

The White Gaze

and the Poetics of Trauma

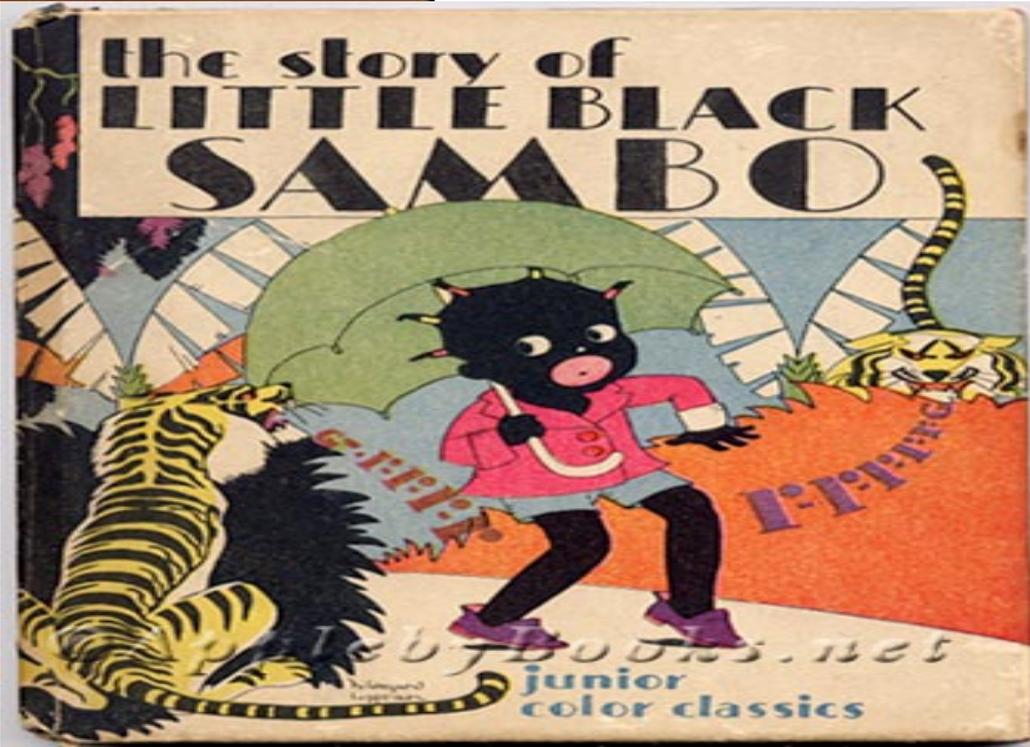
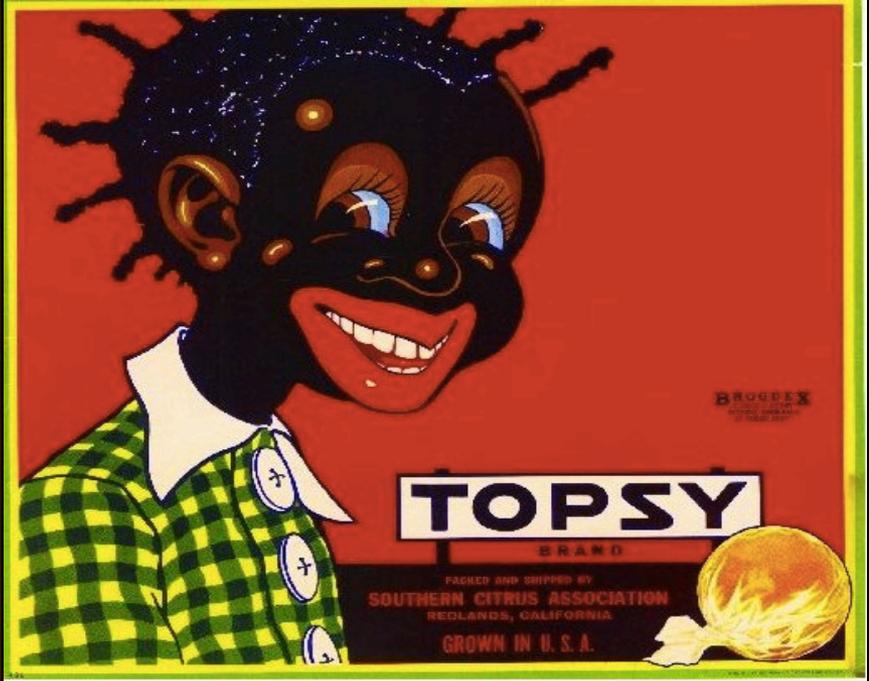


“O angels and ministers of ugliness.

I beheld a face, as black as soot – a mouth that reached from ear to ear – a nose, like nothing human – and lips a full inch in diameter!”

Travel journalist S.A. Ferrall 1849

upon viewing a well-dressed, highly coiffured Black woman promenading on New York’s Broadway







“Is it not the foundation of a greater or less share of beauty in the two races? Are not the fine mixtures of red and white, the expressions of every passion by greater or less suffusions of color in the one, preferable to that eternal monotony, which reigns in the countenances, that immoveable veil of black which covers all the emotions of the other race?”

Add to these, flowing hair, a more elegant symmetry of form, their own judgment in favor of the whites, declared by their preference of them, as uniformly as is the preference of the orangutan for the black women over those of his own species.”

Thomas Jefferson

1781



"Whatever keeps my skin
the purest white."



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**“...the most ludicrous
combination of incongruities
that you can conceive.”**

Frances (Fanny) Kemble
circa 1830s

