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Circulation and Resistance:
The Marrow of Tradition and
the 1900 New Orleans Race Riot

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Many recent critics, such as Birgit Brander Rasmussen, Linda Belau and Ed Cameron, and Dolen Perkins, have rightly pointed out that Charles W. Chesnutt's now-canonical novel, *The Marrow of Tradition* (1901), models its fictional racial violence on the very real white supremacist massacre and political coup in Wilmington, North Carolina, in 1898.¹ Chesnutt himself acknowledged this in the *Cleveland World* at the time of the novel's publication.² Despite, or perhaps because of, this agreement over the novel's sources, a debate has emerged about whether the text affirms an essentially bourgeois, accommodationist agenda or instead challenges white supremacist violence with the potential for a violent black response.³ This debate has emerged in part because, as Perkins points out, Chesnutt's novel diverges significantly from the historical narrative of the Wilmington coup: In the novel, two members of the white mob are killed during the siege of a black hospital; during the actual incident, no whites were killed.⁴ Gregory E. Rutledge reads this divergence as affirmation of black resistance, writing that Josh Green, who leads the defense of the hospital, "gives dimension" to the "rational, vacillating, and compromised" protagonist Dr. Miller.⁵ Others have seen in Green's death a rejection of this violence. Robert Nowatzki writes, for example, that "Josh's death suggests that his manly, violent resistance to white racist terrorism is useless."⁶ This bifurcation of readings is understandable. On the one hand, it seems self-evident that the reader is meant to feel sympathy for Green and his supporters. Nonetheless, their valiant defense is

futile. The novel's revision of the Wilmington massacre, in other words, does not lend itself to easy interpretation.

I argue that we can understand this problem—and synthesize the dyadic critical readings it engenders—only by acknowledging a second major historical source for Chesnutt's writing: the New Orleans race riot of July 24–27, 1900. It is this event, *not* the one in Wilmington, that most prefigures the black-on-white violence of the novel's concluding scenes. Chesnutt himself drew this connection. In the Cleveland *World* article referenced above, Chesnutt writes: "The incidents of the race riot described in the story were studied from *two* recent outbreaks of that kind—one in Wilmington, N.C., and the other in New Orleans" (emphasis mine).⁷ Surprisingly, very few recent scholars have explored or even noted this link.⁸ But recognizing the connection between Robert Charles, whose standoff with a white mob in New Orleans resulted in the deaths of seven white police officers and vigilantes, and Josh Green, who is in many ways Charles's fictional corollary, is critical.⁹ If one reads the novel only against accounts of the Wilmington coup, then Green's standoff with the mob can be understood only as a kind of "epic" invention, as in Rutledge's interpretation, or as an exercise in futility, as in Nowatzki's.¹⁰ But when we recognize that *Marrow* responds to *two* incidents, it becomes clear that Chesnutt is offering up competing, overlapping accounts of racial conflict and showing their ultimate sameness.¹¹

The New Orleans riot had come to represent the radical potential for counterviolence enacted by a black underclass—it came to represent violent resistance to the lynch mob. In 1938, Jelly Roll Morton would claim that a song recounting Robert Charles's struggle against the white mob during the New Orleans incident had been performed by black musicians in that city throughout the years following the riot, but that it was actively suppressed by police and had since been forgotten.¹² The New Orleans riot, for people on both sides of the color line, had come to represent black-on-white violence. But for many white elites, Wilmington had come to represent something else: the tragedy of race relations in the South. While there were certainly defenders of white behavior in Wilmington, the *Cyclopedic Review's* conclusion that the behavior of Wilmington's vigilantes had been "disgraceful" was a common one.¹³ But Chesnutt's fictional bricolage reveals that, in the cases of both Wilmington and New Orleans, black print circulation and ambulatory movement had been interpreted by the white press as a justification for the lynching of black people. By invoking both incidents, Chesnutt's novel demonstrates the parallels between two events whose

similarities would not necessarily have been intuitive. The black counterviolence of the novel's final scenes is typically read as anomalous by contemporary scholars—either as Chesnutt's longing for an invented story of black violent resistance or as Chesnutt's critique of those who express such a longing. When the novel is read only against the Wilmington riots, this interpretation makes sense. An account of black counterviolence during that incident *would be* anomalous. But when we recognize that *The Marrow of Tradition* draws parallels between two ostensibly different incidents, we reveal that black nonviolence and black counterviolence represent a distinction without a difference. In Chesnutt's cosmology, both the (ostensibly nonviolent) black middle class and the (ostensibly violent) black underclass are equally the victims of a white print culture that consistently justifies lynching and a white society that consistently carries it out.

Put another way: Chesnutt's account of black victimization in Wilmington can be linked to a separate, parallel tradition of depicting black resistance in New Orleans. This tradition, embodied most obviously by Ida B. Wells-Barnett's *Mob Rule in New Orleans* (1900), attempted to defend those black men—particularly the emigration activist Robert Charles—who met vigilante mobs with force and were used, by a white press, as an *ex post facto* justification for lynching.¹⁴ Like Wells-Barnett, Chesnutt offered an account that explained and justified black counterviolence. But this project was not straightforward. For Chesnutt, black militancy was an ongoing reality: it was not something he openly endorsed, but neither was it something he could prevent. Far more than black militancy, however, the potential of white supremacist violence was an ever-present, salient reality. Chesnutt's writing was embedded within a historical moment in which every case of even nominal black resistance was rewritten by the white press as evidence of the revolutionary, antisocial potential of black men—a further justification of the extralegal violence perpetrated against them.¹⁵ Moreover, as scholars such as Jean M. Lutes and Jacqueline Goldsby have pointed out, lynching was a public act.¹⁶ This is in some ways the central point of *Marrow's* plot. As the white supremacist General Belmont explains in the novel, “The man who would govern a nation by writing its songs was a blethering idiot beside the fellow who can edit its news dispatches.”¹⁷ The news dispatches about the New Orleans riot were already circulating, claiming that widespread anti-black violence was justified by the threat of “Negro fiend” Robert Charles.¹⁸ Chesnutt's novel, then, *re-edits* the nation's news dispatches; it offers readers an

alternative circulation able to counter accounts of black militancy in the white press.

I use the word “circulation” here intentionally because it collects four divergent, yet overlapping, meanings. In the first and most obvious sense, Chesnutt’s novel (like Wells-Barnett’s pamphlet) is a text that would gain distribution to a mixed audience likely familiar with the news dispatches from New Orleans. The novel reframes and even contradicts earlier accounts of the July 1900 riot. But there are other senses in which the word functions here. There is also circulation in the ambulatory sense. Like news dispatches, people, too, can circulate—traveling “around” a country or a state and returning finally to their starting places. This ambulatory circulation was, in fact, often used as a central justification of lynching violence, as I will explore in detail below.¹⁹ There is, moreover, an archaic, chemical meaning, in which the process of “circulation” is one of refining a liquid by distilling it repeatedly. Much more so than Wells-Barnett’s pamphlet, Chesnutt’s novel accomplishes this form of circulation. In transforming Robert Charles into the character of Josh Green, Chesnutt’s novel strips away details that might distract from understanding the salient logics of lynching violence and black counterviolence. There is, finally, a fourth meaning to the word, a nutritive meaning. Circulation is the movement of sustaining fluids throughout the body of a living thing.²⁰ Even as Chesnutt’s novel counters the white press, it offers nourishment to a black readership hungry for some account of the ongoing sacrifice of black men who have been vilified in the white press even as they are murdered.²¹ By rewriting the real-life Robert Charles in the figure of Josh Green, Chesnutt (like Wells-Barnett) reveals the circulatory logics of lynching violence and counters those logics with textual and ambulatory circulations of his own. By writing fiction, however, Chesnutt is able to do more than this. His novel distills black counterviolence, revealing it not as a justification for lynching but as its result. And, finally, he honors black militants not as fallen soldiers in a valiant, or even a hopeless, war but as victims who were faced with an impossible choice: fight and die, or refuse to fight and die anyway.

Circulation and the Lynch Mob

Before going forward, it will be important to examine the logic that underpinned the turn-of-the-century lynch mob. I argue here that southern lynching depended for its coherence upon two forms of circulation: the textual, narrative circulation of lynching’s spectacular violence and

the (ostensibly threatening) ambulatory circulation of black bodies. The first of these claims has become a scholarly commonplace. Lynching events were invariably, and necessarily, public: witnessed, photographed, recounted in print and by word of mouth. Jean M. Lutes writes, for instance, that depictions of lynching in US newspapers expressed a horror that “was most often inspired not by the mob murder, but by the crime the victim was accused of committing.”²² The “justice” of the lynch mob, then, was predicated upon the myth of black violence—a myth that circulated, verbally and in print, to justify each murder.²³ Remember here General Belmont’s point about “the fellow who can edit . . . news dispatches.”²⁴ The narratives produced by these moments of public recounting, moreover, frequently deployed the same, recognizable tropes: the appearance of an outsider threatening the local community, the failure of the state to confront this threat, and the courageous vigilantes willing to reestablish order.²⁵

This recounting—in print, particularly—was central to establishing and reifying a white male hierarchy.²⁶ These textual circulations, in other words, point to a primary goal of lynching: the restoration and preservation of a particular political order. Goldsby writes that accounts of black violence, and the lynching they ostensibly enabled, point to a larger cultural anxiety about the potential “violence” of rising black political power. The “miscegenation” most feared, she writes, was not the rape of white women so frequently invoked but, in reality, the “fusion politics” that linked black and white voters into a power bloc able to challenge entrenched local interests.²⁷ While I am not fully convinced by Goldsby’s willingness to explain the personal as *primarily* the manifestation of abstract political forces, I am convinced that the two fears were intrinsically interanimating. The fear of the personal and the fear of the political mutually exacerbated one another, both serving to reify a white-dominated political order.

This helps to explain the second feature of lynching violence that will concern us here: the ambulatory circulation of black bodies. It was not merely the black body’s alleged potential for violence but its potential for ambulatory orbits that mobs deployed as a justification for each extralegal killing. The act of traveling and crossing borders can function as “synonymous with political freedom” both because, as Inderpal Grewal points out, it summons romantic tropes once the sole purview of white men and because, I would add, it defies the ability of state and local authorities to regulate the spatial organization of political subjects.²⁸ The widespread migration of African Americans after emancipation

emblemized the political impotence of white southern elites. The white political anger that emerged from this context of black ambulatory movement, moreover, is borne out in lynching statistics. In their recent study of nine hundred confirmed lynching incidents between 1882 and 1929, Bailey et al. determined that the “marginalization” hypothesis is a more statistically convincing explanation of the likelihood that any individual person would be lynched in the South than the “social transgression” hypothesis. In other words, an unmarried black man who had spent time outside a community was far more likely to be lynched than a head of household who had resided in a community but had risen “above his place.”²⁹ In the terms the novel gives us, this means that Josh Green would be a far likelier target for violence than Dr. Miller, although neither would necessarily be safe.

This white anger in the face of black ambulatory orbits is extremely important when considering Robert Charles and, ultimately, when considering Chesnut’s recuperation of him. White-dominated print narratives highlighted both Charles’s potential for violence, which is unsurprising, and the political threat of his physical circulation, which is far more telling. To understand this, we need to examine more closely the events of the New Orleans riot. Robert Charles allegedly shot and wounded New Orleans Police Department officer August T. Mora on the evening of July 23, 1900. Mora had been trying to arrest Charles and Lenard Pierce for waiting on a doorstep on Dryades Street, which was in a white New Orleans neighborhood.³⁰ It isn’t clear who fired first, Mora or Charles, but both men were wounded in the exchange and Charles escaped, setting off a four-day, citywide riot.³¹ By the morning of July 24, a mob of white vigilantes was looking to lynch Charles but settled for beating, shooting, and sometimes killing other, more vulnerable black people. On July 27, police and the white mob finally found Charles in a building at 1210 Saratoga Street. By the time they had smoked him out and shot him to death, Charles had killed seven of his pursuers and wounded twenty others, eight severely.³² Five police officers would be dismissed for cowardice because they fled when confronted by him.³³ Charles, in other words, triggered white fears of black militancy.

What is most critical for my purposes, though, is that newspapers immediately fixed upon Charles’s threatening status as a circulating agent.³⁴ By July 25, after he had reportedly killed two police officers in a continued attempt to evade authorities, the newspapers began labeling him a revolutionary. The *St. Louis Republic*, for instance, identified

Charles as a “negro agitator and incendiary.” As proof of this, the newspaper claimed “the murderer was a fanatic hater of the whites, that he had been engaged in distributing literature among the blacks, calling upon the ‘crushed and trampled spirit’ of the negro to assert itself, and had boasted that he would lead a race riot.”³⁵ This “literature,” as Wells-Barnett would demonstrate, was a series of back-to-Africa pamphlets called the *Voice of Missions*, which had been printed and promoted by Bishop Henry M. Turner’s African Methodist Episcopal Church.³⁶ The periodicals were not actually revolutionary. But, for the *Republic*, a text calling upon the “crushed and trampled spirit” of African Americans is linked by assumption to the ongoing racial violence in New Orleans. Charles’s status as a circulator of such a text, moreover, defines him necessarily as the leader of the imagined, emergent race war.

Other newspapers made the same rhetorical leap—interpreting the ambulatory movement of black bodies and the circulation of black-authored texts as revolutionary. The *Daily Picayune*’s description of Charles bears quoting at some length. In a front page article on July 25, the newspaper reported that Charles “is supposed to be wanted in Vicksburg, and rather than go to jail he would fight.” The report goes on to describe his rented room as evidence of the threat he posed:

Go into his room now, and hundreds of papers of the *Voice of Missions* can be found. Nearly all of these copies are replete with articles condemning the actions of the whites and announcing the strength of the negroes and suggesting a stronger union of the blacks. [. . .] Prominent among the things found in his room was “Liberia and the Negro,” a pamphlet which is vindictive in its treatment of the white race. This inflammatory article stirred Charles to a great extent, and he used to express to his friends that he HATED ALL WHITE MEN.³⁷

The danger Robert Charles represents here is both textual and ambulatory. Charles has been engaged in the distribution of a radical text and in unregulated movement throughout the city, state, and possibly nation. It is not merely Charles’ individual potential for violence that threatens—the fact that he “HATED ALL WHITE MEN,” for instance—but his potential to spread this violence. Charles ostensibly transmits a violent ideology through a print subculture. The *Voice of Missions*, which advocated emigration to Liberia, is here read as a text “condemning the

actions of the whites and announcing the strength of the negroes.”³⁸ There is something telling about this anxiety. The circulation of black texts can *only* be interpreted as conspiratorial and dangerous, just as the ambulatory orbits of a black man can only be interpreted as violent.

For Chesnutt, Wells-Barnett, and other writers attempting to confront lynching culture, newspaper depictions of this kind represented a significant challenge. The accounts of Charles could not be less true—or more compelling to a white audience already convinced of black militancy. The historian William Ivy Hair determined that Charles was not “wanted” for any crime in Vicksburg but had been involved in a shoot-out with a white brakeman for a railroad company in May 1892 in Rolling Fork, Mississippi, about forty miles north of Vicksburg. No one was hurt, but Robert Charles and his brother, Henry Charles, had shocked the small community by arriving from out of town carrying rifles and demanding the return of a stolen pistol. The two Charles brothers were in some sense the victims in this incident—the unidentified white brakeman fired first.³⁹ But the *Daily Picayune* manages to reframe the dispute as evidence of the threat Charles posed. Likewise, only a very ungenerous reading of the *Voice of Missions* could infer that it was a militant, revolutionary periodical. And yet it was part of the print circulation of a subculture to which white readers had little access. The *Daily Picayune* account confirms long-held fears that the black underclass could organize conspiratorially through the circulation of print materials and the ambulatory, border-crossing movement of bodies.

The newspaper, then, interprets Charles’ circulation of print material, his movement, and ultimately his violent resistance as linked justifications for lynching him. It is worth noting that this treatment mirrors the white response to the Wilmington, North Carolina, *Daily Record*, which printed an antilynching editorial that was ostensibly responsible for setting off the coup fictionalized in *Marrow’s* plot.⁴⁰ As the white supremacist Major Carteret explains about the editorial (which in the novel appears in the fictional *Afro-American Banner*), black free speech “violates an unwritten law of the South.”⁴¹ In order to respond, entrenched white power interests will “edit [the nation’s] news dispatches” to depict this example of black print circulation as necessarily revolutionary, just as white writers did in the New Orleans case.⁴² The plan of *Marrow’s* three white supremacists, in other words, is to offer a print circulation that subverts black protests by turning a defense of black

civil rights into a further justification for the lynching of black people. This is precisely what happened in the novel, during the real-life Wilmington coup, and during the New Orleans riot.

Writers like Chesnutt faced a problem: how does one write in protest of lynching in a culture that perceives black writing as a further justification for lynching? Moreover, how does one defend the black mobility necessary for the circulation of ideas in a society that rewrites black mobility as yet another justification for lynching? People need to be able to write and they need to be able to move if there is to be any organized political action. And yet these circulations—textual and ambulatory—were organizational strategies imperiling the lives of blacks, or at least strategies that provided tempting *ex post facto* justifications for white-supremacist violence. The figure of Charles, moreover, would be particularly difficult to recuperate. Newspapers had already established him as both an ambulatory agent of black militancy and a circulator of revolutionary print.

Recuperating Textual and Ambulatory Circulation

Wells-Barnett's *Mob Rule in New Orleans* points the way through this paradox—deploying strategies Chesnutt would build upon and revise in *Marrow*. In some ways, this is unsurprising. Wells-Barnett clearly recognized the overwhelming danger to which black writers and political activists were subjected. During the same month as Charles's standoff with the white brakeman—May 1892—she published an editorial in *Free Speech* calling accounts of black men raping white women a “thread bare lie.” Her newspaper office was burned, her business manager was run out of town, and her life was threatened.⁴³ It is important to recognize, then, that what Wells-Barnett attempts in *Mob Rule in New Orleans* is not a denial; she denies neither Robert Charles' textual circulations nor his ambulatory orbits. Rather, she attempts to counter white print culture by seizing these features of Charles' identity and giving them new meaning.

First, Wells-Barnett recuperates black textual circulation by revising its implications. She writes:

If it is true that the workman is known by his tools, certainly no harm could ever come from the doctrines which were preached by Charles or the papers and pamphlets distributed by him. Nothing ever written in the *Voice of Missions*, and nothing ever published in the pamphlets above alluded to in the remotest way suggest that

a peaceable man should turn lawbreaker, or that any man should dye his hands in his brother's blood.⁴⁴

By this reading, Charles has been the victim of what Mr. Watson warns Green about in *Marrow*. When Green suggests organizing a body of African Americans to defend Sandy from lynching, Mr. Watson explains that “you would probably be arrested as an accomplice.”⁴⁵ The problem of misinterpretation plagues African Americans who try to organize, to circulate, and to defend the rights of those around them. It is this misreading to which Wells-Barnett responds, forcefully and directly. In Robert Charles, she recognizes a man who travels and “preaches doctrines” that are inherently peaceful. This preaching has been misread by white newspapers as “fanatic” hatred, but Wells-Barnett’s pamphlet circulates a new reading and thereby re-edits the New Orleans news dispatches. Nothing of what Charles preached or distributed should indicate that he would ever “turn lawbreaker.” The only possible result of *this* reading, then, is that Charles killed the police officers in self-defense.

And this reveals Wells-Barnett’s second project of recuperation. She reveals not only that Charles’ circulation of the *Voice of Missions* was peaceful, but that Charles’ bodily, ambulatory circulation was peaceful as well. Remember that early reports figured him as a kind of traveling revolutionary or criminal—he was “supposed to be wanted in Vicksburg.”⁴⁶ Bryan Wagner argues that Charles had been treated as “structurally indistinguishable from a vagrant” in that he was targeted by police based upon his spatial position—he was waiting in a white neighborhood.⁴⁷ I think this is correct. Wells-Barnett’s response, however, confronts these police assumptions and undermines them. She reprints a letter from D. J. Flummer, who knew Charles through the Emigration Society. Flummer writes that Charles “always appeared to be mild but earnest in his advocacy of emigration, and never to my knowledge used any method or means that would in the least appear unreasonable, and had always kept within the bounds of law.”⁴⁸ In this alternative circulation, we have a text promoting the idea that a man who had killed or injured dozens of his armed pursuers was in fact “mild,” “earnest,” and peaceable.⁴⁹ Wells-Barnett concludes by writing that Charles’s “work for many years had been with Christian people, circulating emigration pamphlets.” She writes that he lived peacefully and “so he would have died had not he raised his hand to resent unprovoked assault and unlawful arrest that fateful Monday night.”⁵⁰ Robert

Charles, the “Race-War Leader” and “Negro Fiend,” has been transformed into a man who peacefully traveled among African Americans and died defending his own life from an angry mob.⁵¹ While Charles’s ideological position might have appeared threatening, while some even attributed a criminal history to him, the final days of his life are read in this new print circulation as a noble defense of his legal rights.

In some ways, this direct recuperation is also Chesnutt’s project. Josh Green’s initially threatening ambulatory orbits are refigured as peaceful. In the reader’s first encounter with Green, he is traveling from Philadelphia to “Wellington.” Moreover, the narrative initially leads one to suspect that Green is on a mission of vengeance.⁵² In other words, Josh Green represents the lynch mob’s greatest fear (or, perhaps, desire)—a dangerous black man who travels secretly within (and possibly beyond) the borders of the United States, and who is able to freely transmit information and ideology. Moreover, Green’s presence on the train goes unexplained, and the reader is initially left to infer that he is tracking McBane, possibly in order to kill him. The novel immediately begins to dismantle this interpretation, however. By the time of Green’s death, the reader will realize that his violence is only ever deployed defensively. Green becomes the sort of man Wells-Barnett depicts: a man whose orbits threaten only those who threaten him.

By 1900, it was clear that the widespread lynching of black men was predicated upon the myth of their violent potential and, at least partly, their movement. Wells-Barnett and Chesnutt challenge the myth of black violence even as they maintain the right of African Americans to defend themselves. The potential of militant black action, which for the white press functioned as a justification for lynching, is here rewritten as lynching’s inevitable consequence.

Chesnutt’s Distillatory and Nutritive Circulations

But Chesnutt goes farther than this. As I argued above, ex post facto justifications of lynching were based, at least partly, upon the ambulatory orbits of black bodies. Wells-Barnett, moreover, was engaged in a project of defending lynching victims by offering up alternative accounts of these orbits. But fiction offered Chesnutt a more multilayered opportunity to counter the circulatory logics of the lynch mob with logics of his own. He could, in other words, simply rewrite events in more favorable terms. I would like to turn to two alternative forms of circulation here: the distillatory and the nutritive. *The Marrow of Tradition*, I argue, was not simply invested in a project of defending black orbits

and of indicting the authorizations of violence enabled by white print circulation. Rather, Chesnutt's text is engaged in the process of *distilling* accounts of black movement, boiling away the volatile compounds of a white print culture's interpretive practices and finally offering readers the most essential—the most nutritive—account of a militant lynching victim. This process is not, strictly speaking, a defense of black militancy. Instead, it is a radical revision of what black militancy means in the face of a white press that insists upon it as the cause of lynching rather than the consequence.

This distillation of Robert Charles' black-on-white violence is critical for two reasons. First, as Chesnutt's narrator tells us, black militant action has a spotty record in the Americas. He writes, for instance, that "there was never, on the continent of America, a successful slave revolt."⁵³ Black militancy—from the vantage point of Chesnutt's narrator and, I suspect, Chesnutt himself—is a thoroughly understandable dead end. But, second and even more important, the danger of black militancy *to African Americans* was increasing in the wake of the New Orleans riot. Or at least it certainly looked that way. Robert Charles's death was interpreted by many blacks in New Orleans and throughout the United States as a call to arms. In Battle Creek, Michigan, a black boxer named George Walker (or possibly Baker) tried to kill the local chief of police out of sympathy for Charles and was arrested.⁵⁴ In a separate incident, Fred Clark, a black man who had informed on Charles during the riot, was killed. Clark was sitting and reading a book on his doorstep on South Rampart Street in New Orleans on September 2—less than two months after the July incident—when Lewis Forstall, a New Orleans resident who had been sympathetic to Charles, walked up and wordlessly shot Clark in the head, killing him.⁵⁵ A few weeks before, in August, the *Daily Picayune* reported that Thomas J. Amos, an African American man who was lynched in Cheneyville, Louisiana, had been inspired by the spirit of Robert Charles when he taunted the lynch mob—telling them he'd put his own head in the noose and jump if only to show them "how a man can die."⁵⁶ Whether Amos's bravery was actually inspired by Charles or not, the public perception certainly seems to have been that violent—or at least steely-eyed and determined—black resistance was emerging in the aftermath of Charles's martyrdom. Chesnutt, then, was speaking to multiple audiences in his depiction of Green. On the one hand, his novel ran the risk of emasculating its central figure of resistance, undermining the capacity of a black man to defend himself in the immediate aftermath of Charles's spectacular

death. On the other hand, the depiction of any Charles-like resistance ran the risk of offending Chesnutt's white readership and, to his black readership, advocating a kind of violence that looked increasingly futile.

Distillatory circulation is critical to solving both of these problems. As I argued above, this form of circulation removes particular details in order to more fully reveal others through a process of repeated revision and recounting. More so than the Robert Charles song, which was performed in New Orleans in the years following the 1900 riot, or even Wells-Barnett's pamphlet, which was based directly upon first-hand and newspaper accounts, the version of Robert Charles appearing in Chesnutt's novel is a revision of revisions.⁵⁷ His story has been filtered so many times that readers today are only nominally aware of the reference. Robert Charles's violence, in other words, has been distilled. Moreover, in this revision of Robert Charles as Josh Green, we see three important changes. First, black militancy is revealed as wholly the result of white lynching logics and is only dangerous to members of lynch mobs themselves. Second, black violence is more closely focused. Robert Charles was terrifying to whites in part because of his outsized ability to commit acts of violence against his pursuers. Chesnutt's novel focuses the mind by giving readers a single white antagonist who functions as the target of Green's defensive militancy. And, third, the price of black bravery is rendered precisely the same as the price of black cowardice. In other words, the violence of Josh Green's final standoff against the white mob functions as a kind of crucible in which the mob is revealed as the creator and the victim of the very militancy that ostensibly enables it, and in which it is shown that African Americans have an impossible choice when faced with white violence: fight and die, or surrender and die.

The first element of Chesnutt's project, revealing that white mobs are in fact the *producers* of black militancy and its sole victims, forms a central feature of the novel. The reader not only learns that Green's desire for vengeance is understandable, she also learns that Green will never really perpetrate acts of violence without further justification. When Green was ten years old, the reader learns, he watched his father being shot to death by a mob of Klansmen and his mother was "skeered" to such a degree that "she ain' be'n herse'f f'm dat day ter dis."⁵⁸ But while Green initially wants revenge, this desire almost immediately transforms itself. As Miller tells the reader, Green and his men "might resist attack; he thought it extremely unlikely that they would begin it."⁵⁹ The

narrator amplifies this: "It had been Josh's plan merely to remain quietly and peaceably in the neighborhood."⁶⁰ In the final standoff, Green doesn't even strike until the moment *after* he is shot by McBane. While Green threatens to be a revolutionary at the outset of the novel, he is quickly and irrevocably transformed before the reader's eyes. The novel seems to foreclose even the possibility of a black revolutionary who would act first, or kill out of spite, vengeance, or unrighteous anger. Instead, the novel explains that "they that do violence must expect to suffer violence."⁶¹ It indicts the leader of the white mob for creating the very violence of which he is the victim.

But in press accounts of the New Orleans riot, it was the black militants who were the aggressors. Chesnutt elides elements of the popularly received narrative—elements that, it should be noted, turned out to be partly untrue. When Robert Charles was finally discovered on July 27, New Orleans Police Department Sergeant Gabe Porteous and Corporal John F. Lally had just arrested a man named Silas Jackson and were conducting a search of the area. Charles had been hiding in a closet with a small stove for melting lead pipe and forging bullets. When Porteous and Lally entered, Charles immediately shot both men from the safety of the closet. Porteous was struck in the chest and died immediately. Lally was struck in the stomach and didn't die until the next morning. Jackson fled and was captured by another pair of officers a short time later.⁶² But this was not the story in the press. The *Daily Picayune* reported on what looked like the sensational beginnings of a race war. In the newspaper account, the officers entered the building to discover "CHARLES WAS AT THE STAIRHEAD, waiting with his rifle in his hand. Behind him were [George] Ford and Silas Jackson, and [?] Harris was somewhere in the room. No doubt they were all armed, but Silas Jackson had a revolver and Harris had a pistol, too. But Charles was the leader."⁶³ It is only then, as two police officers stand off against four armed black men, that Charles fires and kills the officers. Charles is ultimately left by his comrades. Ford hides, and Jackson and "Harris" flee when the resistance looks doomed. Robert Charles's flight from police was understood by the general public—at least those who believed the newspapers—as the beginning of a revolution, of a war that would endanger the general public. But Josh Green represents a distilled version of this potential, his more focused militancy a kind of clarified liquid in which one can see that he only threatens those who threaten him. Indeed, Robert Charles really did only shoot at those who were trying to capture or kill him. But Chesnutt's process is nonetheless distillatory

because it eliminates complex and volatile histories to reveal a single, animating element: that the dead men (Porteous and Lally in the one case, McBane and his unnamed vigilante companion in the other) caused their own deaths by their aggression.

This brings us to the novel's second, related project of distillatory circulation. Charles's outsized violence is reduced, focused. One reason Charles survived as long as he did was that he never hesitated to fire first. When, in the early morning hours of July 24, police surrounded Charles' rented room—this only a short time after his initial encounter with Officer Mora—Charles began shooting before they saw him. He killed two police officers and forced the remainder to retreat, buying himself critical time to escape.⁶⁴ When Lally and Porteous searched the 1208 Saratoga Street building in which he was hiding on July 27, Charles fired from cover and, again, bought himself time to escape to the next building.⁶⁵ And, when the annex at 1210 Saratoga Street was surrounded by a massive mob of police, militiamen, and vigilantes, and Charles likely realized that hope was lost, he fired first yet again and killed Albert Brumfield, one of the white vigilantes.⁶⁶ Charles's decision to repeatedly act first was in many ways reasonable. Throughout the days of violence, mobs of angry whites searched the city looking to kill him, and when they didn't find him, they often killed other African American residents. Furthermore, the \$250 reward offered by the mayor was not for Charles's capture but for the delivery of his body.⁶⁷ Wells-Barnett defends Charles for these very reasons—he had to fight or die, and so he chose to fight.⁶⁸ But Chesnut is able to re-author Green's actions as totally defensive, and so Green continually holds his fire. The final standoff between Green and the mob is in many ways similar to the one between Charles and the mob. Both men crouch behind a window casement, taking cover and occasionally firing at the crowd outside. Both men, also, are "smoked out" of their hiding places. But, in Chesnut's version, the first shot comes from the crowd and "splintered the window-casing close to Josh's head."⁶⁹ By contrast, Charles's final position was revealed when he shot into a crowd searching the area around 1208 and 1210 Saratoga Street.⁷⁰ Green, it seems, will never fire first. Charles, by contrast, always did.

There are other ways in which these final moments are designed to reduce the violence of Green's actions vis-à-vis Charles. Green, frankly, isn't half as good a shot as Charles had been. From a study of source documents, Hair concludes that Charles's aim was nothing short of remarkable:

Counting the shots he fired into Porteous and Lally, it was estimated that he pulled the trigger of his Winchester about fifty times between 3:20 and 5 PM that Friday afternoon of July 27. Apparently he did not use his Colt revolver. Of the fifty bullets from Charles' Winchester, twenty-four hit human flesh. For, in addition to Porteous, Lally, and Brumfield, he fatally wounded two other men and injured nineteen more.⁷¹

Green is clearly a dangerous man, but Charles inspired genuine, and in some ways well-founded, terror. Newspapers referred to him as a "monster," a "cocaine fiend," a "ruthless black butcher," and a "bloodthirsty champion of African supremacy."⁷² These openly racist descriptions offer little to help us understand Charles himself, but they certainly offer insight into the very real fear he inspired. Remember here that five police officers were later dismissed for cowardice because they fled from Charles.⁷³ Even after peeling away layer upon layer of racist interpretation, the story of Robert Charles contains violence—perhaps justified violence—in tremendous excess. Chesnutt, then, borrows from Charles's final moments but reduces his capacity for dealing death to the white mob. In the novel, the first death of a white man outside the Wellington hospital is displaced—attributed neither to Green nor to one of his men. The reader knows only that "a negro had killed a white man."⁷⁴ Green kills only Captain McBane, whose life he would have spared had McBane not led the attack on the hospital. Rather than reproducing the body count newspaper readers encountered in the wake of the New Orleans riot—Charles killed seven and wounded twenty others, eight severely—the novel shows the death of a single victim: a victim not of black militancy, per se, but of the consequences of his own anti-black violence.⁷⁵

The third element of this distillatory project is perhaps the most radical, and it is also the most salient in understanding how Chesnutt undermines the logic of lynch mob violence. In *Marrow*, the price of black militancy and the price of black passivity are the same. Both Green and those who abandon Green are killed. According to the mistaken press accounts, Charles was leading a revolutionary force. Green's companions in the novel's hospital standoff have corollaries in the earlier news accounts. The difference, though, is that Chesnutt's narrative is much more severe about the fate of those caught by the white mob. The press reported that those who abandoned Charles survived; in

Chesnutt's story, the price of abandoning Green is death. The character of Jerry Letlow is perhaps the most significant of Chesnutt's revisions here. Jerry is placed in an unfortunate position at the end of the novel: he doesn't want to fight but he's caught in the hospital with Josh Green, surrounded by a mob. This is pretty evidently modeled on a real-life figure.⁷⁶ An African-American man named George Ford was in the 1208 Saratoga Street building when Charles shot Porteous and Lally at around 4 PM on July 27. According to Hair, Ford tried to flee the scene but encountered police, militiamen, and vigilantes. He retreated inside 1210 Saratoga Street, apparently not realizing that Charles had fled to the same building. Throughout the standoff between Charles and a mob of thousands, Ford would remain hidden beneath a bed, only a short distance from the windows through which Charles fired at the group outside.⁷⁷ George Ford's bizarre experience—hiding from a white mob directly in that mob's line of fire—was widely reported. Hair cites accounts of Ford's experience in the *Chicago Tribune*, the *New Orleans Daily States*, and the *New Orleans Sunday States*.⁷⁸

But Chesnutt here makes important revisions. Jerry is killed as he tries to surrender: "Jerry's poor flag of truce, his explanations, his reliance upon his white friends, all failed him in the moment of supreme need."⁷⁹ George Ford, by contrast, was spared. The *Daily Picayune* reported that he survived the incident by hiding underneath a mattress, where he was discovered after the shootout. The newspaper reports: "In a moment the bed was torn of all its appendages and the form of a burley negro was found . . . A dozen guns and revolvers were pointed at the head of the negro, but the police and the cooler heads interfered."⁸⁰ The press depicted Ford as compliant and nonviolent, as a betrayer of the militant revolutionaries among whom he had found himself. Ford, according to the *Daily Picayune*, "shows a disposition to talk" to authorities, and might help them discover "an organized gang of desperate negroes."⁸¹ Ford's willing compliance with white authorities, it seems, is repeated in Jerry. But when Chesnutt writes Jerry, that willing compliance with the white mob is revealed as ultimately self-defeating.

Chesnutt's rendering of black compliance, though, gives us a far more accurate picture of lynch-mob logics. Take, for instance, another of *Marrow's* militant victims. The final figure to stand by Green is the black man who fought bravely but at the last moment "turned instinctively to flee, but had scarcely faced around before he fell, pierced in the back by a dozen bullets."⁸² While a corollary to this can perhaps be seen

in the press accounts of Silas Jackson, who survived the New Orleans riot, a closer corollary is probably Dan Wright, who was killed two years before during the Wilmington coup.⁸³ Wright had tried to fight the mob, but was knocked to the ground by a man wielding a pipe. He was then allowed to leave but was shot by about fifty guns when he had reached the distance of about forty yards.⁸⁴ The New Orleans press had falsely reported that a group of black men helped Robert Charles but abandoned him at the last moment. These fictionalized men had been spared. But Chesnutt's novel boils away the false particularity of those accounts by strategically turning back to the Wilmington incident, giving readers the account of a brave man who nevertheless turns to flee and is killed. Chesnutt highlights the cruel paradox of lynching violence, the way in which resistance and nonresistance are interpreted as containing the same latent, racially encoded threat.

And this, finally, is why I argue that the circulations of *Marrow* are nutritive. As Sheila Smith McKoy writes, *The Marrow of Tradition* "commemorates" the black victims of mob violence.⁸⁵ The novel reveals the circulatory logic of lynching—the ways in which it depends both upon the distribution of white print materials and the suspicion of ambulatory black bodies and circulating black texts. But *Marrow* also confronts these logics with circulations of its own (textual, ambulatory, distillatory). Chesnutt reinterprets the overdetermined bodies of ostensible black militants not by endorsing their violence but by showing how their violence was the result of an interpretive double bind: all action is read by lynch mobs as militant action. In the moment after Green's death, when the fictional crowd "dashed forward to wreak vengeance on his dead body," Chesnutt achieves a kind of rhetorical victory over the mob. Chesnutt's crowd finds Green with "a smile still upon his face."⁸⁶ This decision *not* to describe in detail the desecration of Green's body, moreover, allows his victory over McBane to dominate the chapter. When Charles was killed, by comparison, the desecration was reported widely and in chilling detail. It was, moreover, very often justified.⁸⁷ Chesnutt's choice, then, is to strategically reduce the violence of the moment in order to place emphasis on its circular logic, on the ways white fear of black violence produced the very black violence that ostensibly enabled the white fear. The reader is left not with the lingering horror of the white mob's desecration of a black body, although Chesnutt acknowledges this desecration. Instead, the reader is offered an (albeit circumscribed) account of a black man's provisional victory over the white mob. It is a temporary victory. More death will

come, and the cycle will repeat. And yet it is one worthy of our commemoration.

Racial animus is itself distorting. The logic that enabled anti-black lynching violence, depending as it did upon the myth of black threat, warped the experiences and attitudes of people on both sides of the color line. *The Marrow of Tradition* enacts this distortion. It does not endorse the brief, doomed moments of black militancy in its final chapters, but neither does it argue for their futility. Rather, the novel ennobles those black people who are forced by circumstances to defend themselves and reveals, finally, that black and white alike are victims in a white-supremacist culture of constant paranoia. What Chesnutt gives his reader is not simply a rhetorical defense of a black man forced by circumstances to fight but an indictment of the cultural logic that perpetuates racial violence in the first place.

The novel speaks to a larger paradox, one illustrated by a lynching incident in the immediate aftermath of Robert Charles's death. Thomas J. Amos—the man who shouted to the mob in Cheneyville, Louisiana, that he would show them “how a man can die” just before he was, in fact, killed—had attempted to resist his murderers when they came for him. As Amos lifted his gun to fire at the approaching group, his father took “the gun from his grasp and turned him over to those sent to arrest him.”⁸⁸ The tragedy of this moment is evident, and I suspect would not be lost upon Chesnutt. Amos's father realized that his son would be killed if he resisted. Ultimately, however, the younger man was killed anyway. The relentless logic—or, in reality, illogic—of lynch mobs perceived in black bodies either circulatory, revolutionary violence made manifest or its latent potential. Resistance was interpreted as revolutionary violence; nonresistance was interpreted as potential revolutionary violence.

But *Marrow* speaks to the dangerous logic of white supremacy from the other direction, as well. Chesnutt's text reveals that the white racial animus implicit within lynching's circulatory logic in fact circles back upon the very people who articulate it. The fellow who edits the nation's news dispatches, in other words, might very well find himself victim to the racial violence his news dispatches inaugurate; or he will, at the very least, find himself the psychic victim of a white press that depends as it does upon an articulation of constant racial threat. Robert Charles's death was unnecessary. He was threatened with lynching because he had waited on a street corner. And yet the deaths of Porteous and Lally, two of the white officers Charles killed, were equally unnecessary. They

died because they were ordered to look for a man whose crime was to wait on a street corner. Green dies at the end of the novel, yes, but so does McBane. Major Carteret's dying son is nearly denied medical care because his father's news dispatches inaugurated a fresh cycle of violence.⁸⁹

Eric Sundquist is correct, I think, when he writes that the partial endorsement of Green's behavior offered by the novel "introduces a dimension of thought rather at odds with Chesnutt's prevailing sensibility."⁹⁰ But Chesnutt's "prevailing sensibility," I argue, is not the text's central concern at all. As a member of the black intelligentsia living in the North, light-skinned enough to "pass" in many social situations even if he chose not to, Chesnutt's life was a world away from Robert Charles's. And Chesnutt's novel acknowledges the gulf by giving us characters like Green and Miller. But the novel also shows that the gulf is beside the point. *The Marrow of Tradition* recognizes the inescapable paradox in which all US Americans lived: a society based upon the myth of constant racial threat produces cycles of inescapable racial violence—regardless of the behavior of that society's underclass. And a white-dominated press, which interprets all racial violence as further evidence of the latent, violent potential of black bodies, is itself implicated in perpetuating the catastrophe to which it is ultimately a victim. But Chesnutt positions himself as a writer able to distill accounts of this violence, to reveal the pointlessness and illogic of racial paranoia, and finally to give some measure of honor to the murdered, desecrated bodies of white supremacy's victims. When we read of Green, we are not meant to choose a mode of navigating a white-supremacist society. We are meant to recognize, and to mourn, the impossibility of choosing.

Notes

1. Birgit Brander Rasmussen, "‘Those that do violence must expect to suffer’: Disrupting Segregationist Fictions of Safety in Charles W. Chesnutt's *The Marrow of Tradition*," in *Representing Segregation: Toward an Aesthetics of Living Jim Crow, and Other Forms of Racial Division*, ed. Brian Norman and Piper Kendrix Williams (Albany: SUNY Press, 2010), 73–89; Linda Belau and Ed Cameron, "Charles W. Chesnutt, Jack Thorne and the African American Response to the 1898 Wilmington Race Riot," in *Charles Chesnutt Reappraised: Essays on the First Major African American Fiction Writer*, ed. David Garrett Izzo and Maria Orban (Jefferson, NC: McFarlane and Company, 2009), 7–25; Dolen Perkins, "‘White Heat’ in Wilmington: The Dialogue between Journalism and Literature in *The Marrow of Tradition*," *North Carolina Literary Review* 11 (2002): 38–47.

2. Charles Chesnutt, "Chesnutt's Own View of His New Story, *The Marrow of Tradition*," in *Charles W. Chesnutt: Novels, Stories, and Essays*, ed. Werner Sollors (New York: Library of America, 2002), 873.

3. For notable entries in this debate, see Richard Yarborough, "Violence, Manhood, and Black Heroism: The Wilmington Riot in Two Turn-of-the-Century African American Novels," in *Democracy Betrayed: The Wilmington Race Riot of 1898 and Its Legacy*, ed. John Hope Franklin (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), esp. 237; Bryan Wagner, "Charles Chesnutt and the Epistemology of Racial Violence," *American Literature* 73, no. 2

(2001): 333, n. 3; Adélékè Adèkò, *The Slave's Rebellion: Fiction, History, Orature* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), esp. 51 and 57; Lenore Jean Daniels, "Echoes of the African Caribbean Revolution in *The Marrow of Tradition*," *Griot* 20, no. 2 (2001): 1-7; Joyce Pettis, "The Literary Imagination and the Historic Event: Chesnutt's Use of History in *The Marrow of Tradition*," *South Atlantic Review* 55, no. 4 (1990): 37-48; William Gleason, "Voices at the Nadir: Charles Chesnutt and David Bryant Fulton," in *Critical Essays on Charles W. Chesnutt*, ed. Joseph R. McElrath Jr. (New York: G. K. Hall and Co., 1999), 224, 240; and Gregory E. Rutledge, "All Green with Epic Potential: Chesnutt Goes to the *Marrow of Tradition* to Re-Construct America's Epic Body," in *Charles Chesnutt Reappraised*, esp. 155.

4. Perkins, "White Heat" in Wilmington," 43.

5. Rutledge, "All Green with Epic Potential," 155.

6. Robert Nowatzki, "Sublime Patriots: Black Masculinity in Three African-American Novels," *Journal of Men's Studies* 8, no. 1 (1999): 67.

7. See Chesnutt, "Chesnutt's Own View," 873. For a sense of when Chesnutt was actively writing the manuscript for *Marrow*, see Chesnutt to George H. Mifflin, July 3, 1901, in "*To Be An Author*": *Letters of Charles W. Chesnutt, 1889-1905*, ed. Joseph R. McElrath Jr. and Robert C. Leitz III (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), 150, n. 2. Chesnutt sent the finished manuscript of *The Marrow of Tradition* to Houghton, Mifflin in July 1901—a full year after the New Orleans riot. The New Orleans manhunt for Robert Charles was national news, moreover, and was reported in Chesnutt's hometown paper, the Cleveland *Plain Dealer*, while Chesnutt was composing *Marrow*. For this, see "Shot Policemen Dead: New Orleans Officers Encounter Two Colored Desperados," *Plain Dealer*, July 25, 1900, and "Shot to Pieces: Desperado, Who Precipitated Race Riot in New Orleans, Pays Penalty for Murders" *Plain Dealer*, July 28, 1900.

8. For an exception to this, see Eric J. Sundquist, *To Wake the Nations: Race in the Making of American Literature* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1993), 437. Sundquist notes the link but does not explore it further.

9. William Ivy Hair, *Carnival of Fury: Robert Charles and the New Orleans Race Riot of 1900* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2008), 171.

10. Rutledge, "All Green with Epic Potential," 152; and Nowatzki, "Sublime Patriots," 67.

11. For another possible source for Green's character, see Sheila Smith McKoy, *When Whites Riot: Writing Race and Violence in American and South African Cultures* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2001), 69. McKoy reads Dan Wright as a possible inspiration for Green. Wright, who died from his wounds two days after the 1898 Wilmington, North Carolina, riot, embodied the "black tenacity and militancy" that Green embodies in the novel, according to McKoy. While a connection is possible, I find McCoy's argument here less convincing than her other connections of characters to their historical corollaries. First, while Wright resisted, he was ultimately shot while trying to escape the Wilmington mob, not while facing it. Moreover, the central narrative feature of Green's resistance is its success. He stands up to the mob and kills its leader. This was not the case with Wright, who was knocked to the ground by a white man wielding a pipe, allowed to leave, and shot by about fifty guns when he had reached the distance of about forty yards.

12. Bryan Wagner, *Disturbing the Peace: Black Culture and the Police Power after Slavery* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 51-52.

13. "Affairs in various States," *Cyclopedic Review of Current History* 8, no. 4 (Oct. 1, 1898): 899. See also "The North Carolina Race Conflict," *Outlook* 60, no. 12 (November 19, 1898): 707; and Putnam Reed Wallace, "The Old South on Deck," *Independent* 50, no. 2608 (November 24, 1898): 1496.

14. For a sense of Chesnutt's awareness of Wells-Barnett's antilynching work, see Chesnutt to George H. Mifflin, in "*To Be An Author*," 150.

15. My choice to focus largely on violence perpetrated against black men comes from the particularity of the New Orleans incident, in which a black man came to represent the primary racial threat to the city. But women were lynched, as well. For more on the role of women in lynching more broadly, see Sandra Gunning, *Race, Rape, and Lynching: The Red Record of American Literature, 1890-1912* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), esp. 77-107; and Crystal N. Feimster, *Southern Horrors: Women and the Politics of Rape and Lynching* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009).

16. Jean M. Lutes, "Lynching Coverage and the American Reporter-Novelist," *American Literary History* 19, no. 2 (2007): 459; and Jacqueline Goldsby, *A Spectacular Secret: Lynching in American Life and Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 15-16.

17. Charles Chesnutt, *The Marrow of Tradition*, in *Charles W. Chesnutt: Novels, Stories, & Essays*, 530.
18. "Horrible Murder," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi, MS), July 25, 1900.
19. For more on the links between ambulatory movement and lynching, see Amy Kate Bailey et al., "Targeting Lynching Victims: Social Marginality or Status Transgressions?" *American Sociological Review* 76 (2011): 412–36; and Gunning, *Race, Rape, and Lynching*, 6.
20. "circulation, n.," *OED Online*, March 2013, Oxford University Press (accessed March 17, 2013). See definitions 7a, 3, and 5a, respectively.
21. I call this nutritive in order to conjure contemporary associations with the life-sustaining movement of blood throughout a living organism. I would like to avoid any association between blood and racial "bloodlines," or with fictions of racial genealogy. There is nothing racially "essential" about Chesnutt's project here. Rather, I read it as thoroughly political. In other words: I argue here that the novel appeals to the understanding of an imagined community of readers, not to a particular racial essence.
22. Lutes, "Lynching Coverage," 459.
23. Gunning, *Race, Rape, and Lynching*, 5; and Lisa Arellano, *Vigilantes and Lynch Mobs: Narratives of Community and Nation* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2012), 16.
24. Chesnutt, *Marrow*, 530.
25. Arellano, *Vigilantes and Lynch Mobs*, 39, 40, and 45.
26. Feimster, *Southern Horrors*, 5.
27. Goldsby, *A Spectacular Secret*, 28–29.
28. Inderpal Grewal, *Home and Harem: Nation, Gender, Empire, and the Cultures of Travel* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996), 79.
29. Bailey et al., "Targeting Lynching Victims," 419 and 430–31.
30. Hair, *Carnival of Fury*, 119–20.
31. *Ibid.*, 120.
32. *Ibid.*, 171.
33. *Ibid.*, 1–2.
34. *Ibid.*, 120; and Ida B. Wells-Barnett, *Mob Rule in New Orleans: Robert Charles and His Fight to Death: the Story of His Life, Burning Human Beings Alive, Other Lynching Statistics*, in *On Lynchings*, ed. Patricia Hill Collins (Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 2002), 187–92.
35. "Race-War Leader Killed Three Men," *Republic*, July 25, 1900.
36. See Hair, *Carnival of Fury*, 108; and Wells-Barnett, *Mob Rule in New Orleans*, 191.
37. "Two Police Victims of an Assassin's Weapon," *Daily Picayune* (New Orleans), July 25, 1900.
38. *Ibid.*
39. Hair, *Carnival of Fury*, 52–55.
40. Perkins, "'White Heat' in Wilmington," 41.
41. Chesnutt, *Marrow*, 532.
42. *Ibid.*, 530.
43. Trudier Harris, introduction to *Selected Works of Ida B. Wells-Barnett* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 6.
44. Wells-Barnett, *Mob Rule in New Orleans*, 195.
45. Chesnutt, *Marrow*, 610.
46. "Two Police Victims of an Assassin's Weapon."
47. Wagner, *Disturbing the Peace*, 49.
48. Quoted in Wells-Barnett, *Mob Rule in New Orleans*, 195.
49. *Ibid.*, 195.
50. *Ibid.*, 197.
51. "Race-War Leader Killed Three Men," and "Horrible Murder."
52. Chesnutt, *Marrow*, 551–54.
53. *Ibid.*, 679.
54. Sources disagree about the man's surname. See Hair, *Carnival of Fury*, 184; "Narrow Escape: Battle Creek Negro Shoots at the Chief of Police," *Grand Rapids Herald*, July 31, 1900; and "Attempted His Life: Negro in Battle Creek Tries to Shoot Chief of Police," *Kalamazoo Gazette-News*, July 31, 1900.
55. Hair, *Carnival of Fury*, 184–85.
56. "An Assassination and a Lynching," *Daily Picayune* (New Orleans) August 30, 1900.
57. Wagner, *Disturbing the Peace*, 51–52.
58. Chesnutt, *Marrow*, 551.

59. Ibid., 694.
60. Ibid., 697.
61. Ibid., 704.
62. Hair, *Carnival of Fury*, 160–63.
63. “Charles Killed After Slaying Four Others,” *Daily Picayune* (New Orleans), July 28, 1900.
64. Hair, *Carnival of Fury*, 125–26.
65. Ibid., 162 and 165–6.
66. Ibid., 166.
67. Wells-Barnett, *Mob Rule in New Orleans*, 160.
68. Ibid., 160–1.
69. Chesnutt, *Marrow*, 699.
70. Hair, *Carnival of Fury*, 166.
71. Ibid., 170–71.
72. Quoted in *ibid.*, 2.
73. Ibid., 1–2.
74. Chesnutt, *Marrow*, 699.
75. Hair, *Carnival of Fury*, 171.
76. Chesnutt, *Marrow*, 698.
77. Hair, *Carnival of Fury*, 164–65.
78. Ibid., 170.
79. Chesnutt, *Marrow*, 702.
80. “Ford’s Own Words Come Near Causing an Angry Crowd to Lynch Him,” *Daily Picayune* (New Orleans), July 28, 1900.
81. Ibid.
82. Chesnutt, *Marrow*, 704.
83. McKoy, *When Whites Riot*, 69; and “Charles Killed after Slaying Four Others.”
84. McKoy, *When Whites Riot*, 69.
85. Ibid.
86. Chesnutt, *Marrow*, 704.
87. Hair, *Carnival of Fury*, 174–75.
88. “An Assassination and a Lynching.”
89. Chesnutt, *Marrow*, 711.
90. Sundquist, *To Wake the Nations*, 438.