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## Dreaming America

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## NOTES

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### Introduction

1. *Arena*, 23.
2. *Federal Theatre* 1.6.
3. Paul Sporn remembers attending a production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in the Bronx's Crotona Park. "I recall that a huge audience, sitting on newspapers, blankets, handkerchiefs, paper bags, or simply on the grass itself, covered every square foot of the hillside. . . . The drone of sound that issued from it died away shortly after the curtain parted, and this audience of Bronx eastsiders sat as still as it could on a crowded, bumpy hillside that became more and more dampish as the night advanced. When the play was over, it came back to noisy life: cheering, whistling, applauding, and waving handkerchiefs in grateful appreciation of the work the actors had performed" (*Against Itself: The Federal Theatre and Writers' Projects in the Midwest*, 14–15).
4. *The Federal Theatre Project: A Catalogue-Calendar of Productions*, xv.
5. *The Cultural Front*, 50.
6. "Children's Theatre—New York," *Federal Theatre* 2.3.
7. See Roland Marchand's *Advertising the American Dream* (296–99) for a discussion of Depression anxieties focused on children. For discussions of representations of the child and American identity, see Carol Levander's *Cradle of Liberty* and Levander and Carol Singley's *The American Child: A Cultural Studies Reader*. See also Karen Sánchez-Eppler's *Dependent States: The Child's Part in Nineteenth-Century American Culture*.
8. I am indebted to Sánchez-Eppler's "Raising Empires Like Children: Race, Nation, and Religious Education" for the elegantly phrased analogy.
9. In his 1945 study of the Dies Committee, August Raymond Ogden writes that "The *St. Louis Post Dispatch* of 20 October 1938 carried an article in which it was stated that, for the first time, Dies revealed that two of the outstanding results of his inquiry had been to paralyze the left-wing element in the Administration and to discredit John L. Lewis and the

CIO" (*The Dies Committee: A Study of the Special House Committee for the Investigation of Un-American Activities, 1938–1944*, 152).

10. By then Oscar Saul, co-author of *The Revolt of the Beavers*, was a Hollywood screenwriter with one film to his credit; Jules Dassin, the dashing Oakleaf, was directing films noirs; and Elia Kazan was making his name as a director.

11. *Naming Names*, xiii.

12. *Radical Visions and American Dreams*, 98.

13. *Ibid.* See chapter III, "The Search for Community."

14. *Ibid.*, 97.

15. *The Cultural Front*, xvii.

16. *Ibid.*, xxvii.

17. *Ibid.*, xviii.

18. *Ibid.*

19. *Reading American Photographs*, 247.

20. For a comprehensive look at certain government investigations into the New York units of the Federal Theatre Project, see *Government Investigations of Federal Theatre Project Personnel in the Works Progress Administration, 1935–1939 (The show must NOT go on!)*, by Judith Brussell. As she writes, "By fall, 1936, the Department of Justice had directed the DOI [Division of Investigation] to investigate all supervisors of all Arts Projects and find models for criminal prosecution" (iv). The DOI began as an agency to investigate economic fraud but reported all manner of accusations to the WPA Division of Investigation, the Dies Committee, and the FBI. These investigations, which preceded the Dies Committee hearings, are not well known. Brussell writes that even people in the Federal Theatre Project were not aware of them, though Brussell's investigation makes clear that people were fired on account of them.

21. For information about the economic, social, and political upheavals caused by the Depression, see Robert McElvaine's *The Great Depression*. For an account of the Roosevelt presidency and the programs it instituted, see William Leuchtenberg's *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal: 1932–1949*.

22. Her travel to the Soviet Union would later be seized upon by the Dies Committee as proof of her radical leftism, and she would be questioned about it in hearings.

23. The Federal Theatre Project's Living Newspapers were staged productions of current events, drawing on epic theatre staging techniques developed by Bertolt Brecht and Erwin Piscator. FTP Living Newspapers included *Triple A Plowed Under*, about the crisis of agriculture and practices that were exacerbating it; *Power*, about the relation of consumers and the electrical industries; *Spirochete*, about syphilis; and *Injunction Granted*, about labor. For extensive treatment of the Living Newspapers, see Laura Browder's *Rousing the Nation: Radical Culture in Depression America*.

24. Quoted in Mathews, *The Federal Theatre, 1935–1939*, 21.

25. Flanagan, "The People's Theatre Grows Stronger," *Federal Theatre* 1.6, p. 6. *Federal Theatre* was distributed free within the FTP and sold for fifteen cents a copy on newsstands and in bookshops. It was shut down in 1937. Tony Buttitta discusses his employment with *Federal Theatre* in *Uncle Sam Presents*.

26. Mathews, 22–23.

27. *Federal Theatre* 2.4, p. 28.

28. *Federal Theatre* 1.4.

29. See "Censorship in the Federal Theatre" (*Theatre History Studies*), by Barry With-

am, for an excellent discussion of the administrative organization of the FTP with regard to WPA state directors that created so many censorship problems for the project.

30. See *Arena*, 55. See also Mathews, 52–53. For a description of strikes from an actor's perspective, see John Randolph's oral interview with Diane Bowers.

31. Quoted in Goldstein, *The Political Stage*, 250.

32. All were directors of particularly vibrant regional theatres: Gilmor Brown came from the Pasadena Playhouse, Frederick McConnell from the Cleveland Playhouse, Thomas Wood Stevens from the Goodman Memorial Theatre in Chicago, and Jaspar Deeter from the Hedgerow Theatre outside of Philadelphia (Mathews, 26).

33. Fraden writes that *Hymn to the Rising Sun* was also not supported by the cast. She quotes Richard Wright, who was working as publicity director for the unit and who had helped decide what plays would be produced for that particular series. In his autobiography, he writes that after he passed out copies of *Hymn to the Rising Sun* and cast members looked at it, “. . . something went wrong. The Negroes stammered and faltered in their lines. Finally they stopped reading all together.” Wright remembers that one of the cast told the director they thought the play was indecent. “We don't want to act in a play like this before the American public. I don't think any such conditions exist in the South. I lived in the South and I never saw any chain gangs . . . we want a play that will make the public love us” (Fraden, 114).

34. *Government Investigations of Federal Theatre Project Personnel in the Works Progress Administration 1935–1939 (The Show Must NOT Go On!)*.

35. *Ibid.*, v.

36. *Ibid.*, vii.

37. The figure for productions comes from Goldstein, 250. Although the FTP was in existence for four years, and although CCC touring companies that had been inherited from a small Federal Emergency Relief Agency theatrical project performed, only the Los Angeles project opened a play in 1935, according to Goldstein.

38. “Nothing to Write About,” *Federal Theatre* 2.1, p. 1.

39. *The Federal Theatre Project: A Catalog-Calendar of Productions*, xiii–xiv. The figure is echoed in Buttitta and Witham, *Uncle Sam Presents*, 231.

40. For a description of the project's activities in Oklahoma, see Flanagan, *Arena*, 97–101.

41. New York Children's Unit Director Jack Rennick, quoted in *Stage Left*, a reminiscence written on leftist theatre in the thirties by Jay Williams.

42. Saul would co-write one more play for Federal Theatre, a critique of the American medical system, *Medicine*, with H. R. Hays. The play was produced on Broadway in 1940. Both Lantz and Saul became screenwriters. Saul, who died in 1994, received screenwriting credit for *Once Upon a Time* (1944), *Strange Affair* (1944), *The Dark Past* (1948), *Roadhouse* (1948), *The Lady Gambles* (1949), *Once More, My Darling* (1949), *Woman in Hiding* (1949), *The Secret of Convict Lake* (1951), *Thunder on the Hill* (1951), *Affair in Trinidad* (1952), *The Joker Is Wild* (1957), *The Helen Morgan Story* (1957), *The Naked Maja* (1959), *The Second Time Around* (1961), *Major Dundee* (1965), *The Silencers* (1966), and *Man and Boy* (1972). He received screenwriting credit for the film version of *Streetcar Named Desire*, directed by Elia Kazan, and adapted the play for television in 1984. He published one novel, *The Dark Side of Love*, in 1974. Saul also lectured on screenwriting at the University of California at Los Angeles and the Writers Guild Open Door School.

43. *New York Herald Tribune*, June 2, 1937, p. 21, mimeograph, National Archives Box 154 (Vassar Collection).

44. When *The Revolt of the Beavers* opened, a number of pro-labor New York FTP plays were either in rehearsal or had been produced. These include, notably one of the first Living Newspapers, *Injunction Granted*, on labor unions, and Frank Wilson's *Walk Together Children* and J. A. Smith's *Turpentine for the Negro Unit* at the Lafayette Theatre. Pro-Communist sympathies took the FTP stage, notably in *Professor Mamlock*, by Friedrich Wolf, and *Battle Hymn*, by Michael Gold. And anticapitalist sentiments infused productions from the Living Newspaper *Triple A Plowed Under* to W. H. Auden's expressionistic *Dance of Death*. The very structure of the FTP recognized America's ethnic diversity and reached out to different audiences in Yiddish, German, Russian, and Spanish, particularly through its active Yiddish Theatre.

45. Even the three playreader reports located in the FTP Collection at the Library of Congress fail to anticipate the political controversy the play would generate. The play was recommended by all three reviewers. And though one, Robert Ewing, recommended with reservations (of the categories "reject," "reject with reservations," "recommend with reservations," and "recommend"), he wrote, "This play is well written and the authors understand child psychology. The lines and action are kept on a child's level. There is a good villain. The animals add much to the general interest. The individual moral needs clarifying. It is questionable if the implications and talk about adult industrial injustice should be thrust upon children (or animals)" [underline his]. A second reviewer wrote enthusiastically that the play is "a charming tale originally intended for children, but having enough up-to-date material and moral to be of interest to adults. A play any amateur group, especially Junior League dramatic clubs, would enjoy presenting for children's entertainment." In her dissertation, *A Production History of the New York City Children's Theatre Unit of the Federal Theatre Project*, Doreen Heard notes that "Dorothy Hailparn, the author of *Horse Play*, was the first person to recommend the script" (166).

46. The extant photo of the Newark production is at the Special Collections Department at George Mason University.

47. Denning, *The Cultural Front*, xvi.

48. McClendon, who was ill with a fatal cancer, would take little role in shaping the Harlem unit. She argued for white co-directors because she believed the African American theatre workers, shut out from the commercial theatre, needed training from established professionals to develop a strong and skilled community. Furthermore, individual productions often integrated cast and crew members in slight but unprecedented ways; for example, the wise Hoot Owl in *The Revolt of the Beavers* was played by an African American actor.

49. Audiences were integrated except by the division created by the largely racially separated productions. The Federal Theatre Project houses were open to all and did not separate black and white audience members.

50. Swortzell, "Introduction," *Six Plays for Young People from the Federal Theatre Project (1936–1939)*, 22–23.

## Chapter 1

1. Jack Rennick, "Children's Theatre—New York," *Federal Theatre* 2.3 (1936).

2. Cleveland may seem an unlikely city to form a triad with New York and Los Angeles, but the lively children's theatre developed by the directors of the settlement house the Karamu House had created an existing theatre community that the FTP recognized. See Noerena Abookire and Jennifer Scott McNair, "Children's Theatre Activities at Karamu House, 1915–1975," in *Spotlight on the Child*, 69–84.

3. An exception is *A Letter to Santa Claus*. According to its production book, children Joe and Mary were played by children.

4. *Six Plays for Young People from the Federal Theatre Project*, 10.

5. Rennick, "Children's Theatre—New York," *Federal Theatre* 2.3

6. Rennick, Report, August 28, 1936, Box 495, National Archives.

7. *Ibid.*

8. Letters of sponsorship acceptance in the National Archives records include Dorothy McFadden, executive director of Junior Programs; Lewis Chisholm, Acting Lieutenant of the Juvenile Aid Bureau of the New York City Police Department; Goodman Theatre Children's Director Charlotte Chorpennig; and numerous university professionals in child development and theatre. See also Heard, *A Production History of the New York City Children's Theatre Unit*.

9. Letter from George Kondolf, New York City project director, to Richard Whorf, Schubert Theatre. In the letter, Kondolf was soliciting sponsorship for the "Children's Holiday Festival" to be held December 27 through January 1. Kondolf writes that "\$1.25 will provide 25 children with balcony seats, and \$3.75 with orchestra seats."

10. Heard, *A Production History of the New York City Children's Theatre Unit*, 263.

11. *Free, Adult, and Uncensored* notes that during the 1937 Federal Theatre Project's run of *Pinocchio*, advertisements notified the public that adults could attend the production only if accompanied by a child.

12. National Archives Box 496. Although the motion picture traveling road shows never happened, Frank did produce his *Pinocchio* for television in 1957, with Mickey Rooney in the title role.

13. *Spotlight on the Child*, 1.

14. McCaslin, *Theatre for Children in the United States: A History*, 15.

15. *Ibid.*, 16.

16. Quoted in "Junior League Children's Theatre," in *Spotlight on the Child*. See also Janet Gordon and Diana Reische, *The Volunteer Powerhouse*.

17. McCaslin, *Theatre for Children in the United States: A History*, 78.

18. See "The King-Coit School and Children's Theatre," in *Spotlight on the Child*, 51–67.

19. Ward would write four books in all: *Creative Dramatics*, *Theatre for Children*, *Play-making with Children*, and *Stories to Dramatize*.

20. Lewis Wickes Hine, National Child Labor Committee Collection. Titles of photographs taken from National Child Labor Committee caption cards.

21. *Pricing the Priceless Child*, 21.

22. *The Cultural Front*, 7.

23. *Ibid.*, 9.

24. Samuel Gompers at the Chicago International Labor Conference, quoted in Kent, *Culture, Gender, Race, and U.S. Labor History*, 21.

25. Lewis Wickes Hine, National Child Labor Committee Collection.

26. *The Cry of the Children*, xv.

27. The similarity of titles recalls Elizabeth Barrett Browning's poem "The Cry of the

Children,” decrying the wasted lives of English working children. The poem was published in 1844.

28. *The Bitter Cry of the Children*, 216.

29. *Shifting Gears: Technology, Literature, Culture in Modernist America*. See chapters 1 and 2.

30. Conceptually, this spatial relationship might have been at work in stage designing the wheel for *Revolt of the Beavers*.

31. “Child Labor in the Southern Cotton Mills,” 11.

32. Lewis Wickes Hine, National Child Labor Committee Collection.

33. Margaret Larkin, *The Nation*. Larkin’s “The Story of Ella May” was also published in *New Masses* in November, and her “We’ll Never Let Our Union Die” was published nearly ten years later, in the *Daily Worker* (September 14, 1938). I would like to thank Dr. Patrick Huber, Missouri University of Science and Technology, for sharing his then unpublished manuscript about the songs of Ella May Wiggins and for drawing my attention to this article.

34. Quoted in Salmond, *Gastonia, 1929: The Story of the Loray Mill Strike*, 129–30. In the Lawrence strike of 1912 against a number of mills, children played an important representational role in focusing attention on the plight of the striking textile workers, most of whom were immigrants. As Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, an International Workers of the World (IWW) organizer, remembered, children were sent out of the city. “On February 17, 1912, the first group of 150 people were taken to New York City. . . . Five thousand people met them at Grand Central Station. People wept when they saw the poor clothes and thin shoes of these wide-eyed little children” (*Talkin Union*, 44).

35. Salmond, *Gastonia*, 127.

36. *Ibid.*, 131.

37. *American Labor on Stage*, 25.

38. Pittenger, Mark. “A World of Difference: Constructing the ‘Underclass in Progressive America,” *American Quarterly* 49.1 (March 1997): 26–65.

39. *Ibid.*, 48–49.

40. See Margaret Mead’s *Coming of Age in Somoa* and Franz Boas’s *The Mind of Primitive Man*. In 1934, *Race and Culture*, by Ruth Benedict, a student of Boas, became a staple in college classrooms and greatly helped popularize anthropological theories of difference based on culture, not essentialized race.

## Chapter 2

1. All of the press releases cited are archived in the Federal Theatre Project Collection of the National Archives, Box 531, Children’s Theatre Folder.

2. All of these plays were extremely successful productions that generated positive theatre reviews and support for the Federal Theatre Project. *The Emperor’s New Clothes* was a colorful retelling of the classic story. A May 12, 1937, press release sent to the *Bronx Home News* says that in the play, “Children shouted directions to the characters and all but rushed on the stage in certain scenes” (Box 531, Children’s Theatre Folder). *Flight* took its newsreel form from the Living Newspapers and employed a cast of 144 to tell the history of flight from historic times to the present in 28 quickly moving scenes that employed spotlights, a loudspeaker narrator, and blackouts.

3. Lantz and Saul copyrighted the play in 1936; in the fall of 1936 continuing through the spring of 1937, the Congress of Industrial Organization union members won victories in Akron, Ohio, and Flint, Michigan. As Denning notes, “it was the year of ‘sit-down fever’” (23). A release for *Revolt* exclusive to the *Herald Tribune* describes potsie as a kind of hopscotch. “Finally, actors and directors visited the lower East Side to get the authentic New York version and took notes as the street urchins showed them how ‘potsie’ is really played—with a banana peel.”

4. New York publicity had reason to be concerned about potential problems for plays that dealt with contemporary topics. The New York Project’s first Living Newspaper, *Ethiopia*, was censored because Washington officials decreed that no heads of foreign governments could be depicted in a Living Newspaper.

5. The accumulated audience for the performances was 8,395, with gross receipts of \$1,076.76. This compares to an accumulated audience of 129,029 after 97 performances for the New York run of *The Emperor’s New Clothes*, which grossed \$2,596.85 (“New York Children’s Unit Monthly Progress Report for June, 1937”).

6. Atkinson had generally supported the Federal Theatre Project; on May 2, 1937, the *New York Times* published a lengthy article of his in which he called Flanagan a “person of considerable vision” who had not only expanded the American theatre audience by producing affordable theatre but also set up an infrastructure that would benefit community productions for years (“Federal Theatre: Something of What It Has Been doing under Mrs. Flanagan’s Leadership,” *New York Times*, May 2, 1937).

7. Ibid.

8. *Six Plays for Young People*, 14.

9. *The Revolt of the Beavers* was the only children’s play to succumb to this kind of censorship, although a number of FTP plays were successfully shut down, including the Chicago project’s production of Theodore Brown’s *Stevedore* and the Seattle Negro Unit’s production of Aristophanes’ *Lysistrata*. In New York, in addition to *Ethiopia*, Marc Blitzstein’s contemporary labor opera *The Cradle Will Rock*, produced by John Houseman and Orson Welles, was censored. Blitzstein’s musical, which had won the leftist New Theatre League’s major prize in 1937, was a labor play dealing with union organizing in the steel industry. It was censored indirectly by a Washington edict several days before opening. The order said that no new play, musical, or art gallery could be opened before July 1 because of recent budget cuts. While Washington officials insisted the memorandum was an attempt not to stop *The Cradle Will Rock* but only to postpone it, Houseman and Welles said if the government wouldn’t let them open it in June, they would do so privately. Fourteen thousand tickets had already been sold. The story of the play’s impromptu performance is one of the great dramas of the FTP. After Welles and Houseman invited an audience to a run-through—technically not violating the ban—the WPA authorities locked the Maxine Elliott theatre where *Cradle* had been scheduled to open June 16. Houseman and Welles notified ticket holders that the performance would take place even as they were told by the musicians’ union that they had to pay for new rehearsal sessions at Broadway salaries and by the Actors Equity Union that any of the union actors (not the principals, but most of the rest of the cast) who performed on stage would have to obtain Federal Theatre permission. As crowds of ticket holders began to mass outside the Maxine Elliott, Will Geer and Howard Da Silva entertained them until, at the last minute, Houseman and Welles discovered that the Venice Theatre, twenty blocks to the north, was available. Producers, actors, lighting director Abe Feder, Blitzstein, and a crowd of ticket holders walked uptown. As Flanagan’s



biographer Joanne Bentley writes: “No one, least of all Houseman and Welles, knew what sort of performance the audience would see—perhaps only Blitzstein singing at the piano and three or four actors singing from their seats in the auditorium. . . . By nine o’clock every seat in the Venice Theatre was filled, every inch of standing room taken. Blitzstein, in shirtsleeves and suspenders, had taken his place stage center at the untuned upright piano behind the curtain. After some preliminary remarks by Welles and Houseman, the curtain rose and the composer, looking pale and tense in the glare of a spotlight, announced, ‘A street corner—Steeltown, USA.’ He then began to play and sing. ‘It was a few seconds,’ Houseman later recalled, ‘before we realized that another voice, a faint, wavering soprano,’ had been added to Blitzstein’s. All heads in the audience turned as the spotlight moved offstage and onto the lower left box, where Olive Stanton, dressed in green and with hair dyed red, was standing. At first her voice was barely audible but she gradually gained courage. After she had finished, a second actor, also on relief, stood up. From the front row of the orchestra, he made his rejoinder. The first scene took place with the actors positioned thirty feet apart” (*Hallie Flanagan: A Life*, 262, 263). See also Goldstein, *The Political Stage*, 263, 264. The story of the event forms the basis for the 1999 film *Cradle Will Rock*, written, directed, and produced by Tim Robbins.

10. Flanagan writes in *Arena* that in the middle of May, “after a performance of *Can-dide* and *How Long Brethren*, audience and cast joined in an all-night sit-down demonstration against cuts, while 44th Street was filled with marchers” and on May 27 various FTP and WPA unions called a one-day work stoppage. “Seven thousand out of 9,000 relief employees in all the art fields joined the stoppage; all of our theatres were dark, with box-office men on hand to refund money or exchange tickets” (201).

11. According to Judith Brussell’s research into government investigations of FTP personnel, Rennick led and participated in Workers Alliance demonstrations. A look at the overall structure of the New York Children’s Unit showcases leftist theatre credentials in Jay Williams as Assistant to Managing Project Supervisor (Rennick) and former Theatre of Action member (and co-director of *The Revolt of the Beavers*) Peter Hyun as Assistant Play Director (*A Production History of the New York City Children’s Theatre Unit of the Federal Theatre Project, 1935–1939*, 27).

12. Dies Committee 1, page 58, Box 496, National Archives collection. See also *Hallie Flanagan: A Life in the American Theatre*, 318 and *The Political Stage*, 258. Writing that the number of FTP plays that took “serious issue with traditional social and political issues” was very small, Malcolm Goldstein notes that even those that engaged seriously with social and political issues would be later considered moderate, “with the exception of those in Oscar Saul and Lou Lantz’s *Revolt of the Beavers*, a children’s play; Michael Gold and Michael Blankfort’s *Battle Hymn*; and the productions of the Living Newspaper Unit.”

13. And, as Kazan notes in his autobiography, a very tightknit world in the early to mid-thirties. He writes of how members of the Group Theatre worked with the “newborn ‘workers’ theatres” downtown. “Many of us, while living on weekly salaries from Broadway, did our ‘real work’ south of Fourteenth Street—the accepted dividing line between the bourgeoisie and the radicalized masses” (*Elia Kazan: A Life*, 105).

14. According to an article from the *New York Post*, June 2, 1937, reprinted in the FTP brief prepared for the Dies Committee, Oscar Saul and Lou Lantz were noms de plumes for Oscar Alpern, 242 Eighth Ave., and Louis Rosenthal, 1970 85th St. (Dies Committee Folder, p. 64, Box 496, National Archives Collection). Oscar Saul continued to use this name professionally. According to *Stage Left*’s Jay Williams, Saul and Lantz were playwrights for the Workers Laboratory Theatre, whose *Jews at the Crossroads* was performed in 1934.

“Dealing with Jews under the Nazi regime (the play) was criticized for its draggy opening in which everyone talked like mad for several minutes to establish situation and character. Ben Berenberg, taking some time off from Red Vaudeville, played the boss of the factory, a part which whetted his taste again for acting. Although both plays had weaknesses (*Jews at the Crossroads* played in repertory with *Daughter*, a Peter Martin adaptation of an Erskine Caldwell short story), they also had tensely dramatic moments, and both were competently done and were given regular performances, although neither had anything like *Newsboy’s* success,” Williams writes (152–53). Saul also had at this time a commedia dell’arte piece, *Hot Pastrami*, in repertory for the WLT. In *Stage Left*, Saul is given credit for helping write the lyrics to the popular labor song “Flying Squadron” for new member Earl Robinson. Lantz and Saul had *A Day at Bord Motors* for the New Theatre League listed in the FTP’s collection of labor plays. The synopsis reads, “A Satirical sketch giving a picture of what the boss would like the public to believe about his treatment of workers.” For an excellent discussion of the leftist theatre in New York during the late 1920s and 1930s, see *Stage Left*. See also Morgan Himelstein’s *Drama Was a Weapon* and Harold Clurman’s *The Fervent Years*.

15. In *Stage Left* Williams downplays the connection between former Theatre of Action members and *The Revolt of the Beavers*. Furthermore, though Williams actually did the makeup for the play, he neglects to mention this. All Williams says about the play is, “But when it (the FTP) presented a fantasy called *The Revolt of the Beavers*, by Oscar Saul and Lou Lantz, in which the inhabitants of Beaverland kick out their wicked king in the best approved fairy-tale style so that they can play games, eat ice cream, and stay nine years old, a perfect scream of wrath went up that it was a Communist allegory” (228). This, even though Saul and Lantz had both been mentioned in connection with the Communist WLT.

16. Artef, which is a Yiddish abbreviation for Workers Theatrical Alliance, performed from a small theatre on Broadway. Founded in 1927, the company sponsored acting studios that resulted in a permanent company of 29 people. The company performed in Yiddish. Its director Benno Schneider studied with Stanislavsky in Russia; the company was known for a distinctive collective acting style. See Karen Malpede Taylor’s *People’s Theatre in Amerika*, 139–44. Elia Kazan had worked with the Theatre of Action, whom he describes in *Elia Kazan: A Life* as “a group of fifteen actors and actresses . . . Jewish street-smart, many of them brought up by left-wing parents. A true collective, they lived in a Lower East Side five-story walk-up, took turns cooking, slept three or four to a room” (107). Kazan writes well of the company, but then disparages it for two reasons: he is personally not attuned to collective life, and the company performed a play first supporting then attacking New York Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia; the change in politics, he notes, came not from collective decision making but reflected the Communist Party’s rejection of LaGuardia (108). Perry Bruskin, who played a skating beaver, recalls the Theatre of Action life in his oral interview archived at George Mason University.

17. Lewis Leverett had taught acting at the Theatre Collective’s school, where FTP New York director Philip Barbour had taught playwriting with Walter Hart and George Sklar, and where Lee Strasberg taught directing. He had also taught classes to Workers Laboratory Theatre members on the Group Theatre’s acting technique formulated by Strasberg and following the Stanislavsky method (see Constantin Stanislavsky, *An Actor Prepares*, trans. Elizabeth R. Hapgood [New York: Theatre Arts Books, Robert M. MacGregor, 1955]). For the transcript of Kazan’s testimony, see Bentley, *Thirty Years of Treason: Excerpts from Hearings before the House Committee on Un-American Activities, 1938–1968*. Jules Dassin (*Never on Sunday*, *Topkapi*, *Night and the City*) was blacklisted and left the United States in 1953.

18. The play's colorful costumes were reproduced in *Cradle Will Rock*. Robbins plays with the facts about *Revolt*, though the film notes the controversy its production would bring. The film shows its writers as a young couple who are outside the FTP and who pitch their idea by going to Flanagan's office on roller skates and dressed in beaver costumes.

19. Transcript of oral interview by Diane Bowers, 28 archived at George Mason University.

20. The music is preserved in a 1936 copyrighted play that was distributed by the Dramatists Play Service, Inc., of New York after the FTP production.

21. *The Revolt of the Beavers* opened one year after the release of Charlie Chaplin's *Modern Times*, with its enormous wheels symbolizing the mechanism of industrialized America and its elegant roller-skating on the edge of a precipice.

22. Bedard and Tolch, *Spotlight on the Child*.

23. Dies Committee Testimony, National Archives administrative records collection. As Hallie Flanagan recounts in her autobiography, when she was asked by HUAC about the play, she replied that "an audience survey by trained psychologists brought only favorable reactions from children such as 'teaches us never to be selfish'—'it is better to be good than bad'—'how the children would want the whole world to be nine years old and happy'" (*Arena*, 342, 343). See also *Six Plays for Young People*, introduction, and Heard's production history of the New York children's theatre. Heard details the survey alluded to in the testimony. She writes that the survey was conducted by Dr. Frances Holden of the department of psychology at New York University, "with the aid of four students trained in analyzing the reactions of children" in an interviewing process in which hundreds of children were asked questions designed to discover if they had understood a "class angle" to the play (111, 112). Swortzell writes that the survey "revealed that audiences found no similarity to present-day conditions, did not come away with a unified idea of the action, nor discover social implications beyond 'Don't be selfish'" (14).

24. The play, indeed, is central to FTP histories because it was the children's play that Flanagan spent thirteen pages defending in a brief she prepared for testimony before the House Committee on Un-American Activities in August 1938, and she was again asked about the play's politics when she appeared before the Committee in December 1938. Although Flanagan insisted to the Dies Committee that the play was a modern-day fairy tale, as Jane DeHart Mathews has noted, she told her husband and wrote to Philip Davis that she thought it was "class conscious." Mathews writes of Flanagan's decision to produce the play:

Her failure to anticipate the reaction to *The Revolt of the Beavers* is even more surprising in light of her recent fight with the Living Newspaper staff over *Injunction Granted* and the still more recent furor over *It Can't Happen Here*. Perhaps she expected Marxian overtones to go unnoticed. The play, she may have reasoned, was, after all, for the Children's Theatre, not the much praised, much damned, and very much publicized Living Newspaper. Whatever her reasons, the choice was a highly inappropriate one—particularly since the play opened at a time when the future of the entire WPA was once again up for debate. In short, *The Revolt of the Beavers* was a blot on the Federal Theatre's record, but in the context of two seasons of productions it seemed a rather small one. (117–118)

25. *The Revolt of the Beavers*, act 1, scene 2, line 19.

26. Department of Information Folder, Box 525, National Archives Collection.

27. The playscript is available in PDF form online in George Mason University's Federal Theatre Project Materials Collection (<http://digilib.gmu.edu:8080/jspui/handle/1920/3594>). A 1936 playscript is similar to one reproduced in Lowell Swortzell's *Six Plays for Young People*. It is an earlier version of the script that begins "The curtain rises on a meadow. It is on the outskirts of an industrial city and in the distance we can see the jagged outlines of skyscrapers and factories" (127). The staged version, on the other hand, introduces the children in a vacant lot with an old automobile top and seat. In addition to dialogue differences, the *Six Plays* script also has the children enter carrying schoolbooks in shoulder bags, whereas the staged version has them enter with Paul kicking a box into which they are putting firewood.

28. *The Revolt of the Beavers*, act 1, scene 1, line 1

29. *Ibid.*, act 1, scene 1, line 3.

30. When Windy agrees to take them away to have a good time, Mary asks him, "How are y'gonna take us? On a magic carpet?" Windy answers, "What kind of a magic carpet? I'm gonna blow up a big hurricane—and blow you there" (*Ibid.*, act 1, scene 1, line 16).

31. *From the Beast to the Blonde*, xx.

32. Dies Committee Brief 64–65, Dies Committee Folder One, Box 496, National Archives.

33. *Arena*, 200.

34. According to theorist Jack Zipes, the relegating of fairy tales to childhood and the commodification of fairy tales was a nineteenth-century phenomenon that produced a split in the genre correspondent to the Industrial Revolution's idealization of childhood and its imagination. If the Industrial Revolution's work conditions radically regularized and mechanized lives, childhood and the imagination were privileged as an ideal that made this bearable. As economic changes produced an institutionalization of life, the stock of childhood imagination rose. See "The Flowering of the Fairy Tale in Victorian England," in *When Dreams Came True: Classical Fairy Tales and Their Tradition*.

35. *Six Plays for Young People*, 128.

36. However, the socialist utopian fantasies of L. Frank Baum's fairy-tale series *The Wizard of Oz* also drew criticism for their alleged communism in the late 1930s and 1940s. While Baum may have used the fairy tale to critique American social and political structures, it is hardly an overt plea for communism. See Zipes in chapters "Inverting and Subverting the World with Hope," in *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion* and "L. Frank Baum and the Utopian Spirit of Oz," in *When Dreams Came True: Classical Fairy Tales and Their Tradition*.

37. In 1923 Marxist Edwin Hoernle argued, in "Work in the Communist Children's Groups," that "The proletariat will create the new fairy tales in which the workers' struggles, their lives, and their ideas are reflected and correspond to the degree to which they demonstrate how they can become human time and again, and how they can build up new educational societies in place of the decrepid [*sic*] old ones. It makes no sense to complain that we do not have suitable fairy tales for our children. Professional writers will not create them. Fairy tales do not originate from the desk. The real fairy tale originates unconsciously, collectively in the course of longer time-spans, and the work of the writer consist mainly in refining and rounding out the material at hand. The new proletarian and industrial fairy tale will come as soon as the proletariat has created a place in which the fairy tales will be told, not read aloud, and will be composed orally, not repeated. Then machines, tools, boilers, trains, ships, telegraphs and telephones, mine shafts and chemical tubes will become

alive and begin to speak just as previously the wolf or the water kettle in the folk tales of the peasantry and petit bourgeois spoke" (Quoted in Zipes, *Fairy Tales and Fables from Weimer Days*, 13). For information on leftist German emigrés in New York, see Williams, *Stage Left*.

38. *Fairy Tales and Fables of the Weimer Republic*. Zipes notes five major tendencies of the Weimer Republic proletarian fairy tales, all of which are displayed in *The Revolt of the Beavers*. They "(1) project an ideal societal organization that would bring an end to all suffering, (2) portray children whose honesty and clairvoyance endowed them with the ability to expose hypocrisy and made them into harbingers of a bright future, (3) develop exemplary heroes who bring about solidarity and collaboration in a struggle against exploitation, (4) reveal how social class exploitation worked and how it could be stopped, and (5) show the brutality of war and competition and underline the need for peace and coexistence" (20).

39. The positions each take in their argument recall Michael Gold's memory of his relationship to his sister in *Jews Without Money*. While his adaptation to life in the streets suggests the young Gold's ability to survive, the fragile purity of a sister too good for her harsh world is suggested by her reading of fairy tales:

Once my little sister sat on the tenement stoop, reading the Blue Fairy Tale Book. This book was her treasure. It was a big beautiful edition with colored pictures that Harry had given her. She had copied many of those pictures with her crayons, and knew every story in the book by heart. But she loved to read them again and again, her lips moving dreamily, as if she were singing to herself. She was reading now on the stoop, while the New York sun burned out above the tenements in glorious purple, amber, and rose.

Esther was in her own world. The street whirled and clashed around her, the gray old solemn Jews went by, and gabbling mommas, and pimps, pushcarts and rattling wagons. A scabby dog rummaged with its front paws in a garbage can. Three tough guys lounged nearby, and quarreled, and spat tobacco juice. The saloon was busy, the prostitutes were busy, the slum wretchedness was huge and triumphant. But Esther had escaped from it all. She was reading her book. The twilight fell on the white pages and illuminated her face. (275–76)

The memory of Esther's love of fairy tales creates a fragile moment of beauty in Gold's squalid tenement day; her surrender to their language, art, and narrative inspires Esther's brother to remember the tenements as a chiaroscuro of squalor and splendor in a passage that suggests the two might coexist. But each of the above paragraphs ends in light imagery that self-consciously draws attention to the darkness near. And two pages later, Esther is dead, run over while gathering wood on a snowy night, and the fairy child reading on the stoop has been literally crushed by a tenement life too harsh for dreamers. The bond of child and fantasy is remembered as beautiful, like the sunset above the restless systole and diastole of tenement life. But as with the colors of the sunset, Esther's dreamworld of the porch is incidental. The reality is that the sun has set and a tenement girl who dreams of magic and what might be cannot survive the reality what is.

40. Quoted in Denning, *The Cultural Front*, 230.

41. *Ibid.*, 231.

42. Michael Gold further wrote in the *Liberator* that "Art is the tenement pouring out its soul through us, its most sensitive and articulate sons and daughters." His own recounting of a tenement childhood attests to the power of the sons and daughters of the ghetto to

artistically imagine an urban, working-class ethnicity that is intrinsically American and not exotically other. Denning argues: “The plebian writers were united by a common historical situation that was not a common ethnicity but a common ethnic formation: the restructuring of the American peoples by the labor migrations of the early twentieth century from Southern and Eastern Europe and the sharecropping South. These peoples were ethnicized and racialized by that social formation. . . . The invention of ethnicity was a central form of class consciousness in the United States” (*The Cultural Front*, 42). Thus the tenement evokes an ethnicity that, in the case of *The Revolt of the Beavers*, is not made explicit by rituals or behaviors located within a particular ethnic group. Gold’s novel, published in 1930, went through eleven printings by the fall of that year.

43. The film version of the play, directed by William Wyler and starring Humphrey Bogart and Joel McCrea, was in production during the run of *The Revolt of the Beavers* and would be released August 24, 1937.

44. Quoted in *From Class to Caste in American Drama*, 24.

45. Whether the scene with these children was staged or not remains a question. In the final script at the Federal Theatre Project Collection in the Library of Congress, the scene is marked out. However, in the program, located in the National Archives, the characters are listed.

46. Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*. See chapter 3, “The Dream as Wish Fulfilment.”

47. See John Howard Lawson’s *Theory and Technique of Playwriting*.

48. *The Revolt of the Beavers*, act 1, scene 1, line 9.

49. *Ibid.*, act 1, scene 2, line 5.

50. *Ibid.*, act 1, scene 2, line 6.

51. *Ibid.*, act 1, scene 2, line 9.

52. *Ibid.*, act 1, scene 2, line 10.

53. *Ibid.*, act 1, scene 2, line 18.

54. *Ibid.*, act 1, scene 2, line 22.

55. *Ibid.*, act 1, scene 3, line 10.

56. *Ibid.*, act 1, scene 3, lines 9–12.

57. *Ibid.*, act 1, scene 3, lines 14, 15.

58. *Ibid.*, act 2, scene 3, line 21.

59. *Ibid.*, act 2, scene 1, line 8.

60. *Ibid.*, act 2, scene 1, line 10.

61. *Ibid.*, act 2, scene 1, line 17.

62. *Ibid.*, act 3, scene 1, lines 9–13.

63. Page 63, Box 496, National Archives.

64. “Once Upon a Time,” *Saturday Evening Post*, June 26, 1937, p. 22.

65. *Radical Visions*, 99.

66. *Blackface, White Noise: Jewish Immigrants in the Hollywood Melting Pot*, 45–46.

67. See “Nationalism, Blackface, and the Jewish Question,” in *Blackface, White Noise*, 45–47.

## Chapter 3

1. The units were administered by the FTP, though they were often formed through

the sponsorship of community groups. Thus the Harlem Negro Unit was sponsored by the New York Urban League; the Seattle Unit was sponsored initially by Florence and Burton James of the Seattle Repertory Playhouse and the Unit's core formed by the cast of their production of Paul Green's *In Abraham's Bosom*. For a comprehensive examination of the administrative setup of units in Harlem, Birmingham, and Seattle, see Tina Redd's 1996 dissertation, *The Struggle for Administrative and Artistic Control of the Federal Theatre Negro Units*.

2. The phrasing is Rena Fraden's from *Blueprints for a Black Federal Theatre, 1935–1939* to describe an idea developed not only by Alain Locke and W. E. B. Du Bois, but also Sterling Brown and Anne Cooke, the director of dramatics at Spelman College (61–62). The Federal Theatre was only the most funded and publicized attempt at African American theatre in Harlem. Du Bois organized the Krigwa Players Little Negro Theatre. McClendon founded the Negro People's Theatre in 1935, which presented Clifford Odet's *Waiting for Lefty* (and had *The Revolt of the Beavers* director Lewis Leverett on its board of directors). In 1938, Langston Hughes was a founding member of the Harlem Suitcase Theatre; the group disbanded in 1939. And in 1939 founding People's Theatre member Dick Campbell, with his wife, singer Muriel Rahn, organized the Rose McClendon Players; the company disbanded at the start of World War II. In addition, plays were published in *Crisis* and *Opportunity*. See Du Bois, "Krigwa Players Little Negro Theatre." See also White, "The Negro on the American Stage"; Locke, "The Negro's Contribution to American Art and Literature"; and Ross, "The Role of Blacks in the Federal Theatre, 1935–1939."

3. The editorial was published December 21, 1935. Folder Six, Box 142, National Archives.

4. 1935 Photo donated by Esther Porter Lane to the GMU collection.

5. These figures come from Fraden, *Blueprints for a Black Federal Theatre*. Units were established in Birmingham, Durham, Okmulgee, Oklahoma, Chicago, Peoria, New York City, Boston, Newark, Hartford, Oakland, Los Angeles, and Seattle. Some cities, such as New York and Chicago, had more than one unit; for example, New York had a black dance unit, youth unit, and vaudeville unit, and Chicago had an "all-colored" minstrel revue. Cities with those existing in 1939 were Hartford, Boston, Raleigh, Los Angeles, Seattle, New York, San Francisco, Newark, and Philadelphia.

6. See chapters 5 and 7 in Witham, *The Federal Theatre Project: A Case Study*.

7. Fraden, *Blueprints for a Black Federal Theatre*, 59.

8. The prolific Reich also wrote *Beauty and the Beast*, *Baba Yaga*, *Cinderella*, *Death Takes the Wheel*, *Dutch Romance*, *Hansel and Gretel*, *Jack and the Beanstalk*, *Little Red Riding Hood*, *Mother Goose Review*, *Snow White*, *The Three Bears*, *The Three Wishes*, and *Uncle Sam's Hope* for the federal children's stages. Chorpenning is listed as author of the puppet play that opened March 14, 1936, in Philadelphia and is co-author with Reich on the Miami production's listing, according to the George Mason University catalog, although the extant Molka Reich script is credited only to her and bears no similarity besides title to the Chorpenning play.

9. The photo, which is reproduced at the beginning of this chapter, was given to George Mason University by Esther Porter Lane, who worked briefly in Washington and was then transferred by Hallie Flanagan to Seattle, where she would direct, among other projects, *Brer Rabbit* and *the Tar Baby*. The only indications that there was a puppet version of *Little Black Sambo* in Washington, DC, besides the photo, are a ticket stub for a marionette show and brief references in her oral interview archived at George Mason to having

produced puppet shows in the parks, none of which are named. Prior to my research, the photo was assumed to have been of puppets used for the Newark production.

Although there was no Washington unit, the catalogue of FTP productions compiled by George Mason University shows that five puppet shows were performed on December 5, 1936: *Birthday of the Infanta*, *Hansel and Gretel*, *Health Skit*, *Hirschvogel of Nurnburg*, and *Sambo*. All the productions are listed as “puppet theatre,” except *Sambo* (the title under which George Mason University researchers originally classified the Washington production), which is listed under “black theatre.” Thanks to Jennifer Bradshaw, GMU Special Collections, for pointing this out.

10. Because the photos are not close-ups, the actor’s faces are not clear; however, there is a clear ring of white around their mouths. Director’s notes for the Cincinnati production state, “The actors experimented a number of days (on their own time) on the make-up. The first results with the animals resembled masks worn on the face, but eventually the right shade and correct line gave the desired effect.” While this would suggest that the actors chose to produce a blackface effect, as the director had been discussing animal costumes prior to the cited paragraph, it’s unclear whether he means that all actors created their makeup or just the tigers and monkeys. Production Book, Federal Theatre Project Collection, Library of Congress.

11. A visitor to a *Little Black Sambo* rehearsal in Philadelphia (which used the Chorpenning script) “remarked . . . that it was not the Sambo with which she was familiar. ‘Of course not,’ she was assured, ‘It is a new Sambo, re-written with a keen eye out for its modern social implications’” (Jarvis, *Cultural Nationalism in an Urban Setting*, 67).

12. In the files are three Charlotte Chorpenning scripts. The script that I will discuss later has no date or place description, though it does have penciled changes marking it as a probable script used in production. None of the penciled changes were marked in a copy evidently typed in 1939. The introductory notes that refer to the Goodman Theatre production, where Chorpenning directed children’s plays from 1932 to 1952, aren’t attributed. The Chorpenning-attributed Seattle version was the first *Little Black Sambo* to open. Although the *Catalog-Calendar of Productions* lists an extant playscript, it is not in the Library of Congress; however, the catalogue of FTP materials housed at the University of Southern California collection, where some of the Los Angeles units’ materials are archived, indicates that the Seattle unit staged a Chorpenning version of the play. (Seattle was under the Los Angeles bureau.)

13. Jodi Van Der Horn-Gibson makes a compelling argument for the Africanness of the production in “Dismantling Americana: Sambo, Shirley Graham, and African Nationalism.” Graham’s work with the Federal Theatre is discussed in Gerald Horne’s *Race Woman: The Lives of Shirley Graham du Bois*. See 75–76 for a discussion of *Little Black Sambo*.

14. Chicago Production Book, Federal Theatre Project Archives, Library of Congress.

15. For an extensive bibliography on the Scottsboro trial compiled by Douglass O. Linder, University of Missouri–Kansas City School of Law, see [http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/FTrials/scottsboro/SB\\_bibl.html](http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/FTrials/scottsboro/SB_bibl.html).

16. Eric Lott, *Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class*. Michael Rogin, *Blackface, White Noise: Jewish Immigrants in the Hollywood Melting Pot*. See also Robert C. Toll, *Blacking Up: The Minstrel Show in Nineteenth-Century America*.

17. Lott, *Love and Theft*, 5, 6. See also Boskin, *Sambo: The Rise and Demise of an American Jester*, for descriptions of blackface shows.



18. FTP playreader reports on minstrel shows archived at the Library of Congress demonstrate familiarity with the minstrel form. Writing in 1937, reader Gus Weinburg rejects “Alabama” by Aurthur Leroy Kaser with, “The minstrel first part has long outlived its usefulness. It was written long ago. The material is so out of date and oldfashioned that a presentation of it now would be a waste of time and money. It belongs in the dim corridors of the past.” Yet his further comments show that while he insists on the dated quality of the material, he is quite familiar with it. “We have the customary minstrel first part routine. A medley of songs by the company opens the show. Then the usual wrangle and arguments between the interlocutor and end man follow” (Box 137).

19. *Love and Theft*, 6.

20. *Blackface, White Noise*, 14.

21. White producer John Houseman was chosen by Rose McClendon to co-direct the Harlem unit with her. Yet, a year earlier, ill with terminal cancer, McClendon had been unable to perform the lead role written for her in Countee Cullen’s *Medea*, directed by Houseman, and in July 1936, she died. Houseman continued to direct the unit through *Turpentine*, after which he left, and the project was led for the next three years by African American directors J. Augustus (Gus) Smith and Carlton Moss.

22. Folder One, Box 142, National Archives.

23. Folder Two, Box 142, National Archives. *Macbeth*’s opening drew a crowd of 10,000 people and all the major reviewers came, one “having requested in advance that he and his wife be given seats ‘not next to Negroes’ if possible” (Goldstein, *The Political Stage*, 260). Many reviewers echoed the condescending tone of Pollack’s review. See Fraden, *Blueprints for a Black Federal Theatre*, 153–54. The production was set in nineteenth-century Haiti. Welles and Houseman gave the production colorful costumes and jungle settings. The production was paced by a troupe of African drummers, and the witches were a trio of voodoo practitioners. Welles and Houseman rearranged and somewhat altered the text, but kept the Shakespearean prose.

24. *New Theatre* 3.5, p. 24.

25. *Vaudeville*, narr. Ben Vereen, American Masters series, Winstar TV & Video, 1999.

26. *The Daily Worker* also praised *Macbeth*, with its reviewer writing that “For the first time, in a generally recognized sense, the Negro actor was permitted to drop his inane and innocuous ‘blackface’ role and emerge in a piece that truly revealed his many talents held in abeyance because of unjustified prejudices harbored by Broadway producers” (May 10, 1936, Folder One, Box 142, National Archives).

27. *New Theatre* 3.5, p. 24.

28. Playreader reports for Paul Green, perhaps the most widely respected white playwright writing about race in the 1920s and 1930s, demonstrate the problems of a white-imposed (no matter how sympathetically meant) black subjectivity. Reader Harold Berman writes that the play “compresses within a few pages rich characterization and background, and a frustration and exaltation that seems to come from the very core of the Negro people.” An unnamed reader writes that the play is “ringing with the accents of the naïve, superstitious, spiritual-singing Negro folk of North Carolina.” Pragmatic reader Katharine Roberts writes that the play’s sexual scene might inflame anti-FTP passions, while the presentation of volatile race relations might provoke a too credulous racially mixed audience. She writes that it is “definitely not a play for the project. Among other things, the scene in which Goldie and Abraham go off to lie in the bushes and the other negroes discuss their being ‘like hawgs’ and get so sensuous a thrill out of it vicariously that they

break into a primitive dance, punctuated by odd giggles—well it might be interesting to a different audience, but it might be censored by those ready enough at best to criticize the project. Moreover, the conditions of negro education which existed in 1885, the time of the play, have been largely overcome and the prejudice on which the play is based is certainly mostly dissipated. Even ten years ago when the play was written, the subject matter was frankly dated though the treatment was modern, and the only audience interested was that which enjoyed the technical power of the author, or that which enjoyed the emotional orgy. Granted this, why bring up to a mixed audience, not always composed of the most controlled elements, the bitterness and vicious enmity between the blacks and whites which existed fifty years ago and why deliberately do a play which works so powerfully on the emotions of race antagonism? . . . If there are any reactionary sparks, they should not be lit in the mass mind.” (*In Abraham’s Bosom*, Playreader Reports File, 1935–39. Box 137)

29. Box 142, Negro Theatre, Folder 1, National Archives. *Women’s Wear*, June 24, 1936. *New York News*, June 24, 1936. *Bronx Home News*, June 25, 1936.

30. See “The South and the Politics of Anti-Lynching Legislation,” by George C. Rable. Of particular interest, Rable discusses the New Deal–era political complexities of successful Southern legislative opposition to the Costigan–Wagner anti-lynching bill of 1935 and the Wagner–Van Nuys bill of 1937.

31. The horrifying conditions of the Florida turpentine camps are mentioned in Happy James Lawrence’s dissertation, *The Statewide Tours of the Florida Federal Theatre Project*. The camps had no schools, churches, or hospital, and the only store was the company store. Workers lived in two-room cabins with no indoor plumbing and worked under the supervision of a “white, whip-wielding ‘woods rider’ [who] would move through the pine forest on horseback making sure the black ‘chippers’ and ‘dippers’ did their jobs” (10). According to Lawrence, the camp overseer would arbitrarily marry two people and give them one shack to cut down on housing needs (10). The turpentine camps supplied the raw materials for the naval stores industry.

32. Mosely’s character Colonel Dutton is, as E. Quita Craig has written, a mediator. He owns the camp commissary and is a white man; on the other hand, he has had a black mistress for years with whom he has had three unacknowledged children. Attempting to mediate a strike and worker rage over a young man who has been shot, Dutton is first betrayed by the camp owner and then is shot by the white sheriff at the end.

33. Fraden, *Blueprints for a Black Federal Theatre*, 151, 156–57.

34. *Representations* 24:132.

35. *Ibid.* See *Blueprints for a Black Federal Theatre* for a discussion of African American intellectual interest in the folk play. Fraden writes, “In 1927 [Alain] Locke had contrasted the ‘drama of discussion and social analysis and the drama of expression and artistic interpretation,’ and had chosen the ‘folk play’ as the form from which will grow ‘the real future of Negro drama’” (88–89). One year earlier, Langston Hughes had argued for much the same emphasis on black expressive culture in “The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain.”

36. Van Der Horn-Gibson’s “Dismantling Americana” argues the significance of Graham’s contributions.

37. Chinitz, “Rejuvenation through Joy,” 67.

38. “The Conservation of Races,” quoted in Appiah’s “The Uncompleted Argument: du Bois and the Illusion of Race” (24).

39. There has been a backlash against removing *The Story of Little Black Sambo* from circulation; for a fairly recent Internet debate on the issue, see <http://www.fairrosa.info/>

disc/lbs.html. The discussion, which occurred at the time of the new retelling of the story, *Sam and the Tigers*, had participants ranged on either side of the question of whether the original book was racist or not. A beautifully illustrated version by Christopher Bing, with Bannerman text, was published in 2003.

40. It appeared on the American Library Association list of recommended books from 1912 to 1936, when the publication was suspended. In that year, Bannerman published a new book, *Sambo and the Twins*, and in the book review section of the November 1936 *Horn Book*, Anne Carol Moore of the New York Public Library included the new Bannerman offering with nine other books in a list of the year's outstanding children's stories. Some librarians and educators had begun to protest the treatment of African Americans in books for children in the 1930s. *We Build Together: A Reader's Guide to Negro Life and Literature for Elementary and High School Use* would be published by the National Council of Teachers of English in 1941. See also "The 'Real' Doctor Doolittle" for a discussion of the character of Bumpo, in MacCann and Woodard, *Readings in Racism*, 151–61, and the following essay, "The Persistence of Uncle Tom: An Examination of the Image of the Negro in Children's Fiction Series" (162–68), for a discussion of the portrayal of African Americans in early-twentieth-century children's book series such as the Bobbsey Twins and the Hardy Boys.

41. According to Yuill: "from the beginning well known librarians were actively involved in promoting its use. . . . In 1927, a comparative study of 'several of the best book lists prepared by both librarians and teachers for use in elementary schools' was compiled by a class in children's literature at Johns Hopkins. The report included data showing that *Little Black Sambo* was recommended on five out of seven lists. No statement was made as to why the remaining two lists excluded the book" (*Little Black Sambo: A Closer Look*, 5).

42. Whether or not Bannerman had ever attended a minstrel show, England had hosted American minstrels as early as the Virginia Minstrels' 1843 tour. And whether she was familiar with the American cultural implications of the name (or perhaps the Spanish "zambo," which means "bowlegged"), Boskin writes that "the 1873 [Scottish published] *Encyclopaedia Britannica* listed 'Zambo' as 'Any half-breed, but mostly the issue of Negro and Indian parents. . . ." *Sambo: The Rise and Demise of an American Jester*, 39.

43. One debt seems clear; what her Sambo walking away from the whirling tigers with his umbrella strongly resembles is Heinrich Hoffman's drawing of a "Black-a-moor" in "The Inky Boys," a story in his odd and enormously popular German *Der Struwwelpeter*, published first in England in 1848. (The connection was made by Yuill.) Hoffman's sly delight in dreadful punishments to the bad child finds splendid analogue in his crude drawings and shocking disproportions. In "The Inky Boys,"

As he had often done before,  
The woolly-headed Black-a-moor  
One nice fine summer's day went out  
To see the shops and walk about  
And as he found it hot, poor fellow  
He took with him his green umbrella

The story describes three boys whose teasing of the black man enrages "tall Agrippa," who "had a mighty inkstand too, / In which a great goose-feather grew." When the boys refuse to stop laughing at the black man, Agrippa dips them in ink. The story ends,

They have been made as black as crows  
Quite black all over, eyes and nose,

And legs, and arms, and heads, and toes,  
 And trousers, pinafores, and toys—The silly little inky boys  
 Because they set up such a roar,  
 And teased the harmless Black-a-moor

44. Joseph Boskin and Joseph Dorinson, "Ethnic Humor: Subversion and Survival," 92.
45. *Sambo: The Rise and Demise of an American Jester*, 4. The image was used in children's toys. For example, "Sambo Five Pins" enabled turn-of-the-century children to knock down wooden Sambo pins with a bowling ball," notes Gary Cross in *Kids' Stuff: Toys and the Changing World of American Childhood*.
46. "The Trope of a New Negro and the Reconstruction of the Image of the Black," 150.
47. The illustrations are reproduced in Phyllis Yuill's *Little Black Sambo: A Closer Look*.
48. Chicago Production Book, Federal Theatre Project, Library of Congress.
49. The reviewer of the play for the *Chicago Daily News* thought it did not extend far enough in its treatment of the symbolism of the jungle as well as an attempt to universalize the story (*Ibid.*).
50. *A History of the Chicago Federal Theatre Project Negro Unit: 1935–1939*, 148. According to Fraden, Graham wrote a master's thesis at Oberlin College titled "The Survival of Africanism in Modern Music." See also Van Der Horn-Gibson's "Dismantling Americana: Sambo, Shirley Graham, and African Nationalism" for a discussion of Graham's reappropriation of the story in her use of African motifs. After years of correspondence, the director of the Chicago Unit's *Little Black Sambo* married W. E. B. Du Bois in 1951.
51. Chicago Production Book, Federal Theatre Project, Library of Congress. Graham's further notes on the production make clear her particular emphasis on music and percussion as a motif for the production's "primitive" qualities.
52. Chorpenning script, act 1, scene 1, line 2.
53. *Ibid.*, act 2, scene 1, line 10.
54. *Ibid.*, act 2, scene 1, line 16.
55. *Ibid.*, act 3, scene 1, line 13.
56. *Sambo: The Rise and Demise of an American Jester*, 88. Boskin also notes that federal marionette vaudeville shows in the Northern cities "had stringed dolls jumping to minstrel tunes and skits" (88). Ralph Ellison, who worked briefly for federal art, may have remembered these skits when writing of Tod Clifton's Sambo puppets.
57. Reich script, act 1, scene 1, line 1.
58. *Ibid.*, act 1, scene 1, line 2.
59. *Ibid.*, act 1, scene 2, line 1.
60. *Ibid.*, act 1, scene 2, line 3.
61. There is no record at the Library of Congress about the playwright, Robert Warfield, and the play is listed as having been performed by the puppet theatre and not a Negro Unit in the standard production list compiled while the materials were housed at George Mason University.
62. Warfield script 1, act 1, scene 1, line 1.
63. *Ibid.*, act 1, scene 1, line 2.
64. *Ibid.*, act 1, scene 2, line 5.
65. *Ibid.*, act 1, scene 4, lines 9–10.
66. "Black Nationalism and the Italo-Ethiopian Conflict 1934–1936," 130.
67. Following Schmeling's 1935 victory over Louis, a German article linked Louis's defeat with Ethiopia's: "Schmeling . . . checked the arrogance of the Negro race and clearly

demonstrated to them the superiority of white intelligence. He restored the prestige of the white race and in doing so accomplished a cultural achievement. . . . The victory of Italy in Abyssinia must be regarded in the same light. . . . After the war started there was only one thing left, the fight of a white against a black nation. . . . The same question must be asked: What would have happened if Abyssinia had won? The same answer applies: the whole black world would have risen up against the white race in arrogance and bestial cruelty” (*Spandau*, 1936, 301; quoted in Evans, “Joe Louis as a Key Functionary,” 105).

68. *Ibid.*, 119. As Scott details, African American support for Ethiopia ranged from attempts to volunteer in the Ethiopian army to financial support. Scott writes that although support was highest in the urban northeast, columnist George Schuyler wrote “that he had not met one black person in his travels across the country who did not wish to do something to aid the Ethiopians. He pointed out that even in the most rural and remote parts of Mississippi ‘the colored people [were] intensely interested in the . . . struggle and burning to do their little bit to aid the largest independent colored nation in the world’”(123).

69. Typed in larger size, the second script is two pages shorter.

70. It is unclear which script was used, although the second script seems to reference the first at the end with a parenthetical note paraphrasing dialogue from the first one. It is not clear that Warfield made the changes, which include Jumbo saying to Sambo that he can help his father but that “you yo’ll [*sic*] bettah put yo’ new clothes away first. You know all good chil’reen keeps dere clothes neat.” The second script contains a number of spelling errors that indicate it was typed very quickly, for example, “Dambo” for Sambo and “Hoe” Louis for Joe Louis.

71. Warfield script 1, act 1, scene 4, line 13.

72. Ruth Comfort Mitchell was a successful author who lived in Los Gatos, California. Her papers are archived at the University of California at Santa Cruz. *Brer Rabbit and the Tar Baby* is not included on her list of publications with the collection. Married to state senator Sanborn Young, she was a staunch member of the Republican Party, though her interest in African American literature might be inferred from a letter from her to William Stanley Beaumont Braithwaite, African American poet and editor of the annual *Anthology of Magazine Verse* and the *Year Book of American Poetry* (1913–29). There are two letters from Mitchell in the Braithwaite archives at the University of Virginia. One, signed “Ruth Comfort Mitchell (Mrs. Sanborn Young),” asks Braithwaite to sign an enclosed book for her. Then she continues “. . . Last year I gave a program of negro poetry for the Brown-ing Society in San Francisco. . . . All the long years since the first two years of my marriage when we were in New York I have been so very grateful and thankful for the tremendous help you gave me thro’ your Boston Transcript page. I have been very fortunate in my work—thirteen novels and four novelettes of OLD SAN FRANCISCO (no unsold manuscripts) and over a hundred published short stories and two books of verse many many poems in anthologies. . . .” Two months later she wrote again to thank him for the autograph and mentioned how she much she would like to be “sporting up Fifth Avenue as we did thirty years ago” and says she has not been East since 1940. One of Mitchell’s best-known works was a novel written as a rebuttal to John Steinbeck’s *Grapes of Wrath* that tells the story of migrant workers from the ranchers’ perspective.

73. Redd, *The Struggle for Administrative and Artistic Control of the Federal Theatre Negro Units*, 97. The Negro Unit was ordered to close its production of *Lysistrata* the day after its sold-out opening and in spite of the remainder of its scheduled performances being sold out as well. See Redd’s chapter “Seattle: Labor, Race, and the Politics of Production” for a

detailed description of the conflict; see also Fraden, *Blueprints for a Black Federal Theatre*; Witham, *The Federal Theatre Project: A Case Study*; and “Others, Adults, Censored: The Federal Theatre Project’s Black *Lysistrata* Cancellation” by Ron West.

74. Redd, 103. The couple had been active in producing theatre within and for a number of Seattle’s ethnic communities, according to Redd. See also *Left Out: The Seattle Repertory Playhouse, Audience Inscription and the Problem of Leftist Theatre During the Depression Era*. They first produced an African American production of Paul Green’s *In Abraham’s Bosom* in 1933 and found their cast members at the African Methodist Church. Because of this contact, many of those who found employment in the Negro Unit had been able to cite “actor” as occupation on their relief applications (Redd, 105). *Stevedore* was the unit’s second production, following *Noah*, a musical version of the Biblical story.

75. Interestingly, however, *Stevedore* was not the James’s first choice; they wanted to produce Dubose Heywood’s *Porgy*. But, as Redd notes, the actors’ discomfort with the production caused “a committee consisting of African Americans from the Citizen’s Committee and King County Colored Progressive Democratic Club” to visit the WPA state director. Quoting from the log of the Seattle Repertory Playhouse (of which the Burtons were directors), Redd notes the committee said, “[*Porgy*] is too degrading to be put on at this time. . . . Any play that is elevating to the race, we have no objections to, but any play that is not elevating. . . . There is nothing to be gained from it.” The committee’s first choice was *Stevedore*, which tells the story of black and white dockworkers uniting to protect a group of blacks from a white lynch mob in recognition that their class position makes it necessary for them to support each other. The story had particular resonance in Seattle because many members of the African American community came to the city during a 1916 longshoreman strike as strikebreakers and conflicted labor relations between black and white remained, although in the wake of the strike, blacks were admitted into the International Longshoremen’s Association. See Redd, 103, 115–117.

76. *Brer Rabbit and the Tar Baby*, act 1, scene 1, lines 1–2.

77. Esther Porter Lane, oral interview with John O’Connor and Karen Wickre, 23, George Mason University.

78. Box 946, Play Lists File, 1934–39, Library of Congress Federal Theatre Project Collection. The National Service Bureau was designed as a central organizing division that would facilitate the movement of personnel, materials, and services across the project and make available its library to community theatres and its technological developments to professional theatres. Mathews, *The Federal Theatre, 1935–1939: Plays, Relief, and Politics*. See pp. 148–49.

79. According to theatre historian Paul Nadler, Silvera was also a Republican who later worked for Nelson Rockefeller. He was, Nadler writes, “made a play reader by the Federal Theatre’s National Service Bureau, which charged him ‘to weed out anything that was unjust or unproduceable [*sic*] or too militant’” (“Liberty Censored: Black Living Newspapers of the Federal Theatre Project,” 618). Co-writer of *Liberty Deferred* Abram Hill later helped found and direct the American Negro Theatre.

80. Silvera’s was one of at least three plays written by FTP playwrights that attempted to dramatize the history of racism in America. *Liberty Deferred* has two young couples, one white and one black, who, “While touring Manhattan island, [ . . . ] learn and argue about the history and current status of African Americans, while observing almost 40 scenes” (“Liberty Censored,” 619). The scenes cover the historical period from the early slave trade to the presence of African Americans in World War II. Another FTP playreader, Paul Lip-

schutz, composed his *Negro Symphony* (an unproduced play the entire script of which is in the Library of Congress archives), which used the Christ figure of “the Negus” to tell the history of African Americans in America. And finally, Hughes Allison’s FTP-produced *The Trial of Dr. Beck* is a three-act play that goes forward from 1800 to his contemporary time.

81. “A List of Negro Plays,” Box 937, Play Lists File, 1934–39, Library of Congress Federal Theatre Project Collection.

82. See *The Federal Theatre Project: A Catalog-Calendar of Productions*.

83. The playreader reports in general provide a fascinating, complex look at the manner in which people thought about race and representation during the Federal Theatre Project. Plays were reviewed not only for production but also for distribution, and so there are a great number of opinions by people in the division in the archive. While the playreaders were located in New York City and so reflect a geographical uniformity, the opinions reflect a wide variety of views. A number of readers seem to be budding writers and so bring a sense of style to their critical endeavors.

84. Chicago Production Book, Federal Theatre Project Archives, Library of Congress.

85. Playreader Reports File, 1935–39. Box 137.

## Chapter 4

1. The *Washington Post* itself miscalculated the committee’s historical reach, however, in initial reporting on the witness testimony: “The old saying that ‘the truth can never catch up with a lie’ will probably cause the House committee investigation of un-American activities to go down in history as the probe that sought to make Shirley Temple out a communist” (Jack Beall, September 3, 1938).

2. “Shirley’s Feat,” November 2, 1938.

3. *Child Star: An Autobiography*, 60.

4. *Baby, Take a Bow* was released in 1934 and *Triumph of the Will* was technically released in 1935.

5. See “Winning Over the Young” (261–90) in Richard Evans’s *The Third Reich in Power* for a discussion of the Nazi regime’s focus on the young, including through pedagogic directives to schools and the takeover of youth groups and activities. See also his chapter “Prosperity and Plunder,” particularly the section “The Battle for Work” (322–50), for a discussion of the German economy in the prewar years of Nazi power.

6. The play opened about one month after Kristallnacht, which occurred on November 9, 1938.

7. The story began its life as a serialized narrative in *St. Nicholas*, the magazine for children, in 1885. In 1902 it was produced as a play, *The Little Princess*, in London’s Avenue Theatre. For a description of the various versions of the story, see Janice Kirkland’s “Frances Hodgson Burnett’s Sara Crewe through 110 Years.” See the introduction of Paula Krebs’s *Gender, Race, and the Writing of Empire* for a discussion of the role of Mafeking Night in the manufacture of British patriotic support for the Boer War. See Jyotsna Kapur’s *Coining for Capital: Movies, Marketing, and the Transformation of Childhood* for a discussion of the three film versions of *A Little Princess*.

8. A 1995 remake of *A Little Princess* follows the narrative of the Temple film rather than the Burnett book; in the film Sara’s father takes her to a boarding school in New York as he goes to fight in World War I. In the 1990s Hollywood was reluctant to make Sara even

look for her father, much less suffer his loss; he is brought all the way from the trenches to right next door to her to convalesce.

9. Quoted in Hamida Bosmajian, *Sparing the Child: Grief and the Unspeakable in Youth Literature about Nazism and the Holocaust*, 7.

10. For a discussion of fascism, see Mosse's *The Fascist Revolution: Toward a General Theory of Fascism*. See also Evans's chapter "Blood and Soil" (414–34) in *The Third Reich in Power*. William Dudley Pelley's life was the subject of Scott Beekman's 2005 *William Dudley Pelley: A Life in Right-Wing Extremism and the Occult*.

11. Thus, Nazi Germany prized fairy tales as Aryan relics.

12. Sontag's "Fascinating Fascism" and Benjamin's "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" offer foundational analyses of Riefenstahl's film and fascist aesthetics.

13. The other studios were MGM and Paramount. See Colgan's *Warner Brothers Crusade against the Third Reich: A Study of the Anti-Nazi Activism and Film Production, 1933–1941*.

14. John Diggins, "Flirtation with Fascism: American Pragmatic Liberals and Mussolini's Italy," 494.

15. Hence the popularity of Sinclair Lewis's novel *It Can't Happen Here*, which depicted the rise of a homegrown fascist government in the United States. Lewis donated a script to the FTP, and the play opened in seventeen cities across the United States in October 1936, two weeks before the presidential election. And, while proposing a fundamentally liberal New Deal, Roosevelt kindled people's need to be assured. In his call for the nation to act as a "trained and loyal army willing to sacrifice for the good of a common discipline" and his insistence that if his plan to combat the economic crisis were not approved he would ask for broad executive powers, he responded to the American impulse for an authoritative figure at the head of state (Quoted in Leuchtenburg, 41).

16. Quoted in Albert E. Stone, Jr., "Seward Collins and the *American Review*: Experiment in Pro-Fascism 1933–37," 6.

17. Production Book, *A Letter to Santa Claus*, Box 1031.

18. According to the production book, each unit that was involved rehearsed separately for two weeks and the whole production came together only just before the opening. Unfortunately, there seems to be no review available for the production; a notice of an upcoming performance in the *Chicago Tribune* is all the record I have been able to find.

19. Charlotte Chorpenning, who studied under George Pierce Baker at Harvard's 47 Workshop, was the most prolific and influential children's playwright through the mid-century, although she did not become active in children's theatre until she was sixty years old. She wrote more than fifty plays, doubling midcentury theatre for children, and taught classes in children's playwriting at the Goodman Theatre, where she was director of children's theatre from 1932 to 1951. See her autobiography *Twenty-One Years with Children's Theatre*. See also Roger Bedard's "Charlotte B. Chorpenning: Playwright and Teacher," in *Spotlight on the Child* (85–98).

20. *Six Plays for Young People*, 22–23.

21. It could be argued that federal theatre's most famous play, *The Revolt of the Beavers*, was antifascist, but its antifascism is usually overlooked in the face of its overt Marxism and Soviet theatre aesthetics. Nonetheless, the argument can be made that the villainous Chief with his brutal thugs offers as many satirical points of comparison to Benito Mussolini as to a fat-cat industrialist. The FTP collected and released a list of antiwar plays. "These lists



were created at the request of religious, recreational, and educational groups connected with over 100 peace organizations,” the introduction states. Box 496, National Archives.

22. Mickenberg’s *Learning from the Left* offers a groundbreaking examination of the connection between modernist and Popular Front works for children (89).

23. *Ibid.*, 93.

24. For a discussion of the fairy tale in the Weimer Republic, see Zipes’s *Fairy Tales and Fables from the Weimer Days*.

25. *Six Plays for Young People*, 11.

26. Although the New York Children’s Unit communicated with Soviet children’s theatre directors and archived materials sent from them, only a handful of children’s plays evinced either the overtly political rhetoric or the staging associated with leftist theatre. The first production of the New York Unit was Chorpenning’s immensely popular adaptation of *The Emperor’s New Clothes*. In Los Angeles audiences flocked to Yasha Frank’s adaptations of *Hansel and Gretel* and *Aladdin*. Nine versions of Cinderella were produced from Florida to Louisiana to Oklahoma to Colorado. Chorpenning adapted not only *The Emperor’s New Clothes* but also successful versions of *Rip Van Winkle* and *Jack in the Beanstalk*.

27. *Six Plays for Young People*, 179.

28. *Ibid.*, 180.

29. *Ibid.*, 182.

30. *Ibid.*, 183.

31. Interestingly, in light of *The Wizard of Oz*’s effects one year later, “the CHILDREN are whirled around and disappear to reappear on the screen, being whirled madly through space. Snow grows thicker and thicker, the stage lights dance and then dim, and when the lights come up again, the snowy scene at the North Pole is revealed” (185–86). It is unclear whether this conceptualized flight was actually staged. Pictures from the production in the production book show very conventional and static moments in the play with polar bears and the snow ballet. The production book notes that the snow ballet appeared three times as a transition vehicle between scenes. The curtain never goes down, and it would be consistent with the play that the snow ballet appear as the children are whirling through the air.

32. *Six Plays for Young People*, 196.

33. Their innocence creates a profound opposition to the intense emotional strife of the shadows and their accompanying voices. The play’s emphasis on the values of tolerance, sharing, and cooperation is amplified by a setting and staging that opposes darkness to light and fearful images with the children’s dialogue, which centers on understanding how social interactions can function appropriately. It drew from expressionistic staging of psychological forces and leftist techniques (such as were also used in Federal Theatre’s *Living Newspapers*) that visually invoke the energy and mass of the crowd.

34. See Debra Werrlein’s “Not So Fast, Dick and Jane: Reimagining Childhood and Nation in *The Bluest Eye*.”

35. *The Intellectuals and the Flag*, 103.

36. *Six Plays for Young People*, 177.

37. *Ibid.*, 193–94. The director’s notes turn the Aurora Australis into a giant Christmas decoration. The notes indicate colors by quoting the diaries of the Byrd expedition: “every shade of red, from palest pink to crimson, from brilliant orange to primrose, every shade of green from softest apple to shining emerald with shadows purple, and in the crevices cones of purest blue all against the celestial blue of the sky.”

38. *Ibid.*, 202.
39. *Ibid.*, 204.
40. *Ibid.*, 205. Chorpenning had employed audience participation to great effect in her adaptation of *The Emperor's New Clothes*. A May 12, 1937, press release sent to the *Bronx Home News* says that in the play, "Children shouted directions to the characters and all but rushed on the stage in certain scenes" (Box 531, "Children's Theatre," National Archives).
41. *Six Plays for Young People*, 205.
42. *A Little Princess*, 193 (emphasis in original).
43. See McGillis, *A Little Princess: Gender and Empire*.
44. While Burnett's popularity today is assured, as Beverly Lyons Clark notes in *Kiddie Lit: The Cultural Construction of Children's Literature in America*, Burnett had fallen out of favor as a children's author by the 1920s, perhaps as part of a backlash against the Fauntleroy fashion fad of the turn of the century (27, 28).
45. Burnett was born in England but moved to America as a girl. As the *New York Times* review of the film notes, and perhaps not affectionately, "Mrs. Burnett, as you possibly recall, was a lady who had coronets on the brain" ("At the Roxy," *New York Times*, March 11, 1939, <http://www.nytimes.com> [accessed July 7, 2006]).
46. Warner Brothers also used historical England as the setting for an antifascist *The Adventures of Robin Hood* in 1938.
47. "At the Roxy," *New York Times*, March 11, 1939.
48. See Karen Sánchez-Eppler's "Temperance in the Bed of a Child: Incest and Social Order in Nineteenth-Century America" for an excellent discussion of the sentimentalized child of reform fiction.
49. I am indebted again to Sánchez-Eppler's "Raising Empires like Children: Race, Nation, and Religious Education," which points out the connection between the domestic and imperial projects of nation-building in its study of nineteenth-century Sunday school missionary tracts.
50. The *New York Times* review indulges in a snarky aside about the penultimate hospital scene: "Until you see that dramatic sequence in which Shirley Temple meets Queen Victoria, her best friends, Richard Greene and Anita Louise, the ex-music hall pal, Mr. Treacher, and her long-lost father, Ian Hunter, all in the space of a few minutes prowling about a hospital corridor, you haven't really lived, in the cinematic sense" ("At the Roxy").
51. "Group Plans Films to Aid Democracy," *New York Times*, November 15, 1938. Other archived materials include articles in the *New Republic* and the *World-Telegram*, as well as an undated telegram accepting an Advisory Board position from Thomas Mann and a November 18, 1938 telegraph of support from Fritz Lang. Mann wrote "Throughout the world it has become precarious to take democracy for granted—even in America." Archived materials also include Organization Committee and Advisory Board members and the organization's mission statement. National Archives, Box 566.
52. *Ibid.*

## Chapter 5

1. "The Yasha Frank Version," Boston Production Book.
2. Carlo Collodi, *Pinocchio*. For criticism of Pinocchio's representational shift, see *Pinocchio Goes Postmodern*.

3. Yasha Frank Adap., *Pinocchio*, Box 739, Library of Congress Federal Theatre Project Collection.
4. This letter is cited in Jane DeHart Mathews's seminal *The Federal Theatre, 1935–1939*. The letter is in WPA record group 69, FTP Records, National Office Testimonial Letters.
5. “The Tribulations of Pinocchio: How Social Change Can Wreck a Good Story,” 211.
6. “The Yasha Frank Version,” Boston Production Book.
7. Press release, December 22, 1938, Box 531, National Archives.
8. *Ibid.*
9. Martin Star, drama critic, Radio Station WMCS, Box 531, National Archives.
10. “Federal Theatre in Los Angeles,” 132. Published in 1962, Holcomb's *California Historical Society Quarterly* study is a very early historical account.
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Ibid.*, 136, 145.
13. While Frank was the producer for the 1957 live televised version, American composer Alec Wilder was hired to compose the music. Wilder's music for the production is available on podcast through the Wilderworld PodOmatic, <http://wilderworld.podomatic.com/rss2.xml>. A transcribed 2007 interview with lyricist William Engvick suggests the frustrations Frank experienced after the end of the FTP (interview reproduced in its entirety).

On October 13, 1957—50 years ago today—NBC aired a live, nationally-televised) production of *Pinocchio* featuring music composed by Alec Wilder. It is widely considered one of the classics from “the Golden Age of Television.” Wilderworld recently asked *Pinocchio* lyricist William Engvick to share his recollections of the production. Here is some of what he related:

I thought it was pretty good. The night of the broadcast I was in the studio. I watched it from a room—I wasn't with the players. Mickey Rooney was friendly and nice. I can't remember if Alec was there. Even if he was, he always pretended he wasn't. They had never done it live before, and it had to be perfect because you couldn't edit like you can today. There were a number of rehearsals of which I attended a few.

It might have been a more pleasant experience were it not for the “producer” [and scriptwriter], a terrible guy named Yasha Frank who resented us because he wanted to do it all himself. He'd been successful with *Pinocchio* in WPA days. The real producer was David Susskind of Talent Associates. He was a nice guy. He liked us. He also hired us for *Hansel and Gretel* [broadcast in April of 1958].

I worked on *Pinocchio* from July to September. The Lullaby was something Alec and I had written a while before called *Simple As ABC*. I thought it would work in the show, suggested it and changed the words. Alec wrote all the music very quickly. It takes me longer to write, so Alec took off for Rochester—or wherever—and left me alone with these monsters! I felt like I was doing all the work. Sometimes he'd never say where he was. I think it was a real weakness of his: he simply couldn't be tied down to anything, or own anything. Except for books. Bookstore owners loved Alec. He bought loads of books and gave most of them away.

After Hansel and Gretel, Alec and I decided not to do anymore. We were offered a third program [Hiawatha] but turned it down. The drug company [Rexall] that sponsored them pulled out. Yasha Frank killed himself shortly after that. Several years later his son called me for permission to produce *Pinocchio* again. I said that would be fine, but nothing came of it.

That was a long time ago. It's all part of a dream.

14. "Federal Theatre Does Itself Proud with Presentation of *Pinocchio*," p. 2, cols. 1–2.
15. There have been several recent productions of the FTP *Pinocchio*, including one by Pennsylvania Youth Theatre in May 2010.
16. "The Making of Children's Culture," 108.
17. *Pinocchio*'s early publication history in the United States is described in Wunderlich, "The Tribulations of *Pinocchio*: How Social Change Can Wreck a Good Story," 197–98.
18. Harvey J. Graff, *Conflicting Paths: Growing Up in America*, 303.
19. Numerous critical works have charted nineteenth-century representations of the child. See U. C. Knoepfelmacher's *Ventures into Childhood: Victorians, Fairy Tales, and Femininity*; see also Carol Mavor's *Stolen Pleasures* and Jack Zipes's work on fairy tales. With her examination of American temperance fiction, Karen Sanchez-Eppler traces the manner in which many a sentimentalized daughter reformed many a hardened drunk with her sweet patience and innocent caresses.
20. *Behaviorism*, 104. Watson wrote for popular magazines and newspapers, including *Harpers*, *Colliers*, the *New York Times*, and *The Nation*.
21. *Parents Magazine*, June 1930, p. 65.
22. Dorothy Canfield Fisher, "Getting Acquainted with His World," *National Parent Teacher*, 6.
23. *Pinocchio*, act 1, scene 1, p. 8.
24. *Ibid.*, act 1, scene 1, p. 10.
25. *Ibid.*, act 1, scene 1, pp. 19–20.
26. "The Tribulations of *Pinocchio*: How Social Change Can Wreck a Good Story," 210.
27. *Pinocchio*, act 2, scene 1, p. 5.
28. *Ibid.*, act 2, scene 1, pp. 5–6.
29. *Ibid.*, act 3, scene 3, p. 6.
30. *Ibid.*, act 3, scene 3, p. 9.

## Conclusion

1. *The New Deal Stage: Selections from the Federal Theatre Project 1935–1939*, Federal Theatre Project Collection: A Registry of the Library of Congress Collection of the Works Projects Administration Records.
2. Richard Wunderlich and Thomas Morrissey, *Pinocchio Goes Postmodern*, 88. See also Lowell Swortzell's *Six Plays for Young People from the Federal Theatre Project*.
3. "Pinocchio Dies in New York as Federal Theatre Drops Curtain," *Life Magazine*, July 17, 1939, p. 20.
4. "3 WPA Shows Close Amid Hot Protests," *New York Times*, July 1, 1939, sec. 1, p. 2, col. 8.

5. Quoted in *Arena*. Flanagan writes that Harry Hopkins concluded his speech announcing the birth of the Federal Theatre Project at the National Theatre Conference at Iowa University with the declaration “I am asked whether a theatre subsidized by the government can be kept free from censorship and I say, yes, it is going to be kept free from censorship. What we want is a free, adult, uncensored theatre” (28).

6. Lowell Swartzell writes that attempts were made to revive the show under private management when the FTP ended, but the cost of its huge cast was too much for private management to bear.

7. Press release, Box 531, National Archives. Robbins consulted with members of the George Mason University Federal Theatre Collection staff, who perhaps pointed him to the link between vaudevillians and *Pinocchio*.

8. “Trials of the Mind,” 3.

9. Many of the federal plays encouraged audience engagement with onstage action. Chorpenning’s adaptations for federal theatre also made use of the breakdown of the fourth wall. In *The Emperor’s New Clothes* tailors Zar and Zan rely on audience suggestions in order to determine which direction to go. However, the direct plea of *A Letter to Santa Claus* was unusual.

10. *Happily Ever After: Fairy Tales, Children, and the Culture Industry*, 142.

11. *The Intellectuals and the Flag*, 106.