.'s attention had to be "steered" away from his mother and to Koger's subject, Harvey Sr. Koger, *Dr. Harvey Johnson,* 22.

29. *History of the Club Movement,* 37.

30. *The Hamite* and *Clarence and Corrine* were reviewed in the *Home Protector* and *Sower and Reaper,* both in Baltimore, and in Louisville, Kentucky's *American Baptist.* See Penn, *Afro-American Press,* 424–25; and Amelia Johnson, "Introduction," in Harvey Johnson, *Nations from a New Point of View,* 29–30.

31. See Penn, *Afro-American Press,* 424–25, and Amelia Johnson, "Introduction," in Harvey Johnson, *Nations from a New Point of View,* 28–34. Also included are personal letters of response to Harvey Johnson's published pamphlets such as those by Martin Delany, John E. Bruce (Bruce Grit), and I. Garland Penn.

32. (Mrs.) A. E. Johnson, "Afro-American Literature," *New York Age,* January 30, 1892, 1. A. E. Johnson, "The History of a Story," *Richmond Planet,* February 22 and 29, 1896, 3.

33. Amelia Johnson, "Some Parallels in History."

34. In 1905 Harvey Johnson and the Brotherhood contingent would make up five of the twenty-nine people from fourteen states who met near Buffalo, New York. Bettye Collier-Thomas notes that DuBois was in "close contact with members of the Brotherhood . . . as he frequently traveled there to deliver speeches" from 1895 to 1910. The Brotherhood, she goes on, "willingly shared twenty years of experience, strategy development and know-how with the founders at Niagara." See Collier-Thomas, "Harvey Johnson," 224.

35. According to Alexander, *Our Day In Court,* 8, the office address was 2 East Saratoga St. near Calvert. The Johnsons' house was at 1923 Druid Hill Ave. Koger, *Dr. Harvey Johnson,* 22. See *Baltimore City Directory, 1906,* 948.

36. Harvey Johnson, "The Question of Race," 7. This paper was read before the Monumental Literary and Scientific Association of Baltimore, Maryland, and printed at their request, according to the Daniel A. P. Murray Pamphlet Collection at the American Memory site provided by the Library of Congress.

37. Among the members listed are Harry S. Cummings, the first Black man elected to the city council in 1890; W. Ashbie Hawkins, a Howard law school graduate, civil rights lawyer, and editor of the short-lived *Educational Era;* and Warner T. McGuinn. See Chapelle, *Baltimore,* 167.

38. Visit by author to 1923 Druid Hill Ave. and Union Baptist Church, November 2003. The distance from the stairs to Druid Hill Ave. is not evident from looking at the photograph.

39. DuBois Circle Minutes, November 3, 1908, 10. Also see February 1, 1910.

40. See DuBois Circle Minutes, December 3, 1907, 27; March 26, 1907, 9. DuBois Circle papers viewed at the home of the then-elected executive board member and historian, Mrs. Patelle Harris, Baltimore, August 2004.

41. Several sources suggest that five Brotherhood of Liberty members attended the national Niagara Movement conferences and that Harvey Johnson was among them; I did not find him in any photographs of the meetings, however. The records at Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, site of the 1906 Niagara meeting, show that James Robert Lincoln Diggs and Rev. Garnett Russell Waller attended the 1905 meeting in Fort Erie, Ontario. Rev. G. R. Waller and a larger group traveled to Harpers Ferry for the national gathering the next year. The Baltimore delegation also included Rev. George F. Bragg, Dr. Howard E. Young, Prof. Carrington Davis, Prof. Mason Albert Hawkins, William Ashbie Hawkins, and Prof. C. L. Davis. E-mail from Kim Biggs, Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, to Gabrielle Foreman, September 22, 2005.

42. McHenry, *Forgotten Readers,* 3.

43. I have not yet been able to locate any copies of this paper.

44. Lucy Thurman, who was one of the leading Black temperance activists of the era and was then the head of the Federation of Club Women, along with Frances Harper visited on March 17, 1908; they were invited to join the national association. DuBois Circle Minutes, March 17, 1908, 47.

45. McHenry, *Forgotten Readers,* 10.

46. In the April 7, 1908 meeting, the president stated that she had received a letter from "Mrs. Harvey Johnson stating her inconvenience on account of poor health to attend the meetings of the circle and wishing for that reason to resign. It was agreed by all present that we would like to retain Mrs. Johnson as a member as she has proven herself quite a valuable addition to our circle—one always interested in the work carried on by the Organization. The secretary was asked to write a letter to Mrs. Johnson voicing the sentiments of the Association." DuBois Circle Minutes, 51. On April 21, 1908, the secretary stated that instead of writing to Mrs. Harvey Johnson, as requested, she had seen the latter personally and explained the wishes of the ladies to retain her as a member and that Mrs. Johnson had stated that "as soon as health would permit she would be with us again." By June 2, she is again an active dues-paying member. She hosts another meeting on April 6, 1909, and resigns that fall. On November 16, "the resignation of Mrs. Harvey Johnson was accepted and the corresponding secretary was directed to write a letter to that effect to Mrs. Johnson. Much regret was expressed by all the members upon hearing the resignation of Mrs. Johnson as she had always been a faithful worker and inspiring helper." Johnson evidently remained an "inspiring helper." Ibid., 53.

47. Programs found in the DuBois Circle Papers, Baltimore. The second Mrs. G. R. Waller, Lelia Waller, was as active in activist Black Baltimore as was the first Mrs. G. R. Waller (who was one of the few female members of the Brotherhood). Lelia Waller, who like her husband was from Virginia, was thirty-one years old in 1910. She had been married to Rev. Waller (age fifty-two) for nine years; together they had five natural children, and three older children by his first marriage also lived in their household. 1910 U.S. Census, Baltimore Ward 12, Baltimore (Independent City), Maryland; Roll: T624_556, 4A; Enumeration District: 185; Image: 1299.

48. Barkley Brown, "To Catch the Vision of Freedom," 67–68.

49. Kerr-Ritchie, *Freedpeople,* 75.

50. "'A Long, Full, Big Life': Johnson's Political Activism," Maryland State Archives, available at http://www.msa.md.gov/ (accessed December 11, 2008).

51. Koger, *Dr. Harvey Johnson,* 11. Others suggest that the Brotherhood was functioning informally by this point, and that Johnson and his associates had agreed to absorb the cost of the ongoing litigation necessary to desegregate the Maryland bar. William Alexander suggests that court costs ran as high as $250 even before recruiting Waring. Whatever the case, the Johnson household, and probably others, made significant contributions and learned that no individual, or even church, could finance sustained legal challenges. In the future, they collectively organized and funded such efforts. Alexander, *Our Day In Court,* 6. See also Brackett, *Notes on the Progress,* 75.

52. "For thirty of the fifty years he served Union, his salary averaged about a hundred dollars per month." Koger, *Dr. Harvey Johnson,* 22, 23. In 1890, Black men in the sought-

after occupation of a private coachman, if supplemented with butlering, could make about $400 annually in Philadelphia. Cooks made more, about $750 a year. About 90 percent of Black women worked as domestic servants making about $150 a year, approximately the amount that the Johnsons expended on litigation. See Williams, *The Christian Recorder,* 7–8.

53. Holt, "Empire over the Mind," 299, as quoted in Barkley Brown, "To Catch the Vision of Freedom," 68.

54. This is Kerr-Ritchie's language, *Freedpeople,* 75. Baltimore was the city with the largest number of freed and free Blacks after the war. Its history of Black participation in unions, societies, newspapers, and civic organizations was the backdrop for the Brotherhood's formation and largely successful challenges to Jim Crow incursions that succeeded in so many other places in the South. It is in this context that I make claims that the cross-gendered collaborations historians note in the period of 1865 to 1880, so well documented in Richmond by Barkley Brown, extend well into that decade in Baltimore. Harvey Johnson makes the geographic as well as the activist link. He spent time regularly at his home and farm eight miles outside of Richmond during the 1880s and 1890s. See Simmons, *Men of Mark,* 510, and Koger, *Dr. Harvey Johnson,* 23.

55. Baltimore's Republican-led papers were cool on the idea of Black attorneys, while the Democratic organ, the *Sun,* supported the Brotherhood's efforts. See Collier-Thomas, "Harvey Johnson," 217; Delaney, *From the Darkness Cometh the Light,* 35.

56. Koger, *Dr. Harvey Johnson,* 12. The meeting was held on June 22, 1885, at 362 West Lexington Street. The Johnsons lived both at 775 West Lexington Street and 362 Lexington Street, according to Koger; though he sites the 775 Lexington Street address as the place where the first meeting took place, he suggests that they don't move there until 1890. Yet the Baltimore City Directory for 1886 lists "Johnson, Harvey Rev, pastor Union Baptist Ch, h, 362 Lexington." Others confirm the location but date the meeting as June 2, 1885. See *Baltimore City Directory for 1886, 777.* See Alexander, *Our Day In Court, 7.*

57. Legal cases followed on the heels of a petition drive that didn't effect immediate change. On March 19, 1885, after months of planning and litigation, the Supreme Bench of Baltimore City ruled that the color line would not ban Blacks from the bar. Nonetheless, they denied entrance to Charles Wilson, who had applied for admission, declaring that he was not qualified. Johnson then went to Washington, D.C., to recruit Waring, who was admitted on October 10, 1885. The decision also led to the University of Maryland's law school admitting its first Black students soon after. See Koger, *Negro Lawyer,* 6–7; Collier-Thomas, "Harvey Johnson," 217; and Bogen, "Transformation of the Fourteenth Amendment," 939–1037.

58. *A.M.E. Church Review* 4 (1887): 496–505.

59. Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents,* (Yellin edition), 177.

60. By no means do I mean to imply that the Brotherhood exclusively focused on women's issues. In daily papers it advertised a $500 reward for the arrest and conviction of the lynch mob murderers of a Mr. Biggs of Frederick, Maryland. And Harvey Johnson and the Brotherhood's counsel were very active in the Navassa case, defending men who launched an uprising when they were virtually imprisoned on an island under horrific slavery-like labor conditions. Johnson personally appealed to the Maryland attorney general, governor, and U.S. President Benjamin Harrison. See Alexander, *Our Day In Court,*

20–21, 22–24. See Brackett, *Notes on the Progress,* 81. On the Navassa case, see *New York Age,* April 19 and 26, 1890. On defense against lynching, see *New York Age,* December 13, 1890. On a linked suit against steamers, see *New York Age,* May 10, 1890. The libellant, Rev. Robert A. McGinn, was a clergyman and member of the Brotherhood.

61. See Alexander, *Our Day In Court,* 6; Sumler-Edmond, "Quest for Justice," 109; and Collier-Thomas, "Harvey Johnson," 218. The women were each awarded $100 in damages. It was a limited but important success. In what later would be codified into a national "separate but equal" policy, the decision affirmed both segregation and that businesses could not offer second-class services for customers who purchased first-class tickets. It also bolstered Johnson's faith in legal means of redress and energized his efforts to form the Brotherhood and challenge Black attorneys' ability to argue before the Maryland bar.

62. *New York Freeman,* October 31, 1885, 4.

63. Waring, "Colored Man before the Law," 504.

64. Barkley Brown, "To Catch the Vision of Freedom," 74.

65. They were Irene Davis, Sadie T. Galamison, Mary O. Dickerson, and the first Mrs. G. R. Waller. Born in Virginia, Sadie (Madden) Galamison was twenty-three years old and married for two years to Joseph A. Galamison when she appears as a Brotherhood member; 1900 Federal Census, Baltimore Ward 8, Baltimore City (Independent City), Maryland; Roll: T623 611; 17A; Enumeration District: 99. The absence of a 1890 census makes the other women more difficult to locate.

66. She was married to Rev. Garnett R. Waller of Trinity Baptist Church (one of the eleven ministers ordained out of Johnson's congregation) and was mother of three children, including Mary E. Waller and Garnet R. Waller Jr. Johnson nominates G. R. Waller as the first president of the Baltimore NAACP, the second branch established in the nation. See *Afro-American,* February 25, 1958.

67. These do not count those who use initials but are identifiable as male by the title Reverend or Esquire. Alexander, *Our Day In Court,* 4.

68. Ibid., 43–44. The women include Matilda Crist, Elizabeth Reeves, Martha E. Stewart, Patsey Hubert, Mary Holmes, and Mary M. Johnson. Again there are eight names that use gender-neutral initials that I am not able to identify. Since "A. E. Johnson" appeared in print regularly, though not in these lists, it's reasonable to assume that some of those using their initials could also be women. H. S. Cummings, however, is a man; he was one of the two students to integrate the University of Maryland's law school and would become an official member of the Brotherhood. He is included in the Druid Hill Avenue photograph.

69. Barkley Brown, "To Catch the Vision of Freedom," 74.

70. See *Maryland Code,* 62.

71. *Hawbecker v. Hawbecker,* 2.

72. Brackett, *Notes on the Progress,* 67.

73. Alexander, *Our Day In Court,* 11.

74. Sumler-Edmond, "Quest for Justice," 117.

75. One commentator wrote, "It is important to note that the colored leaders desired a repeal of this law, as of all such laws, not on the grounds of social equality but chiefly because they thought it a race discrimination." Brackett, *Notes on the Progress,* 67.

76. Gertrude Bustill (Mossell), author of *The Work of the Afro-American Woman,* married Dr. Nathan Francis Mossell, who was the first graduate of the University of

Pennsylvania's medical school. Together they spearheaded a campaign to raise money to found and finance the Frederick Douglass (training) Hospital. Dr. Mossell also led a campaign against Thomas Dixon's bestseller *The Clansman.* He was brother to Aaron Mossell, University of Pennsylvania's first Black law school graduate. He left his family, but his daughter Sadie became the first Black woman graduate of Penn's law school and the first Black woman to get a PhD in the United States. Aaron and Nathan's younger brother Charles is the A.M.E. preacher "Rev. C. W. Mossell," a graduate of Lincoln Theological Seminary who appears on the list of Brotherhood "life members." He is the only one of the siblings to return to Baltimore where his parents had been in business before moving to Ontario so as not to have children in the United States during slavery. All three boys attended Lincoln University. For the Brotherhood membership list, see Alexander, *Our Day In Court,* 4.

77. Aaron Mossell, "Unconstitutionality of the Law," 77.

78. Brackett, *Notes on the Progress,* 79. A petition from Frederick County included 76 signatures; one from Alleghany included more than 240.

79. Alexander, "Brotherhood of Liberty," 15–16.

80. Brackett, *Notes on the Progress,* 79.

81. Collier-Thomas reports that John Prentiss Poe is Edgar Allen Poe's father; J. P. Poe did, in fact, have a son named Edgar Allen, but he was not the writer, who was J. P. Poe's cousin. See Collier-Thomas, "Harvey Johnson," 219; see also Bogen, "Transformation of the Fourteenth Amendment," 1043, nn. 363, 364. The 1902 amendment that sought to disenfranchise African Americans, the Poe amendment, carried John Prentiss's name. See Mjagkij, O*rganizing Black America,* 89.

82. The Brotherhood's early leadership was made up of Baptists. A.M.E. women also seemed to be prominent in this campaign. See Brackett, *Notes on the Progress,* 79.

83. *Independent* 56 (March 17, 1904): 588. As quoted in Guy-Sheftall, *Daughters of Sorrow,* 59.

84. "More Slavery at the South," *Independent* 72 (January 25, 1912): 176–77. As quoted in Guy-Sheftall, *Daughters of Sorrow,* 58.

85. Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent,* 41, 42. She points out that in 1890 there were a total of 15,100 Black teachers, with women outnumbering men by fewer than 600. The shift toward women teachers was a national, cross-racial trend; in New England, for example, by 1900, 85 percent of teachers were women.

86. Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent,* 54–55.

87. Collier-Thomas, "Harvey Johnson," 220.

88. Collier-Thomas, "Public Education and Black Protest," 386.

89. The men and women of Baltimore continued to advocate for better education. Minutes of the January 18, 1910, DuBois Circle note that "the men's branch" of the local Niagara Movement comes to their meetings to discuss partnerships and larger meetings. Ashbie Hawkins decries the "deplorable conditions of the public schools." He urges a member to come speak and organize. The DuBois Circle responds to the appeal on February 1, 1910. They propose taking the case before the "Progressive League or some other such organization, so that the matter could be taken before the Legislature." Amelia Johnson had resigned due to ill health on November 16, 1909, just two months before these meetings.

90. See Collier-Thomas, "Public Education and Black Protest." Also see "Our Public Schools," *Afro-American,* October 19, 1895.

91. Collier-Thomas, "Harvey Johnson," 221–22.

92. Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent,* 41.

93. Alexander, *Our Day In Court,* 16, 17. The Ford theater wasn't generally this hospitable to Blacks. See "Colorphobia in Baltimore," *New York Age,* November 1, 1890.

94. Calloway and Rollins, *Of Minnie the Moocher,* 11, 12, and 19. Alexander, *Our Day In Court,* front matter, unpaginated, and also "President Reed's Statement of the Navassa Case," 41–42. Calloway notes that his family had status in the Negro community "but that doesn't mean we had money. Negro professionals were paid a hell of a lot less than white professionals with the same jobs." The Calloways lived at 1017 Druid Hill Avenue not far from the Johnsons' home at 1923 Druid Hill Avenue.

95. "Countdown Begins on Douglass High's 100th Anniversary," *Afro-American,* September 10, 1983. Despite its award-winning debate team, music program, and basketball team, in 2007, two-thirds of the school's teachers were noncertified. According to the film, "Hard Times at Douglass High: A No Child Left Behind Report Card," about half of ninth graders will drop out in their first year. The school has been told to raise assessment test scores or face a state takeover.

96. Chapelle, *Baltimore,* 194. Cab Calloway and Thurgood Marshall both attended Frederick Douglass High in 1925, the year in which the Black high school moved into an adequate building on Calhoun and Baker streets. Calloway and Rollins, *Of Minnie the Moocher,* 34.

97. Christian, "Introduction," in Amelia E. Johnson, *The Hazeley Family,* xxviii.

98. Amelia Johnson's *Martina Meriden* has not been republished.

99. Penn, *Afro-American Press,* 424–26.

100. Harper, *Iola Leroy,* 3.

101. duCille, *Coupling Convention,* 63.

102. Suggs, "Romanticism, Law, and the Suppression of African-American Citizenship," 67; Brotherhood of Liberty, *Justice and Jurisprudence,* i.

103. Some historians suggest that the body of *Justice and Jurisprudence* was written by an anonymous white lawyer who perhaps was John Henry Keene. The *New York Age*'s report in 1890 that "Harvey Johnson, D.D. is preparing a manual upon Parliamentary Law" might support others' contention that he had a major hand in its authorship. "Suits Begun in Baltimore," *New York Age,* December 27, 1890, 1. This announcement comes out a full year after *Justice and Jurisprudence* was published in Baltimore, reflecting the general confusion about the book's authorship. The book's style is radically different than Johnson's own. Still, its preface is written in the second person, and it includes an "original letter of Brotherhood to counsel" stating that "we wish your opinion, whether the Fourteenth Amendment is sovereign, of whether citizen-kinds in America have prerogatives superior to those dictates of reason and justice." Brotherhood of Liberty, *Justice and Jurisprudence,* 42. The puzzle as to why the Brotherhood would retain a white author to outline "the portentous struggle of *your* minority with this majority" still has missing pieces; ibid., "Answer of the Counsel to the Brotherhood," emphasis mine. Since 1885, when they successfully integrated the Maryland bar, they had employed Black counsel. Likewise, in his pastorate, and in his relation to the national Baptist leadership, Johnson counseled and asserted independent action in the face of white paternalism and prejudice. Then again, between at least 1881 and 1891, that is, until two years after *Justice and*

Jurisprudence was published with J.B. Lippincott and Co., Johnson was using the printing office of J. F. Weishampel for his pamphlets. By the time he pens "A plea for our work as colored Baptists, apart from the whites" in 1897, he is using the Afro American Company, Printers. See the Daniel A. P. Murray Pamphlet Collection, Library of Congress.

104. I have seen no secondary sources noting that the Baltimore Brotherhood had a branch and no previous mention of *The Power-Holding Class versus the Public.* Yet the *Washington Bee* (October 17, 1885, 3) reports, "The first branch of the United Brotherhood of Liberty was organized by the Rev. Harvey Johnson of Baltimore in the Shiloh Baptist Church, Newport, R.I. Rev. H. N. Jeter, pastor." "Rev. J. N. Jeter [*sic*]" sent one of the letters of regret that was read at the inaugural conference in Baltimore. *New York Freeman,* October 31, 1885, 4. He and Harvey Johnson spent three overlapping years at Wayland Seminary together, from 1869 to 1872. See Simmons, *Men of Mark,* 399, 509. But his own memoir, *Pastor Henry N. Jeter's Twenty-five Years Experience with the Shiloh Baptist Church and Her History. Corner School and Mary Streets, Newport, R. I.* (1901), makes no reference to Rev. Johnson, or the Brotherhood. Both men retained very close relations to Rev. Walter Brooks of the Nineteenth Street Baptist Church.

105. Christian, "Introduction," in Amelia E. Johnson, *The Hazeley Family,* xxvii.

106. The Johnsons' library was well known enough to elicit comments in the press. The national edition of the *Afro-American* announcing Harvey Johnson's burial mentions his "fine library" that included "one of the most valuable set of clippings in Maryland dealing with the race topic" as well as his books on "theology, ethnology, history" and current events. Koger notes that the library was "one of the best within the city" (*Harvey Johnson,* 23). Though the library is generally referred to as belonging to Harvey Johnson, Amelia was a recognized editor and writer whose commitments and work no doubt made her a full partner in the reading interests of the house. Contrast this to the Home Missionary Society's report, circa 1895, affirmed and quoted in the 1903 Negro Baptist Report to the Eighth Atlanta Conference. It states "There are sixty per cent of the ministers whose libraries do not average a dozen volumes." Still, following Eric Gardner's research on the extant nineteenth-century editions of *Our Nig,* it is unlikely that one found its way to the Johnsons' library. DuBois, "Present Condition of Churches—The Baptists," 122. See also Gardner, "Harriet Wilson's *Our Nig*"; *Afro-American,* January 19, 1923, 1.

107. Wilson, *Our Nig,* 8.

108. Amelia E. Johnson, *Clarence and Corrine,* 5 (hereinafter cited in the text as *CC*).

109. Spillers, "Introduction," in Amelia E. Johnson, *Clarence and Corrine,* xxxi.

110. Cooper, *Voice from the South,* 29.

111. Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent,* 42. She cites Jacqueline Jones, in *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow,* 144, who notes that Black women's teaching salaries averaged 45 percent of those of whites. Black women teachers made $25 to $30 a month—less than white men, white women, or Black men in the profession. By 1910, Black female teachers would outnumber men 3:1. There were exceptions to this. Memphis, where Wells had taught, paid teachers the same amount regardless of race, and, after 1878, gender. And they paid well. Wells averaged $60 per month in 1886. See McMurray, *To Keep the Waters Troubled,* 78. In contrast, Blacks in Baltimore at that time were fighting the ban on Black teachers.

112. DuBois, "Present Condition of Churches—The Baptists," 122. The report repro-

duces a portion of a Home Missionary Society study from the late 1890s that "seems a fair presentation."

113. *History of the Club Movement,* 56; Frances Smith Foster, *A Brighter Coming Day,* 218.

114. Frances Smith Foster, *Written by Herself,* 88. Harper commented at the National Woman's Rights Convention in 1866, "I do not believe that white women are dew drops just exhaled from the skies."

115. Tompkins, *Sensational Designs,* 124.

116. Parsons, *Manhood Lost,* 4.

117. *History of the Club Movement,* 47.

118. The temperance symposium is found in the *A.M.E. Church Review* 7, no. 4 (April 1891): 372–81.

119. See, for example, Painter, "Martin R. Delany," 151.

120. Penn, *Afro-American Press,* 408. Fortune was said to have written that Wells handles "a goose-quill, with diamond point, as easily as any man in the newspaper work. If Iola were a man, she would be a humming independent in politics." Wells's short story, "Two Christmas Days: A Holiday Story," appeared in the *A.M.E. Zion Church Quarterly.*

121. Quoted from Yellin, *Harriet Jacobs: A Life,* 208, who cites Stanton, *History of Woman Suffrage,* 2:347, 353, 382–83, 391–92.

122. Quoted from her recollection of the speech in a newspaper article a year later. Felton to the *Atlantic Constitution,* December 19, 1898, Rebecca Latimer Felton Collection, Box 28, Scrapbooks #24–27, pages unnumbered. The scrapbook account I use here differs just a bit from Williamson, *Crucible of Race,* 128. The speech took place on Tybee Island and is sometimes called by that name.

123. Nathaniel Southgate Shaler, Harvard professor and then dean of the Lawrence School of Science, promoted the theory of racial retrogression. Frederick L. Hoffman was a statistician for Prudential Insurance Company who successfully argued that sexual immorality was a race trait that could find no "relief" in "religion, education or economic improvement." Prudential and other insurance companies began to offer benefits to Blacks with payoffs that were one tier less than those to whites. They eventually stopped soliciting Black business. For in-depth discussions of white "radical thinkers," see Williamson, *Crucible of Race,* 119–39 (the Hoffman quote is on page 122).

124. Whites, "Wife's Farm," 271. No date cited. Felton's comments appear in response to her Tybee Island speech.

125. Felton, *Country Life,* 93. Her repetitive use of the phrase "grow and increase" is also found in her *Atlantic Constitution* recollection, Rebecca Latimer Felton Collection, Box 28, Scrapbooks #24–27, pages unnumbered.

126. Whites, "Wife's Farm," 371–72.

127. Parsons, *Manhood Lost,* cited on 119.

128. The narrative energy of the text is devoted to following and then reuniting the lives of the eponymous characters. When they first find each other, Corrine shows Clarence a newspaper that reads,

> A man, while crossing K Street, was knocked down and run over by a runaway horse and wagon. He was fatally injured and was carried to the hospital, where he died after suffering a great deal. Before he died, the man told a sad story of a debauched life. He stated that his name was James Burton, and that he had two children, a boy and

a girl, whom he had deserted at the death of their mother, because he did not wish to be burdened with them. He expressed sorrow for his misspent life, but laid all the blame on whisky.

Amelia Johnson, *Clarence and Corrine,* 177–78.

129. Amelia Johnson, "Introduction," in Harvey Johnson, *Nations from a New Point of View,* 18.

130. Felton, "Problems That Interest Motherhood," in *Country Life,* 281.

131. See McMurray, *To Keep the Waters Troubled,* 245–47.

132. Felton, "Why I am a Suffragist," in *Country Life,* 255.

133. Arguing for separate penal facilities for men and women, she writes that the inspiration for her advocacy is a "poor forsaken colored girl," suffering on a chain gang under a "sentence so disproportioned [*sic*] to the offense that I could not forget it." "Mrs. Felton's Message To the 20th-Century," April 24, 1901, in Felton, *Country Life,* 155–56.

134. Whites, "Rebecca Latimer Felton and 'Protection,'" 52.

135. "Rescue Work," as quoted in ibid., 53.

136. I use Shawn Michelle Smith's language in another context here. *American Archives,* 92.

137. The 1834 New York riots, in which five hundred Blacks were displaced in a bloody five days, had begun with a call to shut down Five Points, the lower East Side neighborhood where Black prostitution and interracial sex abounded. See Robert Fanuzzi's forthcoming work on nineteenth-century masculinity and race riots (from the American Studies Association presentation, "Civic Culture and Public Sex").

138. Whites, "Rebecca Latimer Felton and 'Protection,'" 53.

139. Spillers, "Introduction," in Amelia E. Johnson, *Clarence and Corrine,* xxviii.

140. Her reviewers stress the status of Johnson's novel as the first by an African American or a woman to be published by the American Baptist Publication Society, the first Sunday School novel to be penned by an African American, and so forth. For reviews, see Penn, *Afro-American Press,* 422–24. See Spillers, "Introduction," in Amelia E. Johnson, *Clarence and Corrine,* xxxvii.

141. duCille, *Coupling Convention,* 63.

142. An "inequality" is the mathematical term. "Equations" balance on either side of an "=" (equal) sign. Inequalities use "<" (less than) or ">" (greater than) symbols.