

The judgment of the omniscient narrator to disguise its bias in uncle tom's cabin...



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BUSTER**

Uncle Tom's Cabin, by Harriet Beecher Stowe, presents the linked stories of different slaves in Kentucky from the perspective of an omniscient narrator. "The role of the omniscient narrator is to chronicle the events of a story in an impartial way. He or she has full access to the events and dialogue occurring in the narrative, rendering his or her account the most complete and accurate. This all-knowing, all-seeing narrator type jumps from scene to scene, following characters throughout a story and assessing the progress of the narrative." The narrator shows the feelings of the characters; however, it does not do it from an impartial position; it transmits his opinion, and it judges each character and makes statements about their personalities. However, the narrator states negative things about most characters, even the ones it seems to like, making it appear as if it had no preferences, making it appear fair. The narrator is telling the story while judging the character and showing his opinion, and by doing this, it guides the opinion of the reader. It is a bias narration disguised by the apparent fair judgement of most characters, which guides the opinion of the reader instead of allowing it to make his own.

The opinions of the narrator are clearly stated throughout the book. It gives its opinion about characters and what surrounds them. The narrator calls the songs that Jim (a kid servant) sings "grotesque songs common among the negroes" (Beecher 3), which is an opinion because qualifying a song is subjective. It also states that "The worst use you can put a man to is to hang him. No; there is another use that a man can be put to that is WORSE!" (Beecher 13) which is also an opinion, and one that the reader cannot verify because it is not clearly stated what the other use is. It also gives its opinion

of characters: " Mrs. Shelby was a woman of high class, both intellectually and morally. To that natural magnanimity and generosity of mind which one often marks as characteristic of the women of Kentucky, she added high moral and religious sensibility and principle, carried out with great energy and ability into practical results." (Beecher 9). However, it presents negative opinions too, a character is called a tyrant: " The tyrant observed the whisper" (Beecher 12). The narrator is qualifying the songs among " the negroes" negatively, judging their traditions, while qualifying Mrs Shelby positively, and the master of George negatively, affecting the opinion of the reader.

The narrator also states some of the minor defects of the character of its preference; this creates contrast, and it adds validation to what he is saying, making it appear as complete, and, therefore, the truth. One of Mr Shelby's defects is that he had the belief that if he was not " exactly a believer in the doctrine of the efficiency of the extra good works of saints, he really seemed somehow or other to fancy that his wife had piety and benevolence enough for two" (Beecher 9), instead of trying to get in heaven by himself. This actions disguise the bias and preferences of the narrator, making it appear fair and impartial.

It is possible to notice that the narrator has particular opinions because it is personified. The narrator is aware of the reader, as if it could have a conversation, as if it were a person or character too. This is perceived in fragments like the following: " perhaps you laugh too, dear reader; but you know humanity comes out in a variety of strange forms now-a-days"

(Beecher 6). The narrator addressed the reader, reminding us that it has a personified voice of its own.

The narrator has its own opinions and judgements, and it presents them to the reader throughout the whole text, guiding its opinion. Uncle Tom's Cabin is a canonical text that guided the opinions of the population towards a more fair future, but, for doing it, it had to disguise the opinions of the narrator as impartial to avoid a reader that could think that the narrator imposed ideas. The narrator offers a guided reading of the text, but one which uses the precise devices to guide towards the right idea (as I'm trying to do right now).

## **Works Cited**

Harriet Beecher. Uncle Tom's Cabin. Free Editorial, Freeditorial, freeditorial.com/en/books/uncle-tom-s-cabin.

"Omniscient Narrator." The International Society for the Study of Narrative, narrative.georgetown.edu/wiki/index.php/Omniscient\_narrator.