

= Uncle Tom 's Cabin =

Uncle Tom 's Cabin ; or , Life Among the Lowly , is an anti @-@ slavery novel by American author Harriet Beecher Stowe . Published in 1852 , the novel " helped lay the groundwork for the Civil War " , according to Will Kaufman .

Stowe , a Connecticut @-@ born teacher at the Hartford Female Seminary and an active abolitionist , featured the character of Uncle Tom , a long @-@ suffering black slave around whom the stories of other characters revolve . The sentimental novel depicts the reality of slavery while also asserting that Christian love can overcome something as destructive as enslavement of fellow human beings .

Uncle Tom 's Cabin was the best @-@ selling novel of the 19th century and the second best @-@ selling book of that century , following the Bible . It is credited with helping fuel the abolitionist cause in the 1850s . In the first year after it was published , 300 @,@ 000 copies of the book were sold in the United States ; one million copies in Great Britain . In 1855 , three years after it was published , it was called " the most popular novel of our day . " The impact attributed to the book is great , reinforced by a story that when Abraham Lincoln met Stowe at the start of the Civil War , Lincoln declared , " So this is the little lady who started this great war . " The quote is apocryphal ; it did not appear in print until 1896 , and it has been argued that " The long @-@ term durability of Lincoln 's greeting as an anecdote in literary studies and Stowe scholarship can perhaps be explained in part by the desire among many contemporary intellectuals ... to affirm the role of literature as an agent of social change . "

The book and the plays it inspired helped popularize a number of stereotypes about black people . These include the affectionate , dark @-@ skinned " mammy " ; the " pickaninny " stereotype of black children ; and the " Uncle Tom " , or dutiful , long @-@ suffering servant faithful to his white master or mistress . In recent years , the negative associations with Uncle Tom 's Cabin have , to an extent , overshadowed the historical impact of the book as a " vital antislavery tool . "

= = Publication = =

Uncle Tom 's Cabin first appeared as a 40 @-@ week serial in The National Era , an abolitionist periodical , starting with the June 5 , 1851 , issue . It was originally intended as a shorter narrative that would run for only a few weeks . Stowe expanded the story significantly , however , and it was instantly popular , such that several protests were sent to the Era office when she missed an issue . Because of the story 's popularity , the publisher John P. Jewett contacted Stowe about turning the serial into a book . While Stowe questioned if anyone would read Uncle Tom 's Cabin in book form , she eventually consented to the request .

Convinced the book would be popular , Jewett made the unusual decision (for that time) to have six full @-@ page illustrations by Hammatt Billings engraved for the first printing . Published in book form on March 20 , 1852 , the novel sold 3 @,@ 000 copies on that day alone. and soon sold out its complete print run . A number of other editions were soon printed (including a deluxe edition in 1853 , featuring 117 illustrations by Billings) .

In the first year of publication , 300 @,@ 000 copies of Uncle Tom 's Cabin were sold . At that point , however , " demand came to an unexpected halt No more copies were produced for many years , and if , as is claimed , Abraham Lincoln greeted Stowe in 1862 as ' the little woman who wrote the book that made this great war , ' the work had effectively been out of print for many years . " Jewett went out of business , and it was not until Ticknor and Fields put the work back in print in November 1862 that demand began again to increase .

The book was translated into all major languages , and in the United States it became the second best @-@ selling book after the Bible . A number of the early editions carried an introduction by Rev James Sherman , a Congregational minister in London noted for his abolitionist views . Uncle Tom 's Cabin sold equally well in Britain , with the first London edition appearing in May 1852 and selling 200 @,@ 000 copies . In a few years over 1 @.@ 5 million copies of the book were in circulation in Britain , although most of these were infringing copies (a similar situation occurred in the United

States) .

= = Plot = =

= = = Eliza escapes with her son , Tom sold " down the river " = = =

The book opens with a Kentucky farmer named Arthur Shelby facing the loss of his farm because of debts . Even though he and his wife Emily Shelby believe that they have a benevolent relationship with their slaves , Shelby decides to raise the needed funds by selling two of them ? Uncle Tom , a middle @-@ aged man with a wife and children , and Harry , the son of Emily Shelby 's maid Eliza ? to a slave trader . Emily Shelby is averse to this idea because she had promised her maid that her child would never be sold ; Emily 's son , George Shelby , hates to see Tom go because he sees the man as his friend and mentor .

When Eliza overhears Mr. and Mrs. Shelby discussing plans to sell Tom and Harry , Eliza determines to run away with her son . The novel states that Eliza made this decision because she fears losing her only surviving child (she had already miscarried two children) . Eliza departs that night , leaving a note of apology to her mistress .

Tom is sold and placed on a riverboat which sets sail down the Mississippi River . While on board , Tom meets and befriends a young white girl named Eva . Eva 's father Augustine St. Clare buys Tom from the slave trader and takes him with the family to their home in New Orleans . Tom and Eva begin to relate to one another because of the deep Christian faith they both share .

= = = Eliza 's family hunted , Tom 's life with St. Clare = = =

During Eliza 's escape , she meets up with her husband George Harris , who had run away previously . They decide to attempt to reach Canada . However , they are tracked by a slave hunter named Tom Loker . Eventually Loker and his men trap Eliza and her family , causing Phineas to push Loker down a cliff after George had shot him in the side . Worried that Loker may die , Eliza convinces George to bring the slave hunter to a nearby Quaker settlement for medical treatment .

Back in New Orleans , St. Clare debates slavery with his Northern cousin Ophelia who , while opposing slavery , is prejudiced against black people . St. Clare , however , believes he is not biased , even though he is a slave owner . In an attempt to show Ophelia that her views on blacks are wrong , St. Clare purchases Topsy , a young black slave . St. Clare then asks Ophelia to educate her .

After Tom has lived with the St. Clares for two years , Eva grows very ill . Before she dies she experiences a vision of heaven , which she shares with the people around her . As a result of her death and vision , the other characters resolve to change their lives , with Ophelia promising to throw off her personal prejudices against blacks , Topsy saying she will better herself , and St. Clare pledging to free Tom .

= = = Tom sold to Simon Legree = = =

Before St. Clare can follow through on his pledge , however , he dies after being stabbed outside of a tavern . His wife reneges on her late husband 's vow and sells Tom at auction to a vicious plantation owner named Simon Legree . Legree (a transplanted northerner) takes Tom and Emmeline (whom Legree purchased at the same time) to rural Louisiana , where they meet Legree 's other slaves .

Legree begins to hate Tom when Tom refuses Legree 's order to whip his fellow slave . Legree beats Tom viciously and resolves to crush his new slave 's faith in God . Despite Legree 's cruelty , however , Tom refuses to stop reading his Bible and comforting the other slaves as best he can . While at the plantation , Tom meets Cassy , another of Legree 's slaves . Cassy was previously separated from her son and daughter when they were sold ; unable to endure the pain of seeing

another child sold , she killed her third child .

At this point Tom Loker returns to the story . Loker has changed as the result of being healed by the Quakers . George , Eliza , and Harry have also obtained their freedom after crossing into Canada . In Louisiana , Uncle Tom almost succumbs to hopelessness as his faith in God is tested by the hardships of the plantation . However , he has two visions , one of Jesus and one of Eva , which renew his resolve to remain a faithful Christian , even unto death . He encourages Cassy to escape , which she does , taking Emmeline with her . When Tom refuses to tell Legree where Cassy and Emmeline have gone , Legree orders his overseers to kill Tom . As Tom is dying , he forgives the overseers who savagely beat him . Humbled by the character of the man they have killed , both men become Christians . Very shortly before Tom 's death , George Shelby (Arthur Shelby 's son) arrives to buy Tom 's freedom but finds he is too late .

= = = Final section = = =

On their boat ride to freedom , Cassy and Emmeline meet George Harris 's sister and accompany her to Canada . Cassy discovers that Eliza is her long @-@ lost daughter who was sold as a child . Now that their family is together again , they travel to France and eventually Liberia , the African nation created for former American slaves . George Shelby returns to the Kentucky farm and frees all his slaves . George tells them to remember Tom 's sacrifice and his belief in the true meaning of Christianity .

= = Major characters = =

= = = Uncle Tom = = =

Uncle Tom , the title character , was initially seen as a noble , long @-@ suffering Christian slave . In more recent years , however , his name has become an epithet directed towards African @-@ Americans who are accused of selling out to whites . Stowe intended Tom to be a " noble hero " and praiseworthy person . Throughout the book , far from allowing himself to be exploited , Tom stands up for his beliefs and is grudgingly admired even by his enemies .

= = = Eliza = = =

Eliza is a slave and personal maid to Mrs. Shelby who escapes to the North with her five @-@ year @-@ old son Harry after he is sold to Mr. Haley . Her husband , George , eventually finds Eliza and Harry in Ohio and emigrates with them to Canada , then France and finally Liberia .

The character Eliza was inspired by an account given at Lane Theological Seminary in Cincinnati by John Rankin to Stowe 's husband Calvin , a professor at the school . According to Rankin , in February 1838 a young slave woman , Eliza Harris , had escaped across the frozen Ohio River to the town of Ripley with her child in her arms and stayed at his house on her way further north .

= = = Eva = = =

Evangeline St. Clare is the daughter of Augustine St. Clare . Eva enters the narrative when Uncle Tom is traveling via steamship to New Orleans to be sold , and he rescues the five- or six @-@ year @-@ old girl from drowning . Eva begs her father to buy Tom , and he becomes the head coachman at the St. Clare house . He spends most of his time with the angelic Eva . Eva often talks about love and forgiveness , even convincing the dour slave girl Topsy that she deserves love . She even touches the heart of her Aunt Ophelia .

Eventually Eva falls terminally ill . Before dying , she gives a lock of her hair to each of the slaves , telling them that they must become Christians so that they may see each other in Heaven . On her deathbed , she convinces her father to free Tom , but because of circumstances the promise never

materializes .

A similar character , also named Little Eva , later appeared in the children 's novel Little Eva : The Flower of the South by Philip J. Cozans (although this ironically was an anti @-@ Tom novel) .

= = = Simon Legree = = =

Simon Legree is a cruel slave owner ? a Northerner by birth ? whose name has become synonymous with greed . He is arguably the novel 's main antagonist . His goal is to demoralize Tom and break him of his religious faith ; he eventually orders Tom whipped to death out of frustration for his slave 's unbreakable belief in God . The novel reveals that , as a young man , he had abandoned his sickly mother for a life at sea and ignored her letter to see her one last time at her deathbed . He sexually exploits Cassy , who despises him , and later sets his designs on Emmeline .

It is unclear if Legree is based on any actual individuals . Reports surfaced after the 1870s that Stowe had in mind a wealthy cotton and sugar plantation owner named Meredith Calhoun , who settled on the Red River north of Alexandria , Louisiana . Generally , however , the personal characteristics of Calhoun (" highly educated and refined ") do not match the uncouthness and brutality of Legree . Calhoun even edited his own newspaper , published in Colfax (originally " Calhoun 's Landing ") , which was renamed The National Democrat after Calhoun 's death . However , Calhoun 's overseers may have been in line with the hated Legree 's methods and motivations .

= = Other characters = =

The more notable of the secondary and minor characters in Uncle Tom 's Cabin are :

Arthur Shelby ? Tom 's master in Kentucky . Shelby is characterized as a " kind " slaveowner and a stereotypical Southern gentleman .

Emily Shelby ? Arthur Shelby 's wife . She is a deeply religious woman who strives to be a kind and moral influence upon her slaves and is appalled when her husband sells his slaves with a slave trader . As a woman , she has no legal way to stop this , as all property belongs to her husband .

George Shelby ? Arthur and Emily 's son , who sees Tom as a friend and as the perfect Christian .

Chloe ? Tom 's wife and mother of his children .

Augustine St. Clare ? Tom 's third owner and father of Eva . St. Clare is complex , often sarcastic , with a ready wit . After a rocky courtship he marries a woman he grows to hold in contempt , though he is too polite to let it show . St. Clare recognizes the evil in chattel slavery but is not willing to relinquish the wealth it brings him . After his daughter 's death he becomes more sincere in his religious thoughts and starts to read the Bible to Tom . He plans on finally taking action against slavery by freeing his slaves , but his good intentions ultimately come to nothing .

Marie St. Clare ? Wife of Augustine , she is a self @-@ absorbed woman without a hint of compassion for those around her , including her own family . Given to an unending list of (apparently imaginary) physical maladies , she continually complains about the lack of sympathy she is receiving . She has separated her personal maid , Mammy , from her own two children because they would interfere with her duties . As Marie drives Mammy to exhaustion , she criticizes her for selfishly seeking to attend her own family . Upon the unexpected death of Augustine , Marie countermands the legal process that would have given Tom his freedom .

George Harris ? Eliza 's husband . An intelligent and clever half @-@ white slave who is fiercely loyal to his family .

Topsy ? A young slave girl . When asked if she knows who made her , she professes ignorance of both God and a mother , saying " I s 'pect I growed . Don 't think nobody never made me . " She is transformed by Eva 's love . During the early @-@ to @-@ mid 20th century , several doll manufacturers created Topsy and Topsy @-@ type dolls . The phrase " growed like Topsy " (later " grew like Topsy ") passed into the English language , originally with the specific meaning of unplanned growth , later sometimes just meaning enormous growth .

Miss Ophelia ? Augustine St. Clare 's pious , hard @-@ working , abolitionist cousin from Vermont .

She displays the ambiguities towards African @-@ Americans felt by many Northerners at the time . She argues against the institution of slavery yet , at least initially , feels repulsed by the slaves as individuals .

Prue ? A depressed slave who was forced to let her child starve to death . She takes up drinking in her misery , and is ultimately beaten and killed for it .

Quimbo and Sambo ? slaves of Simon Legree who act as overseers of the plantation . On orders from Legree , they savagely whip Tom but afterward tearfully repent of their deeds to Tom , who forgives them as he lies dying .

= = Major themes = =

Uncle Tom 's Cabin is dominated by a single theme : the evil and immorality of slavery . While Stowe weaves other subthemes throughout her text , such as the moral authority of motherhood and the redeeming possibilities offered by Christianity , she emphasizes the connections between these and the horrors of slavery . Stowe sometimes changed the story 's voice so she could give a " homily " on the destructive nature of slavery (such as when a white woman on the steamboat carrying Tom further south states , " The most dreadful part of slavery , to my mind , is its outrages of feelings and affections ? the separating of families , for example . ") . One way Stowe showed the evil of slavery was how this " peculiar institution " forcibly separated families from each other . One of the subthemes presented in the novel is temperance . Stowe made it somewhat subtle and in some cases she weaved it into events that would also support the dominant theme . One example of this is when Augustine St. Clare is killed , he attempted to stop a brawl between two inebriated men in a cafe and was stabbed . One other example is the death of the slave woman Prue who was whipped to death for being drunk on a consistent basis ; however , her reasons for doing so is due to the loss of her baby . In the opening of the novel , the fates of Eliza and her son are being discussed between slave owners over wine . Considering that Stowe intended this to be a subtheme , then this scene could foreshadow future events that puts alcohol in a bad light .

Because Stowe saw motherhood as the " ethical and structural model for all of American life " and also believed that only women had the moral authority to save the United States from the demon of slavery , another major theme of Uncle Tom 's Cabin is the moral power and sanctity of women . Through characters like Eliza , who escapes from slavery to save her young son (and eventually reunites her entire family) , or Eva , who is seen as the " ideal Christian " , Stowe shows how she believed women could save those around them from even the worst injustices . While later critics have noted that Stowe 's female characters are often domestic clichés instead of realistic women , Stowe 's novel " reaffirmed the importance of women 's influence " and helped pave the way for the women 's rights movement in the following decades .

Stowe 's puritanical religious beliefs show up in the novel 's final , overarching theme ? the exploration of the nature of Christianity and how she feels Christian theology is fundamentally incompatible with slavery . This theme is most evident when Tom urges St. Clare to " look away to Jesus " after the death of St. Clare 's beloved daughter Eva . After Tom dies , George Shelby eulogizes Tom by saying , " What a thing it is to be a Christian . " Because Christian themes play such a large role in Uncle Tom 's Cabin ? and because of Stowe 's frequent use of direct authorial interjections on religion and faith ? the novel often takes the " form of a sermon . "

= = Style = =

Uncle Tom 's Cabin is written in the sentimental and melodramatic style common to 19th century sentimental novels and domestic fiction (also called women 's fiction) . These genres were the most popular novels of Stowe 's time and tended to feature female main characters and a writing style which evoked a reader 's sympathy and emotion . Even though Stowe 's novel differs from other sentimental novels by focusing on a large theme like slavery and by having a man as the main character , she still set out to elicit certain strong feelings from her readers . The power in this type of writing can be seen in the reaction of contemporary readers . Georgiana May , a friend of Stowe

's , wrote a letter to the author , saying : " I was up last night long after one o 'clock , reading and finishing Uncle Tom 's Cabin . I could not leave it any more than I could have left a dying child . " Another reader is described as obsessing on the book at all hours and having considered renaming her daughter Eva . Evidently the death of Little Eva affected a lot of people at that time , because in 1852 , 300 baby girls in Boston alone were given that name .

Despite this positive reaction from readers , for decades literary critics dismissed the style found in Uncle Tom 's Cabin and other sentimental novels because these books were written by women and so prominently featured " women 's sloppy emotions . " One literary critic said that had the novel not been about slavery , " it would be just another sentimental novel , " while another described the book as " primarily a derivative piece of hack work . " In The Literary History of the United States , George F. Whicher called Uncle Tom 's Cabin " Sunday @-@ school fiction " , full of " broadly conceived melodrama , humor , and pathos . "

However , in 1985 Jane Tompkins expressed a different view of Uncle Tom 's Cabin with her book In Sensational Designs : The Cultural Work of American Fiction . Tompkins praised the style so many other critics had dismissed , writing that sentimental novels showed how women 's emotions had the power to change the world for the better . She also said that the popular domestic novels of the 19th century , including Uncle Tom 's Cabin , were remarkable for their " intellectual complexity , ambition , and resourcefulness " ; and that Uncle Tom 's Cabin offers a " critique of American society far more devastating than any delivered by better @-@ known critics such as Hawthorne and Melville . "

This view remains the subject of dispute . Writing in 2001 , legal scholar Richard Posner described Uncle Tom 's Cabin as part of the mediocre list of canonical works that emerges when political criteria are imposed on literature .

= = Reactions to the novel = =

Uncle Tom 's Cabin has exerted an influence equaled by few other novels in history . Upon publication , Uncle Tom 's Cabin ignited a firestorm of protest from defenders of slavery (who created a number of books in response to the novel) while the book elicited praise from abolitionists . As a best @-@ seller , the novel heavily influenced later protest literature .

= = Contemporary and world reaction = =

Uncle Tom 's Cabin outraged people in the American South . The novel was also roundly criticized by slavery supporters .

Acclaimed Southern novelist William Gilmore Simms declared the work utterly false , while others called the novel criminal and slanderous . Reactions ranged from a bookseller in Mobile , Alabama , being forced to leave town for selling the novel to threatening letters sent to Stowe (including a package containing a slave 's severed ear) . Many Southern writers , like Simms , soon wrote their own books in opposition to Stowe 's novel .

Some critics highlighted Stowe 's paucity of life @-@ experience relating to Southern life , saying that it led her to create inaccurate descriptions of the region . For instance , she had never been to a Southern plantation . However , Stowe always said she based the characters of her book on stories she was told by runaway slaves in Cincinnati . It is reported that " She observed firsthand several incidents which galvanized her to write [the] famous anti @-@ slavery novel . Scenes she observed on the Ohio River , including seeing a husband and wife being sold apart , as well as newspaper and magazine accounts and interviews , contributed material to the emerging plot . "

In response to these criticisms , in 1853 Stowe published A Key to Uncle Tom 's Cabin , an attempt to document the veracity of the novel 's depiction of slavery . In the book , Stowe discusses each of the major characters in Uncle Tom 's Cabin and cites " real life equivalents " to them while also mounting a more " aggressive attack on slavery in the South than the novel itself had . " Like the novel , A Key to Uncle Tom 's Cabin was also a best @-@ seller . However , while Stowe claimed A Key to Uncle Tom 's Cabin documented her previously consulted sources , she actually read many

of the cited works only after the publication of her novel . A major part of the Key was Stowe 's critique of how the legal system supported slavery and licensed owners ' mistreatment of slaves . Thus , Stowe put more than slavery on trial ; she put the law on trial . This continued an important theme of Uncle Tom 's Cabin ? that the shadow of law brooded over the institution of slavery and allowed owners to mistreat slaves and then avoid punishment for their mistreatment . In some cases , as Stowe pointed out , it even prevented kind owners from freeing their slaves .

Despite these criticisms , the novel still captured the imagination of many Americans . According to Stowe 's son , when Abraham Lincoln met her in 1862 Lincoln commented , " So this is the little lady who started this great war . " Historians are undecided if Lincoln actually said this line , and in a letter that Stowe wrote to her husband a few hours after meeting with Lincoln no mention of this comment was made . Since then , many writers have credited this novel with focusing Northern anger at the injustices of slavery and the Fugitive Slave Law and helping to fuel the abolitionist movement . Union general and politician James Baird Weaver said that the book convinced him to become active in the abolitionist movement .

Uncle Tom 's Cabin also created great interest in the United Kingdom . The first London edition appeared in May 1852 and sold 200 @, @ 000 copies . Some of this interest was because of British antipathy to America . As one prominent writer explained , " The evil passions which Uncle Tom gratified in England were not hatred or vengeance [of slavery] , but national jealousy and national vanity . We have long been smarting under the conceit of America ? we are tired of hearing her boast that she is the freest and the most enlightened country that the world has ever seen . Our clergy hate her voluntary system ? our Tories hate her democrats ? our Whigs hate her parvenus ? our Radicals hate her litigiousness , her insolence , and her ambition . All parties hailed Mrs. Stowe as a revolter from the enemy . " Charles Francis Adams , the American minister to Britain during the war , argued later that " Uncle Tom 's Cabin ; or Life among the Lowly , published in 1852 , exercised , largely from fortuitous circumstances , a more immediate , considerable and dramatic world @-@ influence than any other book ever printed . "

A French edition , translated by M. L. Carion (or by [Anne-] Louise Swanton @-@ Belloc ? (1796 ? 1881)) , appeared by 1853 published in Cambrai and in Paris . By 1857 , the novel had been translated into 20 languages , including two independent translations into Slovene just one year after its original publication , which started the since @-@ then uninterrupted dialogue between American authors and Slovene translators and readers . Later , it was translated into almost every major language , including Chinese (with translator Lin Shu creating the first Chinese translation of an American novel in 1901) and Amharic (with the 1930 translation created in support of Ethiopian efforts to end the suffering of blacks in that nation) . The book was so widely read that Sigmund Freud reported a number of patients with sado @-@ masochistic tendencies who he believed had been influenced by reading about the whipping of slaves in Uncle Tom 's Cabin .

= = = Literary significance and criticism = = =

As the first widely read political novel in the United States , Uncle Tom 's Cabin greatly influenced development of not only American literature but also protest literature in general . Later books which owe a large debt to Uncle Tom 's Cabin include The Jungle by Upton Sinclair and Silent Spring by Rachel Carson .

Despite this undisputed significance , Uncle Tom 's Cabin has been called " a blend of children 's fable and propaganda . " The novel has also been dismissed by a number of literary critics as " merely a sentimental novel , " while critic George Whicher stated in his Literary History of the United States that " Nothing attributable to Mrs. Stowe or her handiwork can account for the novel 's enormous vogue ; its author 's resources as a purveyor of Sunday @-@ school fiction were not remarkable . She had at most a ready command of broadly conceived melodrama , humor , and pathos , and of these popular sentiments she compounded her book . "

Other critics , though , have praised the novel . Edmund Wilson stated that " To expose oneself in maturity to Uncle Tom 's Cabin may ... prove a startling experience . " Jane Tompkins states that the novel is one of the classics of American literature and wonders if many literary critics aren 't

dismissing the book because it was simply too popular during its day .

Over the years scholars have postulated a number of theories about what Stowe was trying to say with the novel (aside from the obvious themes , such as condemning slavery) . For example , as an ardent Christian and active abolitionist , Stowe placed many of her religious beliefs into the novel . Some scholars have stated that Stowe saw her novel as offering a solution to the moral and political dilemma that troubled many slavery opponents : whether engaging in prohibited behavior was justified in opposing evil . Was the use of violence to oppose the violence of slavery and the breaking of proslavery laws morally defensible ? Which of Stowe 's characters should be emulated , the passive Uncle Tom or the defiant George Harris ? Stowe 's solution was similar to Ralph Waldo Emerson 's : God 's will would be followed if each person sincerely examined his principles and acted on them .

Scholars have also seen the novel as expressing the values and ideas of the Free Will Movement . In this view , the character of George Harris embodies the principles of free labor , while the complex character of Ophelia represents those Northerners who condoned compromise with slavery . In contrast to Ophelia is Dinah , who operates on passion . During the course of the novel Ophelia is transformed , just as the Republican Party (three years later) proclaimed that the North must transform itself and stand up for its antislavery principles .

Feminist theory can also be seen at play in Stowe 's book , with the novel as a critique of the patriarchal nature of slavery . For Stowe , blood relations rather than paternalistic relations between masters and slaves formed the basis of families . Moreover , Stowe viewed national solidarity as an extension of a person 's family , thus feelings of nationality stemmed from possessing a shared race . Consequently , she advocated African colonization for freed slaves and not amalgamation into American society .

The book has also been seen as an attempt to redefine masculinity as a necessary step toward the abolition of slavery . In this view , abolitionists had begun to resist the vision of aggressive and dominant men that the conquest and colonization of the early 19th century had fostered . In order to change the notion of manhood so that men could oppose slavery without jeopardizing their self @-@ image or their standing in society , some abolitionists drew on principles of women 's suffrage and Christianity as well as passivism , and praised men for cooperation , compassion , and civic spirit . Others within the abolitionist movement argued for conventional , aggressive masculine action . All the men in Stowe 's novel are representations of either one kind of man or the other .

= = Creation and popularization of stereotypes = =

Modern scholars and readers have criticized the book for what are seen as condescending racist descriptions of the book 's black characters , especially with regard to the characters ' appearances , speech , and behavior , as well as the passive nature of Uncle Tom in accepting his fate . The novel 's creation and use of common stereotypes about African Americans is significant because Uncle Tom 's Cabin was the best @-@ selling novel in the world during the 19th century . As a result , the book (along with illustrations from the book and associated stage productions) played a major role in permanently ingraining these stereotypes into the American psyche .

Among the stereotypes of blacks in Uncle Tom 's Cabin are the " happy ducky " (in the lazy , carefree character of Sam) ; the light @-@ skinned tragic mulatto as a sex object (in the characters of Eliza , Cassy , and Emmeline) ; the affectionate , dark @-@ skinned female mammy (through several characters , including Mammy , a cook at the St. Clare plantation) ; the pickaninny stereotype of black children (in the character of Topsy) ; the Uncle Tom , an African American who is too eager to please white people . Stowe intended Tom to be a " noble hero " . The stereotype of him as a " subservient fool who bows down to the white man " evidently resulted from staged " Tom Shows " , over which Stowe had no control .

These negative associations have to a large degree overshadowed the historical impact of Uncle Tom 's Cabin as a " vital antislavery tool " . The beginning of this change in the novel 's perception had its roots in an essay by James Baldwin titled " Everybody 's Protest Novel " . In the essay , Baldwin called Uncle Tom 's Cabin a " very bad novel " which was also racially obtuse and

aesthetically crude . In the 1960s and 1970s , the Black Power and Black Arts Movements attacked the novel , saying that the character of Uncle Tom engaged in " race betrayal " , and that Tom made slaves out to be worse than slave owners . Criticisms of the other stereotypes in the book also increased during this time . In recent years , however , scholars such as Henry Louis Gates Jr. have begun to re @-@ examine Uncle Tom 's Cabin , stating that the book is a " central document in American race relations and a significant moral and political exploration of the character of those relations " .

= = Anti @-@ Tom literature = =

In response to Uncle Tom 's Cabin , writers in the Southern United States produced a number of books to rebut Stowe 's novel . This so @-@ called Anti @-@ Tom literature generally took a pro @-@ slavery viewpoint , arguing that the issues of slavery as depicted in Stowe 's book were overblown and incorrect . The novels in this genre tended to feature a benign white patriarchal master and a pure wife , both of whom presided over childlike slaves in a benevolent extended family style plantation . The novels either implied or directly stated that African Americans were a childlike people unable to live their lives without being directly overseen by white people .

Among the most famous anti @-@ Tom books are *The Sword and the Distaff* by William Gilmore Simms , *Aunt Phillis 's Cabin* by Mary Henderson Eastman , and *The Planter 's Northern Bride* by Caroline Lee Hentz , with the last author having been a close personal friend of Stowe 's when the two lived in Cincinnati . Simms ' book was published a few months after Stowe 's novel , and it contains a number of sections and discussions disputing Stowe 's book and her view of slavery . Hentz 's 1854 novel , widely read at the time but now largely forgotten , offers a defense of slavery as seen through the eyes of a northern woman ? the daughter of an abolitionist , no less ? who marries a southern slave owner .

In the decade between the publication of Uncle Tom 's Cabin and the start of the American Civil War , between twenty and thirty anti @-@ Tom books were published . Among these novels are two books titled *Uncle Tom 's Cabin As It Is* (one by W. L. Smith and the other by C. H. Wiley) and a book by John Pendleton Kennedy . More than half of these anti @-@ Tom books were written by white women , with Simms commenting at one point about the " Seemingly poetic justice of having the Northern woman (Stowe) answered by a Southern woman . "

= = Dramatic adaptations = =

= = = Tom shows = = =

Even though Uncle Tom 's Cabin was the best @-@ selling novel of the 19th century , far more Americans of that time saw the story as a stage play or musical than read the book . Eric Lott , in his book *Uncle Tomitudes : Racial Melodrama and Modes of Production* , estimates that at least three million people saw these plays , ten times the book 's first @-@ year sales .

Given the lax copyright laws of the time , stage plays based on Uncle Tom 's Cabin ? " Tom shows " ? began to appear while the novel was still being serialized . Stowe refused to authorize dramatization of her work because of her distrust of drama (although she did eventually go to see George L. Aiken 's version and , according to Francis Underwood , was " delighted " by Caroline Howard 's portrayal of Topsy) . Aiken 's stage production continued as " the most popular play in England and America for seventy @-@ five years . " Stowe 's refusal to authorize a particular dramatic version left the field clear for any number of adaptations , some launched for (various) political reasons and others as simply commercial theatrical ventures .

No international copyright laws existed at the time . The book and plays were translated into several languages ; Stowe received no money , which could have meant as much as " three fourths of her just and legitimate wages . "

== On the plays ==

All Tom shows appear to have incorporated elements of melodrama and blackface minstrelsy . These plays varied tremendously in their politics ? some faithfully reflected Stowe 's sentimentalized antislavery politics , while others were more moderate , or even pro @-@ slavery . Many of the productions featured demeaning racial caricatures of Black people , while a number of productions also featured songs by Stephen Foster (including " My Old Kentucky Home " , " Old Folks at Home " , and " Massa 's in the Cold Ground ") . The best @-@ known Tom Shows were those of George Aiken and H.J. Conway .

The version by Aiken is perhaps the best known stage adaptation , released just a few months after the novel was published . This six @-@ act behemoth also set an important precedent by being the first show on Broadway to stand on its own , without the performance of other entertainments or any afterpiece . Most of Aiken 's dialogue is lifted verbatim from Stowe 's novel and it included four full musical numbers written by the producer , George C. Howard . Another legacy of this adaptation is its reliance upon very different locations all portrayed on the same stage . This reliance led to large sets and set a precedent for the future days of film . By focusing on the stark and desperate situations of his characters , Aiken appealed to the emotions of his audiences . By combining this melodramatic approach with the content of Stowe 's novel , Aiken helped to create a powerful visual indictment against the institution of slavery .

The many stage variants of Uncle Tom 's Cabin " dominated northern popular culture ... for several years " during the 19th century , and the plays were still being performed in the early 20th century .

One of the unique and controversial variants of the Tom Shows was Walt Disney 's 1933 Mickey 's Mellerdrammer . Mickey 's Mellerdrammer is a United Artists film released in 1933 . The title is a corruption of " melodrama " , thought to harken back to the earliest minstrel shows , as a film short based on a production of Uncle Tom 's Cabin by the Disney characters . In that film , Mickey Mouse and friends stage their own production of Uncle Tom 's Cabin . Mickey Mouse was already black @-@ colored , but the advertising poster for the film shows Mickey dressed in blackface with exaggerated , orange lips ; bushy , white sidewhiskers made out of cotton ; and his trademark white gloves .

== Film adaptations ==

Uncle Tom 's Cabin has been adapted several times as a film . Most of these movies were created during the silent film era (Uncle Tom 's Cabin was the most @-@ filmed book of that time period) . Because of the continuing popularity of both the book and " Tom " shows , audiences were already familiar with the characters and the plot , making it easier for the film to be understood without spoken words . There has been no Hollywood treatment since the end of the silent era .

The first film version of Uncle Tom 's Cabin was one of the earliest full @-@ length movies (although full @-@ length at that time meant between 10 and 14 minutes) . This 1903 film , directed by Edwin S. Porter , used white actors in blackface in the major roles and black performers only as extras . This version was evidently similar to many of the " Tom Shows " of earlier decades and featured numerous stereotypes about blacks (such as having the slaves dance in almost any context , including at a slave auction) .

In 1910 , a three @-@ reel Vitagraph Company of America production was directed by J. Stuart Blackton and adapted by Eugene Mullin . According to The Dramatic Mirror , this film was " a decided innovation " in motion pictures and " the first time an American company " released a dramatic film in three reels . Until then , full @-@ length movies of the time were 15 minutes long and contained only one reel of film . The movie starred Florence Turner , Mary Fuller , Edwin R. Phillips , Flora Finch , Genevieve Tobin and Carlyle Blackwell , Sr.

At least four more movie adaptations were created in the next two decades . The last silent film version was released in 1927 . Directed by Harry A. Pollard (who played Uncle Tom in a 1913 release of Uncle Tom 's Cabin) , this two @-@ hour movie was more than a year in production and was the third most expensive picture of the silent era (at a cost of \$ 1 @.@ 8 million) . The black

actor Charles Gilpin was originally cast in the title role , but he was fired after the studio decided his " portrayal was too aggressive . " James B. Lowe took over the character of Tom . The screenplay takes many liberties with the original book , including altering the Eliza and George subplot , introducing the Civil War and Emancipation , and combining the characters of Eliza and Emmeline . Another difference occurs after Tom dies : Simon Legree is haunted by an apparitional vision of the late Tom and falls to his death in a futile effort to attack the ghostly image .

Black media outlets of the time praised the film , but the studio ? fearful of a backlash from Southern and white film audiences ? ended up cutting out controversial scenes , including the film 's opening sequence at a slave auction (in which a mother is torn away from her baby) . The story was adapted by Harvey F. Pollard , Thew and A. P. Younger , with titles by Walter Anthony . It starred James B. Lowe , Virginia Grey , George Siegmann , Margarita Fischer , Mona Ray and Madame Sul Te Wan .

For several decades after the end of the silent film era , the subject matter of Stowe 's novel was judged too sensitive for further film interpretation . In 1946 , Metro Goldwyn Mayer considered filming the story but ceased production after protests led by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People .

A German language version , *Onkel Toms Hütte* , directed by Géza von Radványi , was released in 1965 and was presented in the United States by exploitation film presenter Kroger Babb .

The most recent film version was a television broadcast in 1987 , directed by Stan Lathan and adapted by John Gay . It starred Avery Brooks , Phylicia Rashad , Edward Woodward , Jenny Lewis , Samuel L. Jackson and Endyia Kinney .

In addition to film adaptations , versions of *Uncle Tom 's Cabin* have been produced in other formats . In Brazil , the adapted version *A Cabana do Pai Tomás* was produced as a TV soap opera by Rede Globo ; with 205 episodes , it was aired from July 1969 to March 1970 .

A number of animated cartoons were produced , including the Bugs Bunny cartoon *Southern Fried Rabbit* (1953) , in which Bugs disguises himself as Uncle Tom and sings *My Old Kentucky Home* in order to cross the Mason Dixon line ; *Uncle Tom 's Bungalow* (1937) , a Warner Brothers cartoon supervised by Tex Avery ; *Eliza on Ice* (1944) , one of the earliest *Mighty Mouse* cartoons produced by Paul Terry ; and *Uncle Tom 's Cabaña* (1947) , an eight minute cartoon directed by Tex Avery .

Uncle Tom 's Cabin has influenced numerous movies , including *Birth of a Nation* . This controversial 1915 film set the dramatic climax in a slave cabin similar to that of *Uncle Tom* , where several white Southerners unite with their former enemy (Yankee soldiers) to defend , according to the film 's caption , their " Aryan birthright . " According to scholars , this reuse of such a familiar image of a slave cabin would have resonated with , and been understood by , audiences of the time .

Other movies influenced by or making use of *Uncle Tom 's Cabin* include *Dimples* (a 1936 Shirley Temple film) , *Uncle Tom 's Uncle* , (a 1926 *Our Gang* episode) , its 1932 remake *Spanky* , the Rodgers and Hammerstein musical *The King and I* (in which a ballet called " *Small House of Uncle Thomas* " is performed in traditional Siamese style) , and *Gangs of New York* (in which Leonardo DiCaprio and Daniel Day Lewis 's characters attend an imagined wartime adaptation of *Uncle Tom 's Cabin*) .

= = Collections = =

Major collections of *Uncle Tom 's Cabin* books , ephemera , and artifacts reside at the Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library at the University of Virginia and the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas at Austin .