“SEEING AND KNOWING ALL”

Uncle Tom’s Cabin, unmistakably a classic that hits at the heart of just how cruel and wrong slavery is, uses the “seeing all, knowing all” point of view effectively. This third-person omniscient perspective helps the reader to get a vivid picture of what the characters are experiencing. Whether it’s physically, mentally, or spiritually, author Harriet Beecher Stowe uses this point of view powerfully to help the reader truly know what the characters in the novel are facing. She gives the reader a clear knowledge of what’s going on at all times. This proves to be an effective strategy for keeping the reader captivated.

Stowe uses the third-person omniscient point of view well to describe what’s going on physically with the characters in the novel. In the novel, Stowe narrates, “One night, after all in Tom’s cabin were sunk in sleep, he was suddenly aroused by seeing her (Cassy’s) face at the hole between the logs that served for a window.” (Chapter 38) In this quote, the reader gets a perfect depiction of what Tom physically is doing. It’s clear that everyone in his cabin is asleep, that he is aroused from his sleep, and that he looks through a hole in the cabin wall at Cassy. While Stowe describes physical objects, characters, and events, she also uses the third-person omniscient point of view to describe thoughts of the characters.

Throughout the book, the reader gets a clear image of what the characters are thinking through the “seeing all, knowing all” point of view. These images are created with simple words that explain the thoughts, ideas, and struggles of the individuals in Uncle Tom’s Cabin. In the thirty-first chapter, Stowe writes, “Something within the silent black man answered No! and, as if repeated by an invisible voice came the words of an old prophetic scroll, as Eva had often read to him…” In this passage, Stowe expresses what Tom’s thoughts are, giving the reader knowledge of Tom’s inner being. Not only does Stowe communicate the characters’ thoughts, but also how they are doing spiritually.

Most important of all, the third-person omniscient viewpoint gives insights to what the characters are experiencing spiritually. Throughout the innovative book, God is expressed in the many characters’ lives through dialogue and narrative. In the novel, Cassy explains, “Didn’t I tell you that evil spirits followed me? O! Father Tom, I can’t pray—I wish I could. I never have prayed since my children were sold! What you say must be right…” (Chapter 38) In these lines, Cassy sheds light on her spiritual situation, telling Tom she can’t pray; she has given up hope. Through this, the reader can apply this to his/her own spiritual life.

The third-person omniscient point of view thoroughly helps the reader to know
everything that is going on in a story or novel. Overall, Stowe uses this viewpoint to perfection. Whether it’s physically, mentally, or spiritually, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* has it all.

Through this perspective, Harriet Beecher Stowe proves her point of the novel easily. Compared to other points of view, the third-person omniscient point of view covers everything a reader needs to know in a story.