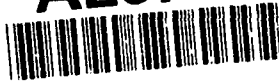


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THE GENDERED NARRATOR: THE VOICE OF THE GOD/MOTHER IN
HARRIET BEECHER STOWE'S DRED

by

SUSAN CAROL ROSS

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of
The University of Texas at Arlington in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of

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ABSTRACT

THE GENDERED NARRATOR: THE VOICE OF THE GOD/MOTHER IN
HARRIET BEECHER STOWE'S DRED

Publication No. _____

Susan Carol Ross, M.A.

The University of Texas at Arlington, 1993

Supervising Professor: Timothy Morris

Stowe's second slave novel, received in the shadow of Uncle Tom's Cabin, has met with rather mixed reviews since its publication. The novel is narrated in a unique way, reflecting Stowe's idea of women's role in society. I call this role, and this narrator, the God/mother. She is creative and nurturing, authoritative and motherly, didactic and intrusive. The God/mother emerges as she recreates herself in her heroines, narrates in the halting and disrupted rhythm of domestic life, and asks the reader to be an obedient child that will take the moral to heart. How readers respond to a text is based on expectations created by social issues, the genre, and the author. Dred's initial reception is evidence that its earliest readers were not entirely predisposed to accept the role of the obedient child.

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DRED'S GENDERED NARRATOR

Dred; A Tale of the Great Dismal Swamp is the quintessential Harriet Beecher Stowe novel. It is, first and foremost, an anti-slavery novel. Like Uncle Tom's Cabin, it examines and attacks the social structures that support slavery. Dred is also an indicting commentary on Calvinism, patriarchal values, class conflict, and the failure of the American dream. And while every one of these themes appears in one or more of Stowe's other works, nowhere else are they all synthesized into one message--"you," society, are not living as God intended.

Dred is also a synthesis of all of Stowe's narrative techniques. At times the plot is sentimental, formulaic, painfully predictable. Nina's conversion, under the positive influence of Clayton, is typical of Stowe novels and of nineteenth-century American sentimental fiction in general. But Nina dies in the middle of the story, and the plot turns to the court-room, the theological session, and the swamp. Dred's narrator is similarly variable, at times didactic, addressing the reader directly, while at other times distant and objective, or absent entirely for long periods.

Dred has been described as "spasmodic action" and "different kinds of material . . . poorly fitted together," feebly "strung on the insubstantial cord of a love story"

(Adams 41-43). Critics have answered this charge in various ways, all of them centered on thematic continuities. One of the links that holds the work together is Stowe's concept of women. Their positive attributes are defined as God-like and motherly, such as compassion, wisdom, unconditional love for their children, and creativity. God and mothers must know when to intervene and when to withdraw, and when to inflict the inevitable punishment on their wayward children. These qualities emerge repeatedly in Stowe's characters, and are not limited to women (Nina, Milly, Tiff, and Harry, for example).¹

This notion of the God/mother describes the narrator as well. She is creative in the sense that the story is her own creation, and the reader is invited to become a child in order to receive important and sometimes painful moral lessons. The narrator calculates when to be compassionate and nurturing, leading the reader gently through the difficult sections, and when to be harsh. She decides when to explain the moral in the simplest terms, and when to let the reader discover it for herself or himself.

In Narrative Discourse, Gerard Genette describes the analysis of narrative discourse as "a study of relationships: on the one hand the relationship between a discourse and the events that it recounts . . . , on the other hand the relationship between the same discourse and the act which produces it" (27). When Genette speaks of these relationships, he is

concerned with the text exclusively, not the life of the author or the social or historical context of the story.² But events in Stowe's life created her own particular form of narrative discourse, and this relationship should not be overlooked when examining the relationships Genette proposes. For example, Genette provides a way to describe how a narrator distributes the ideological function of the discourse. But the stance the narrator takes and the way she chooses to address the reader reflect a broader body of discourse which involves relationships outside of the text. So how an author chooses to tell the story, and how she expects it to be received, relate to her own ideologies and her own perceived position in the community she addresses. For Stowe, this position is feminine, domestic. Her concept of the interaction between mothers, God, fiction, and society is inscribed in the gendered narrative of Dred.

In Sensational Designs, Jane Tompkins redefines an aesthetic standard for sentimental fiction in terms of the cultural work that the novel accomplishes. She explains how students have been taught "to equate popularity with debasement, emotionality with ineffectiveness, religiosity with fakery, domesticity with triviality, and all of these, implicitly, with womanly inferiority" (123). But for Stowe, and hence for Stowe's fiction, religion, femininity, emotion, and domesticity are strengths. I will examine how the concept

of the God/mother unites Stowe's life and fiction, as reflected in her self-conception and the narrative discourse of Dred.

My final chapter will return to the question of aesthetics and reception. After examining what Stowe was trying to do, her motives and techniques, the question remains: how well did she accomplish her goals? Dred was published in the wake of the phenomenally successful Uncle Tom's Cabin, at a time when the slavery debate was more heated than ever. I believe that Dred is also a better novel, partly because it deals with the slavery issue from such a wide variety of angles. But it was less popular than Uncle Tom's Cabin, and certainly has disappeared from the canon. I will offer some hypotheses as to what degree Dred succeeded or failed, and why.

THE GOD/MOTHER AND DOMESTIC LIFE

By far the strongest element in Stowe's identity is the mother. Sociologist Nancy Chodorow has examined why women mother. She concludes that mothering is an historical product, a phenomenon of "psychological and personal experience of self in relationship to child or children" (32). She explains that a woman's identity as a mother informs every facet of her life, both in and out of the home. Traditional notions of women's sphere (home and children, morality and spirituality) versus men's sphere (business and politics) shaped Stowe's ideas to a large extent. But the importance of women as mothers was magnified by her own particular experiences.

Almost all of the men in Stowe's life were ministers, whom she loved and respected, but they also were dependent on women to handle the practical aspects of daily life. She thought of her father, Lyman Beecher, as a brilliant man, "my blessed father, for many years so true an image of the Heavenly Father" (Wagenknecht 29). But he was notoriously disorganized and absent-minded. One Sunday, he caught a fish before church and put it in his coat pocket, where it remained until his wife found it the following Sunday (Wagenknecht 29). Stowe married a man much like her father, a gifted clergyman who needed women to take care of him. When he was away from

home during a cholera epidemic, Stowe insisted he stay away until the situation improved, since his presence would be more of a hindrance than a help (Wagenknecht 56). Other men in Stowe's life--her brother Henry, her son Frederick--had difficulty keeping their lives in order, requiring the intervention of practical and efficient women.

She respected what men could accomplish intellectually, but believed that their accomplishments were facilitated by women. The women in her life were almost saintly in their capacity to do good. The most significant was her oldest sister Catharine. Catharine provided Harriet with the opportunity to teach, direction and encouragement as a writer, and confidence in her role as a woman. Catharine was as intelligent and articulate as Harriet, taking on the role of "spokeswoman for the conservative branch of American feminism in mid-nineteenth-century America," speaking and writing about issues such as higher education for women and suffrage (Harris 15).

One of Stowe's servants, Anna Smith, became an intimate friend because of her energy and competence in running household affairs (Hedrick, "Peaceable Fruits" 312). Stowe moved within a motherly neighborhood power network, wherein women helped each other with nursing the sick, baking bread, and delivering babies. In other words, the women in Stowe's life shared a type of bond, based on compassion and ability,

that operated beyond "superficial" boundaries such as class or race (Hedrick, "Peaceable Fruits" 308).

Stowe was almost reverential toward the gifts that women, herself included, possessed. In her story "The Chimney Corner," the narrator describes how he would build a cathedral honoring "Saint Esther," the model of all those Puritan New England women who did so much with so little (413). Women, as a group, she elevates to a kind of sainthood. They occupy a special position between men and God by virtue of their abilities and their sensibilities. While all Stowe's works contain tributes to these talents, she describes them best as "faculty" in The Minister's Wooing:

To her who has faculty, nothing shall be impossible. She shall scrub floors, wash, wring, bake, brew, and yet her hands shall be small and white; she shall have no perceptible income, yet always be handsomely dressed; she shall have not a servant in her house,--with a dairy to manage, hired men to feed, a boarder or two to care for, unheard-of pickling and preserving to do,--and yet you commonly see her every afternoon sitting at her shady parlor-window behind the lilacs, cool and easy, hemming muslin cap-strings, or reading the last new book. She who hath faculty is never in a hurry, never behind-hand. She can always step over to distressed Mrs. Smith,

whose jelly won't come,--and stop to show Mrs. Jones how to make her pickles so green,--and be ready to watch with poor old Mrs. Simpkins, who is down with the rheumatism. (2)

Women have an almost mystical ability to create, to care for, and still have time to rest, just as God rested on the seventh day.

Stowe's religious beliefs have been the subject of ample discussion.³ To label her a Calvinist or a puritan is overly reductive. She developed a very personal theology, and the concept of the God/mother is intertwined with that theology.

The first and most obvious influence in Stowe's religious life was her father, the minister Lyman Beecher. It is easy to define him as a harsh, unfeeling Calvinist. When Harriet's sister Catherine was grieving over the loss of her fiancé, Lyman reprimanded her for her lack of submission and reminded her of her many blessings--among them, himself (Hedrick, "Peaceable Fruits" 310). But while Beecher may have been insensitive, he was not as dogmatic as Hedrick implies. He was tried for heresy before the Presbytery and then the Synod for his relatively liberal views on slavery. He had the courage to challenge the status quo on moral grounds, entering into the abolition debate with the ultra-conservative church leader, Dr. Joshua Wilson (Edmund Wilson 13).

Although Beecher was acquitted, the ordeal must have

taught Stowe the lesson that there was a moral authority higher than that of organized religion, and a justification for breaking the laws of men. Later, in a very God/motherly act of civil disobedience, she collaborated with her husband and brother to hide an escaped slave girl (Edmund Wilson 13). This ideology reappears in Dred. Since men have corrupted both religion and law, Anne and Clayton are justified in ignoring the law against teaching their slaves to read. Anne supposes that "such barbarous laws were a dead letter in a Christian community, and that the best tribute I could pay to its Christianity was practically to disregard them" (2: 55-56).

Hedrick explains that to Stowe, masculine power meant "the control of people, lands, ideas; it is 'power over'" ("Peaceable Fruits" 325). Organized religion represented a perfect example of how men--not women--corrupt potentially good social institutions. Stowe favored a more Christian, and feminine, kind of power. David Leverenz claims that "Christian discourse provided a fantasy of transforming a beaten-down self into triumphant power, for both sexes, by encouraging an identification with Christ" (200). So one of the problems with American society was that, instead of addressing the kind of inward, spiritual change--the transformation of the self--that Stowe saw as essential for a Christian, men tried to dominate. Organized Christianity had therefore

become distorted.

Dred devotes a great deal of space to indicting contemporary religious doctrine. In "The Clerical Conference" (chapter XVIII), Clayton attends a Presbyterian meeting in order to summon support for his abolitionist activities. But the clergy are mired in bureaucracy, placing morality second to power. If the church took a stand, it could be weakened. Dr. Calker explains, "our divisions are playing right into the hands of the Methodists and Baptists; and ground that we might hold, united, is going into their hands every year" (2: 183). Calker is contrasted with father Dickson, who embodies Stowe's concept of ministry. He is Christlike, a humble, suffering servant, and is not afraid to stand up for what he believes, regardless of what society does to him. As a result he is poor, sickly, ridiculed, and even lynched. Dickson teaches by example, which is another important tenet of Stowe's religion. The "transforming power" comes from positive influence, rather than rules. This kind of influence is one of the ways a mother teaches her children to be morally upright.

If Stowe eschews notions of dogmatic, organized religion, her theology insists on a realistic, practical side. Stowe's world was one of great tragedy, and she needed a theology that could provide real comfort. Death within her own family was almost commonplace. She lost her mother as a young child, and four of her own children. This sorrow tended

to unite women and Christians in Stowe's mind. "Sorrow brings us into the true unity of the Church,--that unity which underlies all external creeds, and unites all hearts that have suffered . . ." (Stowe, "The Chimney Corner" 430). Men were busy with making a living, and they tended to be too cold and practical. In contrast, women supported each other through the trials they experienced as mothers, providing real comfort.

Stowe developed a religion that was compatible with the feminine sphere, based on feminine values of nurturing and compassion and rejecting masculine power structures and dogma. Her stance against slavery developed out of this personal religion, a religion imbued with feminine values. Intellectually, she saw the enslavement of God's children as morally wrong, but it became a more pathetic, personal issue because it was such an affront to these feminine values. Both Uncle Tom's Cabin and Dred recount the tragedy of a mother's children being wrenched from her bosom, and the extremes to which a mother will go as a result. In Dred, Milly tells of her agony as her mistress/ childhood friend sells her children one by one, breaking her solemn promise. In the end, Milly becomes a Christian, having known first-hand God's gift of his son. Harry's sister, Cora, explains to the court why she killed her children as they were about to be sold into slavery:

So I heard them say their prayers and sing their

hymns, and then, while they were asleep and didn't know it, I sent them to lie down in green pastures with the Lord. They say this is a dreadful sin. It may be so. I am willing to lose my soul to have theirs saved. . . . And now, if any of you mothers, in my place, wouldn't have done the same, you either don't know what slavery is, or you don't love your children as I have loved mine. (2: 207)

Separating mothers and children was just one of the many evils of slavery that touched Stowe. She repeatedly objects to claims that Christian slave-owners will act as missionaries to the slaves, pointing out that slavery makes it impossible for the slaves to live as Christians. "[Uncle Tom's Cabin] is a woman's protest against a system that made chastity impossible for women and then deprived them of the children they might still love as deeply as any mother loved her children even though they had no right to have been born" (Wagenknecht 104). In Dred, this threat to the Christian home comes from Tom Gordon, as he threatens to take advantage of Harry's wife, Lisette. Nina, Clayton, and Harry take great pains to prevent this, and eventually Harry and Lisette escape Tom's ownership by joining with Dred's gang. Harry is Tom and Nina's half-brother, evidence of the adultery and miscegenation that exist in slave-owning families.

Stowe values industry in the housewife, and slavery is

an affront to the Puritan work ethic and the sanctity of the well-kept home, to the notion of faculty. She blames slavery for disrupting the home by allowing wives of slave-owners to become lazy and contemptuous of hard work.

One of the worst [results of slavery] is certainly the utter contempt it brings on useful labor, and the consequent utter physical and moral degradation of a large body of the whites; and this contempt of useful labor has been spreading like an infection from the Southern to our Northern States. ("The Chimney Corner" 295)

Slavery, then, is an affront to Stowe's compassionate and practical religion, not only because of its effects on the slaves, but also because of its effects on the slave-owners. Slavery disrupts the proper Christian home, a home kept by hard-working and morally upright wives and mothers.

Stowe's perception of her role as a writer of fiction is intimately connected to her ideas of religion and motherhood. She was, as we have already seen, fairly conservative in her conception of women's sphere. But the literary community of mid-nineteenth-century America was an inviting forum for such a woman. Leverenz describes the country as a place where men were expected to be robust, strong, back-woods types, concerned primarily with proving their honor and avoiding humiliation. Fiction was often associated with romance,

gentility, even weakness. So many male readers and writers retreated into the wings.⁴ Women were more than capable of filling this vacuum. In The Feminine Fifties, Pattee describes how literature became the realm of women. Women were becoming educated by the schools and churches. They needed an form of amusement or escape, and fiction provided an acceptable means of expression of religion, morality, and emotion. So they turned to such books as Jane Eyre, The Wide, Wide, World, and the works of Dickens--books with morally upright heroes and heroines, current social commentary, and a healthy dose of pathos.

One of the tenets of the notion of women's sphere is that the world of business and politics is too corrupt for women. But the literary community was a notable exception. Coultrap-McQuinn explains that nineteenth-century publishers wanted to be known as "Gentlemen Publishers."

Those publishers and editors shared three aims: they sought to develop trusting, paternalistic, personal relationships with their authors; they claimed to have goals beyond commercial ones to advance culture and/or to provide a public service; and they assumed the role of moral guardian for their society. (34)

It would be incorrect to suppose that Stowe saw an inviting literary marketplace and deliberately set about becoming a commercial author. Her role developed somewhat by

chance, directly out of her self-conception as a Christian mother. Her literary career began in the parlor, where she wrote entertaining letters to friends, or read theirs aloud to the family. When she became a member of the Semi-Colon Club, she found the encouragement to write on a wider range of subjects and in various genres. Becoming a writer was a change not in vocation, just in degree: "The 'parlor' is by implication a shaper of public opinion as potent as the 'press' and 'pulpit.' Indeed, these three institutions stand on a continuum" (Hedrick, "Stowe and Parlor Literature" 279). So the mother, writer, and minister are on a continuum as well.

To Stowe, fiction was an appropriate outlet for her motherly ministry. In "House and Home Papers," the narrator defends the reading of fiction on the Sabbath: "The parables of Christ sufficiently establish the point that there is no inherent objection to the use of fiction in teaching religious truth. Good fiction, thoughtfully read, may be quite as profitable as any other reading" (224). But authorship was more than just a means of communicating her ideas. The creativity involved linked authorship with motherhood and God. She even equated the physical and emotional drain of completing a novel with giving birth: "It leaves me in as weak and helpless a state as when my babies were born" (Forrest Wilson 416). Her creativity is a kind of power; her authorship is

authority (Schultz 34). The artist as creator has autonomous authority over the creation, and even the creative, motherly characters in her works become Godlike. As Tiff sews clothes and tills the garden for the Cripps children, he creates their entire world almost out of nothing, he ensures their growth and safety, and he teaches them values. As a kind of domestic artist, the characters mirror the writer, who mirrors The Creator.

Stowe's personal religion, her concept of motherhood, and her view of artists are all interwoven, with creativity and nurturing providing the common thread. She then developed a unique narrative voice that I call the God/mother. The God is omnipotent yet compassionate, resembling the God of her own religion. The mother is creative and competent, selfless and nurturing, the women in her own life. Using the terms together--godmother--adds the meaning of someone who is not the biological parent, but who takes responsibility for the physical and spiritual care of the godchild. The God/mother tells the story of Dred.

THE GOD/MOTHER AS NARRATOR

The God/mother operates on several levels in Dred, and I will treat them separately in order to examine them more closely.⁵ The first iteration of the God/mother is in the characters themselves. Stowe's God created man in his own image, and as a mother she tried to do the same, to pass on her own value system to her children (and, as a writer, to the world). Likewise, the God/mother recreates herself in Dred's heroes and heroines. We can easily identify the heroes by the presence of God/motherly traits; in the villains these traits are conspicuously lacking. The heroes influence those around them to become more God/motherly, and are eventually rewarded for their efforts (although the reward may be the Christian "final reward"). So the God/mother creates a certain relationship between narrator and characters.

The second relationship is that of narrator to narrative-how does she tell different parts of the story and why. Genette's work is particularly useful in examining this relationship, since he provides a vocabulary for describing the various facets and effects of the act of narration. Dred's narrator tells the story in a uniquely God/motherly way, concerning herself not with whether or not we will think Dred is good art, but whether the lesson is clear.

The third relationship is that of the narrator to the

supposed reader, and involves the God/mother's desired effects on the reader, the cultural work Tompkins talks about.⁶ The God/mother treats the story as if it were a part of the reader's real world, blurring traditional lines between fiction and reality that could serve to impair the tale's moral lesson. The result is that the reader is asked to become emotionally involved in Dred.

When critics denigrate Stowe's writing in general as formulaic or repetitive, they frequently point to characters that reappear in novel after novel, with no apparent substantial differences, and this charge is not without foundation. Topsy in Uncle Tom's Cabin is also Tomtit in Dred, Mary Scudder in A Minister's Wooing resembles Anne Clayton, Lillie Seymour in Pink and White Tyranny is much like Nina Gordon. Stowe's concept of human virtue is so tied to the God/mother, that her characters are always defined in the same terms. Elizabeth Ammons gives coherence to my argument by describing Stowe's heroines:

For her, femininity--true womanliness--means unshakable allegiance to the Christian virtues of faith, hope, charity, mercy, and self-sacrifice; purity in body and mind; ethical dependence more on emotion than on reason; submission to mundane authority except when it violates higher law; and protection of the home as a sacred and inviolable

institution. Moreover, these stereotypically feminine attributes are in Stowe's opinion the only worthwhile human ones because they place the welfare of the group, of the whole human family, before that of self. (153)

Add to Ammons' description the element of power that these characters possess, and you have a description of the characters that are God/mothers.

The God/mother must be capable of many things, but if any single attribute can be singled out as most important, it is the role of confidante and counsellor. This is the female ministry Hedrick describes in "Peaceable Fruits." Nina Gordon, as I have explained, is a trifling and undisciplined flirt, with three fiancés, spendthrift ways, and a childlike self-centeredness. She also lacks a personal religion. When her undisciplined habits return to haunt her, she is child enough to know that what she needs right now is a God/mother. Her guardian, Aunt Nesbit, cannot fulfill this role. Aunt Nesbit's form of Christianity is worthless, because she understands only rules and prohibitions, without taking Christianity to heart. Nina complains, "You'll never make me believe that Aunt Nesbit has got religion. . . It isn't being all sober, and crackling old stiff religious newspapers, and boring with texts and hymns, that makes people religious" (1: 85). The God/mother's spirituality is connected to Mother

Earth as well as the Father in heaven, and even in her ignorance, Nina understands that religion can include the joy of common beautiful things, for "what did the Lord make sweet peas and roses, and orange blossoms for?" (1: 53).

Just as she lacks Stowe's compassionate form of Christianity, Aunt Nesbit lacks motherly understanding. "When married, she had thought of self only in her husband and children, whom she loved because they were hers, and for no other reason" (1: 50). The members of her family all died, and with them apparently any hope of igniting the spark of sensitivity that would allow her to become a God/mother. She can keep her corner of the house spotlessly arranged, but can provide no acceptable form of counsel. She is emotionally barren. Nina must look elsewhere for help.

The child in Nina instinctively knows where to find help. She seeks out the advice of Milly, the slave housekeeper who is Aunt Nesbit's antithesis. Milly is an exotic, earth-mother type. "Heaven had endowed her with a soul as broad and generous as her ample frame. Her passions rolled and burned in her bosom with a tropical fervor; a shrewd and abundant mother wit, united with a vein of occasional drollery, gave to her habits of speech a quaint vivacity" (1: 60). Milly is one of the servants who can be trusted to do her jobs efficiently and competently. She even hires herself out to save the family from financial ruin. But more importantly,

she has become a true God/mother through suffering. Milly's children are sold from her by her mistress and childhood friend, and though she experiences overwhelming grief, "Christianity had entered, as it often does with the slave, through the fissures of a broken heart" (1: 61).

Like Aunt Nesbit, Milly has lost her family and has taken on the care of someone else's family. But Milly has the compassion, as well as the domestic power, of a God/mother. So she is qualified to be Nina's counsellor and confessor. She takes Nina in her arms "as if she had been a babe" (1: 83) and floods her with motherly sympathy. Milly also reminds Nina, in her gentle, motherly way, that she should pray when she is in trouble. Aunt Nesbit considers herself pious, but Milly is spiritual.

In "The Reproduction of Mothering," Chodorow explores the possibility that mothering is biologically defined. She dismisses this hypothesis, since some biological mothers are incapable of nurturing their children, while other care-givers who have never given birth, including men, can be excellent mothers. Stowe understood this when she created Tiff. Tiff, along with Milly, best personifies the God/mother as hero.

Tiff is a slave belonging to Sue, who elopes from a decaying Virginia plantation with John Cripps, the lazy son from a similarly decaying family ("having been so unfortunate as to obtain possession of a few negroes, the whole family

became ever after inspired with an intense disgust for all types of labor" [1: 106]). The couple was disowned, and eventually found themselves with three children, squatting in a decrepit shack and labelled "white trash." Sue dies of consumption, and John is ever travelling in pursuit of liquor or some money-making scheme that is destined for failure.

Tiff is the family's God/mother. He is ingenious and creative, sensitive and protective. Tiff is a secondary character in Dred, but Stowe devotes a substantial portion of the narrative to his story, with three chapters dedicated entirely to the description of his role in his little family. Page upon page describes how he skillfully arranges the meager shack, makes the garden produce a miraculous harvest, sews respectable clothing out of rags for the children, prepares succulent dishes practically out of thin air, and still has time to tend to the spiritual and moral instruction of the children. His loyalty and selflessness inspire him to escape with the children from their drunken and violent stepmother, in spite of the risk he incurs as an escaped slave. Stowe's God/mothers all possess a certain amount of magic in their power, accomplishing what seems to be the impossible in caring for others. When the escapees are shipwrecked on the way to New York, Tiff is presumed drowned, but magically reappears, chuckling "You don't get shet of Ole Tiff dat ar way! Won't get shet him till ye's fetched up, and able to do for

yerselves" (2: 328). While Tiff is black, poor, enslaved, and uneducated, he is still the perfect God/mother in every respect.

If the God/mother is so important, so powerful, then what happens to the unfortunate child who has none? The effect is illustrated in the almost grotesque comic figure, Tomtit. He is a rogue, undisciplined and uncontrollable. "Slave and property though he was, yet the first sentiment of reverence for any created thing seemed yet wholly unawakened in his curly pate" (1: 55). Aunt Nesbit tries to teach him with insults and cuffs, but he seems to take an evil delight in evading her attempts, openly mocking her. Milly is Tomtit's grandmother, and why she has not exerted her God/motherly influence over him we can only surmise. Perhaps she is too busy with the care of the rest of the house, or Aunt Nesbit has too close a hold on him. But eventually Milly regains control of Tomtit, taking him with her when she escapes into the swamp. Once Tomtit has a God/mother, he is transformed. Some years later, Clayton visits Milly and inquires after Tomtit. She tells him, "O, Tomtit's doing beautiful, thank'e sir. He's 'come a Christian, and jined the church; and they has him to wait at the anti-slavery office, and he does well" (2: 333). Because of Milly's influence, he is not only useful, he is moral and religious as well.

The motherless Nina Gordon is far from being God/

motherly when the tale opens. But her personal growth is described in terms of how she comes to acquire the God/mother's attributes. At the beginning of the story, she is selfish and childish, she has no self-control, no religion, no useful pastimes. But there is hope for her because she possesses that certain sensitivity that allow her to become God/motherly. Our first glimpse of this transformation occurs in volume 1, chapter XII, when Nina becomes concerned about Tiff and the Cripps children. Her motherly instincts have been awakened, and she has also been influenced by Milly, Anne, and Clayton. So by volume 2, chapter VII, Nina is visiting in Tiff's garden, discussing nature and philosophy, and reading the Bible. There is no doubt that this scene is intended to be emotionally beautiful: "As she spoke, a sudden breeze of air shook the clusters of a prairie-rose, which was climbing into the tree under which she was sitting, and a shower of rose-leaves fell around her" (2: 84).

Nina's development culminates in the cholera epidemic. The terror and confusion are the final test of her God/motherly potential. She becomes the calm, competent, nurse and counsellor, with a genuine spiritual faith that she had never before possessed:

But, as a person passing under the foam and spray of Niagara clings with blind confidence to a guide whom he feels, but cannot see, Nina, in this awful hour,

felt that she was not alone. The Redeemer, all-powerful over death and the grave, of whom she had been thinking so much, of late, seemed to her sensibly near. (2: 115)

Nina's death-scene is the epitome of Stowe pathos, as Nina lies in a dying trance, clearly singing a hymn. As she becomes aware that she is at the end of her life, she smiles and comforts those around her: "No, my poor friends, I don't suffer. I'm come to the land where they never suffer. I'm only so sorry for you!" (2: 136).

Nina dies with more than 200 pages left in the story, a fact that has led to criticism of the novel. But this untimely death can be explained by the fact that the narrator is the God/mother, and Nina represents the Christ-child. Nina is made in the God/mother's image, and tested by moral trials. She becomes more God-like, and must eventually be sacrificed in order to save the other characters. As she dies, she gathers her disciples around her and tells them to carry on her work. Just as the Bible does not end with the death of Christ, Dred cannot end with the death of Nina. The rest of the story interprets her life and death, and the effect she had on those around her. She has told Clayton to take care of her people, and the remainder of the story is occupied with this task. When Clayton visits Cora in prison, he is shaken by an encounter with the image of Nina.

By some singular association, this stranger, with a serious, radiant face, suggested to him the sparkling glittering beauty of Nina; and it seemed, for a moment, as if Nina was fluttering by him in the air, and passing away after her. When he examined the emotion more minutely afterwards, he thought, perhaps, it might have been suggested by the perception, as he lifted the glove, of a peculiar and delicate perfume, which Nina was fond of using. So strange and shadowy are the influences which touch the dark, electric chain of our existence. (2: 209)

Nina reappears to Clayton, as Jesus appeared to the disciples.

Many other characters exhibit the characteristics of the God/mother to some degree. The prominence of these characteristics marks the worth of the character, and their development marks growth. The feminine father Dickson contrasts with the masculine father Bonnie, Clayton with his father, Nina with Tom Gordon. We can use these attributes as a gauge to measure the worth the narrator gives a character.⁷

It seems that to Stowe, blacks, women, and ministers are much more likely to become God/mothers. Some critics have seen her treatment of slaves like Tiff and Uncle Tom as racist, implying that to Stowe blacks are incapable of being masculine. Dred, however, is purely masculine, and while she seems to respect what he is fighting for, his masculine brand

of power--confrontational and violent--results in his demise. It is essential to remember that when she ascribes the traits of the God/mother to a character, she is bestowing the highest praise. In her discourse, the term "emasculated" must be viewed as positive.

It is also essential to remember that the God/mother embodies a particular kind of suffering. Stowe's God sacrificed his own son, and mothers feel the pain and suffering of their children. Women, ministers, and slaves all have in common a degree of suffering and of self-sacrifice which enables them to develop into God/mothers. The nature of the suffering is more or less unimportant; it simply paves the way for the growth of a particular sensibility. So when Stowe includes slaves as God/mothers, she describes blacks as having something very important in common with people like her.

So Dred's characters are a reflection of the God/mother. Their strengths and weaknesses are those of the men and women in Stowe's life. But the God/mother does more than just recreate herself in Dred's characters, or indicate characters' worth. The God/mother gives birth to the entire work, and therefore presumes certain corresponding privileges and responsibilities. Gilbert and Gubar argue that the traditional Western notion linking authorship with authority is a patriarchal paradigm, and "both the patriarchal etiology that defines a solitary Father God as the only creator of all

things, and the male metaphors of literary creation that depend on such an etiology, have long confused literary women" (7). But since Stowe connects God and writing with motherhood, she has little difficulty creating a narrative voice that assumes such an authority. It is this distinctively gendered authority which leads to some interesting approaches to narrative technique.

The single most important task that we assign to a narrator as we open a book is to tell a story that is coherent in some way. There may be gaps for the reader to fill in, as Iser has contended, or perhaps inconsistencies that the reader can either overlook or reconcile in some way. But the story must make sense in accordance with our own definition of sense. As I have already mentioned, Dred has been criticized as fragmented. The title character does not appear until 250 pages into the book, and the heroine dies with as many pages remaining. The setting jumps from plantation to courtroom to wilderness, and finally ends in New England, where the only connection to previous action is Nina's experience in boarding school. Forrest Wilson tries to explain what he found as inconsistent--the shift in focus from Nina and Canema to Dred and the swamp--by describing how Stowe wrote for a deadline, hurrying to complete the novel (414).

But by placing the narrative in the context of the God/mother, we can see that Dred is coherent in a way that

doesn't conform to traditional masculine models. Showalter describes a unique "American poetics of gender" (222), using the image of the patchwork quilt to describe aesthetic and thematic parallels between quilt-making and women's writing, expanding on the metaphor of text and textile. She relates piecing--sewing together scraps of fabric to form a pattern--to Stowe's narrative in Uncle Tom Cabin, using the log cabin quilt as a paradigm (235). In a log cabin quilt, the smallest pieces, and the blocks they comprise, are joined to form a distinct pattern that can be appreciated only in its entirety, and from a distance. As Stowe "pieced" together the novel from a series of "sketches," the work evolved into a coherent whole.

The God/mother is a quilt-maker. She creates the work from her own scrap-bag, using a pattern that is uniquely her own. The characters and their experiences are the scraps, and receive the detailed attention of the tiny stitches. Individually they have no inherent importance, but matter only as they contribute to the pattern. So as the narrator pieces Nina's story to Tiff's story to Dred's story, the pattern emerges. This pattern can be seen only from a distance, as a whole. The pattern, then, is the theme or themes of Dred. And just as one who views the quilt may focus on the light or the dark colors, or the shapes or textures, the reader will focus on his own theme in order to comprehend the individual

parts. The narrator reminds the reader of this relationship in the Preface: "works of fiction must sometimes use some liberties in the grouping of incidents" (1: iv). As the story ends and the last scrap is added, we are told that Miss Fanny gets married and they all live happily ever after. But the narrator cannot stop before returning to thematic issues. Appendix I relates Nat Turner's confession (the historical basis for Dred), Appendix II the case of Souther v. The Commonwealth (the basis for the chapter "Jegar Sahadutha"), and Appendix III "Church Action on Slavery" (the basis of "The Clerical Conference"). The God/mother completes the work by placing the border on the quilt, reminding the reader to look at the whole work. So the novel's coherence is a feminine type of coherence, with fragments that are not inherently related pieced together to form a creative and functional whole.

I have just suggested that one of the roles of the narrator is to provide perspective to the narrative. Using Genette's terms, the situation of the story, or diegesis, encompasses more than just the events of the narrative. For example, we are not told anything about the details of agriculture at Canema, but we know that cotton is being raised there, so the events of cotton-farming are part of the diegesis but not the narrative. One of the tasks of the narrator is to provide focalization, since she must be

selective in what information she gives us in order to limit the narrative and provide emphasis. Dred is an example of what Genette calls "variable focalization" (189), where the information is filtered through the perspectives of different characters at different times.

The God/mother presumes to know everything in the narrative, including the future, the past, and the conscious and subconscious minds of the characters. As a result, she can teach us everything she wants us to know about the motives of the characters. Rather than focalize through a few key characters (as Flaubert does with Charles and Emma in Madame Bovary), she uses them all. We are told why the clergy will not support abolition, why Clayton's neighbors object to him teaching his slaves, why Dred is violent, and why Aunt Nesbit is so cold.

It is important to distinguish between point of view and focalization, however. The point of view is always retained by the God/mother herself, so that we may properly judge the motives. When Tom Gordon plans the lynching, his motives and emotions are explained--he is a determined advocate of the institutions of slavery, he is inflamed by drink, he glories in the use of power and is infuriated by insubordination. But she also describes him as allied with the devil and devoid of conscience (2: 246-7). She creates the illusion of having given his side of the story, but in reality she has not. She

has merely pointed out the evils of drink, of slavery, or of masculine dominance. Each time she changes focalization, she provides herself with another opportunity to teach us what is the right or wrong kind of thought or activity. Thus far I have described some of the ways that the narrator is gendered. The way she focuses our attention and constructs the plot reflect the daily life of the God/mother. All these techniques are interwoven with Stowe's ideology, and she uses some additional techniques to emphasize that ideology even more, techniques which result in the very pronounced presence of the God/mother within the narrative discourse.

The God/mother's ideological role in Dred is not what one would call subtle, and frequently the author suspends the action completely to preach her sermon. These interventions are often criticized as bad art. Genette calls this kind of commentary "'auctorial' discourse, . . . a term which indicates both the presence of the author (actual or fictive) and the sovereign authority of that presence in his work" (258-59). In this type of discourse, he contends, the narrator retains the final word, as the characters are unable to dispute.⁸ Genette maintains that this lack of subtlety is the mark of an inferior writer, citing the "great ideological novelists like Dostoevski, Tolstoy, Mann, Broch, Malroux [who] were to transfer onto some of their characters the task of commentary and didactic discourse" (258-9).

It is doubtful that Genette would have included Stowe in such a list, but a close look at Dred reveals a surprising amount of this kind of transfer. For example, Nina has long dialogues about religion with Aunt Nesbit, Milly, Tiff, and Clayton, and all of these dialogues reveal which values we are to admire. I have already recounted the conclusion to these dialogues--Nina's deathbed speech. Not surprisingly, there are also frequent and lengthy dialogues concerning slavery. Clayton and Frank Russel, the two intellectual characters, present the most coherent arguments, to an extent including both sides of the issue. Stowe sets up a version of a Platonic dialogue that allows Clayton, one of the heroes, to calmly articulate everything that is wrong with slavery. In such dialogues, the characters take up part of the ideological function by presenting the author's moral stance, the common arguments, and the responses to those arguments.

But the narrator does not leave the ideological function entirely to the characters; she engages in a fair amount of "auctorial discourse." These interventions make Stowe's work controversial--Genette's argument concerning lack of subtlety. But the God/mother presumes a special privilege in Dred. One noteworthy example is Chapter XIX, "The Conspirators." This section is thirteen pages long, contains not one bit of dialogue, and the only purpose it serves in advancing the plot is to set the stage for Dred's activity in the swamp. It is

entirely a narrative intervention discussing the history of Dred's father, Denmark Vesey. The narrator recounts how he gathered support and planned an uprising, but was arrested for conspiracy. Vesey left a strong impression on Dred, inspiring him to become militant. She refers to the Declaration of Independence: "The slave has heard, amid shouts, on the Fourth of July, that his masters held the truth to be self-evident, that all men were born equal, and had an *inalienable right* to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" (1: 248). In other chapters, the interventions are brief, such as the paragraph of elegy when the slave Emily dies: "O, love of Christ! which no sin can weary. . . ." (1: 325).

The thematic importance of such interventions is rather obvious, but the style of the interventions is distinctively God/motherly. Very often, authors construct a sort of framework for narrative interventions. For example, in Prevost's Manon Lescaut, des Grieux is kept outside of the main body of narrative, and is a character/narrator. This framework somehow justifies his presence, and leaves the story more or less uninterrupted. But the God/mother attempts to become an integral part of the discourse. Referring back to Hedrick's work on "parlor literature," we recall the family gathered in the parlor, reading letters aloud or telling stories. The narrator would feel free to interject relevant comments, or to explain morals, because the discourse was a

familial one. Dred's narrator takes these liberties. The interventions are disruptive because of their length and interruption to the flow of the plot, or because of the emotional, cloying tone. But the God/mother feels justified in stepping in and out of the background whenever she pleases. She is like the mother who sees her child doing something wrong. She doesn't wait until her emotions have cooled, or her child is finished with what he is doing, but she interrupts then and there, making sure her lesson is communicated. Stowe in fact claimed this relationship to her fiction (although at the time she was attempting to explain technical flaws in Uncle Tom's Cabin rather than defend her right to intervene). She explains that she "no more thought of style or literary excellence than the mother who rushes into the street and cries for help to save her children from a burning house, thinks of the teachings of the rhetorician or the elocutionist" (Coultrap-McQuinn 92). In other words, if something needed to be said, for our own good, she certainly was not going to pause and worry about the most artistic way of saying it. She interrupted when she needed to.

I have spoken of "interruptions" in the narrative. I am using the term in two senses. One, as in the death of Emily, refers to the change in the tone--from a more or less "factual" account of the action or recounting of dialogue, to a moral or emotional lesson. The second meaning refers to a

disruption in what Genette calls the "rhythm" and "order" of the narrative. The rhythm refers to the variable speed at which the action takes place (88). In rough terms, so many pages cover so many days, with variations to summarize, pause, or leap ahead to more significant action. The order refers simply to the connection between the order in which events take place and the order in which they are told (35). "Analepses" (flashbacks) and "prolepses" (foreshadowings) are examples of "anachronies" (disruptions in the order). Rhythm and order are closely related, since the rhythm is often suspended in order to relate an anachrony. For example, "The Conspirators" chapter is both a pause--an interruption to the rhythm of the action, and a deviation in the order of events--an analepsis. Genette's terms are meant to imply no aesthetic judgment, but simply to provide focus to certain characteristics.

In Dred, the rhythm and order I have been discussing are gendered. Showalter's quilt-piecing paradigm applies to time as well as motif. The life of the nineteenth-century mother was one of interruptions. Her daily activities revolved around the needs of others. If a neighbor became ill or went into labor, the household chores were instantly dropped. If the children needed attention, or her husband's suit was missing a button, that became the priority. Stowe was used to writing in snatches whenever the time came available. Hedrick

describes how Stowe wrote between interruptions: "Her letter to Mary, begun while she was in the midst of darning her brother George's socks, continued in stolen moments throughout the day" ("Parlor Literature" 285). Stowe eventually gained the confidence to ask for a room of her own, and presumably the time to use it for uninterrupted writing. Calvin offered words of encouragement, but never actually did much to lighten her domestic load (Coultrap-McQuinn 84-5).

I am not about to suggest that this hectic schedule is reflected in terms of good and bad writing, e.g. Stowe was in a hurry the day she wrote that chapter so it isn't very good. What I am asserting is that the rhythm and order of Dred reflect the rhythm and order of domestic life. The God/mother can stop in the middle of dealing with Harry's conflict with Tom, and spend thirteen pages explaining how Dred was influenced by his father. (In contrast, it takes only six pages for the surviving protagonists to escape the South, be rescued from a shipwreck, and establish a new life in the North.) The narrator is comfortable stopping in the middle of relating how the slave traders abused the slaves to sing a hymn and preach a sermon.

Even the ellipses--jumps in time that assume certain unstated events--are inflected with the voice of the God/mother. As Nina and Clayton's relationship develops, we witness the conversation turn from serious issues, like slavery and

religion, to love. Nina begins laughing and blushing, and Clayton calls her a "wicked little witch," while putting his arm around her and looking into her eyes. But just as the situation gets interesting, the God/mother intervenes to turn the narrative to something more appropriate, and give the young lovers their privacy: "And--But we are making our chapter too long" (2: 28).

The pace of domestic life and the author's need to convey a message result in a distinct narrative style that starts and stops, leaps and pauses as the need arises. I spoke of the ideological function of the narrator in terms of direct interventions--the times when the author stops advancing the action to make sure a moral is clearly communicated. But the ideological function is working in every facet of the narrative. In other words, when she focalizes through a particular character, or chooses to leave out certain details while including others, she is still making ideological choices. So the relationship between the God/mother and the narrative is ingrained with ideology. We can also find this ideology at work in a unique relationship that the God/mother attempts to build between the narrator and the reader.

Before we can examine this relationship, it is necessary to define some terms and basic assumptions. Up to now I have been establishing who the narrator is, and her relationship to the narrative, and now it is time to turn to the reader.

Gerald Prince provides a beginning for my study with his work on the narratee. He describes the many different characteristics that the narratee may have, i.e. docile or rebellious, admirable or ridiculous, ignorant or knowledgeable (8). He then examines how the narrator defines these characteristics. The narrator may indicate, by detailing certain events, that the narratee is simple-minded or has a poor memory. Ultimately, he claims, "the portrait of a narratee emerges above all from the narrative addressed to him" (12).

The most obvious of these signals defining the narratee is the specific addresses. Robyn Warhol contrasts "distancing narrators," who separate the reader from the text's narratee, with "engaging narrators" like Stowe who use inclusive terms, such as "you and "reader," so that the narratee becomes nearly anyone who would pick up the book ("Engaging Narrator" 811). For example, volume 2 begins, "Our readers will perhaps feel an interest to turn back with us, and follow the singular wanderings of the mysterious personage [Dred], whose wild denunciations had so disturbed the minds of the worshippers at the camp-meeting." Most of the addresses in Dred use the term "reader," which does little to limit who the narratee is. But by looking at these addresses in context, we can see that the narratee is asked to become the God/mother's child.

As I have defined the God/mother, she provides protection, comfort, and spiritual guidance. Looking at the

narratee as a child, we can find the inverse of these characteristics. The child is one who needs guidance, protection, and comfort. When the narrator addresses the reader, she reminds the child to pay attention, to think about the implications of what she is about to say, like a mother saying, "look at me when I talk to you." We first learn about Clayton and his beliefs through a lengthy dialogue with Russel, his childhood friend. But lest the child get lost in the conversation itself, and forget to look at the lesson within, the God/mother prefaces the conversation by intervening with a reminder: "We had better let the reader hear the *dramatis personae*, and judge for himself" (1: 20). So the narrator has defined the narratee with this address, implying that she is able to judge character if only she will pay attention.

The God/mother addresses the narratee in a tone that offers protection from the bad influences of the slave trader, who feels the financial burden of applying the principles of religion to his business practices would be too great:

Do not be too sure, friend, that the trader is peculiar in this. The very same argument, though less frankly stated, holds in the bonds of Satan many extremely well-bred, refined, respectable men, who would gladly save their souls, if they could afford the luxury. (1:326)

The term "friend" does not tell us anything about the narratee, but the context tells us that this friend needs to be warned from the evils of rationalization.

The narrator's decisions to include or omit various types of details further define the narratee. The God/mother averts the child's eyes from any scene that would be inappropriate, such as Nina and Clayton flirting. But she chooses for the narratee to witness some very disturbing scenes in order to learn from them. Emily's death is the perfect example. Why does the narratee need to witness the sad and painful death of a character that is fairly inconsequential to the story? Because the child has some important lessons to learn about the evils of slavery and the importance of God and mothers. Father Dickson sings a hymn about motherly love, and Emily is reminded of her own mother, and dies in the realization that God loves her in the same way (1:326).

The narratee is also to possess a childlike faith in happy endings. As the story concludes, the God/mother "shall not detain our readers with minute descriptions" of Fanny and George's engagement, or "dilate on the yet brighter glories of the cottage three months after" when they were married (2:337). The God/mother defines the narratee who, like a child, accepts the plausibility of all being right in the end.

So the God/mother has established the narratee as a trusting child, using some of the same techniques used to

through the scenes of his past, present, and future life. This posture is related to the social message of the novel. "For readers to act upon the novels' suggestions, they would have to take the texts seriously and think of the fiction as somehow true" (Warhol, Gendered Interventions xii). The social message is appropriately addressed to the narratee as child, since Stowe thought of children, through their innocence, as somehow uniquely capable of redemptive work (Tompkins, Sensational Designs 128).

The God/mother narrates Dred as if it were real rather than fiction, and treats the reader as if she were the narratee. I have shown how the narratee is created and addressed as a child. But from narratee to reader is a big step. Many critics have postulated some sort of hypothetical, intermediate person--Gibson's mock reader, Prince's virtual reader, or Iser's implied reader. The notion is basically that, regardless of how the narrator constructs the narratee, she is really addressing what she supposes to be a real person who will read the work, someone who may or may not resemble the narratee. The actual reader, the person holding the book, is the third category. If the narratee of Dred is the child, the God/mother must somehow reach across the gaps to unite the implied reader and the actual reader with this child.

The reader is always unknown, and therefore her response is always unpredictable. The author who wishes to inspire the

reader to take the message seriously and act on that message must create a narrator that convinces the reader that she is the narratee (Warhol, "Engaging Narrator" 812). If she fails in this task, she fails in her cultural work. As Gibson explains, "A bad book, then, is a book in whose mock reader we discover a person we refuse to become, a mask we refuse to put on, a role we will not play" (5). Stowe attempts to avoid this refusal by creating this metadiegesis, this supposed discourse that encourages the reader to become the child narratee and participate.

A good analogy to the psychology behind this technique is the telephone solicitor who leads you through a "dialogue" that is really a sales pitch:

"Don't you agree that you have to pay way too much for your long distance calls?" Pause for answer. "And don't you agree that it would be great to save 50% each month?" Pause for answer. "If I could tell you how to get these great savings right now with no fee, would you agree to change your service to company XYZ?"

The salesman is luring the customer through what appears to be a conversation with logical exchanges of information. In contrast, if he had just stated his message, rather than eliciting responses, it would be much easier for the customer to remain disengaged from the pitch, and give a simple "no" at

the end. Warhol is using Genette's concept of "metalepsis," wherein the narrator crosses diegetic levels and treats the narrative act as contemporaneous with the story (Genette 235), to describe how a narrator engages the reader. This is the technique that Stowe uses to engage the reader, to draw her into the conversation and into becoming the narratee.

Warhol breaks new ground in applying Genette's terminology to Stowe, Gaskell, and Eliot as engaging narrators. She defines five characteristics of engaging narrators and then describes the resulting effect on the reader ("Engaging Narrator"). The first is the names by which the narratee is addressed. She contrasts Bleak House's "Your majesty. . . my lords and gentlemen" with engaging narrators' more inclusive terms. In Dred, Stowe uses terms like "reader," and "friend." These terms are designed to be inclusive, rather than limiting.

The second form Warhol examines is the frequency of direct address to the narratee, rather than to a third person. She cites examples from Uncle Tom's Cabin that demonstrate how Stowe preaches directly to "you." In Dred, direct addresses are less frequent than "reader" and "friend." Instead, Stowe uses terms like "we" and "our" to invite us to see ourselves as part of the fictional world she has created.

Warhol then examines the degree of irony used in referring to the narratee. She claims that distancing

narrators, like Balzac and Fielding, treat the reader as if he were foolish or complacent. "Engaging narrators, in contrast, usually assume that their narratees are in perfect sympathy with them" (813). The God/mother speaks to the reader as a believing child, assuming this perfect sympathy. The Preface concludes, "the author hopes that those who now are called to struggle for all that is noble in our laws and institutions may find in this book the response of a sympathizing heart" (iv). She is confident enough in our compliance that she implies that she will leave certain conclusions and judgments to our discretion. She introduces a relationship between Anne, Clayton, and Livy Ray, but allows us to write the ending: "we can clearly leave every one to predict a result according to their own fancies" (2: 332).

I have already described the relationship between the God/mother and the characters, but Warhol suggests some further implications for this relationship. First, the relationship suggests that the characters are real, "that they exist within the context of the narrator's own world" (815). Stowe's interventions are phrased to give the impression that she is reporting on real people: "The last time we saw him he was walking forth in magnificence . . ." (2: 337).

Finally, Warhol describes the narrator's attitude toward the act of narration itself. If the story is told as if it were real, the reader's reactions should be to feel strongly

enough about the injustices presented to feel compassion for the real victims and take action in the real world. The historical references in the Appendices serve to prove that Stowe is dealing with a real problem, and their placement at the end of the novel serves to remind the reader that real action is expected, like the missionary passing the collection plate after telling a heart-rending story.

According to Warhol, "Stowe relies on engaging narrative [in Uncle Tom's Cabin] when her reader's sympathy is most crucial to her rhetorical purpose" ("Engaging Narrator" 816-17). Warhol uses as an example the death of Little Eva. To apply this statement to Dred involves comparing the occasions when the narrator emerges and addresses the reader with the times when crucial issues or painful events take place. This comparison reveals that in Dred, the God/mother prefers to let the characters evoke sympathy, through their dialogue and their action. When Tiff's baby dies, Nina reads from the Bible, and Tiff offers up a prayer (2: 123). As Nina dies, she preaches her own sermon (2: 135). After Cora murders her children to keep them out of slavery, she tells her story in the courtroom (2: 206-07). The God/mother allows her characters to speak to us to gain our sympathy.

Lengthy interventions are used, however, to explain the motivations of the characters when it is not appropriate for them to speak for themselves. For example, when Tiff escapes

with the children, they make their bed in the forest. As they rest, the God/mother offers three pages justifying Tiff's concept of religion and his actions, and reminding us that the God/mother is watching over them: "O, thou who bearest in thee a heart hot and weary, sick and faint with the vain tumults and confusions of the haunts of men, go to the wilderness, and thou shalt find *Him* there who saith, 'As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you" (2: 169). Another example is how she justifies Clayton's crisis of faith, explaining that he had a "high moral sentiment" but was plagued by doubt because of the hypocrisy he had seen in organized religion. The God/mother assures us that he will reject the "chaff" and seek something more sincere (2: 266-7). In this case it is important to her to retain our faith in Clayton, and to describe how a sincere personal religion is found. Clayton is still doubting, so he cannot argue his case for himself.

Genette calls this type of intervention a "paralepsis." The narrator has information that is external to the thoughts and actions of the characters, and intervenes to provide that information. So Warhol's attempt to describing the gendered narrator has two main theses. The first is that the narrator speaks directly to the reader when the reader's sympathy is especially important. Dred does not exactly conform to Warhol's theory that direct addresses are used when the author requires sympathy. More often, the God/mother either lets the

characters speak for themselves, or uses paralepses. Warhol's second point is that in order to convey a social message, the engaging narrator attempts to blur the distinction between fiction and reality in order to elicit a real, emotional response. In Dred, the interventions are used primarily to maintain this blur in the distinction between the fiction and the real world, to imply that there is an ongoing conversation between the reader and the God/mother that exists in the same plane with the diegesis.

At this point, let us return to Genette's description of metalepsis. He claims that metalepses evoke a feeling of strangeness, producing an effect that is either comical or fantastic:

All these games, by the intensity of their effects, demonstrate the importance of the boundary they tax by their ingenuity to overstep, in defiance of verisimilitude--a boundary *that is precisely the narrating (or the performance) itself*: a shifting but sacred frontier between two worlds, the world in which one tells, the world of which one tells. . . . The most troubling thing about metalepsis indeed lies in this unacceptable and insistent hypothesis, that the extradiegetic is perhaps always diegetic, and that the narrator and his narratees--you and I--perhaps belong to some narrative. (236)

Genette claims that metalepses are disturbing, and that they cause us to question our own sense of reality. So to envision the idea of metalepsis, let us suppose that we can partition the diegetic world from the extradiegetic:

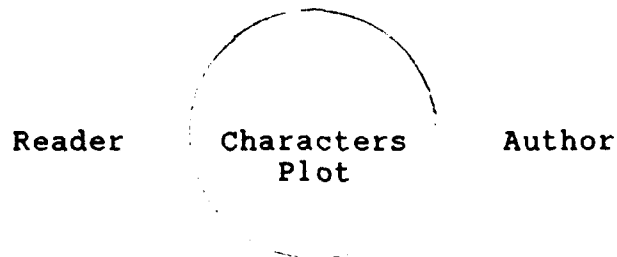


Figure 2 The Diegetic World

The narrator or the narratee may lie either inside or outside the circle, but the characters are inside and the author and reader are on the outside. Genette's idea of metalepsis is that the narrator attempts to expand the circle, so that wherthe reader lives becomes part of the fictional world. But as Warhol has already suggested, Stowe's intent is exactly the opposite. Rather than suggest that the extradiegetic is really diegetic, she wants us to eliminate the differentiation completely, to erase the line that forms the circle, so that the characters, narrator, and reader all occupy the same reality. The diegetic--the world she creates in Dred--is part of the real, extradiegetic world. And rather than unsettle the reader, she attempts to elicit sympathy and understanding.

If we can find some sort of pattern to the metalepses in Dred, it is that they are regularly spaced, brief interjections that interrupt the reader's attention to the narrative in order to break the boundary between the diegetic and the

extradiegetic. Terms like "scene," "sketches," and "narrative" emphasize the fact that we are reading the God/mother's creation, a product of her imagination. The term "reader" is frequently used, especially at the beginnings of chapters, as if to preface each section with a gentle reminder that we are in the act of reading.

These interjections, by themselves, would seem to separate the world the reader lives in from day to day from the world in which the act of reading takes place. But Stowe uses several other techniques which imply that the characters are real people, and that the events are actually happening right now.

Referring again to the example of the narrator turning us away from Nina and Clayton flirting, the God/mother suggests that the action that follows is real, that Nina and Clayton are real people with a right to privacy, and the reader is a real child who needs to be led away from such inappropriate scenes. When she says "But we linger too long in description. We had better let the reader hear the *dramatis personae*, and judge for himself" (1: 20), she suggests that we are listening to a conversation that is actually in progress, and that she will step aside for a moment that we may hear and consider for ourselves.

She also suggests that the story is part of the real world by assuring us that her information is accurate,

gathered from some kind of research external to the diegesis. She opens the discussion of the Claytons and Livy Ray with the explanation "One suggestion more we almost hesitate to make, lest it should give rise to unfounded reports; but we are obliged to speak the truth." She then gives a few details, but interrupts:

The most intimate friendship exists between the three, and of course, in such cases reports will arise; but we assure our readers we have never heard of any authentic foundation for them; so that, in this matter, we can clearly leave every one to predict a result according to their own fancies.

(2: 332)

The God/mother not only limits the information she shares with the reader to that which is appropriate, but also to that which can be substantiated. The historical information in the appendices, as well as in short notes within the text, emphasizes that the events she is relating are happening in the real world.

The God/mother, along with the characters, does most of the talking in Dred, but she uses various interventions to create another discourse between the reader and the God/mother. The invitations for the reader to judge for himself, or fill in the gaps, imply that the reader is participating in the story, becoming the God/mother's attentive child. She

frequently suggests that the reader may have a certain question or interest, and that she is telling the next part in response. Even the numerous italicized words, which never occur in the characters' dialogues, serve to provide a conversational tone, as if the emphasis in the narrator's voice could be heard by the reader.

If the ultimate goal of the God/mother is to unite the diegetic world with the world of the reader, and engage the reader in the dialogue of the text, then the reader's emotional response is the proof of this connection (Warhol, Gendered Interventions 101). This idea can be used to explain some of the more ruthless acts of the God/mother. Critics have linked the death of children in Stowe's, and other authors', novels to the idea of Christian sacrifice. This is a useful argument, but overlooks the notion that these deaths have a calculated effect. The heart-wrenching losses are spaced throughout Dred in a way that keeps the reader engaged emotionally. On 1: 118, Sue Cripps dies; on 1: 206 Milly tells how she lost all her children; on 1: 324, Emily dies; on 2: 123, baby Cripps dies; on 2: 135 Nina dies; on 2: 205 Cora kills her children; on 2: 295, Dred dies. Some of these characters are fairly unimportant to the plot, but their deaths are all infused with a great deal of pathos, designed to "goad [readers] into succumbing to that most physical proof of 'real' emotional response--tears" (Warhol, Gendered

Interventions 101).

Instead of looking at the diegesis as a series of past events, and the narrator's account of those events as a finite activity, the "text produces a real event, and exchange of ideas" (Warhol, Gendered Interventions 203). By speaking through the voice of the God/mother to the reader, Stowe attempts to inspire real reactions to real problems. The God/mother affects the text in what she says, how she says it, and why, and she in turn expects the reader to participate in the experience and be permanently changed.

What I have described thus far is a gendered narrator, that both comes from and does the work of Stowe's female ministry. Naomi Schor provides an apt summary of this approach: "the sex-signature of an author matters," for "to be born female--and especially to be socialized as a woman in a society where education, money, and control over cultural production accrues disproportionately to those born male and socialized as men--is to write with a difference, to write otherwise" (267). The notion of a gendered narrator creates a whole new realm for examining not just women's writing, and not just nineteenth-century fiction, but any text or group of texts. Warhol lists a variety of possible areas for further study, such as the connection between engaging narrators and history, gender, canonization, and aesthetics ("Engaging Narrator" 817). These connections can be extended beyond the

idea of an engaging narrator to the concept of gendered narrating, or any style of narrating.

RECEPTION OF THE GOD/MOTHER:

A THEORY OF CONTEXTUAL AESTHETICS

The God/mother proposes a certain discourse, based on a particular response from the reader. One important reader response, and certainly the easiest to access, is my own. The aesthetics and vocabulary of whatever facets of current literary criticism I subscribe to are readily available. But the gendered narrator, the God/mother, that I am interested in is so inextricably interwoven with the context of the work, that this course of inquiry must search for a contextual response. The ideal research method, then, would be to time-travel back to 1856, and interview some, or all, of Dred's readers, and interpret their responses in light of the God/mother paradigm. However, reality dictates that the responses that were recorded in writing, and preserved, are all the evidence available. While it is certainly impossible to disconnect completely from present day theory and personal prejudice, I will try to focus on contextual aesthetics.

The work of critics such as Baym and Tompkins attempts to redefine aesthetics for nineteenth-century women's fiction by breaking away from a (traditionally male) standard of literariness that has predominated over the last hundred or so years. One of the basic assumptions underlying their work, although not explicitly delineated, is that the production and

reception of the work cannot be separated from the work itself, and that all of these factors have a socio-historical basis. This is the theory brought to light in Jauss's Toward an Aesthetic of Reception:

This perpetual labor of understanding and of the active reproduction of the past cannot remain limited to the single work. On the contrary, the relationship of work to work must now be brought into this interaction between work and mankind, and the historical coherence of works among themselves must be seen in the interrelations of production and reception. Put another way: literature and art only obtain a history that has the character of a process when the succession of works is mediated not only through the producing subject but also through the consuming subject--through the interaction of author and public. (15)

All these interrelationships and influencing factors Jauss combines under the term "horizon of expectations." This horizon of expectations defines what the reader anticipates finding in a new work, based on past experiences with other works that are evoked through similarity in genre, form, or style (23-24). The aesthetic that determines how a work is evaluated is formed by "the way in which a literary work, at the historical moment of its appearance, satisfies, surpasses,

disappoints, or refutes expectations of its first audience" (25).

So my exploration of a contextual aesthetic analysis of Dred is not based on a standard of "literariness" that can be applied ahistorically. Neither is it based completely on what cultural work the novel accomplished, although this is considered in relation to aesthetic evaluation. What I will attempt to do is to reconstruct a sense of the horizon of expectations surrounding Dred's publication, and then evaluate the effects of the God/mother, as reported by readers/reviewers, as she challenges or meets that horizon.

Going back to Hedrick's concept of parlor literature, we can locate the God/mother's narrative style within a certain tradition. This tradition accepted certain techniques, normally associated with the domestic or feminine voice. The parlor forum sanctioned the blurring of distinctions between the public and the private, the formal and the informal, the practical and the ideal. So when the God/mother addresses the reader, this is no affront to the reader's expectations. When the narrator pauses to explain where she got her "evidence" of a scene, as if it were part of the real world, the horizon of expectations is not stretched at all. The reviews never complain about the narrator's metalepses. The God/mother's attempt to unite the diegetic and extradiegetic world was not unsettling; it was accepted.

The horizon of expectations is also embedded in a work's genre. If Dred is a part of any distinct genre, it would be what I have been calling sentimental fiction. It certainly contains many of the stock elements--a motherless girl who converts to Christianity before dying a sad but beautiful death that is intended to bring us all to tears. Reviewers of the past and present alike have identified repetitive characters and scenes in Dred. But this pathos and predictability were accepted features of the genre. From the works of Charlotte Bronte and Dickens, and from one another, American women writers developed a pattern that was expected--a unique combination of catharsis and moral instruction (Pattee).

Some of the elements of Dred that make it so unsettling to the modern reader were willingly accepted in 1856. The most striking example is the Christ-like ministry and death of Nina. The God/mother describes her, with her skirts neatly spread around her, in Tiff's garden reading to him from the Bible. As she dies such a noble death, after serving so conspicuously during the cholera epidemic, we are expected to share tears of sorrow mixed with joy. But such scenes would have been well within the horizon of expectations of contemporary readers. The common complaint voiced in reviews concerning Nina was that, just when the reader has learned to love her, she is gone from the story. But no objections can be found to the obvious attempt at pathos. So sentimentality and

predictability, per se, were well-received. Tompkins uses these traits to explain the political success of Uncle Tom's Cabin, that by its very compliance with these expectations, the novel gained its revolutionary potential (125).

Of course, Uncle Tom's Cabin must be considered the single most important predecessor to Dred. Almost every review or critique of Dred (including my own) makes at least passing reference to it. The overwhelming success of Uncle Tom's Cabin can establish a great deal about the horizon of expectations surrounding Dred. For example, abolition could be a legitimate topic for a novel, slaves could be interesting characters, and political/religious/social commentary could be combined successfully with entertaining fiction. But almost every single review of Dred calls it inferior to its precursor, and the sales figures certainly support this claim. Uncle Tom's Cabin sold 300,000 copies in the first year alone, with final world-wide estimates well over two million, as well as spawning a vast assortment of games and memorabilia (Coultrap-McQuinn 86). Dred sold around 300,000, a success by many standards, but not when compared to its predecessor (Forrest Wilson 418-19).⁹

So by defining the horizon of expectations as sentimental fiction in general and Uncle Tom's Cabin in particular, we can examine how the reviewers describe Dred's shortcomings. One striking similarity in almost all the reviews, whether

favorable or not, is that Dred somehow failed to meet the criteria of "art." Two trains of thought elaborate this claim. The first is an indictment of the plot. The patchwork design of the story, with abolition as its pattern, was not well-received. The New Englander explains: "So slender is the thread that connects the different parts with one another, that 'Dred' might be better styled a series of sketches pertaining to slave-life" (517). In other words, the plot is said to lack unity. This complaint centered around the early death of Nina, the incongruity of Dred's appearance, and the shifts in setting from plantation to courtroom to clerical session to New England. So the horizon of expectations defined a plot as a series of events more obviously and logically connected, without the disrupted rhythm and order used by the God/mother. Important characters were expected to be in the story for the duration rather than selected portions.

The second "bad art" complaint revolves around Stowe's technique of intervening to describe the motives and intentions of the characters. The Quarterly Review explains:

The highest art, of course, is shown by letting the qualities of every agent be inferred solely from his conduct. No one is described in the 'Iliad.' Inferior poets are forced to explain to us the feelings and the objects of their personages, and

set them in motion principally in order to illustrate the previous descriptions. (329)

I was surprised to find this type of objection, since the idea that a good narrator must be absent and let his story demonstrate its own moral is commonly associated with Henry James and later critics. Genette describes the importance of how a narrator chooses to represent the action and dialogue by distinguishing between mimesis and pure narrative, or showing and telling. He explains how pure narrative--telling--is much more mediated than showing, and that Henry James and his associates are credited with forcing mimesis as the true standard of artistry (163).

It is obvious from Dred's reception that this concept predates James. Even in 1856, readers expected a certain finesse in presenting the morals of a novel. The God/mother felt no obligation to honor this distinction between showing and telling; as an active participant in the discourse she could not see the distinction at all. The reviewers reacted against this technique, in a sense refusing to become the child and resenting the excess of mothering.

Bearing all this in mind, we can see that the license of parlor literature is not infinite. Indeed, Hedrick notes that as parlor literature melded into the publishing industry, a division formed between "high" and "popular" literature (301). So once Stowe had earned the reputation and renown of a

professional writer, she lost some of the privileges accorded popular literature. Her previous success had shifted her into a new horizon of expectations with a different standard.

Part of Stowe's venture beyond customary boundaries involved social and political structures. Uncle Tom's Cabin attacked slavery and American society, but it did so primarily from within the bounds of the women's sphere.

Stowe's very conservatism--her reliance on established patterns of living and traditional beliefs--is precisely what gives her novel its revolutionary potential. . . . The brilliance of the strategy is that it puts the central affirmations of a culture into the service of a vision that would destroy the present economic and social institutions; by resting her case, absolutely, on the saving power of Christian love and on the sanctity of motherhood and the family, Stowe relocates the center of power in American life, placing it not in the government, nor in the courts of law, nor in the factories, nor in the marketplace, but in the kitchen. (Tompkins 145)

In other words, Uncle Tom's Cabin worked within the horizon of expectations, complying for the most part with existing social structure, but offering a change in viewpoint oriented mainly around slavery. The transforming power of Christian and

motherly love would create a new man that would be incapable of enslaving others. The shift in the horizon was gradual, and therefore acceptable.

Stowe's confidence seemed to have increased in Dred. She journeyed far beyond even new horizon of expectations established by Uncle Tom's Cabin. Her most pronounced attack is on organized religion and clergymen. The lengthy chapter in the clerical council, and the caricature of father Bonnie, are not examples of working subtly from within the existing system. In fact, it was this attack on organized religion that led to controversy and rejection in America (Forrest Wilson 419). The Southern Literary Messenger called Dred profane and libellous, and even some supporters of abolition thought she had gone too far. The God/mother's took authority too presumptuously. The horizon of expectations had not been shifted; it had been destroyed.

Obviously, moral and aesthetic issues are not easily separable in responding to a work like Dred. As Buell explains,

in the production and, even more, in the discussion of literature, aesthetic questions and questions of religious and moral orientation became closely entwined. Even if writers and reviewers did not work from a specific sectarian bias, they remained acutely concerned with art's moral tendency. (39)

Some reviewers tended to completely lose sight of their biases. For example, Monthly Religious Magazine called Dred "a great work of humane and holy wisdom, of irresistible pathos and genuine originality, of splendid dramatic power and exquisite literary skill" (282). But for the most part, reviewers tried to address the moral and political issues as more or less separate from the work's literary qualities. George Eliot ceded that the work contained some artistic flaws, but that the power of its message prevailed:

Such a book is an uncontrollable power, and critics who follow it with their objections and reservations--who complain that Mrs. Stowe's plot is defective, that she has repeated herself, that her book is too long and too full of hymns and religious dialogue, and that it creates an unfair bias--is something like men pursuing a prairie fire with desultory watering-cans. (571)

But many of the reviewers were unsettled by this prairie fire. The London Times, Dublin University Magazine, and Blackwood's all complained that Dred is too negative and too radical. In their view, Stowe sees no hope for reforming slavery, or for a gradual amelioration of its vices. Dred himself symbolizes something apocalyptic, destruction being the only solution to the problems caused by the existing social structure. The British saw the unrest in America, and were nervous that if

the conflict resulted in violence, the impact would reach across the ocean. Uncle Tom's Cabin had received a much heartier welcome, since it did not challenge the status quo quite so menacingly. Dred had ventured so far as to become too discomfoting even to those who sympathized with its message.

So far I have been describing examples where the horizon of expectations poses a sort of barrier, a barrier that prevents a writer from venturing too far beyond the norm if she wants a good reception. However, the horizon of expectations does not merely prevent excessive change. It may also be a requirement for change. If every work looked identical to the one before it, it would lose its value. Some complaints about Dred were of this nature, that it was too repetitive. The London Times explains that "the world will no longer be taken by surprise, but, conscious of the vastness of its verdict, will deliberate on the issues." In other words, Uncle Tom's Cabin received a warm welcome partly because it was so unique, and Dred would have to stand greater scrutiny. The ways in which Dred duplicated Uncle Tom's Cabin include similar characters and of course the similar subject of slavery. Many readers complained that Dred was just a longer, more negative version. So in some ways, Dred failed to sufficiently challenge the horizon of expectations.

The reviewers certainly do not reach a consensus on the

literary and social merits of Dred. Nor do they necessarily represent all of the book's readers. But they do provide some insight into how the book succeeded or failed.

Viewing the God/mother narrator as a technique designed to allow the cultural agenda of Dred to radically stretch the horizon of expectations, we can call it a partial success. The God/mother managed to keep the readers emotionally and intellectually engaged in the drama and the moral. Even the harshest of reviews found something riveting, most commonly the dialogue and Tiff, "perhaps the most charming and humorous [character] which Mrs. Stowe has yet delineated" (London Times). Most of the reviewers who disparaged the plot objected to the fact that they became interested in, and emotionally involved with, characters who then disappeared. So the God/mother succeeded in convincing the reader that the characters were real enough to care about. And she succeeded in creating dialogue that was captivating enough to be heard.

The work also succeeded in unsettling the status quo. The reviewers, even if they objected to it, heard the message that slavery was far more evil than commonly admitted, and that the changes required were not subtle, simple or comfortable. Dred's prophetic Old Testament lesson was that total upheaval--change of the radical and painful kind--was necessary. While many readers were made uncomfortable by this effect, they still received the correct message.

In some ways, however, the God/mother failed. She presumed authority to comment on all facets of society, and to lecture the reader directly at will at any point in the narrative, and to sacrifice her characters in order to prove a point. The readers were not quite willing to become the subject of such authority, and throughout the reviews they bristle at her presumptiveness. They were not completely able to become attentive children. This failure probably did mitigate the impact of Dred. Sales of the novel, a great percentage of which were made in advance, owed a great deal to the reputation of Uncle Tom's Cabin. As unenthusiastic reviews began to appear and initial sales dropped off, the book lost the kind of momentum needed to have the force Uncle Tom's Cabin did. A book has power if it is read, or if even if it is talked about, but not if it quickly slides into obscurity. On the other hand, Stowe was an inspiration to many other women writers of the time, and she may have shifted the horizon of expectations for them, creating a ripple effect that would be impossible to measure.

Dred may have given confidence to other writers, but it seemed to have lessened Stowe's confidence in writing about difficult issues. As her career progressed, the content of her novels shifted toward less and less inflammatory subjects, until she restricted her writing to New England novels of manners like Pink and White Tyranny and Oldtown Folks. She

also made less money on subsequent works, either because she was afraid to demand more from the publisher or because the publisher knew her reputation had diminished. Some biographers suggest that Stowe became more conservative in her later years, and this conservatism was reflected in her work. Perhaps she also became discouraged by her inability to continue to persuade with the power of Uncle Tom's Cabin, and so shied away from controversy.

It would be interesting to examine the God/mother paradigm in Stowe's later works. Would we find that, as she retreated more toward the center of the women's sphere, that the God--the sense of authority--tended to diminish? As she treats issues closer to, and at times entirely within, the home, does her narrator demand less, or different, emotional or intellectual involvement of the reader? A comparison could also be made of reviews. For example, if the voice of the God/mother became less demanding, did the reviewers become less involved in the moral implications of the work and more involved in the drama for its own sake?

NARRATOLOGY IN CONTEXT

In order to help us understand narrative discourse, Genette has provided us with a set of terms that define what a narrator does. Of course, within any theory of criticism, certain assumptions emerge. Genette is concerned with a sort of scientific dissection of the text, and he assumes that meaning lies within the black marks on the page and the laws by which they are assembled and disassembled. But his form of structuralism provides a framework that does not need to be applied under structuralist limitations. The fact that the narrator is speaking implies a narratee, and Prince has seen the logical step to reader and reader-response. The term "narrative discourse" also invites new applications. Warhol has redefined this discourse in terms of a gendered narrator, opening the field to feminist applications. When Genette refers to the act of narrating, he is again concerned solely with the text. But this act of narrating, the production of narrative discourse, can easily be extended from text to context. The relationship between the author and his community, including but not limited to his or her role as a writer, creates a discourse environment that interacts with text. So Genette's work is valuable to historicist criticism and production and reception theory.

My use of the God/mother paradigm is one way of

combining these approaches. The structure of the narrative, the relationship between the story-teller and the story, provides the starting point. But this relationship reflects the way Stowe interacted with the men and women she worked and lived with, and her view of her own role in the home, the church, the country, and the human community. The God/mother inflected what she wrote, how she wrote, and why she wrote. It also affected how she was read.

One important discovery of this research has been that, in comparing reviews from 1856 to formalist criticism to post-structuralist analyses, I found some surprising continuities. While I expected unity of plot to be more or less a formalist criterion, every period contains indictments of the lack of such unity in Dred. From publication to Hovet's work in 1989, the themes of Old and New Testament theology have been used to explain Dred. The differences lie in what weight is placed on different characteristics, and of course how they are explained. For example, I explain the fragmented plot in terms of Showalter's quilting metaphor. The New Englander explains it as an attempt at "dealing blows at different parties without much regard to the progress of the tale" (517). So we are left with the seemingly impossible task of weighing the usefulness of the various critical approaches.

Jauss provides us with one aesthetic that does just this. By examining the horizon of expectations surrounding

the work, we can measure what the work has done. It is one thing to create the God/mother paradigm to explain the narrative structure, but quite another to try to find a way to examine what the narrative structure does in terms of how it was received. So what I have attempted to do is close the circle of context, to go from historical discourse community, to structures within the text that reflect the community, to reception within that community. This process attempts to recognize that the meaning within the structure of the text reflects the meaning within the structure of the context. The structure of the God/mother's narrative is a structure of nineteenth-century America, and examining these structures provides insight into history as well as literature.

NOTES

1. In "Heroines in Uncle Tom's Cabin," Elizabeth Ammons examines how Stowe applies traditionally feminine values to Tom, depicting him as a "victorian heroine" (153).
2. Genette claims to keep his analysis scientific by limiting his study to the text. "I do not mean to suggest that the narrative content of the Recherche has no connection with the life of its author, but simply that this connection is not such that the latter can be used for a rigorous analysis of the former (any more than the reverse)" (28). While my approach may not meet Genette's definition of "rigorous," I am adapting his theory and vocabulary.
3. Some notable examples include Foster, Hovet, and Hedrick.
4. According to Leverenz, different male writers addressed this perception in different ways. Cooper, for example, reacted by creating very active heroes, men who got their hands dirty and risked their lives.
5. When I argue what Stowe does, I am not implying authorial intent, because I agree with Jonathan Culler that authorial intent is illusive and relatively unimportant: "here, as in most other human activities of any complexity, the line between the conscious and the unconscious is highly variable, impossible to identify, and supremely unimportant" (106).
6. While the author and the narrator are by no means

equivalent, Dred's narrative voice is inscribed with Stowe's life experiences and ideology to the extent that, for the purposes of my argument, the distinction is unimportant.

7. One notable exception to this paradigm is Dred, after whom the novel is titled. Just as he doesn't fit the model, he doesn't fit the society of the novel. He remains in the margins, unexplained. Hovet explains this discrepancy by equating Dred with the God of the Old Testament, a vengeful and very masculine God, contrasted with Stowe's Christian, motherly God of the New Testament.

8. Obviously, for Genette the reader does not participate in this discourse.

9. In the first year of publication, Dred sold 165,000 copies in England and 150,000 in America (pirated and foreign language versions are not included in these figures). Forrest Wilson explains that Dred sold fewer copies in America than Uncle Tom's Cabin because the South no longer offered a potential market for anti-slavery literature. It is meaningless to compare profits from the two slave novels, as Stowe handled the business end of Dred's publication much more wisely than she did the publication of Uncle Tom's Cabin.

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