Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe has been frequently criticized for her indifference towards literary style in her writings. In *Life of Harriet Beecher Stowe: compiled from Her letters and Journals*, her son, Charles Edward Stowe writes that Mrs. Stowe gave "no more thought of style or literary excellance than the Mother who rushes into the street and cries for help to save her children from a burning house thinks of a rhetorian or the elocutionist". Mrs. Stowe was a prolific and hasty writer and at the same time she was a reformer, therefore, she did not attach much importance to literary style vis-a-vis to the theme, the message, and the purpose of her writings. But it does not mean that she did not attach any importance to the style, or that she did not know anything about style.

Mrs. Stowe was not a naive illiterate. "She had spoken standard English all her life, had studied Murray's grammar book in school, --". She learned the art of
writing from her remarkable composition teacher John Pierce Brace at Litchfield Academy. She even taught composition and rhetoric at the Hartford Female Seminary for several years. "In an 1830 letter, Stowe comments on how she has been practicing Johnsonian rhetoric: 'Have been reading Raselas [sic] and writing a little in imitation of Dr. Johnson's style - think it is improving me by giving me command of language - - - - For half an afternoon I could not even shut a closet door except in a double antithesis' "3.

Mrs. Stowe's utmost purpose in her writings was to convey her message to the masses and to persuade them to her point of view, e.g. against slavery. She wrote for the masses, not just for the elite. Therefore, purposely, she avoided what she called "the hifalutin style" - - - - the style with precious diction, latinate constructions, and circumlocution, the so called "grand style" lest she might alienate the masses. Consequently, she chose, what Donovan calls the "plain style of the Puritan rhetorical tradition, modified by the conversational easiness characteristic of the "dashaway or familiar" style of the women's
epistolary tradition. Moreover, Mrs. Stowe establishes an intimacy with the reader by regular use of "we" -- the author and the reader together -- and "you" for the narratee. Thus, according to narratology, the narrator in her novels are usually what Warhol \(^4\) terms "engaging narrator".

Furthermore, most of the narrative in Mrs. Stowe's novels is direct discourse, dialogue between characters, often heated intellectual and debate. Thus Mrs. Stowe has used dialectic style in her novels.

Mrs. Stowe conceived each of her novels as a series of dramatized scenes and then juxtaposed those scenes to form the whole novel. About Uncle Tom's Cabin she wrote, "This work, more, perhaps, than any other work of fiction that ever was written, has been a collection and arrangement of real incidents, actions really performed, of words and expressions really uttered, grouped together with reference to a general result, in the same manner that the mosaic artist groups his fragments of various stones into one general picture. His is a mosaic of gems - this is a mosaic of facts"\(^5\). Obviously, this is what is called paratactic style. The paratactic style
has the effect of abruptness, because the relationship between one scene and the next is not made explicit. This style is eminently suited for writing serials for magazines and that is why Mrs. Stowe adopted this style in her novels, for her novels were serialized first and then published in book form. However, the inherent disadvantage of the paratactic style is that the plots of the novels using this style are loose. Indeed, the plot constructions of most of Mrs. Stowe's novels are faulty in that the plots are loose. But this juxtaposition is very often suited for ironic and aesthetic effect; events are put side by side so as to comment silently on one other.

From her childhood Mrs. Stowe received rigorous training in dialectical thinking and as such her novels are remarkable for dialectical organization. Characters and events are set on opposition to one another. The novels progress from thesis to antithesis. All the novels of Mrs. Stowe are replete with dialectical organization. A beautiful example of this dialectical organization is furnished in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*: Uncle Tom journeys to the south, to misery, to death; Harris' family journeys to the north, to happiness, to freedom.
From the point of view of Linguistics Mrs. Stowe uses at least three styles. One, in labouring through her plot, she uses the standard polite diction. It is illustrated by the following extracts from *Oldtown Folks*:

"After the prayer, the minister expressed the hope that my father would be resigned to the decrees of infinite wisdom, and my father languidly assented; and then, with a ministerial benediction, the whole stately apparition of ghostly aid and comfort departed from our house."

*(OF, P. 62)*

Second style Mrs. Stowe employed very frequently, especially in delineating local colour, and the one in which she was decidedly a pioneer, is the use of local dialect, including the Negro dialect. The following extract from *Uncle Tom's Cabin* illustrates this point,
"Wal, Mr. Haley" said Marks, "
"jest pass the hot water, Yes
sir; you say jest what I feel
and allers have. Now, I bought
a gal once, when I was in trade,
--- and she had a young un that
was mis'ble sickly; ----" 

(UTC, P. 78)

The following is an example from Oldtown Folks,

"Lordy mossy Horace, I wouldn't
be so kind O' unreconciled as
she is all the time for nothin'.
Now I might get into a fluster
'cause I'm kep'a waitin', but I
don't I think it's our duty to be
willin' to wait quite till things
come around; this 'ere's a world
where things can't be driv', and
folks mustn't set their heart on
havin' everything come out jes so
'cause if they do they will allers
be in a stew."

(Of, P. 220)
It may be noted that local dialects are replete with contractions.

Mrs. Stowe was very particular about detail in dealing with rural New England speech; though she was otherwise careless.

Third, the prophetic style, the style that comes most clearly from Mrs. Stowe's subconscious. It may also be called the dialactic style. In a sense Mrs. Stowe suffered from Messianic complex and was always fond of giving informations, advice, and moral and religious instructions.

Mrs. Stowe made frequent use of irony and satire. Her novels are fraught with sarcasm.

She used the device of anatomic metonymy in her characterization; she attributed and delineated physical features of her characters in such a manner that the reader could automatically form a correct picture of the characteristics of her characters. Her novels are full of delineation of characters using this powerful device.
Mrs. Stowe had a penchant for names of her characters, she coined names, which are descriptive of certain characteristic features of the characters.

For example, Eva or Evangeline is the feminine diminutive of evangel, meaning good messenger or gospel, and indeed, Eva acted like a good messenger or gospel.

"Simon" of Simon Legree is derived from the name of Simon Magnus, who was known for heretical sorcery. People falsely believed that Simon Magnus is a man of great power, Simon tried to purchase power of the Holy spirit from the apostles but in vain. The name Simon is the root for simony, which means wrongful sale of religious blessing. Thus the name can notes venal corruption, which Simon Legree certainly embodied in himself.

In Dred we come across the names Skinflint, Stringfellow, and Rev. Mr. Orthodoxy. Skinflint means a stingy person, Stringfellow evidently means lean and thin person and the meaning of Orthodoxy is obvious.
In *My Wife and I* we come across the names Audacia Dangyereyes and Cerulean. Certainly, Audacia is audacious. To crown it, her eyes dangerously spot victims, i.e., coerced subscriber for her journal *The Emancipated Woman*. The word "danger" is derived from ME (Middle English) word dangler. Incidentally, in *My Wife and I* Dangyereyes have been used interchangeably. Cerulean certainly means azure.

One wonders whether Toothacre in *Pearl of Orr's Island* has something to do with toothacher (tooth + ache + (e)r).

We come across the names Goldstick, Bunkam, and Chaffer in *My Wife and I*. Goldstick is obviously a stick of gold, and certainly Goldstick hits the editor, Harry Holyoke with his stick. Messrs Bunkam and Chaffer are involved in the scandal of New York Administration. Bunkam is homophone of bunkum which means nonsense, whereas Chaffer means doer of chaff, and chaff means something worthless.

Some of the other names in Mrs. Stowe's novels are also descriptive of character's characteristics.
Obviously, Mrs. Stowe's choice of such names is one of the devices used for sarcasm and belies the charge of poverty of her diction.

Her articles on writing in Hearth and Home amply demonstrate that Mrs. Stowe had certainly studied her craft. However, "she champions a saxon style, urging simplicity, correctness, and avoidance of affectation, hackneyed expressions, and effects suitable in foreign languages but not in English, with the Bible, Bunyan, Thackeray, Howthorne, Irvin, and Homes as models".

However, it must be admitted that she was a careless and did not bother for literary style at the cost of the themes and the purpose of her writings. She left the punctuation almost entirely to the editors except for the use of dash, she even expected the editors to replace the words if they are repeated too frequently. Even in the use of local dialect she was inconsistent, for example, she used both "neber" and "never" in the same sentence.
Like Emerson, Thoreau, Emily Dickinson, and Frost, Mrs. Stowe was an artist who practiced, what Foster calls New England doublessness. "Perhaps then we can come to defining this concept is to suggest that in his humour the introspective, intellectual New Englander, unlike his fellow Englishman across the sea, virtually became a new person; he did not find delight so much in imitation as in identification, in the sudden revolution of temperament which brought him in emotion, in thought, in expression into the role of his usual opposite, the shrewd and dryly humorous Yankee. In other words, New England doubleness consists in alternating seriousness with humour. Thoreau was a superb artist in practicing New England doubleness; he said light things seriously and serious things lightly.

The conversation between Augustine St. Clare and Miss Ophelia is a good example of the use of New England doubleness. Mrs. Stowe's novels abound in the use of New England doubleness.

Mrs. Stowe also alternated sentimental and anti-sentimental modes in her writings to good effect.
It has already been pointed out in earlier chapters that Mrs. Stowe's novels are replete with the delineation of local colour and that Mrs. Stowe was one of the pioneers in the local colour movement.

To conclude, we may say that Mrs. Stowe had an inimitable style.
References

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