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Racial Innocence

Performing American Childhood from Slavery to Civil Rights

Robin Bernstein

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The Scripts of Black Dolls

A tear is an intellectual thing.
—William Blake, "The Grey Monk"

In 1985, at the age of 102, Daisy Turner recalled an incident from her childhood in which she transformed a black doll from a tool of coercion into one of resistance. Turner, an African American woman, was born in Vermont, where she lived for most of her life. In about 1891, when Turner was about eight years old, a teacher in her predominantly white elementary school concocted a verse pageant for the students to perform at the end of the school year. Poetry had long been an important part of Turner's home life: her family habitually created, memorized, and recited verse, and through these practices Turner developed a remarkable memory (with folklorist Jane C. Beck, the adult Turner videotaped many hours of memorized verse; she also performed nineteenth-century poetry in Ken Burns's documentary *The Civil War*).[1] As Turner remembered in extraordinary yet credible detail, each girl in her school pageant represented a different country. The girls appeared onstage holding dolls, each girl costumed identically with her doll, and recited poems written by the teacher. The first girl to step onstage was Turner's classmate Amy Davis. Turner told the folklorist,

> [Amy Davis] was all dressed in white with blue sash, and little ribbons on her hair. And her doll in white and ribbons. She held her doll, very lovely, in her arms, and said, [Turner cradles her cane as if it were a doll in arms] "My dolly came from sunny France; her name is Antoinette. She's two years old on Christmas day, and a very darling pet." So she went on, rambling about her doll Antoinette. "I hope she'll take the prize." So then she

> went and set Antoinette out front on the seat and went back and turned her skirts and fixed her hair ribbons and sat behind like the mother.[2]

The teacher had selected Daisy to represent the "country" of Africa and had written a poem for Daisy to perform with a black doll named Dinah.[3] For reasons that Turner did not explain to the folklorist, she balked from the day she received the assignment. Upon her father's urging, she reluctantly agreed to follow the teacher's instructions, and she dutifully memorized the poem. But on the day of the pageant, Daisy rebelled.

> I was the last one to go out at the foot [end] of this thing with this black doll. Well, the more I thought of it . . . I begin thinking what a fool I'd been to let my father work me into taking this black doll and saying it was all right, and thinking it was all right 'cause he said so. With my dolls at home, my white dolls, and my white dress and everything, I could have been the best. Instead of that, there I was, the old school dress they all had seen, my hair braided instead of being fluffed and everything. I was angry.

When Daisy got onstage, she spontaneously refused the poem her teacher had written. Drawing on her family's evening tradition of improvising and reciting verse, Daisy extemporized:[4]

> You needn't crowd my dolly out
> Although she's black as night
> And if she is at the foot of this show
> I think she'll stand as good a chance
> As the dollies that are white.
>
> My daddy says that half the world
> Is nearly dark as night.
> And it's no harm to take a chance
> And to stay right in the fight.
>
> So stand up dolly
> And look straight
> To the judges at the right.
> And I'll stand right by your side
> If I do look a fright.

"And so I went on saying my piece through," she explained in 1985. "But instead of saying the piece that the teacher had taught me to say, I was saying what I wanted to say on my own."

Daisy Turner's story raises as many questions as it answers. Exactly what was it about the doll, the poem, and the school pageant that angered the girl and provoked her resistance? Turner recalled her improvised poem in detail, but she claimed to remember only the first two lines of the teacher's poem: "My doll was born in Africa / My doll was born in the sun."[5] Despite the folklorist's requests, Turner never explained what the doll looked like, or exactly what she objected to in the doll's appearance. All we know about the doll is that her name was Dinah, that she represented "Africa," and she was black. We know, also, that in 1985, Turner apparently considered the doll's objectionable qualities to be self-evident, unspeakable, or both.

The significance of Daisy Turner's resistance emerges through this chapter's excavation and reconstruction of the history of black dolls in play. The opening chapter of this book showed how the allegation that black children did not experience pain excluded them from claims of innocence and ultimately defined them out of childhood itself. This chapter concludes that argument by showing how black dolls constituted a key site in which that libel was enacted in the nineteenth century—and then contested, to enormously powerful effect, in the twentieth. In the second half of the nineteenth century, literature, nonfiction, theater, and material culture—the dolls themselves—coordinated with each other to script violent and degrading play with black dolls. Archival evidence shows that many white children did, in fact, enact those scripts by attacking black dolls viciously and shamelessly. The dolls, of course, endured these attacks without complaint. These linked performances of violence and endurance staged contests over citizenship, personhood, and the memory of slavery.

In the early twentieth century, however, New Negro adults began using commercially manufactured dolls to interrupt this history and to choreograph new practices of play. In 1908, Richard Henry Boyd founded the National Negro Doll Company (NNDC), which sold fragile black dolls that required gentle play; other black-owned companies (including the Marcus Garvey–associated Berry and Ross) followed suit and sold black dolls throughout the 1920s. During these decades, debates about black dolls appeared regularly in New Negro periodicals. In the late 1930s, African American psychologists Dr. Kenneth Clark and Dr. Mamie Clark entered these debates when they launched their famous "doll tests," which

pivotally influenced the civil rights movement and which continue to define American popular beliefs about children, race, and dolls.

In their tests, Dr. Clark and Dr. Clark asked African American children to express preferences for black or white dolls. The majority of black children preferred white dolls, the Clarks discovered. In the Clarks' view, these results revealed the negative effects of segregation on children's psyches—an argument that became pivotal in the landmark 1954 Supreme Court Case, *Brown v. Board of Education*, which ruled against segregation in public schools.[6] In the half-century since *Brown v. Board of Education*, the doll tests have become a fixture in popular culture: they have figured prominently in at least three films and full-length television documentaries, and have become a standard element in narratives of desegregation and civil rights.[7] The doll tests continue to be restaged periodically; in the late 1980s, two such restagings received extensive attention in *Time*, *Jet*, and other popular media; and the *Journal of Black Psychology* published a special issue on doll tests in 1988. A search of YouTube will reveal many restagings of the test by journalists (including one program that aired on MSNBC in 2008) and amateurs (including *A Girl Like Me*, a 2005 short film by then-sixteen-year-old Kiri Davis, whose application of the test to children in her neighborhood earned her spots on *Oprah*, NPR, and many other national media outlets, as well as numerous honors). As Gwen Bergner recently argued, the doll tests defined arguments about race, multiculturalism, and self-esteem that structured educational policy in the second half of the twentieth century.[8] The Clarks implanted in American common sense the belief, which remains prominent today, that any black child who prefers white dolls is necessarily showing symptoms of individual and societal pathology: internalized racism.

The doll tests so deeply influenced American beliefs about race despite deep flaws in the Clarks' experiments—flaws that ranged from the statistical methods the Clarks used to the questions that produced the data to the conclusions drawn from the data. Of the many critiques, two challenge the doll tests most fundamentally: doll preference does not necessarily index self-esteem (as Gwen Bergner put it, there is no evidence that "preference for white dolls among black children indicate[s] anything other than a preference for white dolls"[9]), and the doll experiments do not show that school segregation psychologically damages black children.[10] Kenneth Clark acknowledged that he could not establish a causal relationship between school segregation and psychic damage.[11] If anything, the Clarks' evidence suggested the opposite: their subjects who attended integrated

schools in the North were *more* likely than their segregated southern counterparts to prefer white dolls (Daisy Turner, who attended an integrated school in Vermont half a century earlier, fit this pattern). In sum, wrote Richard Kluger, author of the definitive history of *Brown v. Board of Education*, the Clarks' tests "did not definitively prove anything."[12] Why, given these well-reasoned critiques, did the Clark doll experiments appear so persuasive? And if the Clarks did not necessarily show psychological damage, exactly what did they show? In other words, the Clarks produced evidence of *something*, and observers, from the 1930s through today, find that something persuasive and affecting. But what exactly did the Clarks reveal about race, childhood, U.S. history—and dolls?

This chapter answers these questions, as well as the earlier question of what, exactly, Daisy Turner was resisting, by locating both Daisy Turner's refusal and the Clarks' experiments within a century-long history of black dolls in play in the United States. Through material dolls and the structure of the experiment, the Clarks created a dramatic arc that extended from, and therefore bore the cultural weight of, a century of performance practices involving black dolls. This genealogy of performance, I argue, is what Daisy Turner rejected and is also the source of the doll test's ongoing persuasiveness. The doll test derives more power from a history of performance than from the discipline of psychology, so critiques of the Clarks' social science methods, however trenchant, do not address the main source of the test's power and therefore do not make the doll test less persuasive. In other words, the doll tests were, from the start, more affective than convincing, so dissections of *how* the tests were unconvincing did little to compromise their effects. This chapter recuperates the Clarks by defending the doll test not as flawed social science but instead as brilliant drama. Furthermore, this argument redeems the Clarks' child subjects by offering a new understanding of them not as psychologically damaged dupes, not as passive internalizers of racism, but instead as agential experts on children's culture. African American children, including Daisy Turner and the subjects of the Clark doll experiments, resisted scripts that white and black adults embedded—for different purposes and with differing levels of intentionality—in black dolls. To understand these acts of resistance, we must first consider dolls not as objects to look at, but things that script behaviors.

Black Dolls as Scriptive Things

The Clarks' doll experiment, designed by Mamie Clark, aimed to assess African American children's attitudes toward the white and black races and therefore toward themselves. In the experiment, an African American child was brought into a room containing four plastic, jointed baby dolls, each of which was about a foot tall. Two of the dolls were brown with black hair and two were pinkish with yellow hair; beyond these differences, the dolls were identical. All wore diapers; all lacked markings of gender. The experimenter issued an ordered series of requests, including "Give me the doll that is a nice doll," "Give me the doll that looks bad," "Give me the doll that looks like a white child," and "Give me the doll that looks like a Negro child."[13] Finally, the Clarks asked, "Give me the doll that looks like you." Two hundred and fifty-three children, all African American, underwent the doll test between 1939 and 1947. Of these, 150, or 59 percent, chose a pinkish doll as the "nice doll," and an equal percentage identified a brown doll as the one that "looks bad."[14] Sixty-six percent of all subjects chose a brown doll as the one that "looks like you," while 33 percent claimed a white doll as the one that looked like themselves (1 percent indicated that they did not know or offered no response).[15] African American children's preference for white dolls, the Clarks argued, symptomized internalized racism.

Dr. Clark and Dr. Clark assumed a psychological identification between child and doll; they believed that an African American child's attitude toward a brown doll, which the child identified as Negro, necessarily revealed an attitude toward the self. In this view, dolls are containers and delivery systems for the ideas of white and black raciality. This view also posits children as cultural receptacles, and their actions as symptoms of societal pathologies of racism.

The problem with the Clarks' positing of dolls as delivery systems for racial concepts is that dolls cannot contain *only* the idea of race; they also transmit the idea of *doll*. The material form of the doll cannot be incidental to children, and especially not to girls, because almost all girls know what they are "supposed" to do with dolls—even if they choose to play differently or not at all with them.

This point is crucial, as becomes clear through a comparison between the Clarks' experiment with dolls and their experiment with line drawings and crayons. When the Clarks administered their doll test, they sometimes also asked their test subjects to color a line drawing of a girl

or boy "the color that you are." Next, the child was given a line drawing of another child, the opposite sex of the test subject, and instructed, "Color him (or her) the color you like little boys (or girls) to be."[16] One hundred and sixty African American children, aged five to seven, underwent the "coloring test" along with the doll test. Of these, 88 percent provided what the Clarks considered a "reality response" by coloring the child "like you" a shade that the Clarks felt roughly matched the child's skin color. Almost 7 percent gave what the Clarks considered "phantasy responses" by coloring in the drawing significantly lighter than the child's own skin. And 5 percent of the children gave what the Clarks called "irrelevant responses" by applying to the drawing a nonhuman color such as purple or green. When asked to indicate the color she or he liked in other children, 48 percent used a brown or black crayon, 36 percent used white or yellow, and 16 percent selected an "irrelevant color."[17]

The Clarks posited line drawings and crayons as interchangeable with dolls—that is, as different experimental means to the same goal of assessing children's racial attitudes. The test results, however, undermine this supposition. In the coloring tests, 88 percent of Negro children used a "reality" shade of crayon to represent their own skin color, but in the doll tests, only 66 percent of the Negro children chose a brown doll as the one that "looks like you." And whereas in the coloring tests, 36 percent expressed, through drawing, a preference for children colored white or yellow, in the doll test 59 percent selected the light doll as the "nice" one. The Clarks concluded that the results of the coloring test "support[ed]" the results of the doll tests, but that "the trend" toward unrealistic self-identification and internalized racism "was seen more definitely with the Dolls test."[18] Thus the Clarks highlighted the continuities between the coloring and doll tests, and offered no explanation for the significant discrepancies—88 percent versus 66 percent, 36 percent versus 59 percent—in experiments that aimed to measure the same psychological factors in overlapping test subjects.

Consideration of the experiments' physical materials as scriptive things can clarify disparities that the Clarks downplayed. Different things—paper and crayons, dolls—embed in distinct genealogies of performance and therefore prompt different behaviors. In the 1940s, coloring books and crayons had a much shorter and more limited history than dolls did. The McLoughlin Brothers publisher is credited with creating the coloring book in the 1880s, and until 1903, when Binney and Smith invented crayons, children colored mainly with paints. Throughout the early twentieth century, Binney and Smith sold crayons mainly to schools in sets limited to eight colors.[19] In the 1940s, then, line drawings and crayons carried with them a relatively brief and school-oriented history of coloring practices. Dolls, on the other hand, bore a long, extensive, and overdetermined genealogy of performances in homes, schools, and other spaces of play. Dolls and line drawings with crayons may have resembled each other as visual images—that is, as objects to look at—but they registered, as things, in distinct gestural histories.

The Clarks' brown dolls and Daisy Turner's "Dinah" doll contained not only the idea of African Americanness, but the ideas of *doll* and *black doll*, and these things scripted historically located behaviors associated with black dolls. When dolls are viewed as scriptive things, children—not just professional actresses such as Shirley Temple and Dakota Fanning, but all children—emerge as skilled actors in the performance of childhood. Daisy's rejection of a black doll and her resistance to an onstage performance with that doll intervened in not only a school pageant but also a history of practices with black dolls. Daisy Turner refused, certainly, the doll's visually based racial significations (which, the Clarks posited, are interchangeable with those in line drawings). In so doing, however, Daisy also resisted the doll's historically located *scripts*. Recovery of these scripts reveals the hidden stakes of racial innocence not only in the resistance of Daisy Turner and the Clarks' test subjects, but also in the actions of other African American adults and children who used dolls to shape political performances of play from the mid-nineteenth through the mid-twentieth century.

The Scenarios That Black Dolls Script: Servitude and Violence

From the 1830s through the 1890s, when Daisy Turner stepped onstage, black dolls coordinated two main play scenarios: servitude and violence. Scenarios of servitude were embedded in the earliest known visual representation of a black doll in the United States, which appears in the 1831 first edition of Eliza Leslie's *The American Girl's Book*, a manual of instructive and wholesome activities for girls. This book, which was republished at least seventeen times by 1880, was read by generations of American girls. *The American Girl's Book* taught its readers to make several dolls, including a dancing doll, a jointed linen doll, and a "common linen doll," which was a simplified version of the jointed doll. The manual also instructed the

Figure 5.1. Unsigned illustration, "A Black Doll." Eliza Leslie, *American Girl's Book, Or, Occupation for Play Hours* (Boston: Munroe and Francis, 1831), 294. Leslie's book was revised many times between 1831 and 1880, but this image and the attendant instructions for sewing a black doll appeared, unaltered, in every edition. Courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society.

reader to make "A Black Doll" (figure 5.1) as a variation of the common linen doll:

> The linen part must have an outside covering of black silk or black canton crape. The frock should be of domestic gingham or calico, and she should have a check apron. A white muslin cap on her head will greatly improve her appearance. You may make a whole family of these linen dolls, representing a mother and several children, among them a baby. A black one may then be added as a servant.[20]

This passage overtly instructs a girl reader to sew a doll, but it also provides a narrative for play with that doll as a servant. Leslie first connects the black doll's servitude with its physical constitution: its blackness, its "commonness," its apron and muslin cap. Immediately after the physical description, however, the passage raises the possibility of black dolls existing within black families, not as domestic servants but as figures of domesticity: "You may make a whole family of these linen dolls, representing a mother and several children, among them a baby." If a girl misunderstands "these" to refer to black rather than white linen dolls, the next line immediately corrects the error: "A black one may then be added as a servant." The passage thus posits black dolls as isolated from black families, as inherently fit for servitude, and as natural adjuncts to white families, marginal afterthoughts. As such, Leslie's text instructs not only the making of the doll, but also a scenario for play, much as *Uncle Tom's Cabin* provided Frances Hodgson Burnett with play scenarios that she entered with her doll.[21]

The mode of sale and the physical properties of commercially produced black dolls also prompted play scenarios in which black dolls served white ones. Throughout the nineteenth century, Germany and France dominated the international doll market, and most commercially manufactured dolls in the United States originated in one of these two countries. Many European black dolls were made from the same molds as white dolls and therefore were not grotesque in their features. Because the imported dolls were expensive, few American children of color owned European dolls.[22] When a well-to-do nineteenth-century white girl acquired a European black doll, it was typically a late addition to an already extensive collection of white dolls. This sequence of acquisition resulted in nineteenth-century white girls seldom owning more than one European black doll; thus play scenarios imagining African American families were precluded while other, isolative roles—such as servitude—remained easily available for black dolls in play.[23] Like *The American Girl's Book*, advertisements for and articles about commercially made black dolls pointed out physical features that positioned black dolls as servile adjuncts to white doll families. An 1877 article in *Harper's Bazaar*, for example, described European dolls representing "negresses in gaudy head kerchief and sleeves rolled up as if for washing day," while an 1885 *Harper's Bazaar* article observed "bisque negresses, with woolly hair, to be dressed as maids to fairer

dolls" as well as "colored dolls . . . arrayed as cooks with gray [gay] turbans, or in coachman's attire."[24]

Literature about dolls, both commercially imported and homemade, provided more detailed narratives about—and thus more specific play scenarios for—black dolls as natural servants. One of many examples appears in the 1863 *The Dolls' Surprise Party*, written by "Aunt Laura." In this book, two racially unmarked, presumably white girls play with a group of noncommercial dolls, "which the little girls had fixed up for themselves."[25] The homemade dolls include "a black doll, a man, that they called Cesar, and a small black one called Topsey [*sic*]."[26] One of the girls falls asleep and wakens to discover that her dolls are secretly alive: the white dolls are enjoying a party while Topsey sets the table and Cesar serves coffee. *The Dolls' Surprise Party* is but one of many fictional works from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in which dolls come to life and black dolls, without comment or explanation, immediately serve white dolls. This conceit appears, for example, in Johnny Gruelle's *Beloved Belindy* and throughout the "Live Dolls" series of books penned by Josephine Scribner Gates. In that series' inaugural volume, a group of dolls comes to life, and the very first action taken by a black doll named Dinah is to use a toy telephone to order groceries. Soon after, she tends a white baby doll and cooks for the white dolls.[27]

Fiction often associated the name "Dinah," in black dolls and humans, with servitude (for example, *Raggedy Ann Stories* and *Uncle Tom's Cabin* both feature African American kitchen workers named Dinah, as does the song, "I've Been Working on the Railroad").[28] In "The Dollies' Visit," a short story by C.H.W. published in the *Youth's Companion* in 1874, a white girl named Phebe describes herself as a "kind mistress" to "my work girl," a black doll named Dinah.[29] The name Topsy (or "Topsey," as in *The Dolls' Surprise Party*), was also commonly associated with servant dolls, as in Gates's *The Live Dolls' Busy Days*, in which a black doll knocks on the door of a human girl's home and announces, "I's Topsy, an' I hear you alls want a maid-of-all-work. I knows cookin' some, an' I kin scrub an' build fires an' take out you alls' ashes."[30]

The names "Dinah" and "Topsy" did not refer to an identical set of images or ideas, but the two names and figures often collapsed into each other (a collapse that also occurred beyond the realm of dolls: John Lobb, in his "Editorial Note" to an 1878 edition of Josiah Henson's autobiography, quoted Henson as commenting, "Mrs. Stowe's description of Topsy is quite correct: her real name was Dinah").[31] The names "Dinah" and "Topsy" could even overlap or combine, as in the anonymously authored "The Helpful Club: A True Story," published in Chicago's *Unity* in 1884, in which a doll is named Dinah Topsy Tina.[32] In doll play of the nineteenth century and today, regimented ritual coexisted and intersected with anarchy: as we will see later in this chapter, girls and their dolls might stage a genteel tea party that devolves into a water fight; and a photograph can collapse references to doll play and theatrical performance. Representational play with dolls inherently slurs differences between person and thing, and also, often, between things: in play, a stuffed horse might converse with a teapot; a doll of six inches might befriend a doll that is two feet tall. Switches in gender were common, as when, in the hands of Frances Hodgson Burnett, a Topsy doll became Uncle Tom. Dolls also frequently changed race: cloth dolls were sometimes deliberately or accidentally bleached, stained, or dyed; and children used these changes in color as prompts for play incorporating racial changes. For example, the doll named "Dinah Topsy Tina" bore these three names because, the story's narrator notes, she "*used* to be black"—prior, one presumes, to some act of bleaching.[33] This chaotic transmutability underwrote, as possibility, even the most orderly of doll play.

Doll play's tendency to collapse boundaries enabled multiple facets of culture—instruction for homemade dolls, the manufacture and sale of commercial dolls, historical and fictional girls' practices of naming their dolls "Dinah" or "Topsy," and literature about dolls—to merge so as to co-script scenarios in which black dolls served white ones. In other words, girls received a set of mutually reinforcing prompts from divergent sources. These prompts converged to script a diffuse, unauthored, performed narrative in U.S. culture. The relationship between this script and historical children's actions was never simple, because children often revised and refused the prompts they received. They did, however, receive and comprehend these prompts toward play scenarios of black dolls' servitude. Georgianna Hamlen recalled in her 1885 memoir that when she "was a little girl [in the mid-nineteenth century], very small dolls of black china were *supposed to be the proper thing for servants* in doll houses."[34] Perhaps Hamlen and her friends had read Harriet Beecher Stowe's 1870 short story, "Lulu's Pupil," in which a white girl owns a "black china doll with red petticoats that waited on the white lady dolls."[35] Or perhaps they had read any of many similar stories that designate black china dolls as servants. But Hamlen's use of the phrase "were supposed to be" suggests that the notion that a black doll was "the proper thing" to serve white dolls

derived from no single source—that is, no individual text that the girls simply imitated—but rather from a common sense of how girls were expected to play. As competent performers, most children, especially girls, understood the play scenarios that black dolls scripted; that is, children who were diverse in their genders, races, classes, regions, and personal preferences largely understood how one was "supposed" to play with black dolls.

Daisy Turner understood—indeed, she memorized—the printed script that her teacher prepared for her to recite in the school pageant with a black doll named Dinah. As a competent performer, Daisy Turner would also have understood the overdetermined status of black dolls, especially those named Dinah, as servants. Daisy contended with two overlapping but nonidentical scripts: the teacher-authored script of the pageant, which included rhymed verse and orderly stage direction, and the unauthored, diffuse yet cohesive script, the set of prompts, that embedded in a black doll named Dinah.

The scripts of black dolls often merged servitude with violence. An 1861 issue of *Godey's Lady's Book*, for example, instructed its reader to make a "Miss Dinah Pen-Wiper" (figure 5.2). The magazine told the reader to "Take a black china baby"—that is, the sort of commercially manufactured black doll that Georgianna Hamlen understood was "supposed to be the proper thing for servants"—and to "dress it with three black cloth skirts."[36] On top of these skirts, the reader was to dress the black doll in colorful clothes and a turban. The doll's owner was then to lift the outer skirts and use the doll's undergarments as a depository for smears of excess ink. The "Miss Dinah Pen-Wiper" conjoined service with implied violence: this doll had a job, which was to endure lifted skirts, the probing of a pen, and the spillage of excessive and potentially despoiling fluid—rape imagery reminiscent of that of the skirt-flipping topsy-turvy doll.[37] Servitude and violence also merged in a 1912 Dallas newspaper item titled "For Girls Who Make Gifts" (a title that explicitly named its intended actors—girls—and actions—making and giving). The article taught girls to make a "Topsy Pincushion"—a useful household item not unlike the Miss Dinah Pen-Wiper. These instructions begin with a description that could apply equally well to a minstrel performer blacking up: the girl is to take a nonspecific "doll's head," which could be any color ("never mind," the newspaper tells girls, properties such as dirt or "fad[ing]"), and to "apply a good coat of shoe blacking"—a substance used by some minstrel performers as stage makeup. The newspaper instructs the girl to complete

Figure 5.2. "The Miss Dinah Pen-Wiper." *Godey's Lady's Book and Magazine*, May 1861, 451. This illustration accompanied instructions for making the pen-wiper. Courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society.

the doll's minstrel mask with "thick red lips and white eyeballs" and then "fasten [the doll's head] with glue or stitches on to a piece of heavy cardboard with cotton wadding enough to form a good sized body to the waist of the doll." When the doll is complete, the girl should "stick a few dozen colored-headed pins into topsy's [*sic*] shoulders."[38]

Figure 5.3. "Elsie in the Play-Room." The accompanying text reads, "How the children laughed! Eva had hung her old black doll, Dinah, against a beam, 'for a *punish*' as she said." Mrs. D. P. Sanford. *Frisk and His Flock* (1875; New York: E. P. Dutton, 1877), 110. Elizabeth Nesbitt Room, Information Sciences Library, University Library System, University of Pittsburgh.

Fiction and poetry, too, celebrated violence against black dolls, often as it merged with servitude. In the 1863 book *Dolly and I*, by the nineteenth-century best-selling children's author Oliver Optic (pseudonym of William Taylor Adams), a black doll named Dinah "had seen hard service in her day, and did not look as though she would last much longer"—a decimation that none of the white children in the story regret.[39] And in *Frisk and His Flock*, an 1877 children's book by Mrs. D. P. Sanford, a group of white children laugh when a white girl named Eva "hung her old black doll, Dinah, against a beam, 'for a *punish*'" (figure 5.3).[40] (The girl's name, Eva, implies the presence of Topsy; thus this novel, like "The Helpful Club: A True Story," collapsed Dinah and Topsy within a single black doll.) A poem by E.L.E. titled "Topsy," which appeared in the *Youth's Companion* in 1879, tells of a doll named Topsy who is unloved by her girl owner. The girl gives the unwanted doll to the poem's narrator, who makes her into a maid to a white china doll. The girl then drops Topsy and breaks the doll's head off.[41] And in the 1885 *Jimmy: Scenes from the Life of a Black Doll*, a white girl "mistress" repeatedly whips her black doll.[42]

This violence coexisted, in literature and in life, with a passionate love that white children expressed toward black dolls.[43] In 1887, one white mother reported in the magazine *Babyhood* that her toddler daughter owned two rag dolls, one white and one black (named, yet again, Dinah), and that "her affections are centered on the colored" doll: the girl will "never [go] to bed without Dinah in her arms, and cr[ies] for 'Di' if the nurse has forgotten to put it in the crib." This love for Dinah did not, however, prevent the child from giving the doll a "gash in her throat."[44] Love and violence were not mutually exclusive but were instead interdependent: even as historical white children loved their black dolls, they whipped, beat, and hanged black dolls with regularity and with ritualistic and sometimes sexually sadistic ferocity (children did and do commit violence against nonblack dolls as well, but nineteenth-century white children singled out black dolls for attacks that were especially vicious and that took racialized forms such as hanging or burning). In Buffalo, New York, in the late 1880s, a white girl named Mabel Ganson and her white friend genitally mutilated a black doll named Dinah in an effort to make the cloth doll appear to urinate. The girl grew up to become Mabel Dodge Luhan, a well-known patron of the arts, and in her memoir she described the attack in erotic terms: during the event, the girls "were both awfully excited with a queer delicious kind of pleasure, both mysterious and yet familiar." Luhan recalled that she "sat down on the floor and holding Dinah firmly

between my knees I poked a hole into the seam between her dark legs in the place where the hole ought to be." She then held the doll's legs open under a faucet and forced cold water into the gash. The girl expected the doll to absorb the stream, perhaps as the lower half of the Miss Dinah Pen-Wiper absorbed excess ink: "I suppose we thought that Dinah would just swell up and retain the water, but she didn't," Luhan wrote. "She got danker and danker until she was a squishy bundle of rags and the colors ran together and into each other and into the washbowl." With that, "Dinah was done for."[45]

Such viciousness against a black doll was far from isolated. In 1898, a Minneapolis newspaper invited children to write letters describing their play with toys. The newspaper published the letters of forty local girls and boys, each identified by name, address, school, and grade (which ranged from fifth to eighth). Seven of the letters focused on black dolls, and most of these shamelessly reported violence. A girl named Alice Leland announced that she "burned to death" a black doll, while Wm. G. Scholtz reported that he enjoyed pinching his "dearest" plaything, a "little black rubber doll named Tom," and that he allowed a cat to "bite Tom's toes and pull his hair," which provided "fun" for the cat. Scholtz echoed Frances Hodgson Burnett when he declared that his Tom doll, like Burnett's brutalized rubber doll of the same name, "never complained." And Harry E. Cass devised a toy theater out of a box and a homemade curtain, where he "made" a black doll "perform" dramas of African exploration. "Sometimes," the child added, "I would play I was hanging him." The article was titled, with no sign of intentional irony, "Toys That Made Childhood Sweet."[46] Burning, biting, and hanging effigies of African Americans seems "sweet" when those actions are performed by white children who carry an aura of racial innocence.

Harry E. Cass was not alone in his enjoyment of hanging black dolls. In 1902, an anonymous African American woman wrote in the *Independent*, "I have seen very small white children hang their black dolls. It is not the child's fault, he is simply an apt pupil."[47] By couching that statement within a discussion of lynching, the anonymous author suggested that white children were "pupil[s]" of an observed reality of antiblack mob violence, and that their doll play reflected this education. White children did witness the lynching of African Americans; indeed, white children actively participated in these murders. In the 1899 lynching of Richard Coleman in Maysville, Kentucky, for example, "little children from six to ten years of age carried dried grass and kindling wood and kept the fire burning all during the afternoon."[48] The anonymous essayist in the *Independent* may have been correct, then, in her suggestion that some white "pupil[s]" observed or participated in lynchings and then recapitulated that reality in their play.

Harry E. Cass, however, was probably not one of those children, because no African Americans were hanged—legally or by mob—in Minnesota during the seventh-grader's lifetime.[49] To the contrary, during the 1880s and 1890s many African Americans regarded Minnesota, and Minneapolis in particular, as notably congenial places to live and conduct business. The Reverend J. M. Henderson, writing in the black newspaper the *Christian Recorder* in 1888, described "the social environment" for African Americans in Minnesota as "adapted to cultivate and invigorate all the finer feelings and nobler qualities."[50] In June 1898, just six months before Harry Cass wrote to his newspaper, Horace Graves wrote in the *Christian Recorder* that the "white population [of the Twin Cities] is of that type whose hearts are open for the success of the black of their cities."[51]

Harry Cass was most likely a "pupil" not of mobs but of culture—much like Frances Hodgson Burnett, who whipped her "Uncle Tom" doll not after watching a whipping, but after reading Stowe's novel.[52] Cass may have read Stowe's novel, and perhaps he read *Frisk and His Flock* or one of the many other stories in which white children hanged black dolls. Maybe Daisy Turner did the same. Harry Cass certainly observed the play practices of other children, including, perhaps, his neighbors in Minneapolis who cheerfully reported destroying black dolls. Literature and material culture, I have argued, co-scripted nineteenth-century practices of play, and white children like Burnett enacted—and thus revised—the scripts. This process of reinvention, of repetition with differences, was collective. Nineteenth-century doll play was not private; representational play occurred throughout the home and also outside, where it was witnessed by families, neighbors, and, more importantly, other children. Children and former children described their play in periodicals and books, further transmitting practices from child to child. Burnett took cues from Stowe's novel and a doll, but then she published accounts of her play and thus co-scripted other children's behaviors: in 1888, when Burnett was publicizing *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, a girl approached her to say she had read about Burnett's whipping of her black doll and had been inspired toward similar play with her own black doll.[53] The publicity of doll play enabled children to influence each other, to function as teachers as well as pupils. Doll play existed, then, not only in the context of fiction, instructional literature,

and the materiality of playthings, but also in the context of other children's practices. White children, as doll-players, were not only repositories and reflectors of racist culture; they were its co-producers.

Dolls and Blackface

White children's representational play with black dolls has not, to date, been located in relation to blackface minstrelsy, in part because most scholars have understood minstrelsy as a realm of adult, working-class men.[54] This frame precludes children, and especially middle-class children and their home-based practices, from analysis. In fact, however, nineteenth-century white children's play with black dolls circulated gestures both out of and *into* blackface performance. Children's material culture reproduced the minstrel mask (as in the face of Raggedy Ann, or the "Topsy pincushion").[55] White girls, playing in pairs or groups, held their black dolls before them, with the dolls facing each other, and spoke for and through them, often performing minstrel dialect and humor. When a white girl spoke in dialect from behind a black doll, the doll functioned as the minstrel mask, a prop in the performance of corkless racial ventriloquism. Girls and boys used groups of black dolls to stage home-based minstrel shows, often in homemade toy theaters. These domestic activities were neither disconnected from onstage performance nor merely imitative of it. Rather, black dolls, like the Tomitudes discussed in Chapter 3, physically traveled between the home and the stage. As a conduit for the gestures of blackface, black dolls theatricalized the home and domesticated the theater.

Sarah Barrow represented the inherent theatricality of doll play in her 1863 children's book *Funny Little Socks*.[56] In this novel, two white girls, Lina and Minnie, play with three dolls: Lina handles the white "Mrs. Morris" while Minnie propels and speaks for the white "Mr. Montague" and a black servant named Toby.[57] Although Barrow writes most of her novel in conventional prose, she represents the girls' doll play as a script, including stage directions and narrative comments to indicate the girls' gestures.

> Mr. Montague. Toby, bring some water this minute.
> Toby. (*Minnie brings him in with a pitcher.*) Here, massa, here de water. . . .
> Mrs. M[orris]. Toby, put down that water, and go 'way.

> Minnie accordingly made believe that Toby was pouring water right on the floor; then she turned the pitcher upside down in his hand, and spoke for him.
> Toby. Dere de water, missis.
> Mrs. M. Oh! it's all over the carpet! How dare you, Toby?
> Toby. Why, missis, you *told* me to put down de *water*!
> . . . .
> "Oh! did ever anybody have such a funny play before!" cried Lina, fairly dropping Miss [*sic*] Morris, and clapping her hands with delight. "I mean always to play this way."[58]

In this passage, doll play absorbs and is absorbed by theatrical conventions. Lina doubles the meaning of "play": she calls the episode "a funny play" but then immediately slides into the use of "play" as a verb: "I mean always to play this way" (thus Lina echoes the discovery that Hilda Doolittle would make some thirty years later: "a play and to play were the same").[59] The girls use dolls to enact minstrel humor (a black servant's comic misunderstanding of the instruction to put water "down," and the slapstick result of that misapprehension), puns, and dialect—all of which Barrow renders as a dramatic script.

Helen C. Weeks's 1871 novel *Four and What They Did* narrates an amateur marionette show in which two black dolls named Jake and Dinah—yet another Dinah—get married (figure 5.4).[60] The scene deploys minstrelsy's characteristic misunderstanding of words to comedic effect: when the justice of the peace asks Jake, "Can you support a wife?," Jake replies, while almost knocking over his doll-wife, "Pretty well, sir; but I'd a little rather she'd stand on her own feet."[61] This comedy transforms into overt violence in the justice of the peace's next question to Jake: "Will you be kind to Dinah as long as you live[, and n]ever leave her out over night on the grass, or hanging in the grape-vine, with her head down?" Jake replies that he "can't promise" never to hang his wife, because Chester, the boy who owns both dolls, "does that."[62]

Barrow's and Weeks's strategies of representation reflected a historical reality of white children using black dolls to stage miniature theatricals, including minstrel shows, in the home.[63] In fin-de-siècle Minneapolis, we recall, Harry Cass transformed a box and a piece of cloth into a homemade toy theater, where he "made" a black doll "perform" (prior, one supposes, to its hanging).[64] At the same moment, psychologists G. Stanley Hall and A. Caswell Ellis observed white children in Worcester, Massachusetts,

Figure 5.4. "Jake's Wedding." Dolls named Jake and Dinah are temporarily strung with wires and then manipulated as marionettes in a homemade toy theater. Unsigned illustration in Helen C. Weeks, *Four, and What They Did* (New York: Hurd and Houghton, 1871), facing 296. Courtesy of Harvard College Library, Widener Library, KC1431.

staging minstrel shows with black dolls.[65] Georgianna Hamlen's mid-nineteenth-century childhood friend reconfigured a soap box as a miniature theater in which she staged a fairy play with black china dolls playing "gnomes" who dug in "black cambric, [which was] supposed to be coal, with wooden tea-spoons, supposed to be spades."[66] James Alden Markill recalled that when he was a boy in the mid-nineteenth century, his twin sister Janie knit thirty-seven black dolls, including recognizable characters from *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (Topsy, Uncle Tom, Aunt Chloe, Dinah) and the minstrel stage ("Jim Crow"). The twins created miniature sets of plantation scenes, within which they manipulated the dolls as puppets to act out an amalgamated Uncle Tom/minstrel show for an appreciative audience of friends and family.[67]

The Topsy doll, as a stage role, literary character, and material plaything, constituted a central artery in the bidirectional flow of gestures into and out of theatrical blackface performance. Within the home, white children such as James and Janie Markill staged minstrel performances *with* black dolls named Topsy, and beyond the home, white children and adults corked up to perform *as* black dolls named Topsy (as distinct from costuming themselves as the human character named Topsy). In each of these situations, a white child temporarily donned a mask of blackness—cork or doll—and performed according to minstrel conventions. At the turn of the twentieth century, amateur doll pageants, in which children and adults dressed and performed as dolls, were common—and to include a blackfaced performance of a Topsy doll was de rigueur. Amateurs from South Carolina to Idaho staged Charles Barnard's 1897 play *Bibi, A Comedy of Toys, in Three Acts,* which was set in a toy store and which featured many doll characters, including a Topsy doll.[68] Other plays that were popular with amateurs (especially child performers) and that featured a character of a Topsy doll included *The Frolic of the Dolls* and *The Doll Shop.*[69] Also common were high society "doll parties" in which children (and sometimes adults) costumed themselves as different kinds of dolls. For example, in Emporia, Kansas, in 1891—the year of Daisy Turner's pageant—Mabel Hainer attended a "rag baby party" in the guise of a Topsy doll.[70]

Even when a Tom show configured Topsy as flesh rather than cloth, the character transported doll-oriented behaviors into the theater. Thus children's play with black dolls not only imported gestures *from* minstrelsy but also exported practices *to* blackface performance. As early as 1852, the stage directions for H. J. Conway's version of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* had "Topsy making a dress for a large doll baby" that appeared with Topsy onstage.[71]

Figure 5.5. "Miss Lotta Crabtree as TOPSY." 1868. Courtesy of Christopher Brammer.

Many white actresses, in publicity photographs of themselves blacked-up in character as Topsy, posed with dolls; examples of such actresses ranged from Lotta Crabtree, one of the most famous nineteenth-century actresses to play Topsy, to an anonymous actress in William Brady's Tom show (figures 5.5 and 5.6) and another anonymous actress in Stetson's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. That so many publicity photographs depicted Topsy holding a doll suggests not only that stage Topsies may well have performed with dolls but also that troupe managers believed this image would stimulate sales of theater tickets. Topsy with a doll in hand, it seems, offered pleasures that an empty-handed Topsy lacked.

"Topsy is a doll. Dolls do not cry when they fall"

Dolls do not feel, so the blurring of distinctions between Topsy and dolls libeled black children as insensate. Harriet Beecher Stowe first likened Topsy

Figure 5.6. An actress plays Topsy with a rag-doll prop at her feet. Photograph from W. A. Brady production of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin; or, Life Among the Lowly, Embellished with Scenes and Illustrations* (New York: R. F. Fenno, 1904), 256. Collection of the author.

to a doll as one component of an antislavery argument. Stowe repeatedly described Topsy's eyes as "glitter[ing] glass beads" that, like a doll's eyes, reflected external light rather than manifested inward humanity.[72] When Eva converts Topsy, awakening her to her own humanity, the change registers in Topsy's formerly beadlike eyes: at the "moment [in which] a ray of real belief, a ray of heavenly love, had penetrated the darkness of her heathen soul," Topsy's "round, keen eyes . . . were overcast with tears;—large, bright

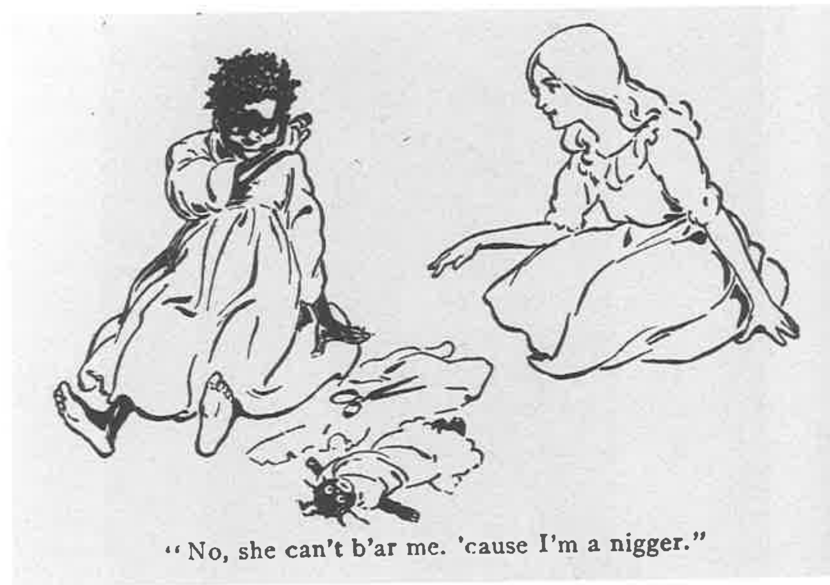

Figure 5.7. "No, she can't b'ar me, 'cause I'm a nigger." In this illustration by Ike Morgan, Topsy visually rhymes with a black doll, both of which have multiple pigtails, unfitted dresses, and faces defined by patches of absolute white and absolute black. This image visualizes the moment immediately before Eva lays hands on Topsy and converts her, as discussed in Chapter 1. Grace Duffie Boylan, *Young Folks Uncle Tom's Cabin* (New York: H. M. Caldwell, 1901), 104. Courtesy of Harvard College Library, Widener Library, AL3527.434

drops rolled heavily down, one by one, and fell on the little white hand."[73] Topsy's conversion, then, alters the precise organ that previously constituted her doll-likeness.

Authors, illustrators, and performers expanded on Stowe's initial likening of Topsy to a doll but erased Topsy's subsequent transition out of dollhood and into humanity. To suggest that Topsy's doll-likeness was permanent and essential rather than symptomatic was to reverse Stowe's attack on slavery.[74] In 1901, Ike Morgan (who later illustrated L. Frank Baum's *The Woggle-Bug Book*) posited this essential likeness when he drew Topsy and a Golliwogg-like doll with nearly identical pigtails, unfitted dresses, and faces that patched together absolute white and absolute black (figure 5.7).[75] In 1900, the popular association between Topsy and black dolls was

posthumously inserted into Stowe's prose when a juvenile edition of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* likened Topsy to an "ugly little black doll."[76] This line, which had no direct antecedent in Stowe's text, appeared in three additional juvenile editions of Stowe's novel between 1900 and 1910.[77]

Essentialized as doll-like, the Topsy of popular culture felt no pain. As an 1880 schoolbook explained, Topsy could fall "flat on her back"—but "Will Topsy cry? O, no; for Topsy is a doll. Dolls do not cry when they fall."[78] Rearticulation of this libel appears in yet another photograph of an anonymous actor—most likely a white girl in blackface—playing Topsy by raising her hand to strike a black doll (figure 5.8).

In this photograph, one figure who is not easily categorized as person or thing (a doll-like slave character) beats another figure who is also not easily categorized as person or thing (a slavelike doll character). The beating, however, never quite occurs. The girl raises her hand to strike the doll, but the two figures remain frozen forever in anticipation. Violence is endlessly deferred in this performance of pain that never pains. Flattened equally into the photograph, Topsy and doll are equalized as insensate things. In Tom shows, Topsy beat her doll, which felt no pain; Ophelia beat Topsy, who felt no pain; and Topsy figuratively beat herself in mirror image, without pain.

This performance of violence that never penetrates, of pain that never pains, imagined an alternative to both the "corporal discipline" and "disciplinary intimacy" that Richard Brodhead has influentially identified.[79] In Brodhead's view, Stowe staged, through Topsy, a contest between corporal discipline (which Michel Foucault might call punishment) and disciplinary intimacy, or the application of control that the authority personalizes and imbues with loving affects (a contrast to Foucauldian discipline, which is impersonal). In *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Aunt Ophelia tries unsuccessfully to control Topsy through corporal discipline, but Little Eva reforms Topsy through touch that melds "love with moral expectation" when Eva implores, "I love you, and I want you to be good . . . for my sake."[80] Eva succeeds where Ophelia fails, and thus Stowe critiques corporal discipline as fundamentally flawed (Brodhead notes that Stowe "raises corporal punishment to [a] pitch of moral intensity"[81]) and champions disciplinary intimacy—that loving mode of social control that Brodhead calls the nineteenth-century American "middle class's greatest creation, absorption, and self-identifying badge."[82]

In theaters, however, doll-like blackfaced Topsies forged a third possibility in which corporal discipline and disciplinary intimacy disappeared

Figure 5.8. In performance as Topsy, a blackfaced actress—most likely a white girl—raises her hand to strike a black doll. Collodion print, ca. 1885–90. Collection of the author.

together behind comically unfelt violence. For Stowe, corporal discipline was *tragically* ineffective because of flaws inherent in corporal discipline; but stage Topsies redefined corporal discipline as *comically* ineffective because Topsy could not be hurt. Tom shows did not, of course, invent comic violence, which had antecedents in Punch and Judy and many other theatrical traditions. What stage Topsies did innovate, however, was comic violence as a riposte to the then-recent formation of disciplinary intimacy. Topsy's doll-likeness recuperated corporal discipline by claiming it not as effective or moral, but as *ineffective* and *therefore* neither moral nor immoral but amoral. The corporal discipline that stage Topsies resurrected was not the antebellum sternness emblematized by Aunt Ophelia, but the postbellum fun of mass cultural excess, of consumption without consequence—a corporal un-discipline. When a doll-like slave beat a slave-like doll, the performance lampooned *both* corporal discipline *and* disciplinary intimacy, reducing both to apolitical entertainment. This racial innocence—that is, the child-borne appearance of the apolitical—both masked and delivered the powerful libel that African Americans were doll-like and insensate, and were appropriate objects for white violent fun. By transporting the gestures of play with black dolls from the home to the stage, actresses playing Topsy transformed Stowe's critique of violence-based-discipline into a jubilant theatrical attack on African Americans.

When Daisy Turner stepped onstage in 1891, she carried with her not only a black doll but also these collapsing histories of home-based play with black dolls, of onstage pageants including black dolls as characters, of onstage citations of everyday play with black dolls, and of the scenarios of servitude and violence that circulated through all these gestural traditions. Each girl in Daisy's pageant dressed like the doll in her arms; Daisy's classmate Amy Davis and her doll Antoinette, for example, both wore white dresses with blue ribbons. Like Amy Davis, Daisy must have doubled with the doll in her arms—but this doubling, in the context of a black girl and doll onstage, caused Daisy's performance to cite that of stage Topsies and their doubling dolls, as in figure 5.8. Although Turner did not describe Dinah's appearance, she did describe her own costume, which must have mirrored that of the doll. Turner lamented wearing "the old school dress they all had seen, my hair braided instead of being fluffed." Turner also mentioned that the dress she wore was red and that she would have preferred a white dress. A red dress was associated with Topsy: in every image in this book in which the original was in color, Topsy wears red. A 1901 advertisement for a "pickaninny" doll linked Topsy, a red dress, and

work clothes: "Little Topsy, / Flipsy flopsy, / Dress of red, / Curly head. / Little apron, white and clean, / Nicest Topsy ever seen."[83] If Daisy wore a plain red dress and braided hair, the doll, too, must have worn a plain red dress and braided hair. In 1891, a black girl in a plain red dress and braided hair, standing onstage in a doubling performance with a black doll, would inevitably have recalled one and only one famous role. The school pageant recruited Daisy Turner into the role of Topsy—a slave, a person legally defined as a thing.

The Terrifying Instability between People and Things

Dolls of all colors anxiously raise questions about the definitions and limits of humanity. As I have argued throughout this book, all dolls in play, and all stories about sentient dolls, trouble the boundary between person and thing—the terror at the ontological core of slavery. Nineteenth-century black dolls, however, uniquely literalized these functions in that they were owned, insentient things that often explicitly represented enslaved humans. Black dolls marked and eroded the border between person and thing; thus they functioned as devices in the meaning and memory of slavery.

Many white children, including Frances Hodgson Burnett, consciously linked literature and black dolls so as to perform fantasies about brutalized slaves. Georgianna Hamlen, for example, recalled that a childhood friend, "who had been reading about Southern plantations and the negro slaves," coaxed her mother to buy her six black china dolls. The girl dressed them "in blue and white striped cotton, and [made] them hold up the train of her best doll's best gown."[84] The white doll represented "Edith, the planter's daughter," and Georgianna Hamlen "thought that she [the white doll] looked very Southern and very proud as she stood on her father's verandah."[85] British novelist Amelia Barr was similarly inspired by a book to enslave her dolls. In about 1837 when Barr was about six years old, she encountered a schoolbook that contained "a picture of a very black slave loaded with chains, toiling in the sugar field, and a tall, white overseer with a whip standing near." Influenced by this image, the white girl "very soon abstracted the steel chain that held my mother's bunch of keys, loaded my negro doll with chains, [and] selected a white doll to act as overseer."[86] White children in 1890s Massachusetts used dolls to play at "slave-selling."[87] And in an 1870 story, the author "Aunt Fanny" (who also

wrote, under the pseudonym of Aunt Laura, *The Dolls' Surprise Party*) dispassionately described a knitted black "mammy" doll that had, in "one of her old black legs" a "*bullet-hole*, where the Southerners had shot her when she was running away head-over-heels from slavery." The narrator explained, "Really and truly, it was only a small pin-hole in the wood, but her little mistress"—that is, the white girl who owned the mammy doll—"made believe that the Southerners had shot her."[88]

Children imagined dolls as slaves, and conversely, adult writers imagined slaves as dolls. By the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, plantation fiction and memoirs took up this simile obsessively, as when Marietta Holley described a slave named Felix as "look[ing] like a tiny black doll" in the 1892 novel *Samantha on the Race Problem*.[89] Especially pernicious was the practice of describing enslaved people as "live dolls" that were fit only to serve as white girls' playthings. In Joel Chandler Harris's 1902 novel *Gabriel Tolliver: A Story of Reconstruction*, an antebellum doctor purchases a recently kidnapped African woman to serve as a "live doll [who] would please his daughter." Upon the presentation of the human gift, the doctor repeats the phrase: "I have brought you a *live doll*, daughter; come and see how you like it."[90] One 1906 antislavery memoir, *The Little Slave Girl*, deploys the trope of the slave as live doll to devastating, ironic effect. In an opening chapter titled "Rebecca's Live Doll," a white girl named Rebecca coldly informs an enslaved woman that she "choose[s]" the woman's baby to have "for mine" as a "live doll."[91] This scene retells the story of Little Eva's steamboat encounter with Uncle Tom, depicting the white girl's insistence that her father acquire the slave she has chosen ("*I want him*") not as Christian love but as heartless, self-centered dehumanization. Upon hearing that the white girl has recategorized the baby as a "live doll," the enslaved mother, "down-trodden and crushed—mentally, spiritually, and physically" can only continue sewing while the girl runs off to inform her father "of her new possession."[92]

The Little Slave Girl lays bare the threat of dehumanization that underlies the convertibility between black dolls and slaves, sentient things and people legally defined as things, things and people—a terror that Bill Brown describes as the American uncanny.[93] Popular culture that toyed with the transmutability between black dolls and slaves lent a veneer of harmlessness, of racial innocence, that never quite suppressed the menace. Terror surfaces, for example, in the anonymously authored story compilation *Little Miss Consequence*, published by McLoughlin Brothers between 1859 and 1862 (figure 5.9 and plate 10). *Little Miss Consequence*

mimics the structure and some content of German author Heinrich Hoffmann's 1845 didactic children's book *Der Struwwelpeter* (*Shaggy Peter*).[94] The "dark, dark" story, "The Girl Who Inked Herself and Her Books, and How it Ended," retells and crucially alters Hoffmann's story of "Die Geschichte von den schwarzen Buben" ("The Story of the Inky Boys"). In Hoffmann's tale, three white boys taunt a moor, and as punishment, St. Nicholas dips the white boys in ink, permanently staining them black. The McLoughlin Brothers version reverses the story and its moral. Miss Mopsa, a white girl whose name echoes that of Topsy and thus portends Topsy-like flip-flops, commits the crime of dipping her own hands in ink and smearing her books. That is, she treats herself like the "Miss Dinah Pen-Wiper" described concurrently in *Godey's Lady's Book* in 1861. The racial transgression, then, is not only that the white girl physically blackens herself, but that she treats herself like a thing that soaks up excess (Mabel Ganson Dodge Luhan, we recall, was surprised when her Dinah doll was unable to absorb a torrent of water). As Miss Mopsa sucks in the ink, she turns black. Her parents deem the black girl "too hideous for a daughter," so they redefine her as a black doll and sell her to a rag shop, which "suspends" her from an iron link.

When McLoughlin Brothers hanged Miss Mopsa, as a black doll, at a rag shop, the publisher Americanized the British tradition of the "Black Doll Shop," an unseemly type of secondhand store that trafficked in rags, bones, stolen goods, and racial terror. According to legend, which Edward Walford cheerily recounted in *Old and New London* (1881), the Black Doll Shop originated through slavery. (Walford is best understood as a re-teller of a popular story, not as a historian of the black doll rag-and-bone shops that did exist in nineteenth-century London.) In Walford's account, the black doll became a sign of used and possibly stolen goods for sale because of a white "woman who, travelling abroad, brought back with her a black baby as a speculation."[95] The woman found "that such an article had no value in England," so she "wrapped it up in a bundle of rags and sold it to one of the founders of the [used goods] trade."[96] That is, the white woman discovered that she could not sell a slave in England and therefore disguised the baby as stolen rag and bone, as a thing, which *was* salable. According to the legend, the "little nigger"—a girl—was raised at the expense of the church. When she grew up, she opened her own used goods shop. Like the doll-like stage Topsies who beat black dolls, the proprietor doubled her construction as stolen rag and bone with her traffic in those substances. She marked her storefront with a black doll "hung out as a sign."[97] The formerly enslaved woman and her children opened fifty rag-and-bone shops and marked each

Figure 5.9. "The Girl Who Inked Herself and Her Books, And How It Ended." This first page of the story visually tells the entire tale: in the upper right corner, Miss Mopsa appears as a white girl. A line threads around the verse, leading the reader's eye first to the left, to the schoolbook Miss Mopsa defaces, then down, as Miss Mopsa turns gray and then black. Bottom center, the line becomes a shelf on which the inkwell rests, and finally, in the bottom right corner, the thread becomes the device by which Miss Mopsa, redefined and sold as a black doll, hangs. *Little Miss Consequence* ([New York:] McLoughlin Bros., between 1859 and 1862), n.p. Courtesy of the University of Florida Digital Collections.

with a hanged black doll, like Miss Mopsa, which wordlessly symbolized the viciousness of racial violence and the quivering transmutability between thing and person, slavery and freedom, rag and flesh at the axis of the bone.

Daisy Turner's Resistance

Daisy Turner knew slavery indirectly but intimately through her family. According to her family's oral tradition, her grandfather, Alexander Turner, survived the middle passage and the auction block in New Orleans. Sold to a man named John Gouldin, Turner labored on a plantation in Port Royal, Virginia, where his son, Alec Turner, was born in 1845. In 1862, Alec Turner escaped to New Jersey; he joined the First New Jersey Cavalry and fought in several battles during the Civil War. After the war, he married a freedwoman named Sally Early, and the two built their home and raised a family in Vermont. Daisy was the middle daughter of thirteen children. The Turner family prized their memories and their history, and Daisy Turner grew up hearing her parents and uncle recite antebellum stories, songs, and poetry. She also grew up with a visceral connection to slavery through her father's blood. When Alec Turner was a boy, a slaveholder discovered him learning to read from primer and lashed him with a bullwhip, spilling the boy's blood on the book. Alec later retrieved the blood-soaked primer and took it with him when he escaped. Daisy Turner treasured this heirloom for the history it evidenced; she frequently handled the book that contained her father's blood, showing both to anyone willing to listen to the story.[98]

The poem that Daisy Turner's teacher wrote—the poem that the eight-year-old girl refused to recite on stage and that the 102-year-old woman still refused to recite on video—almost certainly configured "Dinah" as a slave. The poem declared that the doll was "born in Africa," but the doll's name was associated with American servitude from the "Miss Dinah Pen-Wiper" to *Uncle Tom's Cabin* to the song "I've Been Working on the Railroad."[99] The doll's name and materiality simultaneously signaled violence and black vulnerability, as when white children gathered and laughed as a white girl "hung her old black doll, Dinah, against a beam, 'for a *punish*'" in the novel *Frisk and His Flock*. Daisy's and Dinah's mirrored plain red dresses and braided hair, too, bespoke American servitude—specifically, the enslavement of Topsy—rather than life in Africa. By 1891, commercially manufactured black dolls representing "Africa" had established a visual vocabulary by which to identify a doll as an inhabitant of that continent. This vocabulary included "savage" costuming such as grass skirts or nose rings.[100] Turner's plain red dress, however, counterindicated the presence of a grass skirt or related accoutrements. The Dinah that the teacher put in Daisy's hands may have been "born" in Africa, but she was named, she dressed, and she labored in America. The missing piece of the story, unspoken but unavoidable, is the middle passage.

When Daisy Turner stepped onstage, visually doubled with a black doll named Dinah, the girl was conscripted into practices involving black dolls: serving, hanging, beating, whipping, soaking, blacking up, and enduring dehumanization both off- and onstage. How could she shake off the ghosts of stage Topsies who beat their doll-doubles? How could she shatter the mirror between herself and her slave-doll, and assert that she was a girl, a free person, not a live-doll-slave? How could Daisy announce to her classmates and neighbors that she would perform no comic violence, no breakdowns, no cheery songs celebrating unfelt abuse? She found her answer in her improvised exhortation to

> . . . stand up dolly
> And look straight
> To the judges at the right
> And I'll stand right by your side
> If I do look a fright

Daisy structured her resistance as a correction in the doll's posture. Unlike Stowe's Topsy, who "cring[es]" and sneaks "furtive glances" from the "corners of her eyes," a black doll, in Daisy's view, should "stand up" and "look straight" at those who judge her.[101] Tom shows paired cringing blackfaced Topsies with battered dolls, but Daisy redefined this pairing in her promise to "stand right by your side," despite "look[ing] a fright"—a three-word phrase that conflates fear with ugliness. After interrupting the postures of minstrelsy and declaring the worth of the doll and herself, Daisy concluded not by embracing the doll (as Kenneth and Mamie Clark surely would have wished), but instead by throwing it down: "I set myself down, but instead of setting gently, I had half throwed [*sic*] Dinah up against the seats like that and set myself down with the red dress and all." As she threw the doll away from her body, Daisy disrupted the doubling effect (although her reference to her "red dress and all" suggests that she remained conscious of the visual link between her and the doll). The ungentle rejection of the doll reconfigured

a conventionalized act of comic violence—throwing a black doll—as an expression of Daisy's thoughts, as an intellectual and political act.

The performance of resistance at the school pageant became a favorite episode in Daisy Turner's life, and Turner recounted the story frequently for almost a century. But she refused to fill the story's gaps. She consistently brushed off questions of what the doll looked like. When asked about the teacher's poem, which the eight-year-old girl dutifully memorized, the grown woman, who had a special gift for retaining verse, insisted she could not remember the teacher's words. This claim of forgetfulness is not credible from a woman who punctuated her 104th birthday celebration by unhesitatingly reciting from memory a seventeen-minute poem.[102] Even in 1985, Daisy Turner continued to resist, to slip from the gummy doll that threatened to incorporate her into narratives of servitude and violence, of blackface and slavery.[103]

New Negroes, New Dolls

The traditions of nineteenth-century doll play that children expertly performed—traditions that Harry Cass enacted and that Daisy Turner resisted—clashed with a second, concurrent history: one of African American adults objecting to black girls' practices of doll play and attempting to reshape those practices for the purpose of racial uplift. African American adults, especially men, wanted girls to embrace black dolls as signs and inculcators of self-respect. However, African American girls often refused black dolls along with the scripts those dolls transmitted, and this refusal can be understood as itself a sign and assertion of self-respect or at least self-protection.

Daisy Turner and her father, Alec Turner, were in this way at cross-purposes. When Daisy first received the teacher's poem, she balked at memorizing and performing it with the Dinah doll, but her father convinced her to participate in the pageant. As Daisy Turner recalled, Alec Turner told his daughter that there "was no harm" in doubling with the black doll because

> who could know, or who would realize or decide, which house looked the prettiest, painted red or green or blue or whatever the color was, or which tree was the loveliest. And so if I was a little darker-skinned girl and I took the dark-colored doll, I was just as lovely as the others.

In this recounting of events, Daisy expressed aversion to the doll, the poem, and the pageant, but Alec Turner responded by reassuring his daughter that *she*, a "darker-skinned girl," was "lovely." That is, Alec Turner assumed that a black girl's feelings toward a black doll reflected her feelings toward her raced self. For Alec Turner, like Kenneth and Mamie Clark half a century later, dolls provided occasions to perceive and to declare which colors and therefore which races were "lovely" or, in the Clarks' term, "nice." The possibility that children might react to a doll as a *doll* with its own histories of performance seems to have occurred to neither Alec Turner nor the Clarks.[104]

When African American girls rejected black dolls, their parents often despaired. In 1853, forty years before Alec Turner urged his daughter to perform with the Dinah doll and a century before *Brown v. Board of Education*, William J. Wilson (who wrote under the pseudonym "Ethiop") lamented in *Frederick Douglass' Paper* that "every one of your readers knows that a black girl would as soon fondle an imp as a black doll." Once, Wilson recalled, he "introduced [a black doll] among a company of twenty colored girls" who responded by "screaming" and running away.[105] In Wilson's view, girls' distaste for black dolls resulted from an "education" through "art or literature" that causes African Americans to "depreciate, . . . despise, [and] almost hate ourselves."[106] Wilson in 1853, Alec Turner in 1891, and the Clarks in 1939 shared precisely the same assumptions about children, dolls, and what one might now call internalized racism.

Some New Negro writers tried to counter black girls' rejection of black dolls by advocating the rejection of white dolls.[107] For example, "Dolly's Dream," a 1920 short story by Nora Waring that appeared in the *Brownies' Book* (the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People's short-lived juvenile magazine, co-edited by W. E. B. Du Bois and Jessie Redmon Fauset), features a black girl whose name, Dolly, announces her doubleness with a plaything. Dolly loves a golden-haired doll, and the girl wishes that she, too, had blond hair. Unlike Toni Morrison's Pecola, who goes mad with this desire, Dolly receives her wish. A fairy godmother gives Dolly "pinky white skin and blue, blue eyes" as well as golden hair. When Dolly's family and neighbors fail to recognize her, Dolly realizes that her dark skin, hair, and eyes locate her in a community, and she wishes for her original body—that is, she wishes to be a black Dolly rather than a white dolly, to be neither white nor a thing. Dolly awakens to discover that her transformation was but a dream, and she reenters the waking world glad to have "'cwinkly' black curls."[108]

If, African American adults reasoned, beautiful white dolls filled black children with inappropriate desires and grotesque minstrel dolls inculcated black children with self-loathing, then perhaps beautiful black dolls could foster racial pride. An anonymously authored essay in the *Christian Recorder* in 1889 called passionately for a doll "modeled after the best types of Afro-American girls and young women." Such a product "will come; it must come," the author argued, because it is needed, and therefore whoever creates it will earn "a fortune."[109] In the early decades of the twentieth century, African American entrepreneurs tried to produce dolls that fit this bill (although none earned anything close to a fortune). The National Baptist Convention coordinated efforts to manufacture, sell, and promote black dolls: Black Baptist minister Richard Henry Boyd founded the National Negro Doll Company (NNDC) in 1908, and in that same year the National Baptist Convention and the Illinois Federation of Women's Clubs passed resolutions to endorse the company.[110] In late November 1908, several African American women's clubs in Indianapolis cosponsored a Negro doll fair (women's clubs would later organize "Negro Doll Clubs" and "doll bazaars").[111] Soon more manufacturers, both African American and not, produced noncaricatured black dolls marketed to black children. In the teens and twenties, doll companies including the Garveyite Berry and Ross Company, the Gadsden Doll Company, and the E. M. S. Novelty Company advertised often in the *Crisis*, the *Brownies' Book*, the Chicago *Defender*, and other African American periodicals.[112]

African American adults championed beautiful black dolls as direct causes of racial uplift. Booker T. Washington, an enthusiastic proponent of the NNDC, wrote in 1910 that black dolls "will have the effect of instilling in Negro girls and in Negro women a feeling of respect for their own race."[113] One anonymous newspaper writer commented in the *Negro Star* in 1921, "Take a child and let her play with a white doll three years[,] then bring a brown doll and she will not have the brown doll." White dolls "only teach white superiority and black inferiority" but a parent may reverse the process and "give the Negro child a Negro dolls [*sic*] and see if it does not change the attitude of the Negro regarding black and white."[114] One man proclaimed in the *Freeman* his "Resolutions for 1909" with the far-reaching goal of being "helpful to the entire race." The fourth resolution (superseded only by caring well for children, buying a home, and boycotting racist newspapers): "My children shall play with Negro dolls."[115]

Michele Mitchell attributes the urgency New Negroes invested in black dolls to concerns over the propagation of the race. White dolls, New

Negroes argued, teach a black girl to want white babies and by extension the white husbands who can give her those babies; in contrast, black dolls teach desire for black babies and therefore black husbands.[116] Black dolls were thus understood as tools by which to oppose racial mixing. Mitchell brilliantly analyzes New Negro reformers' use of dolls to represent and attempt to influence families, but she does not comment on what is most remarkable of all: not *how* New Negro reformers thought about doll families, but *that* African American adults consistently understood dolls to represent families—and only families.

As this chapter and the previous one showed, white adults and children sometimes configured groups of dolls as families, but at other times arranged dolls into communities, into publics. Many girls collected dolls that represented different countries and arranged them into what now resembles a proto–League of Nations. The catalog of the white-owned Babyland doll company imagined a plantation wonderland populated by "Topsy" and "Aunt Dinah"; and Marcella was "mistress," not mother, to the Raggedy dolls in her nursery.[117] White-authored novels such as *Funny Little Socks* depicted play in which dolls represented neighbors and servants. African American girls, especially middle-class ones, did use dolls to represent publics, but African American adults were consistent and even insistent in imagining dolls exclusively as families, as "children" to girl "mothers." We see this disjunction within the Clark family: in 1947, Mamie and Kenneth Clark's six-year-old daughter Kate collected dolls "of every color and nation" in the model United Nations mode, but in the North Side Center for Child Development, Kate's psychologist parents structured therapeutic play exclusively around what Mamie Clark described as "families of dolls" (the Clarks' doll tests, similarly, valued affinity rather than diversity when they tested children's willingness to associate themselves positively with a doll of a hue similar to their own).[118] White authors used the terms "mistress" and "mother" frequently and interchangeably to describe white girl doll owners, but African American authors used only the term "mother." I have been unable to find even one instance, from any year, in which an African American of any age or gender described an African American girl as a "mistress" to a doll. This void suggests that African Americans consciously rejected this easily available term along with its implications, as mapped in previous chapters, that slavery is a form of love, of innocent play.

One can, of course, configure dolls as a community without employing the term "mistress," but significantly, New Negro writers seldom pursued

that option. Some black-authored doll stories even envisioned dollhood as *oppositional* to community. In "Dolly's Dream," for example, the protagonist discovers that to become like her blonde doll is to be *separated* from her community, and to regain her dark flesh is to reunite not only with her family but also with her neighbors. In New Negro thought, to be a child was to be a member of a family and a community, but to be a doll was to be a member of a family alone. This distinction appears especially clearly in the story "Mary and Her Dolls," which appeared in Silas X. Floyd's 1905 didactic manual, *Floyd's Flowers; or, Duty and Beauty for Colored Children*. In this story, an African American girl named Mary has five dolls, whom she describes as her "family." Mary's father suggests that Mary give one of her dolls to a poor girl, but Mary objects on the grounds that she loves her "babies" as much as her father loves his children. Her father affirms Mary's logic by kissing her. Mary then finds a way to reconcile a charitable impulse with loyalty to her doll-children: she will use her savings to buy a new doll for the poor girl.[119] Floyd's story ends happily because Mary's solution distinguishes between storied dolls—that is, dolls with which she has played, dolls through which she has imagined "family"—and a new doll to be purchased from a store. Mary is willing to give money for a doll, but she is unwilling to give away her immaterial, affective attachment to a "baby." This distinction creates an avenue for public charity—for community—while preserving the analogy between dolls and family.

When Floyd included this story in a work of prescriptive literature, he implied that his black child-readers should imitate Mary in both her charity and her vision of dolls as families. Floyd and many other reformers called for black girls to use black dolls to play out stories of family as distinct from community, and yet those same reformers wanted doll play to uplift the race as a whole. If doll play was to serve communities, why should it not represent communities? Why did New Negro reformers want Negro girls to use dolls to play out stories of families but not neighborhoods?

The answer may be found in the gestures that these different scenarios of play script. If a girl casts dolls as her "children" and herself as "mother," she performs gestures of care-giving: dressing, feeding, disciplining, and cuddling. If that same girl casts her dolls as something other than a family—as friends or neighbors to each other, for example—she might interact directly with them, or she might stage interactions among the dolls that do not acknowledge the presence of the child. The white girl-characters

in *Funny Little Socks* play in this way when they use dolls to stage a scene among two courting neighbors and a minstrelized servant. The distinction between games of "family" and games of "community" replicates the distinction between "cuddle games" and what H. G. Wells called "floor games," as discussed in the previous chapter. "Floor games" involving hard figurines of soldiers and "natives" play out geographical fantasies of publics: villages, regions, and nations. The games are openly political, not innocent ("The British Empire," Wells wrote, "will gain new strength from nursery floors"[120]). Cuddle games, in contrast, appear to be about love; they take on a child's aura of innocence, which obscures a doll's political history. When New Negro adults called upon Negro girls to imagine dolls as families and not communities, they instructed girls to play cuddle games, not floor games. Thus New Negro adults instructed black girls to perform innocence—the quality from which a century of popular culture had disqualified African American children.

Pain, I have argued throughout this book, was the wedge that split images of white and black childhood into respective trajectories of tender innocence and nonchildlike invulnerability. Black dolls were especially powerful sites through which to perform the libel that black flesh was invulnerable to pain. From the Topsy/pickaninny/"nigger" doll that could be thrown without getting hurt (Chapter 1) to the gutta-percha "Uncle Tom" whose grin implied, to Frances Hodgson Burnett, that he enjoyed being whipped (Chapter 2), to the painless clubbing of Beloved Belindy (Chapter 4) to the ritualistic beating of black dolls by actresses playing Topsy (Chapter 5), play with black dolls made claims about African Americans' ability to feel.

In counterpoint, African Americans selected dolls as special sites through which to reflect on feelings, especially pain and vulnerability. New Negroes widely understood tender rituals of cuddling black dolls as both cause and effect of racial uplift; that is, they cared about black dolls not only as meaningful texts, but as scriptive things. "Mothers!" wrote Marcus Garvey, "give your children dolls that look like them to play with and cuddle" so that "they will learn as they grow older to love and care for their own children and not neglect them."[121] "Today," a 1912 article in the trade journal *Toys and Novelties* observed approvingly, "many negro children were seen fondling black dolls." The author of the article ascribed this tenderness to the success of doll manufacturers that "assist this effort 'to instill in the minds of children race love'" and "race loyalty."[122]

The National Negro Doll Company sold fragile dolls that required

gentle care and that thus scripted small rituals of tenderness.[123] The NNDC seems never to have manufactured its own dolls, but rather to have imported noncaricatured dolls from Germany. These dolls broke easily, as evidenced by an undated pamphlet in which the NNDC issued "Special . . . INSTRUCTIONS that Should be Followed out Carefully" to ensure the dolls' safety. "BEWARE of Broken Dolls," the NNDC proclaimed in large letters. The pamphlet detailed the care that the company took in packing the dolls for shipment. Despite these measures, the NNDC received "a lot of complaints" that the delicate dolls were often "crushed or damaged" in post.[124] These elaborate "instructions" show not only that the dolls were fragile, but also that the NNDC regarded their fragility as a characteristic to manage rather than a problem to correct or even apologize for. NNDC dolls, unlike dolls of rag or rubber, could not be treated roughly—at least not more than once. Because NNDC dolls shattered when subjected to carelessness, much less abuse, they intervened in nearly a century of violent play scripted through black dolls. NNDC dolls determinatively ordered their users not to abuse black dolls. Any child who disobeyed this order would be left with a pile of shards rather than a plaything.

The National Negro Doll Company, like most other early twentieth-century producers and distributors of black dolls, was short-lived. The company folded only a few years after it opened, and by 1930, most companies that specialized in African American dolls had closed up shop. Advertisements for these companies, which had appeared regularly in magazines such as the *Crisis* throughout the 1920s, disappeared from the pages. Dolls distributed by the NNDC or similar companies may have deeply affected some children, but their cultural impact did not approach that of, say, Johnny Gruelle's Beloved Belindy. After New Negro doll manufacturers and distributors closed down, white-manufactured minstrel or mammy dolls, which were made of rags and which invited violence, remained widely available.

By the 1930s, then, when the Clarks launched their doll test, black dolls had for over a century scripted violent and degrading play-performances, both off- and onstage, that libeled African Americans as naturally servile and insensate to pain. African American children, particularly girls, had largely rejected black dolls and the modes of play these dolls scripted. And African American women and especially men, from William J. Wilson to Alec Turner to Booker T. Washington, had, with growing urgency, viewed black children's play with white dolls as a symptom of societal racism and tender play with black dolls as a potential cure for that pathology. This is the deep-rooted and high-stakes contest that the Clarks entered—and ultimately reconfigured.

Tears and Other Intellectual Things

Mamie Phipps Clark designed the doll test for her 1939 master's thesis in psychology at Howard University, and she and her husband then ran the tests through 1947.[125] During those years, the Clarks administered the test to 253 children, all African American, in Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Delaware, South Carolina, and Arkansas.[126] Of the children the Clarks tested, the majority preferred white dolls, and the Clarks argued that this choice revealed psychological damage caused by systemic racism. They published their findings in the *Journal of Experimental Education* (1939), the *Journal of Social Psychology* (1940), the *Journal of Negro Education* (1950), and many other scholarly venues. In 1951, Thurgood Marshall, then a lead lawyer for the NAACP, recruited Kenneth Clark to be an expert witness in several court challenges to segregation.[127] Kenneth Clark testified in three out of the four lower court cases that eventually melded into *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954.

For *Brown*, Kenneth Clark coauthored a statement, which NAACP lawyers appended to a court brief, in which he summarized social science research relevant to psychological damage and segregation. This brief did not mention the doll tests, but it was steeped in the thinking about self-esteem that the Clarks had developed through their decade of experimentation with dolls. The NAACP also submitted to the Supreme Court a 1950 report that Kenneth Clark wrote for the Midcentury White House Conference on Children and Youth. This report did cite the Clarks' experiments. Neither of the Clarks testified orally in *Brown*, and the court's decision never referred directly to the doll tests. However, the unanimous *Brown* decision, authored by Chief Justice Earl Warren, prominently cited the 1950 report in which Kenneth Clark did discuss the doll experiments.

The national public became aware of the doll experiments before *Brown*, in 1947, with the publication of a lengthy article about the Clarks, illustrated with photographs by Gordon Parks, in *Ebony* magazine.[128] After *Brown*, Kenneth Clark's popular writings (*Prejudice and Your Child* in 1955 and the more widely read *Dark Ghetto* in 1965, as well as articles in numerous magazines) secured the place of the doll tests in the public

view. Toni Morrison's 1970 novel, *The Bluest Eye*, fictionalized the doll tests through the figure of Pecola, who longed for and pathologically identified with white dolls.[129] For six decades following *Brown*, the American Psychological Association trumpeted the Clark doll tests as examples of the positive effects of social science research on public policy.[130] Because of this ongoing publicity, the doll tests have "set the parameters for virtually all subsequent research on racial identity, self-esteem, and child development."[131] Ever since *Brown*, the Clark doll tests have been cited, narrated, and restaged to tell stories about race in America.

The Clarks represented their findings as transparent revelations of black children's damaged self-esteem. In fact, however, they carefully structured their experiment as a dramatic arc that ensured that most children would prefer the white doll. The test's results were predictable because of the order of the questions.

1. Give me the doll that you like to play with— (a) like best.
2. Give me the doll that is a nice doll.
3. Give me the doll that looks bad.
4. Give me the doll that is a nice color.
5. Give me the doll that looks like a white child.
6. Give me the doll that looks like a colored child.
7. Give me the doll that looks like a Negro child.
8. Give me the doll that looks like you.[132]

The eight questions divided into three subsets. The first subset, consisting of questions one through four, was "designed," the Clarks wrote, "to reveal preferences" in dolls.[133] The second subset, questions five through seven, determined whether a child understood the dolls' colors of plastic as signifiers of racial identities. And the third subset, consisting solely of question eight, asked a child to affiliate a doll with himself or herself.

Anyone who had read the op-eds and letters in the New Negro press during the 1910s, '20s, and '30s would have known that most African American children preferred white dolls. It was therefore unsurprising that many of the Clarks' subjects chose the pink doll in response to positive questions 1, 2, and 4, and the brown doll in response to negative question 3. It was equally predictable, during the second subset of questions, that most children competently read the dolls' colors as representations of race.

The final subset—the eighth request, "Give me the doll that looks like you"— constituted the climax of the experiment. Upon hearing that question, many of the children who had designated the white doll as "nice" and the Negro doll as "bad" (as 59 percent of them had, in each respective case) suddenly changed demeanor. Children who had been "free and relaxed" suddenly "broke down and cried"; and some "ran out of the testing room, unconsolable [*sic*], convulsed in tears."[134] For others, the answer to the eighth question was disturbingly easy: "That one," said one boy, pointing to the brown doll. "It's a nigger. I'm a nigger."[135]

The Clarks acknowledged that they manipulated the order of their questions to provoke children's rejection of the Negro doll. In an earlier version of the test, the Clarks first asked the children to identify the dolls racially (subset 2), next asked which doll was like them (subset 3), and finally asked which doll they preferred (subset 1). When questioned in this order, black children had a "marked tendency" to identify with and to prefer black dolls. The Clarks discarded this finding as "not necessarily a genuine expression of actual preference, but a reflection of ego involvement." They "controlled" for this "distortion" by changing the order so that children expressed doll preference before they identified a doll with themselves.[136] In other words, the Clarks knew that differently ordered questions produced different results, and they discarded the ordered processes that produced the data they did not want.

Analysis of doll play as a genealogy of performance accounts for this difference in results far better than the Clarks' claims of "distortion" and false positives. In the Clarks' original sequence, children were asked which doll was most like them before they were asked which doll was nice or bad. Therefore, the first question drew children's attention to *themselves*, and asked the children to understand a doll *through* and *in relation to* the self. The person was primary, the doll secondary. In the original sequence, then, the Clarks framed a doll as an *object* that symbolized a person, not a *thing* that prompted play. (An *object*, we recall, is a material item that one looks through or beyond to see something human, whereas a *thing* asserts itself within a field of matter.) Many children responded by identifying the brown doll—which they understood to represent Negro raciality—as the object most like themselves. In the revised sequence, however, the Clarks' initial request—"Give me the doll that you like to play with"—instructed the children to think about the dolls *as dolls* and *in play*. The doll in play, not the person, was primary to the sequence of requests. The Clarks noted that the children did, indeed, approach the dolls as playthings: "Many of the children entered into the experimental situation—particularly the

doll test and the coloring test—with freedom similar to that of play."[137] The Clarks seem to have assumed that children play the same way with black and white dolls, and that the questions were therefore racially neutral. As this chapter has shown, however, traditions of play with black and white dolls are not comparable—and historically located children, as experts in children's culture, are sharply aware of how one is "supposed" to play with racially distinct dolls. A child with basic knowledge of children's culture may well have understood the Clarks' revised opening request—"Give me the doll you like to play with"—as a choice between a white doll that prompted cuddle play and a black doll that scripted play of violence and servitude. This binary choice appears in figure 5.3 as a split down the middle of the image: to the center and left, a white girl cuddles white dolls, and to the right, a black doll hangs. That a majority of black children preferred the former mode of play could reveal low self-esteem but could just as well constitute resistance to the demeaning performances that black dolls had scripted for over a century.

In one iteration of the doll experiment, investigators seem to have varied the Clarks' questions so as to focus very tightly on scenarios and actions of doll play rather than the dolls *or* the children. This apparently slight variation produced significantly different results. In the 1951 case of *Belton v. Gebhart* and *Bulah v. Gebhart*, Kenneth Clark testified that forty-one African American children in Delaware had not been asked to "Give me the doll that looks bad," but instead were asked, "Which of these dolls is *likely to act bad*?"[138] This phrasing anthropomorphized the dolls and asked the child to imagine and describe the dolls as animate—that is, to project the dolls into play. The phrasing addressed *only* how the doll would "act." The question did not ask black children to identify how *they*, as individuals, would play with black or white dolls, but instead asked how the dolls would "likely" function in abstracted, scripted play. By 1951, white children, in literature and life had, for a full century, meted out discipline to black dolls that the children had made to act "bad" (in figure 5.3, the white girl has hung the black doll "for a *punish*").[139] Any child who chose the black doll answered the question precisely as the investigator phrased it: the black doll in scripted play was indeed more likely to act bad. And indeed, when the children were asked which doll "looks bad," 59 percent chose the black doll, but when children were asked which doll was "likely to act bad," the percentage of children who chose the black doll rose to 75. The latter question addressed cultural practices, not preference and certainly not self-esteem; and the children's answers demonstrate expertise

in practices of play. The Clark doll tests may ultimately prove little about self-esteem, but they tell us a great deal about how African American children of the 1930s, '40s, and '50s thought about racialized doll play.

The Clarks' phrasing and order of questions hurtled children toward an impossible choice. In the Clarks' finalized order, questions in the first subset framed dolls as things in play and asked children which things and practices of play they preferred (or, in the exceptional 1951 case, asked children to read dolls' scripts). Most children, predictably, rejected the practices of play associated with and scripted through black dolls. The second subset of questions asked children to identify the dolls as objects that represented racial groups. Again predictably, most children competently read these objects of children's culture. The third subset, the eighth question, forced children who had rejected the practices of play scripted through black dolls and who had identified the brown dolls as signifiers of Negro raciality to confront an impossible choice: were they *more* nice, like the white doll, or more Negro, like the bad doll? Which quality—niceness or Negroness—better described their essential truth?[140]

Children who had been led, question by question, into an epistemological trap responded to the climactic eighth question by breaking down and sobbing. The Clarks claimed that their test subjects' tears symptomized societal racism, but in the immediate sense, the ones who made the children cry were the Clarks—and Kenneth Clark acknowledged as much. Upon hearing that eighth question, Kenneth Clark said, children sometimes "looked at *me* as if *I* were the devil for putting them in this predicament."[141] At other times, Kenneth Clark wrote, the eighth question caused "some children [to look] at the investigator with terror or hostility."[142] For these reasons, Kenneth Clark said, the tests constituted "a traumatic experience for me as well."[143]

If the Clarks were initially surprised by the children's tears, they certainly were not surprised in the fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth year of testing. The Clarks could have altered their experiment to avoid these responses (they had, after all, previously revised the test to avoid an unwanted result). The fact that they did not do so shows that the Clarks viewed tears as a desirable result of the doll tests. That they repeatedly staged a drama that climaxed with children sobbing suggests that the Clarks *wanted* children to cry.

This chapter, like most scholarship on the doll tests, has considered the experiment mainly from the perspective of the Clarks. But let us pause and briefly reexamine it from the perspective of the child test subjects.

The Clarks knew that the eighth question was the last, *but the children did not know that*. For all the children knew, there were ten more questions, thirty more questions to come. Imagine that you are a child taking the test. It's the 1940s. You're five. You're alone in a room with an adult whom you do not know. The adult begins by asking you questions about toys and play. These questions are comfortable because toys and play are subjects about which you know a lot and have strong opinions. Next, the adult asks you about dolls and race. These questions, too, are comfortable, because they're easy, and you know the right answers. Then, the adult blindsides you with a disturbing, impossible question. At this point, all you want is to stop the test and go home. What resources are available to you? What are your options?

You could run out of the room, slamming the door behind you. And indeed, some children did that. Alternatively, you could clam up, glare at the adult, and refuse to answer any more questions. Again, some children did that. Or you could cry—and this is what many children did. Of all the resources available to a child to stop the test, tears were perhaps the most powerful and effective. Unlike children who ran from the room or refused to answer, children who cried did not appear to defy authority. Tears appeared to be purely expressive and therefore non-agential. Tears seemed innocent.

The impossible, binary demand that the Clarks' subjects faced echoed the one that Daisy Turner had confronted fifty years earlier: liken yourself dangerously to a black doll or appear to reject your own racial identity. When Daisy Turner spewed furious verse, she created a third option and thus shattered the binary. Many of the Clarks' subjects forged their own third option when they terminated the experiment by crying. In each of these respective cases, a child resourcefully used the tools—improvised verse, tears—that were available to her or him. Daisy Turner exercised agency by discarding the pageant's script, but the Clarks' subjects exercised agency by *enacting* the scripted behavior of crying. In other words, the Clarks authored a dramatic arc that evoked children's tears, but those tears were simultaneously agential, because by crying, children halted a painful experiment—one that they had no way of knowing was already over.[144] This intersection of scripting and agency illustrates one of this book's central underlying arguments: people are able to resist scripting because they have agency, but agency can also, even simultaneously, emerge *through* scripting. Resistance and scripting are not incompatible; they are often mutually constitutive.

For a century, black dolls in rag and rubber had grinned through the abusive play that they were created to survive. But the Clarks used the materiality of black dolls in conjunction with a carefully-structured dramatic arc to script black children's performances of weeping. These performances refuted the libel that black youth could not feel pain—and they did so at one precise site where that libel had been enacted: black dolls. In a brilliant act of cultural jujitsu, the Clarks pivoted black dolls so as to use all the force of the libel against itself. *Pace* William Blake, a tear is not, in itself, an intellectual thing—rather, Mamie Clark and Kenneth Clark used things to make tears intellectual.

When the Clarks scripted, through dolls, a spectacle of black children's pain, they cast black children in the role of "suffering child," "innocent child," and therefore "child." This defamiliarizing gesture recalled and reversed the work of Lewis Hine's photograph of Callie Campbell picking cotton (Chapter 1). Where Hine showed a child cotton picker who was surprisingly, unfamiliarly white, the Clarks showed suffering children who were unfamiliarly black, and black children who were unfamiliarly suffering. The pained white child, Hine's photograph suggested, deserved protection in the form of child labor laws. When the Clarks vividly described black children weeping, they argued that African American youth not only *could* be hurt but *had* been hurt—by systemic racism. This argument reversed the flight of the pickaninny through popular culture to resurrect Stowe's initial imagining of Topsy as an essentially vulnerable child who had been unnaturally hardened by slavery's violence. The Clarks and the NAACP repeated Stowe's argument with differences when they cast black youth as suffering children, segregation as cruelty toward children, and civil rights, by extension, as a form of child protection. Through this performance, the Clarks and the NAACP located civil rights on the side of childhood innocence, as Stowe had located abolition a century earlier.

From the mid-nineteenth century through the early twentieth century, two qualities defined childhood innocence: whiteness and obliviousness. The Clarks wrought a spectacular performance of black childhood innocence, and this triumphant intervention aided *Brown v. Board of Education* not only in the task of legally desegregating public schools, but also in that of culturally desegregating childhood innocence itself. *Brown* acknowledged that children's daily lives are political, that children do not exist in a state of holy ignorance. (Indeed, the main point of the doll tests was that black children do absorb racism and that it causes them to suffer—unlike Little Eva, for whom "evil rolls off [her] mind like dew off a

cabbage-leaf,—not a drop sinks in."[145]) *Brown*, and the civil rights movement more generally, pried the "whites only" sign off the fountain of childhood innocence and elevated to common sense the fact that children do absorb political ideologies.[146] With these two changes, the civil rights movement fundamentally reshaped the relationship of childhood, innocence, and race in the United States.

Today, many emblems of racial innocence—faithful mammies and uncles who caress white children, Topsies who enjoy comic violence—are understood to be political. Because of the success of the civil rights movement, Disney has disavowed *Song of the South*, Aunt Jemima pancake syrup and Uncle Ben rice receive repeated, never-quite-good-enough makeovers, and most toy retailers would not dream of peddling a kerchiefed Dinah doll. The "wonderful 'leaping' fish" that Henry James observed flying through popular culture have been banished from mainstream toy stores, but they have alighted in new spaces: flea markets, websites, and auctions that traffic in Golliwoggs and other items of racist children's culture. Some buyers and sellers claim to be oblivious to these things' politics (one consumer wrote in 2005, "There is nothing wrong with Golliwoggs. . . . I do not think they are racist at all, I just find them to be adorable toys"[147]), but this position, once dominant, is now fringe. Most items of "black memorabilia" are now sold as historical-political collectibles—as things understood to script adults' acts of accumulation and display, not children's acts of innocent play.[148]

Within children's culture, however, emblems of racial innocence flourish in new guises. Contemporary topsy-turvy dolls contrast a pale-faced Little Red Riding Hood at one pole with a brown Wolf in Grandma's Clothing at the other; thus they retain the sexual subtext while cloaking—but not expunging—the racial meanings that enslaved women sewed into these dolls a century and a half earlier. Little Eva filtered into Shirley Temple and other, ever-proliferating surrogates. The loving embrace between the white, masterful child and the African American adult servant continues to surface in films such as Dakota Fanning's and Jennifer Hudson's *The Secret Life of Bees*. Topsy turned into the pickaninny, whited up, and went undercover in the Scarecrow and Raggedy Ann. These changes mark not the end of racial innocence but its reconfiguration for a postsegregation era. Like riddles cribbed from minstrel shows, these re-formations convey logics, styles, and practices from the nineteenth century to the

twenty-first. They renew childhood as an infinitely flexible, inexhaustible resource. The solemnly restored call to "protect the children" reanimates, disguises, and draws power from old, half-forgotten contests over love and pain and fun, over the racial limits of innocence, and over the American question of who is a person and who is a thing.

107. Joel Williamson, *The Crucible of Race: Black-White Relations in the American South since Emancipation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 117–18; Stewart E. Tolnay and E. M. Beck, *A Festival of Violence: An Analysis of Southern Lynchings, 1882–1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992); The National Association for Advancement of Colored People, *Thirty Years of Lynching in the United States, 1889–1918* (1919; New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1969); Philip Dray, *At the Hands of Persons Unknown: The Lynching of Black America* (New York: Random House, 2002). On photography, memory, and lynching, see Jonathan Markovitz, *Legacies of Lynching: Racial Violence and Memory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004); Dora Apel, *Imagery of Lynching: Black Men, White Women, and the Mob* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2004); Leigh Raiford, "The Consumption of Lynching Images," in *Only Skin Deep: Changing Visions of the American Self*, ed. Coco Fusco and Brian Wallis (New York: International Center of Photography and Harry N. Abrams, 2003), 267–73; and James Allen, Hilton Als, Congressman John Lewis, and Leon F. Litwack, *Without Sanctuary: Lynching Photography in America* (Santa Fe, N.M.: Twin Palms, 2000). On performance and lynching, see Harvey Young, "The Black Body as Souvenir in American Lynching," *Theatre Journal* 57, no. 4 (2005): 639-657.

108. Peter M. Bergman, *The Chronological History of the Negro in America* (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), 347–95 passim.

109. See Williamson, *Crucible of Race*, 188, and Young, "Black Body," on the taking of bodily "souvenirs."

110. A. R. Quin, "My Raggedy Ann," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 21 October 1920, 13. The poem parodies James Whitcomb Riley's poem, "The Raggedy Man," which was a source of Gruelle's name for his doll.

111. Burnett, *One I Knew Best of All*, 56.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 5

1. Turner's account of the pageant, including its specificity of detail, is credible because Turner was not a typical person, but was instead an individual with an extraordinary memory, especially for verse. With folklorist Jane C. Beck, Daisy Turner recorded over eighty hours of interviews, much of which consisted of lengthy poetry recitals.

2. *On My Own: The Traditions of Daisy Turner*, produced and directed by Jane Beck and Wes Graff (Middlebury: Vermont Folklife Center and the University of Vermont, 1986). Unless otherwise noted, all of Turner's quotations are transcribed from this DVD. Information about the Turner family also derives from the DVD, except where otherwise specified. Short audio clips of Turner's interviews are online at http://vermontfolklifecenter.org/multimedia/womenspeak/womenspeak_turner/. These clips, which include Turner's recounting of the story about the pageant, are edited slightly differently from the DVD and therefore do not always match my transcription.

3. To distinguish between the 8-year-old and the 102-year-old Daisy Turner, I generally refer to the former as "Daisy" and the latter as "Turner." I use the term "black doll" to refer to any doll representing an African American because that is the term that people of diverse races used most consistently throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to identify such dolls.

4. In interviews with Beck, Daisy Turner described many incidents in which members of her family wrote, improvised, and recited original poetry as a means of preserving family memories and enacting identity.

5. Jane C. Beck, private correspondence with the author, 7 May 2009.

6. Richard Kluger, *Simple Justice: The History of* Brown v. Board of Education *and Black America's Struggle for Equality* (1975; New York: Vintage, 2004), esp. chap. 14, "The Doll Man and Other Experts."

7. The three films are the historical drama *Separate but Equal* (1991) and the documentaries *The Road to* Brown (1989) and *Simple Justice* (1993).

8. Gwen Bergner, "Black Children, White Preference: *Brown v. Board*, the Doll Tests, and the Politics of Self-Esteem," *American Quarterly* 61, no. 2 (2009): 299–332.

9. Ibid., 317.

10. See, for example, Herbert Garfinkel, "Social Science Evidence and the School Segregation Cases," *Journal of Politics* 21, no. 2 (1959): 37–59.

11. Kluger, *Simple Justice*, 353.

12. Ibid., 356.

13. Kenneth B. Clark and Mamie P. Clark, "Racial Identification and Preference in Negro Children," in *Readings in Social Psychology*, 3rd ed., ed. Eleanor E. Maccoby, Theodore M. Newcomb, and Eugene L. Hartley (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1947), 602.

14. Ibid., 608.

15. According to my review of the Clarks' original data sheets, which are housed in the Manuscripts division of the Library of Congress, boys and girls showed no statistically significant differences in their responses.

16. Kenneth B. Clark and Mamie P. Clark, "Emotional Factors in Racial Identification and Preference in Negro Children," *Journal of Negro Education* 19, no. 3 (1950): 342.

17. Ibid., 343–44.

18. Ibid., 344.

19. Tim Walsh, *Timeless Toys: Classic Toys and the Playmakers who Created Them* (Kansas City, Mo.: Andrews McMeel, 2005), 20–22.

20. Eliza Leslie, *American Girl's Book, Or, Occupation for Play Hours* (Boston: Munroe and Francis, 1831), 294.

21. See Chapter 2.

22. Interview with Barbara Whiteman, curator, the Philadelphia Doll Museum, 27 March 2008.

23. On black dolls as supplements within white girls' collections of white dolls, see Myla Perkins's superb *Black Dolls: An Identification and Value Guide, 1820–1991* (Paducah, Ky.: Collector Books, 1993), 20.

24. *Harper's Bazaar*, 6 January 1877, 3; *Harper's Bazaar*, 3 January 1885, 3. Perkins provides many more examples of black dolls configured as servants.

25. Aunt Laura, *The Dolls' Surprise Party* (Buffalo: Breed, Butler, 1863), 18. The catalog of the American Antiquarian Society identifies Aunt Laura and Aunt Fanny both as pseudonyms of Frances Elizabeth Mease Barrow.

26. Laura, *Dolls' Surprise Party*, 17.

27. Josephine Scribner Gates, *The Story of Live Dolls: Being an Account of How, on a Certain June Morning, All of the Dolls in the Village of Cloverdale Came Alive* (Indianapolis: Bowen-Merrill [later Bobbs-Merrill], 1901; Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1920). Many later books in the series feature black dolls—often named Dinah or Topsy—that repetitiously, unquestioningly serve white dolls. See the previous chapter for discussion of a black doll's assumed servitude in Gruelle's *Beloved Belindy*.

28. Lois Kuznets and Frances Armstrong have both noted that nineteenth-century white girls routinely named black dolls "Dinah." Lois Kuznets, *When Toys Come Alive: Narratives of Animation, Metamorphosis, and Development* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1994), 104; Frances Armstrong, "The Dollhouse as Ludic Space, 1690–1920," *Children's Literature* 24 (1996): 44. The phrase "Dinah doll" was even sometimes used as a synonym for "black doll."

29. C.H.W., "The Dollies' Visit," *Youth's Companion* (Boston), 2 July 1874, 217.

30. Josephine Scribner Gates, *The Live Dolls' Busy Days* (1907), reprinted in *The Live Dolls in Wonderland: An Omnibus for Children containing The Live Dolls' House Party, The Live Dolls' Busy Days, The Live Dolls in Wonderland* [Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1946]), 76. Dinah and Topsy travel together to magical lands in Gates's *The Live Dolls in Wonderland* (1912).

31. John Lobb, Editorial Note to Josiah Henson, *An Autobiography of the Rev. Josiah Henson (Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe's "Uncle Tom"), From 1789 to 1877*, rev. and enl. ed. (London: Christian Aid Office, 1878), 8.

32. "The Helpful Club: A True Story," *Unity* (Chicago),1 March 1884, 313. Black dolls named "Mammy" were uncommon until the twentieth century.

33. Ibid.

34. Georgianna Hamlen, *Chats, "Now Talked of This and Then of That"* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1885), 227, emphasis added.

35. Stowe, "Lulu's Pupil," *Our Young Folk*, September 1870, 531.

36. Hamlen, *Chats*, 227; "The Miss Dinah Pen-Wiper," *Godey's Lady's Book and Magazine*, May 1861, 451.

37. See Chapter 2 for analysis of the topsy-turvy doll.

38. "For Girls Who Make Gifts." n.a. *Dallas Morning News*, 11 November 1912, 11.

39. Oliver Optic, *Dolly and I* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1863), 19.

40. Mrs. D. P. Sanford, *Frisk and His Flock* (1875; New York: E. P. Dutton, 1877), 110.

41. E.L.E., "For the Companion. Topsy." *Youth's Companion*, 8 May 1879, 159.

42. *Jimmy: Scenes from the Life of a Black Doll. Told by Himself to J. G. Sowerby* (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1988). Sharon Marcus discusses fictional girls' whipping of black and white dolls as erotic. Sharon Marcus, *Between Women: Friendship, Desire, and Marriage in Victorian England* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2007), 159–63.

43. On white girls' preferences for black dolls, see Miriam Formanek-Brunell, *Made to Play House: Dolls and the Commercialization of American Girlhood, 1830–1930* (1993; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 28–29.

44. Margaret English, "Home-Made Rag Doll," *Babyhood*, July 1887, 264.

45. Mabel Dodge Luhan, *Intimate Memories: The Autobiography of Mabel Dodge Luhan*, edited with a new foreword by Lois Palken Rudnick (Santa Fe, N.M.: Sunstone Press, 2008), 17–18.

46. "Toys That Made Childhood Sweet," *Minneapolis Journal*, 17 December 1898, Supplements I, II, III. Many nineteenth- and twentieth-century works of fiction, memoir, and social science describe white children like Alice Leland burning black dolls. See, for example, G. Stanley Hall and A. Caswell Ellis, *A Study of Dolls* (New York: E. L. Kellogg, 1897), 30.

47. Anon., "The Negro Problem: How It Appears to a Southern Colored Woman," *Washington Bee* 22, no. 20 (1 November 1902): 1; republished as "A Colored Woman, However Respectable, Is Lower than the White Prostitute," *Independent*, 18 September 1902, 2221–24; reprinted in Gerda Lerner, *Black Women in White America: A Documentary History* (New York: Vintage, 1972), 168.

48. *New York World*, 7 December 1899, quoted in Ralph Ginzburg, *100 Years of Lynchings* (Baltimore: Black Classics Press, 1997), 28. In "The Black Body as Souvenir in American Lynching" (*Theatre Journal* 57, no. 4 [2005]: 639–57), Harvey Young argues that white children played a special role in remembering and reporting lynchings. White children were often less guarded than white adults in their enthusiasm for lynching; as a result, much that is known about the lynching of African Americans was "leaked" by white children.

49. According to John D. Bessler's *Legacy of Violence: Lynch Mobs and Executions in Minnesota* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), Minnesota had no death penalty between 1868 and 1883, so no executions, by hanging or otherwise, occurred during those years (104–5). After the death penalty became legal, "the only black man legally executed in Minnesota was hanged in Duluth at 1:40 A.M. in 1903" (140), five years after Harry Cass wrote to the *Minnesota Journal*. There is no record of any lynchings in Minnesota during the decade and a half before 1898.

50. Rev. J. M. Henderson, "The Garden Spot of America," *Christian Recorder*, 26 July 1888.

51. Horace S. Graves, "Chicago Paragraphs," *Christian Recorder*, 9 June 1898. I thank Erin Dwyer for pointing out Graves's and Henderson's assessments of Minnesota.

52. It is possible that Harry Cass witnessed or participated in a lynching outside of Minnesota. More likely, however, Cass was influenced by literary texts and other children's practices of play that are known to have existed in Minnesota during his lifetime.

53. "Little Lord Fauntleroy: A Pleasant Chat with the Gifted Author of a Children's Classic," *Daily Inter Ocean* (Chicago), 4 November 1888, column E, 1.

54. Studies in this mode include works by Eric Lott, David Roediger, W. T. Lhamon, and Alexander Saxton. Jayna Brown has recently "challenge[d] the male bias shaping earlier works on blackface minstrelsy and the formation of popular culture," arguing for the centrality of black women to this history. Jayna Brown, *Babylon Girls: Black Women Performers and the Shaping of the Modern* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University press, 2008), 3 and passim.

55. "For Girls Who Make Gifts," *Dallas Morning News*, 11 November 1912, 11.

56. Sarah L. Barrow, *Funny Little Socks: Being the Fourth Book of the Series* (New York: Leavitt and Allen, 1863). On the title page of *Funny Little Socks*, Barrow identifies herself as the daughter of "Aunt Fanny" (a.k.a. Aunt Laura), author of *The Dolls' Surprise Party*.

57. In Oliver Optic's 1863 novel *Dolly and I*, two white girls similarly "speak for" and through a white "lady" doll and a black servant doll named (yet again) Dinah (Optic, *Dolly and I*, 47).

58. Barrow, *Funny Little Socks*, 82–83.

59. H.D., *The Gift: The Complete Text* (1982), edited, annotated, and introduced by Jane Augustine (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1998), 48. See Chapter 3 for further analysis of H.D.'s memoir.

60. Helen C. Weeks, *Four and What They Did* (New York: Hurd and Houghton, 1871). The "marionettes" are dolls to which one of the novel's characters has added strings.

61. Ibid., 298.

62. Ibid., 298. Weeks's novel is set in Minneapolis, the same city in which Harry E. Cass would report hanging a black doll twenty-seven years later.

63. This practice elaborated on the "toy theater," a popular plaything that originated in Great Britain in the early nineteenth century. A toy theater was a miniature proscenium stage with wings and a curtain. It was sold with paper figures, often representing casts for specific plays. Commercial toy theaters were most popular with British boys, but in the United States and in Britain, girls and boys created homemade toy theaters, which they populated not only with paper figures but with dolls of all sorts. See George Speaight, *The History of the English Toy Theatre* (1946; rev. ed., London: Studio Vista, 1969); Suzanne Rahn, "Wild Models of the World: The Lure of the Toy Theater," in *Rediscoveries in Children's Literature* (New York: Garland, 1995), 23–37; Lyn Stiefel Hill, "There Was an American Toy Theatre!," *Theatre Survey* 16, no. 2 (1975); and Liz Farr, "Paper Dreams and Romantic Projections: The Nineteenth-Century Toy Theater, Boyhood and Aesthetic Play," in *The Nineteenth-Century Child and Consumer Culture*, ed. Dennis Denisoff (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2008), 43–62.

64. "Toys That Made Childhood Sweet."

65. Hall and Ellis, *Study of Dolls*, 35. See also Sabrina Thomas, "The Ritual of Doll Play: Implications of Understanding Children's Conceptualization of Race," in *Rituals and Patterns in Children's Lives*, ed. Kathy Merlock Jackson (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2005), 113.

66. Hamlen, *Chats*, 228.

67. James Alden Markill, "Janie's Minstrel Troupe," *Youth's Companion*, 13 February 1890, 82.

68. "'A Comedy of Toys': Unique Entertainment in Aid of the Y. M. C. A. Building," *Sunday State* (Columbia, S.C.), 2 October 1898, 6; "Most Successful Amateur Affair. Children of St. Margaret's Pleased Those Present," *Idaho Daily Statesman*, 26 May 1906, 8.

69. E. F. Harkins, "'The Christian' Run Not to Be Extended," *Boston Journal*, 17 December 1915, 13; "Grant School to Give Children's Opera Today," *San Jose Mercury Herald*, 7 March 1916, 8; "Fraternity Chapter," *San Jose Mercury Herald*, 3 July 1921, 26.

70. "Rag Baby Party: Children Represent Rag Dolls—A Unique and Charming Entertainment," *Emporia Daily Gazette* (Emporia, Kan.), 14 February 1891.

71. H. J. Conway, *Uncle Tom; Or, Life Among the Lowly* (Boston: unpublished manuscript, ca. 1852), act 5. The manuscript is online at the University of Virginia's website, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and American Culture http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/onstage/scripts/conwayhp.html. An unpublished 1876 promptbook for a production with Conway's script retained this stage direction, which suggests that Conway's stage Topsies interacted with dolls for at least a quarter of a century.

72. Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852), Norton Critical Edition, ed. Elizabeth Ammons (New York: W. W. Norton, 1994), 206, 207, 214, 244. Cited hereafter as "Stowe."

73. Ibid., 245.

74. Illustrators and performers who expanded on Topsy's early doll-likeness but erased her later humanity replicated the dynamic of Joel Chandler Harris's "Uncle Remus" books, which restaged Stowe's fourth chapter but erased the rest of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. See Chapter 3 on Harris's rewriting of Stowe.

75. It is particularly interesting to note how many illustrators depict Topsy playing with a doll despite the fact that Stowe creates no such scene for her reader (Ophelia merely mentions Topsy's action in the past tense). L. Frank Baum, pictures by Ike Morgan, *The Woggle-Bug Book* (Chicago: Reilly and Britton, 1905); Grace Duffie Boylan, illustrations by Ike Morgan, *Young Folks Uncle Tom's Cabin, Adapted for Children* (New York: H. M. Caldwell, 1901).

76. Anon., *Uncle Tom's Cabin: Young Folks' Edition* (Chicago: M. A. Donohue, n.d. [ca. 1900]), 37.

77. The line appears in Mary E. Blain, *Pleasant Hour Series Uncle Tom's Cabin Rewritten for Young Readers* (New York: Barse and Hopkins, ca. 1900); H[enrietta]. E[lizabeth] Marshall, *Uncle Tom's Cabin Told to the Children* (New York: E. P. Dutton, ca. 1904), and *Uncle Tom's Cabin Little Folks' Edition* (New York: Graham and Matlack, ca.1910).

78. Francis Wayland Parker, *Supplementary Reading for Primary Schools: Second Book* (Boston: Robert S. Davis, 1880), 21. This quotation neatly conflates the *Uncle Tom's Cabin* character, doll-ness, and unhurtability.

79. Richard H. Brodhead, "Sparing the Rod: Discipline and Fiction in Antebellum America," *Representations* 21 (Winter 1988): 67–96.

80. Ibid., 86, citing Stowe, 245.

81. Brodhead, "Sparing the Rod," 83.

82. Ibid., 70.

83. Advertisement quoted in "Novelties in Santa Claus Land," *New York Times*, 3 November 1901, SM9.

84. Hamlen, *Chats*, 227.

85. Ibid.

86. "Dolls of Famous Women: Miss Mary Wilkins, Miss Susan B. Anthony, Mrs. Kate Douglas Wiggin and Others Had Them," *Portland Oregonian*, 16 April 1899, 17.

87. Hall and Ellis, *Study of Dolls*, 34.

88. Aunt Fanny [Frances Elizabeth Barrow], *The Children's Charity Bazaar* (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1870), 22–23. In a similar vein, an 1874 story described a black doll named Dinah as "contraband"—the Civil War term for enslaved people who escaped behind Union lines or into the Union forces (C.H.W., "The Dollies' Visit," *Youth's Companion*, 2 July 1874, 217).

89. Marietta Holley, *Samantha on the Race Problem*, illustrations by E. W. Kemble (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1892), 124. This book was later republished as *Samantha Among the Colored Folks*.

90. Joel Chandler Harris, *Gabriel Tolliver: A Story of Reconstruction* (New York: McClure, Phillips, 1902), 11; emphasis added.

91. *The Little Slave Girl, A True Story, Told by Mammy Sara Herself, Who is Still Alive, to Eileen Douglass* (London: S. W. Partridge, 1906), 5, 9.

92. Ibid., 8, 6. In 1823, the white novelist Eliza Ware Farrar described a parallel scene but reversed its meaning: in Farrar's book, an African American mother named Dinah is "well pleased" when white children "make a plaything" of her son. Eliza Ware Farrar, *The Adventures of Congo in Search of His Master: An American Tale* (London, 1823), 14–15; quoted in Sarah N. Roth, "The Mind of a Child: Images of African Americans in Early Juvenile Fiction," *Journal of the Early Republic* 25 (Spring 2005): 96.

93. Bill Brown, "Reification, Reanimation, and the American Uncanny," *Critical Inquiry* 32, no. 3 (2006): 175–207.

94. *Little Miss Consequence* ([New York] McLoughlin Bros., between 1859 and 1862).

95. Edward Walford, *Old and New London: A Narrative of its History, its People, and Its Places: A New Edition Carefully Revised and Corrected*, vol. 6: *The Southern Suburbs* (1881; London: Cassell, 1893), 163–64.

96. Ibid.

97. Ibid.

98. Daisy Turner told the story of the blood-soaked primer to folklorist Jane C. Beck. The Vermont Folklife Center has posted this audio recording online at http://www.vermontfolklifecenter.org/childrens-books/alecs-primer/audio-photos.shtml. Daisy Turner frequently showed the primer and narrated its origins until the book was destroyed in a house fire in 1962.

99. The phrase "born in" contrasts with the language describing the origins of Amy Davis's doll, which "came from" France. The phrase "came from" constructs Amy Davis's doll as a traveler or tourist, whereas the phrase "born in" suggests that Daisy's doll originated in one place but inhabited another.

100. The German doll company Heubach Koppelsdorf, for example, manufactured many such dolls at the turn of the twentieth century. See Perkins, *Black Dolls*, 34–37.

101. Stowe, 213, 209, 207.

102. Gregory Sharrow, "A Teacher's Guide for On My Own: The Traditions of Daisy Turner and Journey's End: The Memories and Traditions of Daisy Turner and Her Family" (Middlebury: Vermont Folklife Center, 1996), 4.

103. Upon Beck's repeated requests, Turner finally divulged the first two lines of the poem, but then claimed she could remember no more. Jane C. Beck, private correspondence with the author, 7 May 2009.

104. How do children, who are competent performers of childhood and experts in children's material culture, become adults who view dolls not as things-in-performance but instead as objects that represent race? This question cannot be answered positivistically, but one might speculate that the repeated behaviors of parenthood produce the change in perspective. Parenthood necessitates repeated acts of looking at children. In different regions and historical moments, these acts of looking take different forms, ranging, for example, from the inspection of a child's labor to the surveillance of a child's hygiene to the supervision of a child's imaginative practices. High stakes attend many of these repeated practices of looking: a young child who is not watched risks injury or death. The parent's highly charged, repetitive acts of looking *at* a child may, over time, sediment over the individual's past practices of looking *from* the child's perspective.

105. Ethiop [William J. Wilson], *Frederick Douglass' Paper*, 11 March 1853, 94–95; quoted in Timothy Shortell, "The Rhetoric of Black Abolitionism: An Exploratory Analysis of Antislavery Newspapers in New York State," *Social Science History* 28, no. 1 (2004): 75–109.

106. Wilson, *Frederick Douglass' Paper*, 94.

107. Charles W. Chesnutt's 1904 short story "The Doll" takes a different angle. In this story, a doll ominously hung on a spike reminds an African American barber of his daughter and therefore of how much he stands to lose if he takes revenge on his father's murderer. Despite the fact that Chesnutt never specifies the doll's coloration, Eric Sundquist persuasively interprets the hung doll as a symbolic lynching. Eric Sundquist, *To Wake the Nations: Race in the Making of American Literature* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1993), 450–53.

108. Nora Waring, "Dolly's Dream," *The Brownies' Book*, November 1920, 351–52. This story is reprinted in Dianne Johnson-Feelings, ed., *The Best of the Brownies' Book* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 41–43.

109. *Christian Recorder*, 12 December 1889.

110. "The Negro Doll Question Is Reaching Dignity," *Freeman* (Indianapolis), 14 November 1908, 4.

111. "Duquoin's Negro Doll Fair. The Colored Women's Club have Decided to Hold One This Month," *Freeman* (Indianapolis), 14 November 1908, 6. See also Michele Mitchell, *Righteous Propagation: African Americans and the Politics of Racial Destiny after Reconstruction* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 182–83; Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880–1920* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993), 166, 194.

112. Mitchell, *Righteous Propagation*, 184.

113. Booker T. Washington, "Negro's Part in Southern Development," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 35, no. 1 (1910): 131.

114. "Echoes from the National Grand Master's Address," *Negro Star* (Wichita, Kan.), 25 November 1921, 3.

115. Nelson C. Crewes, "Resolutions for 1909," *Freeman* (Indianapolis), 17 April 1909, 2.

116. Michele Mitchell, "The Colored Doll Is a Live One! Material Culture, Black Consciousness, and Cultivation of Intraracial Desire," in *Righteous Propagation,* 173–96.

117. See Chapter 4. See also Sharon Marcus, who comments on British fiction that configures white girls as mistresses of dolls. Sharon Marcus, *Between Women,* 162–63.

118. "Problem Kids: New Harlem Clinic Rescues Ghetto Youth," *Ebony,* July 1947, 23; Mamie Phipps Clark, *The Reminiscences of Mamie Phipps Clark,* Oral History Collection of Columbia University, New York, 25 May 1976, 73, http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/digital/collections/nny/clarkm/transcripts/clarkm_1_1_73.html.

119. Silas X. Floyd, *Floyd's Flowers; Or, Duty and Beauty for Colored Children* (Atlanta: Hertel, Jenkins, 1905), 75–79.

120. H. G. Wells, *Floor Games* (London: Frank Palmer, 1911), 10.

121. Quoted in David Cronon, *Black Moses: The Story of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1955), 175.

122. Dorothy S., Elizabeth A., and Evelyn J. Coleman, *The Collector's Encyclopedia of Dolls,* vol. 2 (New York: Crown, 1968), 148, citing a 1912 *Toys and Novelties* article.

123. Katharine Capshaw Smith argues persuasively that New Negro reformers, including Floyd, understood the bodies of black children as "the site on which the character of the new black identity can be staged," and that this staging involved bodily practices of imagination, including play with dolls. Katharine Capshaw Smith, "Childhood, the Body, and Race Performance: Early 20th-Century Etiquette Books for Black Children," *African American Review* 40, no. 1 (2006): 799.

124. NNDC advertising pamphlet, reprinted in Perkins, *Black Dolls,* 22–23.

125. During the 1930s, a small number of white-owned manufacturers began using identical molds to produce inexpensive plastic dolls in white and black variations. The Clarks obtained such dolls 1939 at a Woolworth's on 125th Street in Harlem, New York. There is some disagreement as to whether the Clarks purchased the dolls together or whether Kenneth Clark purchased them alone. See Joe Holley, "Kenneth Clark Dies; Helped Desegregate Schools," *Washington Post,* 3 May 2005, sec. B, 4; Sam Roberts, "Kenneth B. Clark: An Integrationist to This Day, Believing All Else Has Failed," *New York Times,* late ed., 7 May 1995, sec. 4, 7, col. 1; Kluger, *Simple Justice,* 315. It seems likely that Mamie, the test's designer, participated in the initial purchase.

126. Clark and Clark, "Racial Identification and Preference," 603; Kluger, *Simple Justice,* 317.

127. Kluger, *Simple Justice,* 315.

128. "Problem Kids: New Harlem Clinic Rescues Ghetto Youth," *Ebony,* July 1947, 23. On the Clarks' visibility in the black public sphere before *Brown,* see Gerald Markowitz and David Rosner, *Children, Race, and Power: Kenneth and Mamie Clark's Northside Center* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1996), 32–34.

129. Toni Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* (1970; New York: Simon and Schuster, 1972). On the relationship between Morrison's novel and the Clark doll tests, see Christopher Douglas, "What *The Bluest Eye* Knows about Them: Culture, Race, Identity," *American Literature* 78, no. 1 (2006): 141–68, and Anne Anlin Cheng, "Wounded Beauty: An Exploratory Essay on Race, Feminism, and the Aesthetic Question," *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 19, no. 2 (2000): 191–217.

130. Bergner, "Black Children, White Preference," 300.

131. Ibid.

132. Clark and Clark, "Racial Identification and Preference," 602.

133. Ibid.

134. Ibid., 611.

135. Kenneth Clark, *Prejudice and Your Child* (1955; 2nd ed, enl., Boston: Beacon Press, 1963), 45. See also Ben Keppel, "Kenneth B. Clark in the Patterns of American Culture," *American Psychologist* 57, no. 1 (2002): 32. Kluger mentions a variation of this quotation in *Simple Justice,* 356. Other children answered similarly: a six-year-old Arkansas girl named Erma Lee, for example, explained that the brown doll was like her because "he's a nigger." Kenneth Clark Papers, data sheets for 1941, Library of Congress.

136. Kluger, *Simple Justice,* 602–3. Gwen Bergner notes that the Clarks, in altering the order of questions, "actually skewed *for* white preference behavior." Bergner, "Black Children, White Preference," 309.

137. [Kenneth and Mamie Clark?], "The Genesis of Racial Identification and Preferences in Negro Children." Undated typed manuscript, Box 46, folder 2 "Miscellany," Kenneth Clark Papers, Library of Congress, 25.

138. Kluger, *Simple Justice,* 441, emphasis added.

139. Sanford, *Frisk and His Flock,* 110.

140. Put another way, the first subset of questions foregrounded children's historical practices of engaging dolls as things, and the second subset coercively led children into an adultified reading of dolls primarily as symbolic objects, not things-in-play. The difference between the first and second subset of questions parallels the different positions of Daisy Turner and her father, respectively: Daisy Turner resisted a genealogy of performance that the black doll cited from the past and scripted for the future, whereas her father viewed the doll primarily as a representation of blackness and therefore urged his daughter to embrace the doll—and, through it, her raced self—as "lovely." In 1891, the clash between that African American daughter and father climaxed in Daisy's torrent of furious verse. Half a century later, the Clarks ensured a similarly dramatic climax with their eighth question, which forced a child to connect the doll-as-thing with doll-as-object by locating herself or himself in relation to both simultaneously. The Clarks thus forced together competing perspectives to create an epistemological crisis.

141. Quoted in Kluger, *Simple Justice,* 318; emphasis added.

142. Clark, *Prejudice and Your Child,* 45; [Clark and Clark?], "Genesis of Racial Identification," 26.

143. Quoted in Kluger, *Simple Justice,* 318.

144. When I call the children's tears agential, I do not mean to suggest that the children consciously weighed their options and strategically, much less cynically, selected the most appealing one. My point, rather, is that tears were a remarkably effective means by which to stop the test—an end that many children probably wanted urgently.

145. Stowe 215.

146. This historical change registers in the assumptions of even the most hardened racists. For example, Keith Bardwell, the Louisiana justice of the peace who in 2009 refused to marry an interracial couple (see Introduction), described mixed-race children as "innocent" and sure to suffer rejection from both black and white communities. Thus Bardwell asserted nonwhite children's innocence and sensitivity to political matters—but he used these assertions to *justify* his attempt to prevent the birth of children of color.

147. Narelle Cockram, comment posted 11 February 2005 to "Save the Golliwogg" website http://members3.boardhost.com/gipsy/msg/306.html, accessed 22 September 2010.

148. When I bought the Raggedy Ann-mammy topsy-turvy doll pictured in Chapter 4, the proprietor of Kotton Kountry Kreations mailed it to me with a note expressing hope that I would enjoy the doll. The dollmaker apparently assumed that I—an adult with a credit card—wanted the doll for myself, not for a child.