

UNCLE TOM'S CABIN;
OR,
LIFE AMONG THE LOWLY.

BY
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Uncle Tom's Cabin

Before and After the Jim Crow Era

Michele Wallace

Preface

There is no topic more depressing than that of blacks in early American cinema, the topic of this article. The problem is the intersection of the period of silent cinema (1895 roughly through 1927) with the so-called Jim Crow era, during which racial segregation and apartheid became both custom and law in the US, and the insufficiently explored impact of that intersection on the resulting film industry at myriad levels. It is an impossible, inconceivable intersection, one that film scholars can't even agree really took place in any profoundly meaningful way.

Of course, everybody agrees that it's true enough that the movie theatres were segregated in some fashion; blacks were, for the most part, banned from serious and dignified participation in films, racial and ethnic stereotypes were rife, etc. But what seems impossible to establish definitively is the precise nature of the impact of the socioeconomic, legal, and political realities of Jim Crow on the aesthetic, formal, and narrative components of subsequent films. Each subject (the Jim Crow era and silent film) is generally taught by the experts as though they took place in different worlds. It would improve my mood considerably, I like to think, if this manner of coping with the difficult intersection of these two fields of knowledge were to somehow soften into some form of mutual understanding and tolerance. But how to make that happen—I am still not sure. On occasion, I have strongly suspected that I got into silent cinema in the first place, and even went so far as to make it the focus of my dissertation, not because I chose to study it but rather it chose me through the natural inclination of the depressive to always choose that which will reinforce and consolidate her negative self-assessment and her pessimistic mental state. After all these years, I still don't know if there is any achievable or constructive point to this inquiry.

The endlessly ephemeral quality of silent cinema turns out to be just the right metaphor for historical memory—or, to put this another way, it is almost impossible to pin facts down in the field of silent film for a number of reasons. First, experts think that only somewhere between 10 to 20 percent of silent films survive today, and current official lists rely upon a not necessarily

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1. Title page of the 1852 printing of Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* published by John P. Jewett & Company.

explicit or readily comprehensible combination of existing prints and citations of films (which may no longer exist) in trade journals and other ancillary documents. Even the seemingly innocent question of whether or not a film still survives cannot be simply answered, since no one knows how many films still exist in the hands of private collectors who are under no legal compunction to make their holdings public, much less accessible.

Also, it looks as though not much concerted effort at all has been devoted to scouring the resources of other kinds of archives, libraries, and collections for film holdings that they may be entirely unaware of, or that they may continue to deem insignificant. One must add to this concoction the mysterious and flammable nature of silent film stock, itself, which can either explode or disintegrate and which doesn't have much of a shelf life. Moreover, current preservation technologies are prohibitively expensive and not a national priority. As for the films that we know remain in film archives around the world or among corporate studio holdings, it continues to be a tricky business to get a grip on this picture since recoveries of films previously thought lost are still being made.

Moreover, it is only possible to say anything really conclusive about all of this if you have the kind of access to the resources of film archives and/or studios possessed by only a small coterie of silent cinema scholars. To get abreast of the archival situation, either nationally and/or internationally, would necessitate as well the will, the energy, and the budget to track it all down. In particular, for someone like me who still feels like an outsider for all sorts of reasons, there is an air of uncertainty about all the crucial "facts" of race in silent cinema that is truly unnerving. Some democratically constituted institutional formation or funded research team might conceivably help correct that situation, but don't hold your breath.

By way of an exorcism (or at least a deepening) of that mood, I would like to begin this essay with a short musical tribute (soundless unfortunately) in order to clear the air, and to redefine the emotional quality of the project with which I am engaged. The artist is Mary J. Blige, a comparatively new figure on the musical scene. If Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and Cornel West can territorialize Motown, funk, and Quincy Jones for their project, I guess I can dare to invoke the spirit of Mary J. Blige as the resurrection of something very new but ancient in the world, and as the sense of something like what I shoot for in black feminist scholarship. The song is "Round and Round" on the CD *Share My World* (1997).

By the publication of Mrs. Stowe's book, the creation of the genius and imagination of the author have become as much public property as those of Homer or Cervantes. Uncle Tom and Topsy are as much publici juris as Don Quixote and Sancho Panza. All her conceptions and inventions may be used and abused by imitators, playwrights [sic] and poetasters. They are no longer her own—those who have purchased her book, may clothe them in English doggerel, in German or Chinese prose. Her absolute dominion and property in the creations of her genius and imagination have been voluntarily relinquished; and all that now remains is the copyright of her book, the exclusive right to print, reprint, and vend it, and those only can be called infringers of her rights, or pirates of her property, who are guilty of printing, publishing, importing or vending without her license, "copies of her book."

—Stowe v. Thomas (1853)

A plague of low-genre interest multiplied the superficial types of uncles, aunties, and pickaninnies almost endlessly, echoing even today in the min-

strel and vaudeville stereotypes of a Negro half-down, half-troubadour. The extreme popularity of these types held all the arts in so strong a grip that, after seventy or more years of vogue, it was still difficult in the last two decades to break through this cotton-patch and cabin-quarters formula.
—Alaine Locke ([1940] 1968:139)

As we try to envision a world in which D.W. Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation* (1915) could be the film you just had to see, like *Boyz in the Hood* (1991), *Pulp Fiction* (1994), and *The Crying Game* (1992) all rolled into one, the two other substantial categories of films that we know were made about black people can give us helpful clues to contextualizing the import of *Birth* in its own time. They can also offer us a better understanding of the impact of other kinds of contemporary image production (in art, photography, illustration, and the press) and material culture on cinema.

These two categories I would designate as (1) films caricaturing black life and/or employing blackface white actors as all or part of the cast; and (2) the so-called race films made mostly by independent producers, sometimes black, usually for the specific purpose of rescuing the image of blacks from the deleterious impression made by the caricature films, and, after 1915, by *The Birth of a Nation*. I am saying there were two such categories dealing with black subjects just for the sake of brevity and clarity, since the necessary research into this matter remains undone. Within each of these categories, there are variations and anomalies.

Be forewarned that my information of the types of films that were made about racial themes or issues are culled accumulatively from a host of sources, including Thomas Cripps's *Slow Fade to Black: The Negro in American Film, 1900-1942* ([1977] 1993), Henry Sampson's *Blacks in Black and White: A Source Book on Black Films* (1995), Charles Musser's *Edison Motion Pictures, 1890-1900: An Annotated Filmography* (1997) and *Before the Nickelodeon: Edwin S. Porter and the Edison Manufacturing Company* (1991), and Richard Abel's *The Ciné Goes to Town: French Cinema, 1896-1914* (1999). On occasion, these sources sometimes contradict one another, either because of earlier mistakes, or because of typographical errors, or maybe because primary sources and films that were accessible to some researchers were not equally accessible to others. This is precisely why I'm thinking that group research teams (who can recheck and verify one another's work) based on the model of what I imagined occurred at the 1978 Congress of the International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF), but who focused on issues of race this time, might be just the thing—before even more films have disappeared into the ether.

For instance, by no means were all the caricature films comedic, as one might expect. Some were melodramas like *Birth*, and indeed laid the ground for *Birth's* narrative preoccupations with, for instance, loyal former slaves who fought for the Confederacy or made sacrifices to protect their former Master's families.¹

In the early stages, before *The Birth of a Nation*, when they were still quite brief, what I am calling caricature films weren't always narrative fictions. Sometimes, as in some of the films made of blacks eating watermelons, they were documentaries of a sort.² In caricature fiction films, there were also a fair number of scenarios involving the theft of chickens (which one might expect in line with the then popular stereotype that blacks were more likely to steal chickens than anything else),³ with some gambling, razor fights, and cakewalking.⁴

There were also a fair number of films that focused upon black babies. Sometimes the plot of these films centered around the loss of a white baby who had been mistaken for a black baby, or some other twist on the mistaken identity of a baby. In either case, the featured babies, whether the genre was documentary or fictional, were always phenotypically black, even if the rest of

the “black” cast was in blackface. One sees this same obsession, not always entirely hostile, with blacks as children, in other kinds of turn-of-the-century memorabilia, such as postcards: the contrast of large eyes with shiny dark skin, large head, and infantile body clearly indicates that someone, maybe even some of the racists, think these children are cute.⁵

This fascination with black babies no doubt contributed to the popularity of the Gold Dust Twins advertisements, as well as advertisements—which appear all over the Western world—of soaps that promise to turn black skin white.⁶ Of course, this interest in black infants was not always benign, as is clear in such films as *The Gator and the Pickaninny* (Edison, 1903) or *Ten Pickaninnies* (Edison, 1908) in which the “Ten Little Darkies” eating watermelon are picked off by the farmer, one by one, as in the juvenile ditty “Ten Little Injuns.”

Although few of them survive, the early “race” films spanned the map as well. Many of these films were serious melodramas or documentaries, designed to be shown in churches and to uplift audiences generally. But there were also quite a few comedies that freely borrowed from or parodied many of the elements of the caricature films—so much so that black audiences and theatre owners sometimes complained.

One of the most significant anomalies among the caricature films would be those silent versions of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, and its various spin-offs. Unlike *The Birth of a Nation*, there were many film versions made of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* during the silent period, although none of them has been considered nearly so memorable or so worthy of comment and controversy. *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* is an example of the caricature film as melodrama, although there were also numerous comedic versions of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. The ideological tilt of the narrative varied considerably, depending on who was producing and directing, who the principle players were, and the time period in which the version was made. Sometimes, as in the 1903 Edison version, all the principle characters were in blackface, with black performers occupying the background in crowd and dance scenes. On occasion, the role of Uncle Tom as well as most of the other

significant black roles were played by blacks. And yet Topsy was never played by a black actress in a silent film, so far as we know, although she came as close as she ever would in the 1927 version, in which a young actress is wearing such convincing and seamless blackface and wig that she seems to actually be a black person. It is odd that this should be the only time I can remember seeing convincing blackface or brownface in a silent film since almost invariably Topsy figured in both films and in theatrical performances as an over-the-top, comedic character. I am only willing to concede that she might not be black because her name is given as Mona Ray, and she also played Mammie Warbucks in *Li’l Abner* in the 1940s in which she wears highly stylized makeup and plays a highly comedic part once again. Indeed, in *Li’l Abner* it is still impossible to say for sure what color or ethnicity the real person is underneath the makeup, and she seems to have no other credits that I can find.

Despite *Uncle Tom’s Cabin’s* extraordinary and global importance as novel, performance, and film—particularly in the years from its first publication in 1852 through the 1920s—today it is almost a dead letter. Adolescents no longer read the famous novel, as I did

2. James Lowe as Uncle Tom in the 1927 film version of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. (Photo © Universal; courtesy of the Library of Congress)



in the '60s. If you have read it, you may nevertheless remember little of its elaborate, intertwining plots. If you remember the plot, then you may still have difficulty figuring out why its text would be relevant to anything going on today. Perhaps we have superceded the mind-set of Harriet Beecher Stowe's vision, but the novel is, nevertheless, highly relevant to the world in which *The Birth of a Nation* was first received, and in which black filmmakers and producers struggled to make the first "race" films economically and culturally viable.

Uncle Tom's Cabin also provides a key to both the issues and images of black performance at the turn of the century, in that it was the first serious narrative widely performed on the popular stage (see Williams 1996). Precisely because it was an interracial text, and therefore a text about race relations, it had a double life—a black one and a white one—in the increasingly segregated social world of North and South. White performers staged their versions of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* with all the black roles played by whites, and presumably performed them for lily-white audiences, as a kind of extension of performance practices refined in the crucible of blackface minstrelsy. But at the same time, blacks were performing their versions of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*—precisely how they were casting them I am not sure, although I can guess. And in the process, both kinds of Tom companies were meditating on the future of race relations.

Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was one of the most influential texts of the latter half of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century, for reasons ranging from its genius for attracting readers worldwide, to its lack of copyright protection, to the crucial timing of its first appearance in relation to abolitionist debates and the Civil War. It somehow managed to become the most famous and well-known text in international antislavery debates almost immediately upon its first publication as a series in the Free Soil party journal *National Era* in 1852. Critics and fans alike credit the book with having provided the first easily exportable image-text for immediate and popular consumption depicting the plight of the slave in the US South. Its celebrated, and eminently visualizable cast of characters—Uncle Tom and Aunt Chloe, Topsy, Aunt Ophelia, Little Eva, St. Claire, Simon Legree, George, Eliza, Little Harry, Mr. and Mrs. Shelby, Emmeline, and Cassy—all became instantly recognizable icons of the antislavery drama that most of the Western world was caught up in at that time.

The first edition of the complete book, published in Boston on 20 March 1852, sold 5,000 copies in 2 days. Within a year, it had sold 300,000 copies in the US and 150,000 in England. Because of its lack of copyright restriction abroad and on the stage, Stowe did not benefit monetarily from the proliferation of stage dramatizations or the windstorm of worldwide translation and distribution, because her contract with Jewitt and Company of Boston excluded royalties on foreign sales as well as dramatic rights. While it was translated into 60 languages, the prevailing view of the Supreme Court at the time was that once a book was published, "it entered the public arena if not the public domain, and the author lost control of it" (Lowance and Westbrook 1994:10). Drawing upon myriad literary antecedents—such as American Indian captivity narratives, the slave narrative, the Puritan sermon and jeremiad, the sentimental novel, the epic poem, the heroic narrative, the spiritual autobiography, the saint's life, the melodrama, "and many of the literary forms that appear in the Bible, including historical and prophetic narrative and apocalyptic and millennial writing" (1994:3)—the book's connective tissue was provided by moral arguments against slavery.

Most literary criticism, then as now, has dismissed the book as having had a limited aesthetic value because of its conformity to the melodramatic and sentimental norms of mediocre women's fiction of that day. Nevertheless, it was

swept up in an onslaught of international popular culture, from its first dramatizations in Troy, New York, to the numerous minstrel show parodies and proslavery responses that soon followed.

By the late 1840s, neither the traditional authority of religion nor Republican ideology was effective any longer in exposing the evils of slavery to the opposition. In their place, Stowe substituted the moral power of sentimentality and domesticity, the authority of the human heart, which couldn't be swayed by rational analysis and argumentation (6).

Stowe borrowed from Theodore Weld's *Slavery As It Is* (1839), and the autobiographies of former slaves Frederick Douglass (*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, Written by Himself* [1845]) and Josiah Henson (*The Life of Josiah Henson, Formerly a Slave, Now an Inhabitant of Canada, As Narrated by Himself* [1849]). Her task was that of the propagandist. Her message was designed to transcend the polarization that then stymied the progress of the antislavery cause. She created a series of persuasive and quick-paced scenarios that had riveting suspense, performativity, and characters who could inspire identification in readers who had never considered themselves sympathetic to abolitionism.

As poet and literary critic Sterling Brown writes, Stowe's inclinations were toward "sentimental idealism. Eliza and George, if not models of Christian forgiveness, are still virtue in distress, to be saved by poetic justice" (1937:6). The rest of her characters show similar extremes of character. Stowe was immediately recognized as a leading antislavery spokesperson upon the publication of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which is why Abraham Lincoln greeted her White House visit in 1863—in the midst of the Civil War—with the words, "So this is the little lady who started this great big war."

Uncle Tom's Cabin helped to "isolate the South in its insistence that slavery was either biblical in origin or benign in its treatment of those enslaved" (Lowance 1994:159). The book crystalized the negative reaction to the Compromise of 1850 and its Fugitive Slave Law. *UTC* was instrumental in giving slavery a human face for audiences all over the world.

The most famous of its postbellum criticisms is James Baldwin's "Everybody's Protest Novel" in *Partisan Review* in 1949, republished in his book of essays *Notes of a Native Son* (1964). In 1940, Richard Wright had bit-

3. Eliza saying farewell to Uncle Tom and Aunt Chloe with her son Harry in her arms in the 1927 Universal version of *UTC*. (Photo © Universal; courtesy of the Library of Congress)



terly named his first book of short stories *Uncle Tom's Children*. By 1940, to call someone an Uncle Tom was highly pejorative, equivalent to calling someone “a white man’s nigga.” This is, no doubt, because, as Sarah Smith Ducksworth says, though Stowe’s antislavery sentiments were sincere, they did not “include notions of parity between white and black people, and that her real concern in writing the novel was not to raise lowly Africans up to a position of equality in American society, but to help bring an end to slavery for the sake of white salvation” (1994:205).

In an 1878 introduction to her book, Stowe writes that she “sought to light up the darkness by humorous and grotesque episodes, and the presentation of the milder and more amusing phases of slavery,” based on “her recollection of the never-failing wit and drollery of her former colored friends” (in Bense 1994:188). James Bense argues that Stowe’s comic vision of slavery is essential to the novel’s power. Richard Yarborough charges that Stowe’s characters owe much to the minstrel stage, as in the case of the hilarious Sam and Andy who help Eliza escape but appear little more than “bumptious, giggling, outsized adolescents” (1986:47).

Bense argues, alternatively, that Stowe’s comic inventiveness traps “superior minded readers into a self-reflective identification with ‘Black Sam,’” also referred to as “Master Sam,” a figure “whose irrepressible drive toward selfhood challenges the inauthenticity of an unregenerate culture” (1994:189). The South’s defense of slavery depended upon the image of an idyllic plantation life, with slaveholders as the loving patriarchs of their slave families, and Stowe’s goal was to undermine that facade in terms that proslavery proponents would find most difficult to refute. She did this with humor, precisely the kind of humor that had already won the hearts and minds of Northern popular audiences—blackface minstrelsy. This humor at once undermined the antiracism of the book and disarmed the racist, even as it allowed Stowe to lightly broach deadly serious issues of slavery and emancipation.

Antislavery indictments of the kind that came from slave narratives and antislavery exhortations had proved ineffective in altering the habits of those who didn’t already advocate an antislavery position. Stowe’s antislavery position, on the other hand, turned out to be highly seductive and difficult to refute for 19th-century racists, in that it didn’t argue that blacks are the equals of whites in any concrete terms, but rather that they are childlike, dependent, and spiritually innocent enough to make their exploitation a moral challenge. In contrast to the “pale figures of wanton cruelty” (Bense 1994:189) who paraded the pages of Weld’s polemical *Slavery As It Is*, Stowe’s Legree was all too human.

Visual images of the principal characters are not only an issue in stage versions, but also in the numerous engravings illustrating the various publications of the book over the years. How iconographic images of Uncle Tom, Little Eva, and Aunt Ophelia managed to crystallize with such particularity before TV, even before film, I don’t think I will ever figure out. Black artist Robert Duncanson, mostly a landscape artist, did a painting of Uncle Tom and Little Eva, in which he emphasized the idyllic quality of the landscape, Tom’s large blackness, and Eva’s small whiteness.

George Cruikshank’s illustrations of the 1852 British edition of Stowe’s novel show a tendency to muffle the book’s antislavery seriousness in favor of the physicality probably typical of blackface minstrelsy performance. In his *George Shelby Giving Liberty to His Slaves*, for example, he illustrates a scene that doesn’t even exist in the book, in which George Shelby frees his slaves before setting out to save Uncle Tom from Simon Legree. Many of the slaves in this image have their eyes stretched in glee and are dancing. In another image by Bilings, the slaves are shown cowering on the floor before whites at a slave auction. While the blacks don’t appear any more effectual, it is an image



4. George Cruikshank's illustration for the 1852 London printing of Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*: George Shelby Giving Liberty to His Slaves.

of whites behaving badly, not well. Nevertheless, such images promoting *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, together with the genre paintings of black scenes by Eastman Johnson and William Sidney Mount, and the numerous plantation school writings (such as Joel Chandler Harris's *Uncle Remus* [1892]) which dominated the illustrated press at the beginning of the Jim Crow period, helped to lead to the avoidance of racial subject matter altogether for those who considered themselves sophisticated, urban, and modern.

It goes without saying that minstrels were a disreputable lot in the eyes of a large section of the upper crust negroes . . . but it is also true that all the best talent of that generation came down the same drain. The composers, the singers, the musicians, the speakers, the stage performers—the minstrel shows got them all.

—W.C. Handy ([1941] 1969:33)

Perhaps the least scrutinized source of American visual culture is black performance, which is constituted by a virtually continuous tradition (or series of traditions in music, dance, comedy, and musical theatre) extending from the last decades of slavery. A substantial portion of this tradition is documented in photographs, engravings, and other primary sources before and after the turn of the century. After the start that most black performers got in blackface minstrelsy and Tom Companies (best known for their performances of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*), they went on to establish substantial reputations in a variety of performance genres, from vaudeville to brass bands and jubilee singing groups, as well as blues performance, jazz, and musical theatre. And yet this tradition of popular performance, particularly its visual aspect, is not considered a source of pride, but rather a cause for embarrassment and shame, particularly among blacks who are extensively educated, so much so that its history is often shrouded, from the point of view of research, in a conspiracy of silence. It is as if some of us have taken for granted that the stereotype of blacks finding it so easy to sing, dance, and be funny is true, to the point that accomplishments in

this field deserve no special recognition or celebration. It is precisely because of this performance tradition's roots in the ambiguous legacy of black blackface minstrelsy that black performance is viewed with such suspicion and disdain.

Issues of identity formation, self-differentiation, object relations, and narcissism seem potentially crucial to comprehending how whites who were presumably spectators of lynchings, either first-hand or via the many vivid newspaper accounts, also seemed to derive great satisfaction from the humorous spectacles of blacks as blackface performers. Or were there, in fact, different audiences for lynchings and blackface? Eric Lott reads white blackface minstrelsy as both love and loathing for blackness (1993).

Black performance in minstrelsy is the source of a great many images of blacks driven precisely by the notion of a physical and visual inferiority, presuming that that which looks different is at once ugly, funny, wrong, and threatening, and that differences in appearance are inextricably connected to all sorts of deficiencies of character and intellect. Apparently, black middle-class and educated audiences were repelled by blackface minstrelsy, surmising that it was such buffoonish blacks whom whites wanted to lynch and exterminate. But the facts show that the lynching whites were after the uppity blacks, not the old buffoons and blackface performers who presumably "knew their place." It may even be that black people as a group owe some portion of their survival to such performances of "race."

The relationship of black performers to black audiences to blackface caricatures of themselves is a complex one. Scholars agree that the black blackface minstrels had their largest following among working-class black audiences. Elsewhere I have called for the need for a psychoanalytic reading, or at least a more psychologically sophisticated reading, of African American culture. By this, I am not suggesting the Lacanian-inflected, feminist-influenced interpretation of the mechanisms of the gaze for which cinema studies is best known. While I sometimes greatly admire the performance of this work, it remains far too technically specific, and not visionary enough, since the issue that I am suggesting needs to be pursued is the relationship of people's lives to the stories they tell themselves about themselves. The case of extensive black participation in blackface minstrelsy needs to be accepted and interrogated since it means, it seems to me, that there are crucial aspects to the form that have somehow been overlooked in the haste to condemn it as hopelessly racist, and to erase all memory of it.

The relationship of performances of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* to blackface minstrelsy is symbiotic, with its dramatization being immediately taken over by minstrelsy, and subsequently by the proliferation of Tom Companies, which were an offshoot of the blackface minstrelsy craze. In the 1850s, New York hosted hundreds of stage versions of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. In 1859, four stage companies were performing the work simultaneously on a daily basis in New York. The frequently comedic slant of these productions contributed to the general idea of race as a kind of mean joke on its object, a joke against which entertainment and cultural discourses continue to react to this day.

Uncle Tom as created by Harriet Beecher Stowe was nothing like the flat stock figure who has come down to us, mostly through the interventions of theatre and film, as a white-identified, elderly and cowardly bootlicker. In Stowe's novel, Uncle Tom is youthful, in the prime of life, the father of several children, and the adored husband of his wife. He is large, strong, betrays no trace of cowardice, and there is no question that he hates slavery, and wants more than anything else to be free, although not at any cost.

Tom is a deeply religious man who thinks first of others, black or white. Indeed, what enables him to endure his repeated sales and the whippings of

Legree is not his allegiance to white domination, but his willingness to sacrifice his own personal goals to the greater good of his people, and his religious and spiritual conviction that his reward will be in heaven. Today we may read such devotion as a sign of undue humility and self-effacement, but imagine what terror such inner freedom and fearlessness must have struck in the heart of the attentive slaveholder. Such determination and conviction, of one kind or another, must have been as necessary to the heroics of those much less heralded slaves who remained on the plantation, who didn't run away in order to protect others, as they were to such famous runaway slaves and abolitionists as Frederick Douglass and Harriet Jacobs.

The plot of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* suggests that the only alternative to Tom's sale would be to sell off a number of slaves, breaking up a variety of families in the process. Far from being a worthless bootlicker whom the whites take for granted, in a sense, Uncle Tom, as portrayed by Stowe, is the "master" of most situations on the plantations he lives on.

His heroism is not the traditional masculine sort but the more ancient and altruistic brand of Jesus Christ. In a time in which the notion of Christ as black was still far in the distance for most Americans, Stowe's conceptualization of a black Christ seems, in retrospect, revolutionary in the context of American popular culture. And, indeed, many subsequent productions of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* sought to mitigate the impact of such a characterization.

In regard to theatrical presentations of the story, such productions were not alone during the early 20th century in their exploration of idealized female mulattoes. Idealized mulatto female characters began to appear in blackface minstrelsy almost from the very beginning, although the casts of blackface troupes were all-male, and the mulattoes were played by white cross-dressers, some of whom became famous for their impersonation of women. Later, one of the innovations of black blackface performers, such as Bert Williams and George Walker, was the notion of using women, such as Aida Walker, George's talented wife, to play female roles.

In the postbellum period, when black blackface minstrels began to appear, photos of African American blackface performers in minstrelsy, vaudeville, burlesque, and musical theatre show a marked preference for lighter-skinned female performers. In the texts of popular coon songs, descriptions of the heroine often emphasized her fair beauty, and her lack of the physical attributes considered characteristic of most members of the black race.⁷

The film historian Donald Bogle was right to pinpoint mammies, coons, mulattoes, and Uncle Toms as key iconographical figures in the lexicon of

5. *Mona Ray as Topsy in the 1927 film version of Uncle Tom's Cabin.* (Photo © Universal; courtesy of the Library of Congress)

6. *Aunt Ophelia being stern with a mischievous Topsy in UTC, Universal, 1927.* (Photo © Universal; courtesy of the Library of Congress)



stereotypes of blacks in the early 20th century, and he was also right to suggest that the popularity of the Harriet Beecher Stowe novel had much to do with the formation of these icons (1972). But it is not at all clear that these figures necessarily originated with Stowe's text. The coon figure, in particular, seems to predate blackface minstrelsy, and to hark back to the visual culture of an earlier period. After the Civil War, black performers took on the formulas and tropes of minstrelsy and transformed them into the riotous, anarchic subversiveness of black comedy as it subsequently flowers in the works of Bert Williams (who made films, most of them lost), Moms Mabley, and Pigmear Markum, on through Richard Pryor and Chris Rock; ragtime, coon songs, gospel, blues, rhythm and blues, jazz, and musical theatre are all continuous with this tradition.

After the Civil War, white Uncle Tom productions also included large bands of Jubilee singers, and featured real blacks in various specialties. As such, Uncle Tom came to be considered a classic role for both black and white actors, and most performers of the late 19th century and early 20th century had some experience with Tom Companies and/or blackface minstrelsy. These were dominant, not marginal, performance practices through the turn of the century, especially in the provinces.

There was a hugely successful *Uncle Tom's Cabin* revival presented by William A. Brady at the Academy of Music in New York in 1901, which included as part of its program, set on the levee at New Orleans:

An Old Fashioned Negro Festival, introducing Miss Maud Raymond, in her famous specialties, [...] Miss Martha A. Pulley, and her celebrated Magnolia Octette, Singers, Comedians, Buck and Wing Dancers, Banjo players and Cake Walkers, led by the celebrated Colored Comedians, Luke Pulley, and B.H. Butler.

In the cast for this production, Maud Raymond also plays Topsy (Henry Birdoff Collection 1901). The seductive power of the plantation scenario for white audiences was evoked again and again in popular entertainment, and would carry over seamlessly into film.

Particularly successful examples of nostalgic performances of plantation scenarios consistently occur throughout the turn-of-the-century period. A production of *The South before the War* at Niblo Gardens in New York in 1894 was described in the *New York Herald* of 24 April as "A conglomeration of negro dialect melodies, pastimes on the levee, camp meetings on Frog Island [...] witnessed and appreciated by an enormous audience" (in Musser 1997:174–75).⁸ Producer Nat Salsbury, best known for his Buffalo Bill shows, in a variation on the ethnological villages at world's fairs, launched *Black America* at Ambrose Park in Brooklyn in 1895. In order to evoke a plantation scenario, wagons, mules, and hen houses were brought in as well as a cast of 400 blacks who were employed to sing, dance, and live "pre-Civil War black social life" (Krasner 1997:22–25).

The first film version of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, produced by the Edison Company in 1903, starred its director Thomas Porter, in the title role in blackface, with all the other principle actors in blackface, except that real black musicians and dance troupes were used to perform dances. The brief 15-minute film, in which the theatrical performance tradition is most evident, consisted of a variety of relatively stable tableaux of the main events of *UTC*, interspersed with explanatory intertitles. There are also two scenes in which blacks perform: first there is a ring dance among the slaves on the steamboat which transports Uncle Tom south; and then there is a more elaborate cakewalk sequence as part of the welcome home to Little Eva. These scenes begin a series of 20th-

century ruptures in the rural idyll of the plantation South, which will become more and more characteristic of Hollywood's forays into this territory. The dancing and the singing in *Hallelujah* (MGM, 1929) and *Cabin in the Sky* (MGM, 1943) come to mind. Three more film versions of the story were made in 1910 by the Vitagraph Company, Thanhouser, and Pathe Exchange.

Dismay over Thomas Dixon's portrayals of blacks in stage versions of *The Clansman* ([1905] 1967) and *The Leopard Spots* ([1902] 1967) contributed to W.E.B. Dubois's sense of urgency in writing *Souls of Black Folk* (1903) as a refutation of the political inertia of the Booker T. Washington school, and to his need to be involved in the Niagara Movement and the birth of the NAACP. Throughout this period, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, although conventionally stereotypical onstage and in film, could sometimes be perceived as a destabilizing and subversive element in racial politics.

According to Gregory Waller in his study *Main Street Amusements: Movies and Commercial Entertainment in a Southern City, 1896-1930*, the Daughters of the Confederacy succeeded in pressuring for the passage, in 1903, of a Kentucky state law known as "The Uncle Tom's Cabin law," which specified that any film or show that promoted disharmony among the races could be prohibited from public exhibition. For the Daughters of the Confederacy, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was seen as a radicalizing and politically dangerous text despite the widespread bastardization of Stowe's abolitionist content (Waller 1995).

There were three more versions made in 1913 by Imp, Kalem, and Universal. But I like to think it was something like the 1914 World Film Corporation version directed by William Robert Daly, and starring the famous black actor and black minstrelsy performer and songwriter Sam Lucas in the title role, that the Daughters of the Confederacy had in mind when they introduced their UTC law. Not only does this 60-minute version return to the radicalism of Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* via its virtual exclusion of scenes of dancing and merrymaking (although such occasions did exist in the book, on film or onstage the scenes contributed to the difficult-to-counteract impression that the slaves were happy with their lot), it also emphasizes the narrative about biracial Cassy's sexual exploitation by Simon Legree.

Despite the fact that she is a woman of color whose virtue has been compromised, a still serious indictment in 1914, Cassy is nevertheless portrayed as starkly heroic in her protection of both Uncle Tom and the younger mulatto figure Emmeline. Given some of the feminist writing about the Harriet Jacobs narrative *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861) and Jacobs's heroic escape, the triple figures of mulatto women rebelling and escaping in Stowe's text and in this film—Eliza, Emmeline, and Cassy—suggest that further investigation and analysis is needed into the mulatto figure in the 19th century, for both white and black female authors.

The ambivalence about black women (depending upon how blackness is visually defined) in both Stowe's book and the 1914 World Film version comes through the figure of Topsy, whose characterization seems the most resistant to any kind of evolutionary change, from century to century and medium to medium. Although the presentation of Topsy in the film (played in blackface by Mary Irvine, the "Thanhouser Kid") is every bit as stereotypical as in previous versions, such contradictions coexist with a further radicalization of Stowe's text.

In the World version—which is infinitely more mimetic in its visual approach than the 1903 version but still far short of the sophisticated montage of *Birth*—instead of suggesting to Tom that he kill Legree, Cassy dangles a gun over a sleeping Legree and toys with the idea of shooting him herself. She decides to rescue Emmeline by running away with her instead. In a sequence intercut with shots of Cassy and Emmeline's successful escape, the gun is picked up by an anonymous young male slave whom Tom refused to beat. In a series



of close-ups, this nameless young man is shown shooting Legree, who doesn't die in Stowe's version. The final shot in this sequence is a close-up of the young man holding a smoking gun as he smiles for the camera, with echoes of the famous and pivotal frontal shot of a firing gun in Edison's film *The Great Train Robbery* (1903).

In *Birth*, Griffith seems to have taken Lydia, the mulatto housekeeper of Senator Stoneman, directly from the portrayal of Cassie in the 1914 version of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Lydia is demonized and horrifically sexualized in both Dixon's and Griffith's versions of her, as representative of the evils of miscegenation. Gus—whom Bogle credits with being the source of the fifth and perhaps most significant black stereotype, the black buck (1973)—seems to be a negative version of the young black male slave who shoots Legree at the end of the 1914 film. Gus is a would-be rapist who has developed a taste for white women, nurtured in him by the machinations of Silas Lynch, a mulatto male educated by the Stoneman family.

As I have already indicated, much of the negativity of Dixon's and Griffith's portrayal of mulattoes stems from the political issues of the time. There was a widespread and perhaps accurate perception that the mulattoes—who made up the great majority of the educated and propertied blacks at the close of the Civil War—were the primary instigators of Reconstruction reforms; they supplied the ranks of teachers, doctors, lawyers, politicians, and leaders. As such, they were seen by militant racists as troublemakers. The irrational fear of miscegenation on the part of racist whites serves to further mystify the economic and political rationale for considering mulattoes anathema. According to the historian Joel Williamson (1980), contrary to Griffith's and Dixon's evident fears that blacks would want to reproduce with whites, from the close of the Civil War through the turn of the century the mulatto or biracial population did exactly the opposite by marrying almost exclusively among blacks.

In *Within Our Gates* (1919), the black director Oscar Micheaux takes up all these themes, including the rearticulation of the by then conventional black stereotypes. The mulatto protagonist and her light-skinned doctor lover embody the virtues and dignity of educated blacks, as well as their commitment to the uplift and betterment of the masses. In the process, Micheaux also presents us with humane and dignified portrayals of unlettered, rural blacks, and the manner in which they have been besieged by white vigilantism, ignorance, corruption, and greed. Of course, Micheaux's film was also banned, even as *Birth* and *Uncle Tom's Cabin* were banned, and continue to be banned

7. Little Eva tells Topsy (Mona Ray) she loves her in the 1927 film version of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. (Photo © Universal; courtesy of the Library of Congress)

8. Topsy with Little Eva, who acquires a halo in the 1927 Universal film of UTC. (Photo © Universal; courtesy of the Library of Congress)

and censored formally and informally.

There are myriad other texts of this period, by both black and white authors, that explore black stereotypes, issues around black slavery and black reconstruction, miscegenation, and mulattoes, such as the novels of Charles Chesnutt, Frances Harper, and Pauline Hopkins. There is even less known about these works, especially in regard to their possible impact on films of the period. The texts I am exploring stand out from the rest as exceptional rather than characteristic and representative, but we can only approach a better understanding of them when their initial context is restored and understood to the best of our abilities.

As for the versions of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in the 1920s, what I had not expected was to find these films so engaging and entertaining, in need of resurrection and circulation, and unjustly consigned to historical obscurity. I was particularly taken with a comparison of the three films stemming from *Uncle Tom's Cabin* that were released in 1925 and 1927: These are *Uncle Tom's Gal* in 1925 and *Topsy and Eva* and *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in 1927. The 1927 Universal version of *UTC* is the straight one. It is incredibly lavish, mobilizing the full splendor of the Hollywood machine. The plot is utterly transformed in a variety of ideologically revealing ways. For instance, Eliza ends up being sold to Legree, as well as Tom. The Union Army ultimately frees them both, bringing events forward to meet the Civil War. But what I want to draw attention to here is the fact that Topsy, for the first time in a series of 10 to 20 silent film adaptations of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, is played by either a black girl or a girl so undetectably nonblack as to make a determination of racial identity uncertain—quite an advance in verisimilitude over previous and many subsequent versions of Topsy. The historical record does not take note of Topsy's sudden transformation in the '20s, but instead is preoccupied with a focus on whether or how Uncle Tom is played by a black male. In the Universal film, Uncle Tom is played by James Lowe, who was brought in at the last minute to substitute for a more surly Charles Gilpin.⁹

It is a mistake, however, to ignore Topsy's role here because she, not Uncle Tom, significantly emerges as a major character in the St. Claire and Little Eva sequences. In scene after scene, her closeness and intimacy with Little Eva and Aunt Ophelia are extensively explored. The problem with recognizing the significance of the Topsy episodes has to do with their humor, which seem to trivialize her potential sadness as a character. Topsy "jes grew" because she never knew her parents, has been commanded to work all her life, and has never known tenderness. Stowe presents her as the classic slave child. In the book, Aunt Ophelia is completely successful at cleaning her up, educating her, and changing her life, but her transformation is rarely remarked in the various film versions.

The other two films of the late '20s, particularly when considered in relation to the Universal film, are also noteworthy. First, both are riotous comedies, some of the best and most sophisticated I've ever seen from the silent period. Clearly what allows this irreverent, almost postmodern sophistication is the fact that by now the *Uncle Tom's Cabin* plot, and all its characters, are intimately known by American movie audiences. They have become a source of either humor and amusement or nostalgia, perhaps in part because of how the general population feels about blacks, but mostly because *UTC* is a text that had been rigorously and extensively reworked on the stage for 60 years by this time, at least in the North. Up until recently, it was the dominant race/gender/passing narrative. Now it has become a joke, almost a self-reflexive riddle, like Uncle Sam or Santa Claus.

Uncle Tom's Gal looks at a country girl who dreams of being an actress and is visited by a movie crew shooting a version of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. When the



9. The two title characters, played by the Duncan Sisters, in bed together in *Topsy and Little Eva* (Universal 1927). (Photo © Universal; courtesy of the Library of Congress)

lead actress suddenly quits, our girl gets to play both Topsy and Little Eva. We watch as the film crew sets up the key scenes, with a focus on the interactions of Topsy and Little Eva. The girl goes from being made up to play Little Eva to Topsy and back again to Little Eva, with a particular focus on Little Eva's death scene. It is absolutely hilarious and wonderful.

Topsy and Eva is a wonderful film, particularly for the performances of the Duncan Sisters. The plot takes bizarre comic liberties with Stowe's scenario and Topsy and Eva become all but lovers. Slavery and a staid and elegant Uncle Tom, played by Noble Johnson, remains in the background as Topsy and Eva become inseparable. Most of the film takes place after the war. The incorrigible trickster Topsy becomes devoted to Eva and ends up rescuing her from disaster during a classic and hilarious chase scene that comprises the last 20 minutes of the film. At the end, Aunt Ophelia, who now loves Topsy because she has rescued Little Eva and really the whole St. Claire family, encourages her to climb in bed beside Little Eva so that she can get some much needed rest after her long adventure.

Topsy is portrayed as heroic, adventurous, and an absolutely delightful trickster-figure who won the empathy of this audience member. I could scarcely believe my eyes. In a nutshell: the story here is not the love affair between Uncle Tom and Little Eva, which James Baldwin and other male commentators have directed our attention to, but rather the love affair between Topsy and Little Eva. Since both Topsy and Little Eva are much-maligned stereotypes of black women and white women respectively, both characters, Topsy in particular, are rarely examined—but I suspect that she really should be. Topsy emerges in all these films as the only really free figure in the plantation South, and she couldn't be further from what Donald Bogle describes as an asexual coon (1973).

UTC through the Present

In 1935 and 1936, Shirley Temple portrayed Little Eva in *The Littlest Rebel* and *Dimples*. The prototype for her relationship with Bill Bojangles in film was

Uncle Tom and Little Eva in the Robert Duncanson painting of 1852. The editors of *The Stowe Debate: Rhetorical Strategies in UTC* write of these films: “character stereotypes were more the focus than was any historical guilt over slavery, and music often added to the already pervasive nostalgia about the Old South” (Lowance, et al. 1994:3). Judy Garland played Topsy in blackface in *Everybody Singing* in 1938, and Abbott and Costello played Simon Legree and Little Eva in *The Naughty Nineties* in 1945. Margaret Mitchell continued to insist in 1936 that she had written *Gone with the Wind* in order to provide a more accurate and less negative portrait of the antebellum South than had *UTC*.

The film industry and black film audiences witnessed the birth of sound film and Al Jolson’s appropriation of black music as a space of whiteness in American cinema. Black sound “race” films failed to succeed economically, including Micheaux’s and Spencer Williams’s films, as well as such noble endeavors as King Vidor’s *Hallelujah* (1929), Dudley Murphy’s *St. Louis Blues* (1929) with Bessie Smith, and *Black and Tan* (1929) with Duke Ellington and Fredi Washington.¹⁰ At this point, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* truly begins to die as a serious text. In its place, *Gone with the Wind* (1939) is substituted as the dominant cinematic rendering of slavery, the Civil War, and the plantation South. In terms of racial/cultural politics and the race/gender visual, *Gone with the Wind* functions as a kind of compromise of *The Birth of a Nation* with *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. First, the preoccupation with the fate of black men, either before or after the war, vanishes. Instead, the black characters—a classic Uncle Tom figure, a Mammy figure, and Prissy as a watered-down version of Topsy—become virtually an aspect of the mise-en-scène, part of the scenery, dispensing with the irksome bother of explaining the South’s conflict with or the dependence on blacks.

The narrative tension shifts entirely to the portrayal of Scarlett, a problematically masculine, problematically dark figure who (as the book by Margaret Mitchell makes much clearer than the film) fails always to successfully restrain her racially suspect sexual passion, her working-class aggression, and her unfeminine economic greed and aggressiveness. In a peculiarly US cultural sleight of hand, in place of being openly racialized, the problem of subjectivity invariably settles upon the compromise figure of the white female or the dark,

10. The actress playing Topsy in *Uncle Tom’s Gal* (1925) wore a stocking over her face to make blackface. (Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress)



pseudo-working-class “outsider” male, Rhett Butler, who just so happens to always be surrounded by picturesque, humorous blacks.

There are some wonderful and riotous cartoon takeoffs on *Uncle Tom's Cabin* through the 1940s and '50s, such as the hilarious *Uncle Tom's Cabana* in which Little Eva figures as a Gilda-type chanteuse in Uncle Tom's nightclub in downtown Manhattan.

In the adaptation of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* staged for Alistair Cooke's *Omnibus* television series in 1955, a solemn kind of retooling of the old classic begins to render it more useful to the Civil Rights movement and the liberal integrationist agenda. In this particular version, a beautiful young Ruby Dee makes a fleeting appearance as Eliza, and Topsy is finally played by an actual little black girl of about ten, quite convincingly, although with none of the comedic business of most prior Topsy's.

After that, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* becomes a standard part of the B-movie repertoire, such as in the case of the German *Oncler Toms Hutte* of the '60s, always being fixed yet again—right down to the most recent version made for the Showtime TV channel in which Phylicia Rashad plays Eliza, Sam Jackson plays George, and Avery Brooks plays Uncle Tom. What these more high-minded versions tend to do is to simply rid themselves of the mulatto narrative, by making all the people who would have been played by whites in early movies into visibly black people.

No one can ever leave *Uncle Tom's Cabin* alone or let it be what it is, because who even knows what it is. The Drama Dept.'s off-Broadway version (1997) in New York was quite wonderful and seemed to revel in the theatricality and the melodrama of the text. It also seemed to begin to probe some of the issues that film scholar and feminist Linda Williams raises in her 1996 article on “Versions of Uncle Tom” about the way in which *UTC* illustrates a pivotal, transitional moment in American cinema as well as American theatre. *UTC*, she says, is responsible for providing American theatre and film with its first set of compelling reasons to move from the scattershot approaches of blackface minstrelsy, circus sideshow entertainments, coon songs, burlesque, and vaudeville to the performance and delineation of sustained linear narratives over a sequence of time, which has resulted in what we know today as American theatre and American feature film. What is completely unknown is how indelibly these developments are intertwined with the parallel developments and debates around issues of race.

Notes

1. *American Soldier in Love and War* (American Mutograph and Biograph, 1903); *The Confederate Spy* (Kalem, 1910); *His Trust and His Trust Fulfilled* (Biograph, 1910); *In Old Kentucky*, *Selling Old Master*, *His Master's Son*, and *The House of His Master* (Biograph, 1911); *His Master's Son* (Essanay, 1911); *Uncle Pete's Ruse* (Imp, 1911); *For Master's Sake* (Pathes-Freres, 1911); *For the Cause of the South* (Edison, 1912); *A Slave's Devotion* (Broncho, 1913); *A Black Conspiracy* (Kay-Bee, 1913); *Dixieland* (Selig, 1913).
2. *Watermelon Eating Contest* (Edison, 1896); *Watermelon Feast* (American Mutograph and Biograph, 1896); *New Watermelon Contest* (Edison, 1900); *The Watermelon Patch* (Edison, 1905); other actualities of this genre were *A Morning Bath* (Edison, 1896); *Dancing Ducky Boy* (Edison, 1897); *Buffalo Exposition* (plantation scenes), and *Jamaican Travelogues* (Edison, 1901); *Laughing Ben* (American Mutograph and Biograph, 1902); *The Porter and The Porter's Parade* (American Mutograph and Biograph, 1903); *Cotton Industry of the South* (Lubin, 1908); *A Georgia Possum Hunt* and *King Cotton* (Edison, 1910); *The Cotton Industry in South Carolina* (Imp, 1911); *The Crab Industry* (Lubin, 1911); *The Tobacco Industry* (Lubin, 1914).
3. *Chicken Thieves* (Edison, 1897); *Who Said Chicken?* (American Mutograph and Biograph, 1903); *The Chicken Thief* (American Mutograph and Biograph, 1903); *The Chicken Thief* (Biograph, 1904); *A College Chicken* (Essanay, 1910); *CHICKEN Spells*

- Chicken* (Kalem, 1910); and variations on this theme in, e.g., *How Rastus Got His Turkey* (Pathes-Freres, 1910).
4. *Interrupted Crap Game* (Selig, 1903); *A Scrap in Black and White* (Edison, 1903); *The Negro's Revenge* (Pathes-Freres, 1906); *The Pickaninny Dance*, *Elsie Jones, No. 1*, and *Elsie Jones, No. 2* (Edison, 1894); *James Grundy, No. 1*, *James Grundy, No. 2*, *Cakewalk*; and *Grundy and Frint* (Edison, 1895); *Ballyhoo Cakewalk* and *Darky Cakewalk* (Edison, 1903).
 5. *How Charlie Lost the Heiress* (American Mutograph and Biograph, 1903); *Mixed Babies* (American Mutograph and Biograph, 1908); *Valet's Wife* (American Mutograph and Biograph, 1908); *Mixed Colors* (Pathes-Freres, 1913); *Mammy's Child* (Powers, 1914); *Around the World* (Mutual, 1916); *Minding the Baby* (Cub, 1917); *A Mixed Color Scheme* (Kleine, 1917); *Minding the Baby* (Nestor, 1917); other films with black babies were *A Morning Bath* (Edison, 1896); and *Shadows and Sunshine* (Pathes-Freres, 1916).
 6. *The Gold Dust Twins* (American Mutograph and Biograph, 1903).
 7. See Sampson's *The Ghost Walks* (1988) for illustrations of the apparent lightness of many of the female performers; also see photos in *Black Magic: A Pictorial History of Black Entertainers in America* (1967) in regard to *Uncle Tom's Cabin's* emphasis on miscegenation with regard to resonances with blackface minstrelsy.
 8. A series of Edison films of James Grundy was taken from this production (see Musser 1997:174-75).
 9. Charles Gilpin is best known for his portrayal of Emperor Jones on the stage, as well as his extraordinary work as an actor in black legitimate theatre and in race films, most notably as the drunken father in the Colored Player's *Ten Nights in a Barroom* (1927).
 10. Fredi Washington is featured opposite Paul Robeson in *Emperor Jones* (1932) and in *Imitation of Life* (1934).

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