

Sentimental types, social reform and sentimentalism in uncle toms cabin

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Uncle Toms Cabin by Harriet Beachier Stowe uses sentimentalism in order to captivate her nineteenth century audience. She does this in order to cultivate an understanding and sympathetic viewpoint with her chosen audience. Uncle Toms Cabin utilizes sentimentalism in order to form an attachment with slaves. Throughout the novel you take each hardship the slaves have endured as your own, in doing this she uses sympathy and love crutch to hold up her own Christian views and show slavery must end.

Harriet Beachier Stowe's sentimentality throughout Uncle Toms Cabin is shown within the sympathy displayed by St. Clare, a Christian who silently rejects slavery, and by the death of Eva, in order to evoke an emotional response from her readers, and show that Christian love can overpower the evil that has come from slavery. Stowe's sentimentalism throughout Uncle Toms Cabin is driven by her desire to show that African Americans have the same soul as whites, and that if we are to let go of slavery we first must look at them as we do ourselves. Although St. Clare recognizes that slavery is inherently evil and unjust, he is not quite ready to admit he is one in the same with other masters. "... when Christ should reign, and all the men should be happy and free. Sometimes I think all this sighing, and groaning, and stirring among the dry bones foretells what she used to tell me was coming. But who may abide the day of His appearing?" Here St. Clare shares what his mother once told him, that there will be a day when men are happy and free. St. Clare loves and cares for his slaves, however he is unable to connect to his slaves on a deeper level, because he does not see himself as one in the same with other slave masters.

Throughout the novel you see St. Clare turn into a new person one whose sympathy and love guides him to the right choice. However, this sympathy comes after a great loss. You begin to see St. Clare truly sympathetic towards the slaves once Eva dies. Eva is seen as a Christ like martyr. Her death echoed in the minds of many characters, including Ophelia and Topsy. St. Clare mourned Eva, however he mourned himself in her death as well. St. Clare realizes that within Eva's death lies the death of his past self. He does not want to die as a sinner and realizes that resisting silently is not good enough anymore. St. Clare poses the same characteristics in which he frowned upon "that kind of benevolence which consists in lying on a sofa and cursing the church and clergy for not being martyrs and confessors". Although he dies before he can act upon his new understanding and bond with the enslaved, he is shown as someone who has made up for his sins, and whose soul is now safe. According to Stowe, this means that he can go on to heaven, which is shown when he joyously remarks he is "coming HOME, at last!".

The underlying fear that accompanied St. Clare stemmed from the fear of judgment, which inspired his love for the slaves. In killing St. Clare, Stowe wanted to encourage a great feeling of sympathy toward the slaves. She did this with St. Clare to show a relatable character turning over a new leaf. Stowe attempts to connect her audience with the slaves in Uncle Tom's Cabin by using family and Christian religion. Here she attempted to close the gap between the audience and the slaves, and show that blacks were a valuable asset, and could contribute to America as well as Whites could. She uses Eva and Tom's bond to evoke an emotional response from the readers. When Eva

is introduced in this novel she is described as an innocent child, who in theory represents the massacre in which slavery contributed to. Eva is one of the many who gradually die due to slavery. Stowe paints Eva's presence as an angelic innocent girl. Stowe says "form was the perfection of childish beauty. Her face was remarkable, less for its perfect beauty of feature than for a dreamy earnestness of expression, which made the idle start when they looked at her, and by which the dullest and most literal were pressed, without exactly knowing why". Eva is painted as a pure Christian, someone who is too Christ-like for any Christian to reject. In this description, she is met to be the image of an angel, someone whose light is shining throughout the darkness of this novel. Stowe uses Eva in order to evoke an anger from her audience. Little Eva dies, leaving the audience to mourn her, as she is another fallen angel that slavery has killed. Eva, who was Toms only hope dies young, and after the death of St.

Clare, realizes he will not be free. Tom is a resilient man who overcomes each hardship that is thrown at him, because he follows gods words of "love thine enemies." Tom is seen as less of a fallen angel, and as more of an image of Christ. Tom is highly compliant in all of his endeavors. He is subservient in the aspect that he stays loyal to not only his family but the white men that enslaved him. Tom is described in the novel as a simple-feminized man, sincere, and childlike. He is described as a slave who is "large, broad-chested, power fully-made man, of a fully glossy black, and a face whose truly African features were characterized by an expression of grave and steady good sense, united with much kindness and benevolence'. Tom relies wholly on his faith to get him through the loss of his family and he

ultimately sacrifices himself for his own faith. When Mr. Shelby is arranging the sale of Tom, he describes him as a passive fellow during his conversation with the slave trader Haley as follows; “ Why, the fact is, Haley, Tom is an uncommon fellow, he is certainly worth that sub anywhere, steady, honest, capable, manages my whole farm like a clock”. Tom is essentially described as a loyal man, who will not cheat nor be unfaithful to his master, for he loves Christ and his religion too much. Stowe uses Tom as an ideal sentimental character, and hopes that in showing his love for humanity, the audience will sympathize and feel a bond.