

NOTES

INTRODUCTION: IDENTITY, HISTORY, NARRATIVE

1. As my comments here indicate, extremely diverse groups of critics, for extremely diverse reasons, have argued forcefully against both identity-based social struggles and analyses of identity more generally. While some see identity categories (and, indeed, identity itself) as threatening to individual freedom, others worry that such coalitions endanger progressive social movement; consequently, identity-based analyses have been assailed by a wide spectrum of political sensibilities. The scholarship here is far-reaching, and I will discuss particular instances of these various positions in the chapters that follow. For representative examples, however, see Peter Brimelow, *Alien Nation: Common Sense about America's Immigration Disaster* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1996); Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge: 1990); Jonathan Culler, *On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism after Structuralism* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1982); Todd Gitlin, *The Twilight of Common Dreams: Why America Is Wracked by Culture Wars* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); Nathan Glazer and Daniel Patrick Moynihan, *Beyond the Melting Pot: The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italian, and Irish of New York City* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1970); David Harvey, *Justice, Nature, and the Geography of Difference* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1996); David A. Hollinger, *Postethnic America: Beyond Multiculturalism* (New York: Basic Books, 1995); Gene Andrew Jarrett, ed., *African American Literature beyond Race* (New York: New York University Press, 2006); Michael Lind, *The Next American Nation: The New Nationalism and the Fourth American Revolution* (New York: Free Press, 1995); Walter Benn Michaels, *Our America: Nativism, Modernism, and Pluralism* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1995); Walter Benn Michaels, *The Shape of the Signifier* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004); Richard Rodriguez, *Hunger for Memory: The Education of Richard Rodriguez* (New York: Bantam Books, 1983); Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Disuniting of America: Reflections on a Multicultural Society*, rev. ed. (New York: Norton, 1998); Joan W. Scott, "The Evidence of Experience," *Critical Inquiry* 17.4 (1991): 773–97; Shelby Steele, *The Content of Our Character: A New Vision of Race in America* (New York: St. Martin's, 1990); and Peter W. Wood, *Diversity: The Invention of a Concept* (San Francisco: Encounter Books, 2003).

2. Walter Benn Michaels, *The Trouble with Diversity: How We Learned to Love Identity and Ignore Inequality* (New York: Henry Holt, 2006), 206. Despite the provocative claim implied by his title, Michaels does not in fact argue strictly against studies of identity; instead, he contends that studies of race, gender, sexuality, and disability should be subjugated to analyses of a social difference that he feels has been insufficiently examined—namely, class. In effect, then, Michaels merely pits class *against* other markers of diversity, and in doing so he ironically reifies the very social categories he means to dismantle. To support his position, Michaels cites other critics that, in his words, “share at least some of my [Michaels’s] skepticism about the value of identity” (206), but he provides little elaboration as to how these writers might (or might not) endorse his overriding argument. The authors Michaels cites in this regard include Brian M. Barry, *Culture and Equality: An Egalitarian Critique of Multiculturalism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001); Nancy Fraser and Axel Honneth, *Redistribution or Recognition?: A Political-Philosophical Exchange* (New York: Verso, 2003); and Gavin Jones, *American Hungers: The Problem of Poverty in U.S. Literature, 1840–1945* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2008).
3. Michaels, *Trouble*, 39. In a positive review of Michaels’s book, Dalton Conley makes a similar statement when he notes that in regard to identity-based programs in American universities, “Perhaps it’s time to say enough is enough.” Conley’s exasperation specifically centers on scholarly studies of white identity; however, he does not discuss any of the key differences that might make various identity-based programs distinct from one another. Instead, his critique lumps together all scholarship organized around identity and then worries that such studies might have “the effect of elevating the unnamed default identity—whiteness.” By conflating diverse forms of identity-based scholarship, and by then positioning these studies (through whiteness) as a threat to racial diversity itself, Conley calibrates an ostensible racial sensitivity through what it is ultimately a call to erase racial identity itself. In this respect, his arguments are intellectually misleading, as are his claims that a better use of academic resources would be “[to] hire folks who study the intersection of race and class”—an oddly disingenuous suggestion, since such hires routinely have been made for several years. See Conley, “The Limits of Identity Politics,” *Chronicle of Higher Education*, December 15, 2006, B11.
4. Michaels, *Trouble*, 18.
5. My objections to Michaels’s arguments are shared by a number of other critics, including Stephen Knadler, Eric Lott, and Maria E. Montoya. Lott has been particularly forceful in his critique of Michaels; he notes in a review of *The Trouble with Diversity*, “It’s silly to claim, as Michaels does here, that class and race should be ‘disarticulated’ from each other, as though they were not interlocking systems of power and inequality. It’s just dumb to claim . . . that Americans can’t think straight about class because it doesn’t afford a politics of identity. . . . It is, finally, perverse to

- make the claims Michaels makes simply as a way of defenestrating once and for all the notion of identity politics” (“A Wrongheaded Focus on Class,” *Chronicle of Higher Education*, December 15, 2006, B13). In her review of Michaels’ work, Montoya articulates similar reservations: “His [Michaels’s] description of how class and race work in this country is flip at best and cartoonish at worst. He portrays ethnic-studies programs as 1970s-era separatist cells existing only to engage in the identity politics of victimization and counting of brown faces” (“History, Class, and Race Cannot Be Separated,” *Chronicle of Higher Education*, December 15, 2006, B11). For an extended critique of Michaels’s work, see Knadler, “Traumatized Racial Performativity: Passing in Nineteenth-Century African-American Testimonies,” *Cultural Critique* 55 (2003): 63–100.
6. Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Birth to Presence*, trans. Brian Holmes (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), 10.
 7. Bill Albertini et al., “Is There Life after Identity Politics?,” *New Literary History* 31.4 (2000): 622.
 8. Linda Martín Alcoff and Satya P. Mohanty, “Reconsidering Identity Politics: An Introduction,” in *Identity Politics Reconsidered*, ed. Linda Martín Alcoff et al. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 6.
 9. In this respect, one might also consider the political controversy surrounding President Obama’s first appointee to the Supreme Court, Judge Sonia Sotomayor, who registered her hope during a 2001 UC Berkeley School of Law lecture that “a wise Latina woman with the richness of her experiences would more often than not reach a better conclusion than a white male who hasn’t lived that life.” Judge Sotomayor was forced repeatedly to clarify her remarks, for fear in some quarters that they indicated an unwelcome racial bias and a “liberal agenda.”
 10. See, for example, Hollinger, *Postethnic*; Jarrett, *African American*; Gene Andrew Jarrett, *Deans and Truants: Race and Realism in African American Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007); and Timothy B. Powell, ed., *Beyond the Binary: Reconstructing Cultural Identity in a Multicultural Context* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1999). See also several of the authors cited in note 1 (above).
 11. Wahneema Lubiano, “Like Being Mugged by a Metaphor: Multiculturalism and State Narratives,” in *Mapping Multiculturalism*, ed. Avery F. Gordon and Christopher Newfield (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 64.
 12. Lani Guinier, “Race and Reality in a Front-Porch Encounter,” *Chronicle of Higher Education*, July 30, 2009, <http://chronicle.com/article/RaceReality-in-a/47509>.
 13. Alcoff and Mohanty, “Reconsidering,” 7, 6. Emphasis in original.
 14. Alcoff and Mohanty, “Reconsidering,” 6.
 15. As I note in my preface, I deliberately use the term “minority” throughout this project to emphasize relations of social power in terms of categories of identity (as opposed to the sheer numbers of people within

gender, racial, or sexuality-based groups). There are important reasons, of course, to be wary of the term “minority”—namely because such groups may not in fact be minorities outside of Western culture, and because even in the West the very groups to which the expression “minority” typically refers no longer will be minorities, technically speaking, in the near future due to shifts in population demographics. Still, I find the term useful because of its political overtones; in the academy, especially, there remains a nagging tendency to dismiss work that engages issues of minority identity as intellectually inferior or professionally indecorous (my own work included), and frequently such critiques emerge from constituencies that might otherwise position themselves as “allies.” Simply put, I intend my usage of the term “minority” to signal both an understanding that discrepancies in power among social groups continue to exist in the United States and an awareness that such discrepancies often manifest in uneven and unexpected ways.

16. The chapters that follow discuss many of these works in detail, but for early representative examples of this critical disposition, see Houston A. Baker, *Blues, Ideology, and Afro-American Literature: A Vernacular Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984); Houston A. Baker, *The Journey Back: Issues in Black Literature and Criticism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980); Nina Baym, *Woman's Fiction: A Guide to Novels by and about Women in America, 1820–70* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1978); Hazel V. Carby, *Reconstructing Womanhood: The Emergence of the Afro-American Woman Novelist* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); Barbara Christian, *Black Women Novelists: The Development of a Tradition, 1892–1976* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1980); Judith Fetterley, *The Resisting Reader: A Feminist Approach to American Fiction* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978); Frances Smith Foster, *Witnessing Slavery: The Development of Ante-bellum Slave Narratives* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1979); Frances Smith Foster, *Written by Herself: Literary Production by African American Women, 1746–1892* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993); Henry Louis Gates, Jr., *Figures in Black: Words, Signs, and the “Racial” Self* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); Henry Louis Gates, Jr., *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-American Literary Criticism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); Valerie Smith, *Self-Discovery and Authority in Afro-American Narrative* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987); Jane Tompkins, *Sensational Designs: The Cultural Work of American Fiction, 1790–1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985); Mary Helen Washington, *Black-Eyed Susans* (New York: Anchor Press, 1975); and Mary Helen Washington, *Invented Lives: Narratives of Black Women, 1860–1960* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Press, 1987). For an invaluable account of canon formation, see John Guillory, *Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).

- For examples of critical analyses that situate identity as an important theoretical tool, see Linda Martín Alcoff, *Visible Identities: Race, Gender, and the Self* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); Linda Martín Alcoff et al., *Identity Politics Reconsidered* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (New York: Routledge, 2000); Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory, and Antiracist Politics,” *The University of Chicago Legal Forum* (1989): 139–67; Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color,” in *Critical Race Theory*, ed. Kimberlé Crenshaw et al. (New York: New Press, 1995), 357–83; Michael Hames-García, *Fugitive Thought: Prison Movements, Race, and the Meaning of Justice* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004); Sandra Harding, ed., *The Feminist Standpoint Theory Reader: Intellectual and Political Controversies* (New York: Routledge, 2004); Satya P. Mohanty, *Literary Theory and the Claims of History: Postmodernism, Objectivity, Multicultural Politics* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1997); Paula M. L. Moya, *Learning from Experience: Minority Identities, Multicultural Struggles* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Paula M. L. Moya and Michael Hames-García, eds., *Reclaiming Identity: Realist Theory and the Predicament of Postmodernism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); Hilary Putnam, *Realism with a Human Face* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992); Tobin Siebers, “Disability as Masquerade,” *Literature and Medicine* 23.1 (2004): 1–22; and Sean Teuton, *Red Land, Red Power: Grounding Knowledge in the American Indian Novel* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2008).
17. For key overviews of the essentialist/constructionist debate, see Diana Fuss, *Essentially Speaking: Feminism, Nature, and Difference* (New York: Routledge, 1989); and Edward Stein, ed., *Forms of Desire: Sexual Orientation and the Social Constructionist Controversy* (New York: Routledge, 1992). For an important consideration of the political and social limitations of speaking “for” others, see Judith Roof and Robyn Wiegman, eds., *Who Can Speak? Authority and Critical Identity* (Champaign, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1995).
 18. Timothy B. Powell, “Introduction: Re-Thinking Cultural Identity,” in *Beyond the Binary: Reconstructing Cultural Identity in a Multicultural Context*, ed. Timothy B. Powell (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1999), 1–13. Emphasis in original.
 19. Critic Samira Kawash describes the appeal of hybridity as “a counter to the reductive, normative, or essentializing representations of authentic and autonomous racial and cultural identities. . . . Hybridity appears to escape from the essentialist logic that characterized previous understandings of cultural identity and difference, and this accounts for much

- of its appeal.” Ultimately, however, Kawash is critical of the trend toward hybridity, since, as she puts it, “in the effort to surpass apparently erroneous ideas of purity and essence . . . one might be tempted too quickly to ignore or forget the constitutive power of the color line itself as it produces and organizes knowledge, power, and subjectivity” (*Dislocating the Color Line: Identity, Hybridity, and Singularity in African-American Literature* [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997], 4).
20. For example, see the authors listed in note 16 (above). See also Valerie Smith, “‘Circling the Subject’: History and Narrative in *Beloved*,” in *Toni Morrison: Critical Perspectives Past and Present*, ed. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and Kwame Anthony Appiah (New York: Amistad, 1993), 342–55; Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “In a Word,” *differences* 1.2 (1989): 124–56; Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Strategy, Identity, Writing,” in *The Post-Colonial Critic: Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues*, ed. Sarah Harasym (New York: Routledge, 1990), 35–49; and David Van Leer, *The Queening of America: Gay Culture in Straight Society* (New York: Routledge, 1995).
 21. Indeed, as Linda Martín Alcoff puts this issue, “To say that we have an identity is just to say that we have a location in social space, a hermeneutic horizon that is both grounded in a location and an opening or site from which we attempt to know the world. Understood in this way it is incoherent to view identities as something we would be better off without” (“Who’s Afraid of Identity Politics?” in *Reclaiming Identity: Realist Theory and the Predicament of Postmodernism*, ed. Paula M. L. Moya and Michael R. Hames-García [Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000], 335).
 22. In this regard, see especially Cathy N. Davidson and Jessamyn Hatcher, eds., *No More Separate Spheres! A Next Wave American Studies Reader* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2002). See also Karen L. Kilcup, ed., *Soft Canons: American Women Writers and Masculine Tradition* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1999); and Lora Romero, *Home Fronts: Domesticity and Its Critics in the Antebellum United States* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1997).
 23. Lawrence Buell, “Circling the Spheres: A Dialogue,” *American Literature* 70.3 (1998): 472–73. Emphasis in original.
 24. Guinier, “Race and Reality.”
 25. Guinier, “Race and Reality.” For indispensable studies of the intersection between minority identity and social and economic disparity, see William A. Darity, Jr., and Samuel L. Myers, Jr., *The Black Underclass: Critical Essays on Race and Unwantedness* (New York: Garland, 1994); and William A. Darity, Jr., and Samuel L. Myers, Jr., *Persistent Disparity: Race and Economic Inequality in the United States since 1945* (Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar, 1998).
 26. Rosaura Sánchez, “On a Critical Realist Theory of Identity,” in *Identity Politics Reconsidered*, ed. Linda Martín Alcoff et al. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 34. Paula M. L. Moya articulates a similar perspective

on the value of history in studies of identity when she notes that “an ability to take effective steps toward progressive social change is predicated on an acknowledgment of, and a familiarity with, past and present structures of inequality—structures that are often highly correlated with categories of identity” (introduction to *Reclaiming Identity: Realist Theory and the Predicament of Postmodernism*, ed. Paula M. L. Moya and Michael R. Hames-García [Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000], 8).

27. This view echoes Paula Moya’s observation that “[o]ur conceptions of who we are as social beings (our identities) influence—and in turn are influenced by—our understandings of how our society is structured and what our particular experiences in that society are likely to be” (introduction to *Reclaiming*, 8). As Eric Lott wryly notes, however, such sentiments are not likely to “settle the hash of anyone who believes identity-politics is *so over*” (“After Identity, Politics: The Return of Universalism,” *New Literary History* 31 [2000]: 667). Emphasis in original.
28. Diana Fuss, *Identification Papers* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 2–3.
29. Sánchez, “Critical Realist,” 40.
30. See Christopher Castiglia, *Interior States: Institutional Consciousness and the Inner Life of Democracy in the Antebellum United States* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2008); Saidiya V. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Sharon Patricia Holland, *Raising the Dead: Readings of Death and (Black) Subjectivity* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2000); Dana Luciano, *Arranging Grief: Sacred Time and the Body in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: New York University Press, 2007); Romero, *Home*; and Xiomara Santamarina, *Belabored Professions: Narratives of African American Working Womanhood* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005). The chapters that follow consider many of these studies in further depth.

For additional important analyses of the intersections among epistemology, experience, and identity in the nineteenth century, see Renee Bergland, *The National Uncanny: Indian Ghosts and American Subjects* (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 2000); Michele Birnbaum, *Race, Work, and Desire in American Literature, 1860–1930* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Daphne Brooks, *Bodies in Dissent: Spectacular Performances of Race and Freedom, 1850–1910* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2006); Michael A. Chaney, *Fugitive Vision: Slave Image and Black Identity in Antebellum Narrative* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008); Peter Coviello, *Intimacy in America: Dreams of Affiliation in Antebellum Literature* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005); Theo Davis, *Formalism, Experience, and the Making of American Literature in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007);

- Elizabeth Maddock Dillon, *The Gender of Freedom: Fictions of Liberalism and the Literary Public Sphere* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004); Teresa A. Goddu, *Gothic America: Narrative, History, and Nation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997); Robert S. Levine, *Dislocating Race and Nation: Episodes in Nineteenth-Century American Literary Nationalism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008); Elizabeth McHenry, *Forgotten Readers: Recovering the Lost History of African American Literary Societies* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2002); and Milette Shamir, *Inexpressible Privacy: The Interior Life of Antebellum American Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 2006).
31. Glenn Hendler, *Public Sentiments: Structures of Feeling in Nineteenth-Century American Literature* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 3.
 32. Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, ed. Knud Haakonssen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 11–12.
 33. Emphasis in original. Hendler notes that much of the recent scholarship on nineteenth-century expressions of sympathy and sentimentality tends to emphasize the dynamic's imperialistic tendencies. In this regard, see Elizabeth Barnes, *States of Sympathy: Seduction and Democracy in the American Novel* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997); Hartman, *Scenes*; Marianne Noble, *The Masochistic Pleasures of Sentimental Literature* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000); Karen Sánchez-Eppler, *Touching Liberty: Abolition, Feminism, and the Politics of the Body* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); and Laura Wexler, "Tender Violence: Literary Eavesdropping, Domestic Fiction, and Educational Reform," in *The Culture of Sentiment: Race, Gender, and Sentimentality in Nineteenth-Century America*, ed. Shirley Samuels (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 12–32.

For other significant studies of sentimental literature (and the often problematic dynamics of sympathy), see Lauren Berlant, *The Female Complaint: The Unfinished Business of Sentimentality in American Culture* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2008); Bruce Burgett, *Sentimental Bodies: Sex, Gender, and Citizenship in the Early Republic* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1998); Julie Ellison, *Cato's Tears and the Making of Anglo-American Emotion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999); Christine Levecq, *Slavery and Sentiment: The Politics of Feeling in Black Atlantic Antislavery Writing, 1770–1850* (Durham, N.H.: University of New Hampshire Press, 2008); David Marshall, *The Surprising Effects of Sympathy: Marivaux, Diderot, Rousseau, and Mary Shelley* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988); Lori Merish, *Sentimental Materialism: Gender, Commodity Culture, and Nineteenth-Century American Literature* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2000); Shirley Samuels, ed., *The Culture of Sentiment: Race, Gender, and Sentimentality in Nineteenth-Century*

- America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); Julia A. Stern, *The Plight of Feeling: Sympathy and Dissent in the Early American Novel* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997); Tompkins, *Sensational*; and Cindy Weinstein, *Family, Kinship, and Sympathy in Nineteenth-Century American Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).
34. Castiglia, *Interior*, 125.
 35. Moya, introduction to *Reclaiming*, 18. Rosaura Sánchez makes a similar point: “Both identification and identity are discursive processes that cannot be examined outside of experience, that is, outside of the varied social positionings and positionalities that situate individuals. . . . Experience, then, can only be considered within a constellation of positionings that interconnect in multiple ways, never only in one way, as there are always social boundaries and limits that impact particular interconnections and overlappings that are open or closed, that is, available or unavailable, to us, depending on our positioning” (“Critical Realist,” 42).
 36. Kawash, *Dislocating*, 22. Hybridity, Kawash points out, “is a challenge, not only to the question of human ‘being,’ but to the status of knowledge itself, the question of how and if we can *know* identity or hybridity. To rest with the conclusion that identity is really always hybridity deflects the real challenge of hybridity itself, a challenge posed to the very conditions of modern epistemology and subjectivity” (20). Emphasis in original.
 37. Mohanty, *Literary Theory*, 232–33. For important related discussions, see Alcoff, *Visible*; Alcoff, “Who’s Afraid”; Crenshaw, “Demarginalizing”; Crenshaw, “Mapping”; Harding, *Feminist*; and Alison Wylie, “Why Standpoint Matters,” in *The Feminist Standpoint Theory Reader: Intellectual and Political Controversies*, ed. Sandra Harding (New York: Routledge, 2004), 339–51.
 38. Valerie Smith, *Not Just Race, Not Just Gender: Black Feminist Readings* (New York: Routledge, 1998), xix.
 39. Critic Holly Jackson reported the original discovery of Kelley-Hawkins’s “true” racial identity. See Jackson, “Mistaken Identity: What If a Novelist Celebrated as a Pioneer of African-American Women’s Literature Turned Out Not to Be Black at All?” *Boston Globe*, February 20, 2005, D1. For the follow-up article that notes Henry Louis Gates, Jr.’s decision to withdraw Kelley-Hawkins from the Schomburg collection, see David Mehegan, “Correcting a Case of Mistaken Identity,” *Boston Globe*, March 5, 2005, C1. The controversy surrounding Kelley-Hawkins centers on her two novels: *Megda* (1891); and *Four Girls at Cottage City* (1898).

For relevant scholarship that precedes the revelation about Kelley-Hawkins’s racial identity, see Dale M. Bauer “Master Thoughts,” in *White Scholars/African American Texts*, ed. Lisa A. Long (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2005), 186–97; and Carla L. Peterson, “New Negro Modernity: Worldliness and Interiority in the

Novels of Emma Dunham Kelley-Hawkins,” in *Women’s Experience of Modernity, 1875–1945*, ed. Ann L. Ardis and Leslie W. Lewis (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 111–29. For scholarship that follows it, see Katherine E. Flynn, “A Case of Mistaken Racial Identity: Finding Emma Dunham (née Kelley) Hawkins,” *National Genealogical Society Quarterly* 9.1 (2006): 5–22; Jennifer Harris, “Black Like? The Strange Case of Emma Dunham Kelley-Hawkins,” *African American Review* 40.3 (2006): 401–19; and Holly Jackson, “Identifying Emma Dunham Kelley: Rethinking Race and Authorship,” *PMLA* 122.3 (2007): 728–41.

See also the collection of essays edited by P. Gabrielle Foreman and Cherene Sherrard-Johnson, “Racial Identity, Indeterminacy, and Identification in the Nineteenth Century,” *Legacy* 24.2 (2007): 157–330; and in particular, the essays by Foreman, “Reading/Photographs: Emma Dunham Kelley-Hawkins’s *Four Girls at Cottage City*, Victoria Earle Matthews, and *The Woman’s Era*,” *Legacy* 24.2 (2007): 248–77; and Sherrard-Johnson, “Radical Tea: Racial Misrecognition and the Politics of Consumption in Emma Dunham Kelley-Hawkins’s *Four Girls at Cottage City*,” *Legacy* 24.2 (2007): 225–47.

40. Kenji Yoshino, *Covering: The Hidden Assault on Our Civil Rights* (New York: Random House, 2006), 192, 187.
41. Guinier, “Race and Reality.” Guinier defines racial literacy as “the capacity to conjugate the grammar of race in different contexts and circumstances. Like the verb ‘to be,’ race takes a different form when we speak about ‘I am’ versus ‘you are’ compared with ‘he is.’ In other words, race still matters at a psychic, economic, and sociological level for people of color, even for those who are middle class or multiracial . . . always the meaning of race needs to be interrogated and conjugated carefully in light of relevant local circumstances and their historic underpinnings.”
42. Yoshino, *Covering*, 26. Joel Pfister makes a similar point when he notes that “American authors have from the get-go been among America’s most complex, self-reflexive, daring, and artful cultural theorists. When critics grant many of these authors and their fictions the credit they deserve, it is easier to see that their creative insights contribute much to modern understandings of the workings—and political possibilities—of culture” (“Hawthorne as Cultural Theorist,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Nathaniel Hawthorne*, ed. Richard H. Millington [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004], 35).
43. In this respect, scholar John Ernest’s comments on the relationship between interpretation, history, and understanding are particularly apt: “In the most practical and simple terms . . . interpretation involves not only providing a historical context for understanding the text, but also a metacontext for understanding the discourse, documents, and interpretations that usually constitute historical understanding” (“Still Life, with Bones: A Response to Samuel Otter,” *American Literary History* 20.4 [2008]: 758).

1 WHAT DO WE WANT FROM HARRIET WILSON?

1. As I will argue, the high expectations attached to *Our Nig* are less a scholarly “problem” than they are a sign of the text’s ongoing significance to contemporary discussions of minority identity. The scholarship here is extensive, but two brief examples may serve as representative in this regard. Hazel V. Carby, for instance, reads *Our Nig* as an allegorical slave narrative that condemns antebellum racist society (*Reconstructing Womanhood: The Emergence of the Afro-American Woman Novelist* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1987]). Margaret Lindgren, on the other hand, delineates a specifically female discourse within the novel that crosses racial lines in an attempt to counter hegemonic patriarchal domination (“Harriet Jacobs, Harriet Wilson, and the Redoubled Voice in Black Autobiography,” *Obsidian II* 8.1 [1993]: 18–38).
2. Henry Louis Gates, Jr., *Figures in Black: Words, Signs, and the “Racial” Self* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 147.
3. See Carby, *Reconstructing*; P. Gabrielle Foreman, “The Spoken and the Silenced in *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* and *Our Nig*,” *Callaloo* 13.2 (1990): 313–24; Carla L. Peterson, “Capitalism, Black (Under)development, and the Production of the African-American Novel in the 1850s,” *American Literary History* 4 (1992): 559–83; and Claudia Tate, *Domestic Allegories of Political Desire: The Black Heroine’s Text at the Turn of the Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

The arguments that follow are indebted to the scholarship (and critical methods) of these and several other path-breaking feminist scholars, particularly those that examine the intersections of racial and gender identities. I cite several of these critics directly in my text, but for other significant influences on my analysis, see Johnnella E. Butler, “African American Literature and Realist Theory: Seeking the ‘True-True,’” in *Identity Politics Reconsidered*, ed. Linda Martín Alcoff et al. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 171–92; Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (New York: Routledge, 2000); Ann duCille, *The Coupling Convention: Sex, Text, and Tradition in Black Women’s Fiction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Frances Smith Foster, *Written by Herself: Literary Production by African American Women, 1746–1892* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993); Beverly Guy-Sheftall, *Words of Fire: An Anthology of African-American Feminist Thought* (New York: New Press, 1995); Sandra Harding, ed., *The Feminist Standpoint Theory Reader: Intellectual and Political Controversies* (New York: Routledge, 2004); bell hooks, *Talking Back: Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black* (Boston: South End Press, 1989); Deborah E. McDowell, “*The Changing Same*”: *Black Women’s Literature, Criticism, and Theory* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995); and Marjorie Pryse and Hortense J. Spillers, eds.,

- Conjuring: Black Women, Fiction, and Literary Tradition* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985).
4. For representative examples of the critical disposition against studies of identity, see note 1 of my introduction.
 5. Linda Martín Alcoff and Satya P. Mohanty, "Reconsidering Identity Politics: An Introduction," in *Identity Politics Reconsidered*, ed. Linda Martín Alcoff et al. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 7, 6. Emphasis in original.
 6. Valerie Smith offers an important commentary on this dynamic by noting the ways that novels and other discursive forms (especially those by minority authors) are not typically associated with sophisticated theoretical critique (*Not Just Race, Not Just Gender: Black Feminist Readings* [New York: Routledge, 1998]).
 7. Frances Smith Foster, introduction to "*Minnie's Sacrifice*," "*Sowing and Reaping*," "*Trial and Triumph*": *Three Rediscovered Novels*, by Frances E. W. Harper (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994), xx. Although more recent analytical study may now possess greater analytical awareness into the problematic dynamics Foster mentions, John Ernest notes, in response to Foster's claims, that "one can still find in scholarship, teaching, and conversation evidence that the pattern of regressive advance still persists and that the presentation of the great majority of nineteenth-century African-American literary texts is still largely restricted to what amounts to a chapter on 'Negroes and Slaves,' surrounded by updates but still largely the same" ("Still Life, with Bones: A Response to Samuel Otter," *American Literary History* 20.4 [2008]: 754).
 8. For the historical evidence that supports this assertion, see P. Gabrielle Foreman and Reginald H. Pitts, introduction to *Our Nig; or, Sketches from the Life of a Free Black*, by Harriet E. Wilson (New York: Penguin, 2005), xxxiii–xlili; and Barbara A. White, "'Our Nig' and the She-Devil: New Information about Harriet Wilson and the 'Bellmont' Family," *American Literature* 65 (1993): 19–52. For analyses that comment on the relationship between Frado And Wilson's respective stories, see Carby, *Reconstructing*; Beth Maclay Doriani, "Black Womanhood in Nineteenth-Century America: Subversion and Self-Construction in Two Women's Autobiographies," *American Quarterly* 43.2 (1991): 199–222; R. J. Ellis, "Body Politics and the Body Politic in William Wells Brown's *Clotel* and Harriet Wilson's *Our Nig*," in *Soft Canons: American Women Writers and Masculine Tradition*, ed. Karen L. Kilcup (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1999), 99–122; R. J. Ellis, *Harriet Wilson's "Our Nig": A Cultural Biography of a 'Two-Story' African American Novel* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2003); R. J. Ellis, "*Our Nig*: Fetters of an American Farmgirl," in *Special Relationships: Anglo-American Affinities and Antagonisms, 1854–1936*, ed. Janet Beer and Bridget Bennett (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 65–88; R. J. Ellis, "Traps Slyly Laid: Professing Autobiography in Harriet Wilson's *Our Nig*," in *Representing*

- Lives: Women and Auto/Biography*, ed. Alison Donnell and Pauline Polkey (New York: Macmillan, 2000), 65–76; Foster, *Written*; and Tate, *Domestic*.
9. Foreman and Pitts, introduction to *Our Nig*, xxx. Emphasis in original.
 10. John Ernest, “Economies of Identity: Harriet E. Wilson’s *Our Nig*,” *PMLA* 109 (1994): 431. See also David Dowling, *Capital Letters: Authorship in the Antebellum Literary Market* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2009); Thomas B. Lovell, “By Dint of Labor and Economy: Harriet Jacobs, Harriet Wilson, and the Salutary View of Wage Labor,” *Arizona Quarterly: A Journal of American Literature, Culture, and Theory* 52.3 (1996): 1–32; and Joyce W. Warren, “Performativity and the Repositioning of American Literary Realism,” in *Challenging Boundaries: Gender and Periodization*, ed. Joyce W. Warren and Margaret Dickie (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2000), 3–25.
 11. For example, see Carby, *Reconstructing*; Ellis, “Body Politics”; Barbara Krahn, “Tracking Frado: The Challenge of Harriet E. Wilson’s *Our Nig* to Nineteenth-Century Conventions of Writing Womanhood,” *Amerikastudien/American Studies* 49.4 (2004): 465–82; Jill Jones, “The Disappearing ‘I’ in *Our Nig*,” *Legacy: A Journal of American Women Writers* 13.1 (1996): 38–53; Ellen Prato Fiorito, “‘To Demand Your Sympathy and Aid’: *Our Nig* and the Problem of No Audience,” *Journal of American and Comparative Cultures* 24.1 (2001): 31–48; and Julia Stern, “Excavating Genre in *Our Nig*,” *American Literature* 67.3 (1995): 439–66.
 12. Tate, *Domestic*, 39; Harryette Mullen, “Runaway Tongue: Resistant Orality in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, *Our Nig*, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, and *Beloved*,” in *The Culture of Sentiment*, ed. Shirley Samuels (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 244–64. See also Florence Marfo, “Marks of the Slave Lash: Black Women’s Writing of the 19th Century Anti-Slavery Novel,” *Diaspora: Journal of the Annual Afro-Hispanic Literature and Culture Conference* 11 (2001): 80–86; and Angelyn Mitchell, “Her Side of His Story: A Feminist Analysis of Two Nineteenth-Century Antebellum Novels—William Wells Brown’s *Clotel* and Harriet E. Wilson’s *Our Nig*,” *American Literary Realism* 24.3 (1992): 7–21.
 13. In an interesting reading, Linda Grasso links the “masks” Wilson must wear in order to adhere to nineteenth-century conventions of female propriety (including conventions of genre) to the rage that motivates the text’s production (*The Artistry of Anger: Black and White Women’s Literature in America, 1820–1860* [Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002]). This dynamic has important consequences for the scholarship on the book, for as Lois Leveen puts it, “We long for textual representation of a black female’s agency, but we can hardly celebrate Frado’s subjectivity if it results in her subjugation. Despite the important position *Our Nig* occupies as an early piece of published African American literature, it frustrates our desire for empowering narratives”

(“Dwelling in the House of Oppression: The Spatial, Racial, and Textual Dynamics of Harriet Wilson’s *Our Nig*,” *African American Review* 35.4 [2001]: 577).

- For additional discussions on the complex relationship between social agency and textual representation in *Our Nig*, see Elizabeth Breau, “Identifying Satire: *Our Nig*,” *Callaloo* 16.2 (1993): 455–65; Doriani, “Black Womanhood”; Ellis, “Body Politics”; Foreman and Pitts, introduction to *Our Nig*; Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, “‘To Weave It into the Literature of the Country’: Epic and the Fictions of African American Women,” in *Poetics of the Americas: Race, Founding, and Textuality*, ed. Bainard Cowan and Jefferson Humphries (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997), 31–45; Ronna C. Johnson, “Said but Not Spoken: Elision and the Representation of Rape, Race, and Gender in Harriet E. Wilson’s *Our Nig*,” in *Speaking the Other Self: American Women Writers*, ed. Jeanne Campbell Reesman (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1997), 96–116; Karsten H. Piep, “‘Nothing New under the Sun’: Postsentimental Conflict in Harriet E. Wilson’s *Our Nig*,” *Colloquy: Text Theory Critique* 11 (2006): 178–94; Prاتفiorito, “To Demand”; and Stern, “Excavating.”
14. Eric Gardner’s research into the publishing history of the book supports this assertion. He notes that “although Wilson clearly addressed a black readership in her preface, this readership may never have been reached by the original edition of *Our Nig*. . . . [I]t appears that it instead attracted primary white, middle-class readers who lived close to Wilson’s home in Milford, New Hampshire” (“‘This Attempt of Their Sister’: Harriet Wilson’s *Our Nig* from Printer to Readers,” *New England Quarterly* 66 [1993]: 227–28).
 15. See, for example, the underlying argument in the work of Gene Andrew Jarrett (*African American Literature beyond Race: An Alternative Reader* [New York: New York University Press, 2006]), which discusses African American literature “beyond” race—a proposal to which I respond at length in chapter 2. See also the authors cited in note 1 to my introduction.
 16. Alcoff and Mohanty, “Reconsidering,” 7.
 17. For other detailed analyses of this argument, see Linda Martín Alcoff et al., *Identity Politics Reconsidered* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); Michael Hames-García, *Fugitive Thought: Prison Movements, Race, and the Meaning of Justice* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004); Harding, *Feminist*; Satya P. Mohanty, *Literary Theory and the Claims of History: Postmodernism, Objectivity, Multicultural Politics* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1997); Paula M. L. Moya, *Learning from Experience: Minority Identities, Multicultural Struggles* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Paula M. L. Moya and Michael Hames-García, eds., *Reclaiming Identity: Realist Theory and the Predicament of Postmodernism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); José David Saldívar, “Border Thinking, Minoritized Studies, and

Realist Interpellations: The Coloniality of Power from Gloria Anzaldúa to Arundhati Roy,” in *Identity Politics Reconsidered*, ed. Linda Martín Alcoff et al. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 152–70; and Smith, *Not Just*.

18. Sharon P. Holland, “‘From This Moment Forth, We Are Black Lesbians’: Querying Feminism and Transgressing Whiteness in Consolidated’s *The Business of Punishment*,” in *Beyond the Binary*, ed. Timothy B. Powell (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1999), 157.
19. Gates, *Figures*, 147.
20. Priscilla Wald, *Constituting Americans: Cultural Anxiety and Narrative Form* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1995), 168.
21. Wald, *Constituting*, 169. Emphasis in original. While I do believe it to be dangerous, given the important information excavated through historical research, to presume that circumstances in Wilson’s life had no effect whatsoever on her text, it may be equally problematic to presume that Wilson lacks the ability to craft a narrative independent of those facts. Katherine Clay Bassard, for example, observes the novel positing “‘life’ producing ‘myth’ even as it assumes mythmaking as central to the construction of subjectivity.” In her reading, Bassard emphasizes “the ‘novelness’ of the text as a way of countering a prevailing tendency to see it as rather simplistically ‘autobiography’” (“‘Beyond Mortal Vision’: Harriet E. Wilson’s *Our Nig* and the American Racial Dream-Text,” in *Female Subjects in Black and White: Race, Psychoanalysis, Feminism*, ed. Elizabeth Abel et al. [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997], 199).
22. Harriet E. Wilson, *Our Nig; or, Sketches from the Life of a Free Black, In A Two-Story White House, North* (1859; reprint, New York: Vintage, 1983), 104, 105. Emphasis in original. For this chapter, all further references are to this edition and will be noted parenthetically in the text.
23. The contrast between Frado and Douglass’ respective insurrections is striking. Frado’s triumph is extremely short-lived, and readers receive very little information on how this defining moment might affect her psychologically. Douglass, by contrast, explains in detail the significance of his rebellion against the “nigger-breaker,” Mr. Covey:

This battle with Mr. Covey was the turning-point in my career as a slave. It rekindled the few expiring embers of freedom, and revived within me a sense of my own manhood. . . . I felt as I never felt before. It was a glorious resurrection, from the tomb of slavery, to the heaven of freedom. My long-crushed spirit rose, cowardice departed, bold defiance took its place; and I now resolved that, however long I might remain a slave in form, the day had passed forever when I could be a slave in fact. (*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written by Himself* [1845; reprint, New York: Norton, 1997], 50)

The differences between Frado and Douglass’ rebellions may, of course, concern literal differences in gender. Because the slave narrative

- was understood as a normatively masculine genre, antebellum readers would expect Douglass to speak at length of this crucial turning point. Wilson's voice, however, would likely seem out of place within this literary form; as a woman, any extended discourse she might offer on her revolt might appear unseemly.
24. For examples of this critical disposition, see the authors listed in note 1 of my introduction.
 25. Mohanty, *Literary Theory*, 205–6.
 26. Mohanty, *Literary Theory*, 216.
 27. Linda Martín Alcoff, "Who's Afraid of Identity Politics?," in *Reclaiming Identity: Realist Theory and the Predicament of Postmodernism*, ed. Paula M. L. Moya and Michael R. Hames-García (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 335.
 28. For important readings of the intersections among labor, class, and race in *Our Nig*, see Gretchen Short, "Harriet Wilson's *Our Nig* and the Labor of Citizenship," *Arizona Quarterly* 57.3 (2001): 1–27; and Xiomara Santamarina, *Belabored Professions: Narratives of African American Working Womanhood* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005). See also Patricia J. Williams, *The Alchemy of Race and Rights* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991), who offers crucial analyses of these issues in broader terms. For readings that comment on the importance of the physical body in Wilson's novel, see Cynthia J. Davis, "Speaking the Body's Pain: Harriet Wilson's *Our Nig*," *African American Review* 27.3 (1993): 391–404; and Kyla Wazana Tompkins, "'Everything 'Cept Eat Us': The Antebellum Black Body Portrayed as Edible Body," *Callaloo: A Journal of African Diaspora Arts and Letters* 30.1 (2007): 201–24.
 29. The concept of "intersectionality," of course, informs much of the work performed within the aegis of critical race theory; it has been most fully articulated by the legal scholar Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw. See, for example, Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory, and Antiracist Politics," *The University of Chicago Legal Forum* (1989): 139–67; and Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color," in *Critical Race Theory*, edited by Kimberlé Crenshaw et al. (New York: New Press, 1995), 357–83.
 30. Alison Wylie, "Why Standpoint Matters," in *The Feminist Standpoint Theory Reader: Intellectual and Political Controversies* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 344.
 31. Lauren Berlant, *The Queen of America Goes to Washington City: Essays on Sex and Citizenship* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1997), 246. As Berlant notes, in antebellum America privilege is reserved for those who inhabit nonraced and nongendered bodies. The nation's promise of citizenship, therefore, is fundamentally incompatible with its explicitly corporealized populations, since "anyone coded as 'low,' embodied, or

subculturally 'specific' continues to experience, with banal regularity, the corporeal sensation of nationality as a sensation over which she/he has no control" (239).

32. Paula M. L. Moya, "Postmodernism, 'Realism,' and the Politics of Identity," in *Reclaiming Identity: Realist Theory and the Predicament of Postmodernism*, ed. Paula M. L. Moya and Michael R. Hames-García (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 81. Emphasis in original.
33. The legal scholar Kenji Yoshino (following sociologist Erving Goffman) calls this shared dynamic "covering": the attempt to "tone down a disfavored identity to fit into the mainstream." Everyone covers, he notes, since "in our increasingly diverse society, all of us are outside the mainstream in some way. Nonetheless, being deemed mainstream is still often a necessity of social life" (*Covering: The Hidden Assault on Our Civil Rights* [New York: Random House, 2006], ix). As a form of cultural subjugation that crosses innumerable social groupings, covering, Yoshino observes, is one of the primary civil rights issues of our time. It is, he says, "a hidden assault on our civil rights. We have not been able to see it as such because it has swaddled itself in the benign language of assimilation. But if we look closely, we will see that covering is the way many groups are being held back today" (xi).
34. Satya Mohanty similarly observes the oppressive forces of cultural assimilation. He notes that such expectations [amount] to a repression of alternative sources of experiences and value. That repression would explain why the feelings of minority groups about their "racial" or cultural identities are so tenacious, for instance, or why claims about the significance of gender or sexual identity represent more than the simple "politics of recognition." Quite often, such claims and feelings embody alternative and antihegemonic accounts of what is significant and in fact necessary for a more accurate understanding of the world we all share. (*Literary Theory*, 237–38)

2 FRANK J. WEBB AND THE FATE OF THE SENTIMENTAL RACE MAN

1. Ann duCille, *The Coupling Convention: Sex, Text, and Tradition in Black Women's Fiction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 6, 7. See also Frances Smith Foster, introduction to "Minnie's Sacrifice," "Sowing and Reaping," "Trial and Triumph": *Three Rediscovered Novels*, by Frances E. W. Harper (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994), xi–xxxvii.
2. Arthur P. Davis, introduction to *The Garies and Their Friends*, by Frank J. Webb (New York: Arno Press, 1969), viii.
3. Addison Gayle, Jr., *The Way of the New World: The Black Novel in America* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1975), 13, 14; Bernard W. Bell, *The Afro-American Novel and Its Tradition* (Amherst: University

of Massachusetts Press, 1987), 43. Other studies that see *The Garies* as an insufficient protest novel include Robert Bone, *The Negro Novel in America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1958); and Blyden Jackson, *A History of Afro-American Literature* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989). For scholarship that explains the text's lack of popularity because of its critique of whiteness and white racism, see James H. DeVries, "The Tradition of the Sentimental Novel in *The Garies and Their Friends*," *College Language Association Journal* 17 (1973): 241–49; and Robert S. Levine, "Disturbing Boundaries: Temperance, Black Elevation, and Violence in Frank J. Webb's *The Garies and Their Friends*," *Prospects: An Annual Journal of American Cultural Studies* 19 (1994): 349–73.

Finally, for analyses that suggest that part of Webb's canonical exclusion is due to the lack of information on Webb himself, see Davis, introduction to *The Garies*; and Rosemary F. Crockett, "Frank J. Webb: The Shift to Color Discrimination," in *The Black Columbiad: Defining Moments in African American Literature and Culture*, ed. Werner Sollors and Maria Diedrich (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994), 112–22. This latter deficiency has been at least partly corrected by Eric Gardner's excellent archival work on Webb ("'A Gentleman of Superior Cultivation and Refinement': Recovery the Biography of Frank J. Webb," *African American Review* 35.2 [2001]: 297–308). Tellingly, Phillip Lapsansky notes that while *The Garies* was well received in England, its place of publication, there appears to be no significant extant response to the novel's appearance in the United States ("Afro-Americana: Frank J. Webb and His Friends," *Annual Report of the Library Company of Philadelphia for the Year 1990* [Philadelphia: Library Company of Philadelphia, 1991], 27–43).

4. Robert Reid-Pharr, introduction to *The Garies and Their Friends*, by Frank J. Webb (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), viii.

For additional analyses that tend to be more generous than earlier critics in their assessments of Webb's novel, see Jeffery A. Clymer, "Family Money: Race and Economic Rights in Antebellum US Law and Fiction," *American Literary History* 21.2 (2009): 211–38; John Ernest, "Still Life, with Bones: A Response to Samuel Otter," *American Literary History* 20.4 (2008): 753–65; M. Giulia Fabi, *Passing and the Rise of the African American Novel* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001); Amy Schragger Lang, *The Syntax of Class: Writing Inequality in Nineteenth-Century America* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2003); Samuel Otter, "Frank Webb's Still Life: Rethinking Literature and Politics through *The Garies and Their Friends*," *American Literary History* 20.4 (2008): 728–52; and Robert Reid-Pharr, *Conjugal Union: The Body, the House, and the Black American* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

5. Henry Golemba, "Frank Webb's *The Garies and Their Friends* Contextualized within African American Slave Narratives," in *Lives out*

of *Letters: Essays on American Literary Biography and Documentation*, ed. Robert D. Habich (Madison, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2004), 121, 133. Emphasis in original.

For other significant studies that resist castigating Webb and his novel and remark, instead, on *The Garies'* celebration of African American solidarity in defiance of racist ideologies, see Anna Mae Duane, "Remaking Black Motherhood in Frank J. Webb's *The Garies and Their Friends*," *African American Review* 38.2 (2004): 201–12; Anna Engle, "Depictions of the Irish in Frank Webb's *The Garies and Their Friends* and Frances E. W. Harper's *Trial and Triumph*," *MELUS* 26.1 (2001): 151–71; Stephen Knadler, "Traumatized Racial Performativity: Passing in Nineteenth-Century African-American Testimonies," *Cultural Critique* 55 (2003): 63–100; Robert Nowatzki, "Blurring the Color Line: Black Freedom, Passing, Abolitionism, and Irish Ethnicity in Frank J. Webb's *The Garies and Their Friends*," *Studies in American Fiction* 33.1 (2005): 29–58; and Carla L. Peterson, "Capitalism, Black (Under)development, and the Production of the African-American Novel in the 1850s," *American Literary History* 4 (1992): 559–83. See also Gardner, "A Gentleman"; and Levine, "Disturbing."

6. Otter, "Still Life," 748.
7. Frank J. Webb, *The Garies and Their Friends* (1857; reprint, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 137. For this chapter, all further references are to this edition and will be noted parenthetically in the text.
8. Davis, introduction to *The Garies*, vii.
9. Jackson, *History*, 348.
10. Levine, "Disturbing," 351, 368. Samuel Otter articulates a similar perspective on the novel's relationship to hegemonic culture: "Webb's narrator—arch, ironic, setting and skewing his tables—does not capitulate to the values of a dominant culture or recommend an elevation that is really a submission, in moves that many critics and historians have seen as characteristic of Philadelphia's African-American leaders or a wider devotion to 'respectability' in the nineteenth century" ("Still Life," 747).

For important considerations of racial uplift in its nineteenth-century context, see Eddie S. Glaude, Jr., *Exodus!: Religion, Race, and Nation in Early Nineteenth-Century Black America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000); Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880–1920* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993); Carla L. Peterson, *"Doers of the Word": African American Women Speakers and Writers in the North (1830–1880)* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); and Patrick Rael, *Black Identity and Black Protest in the Antebellum North* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

11. As Robert Nowatzki notes, the decision facing Clarence either to pass as white or to embrace his blackness is "necessitated not by a biological

- incompatibility of white and black ‘blood,’ but by white hostility toward miscegenation and its offspring, and by the power that whites exercise to use knowledge of a mulatto’s ancestry to define that person as ‘coloured’ and inferior” (“Blurring,” 57).
12. In noting the crushing traumatic events Clarence faces in his young life, critic Stephen Knadler offers an important corrective to analyses that would reduce Clarence’s story merely to sentimental allegory: “To make Clarence the tragic mulatto who is a sign of ambiguity, critics [of *The Garies*] . . . derealize his story, as histrionic as it may be, and trivialize the formidable weight of a traumatic past and its wounds for the higher purpose of creating an ideologically useful token ‘black’ man. . . . Wanting to make Clarence a representative son of a racial self-consciousness, on the other hand, African-American critics can, likewise, reduce Clarence’s pain to alienation, something that can be overcome through self-determination and black pride” (“Traumatized,” 80).
 13. Engle, “Depictions,” 159. I find many of Engle’s observations convincing, though I am slightly uncomfortable with her claim that “the riot, although white on black, is motivated more by class than by race” (158). While Engle rightly points out that the mob’s violence affects all sectors of the black community, and is indeed motivated in large part by class issues, the attack is described overtly as being provoked by racial difference; indeed, as the mob threatens the group assembled within Mr. Walters’ mansion, its members cry out: “The house is full of niggers!—the house is full of niggers! . . . Shoot them! kill them!” (213).
 14. Carla Peterson similarly observes that the resilience of the African American community in the wake of the attack demonstrates “the effectiveness of an economics of marginality that resists black underdevelopment, relies on community interdependence, and works to forge collective identity” (“Capitalism,” 579).
 15. Levine, “Disturbing,” 363.
 16. Gene Andrew Jarrett, *Deans and Truants: Race and Realism in African American Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 5.
 17. Gene Andrew Jarrett, “Introduction: ‘Not Necessarily Race Matter,’” in *African American Literature beyond Race: An Alternative Reader*, ed. Gene Andrew Jarrett (New York: New York University Press, 2006), 2; Jarrett, *Deans*, 15.
 18. Jarrett, *Deans*, 3. Jarrett also references the work of critics Shelley Fisher Fishkin and Claudia Tate in his discussion of anomalous texts. Fishkin notes how such texts violate scholarly expectations that require “black fiction writers . . . to focus on African-American life in the United States as seen through the eyes of black characters” and are “considered suspect when they do not” (“Desegregating American Literary Studies,” in *Aesthetics in a Multicultural Age*, ed. Emory Elliott et al. [New York: Oxford University Press, 2002], 125). Similarly, Tate claims that anomalous works are “indisputably marginal in African-American

literary history” because “they resist, to varying degrees, the race and gender paradigms that we spontaneously impose on black textuality” (*Psychoanalysis and Black Novels: Desire and the Protocols of Race* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1998], 7–8).

19. Jarrett, *Deans*, 11.
20. Jarrett, *Deans*, 3.
21. Jarrett, *Deans*, 3.
22. Jarrett, “Introduction,” 5.
23. Nowatzki, “Blurring,” 52. Henry Golemba makes a similar point about Webb’s work in this regard. In his analysis of Mr. Stevens’ racial transformations, he notes that “all this masking highlights the superficiality of social constructions of race, but only the foolish would forget that prejudice—though artificial and downright inane—can be deadly, as witnessed by the death of the Garies and the crippling of [Mr.] Ellis” (“Frank Webb’s,” 133).
24. As Satya P. Mohanty notes, “Oddly enough, [the] postmodernist response turns out to reveal a disguised form of foundationalism, for it remains within a specifically positivist conception of objectivity and knowledge. It assumes that the only kind of objective knowledge we can have is independent of (socially produced and revisable) theoretical presuppositions and concludes that the theory dependence of experience is evidence that is always epistemically suspect” (*Literary Theory and the Claims of History: Postmodernism, Objectivity, Multicultural Politics* [Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1997], 209).
25. This is the argument made by Robert Reid-Pharr. He also notes that “Webb was clearly in conversation with a score of authors, mostly female, of the mid-nineteenth century whose sentimentalism and emphasis on the domestic helped shape the ideological structures of the antebellum writing world.” “Still,” Reid-Pharr observes, “it is important to reiterate that Webb, although he was thoroughly integrated into that world, the world of ‘right feeling,’ continued to insist upon a black distinctiveness within it. He worked to articulate a specificity, or peculiarity, that marked *The Garies* as not simply a novel about domesticity, or even abolitionism, but also—and importantly—about race, about blackness” (introduction to *The Garies*, xviii).
26. Knadler, “Traumatized,” 66, 71.

3 SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT IN *UNCLE TOM’S CABIN*

1. Other significant connections also exist between Webb and Stowe. Stowe was particularly impressed by the dramatic skills of Webb’s wife, Mary, and adapted *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* as a performance piece specifically for her (renamed as *The Christian Slave*). For scholarship that explores this relationship, see Susan F. Clark, “Solo Black Performance before the Civil War: Mrs. Stowe, Mrs. Webb, and ‘The Christian Slave,’” *New*

Theatre Quarterly 13.52 (1997): 339–48; Eric Gardner, “‘A Nobler End’: Mary Webb and the Victorian Platform,” *Nineteenth-Century Prose* 29.1 (2002): 103–16; and Eric Gardner, “Stowe Takes the Stage: Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *The Christian Slave*,” *Legacy* 15.1 (1998): 78–84.

2. The scholarship here is enormous. For classic examples of the rich criticism devoted to the novel, see Hazel V. Carby, *Reconstructing Womanhood: The Emergence of the Afro-American Woman Novelist* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); Deborah E. McDowell and Arnold Rampersad, eds., *Slavery and the Literary Imagination* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989); Shirley Samuels, ed., *The Culture of Sentiment: Race, Gender, and Sentimentality in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); Eric Sundquist, ed., *New Essays on “Uncle Tom’s Cabin”* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); and Jane Tompkins, *Sensational Designs: The Cultural Work of American Fiction, 1790–1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).

For more recent studies, see Ryan C. Cordell, “‘Enslaving You, Body and Soul’: The Uses of Temperance in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* and ‘Anti-Tom’ Fiction,” *Studies in American Fiction* 36.1 (2008): 3–26; Jeanne Elders DeWaard, “‘The Shadow of Law’: Sentimental Interiority, Gothic Terror, and the Legal Subject,” *Arizona Quarterly: A Journal of American Literature, Culture, and Theory* 62.4 (2006): 1–30; Marcy J. Dinius, “Slavery in Black and White: Daguerreotypy and *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*,” *ESQ: A Journal of the American Renaissance* 52.3 (2006): 157–91; Sarah Meer, *Uncle Tom Mania: Slavery, Minstrelsy, and Transatlantic Culture in the 1850s* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2005); Jo-Ann Morgan, “*Uncle Tom’s Cabin*” as Visual Culture (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2007); Jason Richards, “Imitation Nation: Blackface Minstrelsy and the Making of African American Selfhood in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*,” *Novel: A Forum on Fiction* 39.2 (2006): 204–20; Arthur Riss, *Race, Slavery, and Liberalism in Nineteenth-Century American Literature* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006); and Cindy Weinstein, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Harriet Beecher Stowe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

3. I name specifically African American stereotypes here since their representations are immediately germane to my argument. I want to note, however, that white racial stereotypes certainly exist in the novel as well, and that readers might profitably analyze figures like the “southern belle” and “southern gentleman” (types embodied by Marie and Augustine St. Clare).
4. To my knowledge, only one study exists that seriously considers Adolph’s role within the novel. See P. Gabrielle Foreman’s probing essay that argues “that death in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* acts as an insistent sign not of redemption but of the consequence of sexual transgression” (“‘This Promiscuous Housekeeping’: Death, Transgression, and Homoeroticism in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*,” *Representations* 43 [1993]: 51). Centrally, Foreman’s study is concerned with reading Tom and Eva as

- “sinners” within this rubric, and the analysis it offers of Adolph’s character places him, primarily, as a key to understanding the homoerotic overtones of St. Clare and Tom’s relationship. Foreman’s insights are striking—and though I share some of her concerns, my comments in this chapter differ in significant ways. Chief among these is my desire to read Adolph apart from St. Clare, to see him as a “problem” in and of himself. This goal seems particularly crucial in order to circumvent another racist stereotype: namely, that slaves are not capable of originality, and thus can be understood only as facsimiles of their masters. Foreman certainly does not endorse this view; I want only to clarify my reluctance to examine Adolph solely in relation to his master and to emphasize my desire to read him back into the critical conversation on his own terms.
5. Lindon Barrett, “Identities and Identity Studies: Reading Toni Cade Bambara’s ‘The Hammer Man,’” *Cultural Critique* 39 (1998): 6. Barrett rightly cites Robyn Wiegman’s important work on this topic. Wiegman is primarily concerned with what she calls “feminism’s own myth of integration,” but her statements have far-reaching import for studies of identity in general: “[T]he challenge to modernity,” she states, “—which characterizes the tensions within and political stakes of feminism and other political discourses in the United States today—lies in a potential resignification, not of the body as such but of the relationship between its interior and exterior domains” (*American Anatomies: Theorizing Race and Gender* [Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1995], 191).
 6. Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color,” in *Critical Race Theory*, ed. Kimberlé Crenshaw et al. (New York: New Press, 1995), 358, 377.
 7. Valerie Smith, *Not Just Race, Not Just Gender: Black Feminist Readings* (New York: Routledge, 1998), xv, xiv. For other significant analyses that employ intersectionality as critical praxis, see Susan Stanford Friedman, “Beyond White and Other: Relationality and Narratives of Race in Feminist Discourse,” *Signs* 21.1 (1995): 1–49; and Siobhan B. Somerville, *Queering the Color Line: Race and the Invention of Homosexuality in American Culture* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2000).
 8. I want to be clear that it is not my intention to minimize the important scholarly work on Stowe’s text performed under the aegis of feminist and African American studies; indeed, in ways I hope are evident, my analysis is indebted to the theoretical paradigms this criticism provides.
 9. Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin; or, Life among the Lowly* (1852; reprint, New York: Penguin, 1981), 254. For this chapter, all further references are to this edition and will be noted parenthetically in the text.
 10. Eric Sundquist provides a useful overview of some of the cultural distortions these figures have endured since the book’s publication (introduction to *New Essays on “Uncle Tom’s Cabin,”* ed. Eric Sundquist [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986], 1–44). See also Richard Yarborough, “Strategies of Black Characterization in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*

- and the Early Afro-American Novel,” in *New Essays on “Uncle Tom’s Cabin,”* ed. Eric Sundquist (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 45–84. For additional analyses of popular appropriations of Stowe’s characters (and their racist repercussions), see Harry Birdoff, *The World’s Greatest Hit: “Uncle Tom’s Cabin”* (New York: S. F. Vanni, 1947); Donald Bogle, *Toms, Coons, Mulattoes, Mammies, and Bucks: An Interpretative History of Blacks in American Films* (New York: Viking, 1973); J. C. Furnas, *Goodbye to Uncle Tom* (New York: William Sloane, 1956); Stephen A. Hirsch, “Uncle Tomitudes: The Popular Reaction to *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*,” in *Studies in the American Renaissance*, ed. Joel Meyerson (Boston: Twayne, 1978), 303–30; and Robert C. Toll, *Blacking Up: The Minstrel Show in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974).
11. The standard reading on Dinah is by Gillian Brown, who links Dinah’s kitchen with the economies of the slave market (“Getting in the Kitchen with Dinah: Domestic Politics in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*,” *American Quarterly* 36 [1984]: 503–23).
 12. Several studies have remarked on this dynamic, the most elegant and sophisticated articulations of which are by Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of “Sex”* (New York: Routledge, 1993); and Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (New York: Vintage, 1992).
 13. George’s passing here is an important example of a hybrid character inhabiting white masculine identity. His name becomes even more significant in this respect as it echoes the original founding father, George Washington. For an excellent reading of this scene, see Julia Stern, “Spanish Masquerade and the Drama of Racial Identity in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*,” in *Passing and the Fictions of Identity*, ed. Elaine Ginsberg (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1996), 103–30.
 14. Yarborough, “Strategies,” 50–51.
 15. The term “gender insubordination” comes, of course, from Judith Butler (*Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* [New York: Routledge: 1990]).
 16. The discrepancies between Emmeline and Adolph’s respective fates suggest that the character of the tragic mulatto is a gendered description with its own specific sexualized assumptions. As a figure, the mulatto calls attention to the sexual availability of black bodies within slavery through its literal embodiment of miscegenation. Because the light-skinned slave is necessarily an effect of heterosexual union (and because the likelihood that female slave-owners would seduce male slaves is unthinkable within antebellum mores), the mulatto is indicative of a white, male sexual aggression that is explicitly heterosexually oriented. The “tragedy” of the mulatto thus holds particular resonance for female slaves, since their light skin embodies the threat of sexual subservience their (female) ancestors also faced. The light-skinned male slave, by contrast, faces no comparable threat; antebellum ideologies (and the lack

- of bodily “evidence”) work to preclude the possibility of a specifically homosexual assault.
17. We might also consider here the curious allusion Harriet Jacobs makes to her friend, Luke, a slave who was forced to submit to “the strangest freaks of despotism” by his bed-ridden master. “Some of these freaks,” Jacobs tells us, “were of a nature too filthy to be repeated.” Though the incident Jacobs describes carries heavy homosexual overtones (like Stowe’s description of Adolph in the slave market), Jacobs (also like Stowe) refuses to comment further on this scene—leaving Luke “still chained to the bedside of this cruel and disgusting wretch” (*Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, Written by Herself* (1861; reprint, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987). See Aliyyah I. Abdur-Rahman, “‘The Strangest Freaks of Despotism’: Queer Sexuality in Antebellum African American Slave Narratives,” *African American Review* 40.2 (2006): 223–37.
 18. For helpful discussions of the problems inherent in such anachronisms, see Martin Duberman et al., *Hidden from History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past* (New York: Penguin, 1989); and David M. Halperin, “Is There a History of Sexuality?” in *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*, ed. Henry Abelove et al. (New York: Routledge, 1993), 416–31.
 19. We might usefully consider here Calvin Stowe’s own same-sex experiences. As he wrote to his wife during an extended separation, “When I get desperate, & cannot stand it any longer, I get dear, good kind hearted Br[other] Stagg to come and sleep with me, and he puts his arms round me & hugs me to my hearts’ content” (Calvin E. Stowe to Harriet Beecher Stowe, February 14, 1847, in *Harriet Beecher Stowe: A Life*, by Joan D. Hedrick [New York: Oxford University Press, 1994], 180).
 20. For an indispensable study of the tragic mulatto figure, see Susan Gillman, “The Mulatto, Tragic or Triumphant? The Nineteenth-Century American Race Melodrama,” in *The Culture of Sentiment: Race, Gender, and Sentimentality in Nineteenth-Century America*, ed. Shirley Samuels (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 221–43.
 21. In this respect, my argument is not unlike that of Jean Fagan Yellin’s, who situates *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* at a kind of midway point between the conservative domestic philosophies of Stowe’s sister, Catharine Beecher, and the more overtly feminist polemics of the Grimké sisters, Angelina and Sarah. Whereas Beecher believed women should limit their abolitionist sympathies to the domestic sphere, the Grimké sisters advocated for a movement that placed women’s role in both public and private domains. Yellin notes, however, that Stowe’s philosophies ultimately align her more centrally with Beecher’s “separate spheres.” See Yellin, “Doing It Herself: *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* and Woman’s Role in the Slavery Crisis,” in *New Essays on “Uncle Tom’s Cabin,”* ed. Eric Sundquist (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 85–105; see also Tompkins, *Sensational*. For the historical materials that inform this debate, see Catharine E. Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe, *The American Woman’s Home, or Principles*

of *Domestic Science* (New York: J. B. Ford, 1869); Angelina Grimké, "Appeal to the Christian Women of the South," *Anti-Slavery Examiner* 1 (September 1836): [1]–35; Catharine E. Beecher, *An Essay on Slavery and Abolitionism, with Reference to the Duty of American Females, Addressed to A. E. Grimké* (Philadelphia: Henry Perkins; Boston: Perkins & Marvin, 1837); and Angelina Grimké, *Letters to Catharine E. Beecher, in Reply to An Essay on Slavery and Abolitionism, Addressed to A. E. Grimké* (Boston: Isaac Knapp, 1838).

22. Traditionally, much criticism of nineteenth-century American literature has rested on the concept of the "separate spheres" as an explanatory model for cultural difference. Contemporary scholarship, however, has attempted to complicate (and even dismantle) this paradigm by noting the limitations of a theory that relies exclusively on gender as a marker of difference. See, for example, Lora Romero, *Home Fronts: Domesticity and Its Critics in the Antebellum United States* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1997). See also Cathy Davidson, who notes that "the binaric version of nineteenth-century American history is ultimately unsatisfactory because it is simply too crude an instrument—too rigid and totalizing—for understanding the different, complicated ways that nineteenth-century American society or literary production functioned" ("Preface: No More Separate Spheres!" *American Literature* 70 [1998]: 445). Though I generally agree with this position, I nevertheless believe that Stowe's novel often thinks in precisely the "rigid and totalizing" ways we find uncomfortable today.

For additional readings of the relationship between sentimentality and gender in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, see Dawn Coleman, "The Unsentimental Woman Preacher of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*," *American Literature* 80.2 (2008): 265–92; Christopher Diller, "Sentimental Types and Social Reform in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*," *Studies in American Fiction* 32.1 (2004): 21–48; Barbara Hochman, "Sentiment without Tears: *Uncle Tom's Cabin* as History in the 1890s," in *New Directions in American Reception Study*, ed. Philip Goldstein and James L. Machor (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 255–76; and Elizabeth Fekete Trubey, "'Success Is Sympathy': *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and the Woman Reader," in *Reading Women: Literary Figures and Cultural Icons from the Victorian Age to the Present*, ed. Janet Badia and Jennifer Phegley (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 53–76.

23. Myra Jehlen, "The Family Militant: Domesticity Versus Slavery in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*," *Criticism* 31.4 (1989): 392–93. Emphasis in original.
24. We might also consider St. Clare's character as indicative of this dynamic. His sympathy for the enslaved (understood as the specific result of feminine influence) does not translate into the manly act of freeing his slaves before his untimely death. Amy Schrager Lang comments on this "problem" with St. Clare, noting that "the two sides of his character, one feminine, the other masculine, rather than working in tandem to produce the ideal reformer, instead pull in opposite directions and immobilize

- him" ("Slavery and Sentimentalism: The Strange Career of Augustine St. Clare," *Women's Studies* 12 [1986]: 45–46).
25. Karen Sánchez-Eppler, "Bodily Bonds: The Intersecting Rhetorics of Feminism and Abolition," in *The Culture of Sentiment: Race, Gender, and Sentimentality in Nineteenth-Century America*, ed. Shirley Samuels (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 95.
 26. Eric Lott reads the black dandy as emblematic of the antislavery reformer through the figure's compression of racial and class identities. "The black dandy," Lott writes, "literally embodied the amalgamationist threat of abolitionism, and allegorically represented the class threat of those who were advocating it" (*Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1993], 134). While Lott emphasizes the black dandy's threat to proslavery factions (and tends to repress the role of gender), I argue that this figure equally menaces abolitionist ideologies through its complex intersection of gender, class, and racial identities.
 27. The concept of "category crisis" is Marjorie Garber's. In her masterful study, Garber examines the ways in which border-crossings instigate cultural anxiety by calling attention to "the crisis of category itself" (*Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety* [New York: Routledge, 1992], 17).
 28. Marlon T. Riggs, "Black Macho Revisited: Reflections of a SNAP! Queen," in *Black Men on Race, Gender, and Sexuality*, ed. Devon W. Carbado (New York: New York University Press, 1999), 309. Emphasis in original.
 29. Riggs, "Black Macho," 307. See also Marlon T. Riggs, "Unleash the Queen," in *Black Popular Culture*, ed. Gina Dent (New York: New Press, 1998), 99–105.
 30. For a relevant discussion of the ways in which racial identity is gendered (and, specifically, the ways in which black masculinity is equated with "authentic" notions of African American identity), see Phillip Brian Harper, *Are We Not Men? Masculine Anxiety and the Problem of African-American Identity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).
 31. I rely here on Devon W. Carbado's definition of antiracist discourse as "black legal and political scholarship, activism, and discussions aimed at eradicating racism against black people" (introduction to *Black Men on Race, Gender, and Sexuality*, ed. Devon W. Carbado [New York: New York University Press, 1999], 13).
 32. Dwight A. McBride, "Can the Queen Speak? Racial Essentialism, Sexuality, and the Problem of Authority," in *Black Men on Race, Gender, and Sexuality*, ed. Devon W. Carbado (New York: New York University Press, 1999), 263.
 33. There are numerous examples of such theorizing. For a particularly searing critique, see Hazel V. Carby, *Race Men* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998).

34. In addressing this point, the sexuality critique of antiracist practice denounces the supposition that racism and homophobia are necessarily separate phenomena. Devon W. Carbado notes: "What does the antiracist assertion 'being Black and being gay are not the same thing' mean when the gay person imagined in the statement is Black? The antiracist challenges to race/sexual orientation analogies legitimized the disaggregation of Black identity from gay identity, rendering the existence of Black gay and lesbian life invisible" (introduction to *Black Men*, 8–9).
35. McBride, "Can the Queen," 263. Though my argument exposes the dilemma of black gay male invisibility in respect to Adolph's particular situation, this problematic certainly resonates for other comparably marginalized positions, such as black lesbians, bisexuals, and transgender people. For additional important analyses of the relationship among racial, gender, and sexual identities, see Michael Awkward, *Negotiating Difference: Race, Gender, and the Politics of Positionality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); Roderick A. Ferguson, *Aberrations in Black: Toward a Queer of Color Critique* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004); Mark Anthony Neal, *New Black Man* (New York: Routledge, 2005); Robert Reid-Pharr, *Black Gay Man: Essays* (New York: New York University Press, 2001); and Robert Reid-Pharr, *Once You Go Black: Choice, Desire, and the Black American Intellectual* (New York: New York University Press, 2007).

4 FREDERICK DOUGLASS AND THE LIMITS OF KNOWLEDGE

1. William L. Andrews, *To Tell a Free Story: The First Century of Afro-American Autobiography, 1760–1865* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 17. For additional important studies of the slave narrative as genre, see Frances Smith Foster, *Witnessing Slavery: The Development of Ante-bellum Slave Narratives* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1979); and Valerie Smith, *Self-Discovery and Authority in Afro-American Narrative* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987).
2. Sidonie Smith, "Performativity, Autobiographical Practice, Resistance," *A/B: Auto/Biography Studies* 10.1 (1995): 19–20. For additional studies of the interchange between autobiography and performativity (and the relationship of this dynamic to Douglass' writings in particular), see Kimberly Drake, "Rewriting the American Self: Race, Gender, and Identity in the Autobiographies of Frederick Douglass and Harriet Jacobs," *MELUS* 22.4 (1997): 91–108; George Newtown, "From Bottom to Top: Frederick Douglass Glimpses Male Identity from the Closet," *A/B: Auto/Biography Studies* 20.2 (2005): 246–67; and Ben Slotte, "Revising Freely: Frederick Douglass and the Politics of Disembodiment," *A/B: Auto/Biography Studies* 11.1 (1996): 19–37.
3. Valerie Smith, *Not Just Race, Not Just Gender: Black Feminist Readings* (New York: Routledge, 1998), xix.

4. For examples of critical dispositions that seek, instead, to dismantle social identities, see the works listed in note 1 of my introduction. See, also, the discussion of Walter Benn Michaels's work in my introduction.
5. Wilson J. Moses, "Writing Freely? Frederick Douglass and the Constraints of Racialized Writing," in *Frederick Douglass: New Literary and Historical Essays*, ed. Eric Sundquist (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 67.
6. Eric Sundquist, introduction to *Frederick Douglass: New Literary and Historical Essays*, ed. Eric Sundquist (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 4. For additional important analyses of Douglass' work, see Jeannine Marie DeLombard, *Slavery on Trial: Law, Abolitionism, and Print Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007); Robert S. Levine, *Martin Delany, Frederick Douglass, and the Politics of Representative Identity* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997); Robert S. Levine and Samuel Otter, eds., *Frederick Douglass and Herman Melville: Essays in Relation* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008); and Susan M. Ryan, *The Grammar of Good Intentions: Race and the Antebellum Culture of Benevolence* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2003).
7. Frederick Douglass, *My Bondage and My Freedom* (1855; reprint, New York: Dover, 1969), 222. For this chapter, all further references are to this edition and will be noted parenthetically in the text.
8. Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written by Himself* (1845; reprint, New York: Norton, 1997), 45. For this chapter, all further references are to this edition and will be noted parenthetically in the text.
9. Houston A. Baker, *The Journey Back: Issues in Black Literature and Criticism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 43–45.
10. David Leverenz, *Manhood and the American Renaissance* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1989), 121.
11. Leverenz, *Manhood*, 109.
12. Critic Benjamin Quarles notes that the *Narrative* sold thirty thousand copies in its first five years of publication. *My Bondage and My Freedom*, by contrast, sold eighteen thousand copies in its first two years, after which sales dwindled (introduction to *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, by Frederick Douglass [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960], xiii–xiv).
13. Sundquist, introduction to *Frederick Douglass*, 4.
14. Leverenz, *Manhood*, 122.
15. Sundquist, introduction to *Frederick Douglass*, 4.
16. I refer here to Douglass' comments in *My Bondage and My Freedom* regarding condescending requests from white abolitionists to avoid thinking too deeply about his story and to stick only to narration. He writes:

I could not always obey, for I was now reading and thinking.
New views of the subject were presented to my mind. It did

not entirely satisfy me to *narrate* wrongs; I felt like *denouncing* them. . . . These excellent friends were actuated by the best of motives, and were not altogether wrong in their advice; and still I must speak just the word that seemed to *me* the word to be spoken *by* me. (361–62; emphasis in original)

- For an examination of the ways that Garrison's preface to Douglass' *Narrative* reduces him from "fugitive author" to "fugitive reporter," and thus instantiates white supremacy, see Beth A. McCoy, "Race and the (Para)Textual Condition," *PMLA* 121.1 (2006): 156–69.
17. For a crucial analysis of this dynamic in terms of racial minstrelsy, see Eric Lott, *Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).
 18. William Andrews similarly remarks on the slave narrative's literary masquerading before white readers: "The promise of a straightforward rendition of facts allowed the black narrator to pose as an artless and unaffected person whose simply narrative manner bore the conviction of truth that white Protestants in America had traditionally invested in the plain style" (*To Tell*, 9–10).
 19. Priscilla Wald's reading of Douglass similarly probes the unstated pressures in his work. She argues that the text's disjunctions "show a narrator compelled to tell a story different from the story he wishes to tell" (*Constituting Americans: Cultural Anxiety and Narrative Form* [Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1995], 74). Donald B. Gibson similarly highlights the *Narrative*'s implicit ideological conflicts, noting that "Douglass the rational, anti-slavery partisan and Douglass the man whose historical, social, and psychological pasts cannot be entirely constrained within the abstraction 'slavery' often vie for control of the narration" ("Reconciling Public and Private in Frederick Douglass' *Narrative*," *American Literature* 57.4 [1985]: 551).
 20. There is certainly not to minimize the significance of critical analyses of *My Bondage and My Freedom*. See, for instance, Lisa Brawley, "Frederick Douglass's *My Bondage and My Freedom* and the Fugitive Tourist Industry," *Novel: A Forum on Fiction* 30.1 (1996): 98–128; Michael A. Chaney, "Picturing the Mother, Claiming Egypt: *My Bondage and My Freedom* as Auto(bio)ethnography," *African American Review* 35.3 (2001): 391–408; Peter A. Dorsey, "Becoming the Other: The Mimesis of Metaphor in Douglass's *My Bondage and My Freedom*," *PMLA* 111.3 (1996): 435–50; Eric A. Goldman, "Spilling Ink and Spilling Blood: Abolitionism, Violence and Frederick Douglass's *My Bondage and My Freedom*," *A/B: Auto/Biography Studies* 17.2 (2002): 276–95; and Sarah Meer, "Sentimentality and the Slave Narrative: Frederick Douglass' *My Bondage and My Freedom*," in *The Uses of Autobiography*, ed. Julia Swindells (London: Taylor & Francis, 1995), 89–97.
 21. Linda Martín Alcoff and Satya P. Mohanty, "Reconsidering Identity Politics: An Introduction," in *Identity Politics Reconsidered*, ed. Linda Martín Alcoff et al. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 7, 6. Emphasis in original.

22. Alcoff and Mohanty, “Reconsidering,” 6. Alcoff and Mohanty are also keenly attentive to the historical dimensions of this dynamic:

Abolitionist and suffrage movements grappled with the conflicts among and within identities, with the role identity should play in determining leadership, and with whether the ultimate goal should be championing identity-based rights or de-emphasizing identity categories. Identity politics is only the most recent name given to this nest of issues concerning questions of separatism, nationalism, humanism, and the possibilities of a united front. (“Reconsidering,” 8)

23. For an important analysis of this dynamic, see Rafia Zafar, “Franklinian Douglass: The Afro-American as Representative Man,” in *Frederick Douglass: New Literary and Historical Essays*, ed. Eric Sundquist (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 99–117. See also Valerie Smith, who notes that Douglass “attempts to articulate a radical position using the discourse he shares with those against whom he speaks” (*Self-Discovery*, 27).

For additional important analyses see Vince Brewton, “‘Bold Defiance Took Its Place’—‘Respect’ and Self-Making in *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*,” *Mississippi Quarterly: The Journal of Southern Cultures* 58.3–4 (2005): 703–17; Mark K. Burns, “‘A Slave in Form but Not in Fact’: Subversive Humor and the Rhetoric of Irony in *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*,” *Studies in American Humor* 3.12 (2005): 83–96; Jeannine DeLombard, “‘Eye-Witness to the Cruelty’: Southern Violence and Northern Testimony in Frederick Douglass’s 1845 *Narrative*,” *American Literature* 73.2 (2001): 245–75; Lovalerie King, “Counter-Discourses on the Racialization of Theft and Ethics in Douglass’s *Narrative* and Jacobs’s *Incidents*,” *MELUS* 28.4 (2003): 55–82; and Shaindy Rudoff, “Tarring the Garden: The Bible and the Aesthetics of Slavery in Douglass’s *Narrative*,” *ESQ: A Journal of the American Renaissance* 45.4 (2000): 213–37.

24. In a crucial reading, Henry Louis Gates describes the ways in which meaning in the *Narrative* does not always align neatly with external signs. In outlining the contours of what he calls the “black hermeneutic circle,” Gates notes that “Douglass’s method of complex mediation—and the ironic reversals so peculiar to his text—suggests overwhelmingly the completely arbitrary relationship between description and meaning... Not only is meaning culture-bound and the reference of all signs an assigned relation, Douglass tells us, but *how* we read determines *what* we read, in the truest sense of the hermeneutical circle” (*Figures in Black: Words, Signs, and the “Racial” Self* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1987], 89, 97; emphasis in original). See also Valerie Babb, “‘The Joyous Circle’: The Vernacular Presence in Frederick Douglass’s Narratives,” *College English* 67.4 (2005): 365–77; and David Messmer, “‘If Not in the Word, in the Sound’: Frederick Douglass’s Mediation

- of Literacy through Song,” *American Transcendental Quarterly* 21.1 (2007): 5–21.
25. Douglass calls attention here to the inherent difficulty in delineating a specifically “white” perspective, since such a perspective seems grounded, simultaneously, both in slavery’s politics and in the social experience that whiteness makes normative. This ambivalence extends, as well, to what a misinterpretation of the slave songs might mean vis-à-vis white listeners—whether that inability is rooted in whites’ lack of experience of slavery, or in white people’s intrinsic interest in the perpetuation of slavery as a social and political institution.
 26. As Paula M. L. Moya observes, “[K]nowledge is not disembodied, or somewhere ‘out there’ to be had, but rather it comes into being in and through embodied selves. In other words, humans generate knowledge, and our ability to do so is causally dependent upon both our cognitive capacities and our historical and social locations” (introduction to *Reclaiming Identity: Realist Theory and the Predicament of Postmodernism*, ed. Paula M. L. Moya and Michael R. Hames-García [Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000], 18). See also Gregory S. Jay, who notes that Douglass’ texts “are exemplary in that their subject is neither a predetermined automaton of the Symbolic nor a so-called autonomous self freely creating its world. The metaphor of agency suggests rather that the subject occupies a dynamic historical position in which he or she may at once be the medium for ideology’s reproduction and the device for its undoing” (“American Literature and the New Historicism: The Example of Frederick Douglass,” *boundary 2* 17.1 [1990]: 228).
 27. William Lloyd Garrison, preface to *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written by Himself*, by Frederick Douglass (New York: Norton, 1997), 8.
 28. For invaluable studies on the masochistic dynamic inherent in reading about the violence perpetrated upon slaves’ bodies, see Saidiya V. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); and Carolyn Sorisio, “The Spectacle of the Body: Torture in the Antislavery Writing of Lydia Maria Child and Frances E. W. Harper,” *Modern Language Studies* 30.1 (2000): 45–66. For a fascinating analysis of the intersections among racial violence, slavery, and sexual difference, see Aliyyah I. Abdur-Rahman, “‘The Strangest Freaks of Despotism’: Queer Sexuality in Antebellum African American Slave Narratives,” *African American Review* 40.2 (2006): 223–37.
 29. In a suggestive reading, Marianne Noble notes how Douglass cultivates sympathy for the enslaved specifically through an emphasis on racial difference rather than through cross-racial identification (“Sympathetic Listening in Frederick Douglass’s ‘The Heroic Slave’ and *My Bondage and My Freedom*,” *Studies in American Fiction* 34.1 [2006]: 53–68).

30. William Andrews offers a helpful analysis on Douglass' refusal to describe his flight:

Douglass did not want [the discursive relationship between his readers and himself] predicated on the assumption that whites could read slave narratives from the standpoint of the distanced, uncommitted, merely curious collector of facts and still expect to know what and who they were about. Douglass did not want to indulge his reader in a servile way; he wanted his reader to learn something about his or her responsibility to the text. (*To Tell*, 136–37)

Andrews argues that Douglass achieves this connection by implicitly asking whites to use their imagination as a tool for sympathetic identification. This interpretation is compelling, though it is perhaps more generous in its ascriptions of Douglass' faith in white readers than my own reading.

31. For an examination of the ways that “personal” writing can help facilitate social analysis, see Timothy Barnett, who uses the example of Douglass' *Narrative* to elucidate his argument (“Politicizing the Personal: Frederick Douglass, Richard Wright, and Some Thoughts on the Limits of Critical Literacy,” *College English* 68.4 [2006]: 356–81).
32. Satya P. Mohanty, *Literary Theory and the Claims of History: Postmodernism, Objectivity, Multicultural Politics* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1997), 232–33. For important related discussions of these issues, see Linda Martín Alcoff, *Visible Identities: Race, Gender, and the Self* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); Linda Martín Alcoff, “Who's Afraid of Identity Politics?” in *Reclaiming Identity: Realist Theory and the Predicament of Postmodernism*, ed. Paula M. L. Moya and Michael R. Hames-García (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 312–44; Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (New York: Routledge, 2000); Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory, and Antiracist Politics,” *The University of Chicago Legal Forum* (1989): 139–67; Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color,” in *Critical Race Theory*, ed. Kimberlé Crenshaw et al. (New York: New Press, 1995), 357–83; Sandra Harding, ed., *The Feminist Standpoint Theory Reader: Intellectual and Political Controversies* (New York: Routledge, 2004); and Alison Wylie, “Why Standpoint Matters,” in *The Feminist Standpoint Theory Reader: Intellectual and Political Controversies*, ed. Sandra Harding (New York: Routledge, 2004), 339–51.

5 FACE VALUE: AMBIVALENT CITIZENSHIP IN *IOLA LEROY*

1. William Still, introduction to *Iola Leroy, or Shadows Uplifted*, by Frances E. W. Harper (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 1.

2. For positive appraisals of *Iola Leroy*, see Elizabeth Ammons, *Conflicting Stories: American Woman Writers at the Turn into the Twentieth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); Hazel V. Carby, *Reconstructing Womanhood: The Emergence of the Afro-American Woman Novelist* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); Ann duCille, *The Coupling Convention: Sex, Text, and Tradition in Black Women's Fiction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Frances Smith Foster, introduction to *Iola Leroy, or Shadows Uplifted*, by Frances E. W. Harper (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), xxvii–xxxix; Claudia Tate, *Domestic Allegories of Political Desire: The Black Heroine's Text at the Turn of the Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); Mary Helen Washington, *Invented Lives: Narratives of Black Women, 1860–1960* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Press, 1987); and Teresa Zackodnik, “Little Romances and Mulatta Heroines: Passing for a ‘True’ Woman in Frances Harper’s *Iola Leroy* and Pauline Hopkins’s *Contending Forces*,” *Nineteenth-Century Feminisms 2* (2000): 103–24.

For less-approving assessments of the novel, see Houston A. Baker, *Workings of the Spirit: The Poetics of Afro-American Women's Writing* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); Barbara Christian, *Black Women Novelists: The Development of a Tradition, 1892–1976* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1980); Arlene Elder, *The Hindered Hand: Cultural Implications in Early African American Fiction* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1978); Blyden Jackson, *A History of Afro-American Literature* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989); Vashti Lewis, “The Near-White Female in Frances Ellen Harper’s *Iola Leroy*,” *Phylon 45* (1984): 314–22; Deborah E. McDowell, “‘The Changing Same’: Generational Connections and Black Women Novelists,” *New Literary History 16* (1986): 281–302; Alice Walker, *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Jovanovich, 1983); and Kimberly A. C. Wilson, “The Function of the ‘Fair’ Mulatto: Complexion, Audience, and Mediation in Frances Harper’s *Iola Leroy*,” *Cimarron Review 106* (1994): 104–13.

3. For purposes of definition, I rely here on Kevin K. Gaines’s summary of the arguments regularly leveled against late-nineteenth-century uplift efforts (charges that also frequently characterize critiques of Harper and her novel):

[U]plift ideology’s argument for black humanity was not an argument for equality. Indeed, the shift from race to culture, stressing self-help and seemingly progressive in its contention that blacks, like immigrants, were assimilable into the American body politic, represented a limited, conditional claim to equality, citizenship, and human rights for African Americans. Black elites espoused a value system of bourgeois morality whose deeply embedded assumptions of racial difference were often invisible to them. It was precisely as an argument for black humanity through evolutionary class

differentiation that the black intelligentsia replicated the dehumanizing logic of racism. (*Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century* [Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996], 4)

For important additional analyses of racial uplift, see Eddie S. Glaude, Jr., *Exodus: Religion, Race, and Nation in Early Nineteenth-Century Black America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000); Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880–1920* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993); Carla L. Peterson, *“Doers of the Word”: African American Women Speakers and Writers in the North (1830–1880)* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); and Patrick Rael, *Black Identity and Black Protest in the Antebellum North* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

4. Frances E. W. Harper, *Iola Leroy; or, Shadows Uplifted* (1892; reprint, New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 9. For this chapter, all further references are to this edition and will be noted parenthetically in the text.
5. For an interesting discussion of the ways in which literacy is “stolen” in *Iola Leroy* (by slaves, by their masters), see Patricia Bizzell, “‘Stolen’ Literacies in *Iola Leroy*,” in *Popular Literacy: Studies in Cultural Practices and Poetics*, ed. John Trimbur (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2001), 143–50.
6. For readings that align Iola with the tradition of the tragic mulatto figure, see Christian, *Black Women*; McDowell, “‘The Changing Same’”; and Wilson, “Function.” The concept of the “separate spheres” is by now well known; it rests on the belief that men and women have equally important but necessarily separate roles to perform in nineteenth-century culture. Whereas men were understood to inhabit the public realm of commerce and politics, women were relegated to the privatized world of the home. For important studies of this paradigm, see Nina Baym, *Woman's Fiction: A Guide to Novels by and about Women in America, 1820–70* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1978); Nancy F. Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood: ‘Woman’s Sphere’ in New England, 1780–1835* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977); Ann Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture* (New York: Knopf, 1977); Linda K. Kerber, “Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman’s Place: The Rhetoric of Women’s History,” *Journal of American History* 75.1 (1988): 9–39; Shirley Samuels, ed., *The Culture of Sentiment: Race, Gender, and Sentimentality in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); Jane Tompkins, *Sensational Designs: The Cultural Work of American Fiction, 1790–1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985); and Barbara Welter, “The Cult of True Womanhood,” *American Quarterly* 18 (1966): 151–74.

For analyses that complicate the concept of the separate spheres, see Cathy N. Davidson and Jessamyn Hatcher, eds., *No More Separate Spheres! A Next Wave American Studies Reader* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2002); and Lora Romero, *Home Fronts: Domesticity*

- and Its Critics in the Antebellum United States* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1997).
7. Carla L. Peterson, "‘Further Liftings of the Veil’: Gender, Class, and Labor in Frances E. W. Harper’s *Iola Leroy*," in *Listening to Silences: New Essays in Feminist Criticism*, ed. Elaine Hedges and Shelley Fisher Fishkin (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 102.
 8. For an indispensable discussion of intersectionality’s critical project, see Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory, and Antiracist Politics," *The University of Chicago Legal Forum* (1989): 139–67; and Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color," in *Critical Race Theory*, ed. Kimberlé Crenshaw et al. (New York: New Press, 1995), 357–83.
 9. Valerie Smith, *Not Just Race, Not Just Gender: Black Feminist Readings* (New York: Routledge, 1998), xxiii, xv.
 10. Smith, *Not Just*, xix. Smith also cites Deborah E. McDowell’s important work in this regard ("*The Changing Same*": *Black Women’s Literature, Criticism, and Theory* [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995]).
 11. See, for example, Carby, *Reconstructing*; and Foster, introduction to *Iola Leroy*. For additional significant analyses of Harper and her novel, see Julie Cary Nerad, "Slippery Language and False Dilemmas: The Passing Novels of Child, Howells, and Harper," *American Literature* 75.4 (2003): 813–41; Lori Robison, "An ‘Imperceptible Infusion’ of Blood: *Iola Leroy*, Racial Identity, and Sentimental Discourse," *Genre: Forms of Discourse and Culture* 37.3–4 (2004): 433–60; Geoffrey Sanborn, "Mother’s Milk: Frances Harper and the Circulation of Blood," *ELH* 72.3 (2005): 691–715; and Elizabeth Young, "Warring Fictions: *Iola Leroy* and the Color of Gender," *American Literature* 64.2 (1992): 273–97.
 12. For historical and critical analyses of lynching during the postbellum era, see James E. Cutler, *Lynch-Law, An Investigation into the History of Lynching in the United States* (1905; reprint, New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969); Robyn Wiegman, *American Anatomies: Theorizing Race and Gender* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1995), esp. 81–113; Joel Williamson, *The Crucible of Race: Black-White Relations in the American South since Emancipation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984); and C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974).
 13. The strongest articulation of this position is Claudia Tate’s, who argues that modern value systems in contemporary scholarship often blind readers to the subversive discourses that would be more plainly apparent in the historical and cultural contexts of the nineteenth century ("Allegories of Black Female Desire; or, Rereading Nineteenth-Century Sentimental Narratives of Black Female Authority," in *Changing Our Own Words: Essays on Criticism, Theory, and Writing by Black Women*,

- ed. Cheryl A. Wall [New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1989], 98–126). See also Carby, *Reconstructing*; Foster, introduction to *Iola Leroy*; and Zackodnik, “Little Romances.”
14. Tate, “Allegories,” 117. For a similarly helpful assessment of marriage’s specific importance to black culture, see duCille, *Coupling*.
 15. At the end of the nineteenth century, the United States witnessed increased interest in demarcating social divisions, often in terms of racial affiliation and sexual identity. As the legal case of *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) and the newly developed scientific language for sexual inversion made clear, this era exerted significant effort to categorize individuals on the basis of personal identity. The classification of bodies within binary structures (black/white; heterosexual/homosexual) aimed to identify, and thereby regulate, individuals defined as nonnormative. For a particularly helpful discussion of the ways that postbellum America attempted to categorize personal identity into ostensibly clear binary structures (and the resulting effects of such classifications), see Siobhan B. Somerville, *Queering the Color Line: Race and the Invention of Homosexuality in American Culture* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2000). Somerville is specifically concerned with the ways that this era’s increased interest in analyzing sexual inversion was linked to the “separate but equal” segregation legitimized by the *Plessy* decision. For additional studies that examine how social difference in postbellum America comes to be understood as “essentially” pathological, see John D’Emilio and Estelle B. Freedman, eds., *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997); Marylynn Diggs, “Surveying the Intersection: Pathology, Secrecy, and the Discourses of Racial and Sexual Identity,” in *Critical Essays: Gay and Lesbian Writers of Color*, ed. Emmanuel S. Nelson (New York: Haworth Press, 1993), 1–19; and Zackodnik, “Little Romances.”
 16. See, for instance, James Christmann, who attributes Robert’s silence primarily to differences in class. Robert, he states, “the one character whom the reader knows might bring an echo, at least, of the subaltern voice into the high-culture discussions of the ‘thinkers and leaders of the race,’ is conspicuously silent at the *conversazione*. . . Robert loses his dialect as he changes class, but because he never completely abandons folk speech or its values, he goes silent at the second climax” (“Raising Voices, Lifting Shadows: Competing Voice-Paradigms in Frances E. W. Harper’s *Iola Leroy*,” *African American Review* 34.1 [2000]: 15).
 17. In this respect, *Iola Leroy* reveals the extent to which personal identity, particularly for those seen as cultural minorities, is fundamentally an oxymoron. Indeed, Harper’s characterizations (and the stereotypes she writes against) demonstrate the multiple ways that private identity is often an intensely public affair. As Phillip Brian Harper notes, “[S]ocial subjectivity depends upon a person’s having control over a body of interests that are agreed by all concerned parties to be *private* to that person. The problem, from the perspective of white patriarchal interests, is that

- such a recognition with respect to certain historically oppressed populations necessarily constitutes a compromise of white patriarchy's own subjective power" ("Private Affairs: Race, Sex, Property, and Persons," *GLQ* 1.2 [1994]: 124; emphasis in original).
18. For an important reading that also calls attention to the text's multiple discourses, see P. Gabrielle Foreman's analyses of *Iola Leroy*. Foreman argues that "Harper's allusions to symbols of [black] resistance known to some subsets of her readers—white reformists and those who followed the Black press, for example—add a calculated activist charge to a text whose reformist message is simultaneously expressed in more accommodating prose" ("‘Reading Aright’: White Slavery, Black Referents, and the Strategy of Histotextuality in *Iola Leroy*," *Yale Journal of Criticism* 10.2 [1997]: 329).
 19. For example, see Carby, who argues that by the end of the novel "the group of black intellectuals had become self-sufficient, self-contained, and independent of the parameters of white intellectual debate" (*Reconstructing*, 93). For a less sanguine assessment, see Peterson, who argues that the family's return South "signals Harper's retreat from any attempt as yet to construct a place for blacks within the political economy of the nation" ("‘Further Liftings,’" 109).
 20. Suzanne Bost and Marilyn Elkins are two of the few critics who explicitly (and positively) discuss the text's treatment of identity politics. In her discussion of Harper, Pauline Hopkins, Nella Larsen, and others, Bost suggests that "these visionaries imagine decentered identities and inessential racial constructions without letting go of powerful identity politics that are rooted in culturally and historically specific moments" ("Fluidity without Postmodernism: Michelle Cliff and the ‘Tragic Mulatta’ Tradition," *African American Review* 32.4 [1998]: 686). Similarly, Elkins notes that "readers of black women writers of the 1890's often ignore the constraints under which these authors worked, viewing their writing as its conventions prescribe and overlooking its subversions" ("Reading beyond the Conventions: A Look at Frances E. W. Harper's *Iola Leroy*, or *Shadows Uplifted*," *American Literary Realism* 22.2 [1990]: 44). Foreman's discussion of Harper's histotextuality also points to the novel's engagement with a form of pragmatic identity politics ("‘Reading Aright’").
 21. For example, see Christian, *Black Women*; Lewis, "Near-White"; and McDowell, "‘The Changing Same.’" Even critics attuned to the nuances of Harper's text (and who do not castigate her as a sell-out to her race) often describe the novel in primarily optimistic terms. See, for instance, Diggs, "Surveying."
 22. For an overview of Harper's political activism, see Foster, introduction to *Iola Leroy*.
 23. John Ernest points out the ways that the novel provides important lessons on the nation's civic duty: "*Iola Leroy* is a novel designed to inspire readers ‘to feel right’ by engraving upon readers’ hearts images representative of a

transcendent standard of thought and of action, a union of meaning and of mode, of matter and of manner. Harper, however, locates the vehicle of that transcendent standard specifically in African American thought and literary culture” (“From Mysteries to Histories: Cultural Pedagogy in Frances E. W. Harper’s *Iola Leroy*,” *American Literature* 64.3 [1992]: 509). M. Giulia Fabi notes a comparable dynamic in the text, claiming that “*Iola* travels beyond the privileges of whiteness into the realities of blackness, and her increasingly sophisticated knowledge of African American culture eventually culminates in the articulation of the social, economic, legal, and Christian principles upon which a utopian, egalitarian social order should be based” (“Reconstructing Literary Genealogies: Frances E. W. Harper’s and William Dean Howells’s Race Novels,” in *Soft Canons: American Women Writers and Masculine Tradition*, ed. Karen L. Kilcup [Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1999], 58). For a significant reading that also examines *Iola Leroy*’s pedagogical intent, see Lauren Berlant, *The Queen of America Goes to Washington City: Essays on Sex and Citizenship* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1997).

24. As Crenshaw explains, intersectional analysis may provide a means to mitigate such exclusions. With an understanding of how identity categories are complexly intertwined,

[I]t may be easier to understand the need for—and to summon—the courage to challenge groups that are after all, in one sense, “home” to us, in the name of the parts of us that are not made at home. This takes a great deal of energy and arouses intense anxiety. The most one could expect is that we will dare to speak against internal exclusions and marginalizations, that we might call attention to how the identity of “the group” has been centered on the intersectional identities of a few. . . . Through an awareness of intersectionality, we can better acknowledge and ground the differences among us and negotiate the means by which these differences will find expression in constructing group politics. (“Mapping,” 377)

25. Marita Sturken, *Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, the AIDS Epidemic, and the Politics of Remembering* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 7. In this regard, Kevin Gaines’s comments on the relationship between racial uplift and cultural memory are similarly useful: “Contestation surrounds the idea of uplift, which embraces elite and popular meanings and encompasses the tension between narrow, racial claims of progress and more democratic visions of social advancement. In another sense, uplift, as African Americans of all social positions have known it, marks the point where history falls silent and memory takes over” (*Uplifting*, 2).

CONCLUSION: RETURN FROM THE BEYOND

1. Barack Obama, “A More Perfect Union” (speech presented at the National Constitution Center, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, March 18, 2008).

2. Satya P. Mohanty, *Literary Theory and the Claims of History: Postmodernism, Objectivity, Multicultural Politics* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1997), 205–06.
3. Tellingly, the social effects of identity are seen, as well, in the sharp criticism leveled at the Obama administration by gay and lesbian populations in response to his Justice Department's ongoing support of the 1996 Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), which denies federal recognition of same-sex marriage and gives states the right to refuse to recognize such marriages performed in other states. While Obama himself has argued that DOMA is discriminatory, many gay rights activists were appalled at the language the Justice Department employed in its June 2009 legal defense of the law, particularly its comparison of same-sex marriage to incest and child abuse as a grounds for DOMA's constitutionality. The brief reads in part:

Both the First and Second Restatements of Conflict of Laws recognize that State courts may refuse to give effect to a marriage, or to certain incidents of a marriage, that contravene the forum State's policy. See Restatement (First) of Conflict of Laws § 134; Restatement (Second) of Conflict of Laws § 284.5. And the courts have widely held that certain marriages performed elsewhere need not be given effect, because they conflicted with the public policy of the forum. See, e.g., *Catalano v. Catalano*, 170 A.2d 726, 728–29 (Conn. 1961) (marriage of uncle to niece, “though valid in Italy under its laws, was not valid in Connecticut because it contravened the public policy of th[at] state”); *Wilkins v. Zelichowski*, 140 A.2d 65, 67–68 (N.J. 1958) (marriage of 16-year-old female held invalid in New Jersey, regardless of validity in Indiana where performed, in light of N.J. policy reflected in statute permitting adult female to secure annulment of her underage marriage); in re *Mortenson's Estate*, 316 P.2d 1106 (Ariz. 1957) (marriage of first cousins held invalid in Arizona, though lawfully performed in New Mexico, given Arizona policy reflected in statute declaring such marriages “prohibited and void”). (*Smelt, et al. v. United States of America, et al.*)
4. Christopher Castiglia, *Interior States: Institutional Consciousness and the Inner Life of Democracy in the Antebellum United States* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2008), 295–96. As critic Brook Thomas notes in a similar vein, “only when a space is allowed to exist between the political sphere and civil society can a productive interaction between the two take place, for it is only through the relative independence allowed in the relations of civil society that alternative possibilities to the existing basis of political rule can be imagined. Ideally, then, the interaction between civil society and the state allows for perpetual transformation that keeps the civil order from stagnating” (“Love and Politics, Sympathy and Justice in *The Scarlet Letter*,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Nathaniel Hawthorne*, ed. Richard H. Millington [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004], 180).

5. Kenji Yoshino, *Covering: The Hidden Assault on Our Civil Rights* (New York: Random House, 2006), ix.
6. Yoshino, *Covering*, 21–22.
7. Yoshino, *Covering*, xi. Mohanty similarly observes the oppressive forces of cultural assimilation. He notes that such expectations “[amount] to a repression of alternative sources of experience and value. That repression would explain why the feelings of minority groups about their ‘racial’ or cultural identities are so tenacious, for instance, or why claims about the significance of gender or sexual identity are more than the simple ‘politics of recognition.’ Quite often, such claims and feelings embody alternative and antihegemonic accounts of what is significant and in fact necessary for a more accurate understanding of the world we all share” (*Literary Theory*, 237–38).
8. Yoshino, *Covering*, 25; emphasis in original. In this respect, Yoshino notes, contemporary civil rights law may be flawed in assuming that “those in the so-called mainstream—those straight white men—do not have covered selves. They are understood only as impediments, as people who prevent others from expressing themselves, rather than as individuals are themselves struggling for self-definition” (*Covering*, 25). Obama makes a similar point: “Most working- and middle-class white Americans don’t feel that they have been particularly privileged by their race. Their experience is the immigrant experience—as far as they’re concerned, no one’s handed them anything; they’ve built it from scratch” (“More Perfect”). While the degree to which white people (and especially straight white men) may experience cultural oppression comparable to those belonging to more “traditional” minority groups is debatable, Yoshino’s and Obama’s comments helpfully point to the ways in which an alternative civil rights paradigm might emphasize a shared commitment to reject any call to mute difference in the name of “mainstream” assimilation.
9. Mohanty, *Literary Theory*, 216.
10. Obama, “More Perfect.”
11. Yoshino, *Covering*, xii.

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