CHAPTER III

Antislavery Novels

Thematically, Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe's first two novels, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Or, *Life Among the Lowly* (1852) - her magnum opus - and *Dred; Or, A Tale of the Great Dismal Swamp* (1856) unambiguously belong to the group of antislavery novels. Even her third novel, *The Minister's Wooing* (1858) has antislavery overtones, though primarily it belongs to the group of New England Novels. In this chapter we propose to discuss the themes and technique adopted by Mrs. Stowe in her Antislavery Novels.

In order to evaluate critically how Mrs. Stowe's antislavery stance evolved and hardened gradually, we shall carry out the analysis novel by novel in historical order.

1. *Uncle Tom's Cabin*

Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe's antislavery sentiment, which was smoldering in her mind over the years, right from her childhood, founds its first outlet in the publication of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. The novel was first serialized in the *National Era*, a Washington D.C. antislavery journal edited by Amos Eaton.
Mailey, a committed abolitionist, from its issue of June 5, 1851 to that of April 1, 1852. Subsequently, it was published in 1852 in book form, in a two-volume edition, by the house of John P. Jewett. It still remains the world's all time best-seller; 300,000 copies of the novel were sold in America in its first year of publication, 10,000 copies in the first week itself. However, it was even more popular in Great Britain where a million copies were sold during that period. As of 1976 it had been translated into fifty-eight languages.

Nearly 150 editions, many with numerous reprints, have appeared in English; nearly sixty editions in French, over eighty in German, and nearly sixty in twenty-one languages of the peoples of the Soviet Union.¹

Uncle Tom's Cabin is the antislavery novel that for the first time brought the problem of Negro slavery in America to the attention of the entire world. There had been a few books on the subject before, and at least one of them, viz., Theodore Weld's American Slavery As It Is, published in 1839, a carefully documented work of significance, had sold 100,000 copies, mostly in the northern parts of the United States. This book was also issued in England, but did not attract much attention outside America, nor did Richard Wist's novel, The Slave, or Memoirs of Archy Moore (1856), although the latter too had a fairly large number of readers in America.

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The central theme in Uncle Tom's Cabin is crusade against slavery. Its main purpose is to arouse the sentiments of the readers against slavery. The setting of the novel is the Southern states of America, viz., Kentucky and Louisiana where slavery was practised in its ugliest form. Slaves were treated they were beaten and whipped ruthlessly; inhumanly; they were traded like merchandise; they were separated from their families, wives from husbands, children from mothers; and were exploited in all possible ways by their owners. Female slaves were exploited sexually also resulting in miscegenation. In Uncle Tom's Cabin Mrs. Stowe poignantly describes the abominable practice of slavery in contemporary America, especially in its Southern states. She picturesquely portrays the ill treatment meted out to the black slaves by their white masters. Each despicable aspect of slavery has been portrayed by her through a character in the novel.

Uncle Tom is a black slave in the kindly family of Shelbys. He is a noble, high-minded, devout Christian, loyal to his master. However, to meet the financial exigency, Mr. Shelby is constrained to sell his slaves to a slave trader Ialey. He sells Tom and Harry, the son of the mulatto slave Eliza, to the slave trader. Eliza oversees the deal between her master Mr. Shelby, and the slave trader and is very much upset by the idea of being separated from her innocent son. Enraptured by her motherly instinct, she risks the hazards and
escapes across the frozen Ohio River. But Tom, being loyal to his master, resigns to his destiny. Separated from his wife, Chloe, and children, he goes with the slave trader. George Shelby, the son of Tom's former master, meets him on the way and promises to redeem him some day. On his voyage down the Mississippi River, Tom saves the life of little Eva, the daughter of Augustine St. Clare. Moved by this, St. Clare purchases Tom as a servant to work in his New Orleans home. Tom lives happily for two years with the easy-going St. Clare, angelic little Eva and her naughty companion, the Negro child Topsy. However, it is perversity of Tom's fate that Eva falls ill and dies. Worse still, St. Clare is accidentally killed and Tom is sold at auction to a cruel, debased, alcoholic; Simon Legree, a planter in Louisiana. Tom's courage and unflinching faith in Christianity, especially in Christ, impress and frighten his wicked master, Simon Legree who is supposedly haunted by the spirit of his pious mother. Cassie and Amelia, his two female slaves, take advantage of Legree's fear complex and attempt to escape. When Tom declines to disclose their hiding-place, Legree is mad with anger and has him flogged to death. George Shelby arrives to redeem Tom, but alas! it is too late, Tom is dying. Moved by the agony, he vows to devote himself to the task of abolition of slavery.
Uncle Tom's Cabin has a double plot. Uncle Tom, a middle-aged, devoutly Christian black slave, is sold successively southward. Events and episodes in his life form the main plot of the novel. Apart from Tom, the central characters of the main plot, Mr. Shelby; Haley, the crude slave trader; his friend Lokr, another slave dealer; Tom's wife Chloe; Mr. Augustine St. Clare, Tom's second owner; his wife Marie; their angelic daughter Eva; Mr. St. Clare's sister Ophelia; Negro companion Topsy; and Simon Legree, Tom's third owner, are main characters in the plot.

The second plot, actually the subplot, in the novel consists of the events and episodes in Tom's fellow slave Eliza's life. Eliza is the central character in the subplot. Other important characters in the subplot are Eliza's husband George Harris; their son Harry; and workers on the Underground Railroad, especially Mrs. Bird; and her husband, a senator in the Senate of Ohio state.

The subplot presents a contrast to the main plot; the subplot is an antithesis of the main plot. While the sequence of events in the main plot move southwards, those in the subplot move northward. Whereas the main character, Tom, of the plot encounters more and more miserable life in
his journey southward; the main character of the subplot, Eliza, encounters less and less miserable life in her journey northward. To the south lies evil, to the north good. The main plot ends in a tragedy, Tom is flogged to death.

The subplot has a happy ending, eventually Eliza, her husband Harris, and their son Harry escape from slavery to freedom in Canada. While Tom, the central character in the main plot, is Christ-like, and believes in passive resistance to the injustices of slavery. Eliza, the central character in the subplot has the usual flesh and blood, she does not submit to slavery beyond a limit. Mrs. Stowe develops the two plots in the novel in a balanced manner but highlights the contrast between them.

Important Characters in the Novel

Mr. Shelby, Tom's first owner is basically a benign person. He treats his slaves in his Kentucky plantation benevolently. But because of his heavy debt, he is obliged to sell Tom and Harry to the slave trader, Haley.

Mrs. Shelby is a noble lady. She is "a woman of a high class both intellectually and morally." She is endowed
with magnanimity and generosity; She has high moral and religious sensibility; she takes every possible measure for the welfare of her slaves. She very much detests the selling of Harry to Haley and she is against the abominable institution of slavery. She laments:

This is God's curse on slavery! - a bitter, bitter, most accursed thing! - a curse to the master and a curse to the slave! I was a fool to think I could make anything good out of such a deadly evil. It is a sin to hold a slave under laws like ours, - I always felt it was, - I always thought so when I was a girl, - I thought so still more after I joined the Church; but I thought I could gild it over, - I thought by kindness, and care, and instruction, I could make condition of mine better than freedom, - fool that I was!

(Uncle Tom's Cabin, 33)

Haley is a southern slave trader, crude in his...
"... not a cruel man, exactly, but a man of
leather, - a man alive to nothing but
trade and profit; - cool, and unhesitating,
and unrelenting, as death and the grave. He'd
sell his own mother at a good percentage, -
not wishing the old woman any harm, either".

(Uncle Tom's Cabin, 39)

It is through the cross Halsey that Mrs. Stowe,
expresses the prejudice and superiority complex of the white
protagonists of slavery in the following words,

"These critters ain't like white folks,
you know; - - - - - - - - "

(Utc, 6 )

The hero and the central character of the novel Uncle Tom,
is, as stated earlier, a noble, high-minded, devoutly
Christian black slave, loyal to his master. In the words
of his first master, Mr. Shelby,

"Tom is a good, steady, sensible, pious
fellow. He got religion at a camp-meeting
four years ago; and I believe he really
did get it. I've trusted him, since then
with everything I have,—money, house, horses, —and let him come and go round the country; I have always found him true and square in everything”

(Uncle Tom's Cabin, 2)

Tom got several opportunities to escape to Canada, but his loyalty to his master is steady fast; he spurns away every such opportunity. When he and Eliza's son Harry are sold to Kiley, even his wife, Chloe, urges him to escape along with Eliza and her son since in the south slaves are treated brutally. But Tom says,

No, no, — I ain't going — — —
Mas'r always found me on the spot, —
he always kill I never have broke
trust, nor used my pass no ways
contrary to my word, and I never will

(Uncle Tom's Cabin, 43)

Tom is "a sort of patriarch in religious matters, in the neighbourhood". "He is held in great respect by his companions; he is "a sort of minister among them".

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His unflinching faith in God is borne out by the following conversation between him and his wife, Chloe on the day of parting with each other for good. Chloe, expressing her apprehension, says:

"Missis says that she'll try and 'deem ye, in a year or two; but Lor, no body never comes up that goes down dar! They kills 'em! I've heard 'em tell how dey works 'em up on dem ar plantations."

(UTC, 105)

Tom assures Chloe,

"There 'll be the same God there,
Chloe, that there is here."

At this point Chloe expresses her skepticism,

"Well, said Aunt Chloe, 'spos
here will; but de Lord's lets
drful things happen sometimes.
I don't seem to get no comfort
dat way."

(UTC, 106)

To this Tom responds stoically,
"I'm, in the Lord's hands, nothin' can go no furder than he lets it; - and ther's one thin'. I can thank him for. It's me that's sold and going down, and not you nor the chil'en. Here you 're safe; - what comes will come only on me; and the Lord 'll help me, - I know he will".

(WTC, 105, 106)

Instead of cursing God for his dark and un certain future, he thanks him for sparing his wife and children from being sold to the slave trader. This conversation also reveals what a loving husband and loving father Tom is!

Tom certainly desires freedom, but not at the cost of his honour and religious convictions he prefers slavery to flouting dis honourably.

Tom's second master, Augustine St. Clare is very kind hearted and generous. He treats his slaves benevolently, moreover, input of expectations during her life time of his beloved and pious mother whom he still reveres and that of
his beloved daughter, Eva, he is skeptical about God, religion and the Bible. After his daughter Eva's death, he is broken-hearted and melancholy. Tom gives him place and urges him to have faith in God; he implores him to become a Christian and eventually succeeds in his effort, Augustine St. Clare gets converted to Christianity just before his death. The following extracts from the conversations between St. Clare and Tom is worth noting in this context.

Overcome by the grief over Eva's death, St. Clare says:

"Oh, Tom, my boy, the whole world is as empty as an eel-shell".

(UCT, 337)

"I know it Mas'r, - I know it", said Tom; but Oh, if Mas'r could only look up, -
up where our dear Miss Eva is, - up to the dear Lord Jesus!"

Responding to Tom's exhortation to have faith in God, St. Clare says:

"Tom, I don't believe, - I can't believe, - I have got the habit
of doubting", said St. Car., I want
to believe this Bible, - and I can't"    (UTC, 337)

At this, Tom reassures St. Car.,
"Dear M'sir, pray to the good Lord,
Lord, I believe; help thou my
unbelief"

(UTC, 337)

Then Tom insists that there is Jesus Christ; St. Clare
expresses his skepticism,
"how do you know there is any
Christ Tom? You never saw the
Lord".    (UTC, 338)

Then says:
"Felt him in my soul, M'sir -
feel him now!"

(UTC, 338)

Moved by Tom's sentiments, St. Clare says:
"You, you love me;"

Reassuringly Tom says.    (UTC, 338)
"I'd willing to lay down my life,
this blessing, to see M'sir a Christian"    (UTC, 338)
When St. Clare says,

"Tom, you seem to think the Lord
needs a great deal done for him."

(UTC, 343)

Tom responds,

"We do for the Lord when we do
for his creatures".

(UTC, 345)

At this, St. Clare acknowledge,

"Good theology, Tom; better
than Dr. B. Preaches, I dare say."

(UTC, 344)

Just before his death, pressing Tom's hand, St. Clare
says to Tom,

"I am dying pray!"

(UTC, 355)

At this the attending physician says to Tom,

"If you would like a clergyman"

(UTC, 355)

St. Clare hastily makes his head, and says again to Tom,
very earnestly,

"Pray!"

(UTC, 355)

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and Tom prays, with his mind and strength, for the
soul that is passing. When Tom's third master, Simon Legree,
asks him to reveal the whereabouts of his two women-slaves,
Cassy and Emmeline, Tom declines to do so. Enraged by this
Legree says to Tom:

I'll conquer ye or kill ye! -
one or t' other. I'll count every
drop of blood there is in you, and
take 'em, one by one, till ye give up!

(UTC, 461)

Not deterred by this, Tom says in Christ like
manner:

"sir, if you was sick, or in trouble,
or dying, and I could save ye, I'd give
ye my heart's blood; and, if taking
every drop of blood in this poor old
body would save your precious soul,
I'd give 'em freely, as the Lord
gave his for me. O., sir! don't
bring this great sin on your soul!
It will hurt you more than 't will
be! Do the worst you can, my
trouble 'll be over soon; but, if ye don't respect, yours won't never end!  

(UWC, 401)

When Simon Lavac says to Dcu:  

Here, you recall, you made believe to be so pious, — did n't you never hear, but of yer slib., 'Servants, obey yer masters'?  

an't I yer master? did n't I pay down twelve hundred dollars, cash, for all that is inside yer old cussed black shell? an't yer mine, now, body and soul?  

(UWC, 393)

Tom triumphantly responds  

No! no! no! my soul an't yours here! — You have n't bought it, — ye can't buy it.  

(UWC, 393)

Tom Lavac is sacred of the courage and religious attitude of Dcu.
When Simon Legree has him flogged by Sambo and Quimbo, so much so that he is dying, Tom, just like Christ, forgives Sambo and Quimbo and says to them:

"Poor critters!" said Tom,
"I'd be willin' to bar all I have,
if it'll only bring ye to Christ
O Lord! give me these two more souls,
I pray

(UTC, 463)

After ruthless flogging, just before fainting, Tom shows his Christ-like magnanimity and forgiving his brutal master, Simon Legree. His words to the brute are

"I forgive ye, with all my soul"

(UTC, 462)

Tom is a symbol of passive resistance to injustice. In spite of the brutal treatment meted out to him, he does not yield to Simon Legree's demand to reveal the hiding-place of utter's two women-slaves, Cassy and Emmeline, who are executing their plan to escape from their master to freedom.

Thus, Mrs. Stowe has portrayed Uncle Tom, the hero of the novel, as Jesus Christ incarnate.
George Shelby, a young lad, has been brought up by his parents, especially by his devout Christian mother, as a tender-hearted, compassionate, and charitable person. He treats slaves in his father's plantation and household humanely, almost like members of his family. He is very much upset when he learns that his father has sold Uncle Tom during his absence. He rushes to meet Tom on his way to the South. On meeting Tom, he explores the act of his father but Tom counsel him against this and exhorts him to be as good as his parents and to be a Christian like his mother. George promises to Tom:

"I'll be real good, Uncle Tom, I tell you, I am going to be a first-rater; and don't you be discouraged, I will have you back to the place, yet."

(UTC, 114)

He keeps his promise and goes to redeem Tom from Simon Legree. However, it is too late; Tom is dying. He loathes Legree for his atrocity. Tom dies; George buries him decently, and aneling on the grave of Tom gows:

"Witness, et real God! On, witness that from this hour, I will do what I can to drive out this curse of slavery from my land!"

(UTC, 470)

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Aunt Chloe, Uncle Tom's wife, is also very loyal to her master Mrs. Shelby and mistress Mrs. Shelby. She is the chief of the family and is very good in culinary skill. She rules supreme in the cooking department. She loves everyone in the Shelby household; she adores George Shelby very much. She has endued herself by her laughter; she laughs till tears roll on her black shining cheeks. However, she is very much distressed when she learns that Eliza's son Harry and Tom have been sold to Haley. She deplores that the ruthless slave traders tear sucking baby right off his mother's breast and sell him; they pull apart crying children from their mother and sell them; they tear wife, and husband apart and sell them; they are totally devoid of any feeling.

Mr. Augustine St. Clare, Uncle Tom's second master, is a high bred gentleman. His talents are of the very first order, although his mind shows a preference always for the ideal and the aesthetic. He is somewhat detached to the actual business of life and as such, views life objectively. He likes to talk, he enjoys being amusing and shocking. He is straightforward and honest. After a setback in his love affair with a high minded and beautiful lady he marries the only daughter of rich parents who is incompatible to him. Unfeelingly, she is listless and desolate. To crown it, his wife's nature is devoid of love and understanding.
St. Clare has inherited property from his parents, he is an opulent planter in Louisiana. His mother was a kindly woman whom he lost at the age of thirteen. He is a benevolent slaveholder who treats his slaves charitably, but he is "indolent and careless of money". He is an skeptic in spite of his mother's efforts to convert him to Christianity, however, he is devoted to his mother.

He gave his only daughter, Evangeline, his mother's name, fondly fancying that she would prove a reproduction of her image. He is very much attached to his daughter but is cold towards his wife.

Augustine St. Clare's wife, Marie, is the pampered daughter of rich parents and heiress of their fortune. She is "indolent and childish, unsystematic and improvident". She is highly self-centred and devoid of affection and sensibility. She views her husband's devotion to his mother with petulant jealousy. She also dislikes her husband's absorbing devotion to their only child, Eve; all that is given to Eve by Augustine St. Clare seems to her to have been taken away from her. To her other's sufferings, even that of her daughter, are trifling; she regards herself the sole sufferer in the world. She has an endless list of complaints, the principal one being sick-...
to her happens. Essentially, she is hypochondriac.

Augustine and Arie St. Clare's daughter Eva is almost a saint. She has certainly imbibed the virtues of her grandmother. She is very generous and kind-hearted and treats servants and slaves in her household, especially Tom, benevolently. She is an antithesis of her mother. She loves everyone, father, mother, aunt Miss Ophelia, servants, slaves and their children, including the parentless black-girl, Topsy. However, she is more attached to her father, Uncle Tom, and aunt Miss Ophelia; she has special fondness for the naughty black girl, Topsy.

She is a devout Christian and exhorts servants and slaves in her household to be good Christians and to have unwavering faith in Christ. She behaves and acts like a mature Christian minister. She is against slavery; she thinks that slavery is against the basic tenets of Christianity and that in the eyes of God and Jesus Christ all are equal. From slave Pris's pathetic story Eva is so much moved that, addressing Tom, she says,

I would die for that Tom, if I could.

(UTC, 307)
When Eva observes her cousin, Henrique's
tyrannical action towards his slave, Dodo, she confronts
Henrique and condemns him in the following words:

"How could you be so cruel and wicked to poor
Dodo?" said Eva.

I don't want you to call me dear Eva,
when you do so," said Eva.

(UTC, 296)

This shows that Eva is against slavery, so much so that
she urges her father in the following words to become an anti-slavery
leader:

"Papa, you are such a good man, and so
noble, and kind and you always have
a way of saying things that is so
pleasant, couldn't you go all round
and try to persuade people to do
right about this? When I was dead
Papa, then you with think of me and
do it for my sake."

(UTC, 309)

She succumbs to her illness quickly, but before dying
she beseeches her father to free Tom as well as other slaves.
After her death. Her death breaks the heart of everyone who knows her. She aptly justifies her name; she is certainly portrayed by Mrs. Stowe as an Evangeline. However, she is too good to be a realistic character.

Miss Ophelia, Augustine St. Clare's cousin from Vermont in New England, is another remarkable character. She is an intellectual woman, entirely able to hold her own in lively debates with Augustine St. Clare over slavery. Ophelia grew up in an orderly New England village. Because of her New England back-ground she is a living epitome of order, method, and exactness. According to her, the greatest sin is "shiftlessness". By this she means indolent purposelessness. People who do nothing, or who do not know exactly what they are going to do, or who do not take the most direct way to accomplish their goal, are objects of her contempt. She has a clear, strong, active mind. She is well read and is driven by a "dominant and all-absorbing" conscience, "the granite formation" in New England women. She is "the absolute bondslave of 'ought' " and is, rigidly, willful. Once, she is certain that the 'path of duty' lies in any given direction, nothing can deter her from forging along that path.

In spite of her austere character, she has a sense of humour and a warm heart. There is a sharp contrast between the
northern and southern cousin, Ophelia and Augustine, yet Ophelia tolerates St. Clare because she loves him, she laughs at his jokes, and ignores his shortcomings. She also loves little, angelic Eva. This is precisely the reason why she has agreed to come to the South; to help manage St. Clare's menage in the vacuum caused by Marie's negligence, and above all, to help educate Eva.

In theory Ophelia disapproves of slavery, but in practice she dislikes black slaves.

Through Ophelia, Mrs. Stowe has delineated the double-standard and hypocrisy of the Northerners on the issue of slavery. On the otherhand, through Augustine St. Clare, she has delineated the attitude of the benevolent southern planters towards slavery; they are not against slavery but they do not dislike black slaves.

In this connection the following repartee of St. Clare to Ophelia, when she objects to Eva's sitting on Tom's knees and regards it "dreadful" is very revealing:

You loathe them as you would a snake or a toad, yet you are indignant at their wrongs. You
would not have them abused; but you don't want to have anything to do with them yourselves. You would send them to Africa out of your sight and smell.

(UTC, 198)

St. Clare adds further:

"but custom with us does what Christianity ought to do, — obliterates the feeling of personal prejudice".

(UTC, 198)

Thus, it is obvious that, despite her rectitude, Ophelia has a lot to learn, and she does learn a lot from Eva. When Ophelia fails to improve Topsy by adopting harsh measures and sees Eva succeeding by adopting an affectionate and persuasive attitude towards her, she admits,

"I've always had a prejudice against negroes", said Ophelia, and it's a fact, I could never bear to have
that child touch me; but I did

n't think she knew it".

(UTC, 315)

and remarks about Eva:

"Well she's so loving. After

all though, she's no more than

Christ-like" said Miss Ophelia,

"I wish I were like her. She

might teach me a lesson".

(UTC, 316)

Another immortal character in the novel is Topsy, an

eight or nine year old negro girl. She is a wayward slave girl

possessing supershowmanship. She is a sort of minstrel whom

St. Clare purchases for Miss Ophelia to educate and train in

the way she should go according to the former. Actually, St.

Clare purchases Topsy because he cannot bear the agony of

hearing her screams from the regular beatings she receives at

a restaurant he passes by daily. She is an antithesis of Eva

and poses a real challenge to Miss Ophelia's capability of

disciplining and educating. Mrs. Stowe uses Topsy to drive the

moral home that love is above law; it is Eva's superhuman love
that brings Topsy on the right path, the path towards decency and honesty. It is through Topsy that Mrs. Stowe delineates the pathetic condition of the negro slave children; their misery, their inferiority complex, their apparently incorrigible behaviour. She puts forward the thesis that depravity of the negro slaves is not inherent in their race, rather it is a consequence of brutalizing environment, the environment that leads to immorality arising from the natural instinct of self-preservation.

Topsy's utterances evoke humour if taken superficially, but, actually, there is a deep pathos embedded in each of them.
when Miss Ophelia asks her, "Who was your mother?" (UTC, 267), she responds with a grin, "Never had none!" (UTC, 267). When Miss Ophelia further asks, "Never had any mother?" (UTC, 268), "What do you mean? Where were you born?" (UTC, 268). Topsy persists with another grin, "Never was born!" (UTC, 268). When Miss Ophelia insists with sternness to tell her where she was born and who her father and mother are, Topsy reiterates, "Never was born, never had no father, nor mother, nor nothin" (UTC, 268). Is not deep pathos hidden behind the apparently humorous statements of Topsy?

The real answer to Miss Ophelia's question is supplied by Jane, another slave in St. Clare's household. She tells Miss
Ophelia, "Laws, Missis, there's heaps of 'em. Speculators by 'em up cheap, when they's little gets them raised for market" (UTC, 263). This exemplifies one of the most wicked aspect of slavery, the separation of families, especially the separation of little children from their mother and father much before they develope senses.

Again, through Topsy, Mrs. Stowe shows poignantly how acutely the negro slaves suffer from inferiority complex. Then Eva says,

"But people can love you, if you are black, Topsy. Miss Ophelia would love you, if you were good".

(UTC, 314)

At this, Topsy expresses her incredulity in the following words:

"No; she can't bar me, 'cause I'm a nigger -- She'd 's soon have a toad touch her There can't nobody love niggers, and niggers can't do nothin' "

(UTC, 314)
In the novel other negro slaves also express more or less similar views.

Topsy always overemphasizes her own sins and enormities. When Miss Ophelia asks what makes her act perversely, she replies

"Dunno, Missis, -- I spects 'cause I's so wicked "

(UTC, 277)

She insists on having punishment.

"Law, Missis, you must whip me; My old Missis allers whipped me. I an't used to working unless I gets whipped.

--- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- ---

Laws, Missis, I's used to whippin' I spects it's good for me."

(UTC, 277)

Topsy has talent for every kind of drollery, grimace, and mimicry for dancing, tumbling, climbing, singing, whistling,
imitating every sound that hits her fancy. Every child, including Eva, in the St. Clare establishment is fascinated by her.

Through Prue, a tall, bony coloured woman -- rushs and hot rolls vendor -- addicted to alcohol, Mrs. Stowe shows how miserable the life of a slave is, so much so that he or she prefers to die rather than live. Prue laments:

"O Lord! I wish I's dead, I do, --
I wish I's dead, and out of my misery".

(UTC, 238)

Woman - slaves are exploited and used like cattle to breed slaves for the market. The slave traders are oblivious of the natural attachment of the mother to their children. They are so cruel that they do not hesitate from keeping the mother away even from a dying child causing excruciating pain and agony to the mother which sometimes drive her to alcoholism in order to escape from this kind of pain and agony.

Prue typifies thisatrocity of slavery, Prue is a slave in a plantation near that of St. Clare. Her story is one of the most shocking ones presented in the novel, and her fate the most dreadful. She has been used as a breeder by her
master; her job has been to produce children as fast as possible for being sold by the speculators in the market. Finally, she is purchased by another master who allows her to keep one of her children. But due to enormities of her mistress, her last child also dies. Prue resorts to drinking to alleviate her pain and agony, and to sustain her addiction to alcohol starts stealing her master's money for which she is regularly beaten. Consequently, she is held contemptuously both by the master and the other slaves; she becomes a despised wretch. Only Tom and Eva have sympathy for her. But Prue is beyond repairs. Eventually, one day, after being discovered stealing, she is beaten to death.

The agony of Prue is succinctly delineated in the following conversation between Tom and Prue:

"Where was you raised?" said Tom

"Up in Kentuck. A man kept me to breed children for market, and sold 'em as fast as they got big enough; last of all, he sold me to a speculator, and my Mas'r got me O' him.

"What set you into this bad way of drinking?"
"To get shet o' my misery. I had one child after I come here; and I thought then I'd have one to raise, cause Mas'r wasn't a speculator. It was the pearlest little thing! and Missis she seemed to think a heap on 't, at first; it never cried, -- it was likely and fat. But Missis tuck sick, and I tended her; and I tuck the fever, and my milk all left me, and the child it pined to skin and bone, and Missis would n't buy milk for it. She would n't hear to me, when I telled her I had n't milk. She said she knowed I could feed it on what other folks eat; and the child kinder pined, and cried, and cried, and cried, day and night, and got all gone to skin and bones, and Missis got got agin it, and she said 't warn't nothin' but cross-ness. She wished it was dead, she said; and she would n't let me have it 0' nights, 'cause, she said, it
kept me awake, and made me good for nothing. She made me sleep in her room; and I had to put it away off in a little kind O' garret, and thar it cried itself to death, one night. It did; and I tuck to drinkin', to keep its crying out of my ears I did; and I tuck to drinkin', to keep its crying out of my years I did, - and I will drink! I will, if I do go to torment for it Mas'r says I shall go to torment, and I tell him I've got thar now!"

(UTC, 240, 241)

Thus, through Prue, Mrs. Stowe demonstrates how cruel and wicked the owners of slaves are.

How intensely slaves abhor their cruel white masters is obvious from the following words of Prue:

"I looks like swine to heaven,"

said the woman; "an't ther where
white folks is gwine? S'pose they'd have me thar? I'd rather go to torment, and get away from Mas'r and Missis."

(UFC, 241)

This shows that slaves prefer to be in hell rather than to be in heaven if their masters are to be found there.

Simon Legree, Tom's third master, is his antithesis. He is the archvillian of the novel, the worst kind of slave owner. He is very cruel, wicked, and the meanest kind of exploiter of slaves. He is defiler of women; he sexually exploits and assaults his female slaves. Cassy and Ermaline are his victims of such ghastly exploitation.

Simon Legree is a Gnostic heretic who deifies himself, he tries to impress upon Tom that he should completely surrender to him, he should give up his religion and faith for the sake of his new master. On discovering Tom's piety, he vows to destroy it, and says to Tom:

"I'm your church now!"

(UFC, 375)
After first rootless beating in Legree's plantation, Tom passes through a period of deep depression. His faith in God and the Bible starts waning. He laments:

"O Jesus! Lord Jesus! have you quite forgot us poor critturs."

(UTC, 402)

One evening when Tom is in such a depressed state of mind, he draws his worn Bible from his pocket, sees the marked passages which bad thrilled his soul so often earlier, but now it appears to him that the words have lost their power, they no longer inspire him. Heavily sighing he puts the Bible back in his pocket.

Legree, who is standing opposite to him, remarks tauntingly,

Well old boy, you find your religion don't work, it seem!

(UTC, 436)

and tempts him to throw the Bible in the fire and to tow his line.
Come, Tom, don't you think you'd better be reasonable? - heave that old pack of trash in the fire, and join my church!

(UTC, 436)

These words amply demonstrate that Simon Legree is devil-incarnate, just the antithesis of Christ and that his "church" is the "church" of evil, of sin of perversion.

Momentarily,

The atheistic taunts of his cruel master sunk his before dejected soul to the lowest ebb; and, though the hand of faith still held to the eternal rock, it was with numb, despairing grasp.

(UTC, 436)

But, subsequently,

--- --- -- a vision rose before him of one crowned with thorns, buffeted and bleeding.

(UTC, 437)
and gradually,

the sharp thorns became rays of glory, and, in splendor inconceivable, he saw that same face bending compassionately towards him, and a voice said, *He that overcometh shall sit down with me on my thorne,

(UTC, 437)

Tom is reawakened, his faith in Christ is reinforced.

Simon Legree is superstitious and is haunted by his deceased pious mother's forebodings.

The central character of the subplot, Eliza has been brought up by Mrs. Shelby from her girlhood as a petted and indulged favourite. She is gifted with refinement and softness of voice and manner. Under the protecting care of her mistress she has reached her maturity without being defiled. She has been married to a bright and talented young mulatto man, George Harris, who is a slave on a neighbouring estate. She is a good Christian, and a loving wife and mother. She is also loyal to her master and mistress. She lost two children, and when her master sells her only child Harry to the slave trader Haley, her patience and loyalty give way to her motherly instinct; she
braves the hazards and miraculously crosses the frozen Ohio River with her son, Harry, lost he be snatched away from her by Haley. Ultimately, she escapes to Canada where she is reunited with her husband.

Eliza's husband, George Harris has been hired out by his master to work in a bagging factory. Because of his adroitness and ingenuity he is considered to be the best hand in the factory. He has invented a machine for the cleaning of hemp, which, in view of the education and the background of the inventor evinces his mechanical genius comparable to that of Whitney, who invented cotton-gin.

He is endowed with handsome personality and pleasing manners which have endeared him to everyone in the factory. However, in the eyes of the law, he is not a man, but a thing. Consequently, all these superior qualifications are subject to the control of a vulgar, narrow-minded, tyrannical master. Jealous of George's fame, and suffering from inferiority complex he withdraws him from the factory, and decides to take him back to work in his planation.

George is forlorn and depressed. He visits Eliza and vents out his resentment against slavery in the following words:
Yes Eliza, it's all misery, misery, misery! My life is bitter as wormwood; the very life is burning out of me. I'm a poor, miserable forlorn drudge; - - - - - - what's the use of trying to do anything, trying to know anything, trying to be anything? What's the use of living? I wish I was dead. - - - - - - -

My master! and who made him my master? That's what I think of, - what right has he on me? I'm man as much as he is. I'm a better man than he is. I know more about business than he does - - - - - - -

(UTC, 17)

Thus George questions the right to hold slaves. He also questions the superiority of the white masters. He is an antithesis of Tom; he is not submissive like Tom; he revolts and ultimately escapes to Canada where he is reunited with his wife, Eliza, and son, Harry.
Actually, here Mrs. Stowe is expressing her and her fellow abolitionists antislavery sentiments through her mouthpiece and communicates her message to the readers.

Mrs. Mary Bird is another important character in the subplot. She is a timid, blustering little woman, about four feet in height, having wild blue eyes, and a peach-blow complexion, and the gentlest, sweetest voice in the world. Her husband and children are her entire world, and she ruled her world more by entreaty and persuasion than by command or argument. There is only one thing that provokes her; it is anything in the shape of cruelty. She is a devout Christian; she flouts the law if it contravenes what the Bible says. She has lost one of her children, and as such understands the tender feeling of a mother who is afraid of losing her child. She gives shelter and clothes to Eliza and her son, Harry and thus commits civil disobedience.

Her husband, Senator John Bird is a member of the Ohio state senate and is a party to the law passed by the state senate that forbids people from helping and giving shelter to fugitive slaves. Mrs. Bird derides him for this and vows to break the law. Senator Bird is a pragmatic politician, but, at the core of his heart, he is also a
compassionate person. Mrs. Bird successfully persuades her husband to help Eliza and Harry in escaping from their catchers. Mr. Bird, the patriotic senator, who had been all the week before, urging the legislature of his state to pass more stringent resolutions against fugitives, their harbourers, and abettors, now drives Eliza and Harry on his carriage to the home of John Van Trompe. The law maker becomes the law-breaker!

John Van Trompe has once been a considerably big land-holder and slave-owner in the State of Kentucky. Being a great honest and just-hearted man, for some years he has been observing with repressed uneasiness the workings of the slavery-system which is equally bad for the oppressor and the oppressed. Consequently, he purchases land in Ohio, sets all his slaves - men, women, and children - free and takes up to himself to give safe shelter to the fugitive slaves and to help them in escaping from slavery.

In this connection the role of the so called underground railroad is very important; it is the route along which the slaves escape north. The underground railroad is punctuated by stations, where the fugitive slaves take shelter
during their escape. The Quaker Settlement is such a station John Van Trompe escorts Eliza and Harry to the Quaker home of Simeon and Rachel Halliday. The entire population of the Quaker Settlement is committed to the cause of helping fugitive slaves escape north. The Quaker community is remarkable for its egalitarian humanism, for its orderly cleanliness, for its lavish generosity.

Rachel Halliday, like Tom and Eva, is a Christian Model. Her husband, Simeon Halliday is also a very generous person; he regards it to be his duty to provide shelter and help to the fugitive slaves. The Quaker home of the Hallidays is indeed a home where work is done collectively, where peace and harmony prevails. It is a peaceable kingdom.

It is in the home of Hallidays where reunion of Eliza, Harry, and George Harris takes place. It is for the first time that here George Harris sits down on equal terms at any white man's breakfast table. It is here that belief in God, and trust in his providence begins to encircle George's heart as atheistic doubt, and fierce despair melt away before the light of a living Gospel; the Gospel manifested through the living faces and a thousand acts of love and good-will.
Themes in Uncle Tom's Cabin

As mentioned earlier, the central theme in the novel is crusade against slavery. However, viewed in broader perspective, the theme in the novel is crusade against evil in general; crusade against theological, moral, economic, political, and social evils.

Mrs. Stowe deals with the theological evil of atheism through her characters George Harris and Augustine St. Clare and eventually brings them into the fold of Christianity through the religion of love as opposed to the religion of doom preached Calvinism. She also deals through Uncle Tom the flickering of faith during weaker moments in one's life, and eventual victory over this weakness. Religious skepticism is beautifully handled through intellectually stimulating conversation between Miss Ophelia and her cousin, Augustine St. Clare.

Moral evil of slavery has been highlighted in the novel through negro characters. Various despicable aspects of slavery have been delineated through different characters. The immorality of treating slaves as a thing, a commodity, a merchandise, rather than as a human being is emphasized
throughout the novel, particularly through Uncle Tom, Harry, Adolph, Susan, Emmeline, Lucy and other slaves on the one hand and the slave trader Haley, the slave warehouse in New Orleans, the slave auctioneer, Mr. Skeggs, and the slave buyers in particular Simon Legree, on the other. To emphasize this immorality further, Mrs. Stowe uses the ironic device of naming chapter titles; chapter V, X and XI are titled, "Showing the Feelings of Living Property On Changing Owners", "The Property Is Carried Off" and "In Which Property Gets Into. An Improper State Of Mind" respectively. As a matter of fact, to highlight this immorality, Mrs. Stowe had originally used the subtitle "The Man That Was A Thing" for the novel.

Another moral evil of slavery is painful separation of families; separation of wife from husband, separation of children from parents, especially from mothers. Separation of wife from husband is highlighted through the separation of Uncle Tom from Chloe, of Eliza from George Harris, of John auctioned at the New Orlean's warehouse from his wife, of Emmeline and Lucy from their husbands. Separation of children from parents is highlighted through the separation of Harry from George Harris, of Tom from his children, of prue from her children, of Cassy from her children, of Topsy from her parents, of Susan from Emmeline, of old, partially blind and crippled slave woman from her only remaining son, fourteen.
year old Albert.

The immorality of using women slaves as cattle to breed slaves for the market is emphasized through the tragic story of Prue. The immorality of sexually exploiting women-slaves is highlighted through Cassy, Emmeline and Lucy in the Legree plantation.

The immorality of physical torture meted out to slaves is highlighted through what happens to Tom in the Legree plantation. Tom is not the only slave who is physically tortured; other slaves in the Legree plantation are also victims of torture. However, it is Tom who succumbs to physical torture.

The immorality of condescension of white masters over their black slaves is demonstrated through the treatment given to black slave boy Harry by his otherwise quite benevolent master, Mr. Shelby. When Harry enters the room, where Mr. Shelby are transacting their business, Mr. Shelby whistling and snapping a bunch of raisins towards him says,

"Hulloa, Jim Crow! pick that up now!"

as if Harry were a pet dog. Often young slaves are treated as pet animals by their masters.

(UTC, 3)
The condescension of white masters over their black slaves is also demonstrated through the fact that Mrs. Shelby regards her slaves as children and Tom's masters address him as "boy".

The economic evil is depicted in the novel through the fact that the economy of the South was dependent on slavery. The black slaves provided cheap labour and they worked hard for longer hours. Mrs. Stowe has demonstrated this evil through Simon Legree who uses slaves, as he does everything else, merely as a means for money-making. However, Mrs. Stowe also points out, in the novel, through Augustine St. Clare, that economic exploitation is a general evil, it is not confined to slavery in the South alone. The people in the North, in England, and in other European countries economically exploit the workers in the factories as well. Augustine St. Clare says to Ophelia:

"Look at the high and the low all the world over, and it's the same story, - the lower class used up, body, soul, and spirit, for the good of the upper. It is so in England; it is so everywhere; and yet all Christendom stands
aghast, with virtuous, indignation, because we do the thing in a little different shape from what they do it."

(UTC, 236)

Mrs. Stowe has highlighted the political evil of expediency and appeasement as evinced through the enacting the unethical Fugitive Slave Law by the US Congress in 1850. This was done to appease the slave-holding states. Lest they may secede from the Union. Similarly, law was passed by the senate of the Ohio State in order not to alienate the neighbouring slave-holding state of Kentucky.

Mrs. Stowe highlights, in the novel, several social evils. One being the denial of the rights and privileges to the slaves enjoyed by the whites; the other being the denial of the right to marriage to slaves.

Mrs. Stowe has also highlighted, through Miss Ophelia, the social evil of hypocrisy in the North on the issue of slavery. While the Northerners are indignant over slavery, they loath slaves as they do a snake or a toad. Miss Ophelia admits this and men's her way on being inspired by the acts of Eve.

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Of late there has been Marxist interpretation of
the themes of Uncle Tom's Cabin. Josephine Donovan is
one such interpreter. According to her the principal theme
in Uncle Tom's Cabin is the problem of evil. She is of the
opinion that Mrs. Stowe's principal assumption in Uncle Tom's
Cabin is that the roots of evil are economic, that most wrong
doing and evil behaviour in the novel are shown to have
monetary motives and that in this Mrs. Stowe links slavery
with capitalism, and therefore her critique of the profit motive
remains relevant even today. Josephine Donovan's Marxist
analysis of the events and episodes in the novel appear quite
convincing. In particular, the philosophy of economic deter-
minism of Augustine St. Clare propounded during his discussion
with his cousin Miss Ophelia and wife Marie is essentially
Marxist. St. Clare also rejects the idea that scripture
provides justification for slavery. He holds that scripture
is interpreted to suit the economic necessities of the day, a
view which has clearly a Marxist ring.

However, Josephine Donovan herself acknowledges
that there is no evidence that Mrs. Stowe had read Marx, or
Engels but at the same holds the opinion that in view of her
acute interest in contemporary affairs, it is quite likely
that she at least familiar with some of their ideas. But most
critics hold the view that St. Clare's theories derive from Or stes Brownson, an American thinker, who several years before, the publication of The Communist Manifesto advocated the abolition of "hereditary property" to end "economic exploitation", which he regarded as the root of social evil. Since Brownson's ideas were published in a Cincinnati journal, Western Messenger, during 1839-41, while Stowe was there, it is quite likely that she had their first hand knowledge.

However, in spite of Josephine Donovan's persuasive argument, it can be said that the principal theme of Uncle Tom's Cabin is not the problem of evil in the sense used by her but it is crusade against slavery. This is corroborated from the following extract from the preface of the novel:

The object of these sketches is to awaken sympathy and feeling for the African race, as they exist among us; to show their wrongs and sorrows, under a system so necessarily cruel and unjust as to defeat and do away the good effects of all that can be attempted for them, by their best friends, under it.
Technique Used in Uncle Tom's Cabin

Artistically, Uncle Tom's Cabin belongs to the genre of historical novels, the genre pioneered by Walter Scott and James Fenimore Cooper. Mrs. Stowe was an ardent admirer of Scott and his novels, she could recite his novels, by the chapter. Therefore it is quite natural that she imbibed his technique and used it in her novels.

Scott aimed at achieving verisimilitude in his novels. In literary work, by verisimilitude one means the semblance of truth or reality; or the literary principle that requires a consistent illusion of truth to life. It covers both the exclusion of improbabilities, as in realism and naturalism, and the careful camouflage of improbabilities in nonrealistic works. In this technique the reader is brought in touch with the story by a continuous background of setting, incident, and minor characters to let him believe in the tale. This descriptive background is used not only to gain credence of the reader, but also to create an atmosphere that would make the story come alive with excitement, suspense, sympathy, or whatever emotion the writer wishes to evoke. This dual use of descriptive background to authenticate events and to rouse the reader's emotion is one of the skills that Mrs. Stowe learned from Scott.
An excellent example of Mrs. Stowe's use of the technique of verisimilitude is furnished by the following description of the famous episode in which Eliza crosses the frozen Ohio River with her son in their flight from Marks and Loker:

--- with a wild cry and flying leap she vaulted sheer over the turbid current by the shore, on to the raft of ice beyond. It was a desperate leap, impossible to anything but madness and despair; ---

The huge green fragment of ice on which she alighted pitched and cracked as her feet came on it, but she stayed there not a moment. With wild cries and desperate energy she leaped to another and still another cake; stumbling, leaping, slipping, springing upwards again. Her shoes are gone, her stockings cut from her feet, while blood marked every step; but she saw nothing, she felt nothing, till dimly as in a dream, she saw the Ohio side, and a man helping her up the bank.

(UTC, 67)
This description is based on excellent observation. Mrs. Stowe knows well that the turbulent water under the fragments of ice will make them look green; that current is fast right next to the shore, that the fragments of ice would not be smooth but rather rugged and sharp. Moreover, Eliza is desperate and hence her action appears to be natural. Therefore, the vivid description, which the reader verifies from his own experience, leads him to believe that the story is authentic. *The Uncle Tom's Cabin* is full of such verisimilitudes.

The narrative technique used by Mrs. Stowe in the novel is the third-person narrative in which the narrator is not a character within the events related, but stands outside those events. In this mode of story-telling, all characters within the story are referred to in third person. In *Uncle Tom's Cabin* the narrator and the narratee are both extradiegetic and hetrodiegetic, i.e., in this novel the narrative act is situated outside the fiction and neither the narrator nor the narratee functions as a character. In the novel Mrs. Stowe uses both the "distancing narrator" and the engaging narrator", more often the latter. A "distancing narrator" is a narrator who provides so much information about the narratee that the
Uncle Tom's Cabin abounds in direct, sermonlike narrative interventions in which the narrator demands from the narratee sympathy for the slaves, and even action on their behalf. The following is a typical example of this:

"And you, mothers of America, -- you, who have learned, by the cradles of your own childhood, to love and feel for all mankind, -- by the sacred love you bear your child -- - - - - - I beseech you pity the mother who has all your affections, and not one legal right to protect, guide, or educate, the child of her bosom! By the sick hour of your child; by those dying eyes, which you can never forget; by those last cries, that wrung your heart when you could neither help nor save - - - - - - I beseech you, pity those mothers that are constantly made childless by the American slave-trade! And say, mothers of America, is this a
thing to be defended, sympathized
with, passed over in silence?"

(UTC, 494)

In this case, the narrator's strategy is simply to
evoke the egocentric feelings of those actual readers who can
identify themselves with the narratees, and then to entreat
the readers to project those feelings into compassion for
actual slaves.

Uncle Tom's Cabin belongs to the traditions of
sentimentalism and realism. Uncle Tom's Cabin has been both
censured and launched as a sentimental novel. This genre was
dominated by women as authors, characters and readers and is
classified by emotional extravagance. Sentimental novels
were enormously popular in the late eighteenth century. However,
until recently they were not taken seriously by critics. Uncle
Tom's Cabin has some sentimental attributes, e.g. occasional
tendency towards emotional hyperbole, a Christian worldview,
and a focus on mothers and children. Most sentimental novels
are concerned with one heroine whose fate depends on securing
a proper husband; marriage is therefore the desired denouement.
Typically, sentimental novels have hardly any humour, any irony,
and any realism in character, dialogue, or setting; the latter
being usually domestic, indoor space. In all these respects, **Uncle Tom's Cabin** does not fit in the genre of sentimental novels. However, it certainly expresses a political sensibility towards the oppressed, which Philip Fisher has identified as a distinguishing feature of sentimental fiction.

In other ways **Uncle Tom's Cabin** falls comfortably in the tradition of realism, particularly that obtaining from Irish writer Maria Edgeworth (1767-1849) and Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832). She was apparently also influenced by some continental realists, especially the Russian Nikolai Gogol (1809-52) whose *Dead Souls* bears a considerable similarity to **Uncle Tom's Cabin** in its satirical tone and its social criticism.

"The epic scope of Stowe's novel precludes identifying it simply as a sentimental work. Indeed, to my knowledge **Uncle Tom's Cabin** is the first epic novel written by a woman. The novel's panoramic sweep; its multitude of fully developed, psychologically complex, and varied characters; its realistic specificity in setting; economic milieu, environmental detail, and dialect; its bitterly sarcastic tone; and Stowe's extensive use of metonymy -- a typical of the sentimentalist mode -- place it in the realist camp."
The Impact of Uncle Tom's Cabin

Uncle Tom's Cabin had a tremendous impact on the world. The timing of its publication was just right. It became not merely one of the greatest best-sellers in history, but a social document which influenced the public opinion everywhere. Even in the southern states of America, where its sale was forbidden, it had a clan destined circulation. Macaulay regarded Uncle Tom's Cabin as the greatest American literary achievement. Leo Tolstoy grouped it with a handful of masterpieces of the world. William Dean Howells considered it the only great American novel produced before the Civil-War in America. Ralph Waldo Emerson, John Greenleaf Whitier, and James Russell Lowell responded very positively to the novel. Apart from Leo Tolstoy, the other contemporary European writers who praised the novel earnestly include George Sand, George Eliot, Charlotte Brontë, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Heinrich Heine, Charles Dickens, Ivan Turgener, and Victor Hugo. Sand and Eliot considered Stowe a writer of genius, and Tolstoy found in Uncle Tom's Cabin an "example of the highest art". However, the response of the contemporary southern critics was negative, and some went to the extent of excoriating Mrs. Stowe for violating their code of ladylike behaviour. In general, the novel was hailed by the abolitionists and condemned by the
protagonists of slavery.

The impact of Uncle Tom's Cabin in America can be compared with the writings of Rousseau, Didero, Voltaire, and Montesque in France. While the writings of these Frenchmen triggered the French Revolution, the publication of Mrs. Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin is said to have triggered the Civil War in America (1861-65). This is borne out by the fact that when Mrs. Stowe was introduced to President Abraham Lincoln in 1862 by Congressman Henry Wilson, he is said to have exclaimed

"So this is the little woman who wrote the book that made this big war!"
References


4. Ibid. p. 811.


Mrs. Stowe’s second anti-slavery novel, *Dred: A Tale of the Great Dismal Swamp*, has its genesis in the slave insurrection, led by Nat Turner, in Eastern Virginia in 1831. It was a revolt of just sixty or seventy slaves, but it rocked the entire United States. The name of the novel derives from the name of one of the principal participants in the revolt. *Dred* complements *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* by showing the demoralizing effect of slavery on the whites. The novel can be regarded as a providential history urging its readers to cleanse the sins of the nation. It also provides a measure of the extent to which Mrs. Stowe’s outlook on slavery changed in the trouble years between 1852 and 1856. The novel is set entirely in North Carolina. The story of the novel is briefly as follows.

Edward Clayton and his sister Anne, have introduced a programme of reform in their Magnolia Grove plantation. They have an extremely patronizing attitude towards the slaves and they provide them benevolent education in the manner it is done in white society. The Clayton’s sceptical neighbour, Mr. Bradshaw, is deeply moved by this. Edward and Ann Clayton intend to persuade their countrymen to follow their pious
example. However, the other characters in the novel do not give allegiance to the reform. Actually Edward's and Ann's father Judge Clayton articulately opposes their programme of reform on the grounds that the slavery is legal, whether it is right or wrong.

Anne Clayton explains their method to Nina Gordon, her brother's fiancée. Nina is surprised to note that none of the cabinets or closets in the house is locked.

Nina Gordon, daughter of Colonel Gordon, entrusts the management of her father's North Carolina estate to Harry, her mulatto half-brother, after their father's death. Nina's brother, Tom Gordon, is averse to this.

There is a sort of double triangle in the story; first with Nina, the sister of both Harry and Tom, second with Harry's French quadroon wife, Lizette, whom Tom lusts.

Harry is confronted with a dilemma; whether to yield to his vehement wrath over Tom Gordon's treatment meted out to himself and his wife and to join hands with Dred, a religious zealot Negro insurgent, and thus offend Nina Gordon to whom he
is devoted; or to remain loyal to Nina and be a coward and betrayer of his race. Dred provokes Harry to view the racial conflict in its true perspective and to adopt the path of violent rebellion. On the contrary, Milly, an elderly slave woman, counsels Harry not to follow Dred's path, and urges him to have patience and restraint, and not to turn against Nina who has bought Harry's wife Lizette whom Tom wanted to buy for himself.

On Nina's sudden death by Cholera, her brother Tom comes into possession of her property, and cruelly forces Harry to flee. Harry seeks refuge in the Swamp where he is protected by Dred. Dred is killed by Tom when the latter comes in search of his half-brother Harry. A subplot tells the story of the Cripps family, living in squalor and poverty. The miserable plight of the family is mitigated by the faithful service of their only retainer, Old Tiff who makes untiring effort to keep up the respectability of the family for the sake of what they were on their mother's side. The head of the family, John Cripps is a worthless poor white trader and a brutal father, who, after the death of his wife Sue, remarries and treats his children and his slave Old Tiff, cruelly. This compels Old Tiff to take the Cripps children to the Swamp among
Edward Clayton is a high-minded planter and a benevolent master of some four hundred slaves. He has set up a pretty row of cottages and a large bathing establishment for his slaves to spread neatness and order among the slaves. He provides charitable education to his slaves. He has also introduced a sort of jury trial among them. Though he is not an abolitionist, he does not abhor them. On the contrary, he says that the abolitionists have inalienable right to express their views. When his friend asks,

"- - - - - what are you going to do?"

(Cred, Vol. I, P. 23)

Clayton replies,

"As any Christian man should do who finds four hundred of his fellow men..."
and women placed in a state of absolute
dependence on him. I am going to educate
and fit them for freedom. There is not a
sublimer power than the God has given to
us, masters. The law gives us absolute
and unlimited control. A plantation such
as a plantation might be would be "a light
to lighten the Gentiles! There is a
wonderful and beautiful development
locked up in this Ethiopian race, and
it is worth being a life object to
unlock it. The raising of cotton is to
be the least of the thing. I regard my
plantation as a sphere for raising men and
women and demonstrating the capabilities
of a race."

(Dred, Vol.I, P.23)
Anne Edward Clayton has a novel solution to the moral problem of slavery. Actually, it is Mrs. Stone's solution expressed through her mouthpiece, Edward Clayton. But, eventually the solution does not work. Consequently, Edward Clayton frees his slaves and migrates to Canada to work for the cause of abolition.

Anne Clayton is the special companion and confidant of her brother and subscribes to his view on the issue of slavery. She collaborates with her brother in executing the reform projects for the welfare of slaves. In particular, she teaches the slave children in the school run by her brother and which is an important component of the reform projects. She
is of the view that if there is a missionary work in this world, it is the administration of these reform projects.

Edward's and Anne's father, Judge Clayton, is an antithesis of Edward and Anne. He is for slavery as it is. He unequivocally opposes the reform projects of his son and daughter on legal ground; for him the moral issue of slavery is irrelevant. In his decision on an appeal against the judgement of the lower court which had endorsed Edward Clayton's high-minded defence of a slave woman, Molly, who had been brutally treated by a white man, who had hired her from the Gordon family, the tall, dignified, stern elderly gentleman of the old school reverses the judgement of the lower court. He repudiates his son in words drawn from an actual case which had been decided by Judge Ruffin of North Carolina.

Nina Gordon, the daughter of the deceased Col. Gordon.

"--- --- --- is declared by the author. --- and one of her lovers, Edward Clayton --- to be pretty, bewitching, full of native shrewdness.

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and vitality, with an instinctive
preference for kindness and
justice, which it must be confessed,
is not yet quite apparent to the
reader.  

She is engaged to three gentlemen, Mr. Carson, Mr. George
Emmons, and Mr. Edward Clayton, but does not know whom she
likes the best. When Harry asks her,

"Engaged to three gentlemen, Miss
Nina?"

(Dred, Vol.I, P.3)

Nina replies,

"Right? -- Why not? I don't
know which to take --- I posi-
tively don't; so I took them
all on trial, you know."

(Dred, Vol.I, P.3)

This attitude of Nina led Edward Clayton to remark to his
friend Frank Russell,
"Well then, really," said Clayton, raising himself and speaking with energy, "I'll tell you just what it is: Nina Gordon is flirt and coquette -- a spoiled child, if you will."

(Dred, Vol.I, P.18)

However, she is kind toward her slaves, especially toward Harry. But it may be noted that

"In the heroine of Dred, Nina Gordon, we get the first striking example of Mrs. Stowe's strange tenderness for the fashionable, frivolous girl. Nina's development, through the love of wise man, and sudden, cruel contact with the world's evil is beautifully done to a point. Unfortunat­ely Mrs. Stowe did not know where to stop. A girl of courage and fine humanity did not satisfy her, she had to have a saint; and this is about as convincing as it had been to make Topsy, in her ultimate phase, a missionary to Africa! Worse having accomplished this, Mrs. Stowe turns about and slays the girl, with typical Victorian sadism, as she had already slain little Eva and was to slay Mara, of The Pearl of Orr's Island, and even the hapless infant at the beginning of My Wife and I. And when she killed Nina, she came close to killing the book!"
Harry Gordon is the most interesting character in the novel, especially because of his dilemma. He is the son of Colonel Gordon, and of a beautiful Eboe mulatress. He is intelligent, well educated, and able manager of Mina Gordon's estate. To all intents and purpose he is a free man. However, in the presence of Tom Gordon he always realizes that he is slave. He loyal and devoted to his half-sister and mistress, Mina Gordon.

Tom Gordon is a cruel, licentious, alcoholic, though he is endowed with the same intelligence and sensibility as Harry. He is an embodiment of the evil effect of slavery on the white masters. Ever since his childhood he has been hostile towards the slaves, especially towards his half-brother Harry. He is so depraved that his father partially excluded him from his natural rights to his father's property in order to protect Mina and his slave family from the violence and cruelties of his son, Tom. He is as satanic as Simon Legree, a fact amply borne out by the lynching of good Father Dickson by Tom and his desperate followers.

Dred is another interesting character in the novel; he is more interesting than Uncle Tom. Whereas Uncle Tom has been modeled after Jesus Christ, Dred has been modeled after the prophets of the Old Testament.
"his (Dred's) conversation, a medley of biblical passages, is a continuous, intense declaration; and at the sound of his voice, invisibly carried through the night air, even the heartless owners tremble, conscious of their sins."³

Mrs. Stowe has conceived the character of Dred after an authentic historical personage, Dred, the son of the famous slave insurgent Denmark Vesey and a Mandingo slave woman Vesey. Familiarized himself perfectly "with all those parts of the scripture which he thought he could pervert to his purpose and would readily quote them to prove that slavery was contrary to the laws of God, and that slaves were bound to attempt their emancipation, however shocking and bloody might be the consequences; that such efforts would not only be pleasing to the Almighty, but were absolutely enjoined." (Dred, Vol.I, p257)

Denmark Vesey trained his son to follow his path of insurgency; to memorize the relevant passages from the Bible, especially the Old Testament and to use them to his purpose. Vesey's son, who received his name Dred from his mother, had an extraordinary physique, and
"The development of the child's mind was so uncommon as to excite astonishment among the negroes. He early acquired the power of reading, by an apparent instinctive faculty, and would often astonish those around him with things which he had discovered in books."

"A son so endowed could not but be an object of great pride and interest to a father like Denmark Vesey. The impression seemed to prevail universally among the negroes that this child was born for extraordinary things; and perhaps it was the yearning to acquire liberty for the development of such a mind which first led Denmark Vesey to reflect on the nature of slavery, and the terrible weights which it lays on the human intellect, and to conceive the project of liberating a race.

During the process of conspiracy, this son, though but ten years old, was his father's confidant; and he often charged him, though he should in the attempt, never submit tamely to the yoke of slavery; and nourished the idea already impressed that some more than ordinary destiny was reserved for him."

(Dred, Vol.I, P.260-261)
At the time of his father's execution on charges of conspiracy Dred was of fourteen years. He witnessed the undaunted aspect with which his father and the other conspirators met their doom. The memory of this event left an indelible mark on his mind.

Dred was sold to a distant plantation and became noted for his indomitable disposition. On slightest rebuke or threat he flashed up with a savage fierceness which, supported by his immense bodily strength, made him an object of dread among overseers. Because of the difficulty in managing him he was sold from master to master. Finally, an overseer, harder than the rest tried to subdue him. In the scuffle that followed, Dred struck him to earth, a dead man, and escaped to the swamps, and was never afterwards heard of in civilized life.

"Dred carried with him to the swamp but one solitary companion -- the Bible of his father. To him it was not the messenger of peace and good will but the herald of woe and wrath."

(Dred, Vol.I, P.263)

He did not confine himself to any particular region, but traversed the entire swampy belt of Carolina as well as that of Southern Carolina. He used to rescue fugitive slaves from the hunters and to provide shelter in the swamp. Later, he came
in possession of an excellent rifle which he always used to carry with him.

The character Dred in Mrs. Stowe's novel is the replica of the historically authentic Dred, the son of Denmark Vesey, who actually made the swamp his habitat. Dred of the novel carries a rifle, a bowie knife and a hatchet. He talks of the wrathful denunciations of the ancient prophets against oppression and injustice. He has read of kingdoms convulsed by plagues, of tempest, and pestilence, and locusts, of the sea cleft in twain. He is thrilled with fierce joy as he reads how Samson, with his two strong arms, pulled down the pillars of the festive temple, andwhelmed his triumphant persecutors in one grave with himself.

According to Alice Crozier, "Dred is a monomaniac, engulfed by an errand of vengeance against an evil whose enormity has become coexistent with creation itself. She writes:

"Dred is a man driven by hatred, a man maimed in his soul by the violence of his persecutors and by the violence of his own desire to destroy them. As he listens to the grotesque and brutal stories which are told to him by the slaves who have escaped their pressures and reached his hidden home in the Swamp, each of their encounters with the force of white oppression
becomes his own and he raises cry to Jehovah to punish "this evil nation". He is a man possessed and maddened by his own heart's hatred, and often the intensity of that demonic passion will hold him ferociously still, "his eyes fixed before him on vacancy, the pupils swelling out in glassy fullness, with a fixed, somnambulic stare."\(^4\)

But Alic Crozier admits that, certainly, Mrs. Stowe finds Dred noble and awesome. The fact that Mrs. Stowe constantly compares Dred to the "wild old warrior prophets" whose mighty example had been held in reverence by New Englanders for more than two hundred years is enough to establish that she regards him as heroic. Furthermore the fact that she compares the Negroes as a race to the ancient Israelites suggests that she views Dred as the Mosaic leader guiding his oppressed chosen people out of captivity.\(^5\)

Alice Crozier's criticism that Dred is a most improbable mixture of savagery and bombast is also not tenable since Dred of the novel is the replica of a historical personage, viz., Dred, the son of Denmark Vesey.

Needless to say, Dred's passionate hatred for the slaveholder and the oppressors is the result of despair. He is
dis ressed to note that the nation has already committed itself
to the course of injustice from which it has lost the will and
power to redeem itself. He regards himself to be the executer
of God's anger and exhorts his haunted followers in the swamp
to adopt the path of bloody revolution against the entire
society. He is essentially a revolutionary; he provokes Harry
to throw the yoke of slavery and join him in executing his plan
of bloody revolution

Mrs. Nesbit, Nina Gordon's aunt and her 'would-be
guide is an amusing character in the novel. When she was young,
she was highly selfish; she thought only of self in the form of
admiration and the indulgence of her animal spirits. When
married, she thought of self only in her husband and children,
whom she loved because they were hers, and for no other reason.

Aunt Nesbit has melancholy virtue and acrid religious
principle. She looks upon religion in the form of a ticket,
which once purchased and snugly laid away in a pocket book, is
to be produced at the celestial gate in order to secure
admission to Heaven. The poor lady hardly imagines, when she
sits with such punctilious satisfaction, while the Rev. Mr.
Orthodoxy demonstrates that selfishness is the essence of all
moral evil that the statement has the slightest application to
her.
Old slave woman Milly is a remarkable character in the novel. She is the waiting woman of Aunt Nesbit; tall, broad-shouldered, deep-chested, and large-eyed. In character Milly is worthy of her remarkable external appearance. Heaven has endowed her with a soul as broad and generous as her ample frame.

She is mother of thirteen children, all are sold away from her by the time she has her last child, a boy named Alfred. Nina's aunt, Miss Harriet, has assured Milly not to sell Alfred. However, when the neighbours, Joneses, offer a large amount of money for Alfred, Miss Harriet sells him. As a result of this Milly is grief-stricken. When, on the following Sunday morning she proceeds to Joneses place to give the new coat and shoes that she has purchased to Alfred, she is shocked to learn from Huldah, on the way, that Alfred is dead. She tells Nina,

"And she (Huldah) told me it was dis yer way. Dat Stiles - he dat was Jones's overseer - had heard dat Alfred was dreadful spirited; and when boys is so, sometimes dey aggravates 'em to get 'em riled, and den dey whips 'em to
break 'em in. So Stiles - - - - - -
was real aggravating to him; and dat boy - well, he answered back, just as he affer would be doing, 'cause he was smart and it 'peared like he could n't keep it in. And den - - - - - - - -
Stiles was mad, - - - and den Alfred, he cut and run. - - - - - - and just den young master Bill come along, and wanted to know what was de matter. So Stiles told hi, and he took out his pistol, and said, "Here, you dog, if you don't come back before I count five, I'll fire."

"Fire ahead!" says Alfred; "'cause you see, dat boy never knowed what fear was. And so he fired. And Huldah said he just jumped up and give one scream, and fall flat."

(Dred, Vol.I, P.224)

'Nut, Alfred was treated, killed and buried like a dog.

After hearing from Huldah the heart-breaking description of how her son was brutally killed, Milly's heart is filled
with anger and hatred for Miss Harriet. She goes straight way to Miss Harriet and says,

"You see dat hole! "said I;" you see dat blood! Alfred's killed. You killed him; his blood be on you and your chil'en! O Lord in heaven, hear me, and render him unto her double."

(Dred, Vol.I, P.224)

Milly is wild and restless with grief. She spends many nights in woods, crying in despair, trying to find God to avenge her, but in vain.

Milly has greater reasons to be bitter and loathsome against the holders of slaves than Dred, but she turns Vol. 2 face after hearing in a sermon at a camp meeting one night, how God has given up His own son. She narrates her religious reawakening in the following words:

"O Lord, what a story dat ar was! And den, how dey took him and put de crown of thorns on his head, hang him up bleeding, bleeding, and bleeding! -- -- -- I saw him, suffering, bearing with us, year

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in and year out - bearing - bearing
bearing so patient! Prayed like, it
wasn't just on de cross, but bearing
always, every where! Oh, Chile, I
saw how he loved us! us-us- all-all-
every one on us! we dat hated each
other so --- Oh Chile, I
saw what if was for me to be hatin', I
like I hated. "O Lord," says I, "I give
up! O Lord, never see you afore; I
didn't know Lord, I's a poor sinner!
I won't hate no more!" Ah, Chile,
den come such a rush of love in
my soul! Says I, "Lord, I kev love
even the white folks --- --- ---
Ah, Chile, we must n't hate nobody;
we's all poor creatures, and de dear
Lord he loves us all"

(Dred, Vol. I, P. 227, 228, 229)

Milly urges Harry to eschew hatred and violence, and
preaches him the religion of love. In this respect she is an
antithesis of Dred who is obsessed with hatred, and preaches
under the religion of violence. Like Adam and Eve, Milly has
not betrayed as an evangelist. Milly is one of the two
most powerful preachers of the Christian faith in Mrs. Stowe's novels, the other being Canon in *The Minister's Lodge*.

Old Tiff is another benign character in the novel. He is the only retainer, a faithful one, in the Cripps family. As the head of the family John Cripps is an irresponsible person, Old Tiff does everything possible to alleviate the suffering of the Cripps family, especially of Mrs. Sue Cripps, cultured lady from a good family in the North, and her children.

As a matter of fact, Old Tiff came with Sue as her retainer when she was married. He is a devout servant, he takes care of everything outside and inside the house. He sews, he knits, he works in the garden, he does the household work, and he teaches the children. He completely identifies himself with his mistress and her children. He does not have even a grain of selfishness in his character.

After Mrs. Cripps' death, Mr. Cripps treats his children cruelly as a result of which Old Tiff is forced to flee to the Swamp with the Cripps children where they are treated well by Dred. After Dred's death Old Tiff resists to go back with the Cripps children.
Tomtit is a comic character in the novel. He has a host of oddities; he indulges in a series of irresistible comical conducts.

When Mrs. Rochester says:

"Tomiti, I do believe you intend to burn me to death, some day!"

On this, Tomtit remarks, (Dred, Vol.I, P.53)

"Laws, Missus, dat are hot? Oh, sure
I was 'tickler to set the nose round
to the fire"

(Dred, Vol.I, P.53)

As a matter of fact, in Tomtit we have a masculine Topsy.

Themes in Dred

As in the case of Uncle Tom's Cabin, the central theme in Dred is crusade against slavery. However, Dred complements Uncle Tom's Cabin in that it shows the evil effects of slavery on the slave holders also.

The shiftlessness, misery, the backward tendency of all the economical arrangements of slave states, the retrograding of good families into poverty, the deterioration
of land; the worst, the demoralization of all classes, from the aristocratic tyrannical planters to the oppressed and poor whites, which is the result of the introduction of the slave labour.

Another theme in the novel is the corruption of Christianity which arises from the same source, a corruption that has gradually lowered the standard of the Church, both in the North and the South.

Related with this is the connivance of the clergymen with the practice of slavery, and their failure in raising their voice against the immoral and un-Christian institution.

The evil effect of slavery on the aristocratic slave holders is exemplified through the characters, Nina and Tom Gordon. The evil effect on the poor whites is demonstrated through John Cripps. The selling of slaves and plantations by slaveholders shows the retrograding of the good families into poverty. The evil effect on poor whites results also from the cheap labour obtained from the slaves. The social evil of miscegenation is also a theme of the novel. Harry is an example of miscegenation.
Actually, while writing the novel Mrs. Stowe started with the theme that through benevolence, education, and gradual emancipation the moral problem of slavery could be solved. Edward and Anne Clayton are presented as the executors of this solution. The concurrent theme was Mrs. Stowe's most cherished theme of the Christian love and forgiveness preached through Willy. However, an abrupt change in Mrs. Stowe's stance on the solution of the moral problem of slavery occurred when she was half way through the novel. The cause of the change was the beating in the Senate of Charles Sumner by Preston Books of South Carolina occasioned by Senator Sumner's scathing criticism of Senator Butler in his speech, "Crime against Kansas". A sequel to this, which also had an impact on Mrs. Stowe, was the massacre, three days after the Summer episode, of five pro-slavery men in Pottawatomie, Kansas carried out by John Brown and his sons. The third incident that influenced Mrs. Stowe was the sensational slave auction conducted by Henry Ward Beecher in Plymouth Church following the protest meeting in Brooklyn against the physical attack on Sumner. These three events, which occurred within a period of two weeks, led Mrs. Stowe to believe that theilder form of crusade against slavery propounded in the first half of her second antislavery novel would not work and as such
she decided to adopt a more aggressive stance against slavery. Consequently, the development of the novel changed suddenly, resulting in the introduction of Dred as a character, a character along with whom its name from actual life. This resulted in confusion worse confounded. The novel ends without any message, without telling unequivocally the solution of the slavery.

**Technique Used in Dred**

Like *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, *Dred* also belongs to the genre of historical novel. In *Dred* Mrs. Stowe has used her familiarity that she acquired with the history and the laws of the slave states both through her investigations and through her own investigation. For example, Judge Clayton's decision on an appeal against the lower court's decision on Molly's case is essentially the same as that of Judge Ruffin's which occurred in reality and is included in *The Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin*. The novel has for its basis the insurrection led by Nat Turner in Eastern Virginia in 1831 and the character Dred in the novel is the replica of one of the principal participants of the same name in the uprising. As a matter of fact, the
preparation of The Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin was also
directly the preparation of Dred. She has freely made use
of the materials collected in the Key. Thus "---
Dred moves beyond pictorial verisimilitude into a kind of
realistic writing the vitality and conviction of which
transcend the conventions of the historical romance and
the requirements of the historical chronicler in such a way
that it is the energy and truthfulness of the art itself to
what we assent." 6

However, "The Camp-Meeting" - where the Gordon and
Clayton families and their neighbours as do all the slaves
and servants, where the ministers of different denominations
in the vicinity gather to compete with each other for applause
and convert, were both are set up on the camp ground by whiskey
makers, slave-traders, slave-hunters, and peddlers of all kinds,
where picnics are spread, tents are erected, hymns are sung
by different groups, and a stand is built for the preachers -
is a pure fiction is beautifully done.

The narrative technique used in Dred is again the
third person narrative. As in the case of Uncle Tom's Cabin
the main narrator is an omniscient or intrusive narrator, who
in addition to reporting the events of the novel's story
also offers further comments on characters and events. The narrative is heterodiegetic, i.e., a mixture of extradiegetic and hypodiegetic narratives. - The level of the narrative is mostly extradiegetic, most of the time narrator stands outside the sphere of the main story. However, partly it is also hypodiegetic, like Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, in which tale-within-the-tale is embedded.

In Brad: "Some of the pictures are fine, the plantation very clear, and a death scene and funeral services very affecting, but much of the details are irrelevant to the narrative. The literary tone ranges from the light chatter of the ladies magazines to solid exposition suited to editorials, in the Independent".  

The unities of the story are not well preserved. The progress of the theme is halting, and it is plainly evident that this is a mere frame work setup by the author upon which to hang her facts and deductions, concerning the state of social life under slavery. But there are constantly introduced in conversation, dissertations and ideas upon this theme, which, while they doubtless mar the artistic value of "Brad" as a novel, make a valuable supplement to "Brad's Library".

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As a novel, *Dred* is worse than *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. *Dred* has several defects. It is somewhat of a patchwork; partly because Mrs. Stowe's forte was doing a scene or imagining a situation, rather than constructing a plot or polishing the narrative and partly because she wrote in hurry in a haphazard manner, between household chores and other activities and that she never revised what she wrote. In spite of its defect, the novel has some virtues; it certainly has moments, scenes, depths that show how life really is.
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