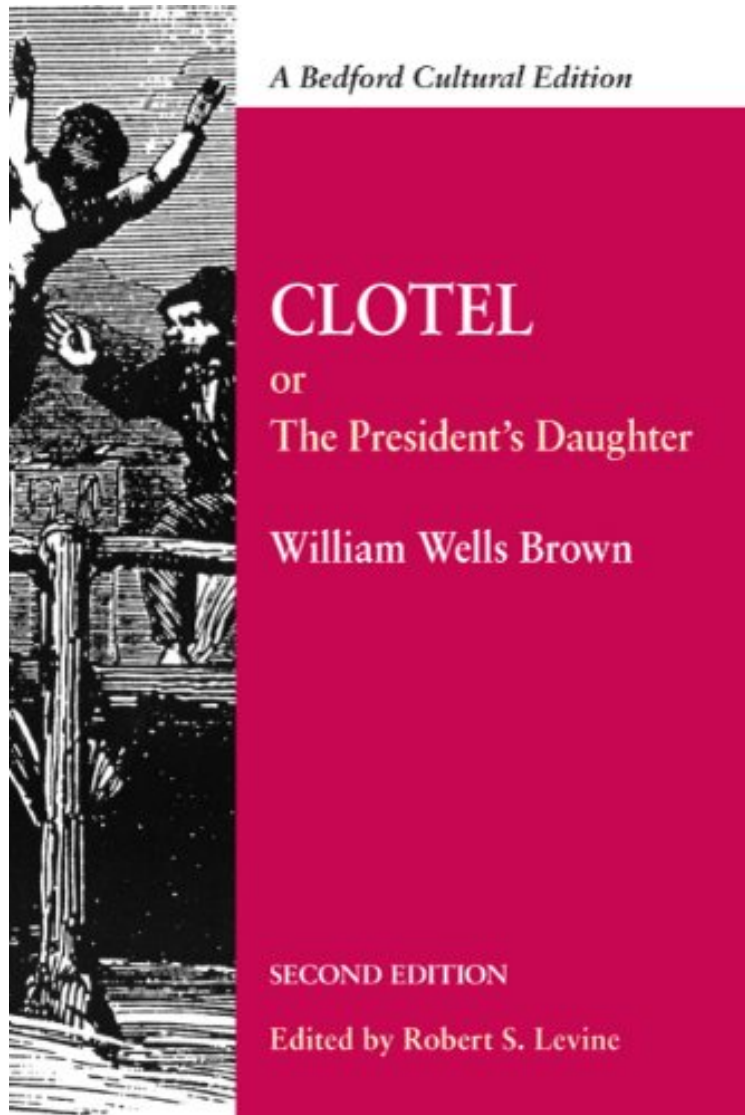


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Clotel: Or, The President's Daughter: A Narrative of Slave Life in the United States (Bedford Cultural Editions)

William Wells Wells Brown

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William Wells Wells Brown : Clotel: Or, The President's Daughter: A Narrative of Slave Life in the United States (Bedford Cultural Editions) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Clotel: Or, The President's Daughter: A Narrative of Slave Life in the United States (Bedford Cultural Editions):

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. DO NOT BUY THIS EDITION!!By Amber MorrellThis is a review on the printing of the edition, not the actual text. Yes, this edition is the cheapest one available, but you get what you pay for! The text inside looks like it was printed straight from a Word document; it is unformatted, meaning the epigraphs at the beginning of the chapters run in with the text and cannot be differentiated. The type is RIDICULOUSLY tiny -- I'm a young college student without eye problems, but even I had a hard time reading this book because of how much they tried to cut down on costs. The Penguin Classics edition is 320 pages. This edition is 89 pages. That should tell you just how tiny the type is in this edition. Even though it is "sold and shipped" by , you will get a "print to order" book made using CreateSpace. I ordered this book January 16th, 2016. Inside it says it was printed January 17th, 2016. This is not a quality book. The cover is a pixellated image copy and pasted from Google images that has nothing to do with the text. The back cover text is literally just the first bit of the preface. Terrible, terrible, terrible. Spend the extra seven bucks and get the Penguin Classics version! You won't regret it!

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. IMPORTANT WORK IN AMERICAN LETTERS -- JUST DON'T CALL IT A NOVELBy Nelson H. WuWhat if Founding Father Thomas Jefferson had an affair with a slave and fathered an illegitimate mulatto daughter? Author William Wells Brown uses this as a point of departure for *Clotel*, or the Presidents Daughter to examine race relations in 1800s America. Often billed as the first novel published by an African American, *Clotel* establishes many of the themes and introduces the stock characters that would populate what scholars refer to as the "slave narrative. This is, then, a seminal work in American letters. Just dont call it a novel. While the narrative contains romance, intrigue, breathless escapes and a cast of memorable characters, Brown is less interested in telling a typical 1800s melodrama than he is in presenting a series of polemical arguments that systematically reveal the peculiar institution as inhumane, un-American and, ultimately, sacrilegious. Time and again, Brown interrupts the story to deliver a pages-long diatribe meant to convince the reader of slaverys evils. As a result, the story keeps tripping over its own agenda. The story doesnt even concentrate exclusively on *Clotel* and her adventures. Rather, it focuses on *Clotel*, her sister and their mother, and traces the three womens lives after they are cruelly separated from each other. *Clotel* becomes a kept woman to a white, liberal-leaning gentleman. Cloistered in her own home, she dreams of seeing her mother, sister and eventually her own child again. This sets in motion numerous daring escapes as *Clotel* travels across the country, chasing her dreams and her freedom. This brief summary actually makes *Clotel* seem like a page-turner. Its not and Brown never intended it to be. Its a series of polemical essays built around a story. As the introduction to this Modern Library edition notes, Brown wrote the book for a European audience and he has no interest in writing a Dickens-esque or Dumas-like adventure, which is too bad since thats one reason why a more troublesome piece of literature like *Uncle Toms Cabin*, with its propulsive narrative, remains on high-school reading lists while *Clotel* is consigned to graduate seminars and usually buried deep within university curriculum. After all, if youre motivated enough to pick up this book, chances are that you hardly need convincing that slavery can never be justified on any level. Its best, then, to approach *Clotel* as a historical document a snapshot of a moment in time that captures what pro- and anti-slavery Americans were thinking just before the Civil War that would forever change the course of American history.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. fiction essay combinedBy WandaThis novel is interesting even though it is as much narrative essay against the evils of slavery as a piece of fiction. Mr. Brown aims his pen squarely at Christians, challenging them to live their faith. Himself an escaped slave who helped others escape, his story is an authentic indictment of slavery and it's interesting that rumors of Jefferson's children with Sally Hemings were well known long before modern historians had DNA evidence to prove it.

Clotel; or *The President's Daughter* (1853), the first published novel by an African American, has recently emerged as a canonical text for courses in African American as well as nineteenth-century American literature courses. The story was inspired by the rumored sexual relationship between Thomas Jefferson and his slave Sally Hemings, and this edition of *Clotel* is the only one to reprint selections from the key texts and cultural documents that Brown drew on (and even appropriated) when he wrote his novel.

About the AuthorROBERT S. LEVINE is Professor of English and Distinguished Scholar-Teacher at the University of Maryland, College Park. He is the editor of a number of volumes, including *Martin R. Delany: A Documentary Reader* and *Frederick Douglass and Herman Melville: Essays in Relation*. His books include *Martin Delany, Frederick Douglass, and the Politics of Representative Identity* and *Dislocating Race and Nation: Episodes in Nineteenth-Century American Literary Nationalism*.