

THE INTERLOCUTOR OF TUSKEGEE: THE ROLE OF HUMOR IN *UP FROM SLAVERY*

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Counterblast: The e-Journal of Culture and Communication, v.1, n.1 (November 2001)

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Up From Slavery is not a funny book. Yet one of the most fascinating aspects of what is otherwise a quite sober and polemical success story is Booker T. Washington's use of what can only be described as—in the terms of his time—"darky jokes." For example, at one point Washington relates a conversation he claims to have had with an old man who worked on the grounds of the Tuskegee Institute. After explaining that the school had expanded so much it needed the extra space the hen house would afford, he asks the old man to clean out the hen house. The old man replies, "What you mean, boss? You sholy ain't gwine clean out de hen-house in de day time?"¹

As with this example and throughout the text, the very people Washington purports to help, the very class he wants to wash and brush and teach, only get to "play the fool" the few times Washington allows their representative voices into his text. To understand why Washington uses such devices, which clearly irked his more educated black readers, we must explore the nexus of the most common dialogue between black speakers and white listeners in nineteenth-century America: the minstrel show.

In his 1987 book *Modernism and the Harlem Renaissance*, Houston Baker, Jr., describes what he reads as Washington's "minstrel mask." Baker writes: "That mask is a space of habitation [. . .] for that deepseated denial of the indisputable humanity of inhabitants of and descendants from the continent of Africa." To Baker, Washington's assumption of the mask is the key to his "mastery of form," which makes him the most effective communicator of his day. The minstrel mask has an absurd face, and its language constitutes nonsense. But most importantly, Baker points out, African Americans of Washington's time had to wear the minstrel mask and participate in nonsense rituals to survive. White audiences in Washington's time demanded that African Americans address them with the minstrel mask on, "to remind white consciousness that black men and women are mis-speakers bereft of humanity—carefree devils strumming and humming all day—unless, in a gaslight misidentification, they are violent devils fit for lynching, a final exorcism that will leave whites alone."²

While Baker's observation that Washington dons a mask is important, if not essential, to understanding Washington's rhetorical strategy and his use of jokes, Baker's description is incomplete because his description of minstrelsy is incomplete. Minstrelsy had many complex modes of performance by the late nineteenth century. Each show had a series of stock characters and stock jokes. Any successful minstrel show exploited some commonly recognizable comic archetypes such as "Sambo" or the "Zip Coon." If Baker is correct, white audiences had to have reacted to Washington's speeches and writings with some level of comfort and familiarity. They had to be able to identify something in Washington's style or "form" that indicated to them that Washington was worth the price of admission, and worthy of living another day. Beyond the very presence of "darky jokes," which Baker has already noted, what did white audiences recognize in *Up From Slavery*? And, more importantly to our understanding of Washington himself, which mask is Washington wearing in his minstrel text? The answer lies in historical descriptions of the "interlocutor," the dapper and eloquent on-stage director of the improvisational comic portions of the minstrel show.

Minstrel shows were the most popular form of entertainment in the United States throughout the 19th century. Starting in the 1830s, troupes of white comic musicians would color their faces with burnt cork

and thrill mostly Northern audiences with what they claimed were songs from the plantation. In the first generation of minstrel shows, generally four performers bearing musical instruments would sit on stools on a small stage and play songs and tell jokes in dialect. By the 1850s, the shows had reached a level of popularity that allowed for larger troupes and more elaborate performances. Most of the more established companies employed a standard three-act performance. The first act opened with a “walk-around,” in which the entire company paraded around the stage in gaudy clothes, singing upbeat silly songs. After the parade, the players would gather in a semicircle and take turns telling jokes and singing songs, including some sad or serious ballads. But the highlights of the first act were usually jokes, often told at the teller’s expense.³

Orchestrating the chaos of the semicircle was left to a master of ceremonies—whom Baker would call a “master of form.” This “interlocutor” usually stood at the center of the semicircle and chose which player would tell the next joke or sing the next song. As Robert Toll, a historian of popular music and minstrelsy, describes him, the interlocutor used “a precise if somewhat pompous command of the language, an extensive vocabulary, and a resonant voice.” The interlocutor held a position of comic and exaggerated dignity. Yet his role as conductor and director was essential to the success of the act and the show at large. The interlocutor, as Toll writes, “orchestrated the loosely structured, heavily improvisational first part to meet the particular audiences’ tastes.” He was well dressed and well mannered, and was often the target of down-home barbs from the “endmen.”⁴

The endmen were the chief comedians of the troupe. They were usually named “Mr. Tambo” and “Mr. Bones” after the percussive instruments they played. Often they engaged in cross-stage dialogue, playing off each other as the sophisticate and the rube would in twentieth-century Vaudeville shows or Abbott and Costello in film or Rocky and Bullwinkle in cartoons. The one who assumed the dumb country rube role would evolve into the “Sambo” archetype, and the one who “put on airs” as well as bright, faux-urbane clothes and played the sophisticate developed into the “Zip Coon” stereotype, best exemplified in the twentieth century by Kingfish from *Amos and Andy*. Here is an example of dialogue between the two characters:

“Say, Pomp. Where you get dat new hat?”

“Why, at the shop, ob course.”

“What is the price of such a hat as dat?”

“I don’t know, nigger, I don’t know—de shopkeeper wasn’t dar!”⁵

The endmen were the most extreme versions of the stereotypes. When all-black minstrel companies took the stage in the late nineteenth century, they often did so without blackface—except for the endmen, who still blacked up to show their participation in the old game.⁶ The central comic devices that operated within these endmen jokes were malapropisms and puns. While the racist context within which these devices flourished (although they existed on stages long before minstrelsy) has for the most part decayed, the jokes remain—hard, stale, and unappetizing. Often the endmen would draw the interlocutor into the dialogue and would lampoon his pretensions as well. For example:

“Mr. Interlocutor, sir!”

“Yes, Mr. Bones.”

“Mr. Interlocutor sir. Does us black folks go to hebbin? Does we go through them golden gates?”

“Mr. Bones, you know the golden gates is for white folks.”

“Well, who’s gonna be dere to open dem gates for you white folks?”⁷

In *Up From Slavery*, Booker T. Washington tells most of his jokes in quotes, through the voices of other characters. In this way, Washington acts as the familiar interlocutor, and smears cork on his illiterate or pretentious neighbors, who play Tambo and Bones and act like Sambo and Zip Coon. The best example of a Sambo—or “Jim Crow” as it was commonly known in the first half of the nineteenth century—stereotype in *Up From Slavery* is the old man and the chicken coop, as cited above. In this dialogue, Washington plays the straight man, and the old man replies with a chicken-stealing joke. Another example is when Washington meets another old man who tells him about his family getting sold in 1845. Washington asks him how many were sold that day, and the old man replies, “There were five of us; myself and brother and three mules.” Sambo jokes such as these confirm to the white audience that the Sambo character is harmless and unambitious, that the “right” type of African American can tell chicken-stealing or dumb-slave jokes as well as a white man in blackface can, and that Washington is a familiar and likable type who simply wants to make his school a little bigger and a little better. Washington sacrifices the old men’s dignity for a larger school.⁸

Fears of rampant democracy, a strong part of nineteenth-century political culture in both North and South, found fuel in Washington’s use of stories of simpletons entrusted with too much power. Washington describes a school teacher who could barely read, who, when asked how he would teach the shape of the Earth, replied that he would put it to a vote and satisfy the majority. As far as actual politics, Washington offers the story of the man in Tuskegee who tries to coach him how to vote:

We wants you t’ be sure to vote jes’ like we votes. We can’t read de newspaper very much, but we knows how to vote, an’ we wants you to vote jes’ like we votes. [. . .] We watches de white man, and we keeps watching de white man till we finds out which way de white man’s gwine to vote, den we votes ‘xactly de other way. Den we knows we’s right.⁹

When Washington the Interlocutor taps his Zip Coon performers, he is especially brutal. He has no patience for false urbanity or ostentatious displays of wealth or class. So when he derides young men in Washington, D.C., for spending two dollars for a Buggy on Sunday “in order that they might try to convince the world that they were worth thousands,” he feeds right into white prejudices about foolish black dandies.¹⁰ In the same way, Washington lampoons black students who try to learn French or grammar or advanced mathematics without knowing their use. His tone is solemn, but the audience is nodding and smiling. “I had to summon a good deal of courage to take a student who had been studying cube root and ‘banking and discount’ and explain to him that the wisest thing for him to do first was thoroughly to master the multiplication table.”¹¹

Washington’s harshest skewering of Zip Coon pretensions comes when he describes the propensity of lazy field hands who have learned to read to declare themselves men of God: “O Lawd, de cotton am so grassy, de work am so hard, and the sun am so hot dat I b’lieve dis darky am called to preach!”¹² As Robert Toll and Eric Lott have described, exposing and deflating the sophisticated front of those who dared to “put on airs” was a well known and successful minstrel device.¹³

By setting himself up as the interlocutor, Washington diffuses and confuses his audience’s apprehensions about his aims and means. Washington wanted and needed not only white monetary support, but explicit permission to continue industrial education at the Tuskegee Institute at a time when hundreds of black men were being killed every year for minor social slights. In 1895, Ida B. Wells released a report entitled *A Red Record* that documented more than 1,000 lynchings of men, women, and children in the previous ten years.¹⁴ The NAACP released a report in 1919 that showed that in the previous 30 years, 3,224 people had been lynched in the United States.¹⁵ Many of these were in Northern Alabama, where Tuskegee lies, yet the bulk of them occurred in areas in which African Americans were the distinct minority, instead of the numerical majority. No doubt Washington felt himself in potential danger every day, especially when he traveled. Being the most prominent African American in the United States at the time would have

generated ill will from whites throughout the nation. Although Washington does not claim to be the target of any threats in *Up From Slavery*, informed readers would have noted the climate of fear and read the text against that subtext. Washington, attempting the strange and daring project of helping African Americans to achieve some sort of economic prowess in the largely depressed South, was actually proposing a rather radical prescription. Nothing could be more frightening to Southern whites than a truly powerful African American community in their midst. In order to distract his white readers from the threat of economic progress, Washington played a comforting and familiar role in his text. By setting the less-sophisticated characters up as Tambo and Bones, Washington has put his potential students into harmless frames. Instead of fearing the education of poor Southern blacks, northern whites could sympathize with them and smile about their “improvement.” In this way, Washington was not only protecting himself, but was placing his constituency behind a different set of minstrel masks to protect them from white authority.

Humor scrambles emotional patterns, and laughter can relieve what might otherwise be a tense and dangerous situation. Black minstrels, who rose to prominence in the last half of the 19th century, showed how effective the minstrel mask could be when confronted with danger from angry whites. Yet still, many black entertainers were lynched in the years surrounding the turn of the century. If they stepped out from behind the minstrel mask, even for a moment, and caused the slightest discomfort to the white world, they could expect harm. It was clear to black minstrels that the mask offered them more protection than the government, the police, or a gun ever could. In the street, they were in danger. On stage, they were safe. As Toll describes the impact of black minstrels blacking up to spoof white caricatures of blacks: “Audiences, black and white, could laugh down at characters who were worse off and/or more ignorant than anyone in the audience. Furthermore, laughing at these stereotypes might have softened their negative impact on black people.”¹⁶

Was Washington employing these tropes because he was so used to donning a minstrel mask as a Southern black man that he just slipped into it whenever he stepped out into public, or was this a careful and intentional construction of a narrative strategy? Structuralist critic Roland Barthes would ask us not to explore the latter possibility, or even ask such a question. Barthes has surmised that we need only pay attention to the effect certain “codes” such as these have on the readers of a text, and that securing authorial intent is a futile goal. Searches for historical sources and influences are, to Barthes, simply reinforcements of what he calls the “myth of filiation.” In other words, to make sense of a text such as this, we must only consider its destination, not its origin. In contrast, Michel Foucault has introduced the more useful notion of the “episteme” to literary study. To Foucault, an “episteme” is a system of culturally acquired and shared knowledge within a specific historical period. In a literary text, an “episteme” could operate with or without authorial intentionality to complete a circuit of communication, but not necessarily the one the author had intended. Both these structuralist ideas could be useful when considering texts that have a foggy sense of authorship, or are not so soundly grounded in facts and events, or have no specific purpose outside the relation of a narrative or theme. Mostly, they are useful when considering texts about which there is little or no useful historical documentation. With *Up From Slavery*, employing Barthes’ claim that the author is critically dead does not open any useful understanding of what the book has meant to its culture. Its author and his reputation and motivations have been the loci of the bulk of debate within African-American history of that period. Foucault’s idea of the “episteme” is more useful when considering this text and how it works in American culture. We can read the signs of minstrelsy as an “episteme” that links Washington to his readers. And, we can grant him agency and intentionality.¹⁷

Many myths, even the “myth of filiation” are useful when trying to understand historically significant texts. In this case, Washington himself considered how the codes would play on his intended audience long before late-twentieth-century critical readers could. Starting from a critical assumption of Washington’s authorial intentionality, Roland Barthes does in fact supply us with a useful concept that supplements Foucault’s “episteme”: “The text is plural [. . .] it achieves plurality of meaning” from the threads of signifiers from which it is woven. *Up From Slavery* was used and read with codes and

perspectives that Washington did not or could not have considered, especially when read by the emerging black bourgeoisie.¹⁸

There is substantial historical evidence that shows that Washington was fully aware of his rhetorical tactics and their effects on his intended audience. Claiming authorial intentionality may be out of fashion when analyzing texts, but in this case, we learn more from the text by assuming it than by pretending otherwise. *Up From Slavery* was carefully constructed and marketed to a largely white audience. Its success bled over into his black readership, since its publication has stood as the “authentic,” or at least most useful, document of Washington’s life and work. In 1897, Washington contracted a black journalist, Edgar Webber, to help him write his first autobiography, *The Story of My Life and Work*. Washington was too busy to oversee the details of the book, and was upset and dissatisfied with the final product, which had many typographical errors and awkward insertions such as schedules and texts of speeches that merely padded it. J. L. Nichols of Naperville, Illinois, published the book and sold it via subscription, which was then the best way to reach rural, Southern and Western readers. *Up From Slavery* was Washington’s second attempt at framing his life, and this time he took no chances. He hired a white journalist, Max Thrasher of Vermont, to help him write it. According to biographer Louis Harlan, Washington oversaw every detail of the production and allowed Thrasher no freedom to vary from his dictation.¹⁹

We know that Washington was a meticulous man of few carefully selected words. So we can assume that Washington had a very specific purpose in publishing *Up From Slavery* in a major Northern publishing house, and much motivation to tune every sentence. In many ways, the book is a carefully constructed direct mail fund-raising letter. There are very few accidents in advertising. In fact, there is evidence that supports the case that *Up From Slavery* was not meant to be merely a sly literary trick, as some have claimed, but a pragmatic tool of Washington’s trade. Just before *Up From Slavery* was published, Washington wrote a letter to the publisher who handled *The Story of My Life and Work*. The publisher, Nichols, was concerned that *Up From Slavery*, published by Doubleday and sold in stores, would cut into sales of the earlier subscription work. In the letter, Washington explained that the subscription book was aimed at and read by Southern blacks. *Up From Slavery*, on the other hand, was meant to be sold to “a class of people who have money and to whom I must look for endowment and other purposes.”²⁰

In other words, Washington did not fear including racially insulting jokes in *Up From Slavery* because those who might take offense were not supposed to be his audience. He had not considered that *Up From Slavery* might completely replace his previous work and serve as the sole document of his efforts. Yet Washington clearly understood the different segments of his white audience. From Southern whites and Northern racist whites, he had to achieve a sense of security in a violent environment. From wealthy liberal whites he had to solicit money without sparking fears that he was using the money for anything revolutionary. The same minstrel mask, that of the interlocutor, worked effectively for all the segments of his audience. According to humor historian Mel Watkins, minstrelsy allayed Northern fears of black migration by making blacks seem happy and cheerful on the plantation. Seeing a troupe of either black performers or black-faced performers singing “Dixie” and staging happy down-home skits put Northern white audiences at ease. Watkins writes: “It is easy to understand why white audiences continued to flock to minstrel shows during this period. Freed blacks posed a substantial threat to most whites—not so much a physical as a psychological menace, and as competition in the labor market. Both white and black minstrels provided a source of comfort and reassurance to white audiences.” *Up From Slavery* was a substitute success story for “Up From Alabama,” which would have been a much scarier story for its intended audience.²¹

In addition to wearing the minstrel mask of the interlocutor, Washington employs another rhetorical device that virtually sacrifices the dignity of his constituency while further alleviating potential hostility among his white readers. By taking the almost “winking” rhetorical stance that invites white readers into a “pleasant” round of minstrel jokes, Washington invites his white readers into a “community of knowers”—in this case, a community of educated readers. While making his white readers feel at ease

with him, Washington spoofs illiterate “darkys” for the sake of reinforcing a community identity. In this way, Washington employs a sophisticated American rhetorical device known as the “tall tale.” In his book, *Mark Twain and the Art of the Tall Tale*, Harry Wonham describes the function of the tall tale among a “community of knowers”:

Tall humor grew up both in response to Europe’s uninformed critique of life on the frontier and in response to the frontier itself. Settlers in the American wilderness from Jamestown to California consoled themselves by piling stories of hardship and loss on one another until the representation of life became laughably absurd. [. . .] For the group that shares the yarn spinner’s privileged point of view, the inflated story of cruelty and suffering—by making those things laughable—may signal a dual victory over both condescending outsiders and the very conditions of life that inspire the tale.²²

In other words, tall tales involve spoofing the outsiders for the bemusement of the insiders. As Wonham writes,

Perhaps as a way of celebrating the seemingly limitless potential of the land, perhaps as an ironic response to their own substantial hardships, many Americans embrace the tall tale as a comic ritual capable of affirming their collective experience, often at the expense of cultural outsiders. [. . .] One of the functions of a yarn-spinning performance is to reinforce the identity of this elite group, to define the shaded area in the Venn diagram where tacit cooperation among culturally aligned individuals does take place.

In Washington’s case, the insiders are the sophisticated white readers, with whom he has rhetorically aligned himself. The outsiders, whom he still protects with the minstrel mask, are the uneducated and illiterate victims of the jokes.²³

Yet we must be careful not to confuse Washington’s portrayal of the interlocutor and the tall-tale teller with that of another classic American archetype: the trickster. Frederick McElroy’s essay, “Booker T. Washington as Literary Trickster,” tries to define Washington as a literary and rhetorical trickster who fits the cultural archetype merely because he is aware of Southern black culture. McElroy does not, however, fully explore the character and nature of the trickster character, nor does he rectify it with Washington’s character. If Washington were really playing the trickster, he would have reveled in the joke for the joke’s sake. He would have shown that he was in some way enjoying the trick. *Up From Slavery* is far too slick and serious to allow readers to assume such a motive.

For this reason, McElroy’s description of Washington as a “trickster” fails to hold up to scrutiny. Ever since Henry Louis Gates published his influential work *The Signifying Monkey*, critics and folklorists have been busy finding tricksters hidden in texts from Bugs Bunny cartoons to Charlie Parker biographies. While most of these descriptions have revealed more complicated political strategies than previously thought, and have greatly added to our understanding of them, the inflation of the world’s trickster population has devalued the real tricksters. Gates’s project was to find a defining trope for what we too easily call “African-American literature.” Rather than define the work by the skin color of the author, Gates and Baker spent years trying out different defining textual tropes so that they could escape the essentialist bind. Gates ultimately failed to prove his case, largely because there are works such as *Huckleberry Finn* and *The Confessions of Nat Turner* that no one comfortably describes as African-American, yet could arguably join the “chain of signification” that Gates describes. On the other hand, critics have had a hard time placing a work like *Up From Slavery* into that chain.²⁴

McElroy tries his best. Relying on some of Washington’s public speeches, and using examples of African-American folktales, he shows that Washington had a strong familiarity with the oral traditions of the day. Bolstered by biographical evidence that Washington was hardly a meek “Tom” who was happy to accept what crumbs of dignity the “man” offered him, McElroy argues that Washington’s duplicity is evidence that he was modeling himself on such classic tricksters as B’rer Rabbit and John the slave. McElroy states that Washington is slyly signifying on Frederick Douglass’s narrative. While it is

understandable that Washington was—in Gates’s words—“revising with a difference” Douglass’s work, it does not follow that he did so with the existential wit of a trickster.

As Gates describes signifying, the trickster is the instigator of the signification. Originating with the West African god Esu Elegbara, and transmitted through a series of “signifyin’ monkey” and “shine” poems and stories, the trickster frequently appears in African-American literature and folklore. Tricksters generally have little to lose when they outwit their opponents, and get a rush out of living on the edge of peril. Washington does not fit this pattern in either his life or his art. He had much to lose. While he was much more subversive than earlier intellectuals have given him credit for, he was still risk-averse and tactful. Play is not a verb that comes to mind when describing Washington, nor when describing the ever-sober and conservative interlocutor of the minstrel show.

Washington was successful with all his audiences save black intellectuals and the crowd that would become the NAACP. *The Nation* reviewed *Up From Slavery* positively in 1901 and noted that Washington’s “sense of humor is keen, and he has some amusing stories, but they are never lugged in by the ears; they are always pertinent and happy illustrations of particular phases of his thought.”²⁵ In contrast, W. E. B. Du Bois took exception to Washington’s criticism of the young boy trying to learn French while growing up in poverty. To Du Bois, this is not a comic scene, built on absurdity. Du Bois wonders “what Socrates or St. Francis of Assisi would say to this.”²⁶ And Kelly Miller, writing in 1908, notes that Washington’s rhetorical strategies have in fact acquiesced to and benefited from white assumptions about African-American character and habits. Miller writes: “Mr. Washington’s popularity and prominence depend largely upon the fact that his putative policy is acceptable to the Southern whites, because he allows them to believe that he accepts their estimate of the Negro’s inferior place in the social scheme.”²⁷ Miller has unmasked Washington. Yet the fact remains, as Eric Lott concludes about the effect of minstrelsy on white audiences, “the minstrel show worked for over a hundred years to facilitate safely an exchange of energies between two otherwise rigidly bound and policed cultures, a shape-shifting middle term in racial conflict which began to disappear (in the 1920s) once its historical function had been performed.”²⁸ So there is some question about whether Washington could have disseminated his message without the mask of the interlocutor and without forcing his characters into Jim Crow suits. Could Washington have played any role other than co-conspirator in the minstrel farce?

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¹ Booker T. Washington, *Up From Slavery* (New York: Norton Critical Editions, 1996) 62. Originally published by Doubleday in 1901.

² Houston A. Baker, Jr., “Booker T. Washington’s Mastery of Form,” *Modernism and the Harlem Renaissance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987). Reprinted in the Norton Critical Edition of *Up From Slavery* 240-243.

³ Mel Watkins, *On the Real Side: Laughing, Lying and Signifying* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994) 89.

⁴ Robert Toll, *Blacking Up: The Minstrel Show in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974) 52-53.

⁵ William Schechter, *The History of Negro Humor in America* (New York: Fleet Press, 1970) 56-57.

⁶ Toll 200.

- ⁷ Redd Foxx and Norma Miller, *The Redd Foxx Encyclopedia of Black Humor* (Pasadena: Ward Ritchie Press, 1977) 18-19.
- ⁸ Washington 56.
- ⁹ Washington 53.
- ¹⁰ Washington 44.
- ¹¹ Washington 59.
- ¹² Washington 61.
- ¹³ Eric Lott, *Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993) 133.
- ¹⁴ Ida B. Wells-Barnett, *A Red Record: Tabulated Statistics and Alleged Causes of Lynchings in the United States 1892-1893-1894* (Chicago: Donohue & Henneberry, 1895) 106.
- ¹⁵ NAACP, *Thirty Years of Lynching in the United States, 1889-1918* (New York: NAACP, 1919) 7.
- ¹⁶ Toll 257.
- ¹⁷ Roland Barthes, "From Work to Text," *Textual Strategies*, ed. Josue V. Harari (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979) 77. Also see Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author," *Image, Music, Text* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977). Also see Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Vintage, 1970). Of course, only our "episteme" contains the ideas of Barthes and Foucault, so they theoretically could become less useful when considering the effect of the text on Washington's audience. In his essay "What is an Author," Foucault raises Beckett's question, "What does it matter who is speaking?" With Washington, as with other authors who do autobiography or stand as cultural icons, it matters very much.
- ¹⁸ Roland Barthes, "From Work to Text" 76.
- ¹⁹ James M. Cox, "Autobiography and Washington," *Sewanee Review* 85.2 (Spring 1977). Reprinted in the Norton edition of *Up From Slavery* 228-229.
- ²⁰ Frederick McElroy, "Booker T. Washington as Literary Trickster," *Southern Folklore* 49 (1992): 102.
- ²¹ Watkins 124.
- ²² Henry B. Wonham, *Mark Twain and the Art of the Tall Tale* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993) 18.
- ²³ Wonham 22-24.
- ²⁴ Henry Louis Gates, Jr., *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-American Literary Criticism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).
- ²⁵ *The Nation* 4 Apr. 1901: 281.
- ²⁶ W. E. B. Du Bois, "Of Booker T. Washington and Others," *Souls of Black Folk*. Reprinted in *Up From Slavery* 176.
- ²⁷ Kelly Miller, "Radicals and Conservatives," *Race Adjustments* (New York: Neale, 1908). Reprinted in *Up From Slavery* 188.

²⁸ Lott 6.

Up From Slavery: An Autobiography. Booker T. Washington. This volume is dedicated to my Wife Margaret James Washington And to my Brother John H. Washington Whose patience, fidelity, and hard work have gone far to make the work at Tuskegee successful. Preface. Introduction. Chapter I: A Slave Among Slaves. Chapter II: Boyhood Days. Chapter III: The Struggle for Education. Chapter IV: Helping Others. Chapter V: The Reconstruction Period. Chapter VI: Black Race and Red Race. Perhaps the most developed theme in Up From Slavery is that of finding dignity in labor. Washington believes that slavery has given black Americans a distorted perception of labor—that it is a degrading rather than an uplifting and honorable practice. Through his education program at Tuskegee Institute, speeches, and testaments from his own life, Washington wishes to reverse the perception of labor as dishonorable, since he believes that finding dignity in labor will help to uplift not only black Americans but also people of all races. Specifically, Washington believes that laboring for oneself President 1968 By Marco Calavita "Reel Pleasures: Exploring the Historical Roots of Media Voyeurism and Exhibitionism" By Bilge Yesil "The Interlocutor Of Tuskegee: The Role of Humor in Up From Slavery" By Siva Vaidhyanathan "E-Ticket to Nike Town" By Sue Collins. :: I. M. Pei's La Pyramide du Louvre: A Diamond in the Rough or Merely Junkspace?