Uncle Tom's Cabin Study Guide

Uncle Tom's Cabin by Harriet Beecher Stowe

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Introduction

When *Uncle Tom's Cabin; or, Life among the Lowly* was first published in 1852, no one-least of all its author, Harriet Beecher Stowe-expected the book to become a sensation, but this antislavery novel took the world by storm. It was to become the second best-selling book in the world during the nineteenth century, second only to the Bible, and it touched off a flurry of criticism and praise. Stowe had written the novel as an angry response to the 1850 passage of the Fugitive Slave Law, which punished those who aided runaway slaves and diminished the rights of fugitive as well as freed slaves. Hoping to move her fellow Americans to protest this law and slavery in general, Stowe attempted to portray "the institution of slavery just as it existed." Indeed, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was nearly unique at the time in its presentation of the slaves' point of view.

Stowe's novel tells the stories of three slaves — Tom, Eliza, and George — who start out together in Kentucky, but whose lives take different turns. Eliza and George, who are married to each other but owned by different masters, manage to escape to free territory with their little boy, Harry. Tom is not so lucky. He is taken away from his wife and children. Tom is sold first to a kind master, Augustine St. Clare, and then to the fiendish Simon Legree, at whose hands he meets his death. Stowe relied upon images of domesticity, motherhood, and Christianity to capture her nineteenth century audience's hearts and imaginations. In spite of the critical controversy surrounding the book, the characters of Uncle Tom, Little Eva, and Simon Legree have all achieved legendary status in American culture. Often called sentimental and melodramatic, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* nevertheless endures as a powerful example of moral outrage over man's inhumanity to man.

Author Biography

Stowe seemed destined to write a powerful protest novel like *Uncle Tom's Cabin:* Her father was Lyman Beecher, a prominent evangelical preacher, and her siblings were preachers and social reformers. Born in 1811 in Litchfield, Connecticut, Stowe moved with her family at the age of twenty-one to Cincinnati, where she lived for eighteen years. In Cincinnati, across the Ohio River from slaveholding Kentucky, Stowe was exposed to the institution of slavery. Although she made just one brief trip to Kentucky—her only personal contact with the South—she knew freed and fugitive slaves in Cincinnati. She also had friends who participated in the underground railroad, the secret system for aiding runaway slaves in their flight to freedom.

Stowe learned about slave life by talking to these people and by reading various materials, including slave narratives and antislavery tracts. She also saw Northern racial prejudice. Stowe began writing while living in Cincinnati. In 1836, she married Calvin Ellis Stowe, a distinguished biblical scholar and theology professor, and they had seven children. After marrying, Stowe continued to write, supplementing her husband's limited earnings. In 1850, the United States Congress voted to pass the Fugitive Slave Law, which prohibited Northerners from helping slaves escape and required them to return slaves to their masters in the South. Stowe, having moved to Brunswick, Maine with her family, had been planning to write a protest of slavery since her experiences in Cincinnati. The passage of the Fugitive Slave Law proved a powerful catalyst. She began work on *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and published it first in serial form in the abolitionist magazine *The National Era.* The first installment appeared on June 5, 1851, but before the serial could be completed, the novel came out in a two-volume set in March 1852. The book became an immediate and extraordinary success, selling over one million copies in America and England before the year was out. Thus, Stowe became the most famous American woman writer of her day.

In the United States, the novel incited controversy from both Northerners and Southerners: Northerners felt that Stowe portrayed the slaveholding South too kindly, while Southerners believed Stowe condemned their way of life. In 1853, responsing to criticism that her novel was not grounded in reality, Stowe published *A Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin,* in which she pointed to factual Documents&madash;newspaper articles, court records, state laws-to substantiate her portrayal of slavery in *Uncle Tom's Cabin.* Less than a decade after the publication of *Uncle Tom's Cabin,* the Civil War began, largely due to the conflict over slavery. President Abraham Lincoln, upon meeting Stowe in 1862, is said to have declared: "So this is the little lady who brought on this big war." Stowe died on July 1, 1896, in Hartford, Connecticut, and is buried in Andover, Massachusetts. In spite of having published many works before and after its momentous appearance, she is remembered mainly for *Uncle Tom's Cabin.*

Plot Summary

Part II

In this longest section of the book, Uncle Tom's saintly character is revealed as he accepts the indignity of being sold "down the river" to New Orleans. On the steamboat Uncle Tom makes friends with a little girl named Eva St. Clare, who is as good-hearted as he is. When Uncle Tom saves Eva after she falls into the river, her father agrees to purchase him in gratitude. Uncle Tom is taken to the St. Clare plantation where he lives a relatively easy life as the head coachman. The mistress of the house, St. Clare's sister Miss Ophelia, who moved from New England to the South, is extremely critical of lazy southern ways. St. Clare buys her an eight-year-old slave, Topsy, to distract her from reorganizing the household. Topsy is contrasted with Eva, who is the same age, but whose saintliness is the opposite of Topsy's rascally, naughty nature, just as Eva's blonde hair and white skin contrast with Topsy's black hair and black skin. Eva tries to reform Topsy, to no avail. Only when it is clear that Eva is slowly wasting away does Topsy promise to be good.

Before she dies, Eva makes her father promise to free all of his slaves. Eva gives each of the slaves a lock of her golden hair as a keepsake and begs them all to become Christians. St. Clare tells Uncle Tom he is going to be freed, but the old slave prefers to stay with St. Clare in order to convert him to Christianity. When St. Clare dies unexpectedly before freeing the slaves, his wife sells the slaves at public auction. Uncle Tom is bought by the villainous Simon Legree.

Part III

Stowe describes the slave auction at which Uncle Tom is sold for the benefit of her Northern readers who are not familiar with slavery. She explains why negroes appear to be happy in slavery when in reality they are not:

The dealers in the human article make scrupulous and systematic efforts to promote noisy mirth among them, as a means of drowning reflection, and rendering them insensible to their condition. The whole object of the training to which the negro is put, from the time he is sold in the northern market till he arrives south, is systematically directed towards making him callous, unthinking, and brutal. The slave-dealer collects his gang in Virginia or Kentucky, and drives them to some convenient, healthy place - often a watering place - to be fattened. Here they are fed full daily; and, because some incline to pine, a fiddle is kept commonly going among them, and they are made to dance daily; and he who refuses to be merry - in whose soul thoughts of wife, or child, or home, are too strong for him to be gay - is marked as sullen and dangerous, and subjected to all the evils which the ill will of an utterly irresponsible and hardened man can inflict upon him. Briskness, alertness, and cheerfulness of appearance, especially before observers, are constantly enforced upon them, both by the hope of thereby

getting a good master, and the fear of all that the driver may bring upon them if they prove unsalable.

Simon Legree is a brutal master who takes pleasure in tormenting his slaves. When Uncle Tom tries to help another slave, Lucy, by filling her bag with cotton after she has been beaten and cannot work anymore, Legree commands Uncle Tom to beat Lucy. Uncle Tom refuses, and Legree beats Tom so badly that he almost dies. Another slave, Cassy, comes to bind Uncle Tom's wounds and declares that God has forgotten the negro race, but Uncle Tom never loses his faith. Cassy develops a plan of escape and invites Uncle Tom to come along. Once again, Uncle Tom refuses to run away, seeing it as his Christian duty to stay behind and comfort the slaves who cannot escape. After Cassy drugs Legree so that she and another slave, Emmeline, can leave, Legree suspects that Uncle Tom knows where they have gone. In a scene that is reminiscent of Christ being tormented and spat upon before his crucifixion, Uncle Tom is taunted and spat upon before Legree delivers the blow that ultimately kills him.

In the meantime, George Shelby, the son of Uncle Tom's original owner, has been searching for him ever since he was sold down the river. George finds Uncle Tom in time to bid him farewell before he dies. In a fury, George threatens to charge Legree with murder, but Legree points out that no white person will convict another for killing a slave. George realizes sadly that Legree will go unpunished. But George vows to do *"what one man can do* to drive out this curse of slavery from my land!" He returns to Kentucky and frees all of his slaves, calling on them to "be as honest and as faithful a Christian as Tom was."

Part IV

Stowe ties up all the loose ends of her story. George and Eliza have been free for five years, and little Harry is going to a good school. Cassy, who turns out to be Eliza's mother, joins the family in Canada, and they all emigrate to Liberia. Topsy lives a happy life with Miss Ophelia in Vermont. In the final chapter, Stowe claims that although *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is fiction, it is based upon actual facts that have been enacted in the history of slavery many times. She makes a direct appeal to Southerners to release their slaves and to Northerners to become active in denouncing slavery. She argues that all Christian people, North and South, must unite in ridding America of this great evil for the sake of their souls. She believes that freed slaves should be trained and educated in the North and then sent to Liberia to begin life anew. She argues that the negro race, persecuted though it is, has done much to educate itself. "If this persecuted race, with every discouragement and disadvantage, have done thus much, how much more might they do if the Christian church would act towards them in the spirit of her Lord!" Stowe ends *Uncle Tom's Cabin* with a warning that unless the slaves are freed, both North and South will suffer the wrath of Almighty God.

Chapter 1

Chapter 1 Summary

Uncle Tom's Cabin is Harriet Beecher Stowe's story of three slaves and the paths their lives take in pre-Civil war America. As the story begins a man named Mr. Haley is in the home of Mr. Shelby, a plantation owner in Kentucky. Mr. Shelby has incurred a debt owed to Mr. Haley who wants slaves for payment. Mr. Shelby is reluctantly offering up his best slave, Tom, who is loyal and trustworthy and a credit to any man. Haley is impressed by Tom's characteristics but needs another slave to complete the deal.

Suddenly the two men are interrupted by a young boy named Harry who sings and dances happily for Mr. Shelby and his guest. The boy is particularly beautiful and Mr. Haley is taken with the child. Eliza, Harry's mother who is also Mrs. Shelby's servant, enters the room to get Harry. When the mother and son have gone, Mr. Haley propositions Mr. Shelby to sell both Eliza and Harry but Mr. Shelby resolutely tells Mr. Haley that Mrs. Shelby will never part with Eliza. Eliza has overheard part of the men's conversation and approaches Mrs. Shelby with the possibility of Harry being sold from her and Mrs. Shelby assures Eliza that nothing of the sort will take place. Unfortunately, Mrs. Shelby does not know of her husband's volatile financial situation and is unaware of the discussion her husband is holding with Mr. Haley.

Chapter 1 Analysis

Uncle Tom, for whom the novel is named, never actually appears in this chapter but his character is defined as loyal and industrious by his master, Mr. Shelby. Mr. Shelby is characterized as more of a genteel person in his dress and mannerisms while Mr. Haley is crasser in his speech and obnoxious ways, symbolizing the two sides of the slavery issue which will very soon collide.

The meeting between Mr. Shelby and Mr. Haley occurs on a chilly February afternoon which foreshadows the grim future for not only these two men but the entire country. Eliza's fear of losing her son is also another foreshadowing of the many losses which are to come. Unfortunately, Mrs. Shelby is kind but napve in the ways of the real world which will also come crashing in on the whole society.

Chapters 2 and 3

Chapters 2 and 3 Summary

Eliza, Mrs. Shelby's servant, was raised by the woman almost as one of her own and even held a beautiful wedding in the Shelby home when Eliza married a mulatto named George. Eliza and George are separated more than they are together as George is hired out to work at a factory where he invents a machine to clean hemp. The factory owner is pleased with George's inventiveness but George's master sees the invention only as another way for George to avoid work and removes George from the factory. Now doing menial labor, George is ever further away from Eliza, and the factory owner's request that George be returned are resolutely denied. More sadness is inflicted on the small family when the couple loses two babies but Harry survives and Eliza is especially protective of him.

Soon after Eliza shares with Mrs. Shelby what she had overheard at Mr. Shelby's door, George comes home to see Eliza one more time before he heads to Canada. George has reached his limit of abuse and hard work and tells Eliza that he will buy her and their son as soon as he makes enough money. There is significant risk in George's plan but it is one he is willing to take to avoid returning to his present dire situation.

Chapters 2 and 3 Analysis

The terror of slavery begins to be revealed as Eliza's fears of losing her son are combined with George's accounting of his recent abuses. The little family has no hope of staying together as a unit because slaves do not have legally recognized marriages and are, after all, property to be bought and sold at the owner's discretion. The inhumanity that tears at the heart of this couple is just a microcosm of events that are occurring all over the Southern states. Eliza, having been raised in a white household, encourages her husband to remember the values of Christianity but George has run out of patience and perseverance and is taking his life into his own hands.

Chapters 4 and 5

Chapters 4 and 5 Summary

Uncle Tom's cabin is described as a small log building with so many flowers that the logs are almost disguised. Each summer there is a berry patch and many types of annual- variety flowers. Aunt Chloe, who is Tom's wife and the head cook at the Shelby plantation, has just prepared supper and others are cleaning the table and washing up the dishes. Tom's and Chloe's sons, Mose and Pete, play with the baby.

Young Master George Shelby is at the table trying to teach Tom to write and Aunt Chloe comments on how bright George is and how good it is for him to teach Tom. After the lesson, the cabin is transformed to a meeting room where the other slaves come to sing and talk about the Bible. Master George stays to facilitate some of the evening's events and Uncle Tom assumes the role of minister for the group, praying and leading the others in prayer.

Up in the big house, as Mr. and Mrs. Shelby prepare to retire for the evening, Mrs. Shelby inquires about Mr. Haney's visit. Mr. Shelby reluctantly tells his wife that Uncle Tom and Harry have been sold and will be gone tomorrow. Mrs. Shelby tries to intervene offering up any possession she may have in order to avert this tragedy but the sale is complete and the fate of Uncle Tom and Harry is sealed. Mrs. Shelby feels that the separation of these two people from their families and the resulting grief is God's curse on slavery, both for the slaves and the people who own them.

Eliza has slyly hid in the closet and hears every word of the Shelbys' conversation which gives her time to wake Harry, pack a few clothes and head out into the night. On the way from the plantation, Eliza stops at Uncle Tom's cabin to warn the man of his fate and Aunt Chloe encourages Uncle Tom to go with Eliza and Harry, but Uncle Tom refuses. Rationalizing that he has never let the master down at any time in his life, Uncle Tom cannot begin now and will stay to be sold tomorrow to help ease Mr. Shelby's debt. Eliza asks Aunt Chloe to tell her husband, George, what has happened to Harry and her, if she should ever see him, and then turns and heads out into the night.

Chapters 4 and 5 Analysis

The interior of Uncle Tom's cabin is one of warmth, friendship and religious worship, much like those of white people, only on a much smaller scale. The author begins to establish the humanity of these black people who are diminished in the eyes of most white people. The emotions and the need for family unity and community reside in all people, no matter the race or color. For the first time in the book, the black dialogue is heard from Uncle Tom and Aunt Chloe, giving the story its authenticity and local color. It is interesting to note that Uncle Tom is allowed writing lessons from young Master George which is an uncommon practice especially in the states further south.

There is also a revelation in the rift between Mr. and Mrs. Shelby in how each reacts differently to the sale of Uncle Tom and Harry. Mr. Shelby is bothered and does not want to be home when Haney arrives tomorrow, but Mrs. Shelby declares she will stand fast and even speak to Uncle Tom in his hour of distress. Mrs. Shelby realizes the larger religious and moral implications of the slavery issue as well, despite her being a sheltered wife of a plantation owner.

Chapter 6

Chapter 6 Summary

Mr. and Mrs. Shelby have a restless night and sleep longer than normal the next morning. To Mrs. Shelby's dismay, Eliza does not answer her bell, even after three times and it is then that the news spreads that Eliza and Harry have escaped. Mrs. Shelby is secretly pleased with the news, but Mr. Shelby is furious at the awkward position he is now in with Mr. Haley, as might be expected.

Mr. Shelby bristles at the insinuation of misconduct over the deal but ultimately calms Mr. Haley with breakfast so that plans for retrieving the runaways can be determined. Mr. Shelby orders two other slaves, Sam and Andy, to prepare horses and get ready to help Mr. Haley in the search effort. Mrs. Shelby makes comments under her breath so that Sam and Andy understand that they are to ride slowly and to confuse the situation as best as possible in order to give Eliza more advantage. Sam and Andy concoct high jinks with the horses and delay so long that eventually the morning extends into dinnertime and Mr. Haley once more partakes at the Shelby's table.

Chapter 6 Analysis

The intensity of the escape and the preparations for the chase is broken by the author's use of humor in the characters of Sam and Andy. Their antics not only amuse each other but the others on the plantation who gather in the attempts to stall the search efforts. Sam and Andy know they can rely on Mrs. Shelby's kindness and feel emboldened in doing their part to alleviate such a painful situation.

Chapters 7 and 8

Chapters 7 and 8 Summary

As Eliza runs through the night with Harry clinging to her, she thinks of the place she is leaving and may never see again and is filled with momentary sadness, but Eliza's maternal instincts are stronger than melancholy and she pushes on. Stopping only once to feed Harry, Eliza moves as quickly as possible and reaches a town on the Ohio River, where she stops at a tavern for some dinner and a little rest.

Crossing the river tonight seems impossible as the ferries have been stopped on account of the ice. The tavern owner seems to sense Eliza's distress about her child and tells her there will be a barge leaving later tonight. With that piece of good news, Eliza and Harry wait in a small bedroom offered by the woman. While Harry sleeps, Eliza hears a commotion outside the window and looks out to see Sam, Andy and Mr. Haley. Sam has seen Eliza and is making extra noise to alert her to the immediate danger.

Eliza scoops Harry up in her arms and runs out the door into the woods bordering the river. With Mr. Haley in hot pursuit, Eliza sees no alternative but to jump on a big piece of ice floating in the river. Miraculously, Eliza is able to jump from ice chunk to ice chunk until she reaches the Ohio side of the river. Her feet bloodied and completely exhausted, Eliza sees a man she recognizes as a friend of Mr. Shelby's who helps her up the riverbank and points to a place of shelter in the town. Back at the Shelby plantation later that night, Sam and Andy recount the story of Eliza's daring escape over the ice and Mr. and Mrs. Shelby cannot help but be amused and relieved.

Mr. Haley has stayed behind at the tavern in the hopes of launching a plan to catch the elusive Eliza. Mr. Haley comes upon an old slave trader friend, Tom Lokar, and Lokar's friend, Marks, a lawyer. After relating the story of the narrow escape this afternoon, Lokar and Marks agree to help Mr. Haley catch Eliza and Harry for a part of the profit. As Mr. Haley is most anxious to get the boy, he agrees that Lokar and Marks can keep Eliza if they manage to capture her.

Chapters 7 and 8 Analysis

Eliza and Harry have the advantage of being mulattos which does not draw attention to them on their escape. Even the woman in the tavern thinks that Eliza is white and does not suspect that any escape is in progress. The author makes an important point in that the societal degrees of color can make all the difference in a person's fate, regardless of that person's true parentage.

Another technique the author uses is that of switching tenses so that the words are directed to the reader in the form of questions. This ploy is intended to draw the reader in and generate some form of sympathy or empathy for an emotionally painful situation

that otherwise may go by with little attention. Stowe wants the reader to pay attention to the scene and not only look at it but be in it and try to experience what the characters are living at the moment.

There is an element of foreshadowing in the personal thoughts of the man who helps Eliza up the riverbank into Ohio. Although the man knows Mr. Shelby and feels an allegiance to him, the man's conscience over the morality of the situation wins out over loyalty to a friend. This rift of conscience will soon divide the country and this very river will be the deciding line. The theme of religion and law begins to emerge in this chapter too as Mrs. Shelby comments that the business of catching slaves is rising to the level of a dignified profession. Mrs. Shelby represents those who morally oppose slavery and is conflicted because of her husband's position as a plantation owner with slaves.

Chapter 9

Chapter 9 Summary

On the Ohio side of the river, Senator and Mrs. Bird are in their home discussing the recent passing of the Fugitive Slave Law which essentially forbids the people in northern states from assisting runaway slaves. Mrs. Bird questions the Christianity of such legislation and informs her husband that she will break the law should she find herself in a position to provide assistance to some unfortunate slave. The Birds are interrupted by the arrival of Eliza and Harry at their door and the two refugees are admitted to the Bird home. Eliza shares her story of fear and exhaustion from crossing the ice-filled Ohio River in an attempt to evade slave catchers. While Mrs. Bird provides food and warm clothing to Eliza and Harry, Eliza tells the story of Mr. Shelby's situation which has predicated her flight.

Eliza also informs the Birds of her husband George's hope to escape to Canada and her own plans to join him there. The Birds provide shelter for a few hours to allow Eliza and Harry to rest and then Senator Bird delivers the runaway mother and son to the home of John Von Trompe, a friend of the Birds, who helps to shelter slaves as part of the Underground Railroad. Bird wishes Eliza well and hastens home to prevent discovery of his secret mission.

Chapter 9 Analysis

Harriet Beecher Stowe begins to create situations, which will bring to light the issue of religion vs. politics in the issue of slavery, which will become a major theme of the novel. Just as in the beginning of the story with Mrs. Shelby, it is the woman of the house, Mrs. Bird who takes a stand against slavery in the name of Christianity. The men are involved in the business and political aspects of the issue and will represent those elements throughout. Senator Bird has sympathetic leanings but must still maintain his political position and cannot be perceived to be anti-slavery.

Chapter 10

Chapter 10 Summary

While Eliza has apparently escaped from the Shelby plantation, Uncle Tom has remained faithful to his master and prepares to be taken away by Mr. Haley. Aunt Chloe is distraught and knows that she will probably never see Tom again and Tom's attempts to comfort his wife with religion do not work this morning. Mrs. Shelby enters the cabin on this unhappy scene and informs Tom that she will find out where he is to be taken and that she will do everything she can to buy him back soon.

Mr. Shelby has gone away on business for a few days so as to avoid this unpleasant departure but Master George arrives at the cabin just in time to see Tom leave. The Shelbys had not informed their son about Uncle Tom's being sold because the boy is so close to Tom. George gives Tom a dollar coin to wear on a string around his neck to remind Tom of the Shelbys. Young Master George's fury and outrage at Uncle Tom's fate is directed at Mr. Haley and the boy swears never to engage in the buying and selling of slaves when he is grown.

Chapter 10 Analysis

In this chapter Stowe begins the humanization of the Negro people by portraying them as human beings with emotions and feelings and family attachments as opposed to being animals which is the current perception. The affectionate natures and loyalty of the people is called out as well as the fear of being sold down river, further south where tales of horror originate. To further this perception of the Negroes, Stowe equips Uncle Tom with a strong Christian ethic buoyed by his being one of the few slaves who can read the Bible. This characterization alone sets the Negro on another level as the popular perception is that religion is one of the characteristics proving the white man's superiority.

Chapter 11

Chapter 11 Summary

It is the same dreary February afternoon when Mr. Wilson, the slave, George's former employer at the factory, enters a tavern in Kentucky. During conversation with another patron at the bar, Mr. Wilson reads the flyer announcing a reward for George's capture. Whoever produces George or some suitable proof of his death will be rewarded with four hundred dollars.

Soon after a stranger who looks to be a Spanish man enters the tavern accompanied by his servant. The new man, who is introduced as Henry Butler, exchanges a knowing look at Mr. Wilson and Mr. Butler invites Mr. Wilson to a private meeting in the back of the building. It is then that Mr. Butler reveals that he is actually George Harris, Mr. Wilson's former worker, who is traveling in disguise on his way to Canada.

Mr. Wilson is amazed at George's audacity and tries to talk George out of the risky plan not only for George's safety but because it is illegal. George can barely contain his outrage for Mr. Wilson's obtuse views. If George remains he will surely be beaten or killed, so running is his only viable option. George also makes it clear that slaves are not part of the country, as they have no rights so therefore have no obligations. George had been separated from his own family many years ago and he will not let that happen to his little family unit if he can possibly avoid it. Mr. Wilson's efforts to halt George are futile as George is undeterred and can smell the fresh air of freedom being so close to the Ohio River.

Chapter 11 Analysis

George's experiences have been a little different from most other slaves in that his intelligence puts him in positions where he could utilize his wits and work among white men. This serves as a sort of elevation in status for George who has had some privileges and has some knowledge in managing in the white man's world. It is this ingenuity that allows George to undertake his bold escape right under the flyer announcing a award for his capture.

George is also able to intelligently discuss his position with Mr. Wilson and lament the lack of country and rules that would protect George and his family. George can also project and ask Mr. Wilson what he would do should Mr. Wilson's family be captured by a tribe of Indians and made to hoe for the rest of their lives. Stowe uses George to symbolize the higher natures of Negroes which are normally perceived to be nonexistent.

Chapter 12

Chapter 12 Summary

Mr. Haley and Uncle Tom continue on their journey and Mr. Haley is intrigued by an announcement for a slave auction to be held in Washington, D.C. the next day. It is Mr. Haley's plan to have a whole gang of slaves to be sold down river with Uncle Tom. Mr. Haley spends the night in a hotel while Tom is locked in a local jail. At the auction, Mr. Haley buys a young boy named Albert but refuses to buy Albert's mother because she is getting on in years and will not bring as much money as Mr. Haley wants to make at the next slave auction. The mother pleads with Mr. Haley but the trader is adamant about his decision and separates the boy and his mother.

Mr. Haley loads his new slaves on board a river boat along with Tom to begin their journey further south. Mr. Haley also buys a young woman named Lucy and her baby, who are already on the ship. Another trader wants to buy the child and Mr. Haley agrees on the condition that the switch will not be made until the ship is near its destination so he can take the child without the mother realizing it. When Lucy goes to the side of the ship for a few moments her child is stolen and she becomes hysterical when the realization of what has happened sinks in.

Lucy is seated near Tom below deck and it is clear that the young woman is distraught over her situation. Tom tries to console Lucy but she is bereft and sullen. Tom sleeps fitfully that night and is aware of Lucy's presence nearby until he wakes near dawn and sees that Lucy's seat is empty. When Tom hears a splash in the water he knows that the young woman has thrown herself overboard in her grief.

Chapter 12 Analysis

Stowe uses the technique of irony in this chapter when describing the two characters, Mr. Haley and Uncle Tom. Mr. Haley, a white man, and supposedly a higher being, thinks only about Tom's physical attributes in relation to their salability. At the same time Tom, who supposedly is no better than an animal in the estimation of many white men, muses about passages from the Bible and the furtherance of his spiritual well being.

Stowe uses the technique of addressing the reader in this chapter when questioning what makes Mr. Haley so despicable. The author asks the reader to consider the events from Mr. Haley's perspective of being simply a middleman in business decisions that are made by other men. There is also the suggestion that during the Final Judgment of men's lives, Mr. Haley may be provided more grace than the men who buy and sell these Negro human beings.

Chapter 13

Chapter 13 Summary

The story turns now to Eliza and Harry's escape as mother and son have been given refuge at the home of a Quaker family in Indiana. The cozy, warm home of Simeon and Rachel Halliday is a welcome reprieve from the terror and exhaustion which have plagued Eliza for the past several days. The Hallidays offer Eliza a permanent home but Eliza must forge on to Canada to be with her husband, George.

The Hallidays and their neighbors in the Quaker community provide warm clothes, food and sweet treats for Eliza and Harry in the first acts of kindness Eliza has experienced since leaving Mrs. Shelby back in Kentucky. Later that day, Simeon comes home with the news that more runaway slaves will be arriving at the home tonight and George, Eliza's husband, will be among them. The shock of this news makes Eliza faint and when she wakes several hours later she finds George at her side. The Halliday family and neighbors make the final preparations for getting George, Eliza and Harry carried on to the next stop in their journey, which will begin at nightfall for safety's sake.

Chapter 13 Analysis

The author uses this scenario to interject the pacifist beliefs of the Quaker people who do no harm to any man regardless of that man's personal beliefs. The Hallidays are more than glad to harbor the runaway slaves but would also not take up arms against the men who are in pursuit of those slaves. This is an unnerving situation for Eliza and George who have never felt such goodwill or such equality with a white person. Instead of resting in this place on a permanent basis, the atmosphere in the home is the taste of freedom the little family needs to carry them on to Canada, where freedom is unretractable.

Having established the plot of the book, Stowe now begins more use of literary techniques such as the metaphor of Rachel Halliday's rocking chair with its human characteristics. "It had a turn for quacking and squeaking...either from having taken cold in early life, or from some asthmatic affection, or perhaps from nervous derangement..." Obviously a chair cannot be afflicted with these human ailments but it is very clear what the author intends by using the characteristics in the description.

Chapters 14, 15 and 16

Chapters 14, 15 and 16 Summary

The story now reverts to the situation regarding Uncle Tom, who is still aboard the riverboat headed for New Orleans and the slave auction. Mr. Haley has been impressed by Tom's gentle nature and subservient behavior and removes Tom's shackles, which allow Tom to walk around the ship. During Tom's walks he sees a beautiful blonde girl of about five years of age who seems almost divine in her appearance and gentle manner.

The girl, whose name is Evangeline but is called Eva, befriends Tom and the big Negro man and the tiny blonde girl become friends. Eva asks her father, Augustine St. Clare, to buy Tom so that he may go home with them, but Augustine is not on a slave buying expedition. Augustine and Eva are returning home from New England where the father and daughter traveled to escort Augustine's aunt, Miss Ophelia, back to New Orleans, who will be assuming the household management duties of the St. Clare mansion. Augustine's wife, Marie, is quite delicate and prone to nervous disorders and hypochondria and is no longer capable of managing the household and all the slaves. It is Augustine's hope that Miss Ophelia's, Vermont instincts for organization and order, will help put the household in efficient working order again.

Augustine is a twin son of a Louisiana planter with a long heritage in the South. Augustine favors his mother's sensitive personality as opposed to that of his brash father and dotes on little Eva because of her resemblance to his now-dead mother. Augustine is not agriculturally-minded, so his twin brother now manages the plantation while Augustine and his family live in the mansion in New Orleans. As the steamboat moves closer to New Orleans, Eva accidentally falls overboard and Tom jumps in to rescue the girl and saves her from drowning. Augustine buys Tom from Mr. Haley and Eva is delighted that her new friend will be going home with them.

The welcome at the mansion is cool as Adolph, Augustine's servant, is less than impressed by Tom's rustic presence. Tom cannot help but be overwhelmed at the opulence of the home and stands aside as more greetings take place. Eva runs to Mammy, one of the head servants of the house, an action which does not please Miss Ophelia, who is always concerned with propriety and the appearance of things.

Marie coolly receives Eva and Augustine and is bored by the gifts he has brought her, preferring instead to drone on about her latest ailments and his lack of concern for her welfare. Augustine hopes that the acquisition of Tom, who will now be Marie's driver, will cheer up his wife, but Marie only scoffs that Tom is probably one of those slaves who is drunk all the time.

After Miss Ophelia has been in the St. Clare household for a few days, she engages in a discussion of slavery with Augustine and Marie. Marie is pained to discuss the potential plight of anyone other than herself and feels that slavery is the natural order of

things and it is her birthright to use slaves any way she sees fit. Marie is especially perplexed by her own daughter's benevolent behavior toward inferiors. Even Miss Ophelia is weakening on the right to slavery issue but does admit that some of the household slaves do seem to have some redeeming qualities.

Chapters 14, 15 and 16 Analysis

Eva St. Clare and her father, Augustine, become the compassionate counterpart to the Hallidays, who are assisting George and Eliza further north. Although Tom is not on his way to freedom it does seem that his fate will not be as dire as it could have been had he been taken to the slave auction in New Orleans instead of being bought by the St. Clares.

Although Tom and Eva are extreme opposites in appearance and life situations, there is an affinity for kindness and spirituality which draws the two together and creates a stronger bond as the story progresses. Sometimes it seems that the simple hearts of these two unlikely friends are the only ones who feel the sin of slavery appropriately. Augustine owns slaves but does not seem interested in them for labor or profit; slaves are simply a fact of life. Even Miss Ophelia, an abolitionist from the North, still has prejudices when faced with daily life with Negroes.

Eva is also in stark contrast to her petulant mother, Marie, who acts more childlike and immature than the five-year-old girl. The girl's spirituality is of a level far beyond her years and Stowe appropriately names her Evangeline to symbolize the fervor of religious evangelists throughout history. Eva also symbolizes the factions in the country whose pure hearts abhor the reality of slavery and fight with whatever tools available to speak out against it.

In the midst of so much discussion and angst around the slavery issue, the author introduces some humor to relieve some of the intensity. Augustine St. Clare is described as a sarcastic fellow and Stowe pits him brilliantly against the long-suffering character of his wife. In one scenario Augustine relates to Marie his form of reprimanding a slave when he has had to chastise his own servant, Adolph, for wearing some of Augustine's clothes and assuming a haughty manner. "...I was obliged to let him understand explicitly that I preferred to keep *some* of my clothes for my own personal wearing; also, I put his magnificence upon an allowance of cologne water, and actually was so cruel as to restrict him to one dozen of my cambric handkerchiefs."

Chapter 17

Chapter 17 Summary

The action moves back to the north with George, Eliza and Harry about to make their departure from the Halliday home. Rachel is preparing a feast for the little slave family so they will be well nourished for the next leg of their journey. The atmosphere in the home is congenial but tinged with anxiety at the approaching evening's adventure. Soon the family is interrupted by the arrival of a neighbor, Phineas Fletcher, who announces that the talk in town is that the slave catchers are nearby and hot on the trail of George, Eliza and little Harry. Phineas is a rough but kindhearted man who feels obliged to help the little family escape the approaching captors.

Meanwhile George and Eliza spend a few moments together to express their love for each other in the event that the evening brings disaster instead of their safekeeping. Soon Phineas ushers George, Eliza, Harry and two other runaways into his covered wagon and the group sets out into the night. Phineas has made arrangements with another anti-slavery sympathizer, Michael, to ride out on horseback to notify Phineas of the whereabouts of the slave catchers. Soon Michael approaches the covered wagon with the news of the imminent approach of the enemy so Phineas yells for the slaves to take cover behind some rocks at the top of a steep hill.

A man named Tom Lokar who attempts to climb the hill to retrieve the slaves, never thinking they might be armed, since they are in the company of a Quaker man, leads the slave catcher gang. George, however, has managed to bring along a firearm and shoots Tom, who falls to the ground wounded while his cohorts run away. When the coast is clear for escape, Phineas and his runaway charges prepare to make their way to the wagon again but the sounds of the wounded Tom, deserted by his gang stop Phineas, George and the others, who move Tom to a wagon, where he is transported to a nearby Quaker home for medical care.

Chapter 17 Analysis

The Christian kindnesses shown to George in the Halliday household temper his anger for a short while and George considers the thought of becoming a Christian himself. There is much to do; yet before such issues can be entertained, George must secure freedom for his family. Even though George makes his "declaration of independence" from atop the rocks where the slaves hid from Tom's gang, George will not rest easy until they have reached Canada. George's new thinking about Christianity is soon tested, as he and the others cannot let the wounded Tom alone to die on the hillside. The author positions George in the ultimate irony of having him assist the man who had been set to kill or capture him earlier that night.

Chapters 18, 19 and 20

Chapters 18, 19 and 20 Summary

Back in New Orleans, Tom is adjusting to life at the St. Clare household and has become a personal favorite of Augustine's, which infuriates the haughty Adolph. Tom is able to help with the shopping while exercising some economies, which pleases Augustine, who is not able to exercise the same restraint regarding finances. Tom becomes more comfortable with Augustine and even tries to counsel his young master on the evils of the drinking and frivolous lifestyle which does not include religion. One night after Augustine has come home drunk again, Tom begs Augustine to please stop his errant behavior for the sake of his everlasting soul. Tom's pleas touch Augustine, as Tom is the only one in the household brave enough to intervene on his master's behalf, so Augustine vows not to drink again.

While Tom attempts to take care of Augustine's spiritual well-being, Miss Ophelia attempts to bring order to the dismal state of the housekeeping at the St. Clare mansion. Miss Ophelia's first obstacle is Old Dinah, the head cook for the house, who is so firmly entrenched in her ways that no one else ever challenged her methods. Miss Ophelia is appalled to find the cupboards and drawers filled with items that are completely out of place; onions in a linen drawer, nutmeg in a pocket.

Miss Ophelia's New England sense of order cannot abide this disarray and she informs Old Dinah that the kitchen will be organized with the expectation that it remain that way in the future. Old Dinah does not understand the need for this intrusion and the other slaves are in awe that Old Dinah is forced to comply with the orders of this new member of the household.

The display of inefficiency and waste found in the kitchen prompts Miss Ophelia to discuss the topic with Augustine who is completely nonplussed by the news. It is widely known that Negroes are lazy and dishonest, a fact which Augustine cannot counter, plus Old Dinah prepares the most wonderful meals and that is really all that concerns the master of this disorganized household.

An old slave woman named Prue, who remains drunk from the grief of losing a son, visits the household kitchen slaves periodically. Prue claims that she welcomes death to bring an end to her suffering and Tom attempts to console the woman and asks her to seek religion as a means of finding relief during her remaining time on earth. Before long news reaches the St. Clare household that Prue has been beaten to death by her owner for drunkenness, a fact which spurs more discussion between Augustine and Miss Ophelia on the topic of slavery.

Augustine is rather blasy about the unfortunate event but Miss Ophelia cannot help but be outraged at the horror of it. According to Augustine it is within the rights of every slave holder to treat his property as he chooses and no man, regardless of how noble,

has the right to intervene. Augustine does reveal that he himself has employed the technique of kindness on slaves, one in particular, a man named Scipio, who responded most favorably when all methods of brutality proved to be ineffective.

In her continuing friendship with Tom, little Eva attempts to write a letter to Tom's family indicating his location and good health but the child is ineffectual in completing the task. Augustine intervenes to write the letter but cautions Tom about thoughts of returning the Shelby plantation in Kentucky. One day, soon after Augustine's lengthy discussion on slavery with Miss Ophelia, Augustine arrives home with a little slave girl named Topsy, who is to become the exclusive property of Miss Ophelia. Augustine wants to put Miss Ophelia's ideas and theories about slavery into practical application and challenges his aunt to educate the girl, who is known to be cunning and unmanageable.

Miss Ophelia is appalled at the intrusion of Topsy into her life and into the household but Augustine reminds his aunt of the hypocrisy of religious zealots who will send missionaries to do the hard work in the world but never consider taking on the causes themselves. In an attempt to appeal to Miss Ophelia's kinder side, Augustine shares stories of abuse which Topsy has endured, which he hopes will help his aunt realize that, while Topsy is an unexpected intrusion, there is the opportunity to do some first hand redemption.

In her typical orderly fashion, Miss Ophelia begins instruction with Topsy in the operations of the household and diligently schools the girl in the mechanics of personal toiletry and domestic arts. Any further attempts at education are thwarted because Topsy cannot spell, or read, and does not even know her parents, or how old she is. The gravity of the slave situation and the impact on the lives of the Negro people begins to have an impact on Miss Ophelia, as she witnesses the ravages firsthand through Topsy.

Topsy's insolent behavior and lack of adherence to any rules begins to wreak havoc in the house, even stirring the wrath of the other slaves, who quickly tire of the girl's cunning ways. Miss Ophelia even catches Topsy with items stolen from Miss Ophelia's personal effects and the girl eventually admits to the thefts, but also admits to committing crimes she did not commit.

Miss Ophelia's exasperation with the girl pushes her to the point of wanting to beat Topsy and Augustine tells Miss Ophelia to do as she sees fit; however, it is a vicious cycle well known to Southern slave owners, that slaves become more hardened with abuse which, in turn, makes the masters more hardened. Miss Ophelia experiences the reality of managing a situation, which she had just philosophized about back home in Vermont. Miss Ophelia continues Topsy's education in religion and domestic arts while Augustine slips little gifts and candies to the girl on the side.

Chapters 18, 19 and 20 Analysis

This section is important because the author wants to point out the realities of trying to alter a lifestyle which has been in place for many years. The anti-slavery advocates, symbolized by Miss Ophelia, may very well act differently from the positions they take, should they be faced with the daily management of people and a system so wrought with abuse and inequities. The author wants people to understand that theories, however noble they may be, can be seriously tested in reality, and the issue of slavery has many facets to be considered by those who profess its abolition.

In spite of the gravity of the topic of the book, the author weaves in literary techniques like similes and metaphors, which make it quite engaging. In the instance where Augustine is describing the statesmanlike characteristics of his well-disciplined father, he tells Miss Ophelia, "The fact is, my father showed the exact sort of talent for a statesman. He could have divided Poland as easily as an orange..." Augustine's lyrical manner of speaking continues later in the section where he defends Eva's playing with Topsy, against Miss Ophelia's objections that Topsy will corrupt Eva. Augustine simply states, "She can't teach her mischief; she might teach it to some children, but evil rolls off Eva's mind like dew off a cabbage leaf - not a drop sinks in."

Chapter 21

Chapter 21 Summary

Back in Kentucky, Tom's letter has been received at the Shelby plantation and Mrs. Shelby once again raises the issue of buying Tom back so he may return to Aunt Chloe and the children. Unfortunately, Mr. Shelby's financial situation has not improved enough that this is possible, so Mrs. Shelby declares she will make efforts on Tom's behalf and give music lessons for a fee. Mr. Shelby will not consider the disgrace of having his wife earning money and flatly denies the request.

Aunt Chloe is moved by Mrs. Shelby's attempts and learns there is an opportunity for her to earn some money by being employed at a confectioner's shop not far away. Mrs. Shelby makes the arrangements so that Aunt Chloe can leave and Aunt Chloe is buoyed at the thought of earning money, which will help return Tom to the Shelby plantation. Mrs. Shelby tells Aunt Chloe she herself will also continue to strive to secure the necessary funds for Tom's return, and Master George promises to write a letter to Tom stating the most recent events on his behalf.

Chapter 21 Analysis

Once more the author shows the difference in the way that women view the issue of slavery vs. the way men do. Mrs. Shelby looks at Tom's absence as being apart from his family, while Mr. Shelby, even though he had liked Tom, views the situation as a business transaction, not a personal matter. Stowe uses the dialect of the rural Kentucky slaves to help lend authenticity to the characters, especially Aunt Chloe who "had a particular fancy for calling poultry, poetry...'La sakes! I can't see; one jis good as turry,--poetry suthin' good, anyhow;' and so poetry, Chloe continued to call it."

In another situation, when Aunt Chloe brings up the idea of going to work for a baker to earn money she says, "Laws! I an't a proposin' nothin'; only Sam he said der was one of dese yer perfectioners, dey calls 'em, in Louisville, said he wanted a good hand at cake and pastry; and said he'd give four dollar a week to one, he did." In spite of being told that the correct name for the baker is confectioner, not perfectioner, Aunt Chloe persists in her old ways.

Chapters 22, 23 and 24

Chapters 22, 23 and 24 Summary

It has been two years since Uncle Tom's arrival at the St. Clare mansion and the relationship between the slave and the little girl, Eva, has steadily grown. It is Eva's kindness and religious tendencies, which offer comfort to Tom who still misses his own family but is able to find contentment, in spite of his circumstances.

Every summer the St. Clare family takes up residence at their Lake Pontchartrain villa and Tom and Eva spend many hours at the lake reading the Bible and keeping company. One evening, during a particularly spectacular sunset, Eva senses a heavenly aura and tells Tom she will be going to heaven before long. Tom is chilled at Eva's proclamation because he has seen her weakening condition over the past several months and feels as if Eva knows something no one else could know. The author interjects some statements directed at the reader, that children like Eva never live long, almost as if they are too good and pure to remain on Earth for too long a time. If the reader should ever see an especially sensitive child with a deep, spiritual light in her eye, it may as well be reasoned that the child is marked as an angel and will soon return to heaven.

The author also makes the statement that those around Eva do not have any sense of her imminent departure. Miss Ophelia has noticed Eva's weakening condition, combined with a persistent cough, but Augustine will not listen to his aunt's admonitions and denies the possibility of any dire outcome. Eva is not strong enough to run with the slave children any longer and watches them play throughout the summer. One day Eva asks her mother why the slave children are not taught to read, to which Marie responds that people simply don't educate slaves. Eva thinks that everyone should be able to read so the words of the Bible are available to them and wishes to set up a school some day to teach reading and religion to Negroes. Marie thinks her daughter is a peculiar child and pays no more attention to Eva's foolish thoughts.

One day, Augustine's brother, Alfred, arrives at the villa with his son, Henrique, a twelve-year-old boy. Alfred and Henrique are as dark and exotic-looking as Augustine and Eva are fair. Their personalities are in line with their looks, as well as the fiery temperaments of Alfred and his son, and the congenial personalities of Augustine and Eva.

The stark contrast in the children becomes evident one day, when Henrique erupts into a fit of rage when his slave, Dodo, answers in a way he considers inappropriate, regarding the matter of a horse being brushed. Henrique hits Dodo, to Eva's horror and Tom validates that Dodo had not been in error in his answer. Henrique throws Dodo a coin and walks away, but Eva remains and tries to console Dodo for the injustice he has suffered. Later, Eva chastises Henrique for his behavior in the incident and makes him promise to behave kinder in the future.

Alfred and Henrique depart after a few days and Miss Ophelia forces Marie to address Eva's frail health. Ever the hypochondriac, Marie feels that Eva has no condition that could possibly be worse than the ailments she herself suffers on a daily basis. It is only after Miss Ophelia calls a doctor to tend to Eva that Marie considers the possibility the child may actually be ill.

Everyone in the St. Clare household begins to sense the gravity of Eva's health, but Eva remarks she is happy to be returning home to heaven soon, her only sadness in leaving her dear father and the slaves who have suffered so much in their lifetimes. Eva asks her father if he will free Tom after her death but Augustine is too overcome with emotion to respond and gently holds his daughter until she falls asleep.

Chapters 22, 23 and 24 Analysis

Once again the author shows stark contrasts between the two sides of the slavery issue, as exhibited by the physical and moral attributes of Alfred and Henrique, as opposed to Augustine and Eva. As is true in much literature, the forces of evil are portrayed as dark and menacing, which is the description of Alfred and Henrique, while fair coloring and temperament just like Augustine and Eva mark good and pure overtures. The author also introduces the element of foreshadowing in this section when Eva, struck by the brilliant sunset over the lake, remarks that she will soon be returning to heaven. It seems impossible that such a sweet, young person could possess such heavy thoughts, but dying seems to Eva, as if she will be returning home.

There is visual foreshadowing as well, when one afternoon, Eva runs up the steps toward Augustine, sitting on the veranda and the rays of light from the sun "formed a kind of glory behind her, as she came forward in her white dress, with her golden hair and glowing cheeks, her eyes unnaturally bright with the slow fever that burned in her veins." The author wants the reader to share Augustine's perception of Eva as an angel so both the reader and the father will understand what is soon to come. Stowe also makes the editorial comment that the good die young, as if to point out the purity and compassion, needed in the world to fix the horrible evils, which suffocate it, cannot live in such an environment, and the world will suffer in untold ways from lack of such compassion.

Chapters 25, 26 and 27

Chapters 25, 26 and 27 Summary

Miss Ophelia's challenges continue with the education of the slave girl, Topsy, who continues to sneak around the house and steal items from bedchambers. One day Miss Ophelia reaches her tolerance level when she realizes that Topsy has cut up one of her bonnets to make doll clothes. Marie self-righteously re-states her position that Negroes must be dealt with severely, but Augustine still maintains that kindness will ultimately prevail, and asks Miss Ophelia to employ her Christian beliefs in the ongoing management of Topsy.

Eva tries to intervene to mitigate the angst surrounding Topsy's presence in the household and questions the slave girl about her past in an attempt to understand her better. Topsy has no recollection of any family, or of any kindness shown to her, until Eva shows compassion and tells Topsy of the love to be found forever in Jesus Christ. When Eva's illness confines her to her bedchamber Topsy faithfully brings fresh flowers everyday, an act which Marie tries to stop, but Eva encourages the slave girl to return each day. Eva tries to explain to Marie that Topsy is trying to make up for the bad she had done in the past and if bringing flowers is part of that then the matter is simple enough.

Tom, along with the other slaves in the household, can sense Eva's illness is worsening every day and the house is quiet with hushed conversation. One day Eva calls all the slaves to her room to tell them of her love for them and her wish that they should all be free one day and also find the love of Jesus Christ. Then Eva proceeds to cut locks of her golden curls and hands one lock to each of the slaves gathered in the room. The gesture is too emotionally draining for Mammy and Tom, who are escorted out of the room by Miss Ophelia.

Eva assures Augustine that all the rest of her curls belong to him, Marie and Miss Ophelia, and proceeds to question her father on the strength of his Christian belief. Augustine's evasive answer on the topic sends Eva into a sobbing fit until Augustine agrees to believe the same way that Eva does. Eva continued to decline and died in her bed just a few days later, amid much lamenting and hysterics from those who loved her. Augustine goes through the motions of Eva's funeral in a state of shock, while Marie is consumed with the propriety of the funeral. Augustine's stoic behavior does nothing to bridge the gap in this already troubled marriage, but he cannot bear Marie's petulant behavior with his grief for Eva so fresh.

Not long after the funeral the St. Clares return to the house in New Orleans to try to begin their lives without their beloved Eva. Tom is the only one who seems to sense Augustine's continuing anguish and takes the liberty of talking to his master about the comfort to be found in the Christian religion. Augustine needs something tangible to believe in and does not understand how Tom can believe in this Jesus, whom Tom has

never seen. Tom feels Jesus' presence in his soul and shares with Augustine the despair felt when torn from his family on the Shelby plantation, but Jesus put contentment in Tom's heart and Tom is ready to do whatever Jesus asks of him. Augustine is incredulous that the life of a man named Jesus, who lived over a thousand years ago, can still impact the lives of others today. Augustine would like to pray but feels nothing any time he has ever attempted it, so Tom kneels and shows his master how to do it and then quietly leaves the room.

Chapters 25, 26 and 27 Analysis

The theme of religion becomes increasingly more important in this section with continuing debates on Christian treatment of slaves in the St. Clare household, as well as Eva's fervor to impart her faith before her death. Augustine, who is not a confirmed Christian, pushes Miss Ophelia to prove her faith by treating Topsy in the manner consistent with Christian teachings. Ironically, it is Augustine, who is a kind man and has the most benevolent tendencies toward the slaves, who is the non-believer in the household. Another irony is the spiritual intelligence exhibited by Uncle Tom in his dealings with Augustine, who is supposedly Tom's superior in every way. Augustine does begin to mellow with Tom's guidance on the topic and there is every indication that Augustine is on the verge of a breakthrough, and the kindness that has ruled him is very much Christian, only Augustine did not know it.

Eva's death, while tragic, is the turning point in the further revelation of more religious experiences and beliefs, as those who knew her are fixed in her requests to do good and to follow Jesus' teachings. Although just a child, Eva had great impact on the lives around her and Augustine seems to be particularly moved by his daughter's dying request that he become a Christian. Marie, on the other hand, feels very secure in her belief of what Christianity is and continues to live in her self-absorbed world. Culturally, Eva's death scene is classic Victorian with all the funeral traditions of laying the body out for viewing, while people visit and bring the appropriate white flowers. There is significance in Eva's locks of hair also, as there is a tradition of cutting locks of a dead person's hair for keepsakes in lockets, or to be woven into jewelry, or other mementoes.

Chapters 28 and 29

Chapters 28 and 29 Summary

After a few weeks of contemplation over Eva's Bible, Augustine reaches the decision to free Tom, which had been Eva's request many weeks ago. Miss Ophelia has taken her Christian beliefs to heart and commits herself completely to raising Topsy to be a fine Christian girl and asks Augustine to prepare the papers declaring Topsy to be Miss Ophelia's property. It is Miss Ophelia's plan to return to Vermont with Topsy as her young charge. The thought of the abolitionists' reactions to this scenario makes Augustine tease his aunt about the reception she will receive back north. Miss Ophelia is unfazed by Augustine's comments and urges Augustine to make the proper arrangements to have the other slaves freed so there would be no question as to their fate, should something happen to Augustine. Augustine has nothing more to lose since Eva's death and agrees to have the appropriate papers drawn up if Miss Ophelia will honor her commitment to help educate freed slaves, a job for which she is more than ready.

Tragedy unexpectedly strikes the St. Clare household again, when one night, Augustine is mortally wounded trying to intervene during a knife fight in a cafy. The sight of her dying husband makes Marie collapse into several fainting spells and Miss Ophelia attends to her nephew the best she can. Augustine asks Tom to pray for him, but Augustine does not recover and dies before being able to draw up the papers releasing Tom and the other slaves from bondage.

Augustine's death throws the household into wild confusion and panic when Marie takes control of the slaves, whose fates are still sealed in slavery. Marie's views on the treatment of slaves are widely known throughout the house and the slaves all fear for their immediate safety, as well as their long-term prospects. During one particularly vicious mood, Marie orders a young woman named Rosa be taken to the whipping house for fifteen lashes, for talking back to her. Marie has never liked Rosa for the girl's inherent beauty and grace and finds this opportunity to take some revenge. Miss Ophelia tries in vain to intervene on Rosa' behalf, but the punishment is carried out. Later on, Miss Ophelia also tries to reason with Marie regarding Tom's fate, given Augustine's decision to free Tom, but Marie is fixed on selling Tom at the slave warehouse because he will bring good money. The news he will not be freed devastates Tom, who ultimately accepts his new fate with nobility and asks Miss Ophelia to write to his family on the Shelby Plantation to inform them of the situation. Soon afterwards, Marie makes plans to sell the mansion and move back into her father's home. Tom and the other slaves are sent away with a slave trader.

Chapters 28 and 29 Analysis

With the agreement to free his slaves, Augustine has found redemption just as little Eva had hoped. It is ironic that as soon as Augustine finds a renewed purpose for living he is killed so violently and can never enact the compassionate decisions he has made. It is also ironic that Augustine, who was a gentle soul, should be killed in such a violent way, shadowing to a degree the barbaric death of the ultimate compassionate soul, Jesus Christ.

Another tragic irony is that Tom, who came within days of being set free, is now cruelly back in bondage. Tom's acceptance of the twist of fate, however, is characteristically spiritual, despite his deep disappointment. The author makes the point of the completely tenuous nature of a slave's life, especially after the death of a benevolent master. The fate of any person can be altered without notice, but the slaves had no laws or societal regulations on their side to prevent their being completely uprooted and separated from familiar surroundings and family. In the case of the death of a benevolent owner like Augustine St. Clare, the uprooting is particularly cruel because the chances of being similarly situated so well, are very slim.

Chapters 30, 31 and 32

Chapters 30, 31 and 32 Summary

Tom and the other slaves from the St. Clare house arrive at the slave warehouse run by a man named Mr. Skeggs, whose intention it is to treat the new arrivals as best as can be expected so they will be fed, cleaned and hopefully in better spirits, which will bring better money on the auction block. Mr. Skeggs uses the antics of his own slave, named Sambo, to help pick up the spirits of the slaves, but Sambo just taunts them and derides them into dancing and singing in preparation for sale.

Two slaves in the women's quarters, a woman named Susan, and her daughter Emmeline, are in deep distress at the prospect of being separated at the sale tomorrow. It is clear from their gentle demeanors and clothing the women have been treated well, in a fine home before their arrival here. Emmeline is a lovely young girl of fifteen, and Susan is petrified at the almost certain fate of her daughter at the hands of these evil slave traders.

As the slaves are lined up for inspection, Tom notices a particularly repugnant man coming his way and later learns the man's name of Simon Legree. Legree selects Tom and Emmeline for invasive inspections and eventually buys the two at the sale. Susan is distraught at her daughter's fate and pleads with the kindly man who is now her own new master to bid on Emmeline in a last desperate act. Legree is fixed on having Emmeline for his own and consistently outbids Susan's new owner until the sale is finalized.

Legree's new slaves are loaded onto a boat headed for Legree's plantation, located on the Red River in Louisiana. Legree sells off all the clothes Tom has brought in his trunk and makes Tom change into a set of clothes which must last for at least another year. Tom manages to retain his Bible by hiding it from Legree, but aches at the sight of his personal mementoes being tossed overboard.

Eventually this sad band of travelers reaches Legree's rundown plantation and are met by Sambo and Quimbo, slaves who Legree puts to work as overseers of the whole plantation. Sambo receives a new woman named Lucy, whom Legree had purchased in New Orleans, while it is Emmeline's fate to become Legree's new mistress. Tom is shown to a hut, which is in such a ramshackle state that Tom's faith falters momentarily as his new life becomes real.

As the evening draws on, the other slaves on the plantation return from the day in the cotton fields. The evening meal consists of corn cakes, for which the slaves must first grind the corn into meal before preparing. Tom senses the overwhelming fatigue of these people and assists two women in preparing their meals. Tom is happy to provide any ease to suffering and takes the opportunity to tell the women about Jesus and the Bible.

Chapters 30, 31 and 32 Analysis

In the character of Simon Legree, Stowe creates one of the most famous icons in American literature to symbolize malicious and greedy behavior. Legree's personal countenance is repulsive and his plantation is in ruins. Legree did not inherit his land but bought it to help someone out of a debt, so Legree has none of the cultural and familial lineage of the typical Southern gentleman to take the edge off his distasteful persona.

Everything about Legree is rotten, even the ground around the house will not flower anymore because of his presence. The only exceptions are the trees, which line the gravel drive to the house that Stowe describes as, "a noble avenue of China trees, whose graceful forms and ever-springing foliage seemed to be the only things there, that neglect could not daunt or alter - like noble spirits, so deeply-rooted in goodness, as to flourish and grow stronger amid discouragement and decay." The strongly-rooted trees symbolize the lineage of slaves whose lives were endeared with nobility and silence at this place and whose legacy is the grace with which they bore their trials and sorrows.

Chapters 33, 34, 35 and 36

Chapters 33, 34, 35 and 36 Summary

Tom adapts to his new circumstances as best as can be expected and develops amiable relationships with those around him and also catches the eye of Legree who silently considers making Tom an overseer. Tom's conscientious and compassionate nature eventually irritates Legree who would prefer that Tom were a bit more ruthless and cunning like Quimbo and Sambo.

One day, Tom is joined on the walk to the cotton fields by a distinctive mulatto woman, who says nothing but remains close to Tom throughout the day. Soon Tom learns the woman's name is Cassy and she had been Legree's mistress until the recent arrival of Emmeline. In spite of her regal bearing, Cassy is a facile cotton-picker and can hold her own in the fields. Lucy, one of the slaves who arrived with Tom, is slow and labors hard to fill her bag with cotton. Tom cannot bear the thought of Lucy falling behind so he puts some of his cotton in Lucy's bag, an act which earns both Tom and Lucy a slash of the whip from Sambo who has been watching them.

Cassy moves close enough to talk to Tom and puts some of her cotton in Tom's bag but warns Tom about the dangers of doing that again. According to Cassy there is no room for kindness and compassion on Legree's property so Tom should abandon all thoughts in this vein in order to avoid more trouble. Legree's snitch, Sambo, tells Legree of Tom's kind act in the fields today so Legree determines to break Tom's spirit by ordering Tom to whip Lucy because her bag of cotton does not weigh enough for today's efforts. Tom's refusal to beat another human being, results in his own severe whipping, first at Legree's hand and then by the two overseers.

While Tom recovers in an old outbuilding he is visited by Cassy who brings water to drink and ointment for the wounds. Cassy again reminds Tom of how to conduct himself to avoid more torture because of the way Legree runs the plantation but Tom has no intention of bending to Legree's evil ways even if it means his own death. Cassy confides in Tom that she used to be a Christian but that her religion has left her because of all the physical and emotional abuses suffered throughout her life. Tom encourages Cassy to find the way back to religion, but Cassy is resolute in her position.

Because of her position of being Legree's mistress for so many years, Cassy has a familiarity with Legree which none of the other slaves have. This relationship allows Cassy to challenge Legree on the stupidity of whipping a strong slave like Tom during the busy cotton picking time. Cassy is no longer afraid of Legree and can now keep him at a distance because she threatens to bring up the devil which lives inside her, a fact which terrifies Legree.

Soon Cassy has the opportunity to talk privately with Emmeline who is petrified of living in the house with Legree and begs Cassy to run away with her and live in the swamp to

avoid the hideous Legree. Cassy tries to calm Emmeline and relates stories of past incidents of torture of slaves, who had made an attempt to escape, and advises the girl to do her best to adjust so she will not go crazy.

Moved by Tom's compassion, Cassy once more pleads with Legree not to beat Tom anymore because he is a good worker and cannot be spared in the fields. Legree must have the last word on the issue and visits Tom in the outbuilding and challenges him about his subservience once more. Tom agrees to any type of work that is required of him, but adamantly refuses to engage in punishing anyone. Legree flies into a rage and beats Tom yet again, until Cassy intervenes and tells Legree that Tom has more value in the fields than in recovering in some shack. Legree leaves Cassy to console Tom once more.

Chapters 33, 34, 35 and 36 Analysis

In spite of his horrid countenance and evil ways, Legree is a very superstitious man and Cassy is able to control him by convincing Legree that the devil lives inside her. The author provides some foreshadowing by creating Legree with this weakness in contrast to his other hideous traits to provide the possibility of destroying him through this vulnerable area, which will be revealed soon.

Legree also acts as a foil against Tom, who experiences personal violence for the first time in his life, having lived with only benevolent masters. In spite of the recent abuses, Tom's kindness and compassion are unending, earning him the respect of the other slaves, especially the mulatto, Cassy. Cassy's shrewdness helps alleviate Tom's plight to a small degree as she tries to convince Legree that beating Tom will keep the slave from working and that affects Legree's finances, which he guards greedily. Tom and Cassy share a common bond of having had benevolent masters who died before they were able to emancipate their slaves. It is this anguish of bitter disappointment that has driven Cassy to bitterness, while Tom remains content that Jesus will see him through his trials and sufferings.

Chapter 37

Chapter 37 Summary

The story moves back to the plight of George and Eliza, who are staying at the Ohio home of a Quaker woman named Aunt Dorcas, who has nursed Tom Lokar back to health. Tom was the one wounded by George on the night of the escape, three weeks ago. In gratitude for his care and return to health, Tom reveals there is a party of slave hunters waiting for George, Eliza and Harry in Sandusky, where the little family plans to cross Lake Erie into Canada. This provident information allows the slaves to create disguises for themselves and their child. Eliza's hair is cut and she is dressed in men's clothing so that her overall appearance is now masculine. Harry, on the other hand, is dressed to look like a little girl in the hopes that the slave traders will not recognize him.

As departure time draws closer George shares his apprehension with Eliza, who encourages her husband telling him they are only twenty-four hours away from living free. The family reaches Sandusky and the Canadian woman, Mrs. Smyth, who is waiting for them, takes the role of Harry's aunt, so the slave catchers will not spot the little family of three. Soon the runaway slaves are aboard a steamship and eventually dock at Amherstberg, in Canada, where Mrs. Smyth leads them to the home of a missionary, where the exhausted little family cannot sleep for the joy of freedom pulsing through them.

Chapter 37 Analysis

Once more the author writes directly to the reader regarding the concept of freedom and what that entails for each man who makes up all the men of a nation. Stowe asks the reader to consider what thoughts must be consuming George at the time when the possibility of freedom is so close by saying, "To your fathers, freedom was the right of a nation to be a nation. To him, it is the right of a man to be a man, and not a brute; the right to call the wife of his bosom his wife, and to protect her from lawless violence; the right to protect and educate his child; the right to have a home of his own, a religion of his own, a character of his own, unsubject to the will of another."

Chapters 38, 39 and 40

Chapters 38, 39 and 40 Summary

The story moves back to Tom, and the author asks the reader directly to consider how many people must entertain the thought of dying when the burdens of life become too overwhelming. The martyr considers this thought exhilarating at the prospect of imminent heavenly glory. This is essentially Tom's plight, as his physical stamina is beaten continually and even his faith is being challenged. Thinking that Jesus must have forgotten him in his misery, Tom sits wearily at a campfire one night and sees a vision of a bloodied and suffering Jesus whose crown of thorns ultimately turns into rays of light. Jesus consoles Tom by telling him that his earthly suffering will be rewarded soon, in heaven, and Tom gains strength by the heavenly episode.

Tom's peaceful countenance is perceived by the overseers as a sign that Tom has plans to escape so Legree beats Tom to keep him submissive. Tom bears the physical and spiritual wounds and continues to preach about the Bible to his fellow slaves. Tom is not even swayed to kill Legree when an opportunity to do so is presented by Cassy, whom Tom attempts to redeem. Cassy's hatred for Legree is intense, but she cannot risk killing him, so she develops a plan to outsmart him by taking advantage of his superstitious nature. Cassy knows Legree is afraid of the garret area in the house because of the stories of ghost sightings, so Cassy plants a bottle in one of the walls so when the wind blows it will cross over the open mouth of the bottle and make ghostly sounds. Soon Cassy begins to move her furniture and belongings out of her bedroom, which is positioned underneath the garret and tells Legree that the ghostly sounds are too unnerving, a fact that further adds to Legree's anxiety about hauntings. Cassy is moving the items, plus many more provisions to the garret, where she and Emmeline will be able to hide from the hideous Legree.

Cassy's plan entails the flight of Emmeline and herself into the swamp one night, making sure that Sambo and Quimbo see them and set the dogs after them. The dogs are unable to pick up the trail of the two women, who actually return to the house where they take up residence in the garret, safe from Legree, who will not approach the space which he thinks is haunted. Cassy and Emmeline witness Legree's return from the futile search for the two women and later find out Legree has beaten Tom, who will not reveal any information on the women's whereabouts. Before he dies, Tom is able to share the word of the Bible with Quimbo and Sambo, who are moved by the dying slave's peaceful countenance.

Chapters 38, 39 and 40 Analysis

The author uses the element of foreshadowing at the beginning of the section when she addresses the reader directly asking, "Have not many of us, in the weary way of life, felt, in some hours, how far easier it were to die than to live? The martyr, when faced even

by a death of bodily anguish and horror, finds in the very terror of his doom a strong stimulant and tonic. There is a vivid excitement, a thrill and fervor, which may carry through any crisis of suffering that is the birth-hour of eternal glory and rest." Stowe refers to the imminent death of Uncle Tom, who has endured so much hardship, yet has persevered in his faith, when giving in to death would have been a welcome choice on some days. There is also foreshadowing about Tom's approaching death with the apparition of Jesus appearing amid the campfire flames, assuring Tom of his imminent heavenly reward.

Chapters 41 and 42

Chapters 41 and 42 Summary

The letter which Miss Ophelia had written to Mrs. Shelby about Tom's being sold to Legree has finally reached the Shelby plantation having been delayed by the mail. Mrs. Shelby is distraught but cannot address the issue because she is caring for her dying husband. After Mr. Shelby's death, Mrs. Shelby becomes executrix of the estate and sends young Master George to New Orleans to track down Tom.

Master George eventually arrives at Legree's plantation to find the dying Tom, and the young man is overwrought with grief. Tom is consoled by Master George's appearance and the fact he had not been forgotten at the Shelby plantation. Uncle Tom asks Master George not to tell Aunt Chloe of the dire condition in which Tom has been found and then the beloved slave smiles, closes his eyes, and dies. Master George takes out his rage on Legree, and then buries Tom in his own coat on a shady knoll, away from the plantation.

Cassy and Emmeline are able to leave Legree's plantation disguised as white-veiled figures too ghostly for the now very-ill Legree to challenge. Cassy's mulatto skin color allows her to pass for a woman of Spanish descent and she boards a ship headed north with Emmeline, posing as her servant. Aboard the boat, Cassy and Master George have a conversation about the evil Legree and Master George sympathizes with Cassy, after having met the heinous man himself.

Master George also meets a French woman named Madame de Thoux. It is revealed that this woman is George Harris' long-lost sister. Master George reveals that George Harris, his wife Eliza, and son Harry, have escaped to Canada. Cassy has overheard this conversation and after a little bit more investigation it is apparent that Eliza is Cassy's daughter, whom she lost many years ago.

Chapters 41 and 42 Analysis

This section is filled with much irony, the most poignant being the late arrival of Miss Ophelia's letter indicating Uncle Tom's fate, which prompts Master George's trip to find the beloved slave dying and Master George impotent to help at this point. It is also ironic that Cassy and Emmeline are able to escape Legree by creating spiritual fear in the man who has subjected so many people to the fear of physical torture. Ironically, it is Uncle Tom who brings together all the long-lost people in the end. Had it not been for Master George's trip to find Tom, and then meeting Madame de Thoux and Cassy on the return trip, the search for the lost relatives could have gone on forever. The figure of Uncle Tom is iconic in that he provides the reconnection of the slave families from the Shelby plantation as well as the connection of the slaves and masters to their heavenly family, led by Jesus Christ.

Chapters 43 and 44

Chapters 43 and 44 Summary

It is now five years later and Madame de Thoux and Cassy have been reunited with George and Eliza who still live in Canada. Cassy is overjoyed to see her daughter, Eliza, and two grandchildren, Harry and Little Eliza, who has been born to the Harrises in Canada. George's sister, Madame de Thoux, has a fortune left to her by her West Indian husband and she finances a trip to France for the entire family, including Emmeline, who falls in love and marries a sailor. Eventually the Harris family travels to Africa to become missionaries. Back in New England, Miss Ophelia has successfully provided an education and freedom for Topsy who also becomes a missionary in Africa.

The saddest part of the story's close is the revelation of Uncle Tom's death to Aunt Chloe and all the others at the Shelby plantation. Completely saddened and changed by the atrocity of Uncle Tom's death, Master George draws up the papers freeing all his slaves and tells them that this is the fulfillment of a promise he had made at the grave of the beloved Tom.

Chapters 43 and 44 Analysis

In spite of the atrocities associated with slavery, the author provides some hope for the human race, via redemption and belief in Christ. The reunion of the extended members of the Harris family symbolizes triumph over tragedy of the most extreme nature. It is important to note that the characters go on to missionary work to fulfill higher purposes, in stark contrast to the perception of Negroes at this time in history. The author does not lighten Aunt Chloe's burden though and the slave woman represents those whose lives have been shattered and who live with the constant threat of disruption and tragedy. Stowe's sensitivity to the plight of Negroes and portraying them as intelligent, loyal souls who seek family and basic human dignity in this book is a huge catalyst to the events leading up to the Civil War in America a few years later.

Chapter 45

Chapter 45 Summary

The author takes the opportunity to address the authenticity of the story in this final chapter as the result of inquiries from correspondents from all over America. The incidents portrayed in the book are drawn from the observations of the author, or friends, with much of the dialogue written word-for-word as it had been spoken. The characters are drawn as compilations of more than one person in most cases, but the vulnerability of slaves, who were dependent on the state of commerce was a general misery shared by all.

Stowe calls upon people in the northern states to examine the story she tells and not look away but rather engage all their Christian ethics to end the atrocity of human bondage. Stowe directly speaks to the reader in regard to individual responsibility and suggests that only each person can judge for himself, and the only thing an individual can do, "they can see to it that *they feel right*...every man or woman who *feels* strongly, healthily and justly, on the great interests of humanity, is a constant benefactor to the human race." Stowe ends her narrative by stating that both the North and the South have been found guilty by God and even the Christian church will have much explaining to do for its passivity. It is only through justice and compassion that the United States will remain united and its inhabitants escape the wrath of Almighty God.

Chapter 45 Analysis

Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote *Uncle Tom's Cabin* when angered by the passing of the Fugitive Slave Law in 1850. This law dictated that any runaway slave be returned to his or her master and anyone who aided runaways would be punished. According to Stowe, this law did more to divide the country than any other issue because most of the people in the north could not risk financial difficulty by resisting the tenets of this new law. The political and economic issues that were taking precedence to basic human goodness outraged Stowe, whose simple prose still conveys today a story of the power of redemption through goodness and the hope for the triumph of good over evil.

Characters

Adolph

Augustine St. Clare's personal slave, Adolph is something of a dandy. He wears his master's castoff elegant clothing and looks down on slaves whom he thinks are less refined than himself.

Mr. Bird

See Senator John Bird

Senator John Bird

Senator Bird votes for the Fugitive Slave Law in Congress, for which his wife chastises him. When runaway slave Eliza Harris and her little child Harry come to their house seeking shelter, the senator is moved by her plight and changes his mind about the law, helping her to escape capture.

Mrs. Mary Bird

The usually timid wife of Senator Bird surprises her husband by condemning slavery, arguing that it is un-Christian and anti-family. When Eliza Harris stops at their home in her flight from slavery, the Birds shelter her and help her to escape safely with little Harry.

Black Sam

See Sam

Misse Cassy

Misse Cassy is a slave owned by Simon Legree who has been Legree's mistress since she came to his plantation as a young girl. Cassy befriends Tom after he comes to live on Legree's plantation. Strong and dignified in spite of her enslaved state, Cassy calls herself "a lost soul" and tells Tom she does not believe in God. She is angry and bitter about her enslavement. Her two children were taken from her and sold. She killed her third child in its infancy to keep it from growing up in slavery.

Cassy and young Emmeline finally escape from the plantation together after Tom dies and make their way to Canada. Cassy is reunited with Eliza Harris, whom she discovers to be her longlost daughter.

Aunt Chloe

Uncle Tom's wife and the mother of his three children, Chloe is a slave and the head cook on the Shelby's Kentucky plantation. After Tom is sold down South, the Shelbys allow Chloe to hire herself out as a baker and save the money to buy Tom's freedom. When she finally earns enough money to rescue him, it is too late: Tom has died.

Dolph

See Adolph

Emmeline

Emmeline is a fifteen-year-old religious and innocent slave girl bought by Simon Legree to be his newest "mistress." In that role she replaces Cassy.

Eva

See Evangeline St. Clare

Miss Feely

See Ophelia St. Clare

Phineas Fletcher

A former backwoodsman who married into the Quakers, Phineas Fletcher is rough and daring but kind. He helps George and Eliza Harris, their son Harry, and their friend Jim and his aging mother, to escape the slave hunters.

George Mas'r

See George Shelby

George Master

See George Shelby

Rachel Halliday

Rachel is a gentle and maternal Quaker woman who shelters Eliza, George, and Harry as they hide from slave hunters.

Simeon Halliday

Husband of Rachel Halliday, Quaker Simeon helps to plot George and Eliza's escape from slave hunters.

Eliza Harris

Famous for her desperate flight across the frozen Ohio River, made by jumping barefoot along sheets of ice, Eliza is the novel's central symbol of motherhood. A refined and religious young slave woman owned by the Shelbys, Eliza is married to George Harris, a light-skinned slave on a neighboring plantation. Their only child, Harry, is the center of Eliza's life. When she learns Harry has been sold to a slave trader, Eliza panics and risks everything to protect and to keep him.

George Harris

The husband of Eliza and father of Harry, George is a slave belonging to the Harris family, neighbors of the Shelbys. Handsome and intelligent, George can no longer bear being a slave. His master, an ignorant man, is cruel to him, and slavery seems utterly irrational to George who exclaims: "My master! And who made him my master? ... What right has he to me? I'm a man as much as he is. I'm a better man than he is." Apologizing to his religious wife for his feelings, George explains to her that he cannot believe in a God who would let slavery exist. Unable to suffer any longer, George decides to run away to Canada. He and Eliza eventually find each other on their respective flights north. Once free, George obtains an education and ultimately takes his family to the African country of Liberia to "find [him]self a people."

Harry Harris

Harry is the beautiful and bright little son of Eliza and George Harris. He is carried by his mother across the frozen Ohio River to save him from being sold to a slave trader.

Mas'r Henrique

See Henrique St. Clare

Simon Legree

Simon Legree is Tom's final master, the brutal owner of a desolate Louisiana plantation whose slaves are abused and hopeless. Legree's name, which calls up images of greed, has become synonymous with evil and cruelty. His plantation represents the worst conditions that slavery can create: he beats, underfeeds, overworks, and bullies his slaves. He does not give them proper housing or warm enough clothing and forbids those slaves who are religious to view God as a power above himself. Legree attempts to corrupt Tom by enticing him with power over the other slaves, but Tom's Christian faith enables him to resist. Tom's resistance infuriates Legree, and he threatens to kill Tom for not recognizing him-instead of God-as his master. Legree's need for power and control over his slaves has made him a depraved monster, and his corruption exemplifies the demoralizing effects of slavery on slaveowners.

Lizy

See Eliza Harris

Tom Loker

Tom Loker is one of the slave hunters who chases after George and Eliza Harris, their son Harry, and two of the Harrises' friends.

Marks

Marks is the slave-hunting partner of Tom Loker.

Mas'r

See Mr. Arthur Shelby

Master

See Mr. Arthur Shelby

Missis

See Mrs. Emily Shelby

Miss Ophelia

See Ophelia St. Clare

Pussy

See Evangeline St. Clare

Quimbo

One of Simon Legree's slave henchmen, Quimbo participates in beating Tom to death, but then feels remorseful in the face of Tom's prayers and apologizes to Tom as he dies.

Sam

A slave of the Shelbys' who is known for comically overblown oratory, Sam is chosen along with another slave, Andy, to help Haley chase Eliza after she runs away. Sam keeps tricking Haley in order to slow down the chase and give Eliza time to escape.

Sambo

One of Simon Legree's slave flunkeys, Sambo assists in the beating death of Tom and, as Tom dies, repents and becomes converted to Christianity.

Mr. Arthur Shelby

Tom was given to Mr. Shelby as an infant; Mr. Shelby is Tom's first master. As the novel opens, Shelby is reluctantly making arrangements to sell Tom to Haley, the slave trader. Shelby is what is known in the world of slavery as "a kind master," and his reluctance to sell Tom reveals him to be "a man of humanity." He cares about Tom, but decides he needs the money that the sale will bring.

Mrs. Emily Shelby

Mrs. Shelby, a woman of "high moral and religious sensibility and principle," tries to convince her husband not to sell Tom and little Harry. She has raised Eliza from girlhood and has treated her as a particular favorite. Representative of the novel's strong domestic and moral emphasis, Mrs. Shelby feels it is important to allow slave families to stay together.

George Shelby

Young George Shelby, the only son of Mr. and Mrs. Shelby, loves the slaves with whom he has grown up&madash;particularly Tom&madash;and treats them almost like family. After Tom is sold to Haley, George vows to bring him back to his family one day and declares that he will never buy or sell slaves when he grows up. A few years after Tom leaves the Shelbys, George becomes the master of the Shelby plantation when his father dies suddenly. George nearly fulfills his promise to Tom, arriving at Legree's plantation just as Tom is dying. Upon his return home after burying Tom, George frees the slaves on the Shelby place.

St. Clare

See Augustine St. Clare

Alfred St. Clare

Augustine St. Clare's twin brother and his physical and spiritual opposite, Alfred is a slaveholder and believes that the Anglo-Saxon race is "the dominant race of the world."

Augustine St. Clare

St. Clare is Tom's second master, for which Tom feels fortunate. Sensitive, kind and contemplative, St. Clare adores his daughter, Eva; tolerates his demanding wife, Marie; enjoys debating political issues with his cousin Ophelia; and indulges his slaves. Reflecting his name, St. Clare is "gay, airy, [and] handsome," but he is something of a fallen idealist. As a very young man, St. Clare's nature had been one of "romantic passion," but the defining event of St. Clare's life was the loss of his one true love. To his cousin's consternation, St. Clare refuses to read the Bible or to call himself a Christian. In spite of the fact that he is a "heathen" slaveholder, St. Clare has surprisingly humanitarian views that come to light when he discusses slavery and race relations with Ophelia, Marie, or his brother Alfred. St. Clare tells Tom that he plans to emancipate him, but he is unexpectedly killed before he can do so.

Evangeline St. Clare

Little Eva's full name, Evangeline, is a pointed reference to her evangelism, an activity which she shares with Tom. Eva is the delicately beautiful and angelic daughter of Augustine and Marie St. Clare, who befriends Tom and inspires love in all who know her. Often discussed as "Christlike," Eva does not seem meant for this world. She is described as being "spirit-like," with "large, mystic eyes." She is capable of converting even the seemingly amoral Topsy to Christianity, and she is persistent in her talks about going to heaven. Eva feels deeply for her fellow creatures, particularly those less

fortunate than herself, such as her family's slaves. She often speaks to her father, mother, and cousins Henrique and Ophelia about her abomination of slavery. Just before she is to die, Eva calls all the members of the household to her bedside to tell them she is dying, to implore them to become Christians, and to give each of them a lock of her hair as a keepsake. Her deathbed scene, one of the most famous in literature, is the height of Victorian domestic melodrama, with Little Eva struggling for breath as her loved ones surround the bed, tears streaming down their faces.

Henrique St. Clare

While visiting his cousin Eva, spoiled Henrique is cruel to his young slave, Dodo, and sees nothing wrong with his behavior even when Eva reproves him for it.

Marie St. Clare

The selfish wife of Augustine St. Clare and mother of little Eva, Marie is a faded beauty who commands attention by complaining constantly about feeling ill. She becomes jealous of the attention Eva receives when she is dying. Coldhearted, Marie views slaves as less than human and believes that her sensitive, kind husband never does enough for her.

Ophelia St. Clare

Miss Ophelia is Augustine St. Clare's middleaged, unmarried cousin from Vermont whom he brings back to New Orleans to help look after Eva. Ophelia, a Christian, is a product of her orderly, quiet, precise New England home, and in her eyes the greatest sin is "shiftlessness." She loves her cousin Augustine in spite of his lackadaisical ways and the fact that he is not a Christian, and she often debates the issues of slavery and race relations with him. Although she deplores the practice of slaveholding, she holds prejudices against black people and would prefer to have little to do with them.

Ruth Stedman

Ruth is the young, sweet Quaker mother who helps to minister to Eliza and Harry after they escape from Haley.

Father Tom

See Uncle Tom

Uncle Tom

Tom is a slave who lives first with the Shelbys of Kentucky, then with the St. Clares of New Orleans, and finally on the plantation of Simon Legree in Louisiana. At the Shelbys', where Tom holds the affectionate name of Uncle Tom, he is married to Chloe, and they have three children. Stowe tried to show in this novel how slaves were capable of creating loving, Christian families, just like free whites. Uncle Tom's cabin is all hearth and family, with Chloe cooking at the stove, the children tumbling about on the floor, and Tom bouncing the baby on his knee. Tom is a converted Christian, and he is looked up to by the other slaves as a religious figure. He succeeds in converting others to his beloved Christianity. At the St. Clares', Tom and little Eva share a powerful belief in God and heaven.

Tom's faith is put to the ultimate test when he comes under Legree's power: The fiendish Legree vows to corrupt Tom, asking him "An't I yer master? ... An't yer mine, now, body and soul?", to which Tom replies, "My soul an't yours, Mas'r! ... It's been bought and paid for by one that is able to keep it ..." Legree is unable to disturb Tom's religious convictions.

When Tom dies at the hands of Legree and his henchmen, his death is Christlike. He forgives his tormentors and converts them even as his blood drips from their hands. Uncle Tom's name has become synonymous in American culture with fawning and flattering behavior, particularly on the part of a black person towards a white person. Tom is indeed the gentle, devoted, trustworthy slave to his kind masters, Mr. Shelby and Mr. St. Clare, but these qualities stem more from his Christian beliefs than from a lack of dignity. Viewed in the context of the book's nineteenth-century reading audience, Tom serves as a symbol of the support and sustenance that Christianity provides even in the most dire of circumstances.

Topsy

Topsy is a young slave girl who has been so abused and neglected by previous owners that she thinks cruel treatment is her birthright. Purchased for Ophelia by her cousin Augustine as a kind of educational experiment, Topsy is seen by Augustine as a blank slate: undisciplined, uneducated, and ready to be trained. Although reluctant to have any thing to do with Topsy at first, Ophelia finally takes her on as a sort of project. Believing herself wicked and irreformable, Topsy proves a challenge to Ophelia's orderly ways, but she is finally "converted" to goodness by the Christ-like kindness and concern of little Eva.

Cousin Vermont

See Ophelia St. Clare

Mr. Wilson

Mr. Wilson is the factory owner who had employed George Harris while George was a slave. George meets Mr. Wilson again while he is en route to the North, attempting to escape slavery.

Themes

Human Rights

Slavery took many rights away from the enslaved. The loss of the basic right to have an intact family was perhaps its cruelest effect. Stowe targeted her white female audience in addressing this denial of human rights, knowing she would find empathy in this group that was devoted to family and home. In *Uncle Tom's Cabin,* she emphasizes the slaves' right to family by focusing on the destructive effect slavery has on several slave families. Speaking for Stowe, Mrs. Shelby asks her husband not to sell Harry and Uncle Tom because she believes slave families should be allowed to stay together. On her deathbed, little Eva tells her father that the slaves love their children as much as he loves her. Through Eliza's courageous escape with Harry across the frozen Ohio River, the tearful separation of Uncle Tom from his wife and children, and Cassy's devastating story about her children being sold away from her, Stowe powerfully demonstrates that slaves are human beings who need, desire, and deserve family attachments. By pairing white mothers like Mrs. Bird, Rachel Halliday, and Ruth Stedman with Eliza, Stowe contrasts the white mother's right to love and enjoy her children with the black mother's powerlessness to do the same.

God and Religion

Religion and faith play a central role in *Uncle Tom's Cabin.* A character's relation to Christianity- believer, lapsed believer, nonbeliever—is part of how that character is defined. Eliza, Tom, Mrs. Shelby, Eva, and Ophelia are all described as dedicated Christians, and they are mostly good.

George, Augustine St. Clare, and Cassy are basically good in spite of their inability to believe in Christianity (they are presented as having justifiable excuses not to believe). Simon Legree's complete lack of religious faith is connected to his depravity. Christianity is linked in the novel to morality, humaneness, and generosity. The Christian faith of slaves gives them courage and the strength to go on. Tom's and Eva's religious convictions transform them into Christ-like figures, and their deaths, like Christ's, are meant to be redemptive. Although she dies of tuberculosis, Eva appears almost to give her life for the antislavery cause, as slavery pains her so profoundly. Tom converts Sambo and Quimbo to Christianity as he dies at their hands. In using religion to define her characters and her cause, Stowe speaks directly to her nineteenth-century audience. Slaves portrayed as pious and even saintly, are viewed more positively than their irreverent owners.

Love

Uncle Tom's Cabin explores the power of love, specifically love of God and love of family. A mother's love for her children is built up in the novel as the most powerful kind of love. This portrayal of love helps Stowe convey the inhumanity of slavery by depicting the anguish of slave mothers who are torn from their children.

A mother's love can be transformative: witness Eliza summoning the courage and strength to cross the river on the floating ice cakes. Her love for her child makes her almost superhuman. Love of God is also portrayed as being transformative. Although they are but a lowly slave and an innocent child, Tom's and Eva's powerful love of God raises them to the stature of Christ in their capacity for love, forgiveness, and moral valor. They die like saints, with Eva giving out locks of her hair like religious icons to her loved ones and Tom being tortured and killed by those who are galled by his faith. Love and prayer are the two most potent forces in the world of the novel.

Morals and Morality

Discussions of moral principles in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* converge in the central issue of slavery. Basically, the novel asks, is human slavery right or wrong? It is not difficult to see that the novel portrays the practice of slavery as immoral. Slavery breaks apart loving families, degrades slaves and their owners, and robs human beings of their freedom. While the novel presents not only an obviously evil, immoral master in Simon Legree, it also gives readers so-called "kind" masters like Mr. Shelby and St. Clare. However, it points out that, kind or not, a master is still a master, and one human being should not be allowed to own another.

More subtle than the blatant antislavery theme in the novel is the treatment of attitudes toward slavery. Here, Stowe presents some gray moral areas. What about the people who believe slavery is wrong and do not practice it but who despise blacks? And what about slaveholders who are uncomfortable with owning slaves but do not know what to do about it? In conversations about slavery between St. Clare and Ophelia, St. Clare asserts there is something immoral about the way Northern Christians condemn slavery but do not want anything to do personally with the blacks themselves. In St. Clare himself, Stowe expresses the difference between belief and action. He is troubled about the enslavement of blacks and believes that blacks are treated inhumanely, yet he does not free his own slaves. George Shelby and Little Eva are in a sense yardsticks for morality in the novel. Both characters truly love the black slaves in their families, vehemently oppose slavery, and attempt to persuade the adults around them to condemn slavery and free their slaves. As children, George and Eva are powerless to effect real change— George will finally free the Shelbys' slaves when he grows up—but they are moral in that they believe in what is right (according to the moral code of the novel), and they live by their beliefs.

Race and Racism

In the world of Stowe's novel, characters are defined in large part by the color of their skin. In this kind of stereotyping, Stowe herself is guilty of a certain kind of racism. While white characters are not necessarily all good, as illustrated by the likes of slave trader Haley, Simon Legree, slave hunters Loker and Marks, and Alfred St. Clare and his son Henrique; black characters' virtue is related to the lightness or darkness of their skin. For example, slave mother Eliza Harris, set up as a model of piety and moral integrity, is a quadroon (one-quarter black), so lightskinned as to be almost white. Her husband, George, an admirable example of honor and decency, is also light-skinned, as is their son, Harry. Stowe presumes that her white nineteenth-century reader will be better able to identify with the Harris family because they look so much like her own. Stowe depends upon that identification of reader with character for the success of her novel. Darker-skinned figures, like Topsy, Aunt Chloe, and Black Sam, seem more like stock characters. They are simple, speak in dialect rather than standard English, and are more comic than heroic. Tom, although dark-skinned, is noble in his Christian humility and patience, but he is also characterized as simple, innocent, and uneducated. Stowe uses her white characters not so much as vessels of racism but more as mouthpieces of racist attitudes. In particular, Augustine St. Clare's conversations with others on the subject of slavery bring up many facets of the problem of racism. When he debates the issue of slavery with his Northern cousin Ophelia, readers see how hypocritical she is. While she opposes the institution of slavery, she also personally dislikes blacks. When St. Clare discusses their slaves with his wife, Marie, readers see Marie's belief that blacks are suited only for slavery. St. Clare's conversations about race with his brother Alfred reveal Alfred's position that the white race is meant to be dominant. While St. Clare's various discussions on racism often read like the texts of political debates, readers can see that Stowe is using these dialogues to shore up her antislavery message.

Style

Point of View

The third person ("they," "he," "she") omniscient or all-seeing narrative point of view is necessary to Stowe's novel, as the novel follows simultaneously the activity of several characters in different places. The point of view occasionally shifts to second person ("you") for the purpose of drawing the reader into the story at moments of high emotion. For instance, during the description of Eliza's flight with Harry from the Shelbys, the narrator suddenly confronts us: "If it were *your* Harry, mother, or your Willie, that were going to be torn away from you by a brutal trader, tomorrow morning ... how fast could *you* walk?" Since the success of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* depends upon the reader's ability to empathize with the characters-and particularly the black slaves-these shifts into second person point of view are crucial to Stowe's purpose.

The omniscience of the narrator also enables the reader to empathize with the characters by showing the reader the emotions and motivations of the characters. When readers learn about how Tom feels upon hearing that St. Clare plans to free him, they can feel compassion for him: "He felt the muscles of his brawny arms with a sort of joy, as he thought they would soon belong to himself...."

Setting

Uncle Tom's Cabin is an antislavery novel, and the time and place of the novel provide an historically accurate context for considering the issue of slavery. The antebellum period in American history was characterized by slave-holding in Southern states. Stowe wrote her novel during this period in angry response to the practice of slavery. The novel is set primarily in Kentucky and Louisiana, which were slave states. Kentucky is across the Ohio River from the free states, so setting part of her novel in Kentucky allowed Stowe to show slaves escaping to free territory. Once in free territory, escaped slaves encounter the injustice of the Fugitive Slave Law&madsh;Stowe's incentive for writing the novel&madsh;as Eliza is chased by hired slave hunters. Tom is sold "down the river" to New Orleans, where he resides in relative peace with the St. Clares. After Tom is sold to Simon Legree, he experiences slavery at its worst. "Down the river" had a special, dreadful significance for slaves farther north, as it represented the distant unknown and the hard hot work of the large plantations.

Historical Context

The Fugitive Slave Law

In its early years as a nation, the United States gradually became divided into two main regions, the North and South. These regions were growing increasingly more different in terms of their economic systems and ways of life. By the 1830s, the North was becoming more urban and industrial, employing free labor. The South was evolving into a more agrarian, or agricultural, culture that depended upon slave labor. The two regions shared less and less, and they began to disagree over the issue of slavery.

Following the Mexican War (1846-48), America grew by one-fifth through westward expansion. Congress was forced to confront the issue of slavery as it determined whether the newly acquired areas would be free states or slave states. Out of Congress's deliberations came the Compromise of 1850, which included five provisions concerning slavery, one of which was a more severe Fugitive Slave Law. This law radically diminished the rights of free blacks and required anyone who knew about a fugitive slave to return the slave to his or her owner. The Fugitive Slave Law appeased Southern slaveholding states but infuriated Northern abolitionists, who believed they should be free to help their fellow men and women escape from the bonds of slavery. Enraged by the passage of what she saw as an unjust law, Harriet Beecher Stowe was moved to write *Uncle Tom's Cabin.*

Although the entire novel is about slavery, it directly addresses the Fugitive Slave Law in chapter nine, "In Which It Appears That a Senator Is But a Man." Here Senator Bird is at home, fresh from the Congressional vote on the Compromise of 1850. Readers discover through his conversations with his kind-hearted wife that he voted in favor of this piece of legislation. His wife chides him for what she sees as his immoral vote: "'You ought to be ashamed, John! ... It's a shameful, wicked, abominable law, and I'll break it, for one, the first time I get a chance; and I hope I *shall* have a chance, I do!'" The senator defends himself by claiming that " 'it's not a matter of private feeling- there are great public interests involved, there is such a state of public agitation rising, that we must put aside our private feelings.'" Ultimately, the senator's beliefs are put to the test when runaway slave Eliza and her little Harry appear in his kitchen, desperately seeking shelter and aid. Senator Bird, who is in truth a humane man, is touched by Eliza's plight and decides to help Eliza and Harry to escape. The journey toward freedom of Eliza, Harry, and eventually Eliza's husband, George, enables Stowe to show the injustice of the Fugitive Slave Law, as the runaways are constantly being chased by hired slave hunters, even after reaching free American territory. Escaped slaves are not truly free until they reach Canada.

Nineteenth-Century Views of Women

In the mid-nineteenth century, the home was the heart of American society. Women's work as housewives and mothers was considered valuable. The domestic novel, a genre that focused on housewives and their sphere, became extremely popular as well. Regarded as the spiritual and moral caretakers of their families, women also extended this moral guardianship outside the home to help the less fortunate. Many theologians of this period believed that the home was the most appropriate place for children's religious education and that mothers were responsible for training the future citizens of America. Thus housewives and mothers carried a certain amount of weight within American culture, as they were thought to possess a moral authority.

Life in Slavery

Slavery is often thought to have been universal in the antebellum period, but in 1860, slaves were held by only about one third of all white Southern families. Contrary to popular belief, only a small number of slaveholders owned over fifty slaves to work on their large plantation. Most slaveowning families did not own large plantations and held twenty slaves or fewer.

Life in slavery meant a life of restrictions, with no civil rights. Slaves had no control over their own lives and were considered property, just like cattle or other livestock. They were often sold at slave auctions, where they could be inspected from head to toe by potential buyers. Slave families were not recognized as valid. Though slaves might marry each other, slave marriages were not considered legal, and husbands and wives could be sold away from each other. Slave mothers and their young children could also be separated from each other, although a law supposedly prohibited this practice. Many slaves did not have adequate food, housing, or clothing, and many slaves were subject to physical abuses such as beatings or rapes in spite of laws limiting such mistreatment. Slave women were powerless to oppose their owners' sexual exploitation and often bore children fathered by their white owners.

In order to survive the oppression of slavery, slaves created a whole culture for themselves apart from mainstream American culture. For instance, slave songs, also called spirituals, sustained the slaves with images of the Promised Land, freedom, and God's protection and love. Folktales and other oral lore often reflected tales brought by earlier slaves from Africa. Some tales centered on such mischievous characters as Br'er Rabbit who were smart enough to trick their oppressors. Slaves living together on a farm or plantation often formed close-knit communities, as depicted in Stowe's novel with Uncle Tom, Aunt Chloe, and their fellow slaves at the Shelbys'. These human connections helped to sustain them as long as they were together.

Christianity in the 1850s

The first half of the nineteenth century saw a period of religious fervor known as the Second Great Awakening. The original Great Awakening of the eighteenth century had resulted in greater emphasis on the role of the individual in religion. Evangelical leaders of the Second Great Awakening exhorted followers to find personal redemption through Christ. Those who had been redeemed were inspired to look beyond themselves and to try to improve society. Reform movements emerged, calling for the end of such social problems as prostitution, alcoholism, and slavery.

Critical Overview

In 1853, Stowe published *A Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin,* with which she intended to quiet her critics' assertions that *Uncle Tom's Cabin* had been poorly researched. This second book cited actual documents, such as laws, court cases, and newspaper articles, that substantiated Stowe's portrayal of slavery in her novel. Accurate or not, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* hit a nerve in the United States and around the world. It maintained its popularity through the antebellum and Civil War years, inspiring translations into many languages as well as adaptations for the stage.

Although the notoriety of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* died down after the Civil War and emancipation of the slaves, it has endured as a mainstay of American literature. Stowe went on to write many other books, but her first book remained her most famous. Critics throughout the twentieth century have continued to examine *Uncle Tom's Cabin.* In his 1949 essay, "Everybody's Protest Novel," first published in *The Partisan Review,* James Baldwin criticized Stowe's novel, saying "it is a very bad novel" because of its "self-righteous, virtuous sentimentality ... [which] is the mark of dishonesty."

Baldwin contends that the novel is driven by "theological terror, the terror of damnation" or "a fear of the dark." He claims that the novel equates darkness, or blackness, with evil, and therefore those characters with black skin—like Tom—are "born without the light [so that] only through humility, the incessant mortification of the flesh ... can [he] enter into communion with God or man." This treatment of black characters, Baldwin feels, denies them their humanity.

Criticism

- Critical Essay #1
- Critical Essay #2
- Critical Essay #3

Critical Essay #1

In the following essay, Cumberland, an assistant professor at Seattle University, explains that Stowe's novel cannot be understood outside of its historical context and the author's motives for writing it .

When *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was published in 1852, it created an immediate controversy in a United States that was divided-both geographically and politically-by the issue of slavery. It is impossible to understand the content or the importance of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* outside of the historical forces that prompted Harriet Beecher Stowe to write it.

The early settlers of the Thirteen Colonies were well aware of the problem that was developing for the young nation as more and more slaves were kidnapped in Africa and brought to America to supply agricultural labor for the underpopulated colonies. Due to a complex combination of economic need, political indecision, scientific ignorance, and prior custom, no action was taken to rid the country of slaves while there were still few enough of them to return to their homes in Africa.

Thomas Jefferson said that America "had a tiger by the ears," meaning that the slaves were dangerous because, like a tiger in captivity, they would turn on the people who captured them if they were ever released. Jefferson concluded, as did most Americans in the eighteenth century, that the only way to control the "tiger" was to keep holding it tightly by the ears, as terrible as that dilemma was for both the slaves and the slave owners. Thus when Jefferson wrote in the Declaration of Independence in 1776 that "all men are created equal," he did not include the African slaves.

Jefferson did, however, lay the problem of slavery at the feet of George III, saying in his first draft of the Declaration that King George "has waged cruel war against human nature itself, violating its most sacred rights of life and liberty in the persons of a distant people who never offended him, captivating and carrying them into slavery in another hemisphere, or to incur miserable death in their transportation thither." Jefferson was forced to delete this passage from the final version of the Declaration, however, because of the fierce disagreement it caused between delegates from slave holding colonies in the South and delegates from colonies that had already outlawed slavery in the North. The argument between the northern and southern colonies threatened to precipitate secession and civil war just at the time when the thirteen colonies needed to be united in order to fight for independence against England. In effect, the Founding Fathers decided to leave the problem of slavery and civil war to their descendants. They believed that they were justified in doing this because freedom from the tyranny of England outweighed internal issues. They believed that when America was a nation in its own right it would have the peace and freedom to solve all of its domestic problems. What the Founding Fathers did not anticipate, however, was that the slave trade would become the source of economic security for an entire region, making it very difficult to abolish without bankrupting that region and seriously compromising the stability of the nation.

The "triangular trade" was extremely lucrative. It was called "triangular" because the path of a trading ship, if traced on a map, describes a triangle over the Atlantic ocean. The ships would take manufactured goods from England and Europe to trade in Africa for slaves. The slaves would then be transported to the Indies or the Americas (the notorious "middle passage") and traded for staples like cotton, sugar, rum, molasses, and indigo which would then be carried to England and Europe and traded for manufactured goods. This procedure, repeated again and again from the time of the first slaves' arrival in America in 1619 to the abolition of the slave trade in 1807, made traders at each stop on the triangle very wealthy. The Founding Fathers agreed, with a clause in the Constitution, to end the slave trade, but this did nothing to end the slave system. Slave owners simply continued to supply the slave markets through "natural increase." The loss of an external source of supply only made slaves more valuable.

Nevertheless, by the nineteenth century most of the world had come to believe that slavery was wrong. Enlightenment ideals concerning the brotherhood of mankind had changed social perceptions, and slavery had been abolished almost everywhere in Europe and its colonies. It was very difficult for Americans to imagine ending slavery, however, because no one in the country had ever lived without it. In the seventy-five years since the foundation of the country, the North had gotten used to the idea that slaves were necessary to the South. Most of them believed that slave owners were kind to the slaves. They also believed that slaves were childlike and ineducable, and that if they were not kept as slaves they would not be able to take care of themselves. There was also the problem of what to do with the slaves if they were freed. No one, North or South, wanted to live with negroes. Thus, for a long time, it was easier to live with slavery rather than to try to change it. As the United States expanded westward, however, slavery became a more pressing issue. Each new state entering the union shifted the balance of political power in Congress between slave states and free states. This, together with the rise of the Abolition Movement in the 1830s and the religious revival called the "Great Awakening," which saw slavery as evidence of national sin, created an atmosphere of tension between North and South that had been postponed since the founding of the nation. Into this atmosphere came Stowe's novel, which depicted the cruelties of slavery in a way that had never registered on the national consciousness before.

Harriet Beecher (1811-1896), born in Litchfield, Connecticut, belonged to a family of famous clergymen. Her father, Lyman Beecher, was a strict Congregationalist, and her brother, Henry Ward Beecher, became a famous preacher during a era when preachers were admired as much as film or television celebrities are admired today. Harriet Beecher was a retiring woman, however, married to Calvin Stowe, a professor at Lane Theological Seminary in Cincinnati, Ohio. For eighteen years, as she raised seven children, Stowe observed the effects of slavery in the slave state of Kentucky, just across the Ohio River from her home in the free state of Ohio. Stowe supplemented her family income with freelance writing. She developed the idea of writing a novel about the horrors of slavery after the Fugitive Slave Act was passed in 1850.

Many Northerners were outraged by this law, which allowed slave owners to pursue their runaway slaves into free states in order to recover their "property." Stowe

combined her religious background with her political beliefs by writing a book about a saintly slave who forgave his tormentors, just as Jesus Christ forgave His.

When *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was published it became an instant success, selling so many copies that it is considered today to be the first "best seller" in American publishing history. It was banned in the South, however, and prompted dozens of answering novels, essays, and poems by pro-slavery writers. Southern writers believed that Stowe exaggerated the condition of slaves in the South, representing the exceptional cruel master (Simon Legree) as the norm, and representing the kind master (Mr. Shelby) as too weak not to sell slaves in times of economic necessity. For nine years, between the time *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was published in 1852 and the start of the Civil War in 1861, a public relations war between Northern anti-slavery writers and Southern pro-slavery writers was waged. Though many anti-slavery works had been written before Uncle Tom's Cabin, most notably the fugitive slave narratives of Frederick Douglass,

William Wells Brown and others, it was the combination of sentimentality and religious feeling in Stowe's novel that triggered the controversy that ended in Civil War. Abraham Lincoln's famous comment when he met Mrs. Stowe ("So you are the little lady who made this big war") implies that *Uncle Tom's Cabin* caused the war, but Stowe only articulated in a new way the deep-seated problem that had been present in America since the foundation of the colonies in the seventeenth century. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is not a work which can stand alone as a self-contained entertainment. It requires an understanding on the part of the reader of the conditions which made the author write it and which made the nation respond to it so passionately.

It is difficult, today, to imagine a work of literature so powerful that it can truly be said to have hastened the onset of a war and the resolution of a problem so intractable that neither the Founding Fathers nor nearly a hundred years of Congresses could find a solution. The fact that Abraham Lincoln decided to emancipate the slaves in 1863 without addressing the related problems of where the freed slaves would live or whether the South would be bankrupt, is a testament to the fact that intense public feeling, rather than logic and negotiation, had made it possible for Lincoln to act unilaterally. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* contributed greatly-even primarily—to that change of feeling in the nation. The first approach to *Uncle Tom's Cabin,* therefore, must be the historical and biographical.

In the century and a half since *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was published, many scholars have reflected on the various ways one can read and understand this complex text, and how *Uncle Tom's Cabin* has been interpreted differently over the years, both before and after the Civil War. Cultural studies, such as Thomas F. Gossett's *"Uncle Tom's Cabin" and American Culture* and Moira Davison Reynolds' *"Uncle Tom's Cabin" and Mid-Nineteenth Century United States* provide the historical frame of reference needed to understand the religious, political, and racial issues addressed in the novel. Though early biographies of Stowe focus on the dramatic irony of a shy housewife making a massive impact on American history, more recent biographies, such as Joan D. Hedrick's *Harriet Beecher Stowe: A Life* place the facts of her career in the framework of the century and give the reader a history of an era in addition to a history of a life.

Once the historical frame is understood, however, the most central avenue of approach to *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is that which addresses its primary theme of sin and redemption. When the reader considers that Harriet Beecher Stowe came from a family of preachers, it becomes clear that she is as much a preacher in her novel as a minister in his pulpit.

The character of Uncle Tom is unmistakably modeled on Jesus Christ, and everything that happens to him is designed to demonstrate how evil can be transformed into good by love. Little Eva is another model of saintly behavior, designed to prompt all who know her to change, like Topsy, from being bad to being good. Stowe intended the reader, including the southern slave owner, to read *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and "turn from sin and be saved." The theme of sin and redemption can be expressed in more general terms as the struggle between good and evil, with slavery as the metaphor for all that is evil in the world. This is the approach taken by Josephine Donovan in *"Uncle Tom's Cabin": Evil, Affliction, and Redemptive Love.* The full range of evil, from the heartless cruelty of Simon Legree, the subtle weakness of Mr. Shelby, and the humorous rascality of Topsy are all transformed by the power of Uncle Tom's acceptance of his fate. It is for the reader to go out into the actual world and transform it.

Source: Sharon Cumberland, in an essay for *Novels for Students,* Gale, 1999.

Critical Essay #2

In the following excerpt, Joswick addresses Stowe's message about the problem of being moral and just within a corrupt social system of slavery.

The moral conclusion of Uncle Tom's Cabin is as uncontestable as it is everywhere obvious in the novel: the evils of slavery demand that it be abolished. We need to heed, however, the manner in which the argument is presented. At first glance it seems as if Stowe wishes to keep the injustice of slavery separate from the moral characters of those participating in it, for repeated in the novel is an assertion, rendered explicit in the Introduction to the 1881 edition, "that the evils of slavery were the inherent evils of a bad *system* and not always the fault of those who had become involved in it and were its actual administrators." As St. Clare says at one point, "The *thing itself* is the essence of all abuse!" But laws and moral character are never far apart in Stowe's reasoning. Slave laws are wrong, she says in the last chapter, primarily because "there is, actually, nothing to protect the slave's life, but the *character* of the master," for the law will sanction the actions even of that owner "whose passions outweigh his interest." The slave's only "right" under the law is his or her economic value, and the "justice" of the law promotes only the owner's self-interest. Rather than emphasizing other notions of rights and obligations, however, Stowe repeatedly charges that the system would crumble of its own accord were it not for the moral sanction given it by benevolent masters. "For pity's sake, for shame's sake, because we are men born of women ... many of us do not, and dare not ... use the full power which our savage laws put into our hands," St. Clare concludes; but "it is you considerate, humane men," says another character, "that are responsible for all the brutality and outrage wrought by these wretches like (Simon Legree); because, if it were not for your sanction and influence, the whole system could not keep foot-hold for an hour.... It is your respectability and humanity that licenses and protects Legree's brutality."

What these remarks underscore is a conviction not only that human character is at the root of any social system but that moral character, by its pervasive influence, is the real authority in a society. The laws that define rights and obligations here and elsewhere in the novel are usually reduced to matters of self-interest and are often imaged as unstable structures that would collapse without the support of a higher moral authority. The truth of slavery, Stowe is saying, is to be found in the moral influence of those who lend it tacit support and in the moral degradation of those who use the power of law to vent their brutal passions. Thus, if slavery is to be abolished, the appeal will not be so much to a declaration of rights as to a conversion of character. As [critic Jane P.] Tompkins puts it [in a 1981 *Glyph* article], in Stowe's view reality "can only be changed by conversion in the spirit because it is the spirit alone that is finally real." Owners (and readers), then, ought not merely to forgo the use of power in the law; they must undergo a change of heart directed toward an authority higher than the law.

The final authority toward which the conversion is directed is, of course, an eternal and transcendent God, but this divine authority is given both a communal context and a morally persuasive power in the novel. And as most readers could readily say, divine

authority has its worthy representatives in the mothers who appear in the novel, for motherly love, not law, is the novel's highest authority for directing all ethical choices and all communal responsibilities....

Motherly love is all-powerful precisely because it relinquishes the rights of power. Spurn a mother's love, and its comforts are transformed into fears of judgment, not because love will assert a rightful indignation, but because love will always be self-sacrificing and forgiving. The "bad soul" is thereby compelled to see "herself," that is, to see its own truth against the measure of its own *feminine,* unwavering ideal. Equally important, the inner truth is known by seemingly palpable forms, as if the soul "herself" were an apparition of a mother visiting her child. Thus, a conscience originates out of *self-evident* measures of good and evil, for the separation from motherly love divides the soul from itself, a division which is itself "direst despair" and which is made palpable in the psychological phenomenon of visions.

The conversion of heart that the novel demands, then, consists in turning to the authority of motherly care as the principle for ethical action. How forms of moral reasoning likewise change in this conversion can be seen in tracing the transformation of Eliza from slave to free woman. Early in the novel Eliza holds those notions of justice and religious obligation that govern and sanction the slave laws: "I always thought that I must obey my master and mistress, or I couldn't be a Christian," she says with mournful resignation at one point. Her obedience and religious piety are directed by a concept of authority restricted to a distinct and fixed social position, and the ordering principle of this authority likewise fixes distinct social classes to which people resort for a sense of personal identity and for guidance on how to act. Eliza finds this authority persuasive and valuable not so much because she fears punishment (although that too) but because she feels obliged to reciprocate the kindness of the master and mistress with obedience to their authority. Lawrence Kohlberg calls this form of moral sense "instrumental hedonism" or "reciprocal fairness," for most of the reasoning about obligations centers on the actual benefits (or punishments) that ground moral exchanges. Thus

Eliza's husband George says he can see "some sense" in Eliza's reasoning because, as he tells her, "they have brought you up like a child, fed you, clothed you, indulged you, and taught you, so that you have a good education; that is some reason why they should claim you."

This notion of justice is employed also to defend the Fugitive Slave Law. Senator Bird, for example, reasons that it is "no more than Christian and kind" to treat "our brethren in Kentucky" with reciprocal fairness by trying "to quiet the excitement" stirred up by the excessive acts of "reckless Abolitionists." But this form of reasoning need not result in only one conclusion about either slavery or the Fugitive Slave Law. When Eliza has crossed the Ohio, for instance, she is aided by a man who turns out to be a neighbor to the Shelbys. He admires her courage and declares that by her daring she has "arnt" (earned) her liberty and that he will not return her to Shelby. He adds, "Shelby, now, mebbe won't think this yer the most neighborly thing in the world; but what's a feller to do? If he catches one of my gals in the same fix, he's welcome to pay back." Again, fair

reciprocity justifies a moral choice, but this choice is one Stowe obviously approves; because of his lack of instruction in legal niceties, the "heathenish Kentuckian ... was betrayed into acting in a sort of Christianized manner, which, if he had been better situated and more enlightened, he would not have been left to do." Although conclusions are different, the same form of moral reasoning is operating, especially in the recognition that notions of law derive from an authority fixed in a particular socioeconomic class.

Source:: Thomas P. Joswick, "'The Crown without the Conflict': Religious Values and Moral Reasoning in *Uncle Tom's Cabin,"* in *Nineteenth-Century Fiction,* Vol. 39, No. 3, December, 1984, pp. 257-74.

Critical Essay #3

In the following excerpt, Ammons discusses the important role of Stowe's female characters as opponents of slavery.

The opening episode of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* introduces Stowe's argument by portraying mothers, black and white, as active opponents of slavery. The system itself, this first scene makes clear, is basically masculine: white men buy and sell black people while the white woman stands by powerless to intervene. This may not be the pattern in every case but, in Stowe's opinion, it is the model, as her prime and detailed treatment of it suggests. When the slave-holder, Mr. Shelby, gets himself into debt and decides that he must sell some property, he settles on Eliza's son, Harry, and Uncle Tom. Shelby, it is true, does not *want* to sell the pretty child or the kind man who raised him from a boy; but sell he does, and to a trader he knows to be so callous, so '"alive to nothing but trade and profit ... [that] he'd sell his own mother at a good per centage."' Figuratively Shelby would do the same, as his selling of Tom demonstrates, and Stowe emphasizes how fine the line is that separates the "benevolent" planter Shelby and the coarse trader Haley, whose favorite topic of conversation (to Shelby's discomfort) always has to do with slave mother's aggravating attachment to their children, whom Haley is in the business of selling away from them. Shelby is in the same business, one step removed, but would rather not admit it. His wife confronts him. Although helpless to overrule him legally, she cries out against his refined brutality, calling 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.... I never thought that slavery was right-never felt willing to own slaves."' When her mate suggests they sneak off on a trip to avoid witnessing the black families' grief at separation, her resistance crystallizes.

'"No, no,' said Mrs. Shelby; 'I'll be in no sense accomplice or help in this cruel business."' Likewise Tom's wife, Aunt Chloe, reacts rebelliously, supporting Eliza in her decision to run away with her child and urging Tom to go with her. These two maternal antagonists of slavery secure Eliza's flight. Because Mrs. Shelby surreptitiously encourages the slaves to sabotage the search for Eliza, and because Aunt Chloe stalls the pursuit by producing culinary disasters which keep the search party at dinner for hours, Eliza is able to make her break for freedom across the frozen Ohio, baby in arms. Due to the conspiracy of the two mothers, one white and one black, followed by the equally crucial assistance of stalwart Mrs. Bird, wife of a wrong-headed Ohio Senator and herself a recently bereaved mother, Eliza and child arrive safely at a Quaker station on the route to Canada. The community serves as a hint of the ideal in *Uncle Tom's Cabin.* It is family-centered, nonviolent, egalitarian; and especially impressive among its members are two hearty matrons, significantly named Ruth and Rachel. Stowe remarks: "So much has been said and sung of beautiful young girls, why don't somebody wake up to the beauty of old women?" For Stowe Rachel Halliday's beauty issues from her perfection as a mother and from the way she uses her power in what is in practice a matriarchal (because completely home-centered) community.

Stowe plays with the idea of Rachel as a mothergoddess, calling her a figure much more worthy of a "cestus" than the overrated Venus whom "bards" like to sing about, and then immediately follows that remark with a glimpse of Rachel's husband happily "engaged in the anti-patriarchal operation of shaving." Of course, Stowe is being whimsical here, but only in the sense that she is too confident a Christian to need to appeal seriously to pagan concepts to express the principle incarnate in Rachel, whose earthy maternal love Stowe will bring to transfigured life in the two unlikely but motherly Christ-figures, Eva and Tom. As a matter of fact the Quaker community is "anti-patriarchal" in its pacifism and its matrifocal social structure, and that is its beauty for Stowe. "Rachel never looked so truly and benignly happy as at the head of her table. There was so much motherliness and full-heartedness even in the way she passed a plate of cakes or poured a cup of coffee, that it seemed to put a spirit into the food and drink she offered." Rachel Halliday, sitting at the head of her family's table in a scene that brings to mind Christ's ministry at the Last Supper, illustrates how humane and spiritually nourishing mother-rule might be.

Eliza and her family escape their white masters. Most slaves did not, and Harriet Beecher Stowe places particular emphasis on the horrors suffered by the system's maternal victims. The first slave auction in the book focuses on an aged mother and teen-aged son who are sold apart over the old woman's pleas and sobs. A young black woman whose baby is stolen and sold drowns herself in the Mississippi, her only obituary an entry in a slave trader's ledger under "losses." A middle-aged slave, her twelve children auctioned away, drinks to silence memory of her thirteenth baby who was starved to death; drunk once too often, the woman is locked in a cellar until the smell of her corpse satisfies her owners' wrath. The degradation of Cassy, Simon Legree's chattel concubine, began with a white lover's clandestine sale of her two small children. Cassy spared her next baby; in her own words, "'I took the little fellow in my arms, when he was two weeks old, and kissed him, and cried over him; and then I gave him laudanum, and held him close to my bosom, while he slept to death.... I am not sorry, to this day; he, at least, is out of pain.'" These cruelly severed ties between mothers and children recur throughout Stowe's exposé of slavery for several reasons: to stir Abolitionist passion within parents in Stowe's audience, to assert the humanity of the black race in the face of racist myths that blacks do not share the emotions of whites, to show that women suffer horrible tortures in the midst of a society boastful about its chivalry toward the "gentle sex," and—most important— to dramatize the root evil of slavery: the displacement of life-giving maternal values by a profit-hungry masculine ethic that regards human beings as marketable commodities. Planters, traders, drivers, bounty hunters, judges, voters-all are white, all are men, all are responsible; and the mothers and motherless children in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* show the human cost of the system. No character illustrates Stowe's charge more starkly than Topsy. Motherless all her young life and systematically kept ignorant by whites, what can the child believe except that she "just growed"?

It is a miracle that she has managed that. For years her owners have routinely beaten her with chains and fireplace pokers, starved her, and locked her in closets until she can respond to nothing but pain and violent abuse. The child has been crippled psychologically by an entire social structure purposely designed to strip her (and her

black brothers) of all sense of human selfhood. Stowe defends Topsy as a credible character in [her] *A Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1853): "Does any one wish to know what is inscribed on the seal which keeps the great stone over the sepulchre of African mind? It is this,— which was so truly said by poor Topsy— 'NOTHING BUT A NIGGER!' It is this, burnt into the soul by the branding-iron of cruel and unchristian scorn, that is a sorer and deeper wound than all the physical evils of slavery together. There never was a slave who did not feel it."

It is significant that only Evangeline St. Clare can dress Topsy's "wound" and awaken in the motherless black girl feelings of tenderness, trust, and self-respect. To understand the ethereal blonde child's life-renewing influence, one must take seriously the unearthly qualities Stowe attaches to Eva. She is not a realistic character any more than Hawthorne's preternatural Pearl in *The Scarlet Letter* (1850) or Melville's Pip in *Moby Dick* (1851). Stowe, too, relies on Romantic convention in *Uncle Tom's Cabin,* first published serially in 1851-52. She consistently describes Eva as dreamy, buoyant, inspired, cloud-like, spotless; and flatly states that this child has an "aerial grace, such as one might dream of for some mythic and allegorical being." Stowe is clear that her mythic and allegorical character resembles Jesus. Tom, who "almost worshipped her as something heavenly and divine," often gazes on Eva "as the Italian sailor gazes on his image of the child Jesus, —with a mixture of reverence and tenderness." Eva's Mammy considers her a "blessed lamb" not destined to live long. Stowe calls her a "dove" and associates her with the morning star. Ophelia describes her as "Christ-like" and hopes that she has learned "something of the love of Christ from her." Tom, before her death, visualizes Eva's face among the angels; and after she is gone he has a dream-vision of the saintly child reading Christ's words to him, words of comfort which end with "'I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour.'" Even while alive Eva's selflessness seems supranatural.

Sights and stories of slavery's atrocity make "her large, mystic eyes dilate with horror...." and move her to lay her hands on her breast and sigh profoundly. She explains, "'these things *sink into my heart.'"* The child identifies with the slaves' misery, telling Tom finally: "'I can understand why Jesus *wanted* to die for us.... I *would die* for them, Tom, if I could.'" On the figurative level-the only level on which Eva makes sense-she gets her wish. Stowe contrives her death to demonstrate that there is no life for a pure, Christlike spirit in the corrupt plantation economy the book attacks. None of this means that Eva "is" Christ. But I think it does mean that she reflects by way of her name a type of Christ, and Stowe's unusual typology vivifies the moral center of *Uncle Tom's Cabin.*

Source: Elizabeth Ammons, "Heroines in *Uncle Tom's Cabin, in American Literature,* Vol. 49, No. 2, May, 1977, pp. 165-79.

Adaptations

Directed by William Robert Daly, the 1914 silent film version of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* starred Mary Eline, Irving Cummings, and Sam Lucas. Lucas was one of the first African-American actors to appear in a leading movie role.

Another film version of *Uncle Tom's Cabin (Onkel Tom's Hutte)* was made in Yugoslavia in 1969 by Hungarian director Geza von Radvanyi and stars John Kitzmiller, O.W. Fischer, Herbert Lom, and Gertraud Mittermayr.

A made-for-television version of Stowe's novel, directed by Stan Lathan, appeared in 1987. This version stars Avery Brooks, Kate Burton, Bruce Dern, Paula Kelly, Phylicia Rashad, Kathryn Walker, Edward Woodward, Frank Converse, George Coe, and Albert Hall.

Topics for Further Study

Research mid-nineteenth-century American views of motherhood and domesticity and compare those views to Stowe's portrayal of mothers and motherhood.

Look at actual nineteenth-century slave narratives written by both women and men, and consider the ways in which slavery was different for each sex.

In what ways had slavery been built into an economic necessity in the agrarian antebellum South? Why might slaveholders sympathetic to the slaves' plight not have freed their slaves?

Compare and Contrast

1850: The U.S. Congress voted to pass the Fugitive Slave Law, which required Northerners to return runaway slaves to their Southern masters and tightened restrictions on free blacks as well as fugitive slaves.

1950s: Jim Crow laws were still in effect in the southern states, limiting the rights of African Americans. Slowly, many of those laws began to be reversed in the 1950s, such as the 1954 Supreme Court decision that declared school segregation unconstitutional in *Brown v. Board of Education.*

Today: Many African Americans now serve in Congress, sit on the Supreme Court, and have been considered credible candidates for president by both major political parties.

1850s: American culture valued domesticity and the role of housewives in society. White middle-class women were expected to settle happily into marriage and motherhood and to tend to their families' spiritual and moral lives.

1950s: While more career opportunities were beginning to open for women, middle-class women were still for the most part expected to marry young, quit working outside the home after marriage, and stay home to care for their children.

Today: Society's expectations for women have changed with regard to marriage, working outside the home, and staying home with children. An increasing number of American women now choose to pursue a career along with raising children.

1850s: The Second Great Awakening, a religious movement calling people to find redemption through Christ, motivated inspired followers to try to improve society through reforms, which often included antislavery efforts.

1960s: The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. wrote his stirring *Letter from Birmingham Jail,* in which he bemoaned the "laxity of the church" in the civil rights movement and called upon Christians to turn to "the inner spiritual church" and take up the civil rights cause.

Today: Motivated by the problems affecting African-American communities, many religious leaders have become more involved in social reform. For instance, on October 16, 1995, Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan arranged the Million Man March in Washington, D.C.-an event impelling black men of all ages and backgrounds to take responsibility for themselves and their families through spiritual means. The ceremonial "atonement" also encouraged the men to take advantage of educational opportunities, invest within their communities, and promote peace in their neighborhoods.

What Do I Read Next?

Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written by Himself, Douglass's autobiography, was first published in 1845. Douglass tells of his life as a slave in the American South, the cruelty of Christian slaveholders, and how, after learning to read, he finally was able to escape to freedom.

Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, written in 1861 by Harriet Jacobs, is the first slave narrative written by an African-American woman. Jacobs tells of the particular problems experienced by women in slavery—sexual exploitation, the separation of mother and children—and makes emotional appeals to her white female reading audience.

Our Nig; or, Sketches from the Life of a Free Black, in a Two-Story White House, North, written in 1859 by Harriet Wilson, is the first published novel by an African-American woman. Wilson's novel focuses on the character of Alfredo, a young mixed-race woman living in the antebellum North who strives to maintain her Christian faith and to become independent from her unkind mistress.

Published in 1853, *Clotel; or, The President's Daughter* by William Wells Brown is the first novel by an African American published. It tells the fictional story of the beautiful, genteel mixed-race daughter of Thomas Jefferson and her experiences in and out of slavery.

Further Study

Nina Baym, et al., eds., *The Norton Anthology of American Literature,* 4th ed., Vol. 1, Norton, 1994.

An anthology containing Jefferson's first draft of the Declaration of Independence, showing his initial condemnation of slavery.
Josephine Donovan, *Uncle Tom's Cabin: Evil, Affliction and Redemptive Love,* Twayne, 1991.
This is a good general introduction to the themes and historical context of *Uncle Tom's Cabin,* with a reading of the text in terms of the problem of evil.

Ann Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture,* Avon, 1978.

A classic study of American culture during Stowe's era, which relates the religiosity of the times both to the abolitionist movement and the marginalization of women.

Thomas F. Gossett, *Uncle Tom's Cabin and American Culture,* Southern Methodist University Press, 1985.

A cultural study of Uncle Tom's Cabin beginning with the political environment surrounding Stowe from her birth in 1811 to the reception of the novel from 1852 to the present.

John D. Hedrick, *Harriet Beecher Stowe: A Life,* Oxford University Press, 1994.

The most recent scholarly biography with an extensive bibliography and sixteen pages of photographs.

Theodore R. Hovet, *The Master Narrative: Harriet Beecher Stowe's Subversive Story of Master and Slave in Uncle Tom's Cabin and Dred,* University Press of America, 1988.

A book which relates American slavery to patriarchal themes and concepts of the "fallen world." Allows *Uncle Tom's Cabin* to be seen in the context of the western patriarchal tradition dating back to Plotinus in the third century.

Mason I. Lowance, Jr., Ellen E. Westbrook, and R. C. De- Prospo, eds., *The Stowe Debate: Rhetorical Strategies in Uncle Tom's Cabin,* University of Massachusetts Press, 1994.

Discusses the three main debates generated by *Uncle Tom's Cabin* over the years: slavery, critical reception, and theory. Contains many useful articles on such topics as race and slavery, domesticity and sentimentality as rhetorical strategies, and various theoretical approaches to Uncle Tom's Cabin.

Moira Davison Reynolds, *Uncle Tom's Cabin and Mid- Nineteenth Century United States,* McFarland, 1985.

A description of the political environment that surrounded the publication of *Uncle Tom's Cabin.*

Harriet Beecher Stowe, *The Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin,*

Arno Press & New York Times, 1968.

Originally published in 1854, *The Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin* presents Stowe's own source book of facts for *Uncle Tom's Cabin* that she complied to corroborate her claims and to demonstrate to skeptical readers that all of the characters and events in the novel were based upon actual people and phenomena of slavery.

Forrest Wilson, *Crusader in Crinoline: The Life of Harriet Beecher Stowe,* J. B. Lippincott, 1941.

A dated popularization of Stowe's life, which should be used only with more current biographies, but which contains many interesting photographs and contemporary drawings.

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Langston Hughes, introduction to *Uncle Tom's Cabin in Critical Essays on Harriet Beecher Stowe,* edited by Elizabeth Ammons, G.K. Hall, 1980, pp. 102-4.

Kenneth S. Lynn, introduction to Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin; or, Life among the Lowly,* The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1962, pp. vii-xxiv.

Madeleine B. Stern, "Harriet Beecher Stowe," in *Dictionary of Literary Biography, Volume 12: American Realists and Naturalists,* edited by Donald Pizer and Earl N. Harbert, Gale Research, 1982, pp. 425-33.

Richard Yarborough, "Strategies of Black Characterization in *'Uncle Tom's Cabin'* and the Early Afro-American Novel," in *New Essays on Uncle Tom's Cabin,* edited by Eric J. Sundquist, Cambridge University Press, 1986, pp. 45-84.

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Introduction

Purpose of the Book

The purpose of Novels for Students (NfS) is to provide readers with a guide to understanding, enjoying, and studying novels by giving them easy access to information about the work. Part of Gale's□For Students□ Literature line, NfS is specifically designed to meet the curricular needs of high school and undergraduate college students and their teachers, as well as the interests of general readers and researchers considering specific novels. While each volume contains entries on □classic□ novels

frequently studied in classrooms, there are also entries containing hard-to-find information on contemporary novels, including works by multicultural, international, and women novelists.

The information covered in each entry includes an introduction to the novel and the novel's author; a plot summary, to help readers unravel and understand the events in a novel; descriptions of important characters, including explanation of a given character's role in the novel as well as discussion about that character's relationship to other characters in the novel; analysis of important themes in the novel; and an explanation of important literary techniques and movements as they are demonstrated in the novel.

In addition to this material, which helps the readers analyze the novel itself, students are also provided with important information on the literary and historical background informing each work. This includes a historical context essay, a box comparing the time or place the novel was written to modern Western culture, a critical overview essay, and excerpts from critical essays on the novel. A unique feature of NfS is a specially commissioned critical essay on each novel, targeted toward the student reader.

To further aid the student in studying and enjoying each novel, information on media adaptations is provided, as well as reading suggestions for works of fiction and nonfiction on similar themes and topics. Classroom aids include ideas for research papers and lists of critical sources that provide additional material on the novel.

Selection Criteria

The titles for each volume of NfS were selected by surveying numerous sources on teaching literature and analyzing course curricula for various school districts. Some of the sources surveyed included: literature anthologies; Reading Lists for College-Bound Students: The Books Most Recommended by America's Top Colleges; textbooks on teaching the novel; a College Board survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; a National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; the NCTE's Teaching Literature in High School: The Novel;and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) list of best books for young adults of the past twenty-five years. Input was also solicited from our advisory board, as well as educators from various areas. From these discussions, it was determined that each volume should have a mix of □classic□ novels (those works commonly taught in literature classes) and contemporary novels for which information is often hard to find. Because of the interest in expanding the canon of literature, an emphasis was also placed on including works by international, multicultural, and women authors. Our advisory board members□educational professionals□ helped pare down the list for each volume. If a work was not selected for the present volume, it was often noted as a possibility for a future volume. As always, the editor welcomes suggestions for titles to be included in future volumes.

How Each Entry Is Organized

Each entry, or chapter, in NfS focuses on one novel. Each entry heading lists the full name of the novel, the author's name, and the date of the novel's publication. The following elements are contained in each entry:

- Introduction: a brief overview of the novel which provides information about its first appearance, its literary standing, any controversies surrounding the work, and major conflicts or themes within the work.
- Author Biography: this section includes basic facts about the author's life, and focuses on events and times in the author's life that inspired the novel in question.
- Plot Summary: a factual description of the major events in the novel. Lengthy summaries are broken down with subheads.
- Characters: an alphabetical listing of major characters in the novel. Each character name is followed by a brief to an extensive description of the character's role in the novel, as well as discussion of the character's actions, relationships, and possible motivation. Characters are listed alphabetically by last name. If a character is unnamed□for instance, the narrator in Invisible Man-the character is listed as □The Narrator□ and alphabetized as □Narrator.□ If a character's first name is the only one given, the name will appear alphabetically by that name. □ Variant names are also included for each character. Thus, the full name □Jean Louise Finch□ would head the listing for the narrator of To Kill a Mockingbird, but listed in a separate cross-reference would be the nickname □Scout Finch.□
- Themes: a thorough overview of how the major topics, themes, and issues are addressed within the novel. Each theme discussed appears in a separate subhead, and is easily accessed through the boldface entries in the Subject/Theme Index.
- Style: this section addresses important style elements of the novel, such as setting, point of view, and narration; important literary devices used, such as imagery, foreshadowing, symbolism; and, if applicable, genres to which the work might have belonged, such as Gothicism or Romanticism. Literary terms are explained within the entry, but can also be found in the Glossary.
- Historical Context: This section outlines the social, political, and cultural climate in which the author lived and the novel was created. This section may include descriptions of related historical events, pertinent aspects of daily life in the culture, and the artistic and literary sensibilities of the time in which the work was written. If the novel is a historical work, information regarding the time in which the novel is set is also included. Each section is broken down with helpful subheads.
- Critical Overview: this section provides background on the critical reputation of the novel, including bannings or any other public controversies surrounding the work. For older works, this section includes a history of how the novel was first received and how perceptions of it may have changed over the years; for more recent novels, direct quotes from early reviews may also be included.
- Criticism: an essay commissioned by NfS which specifically deals with the novel and is written specifically for the student audience, as well as excerpts from previously published criticism on the work (if available).

- Sources: an alphabetical list of critical material quoted in the entry, with full bibliographical information.
- Further Reading: an alphabetical list of other critical sources which may prove useful for the student. Includes full bibliographical information and a brief annotation.

In addition, each entry contains the following highlighted sections, set apart from the main text as sidebars:

- Media Adaptations: a list of important film and television adaptations of the novel, including source information. The list also includes stage adaptations, audio recordings, musical adaptations, etc.
- Topics for Further Study: a list of potential study questions or research topics dealing with the novel. This section includes questions related to other disciplines the student may be studying, such as American history, world history, science, math, government, business, geography, economics, psychology, etc.
- Compare and Contrast Box: an □at-a-glance□ comparison of the cultural and historical differences between the author's time and culture and late twentieth century/early twenty-first century Western culture. This box includes pertinent parallels between the major scientific, political, and cultural movements of the time or place the novel was written, the time or place the novel was set (if a historical work), and modern Western culture. Works written after 1990 may not have this box.
- What Do I Read Next?: a list of works that might complement the featured novel or serve as a contrast to it. This includes works by the same author and others, works of fiction and nonfiction, and works from various genres, cultures, and eras.

Other Features

NfS includes □The Informed Dialogue: Interacting with Literature,□ a foreword by Anne Devereaux Jordan, Senior Editor for Teaching and Learning Literature (TALL), and a founder of the Children's Literature Association. This essay provides an enlightening look at how readers interact with literature and how Novels for Students can help teachers show students how to enrich their own reading experiences.

A Cumulative Author/Title Index lists the authors and titles covered in each volume of the NfS series.

A Cumulative Nationality/Ethnicity Index breaks down the authors and titles covered in each volume of the NfS series by nationality and ethnicity.

A Subject/Theme Index, specific to each volume, provides easy reference for users who may be studying a particular subject or theme rather than a single work. Significant subjects from events to broad themes are included, and the entries pointing to the specific theme discussions in each entry are indicated in boldface.

Each entry has several illustrations, including photos of the author, stills from film adaptations (if available), maps, and/or photos of key historical events.

Citing Novels for Students

When writing papers, students who quote directly from any volume of Novels for Students may use the following general forms. These examples are based on MLA style; teachers may request that students adhere to a different style, so the following examples may be adapted as needed. When citing text from NfS that is not attributed to a particular author (i.e., the Themes, Style, Historical Context sections, etc.), the following format should be used in the bibliography section:

□Night.□ Novels for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 234-35.

When quoting the specially commissioned essay from NfS (usually the first piece under the □Criticism□ subhead), the following format should be used:

Miller, Tyrus. Critical Essay on □Winesburg, Ohio.□ Novels for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 335-39.

When quoting a journal or newspaper essay that is reprinted in a volume of NfS, the following form may be used:

Malak, Amin. □Margaret Atwood's □The Handmaid's Tale and the Dystopian Tradition,□ Canadian Literature No. 112 (Spring, 1987), 9-16; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 4, ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski (Detroit: Gale, 1998), pp. 133-36.

When quoting material reprinted from a book that appears in a volume of NfS, the following form may be used:

Adams, Timothy Dow. □Richard Wright: □Wearing the Mask,□ in Telling Lies in Modern American Autobiography (University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 69-83; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 1, ed. Diane Telgen (Detroit: Gale, 1997), pp. 59-61.

We Welcome Your Suggestions

The editor of Novels for Students welcomes your comments and ideas. Readers who wish to suggest novels to appear in future volumes, or who have other suggestions, are cordially invited to contact the editor. You may contact the editor via email at: ForStudentsEditors@gale.com. Or write to the editor at:

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