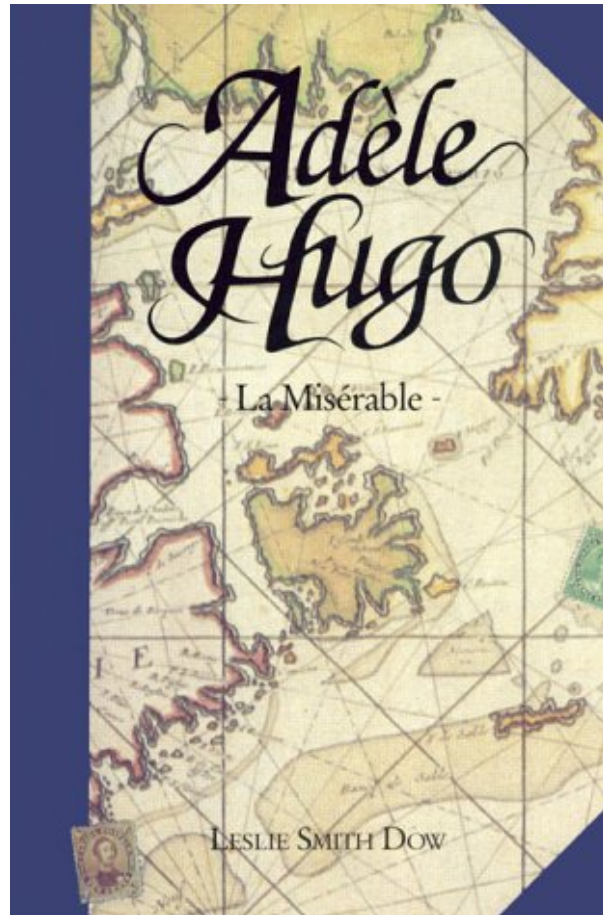
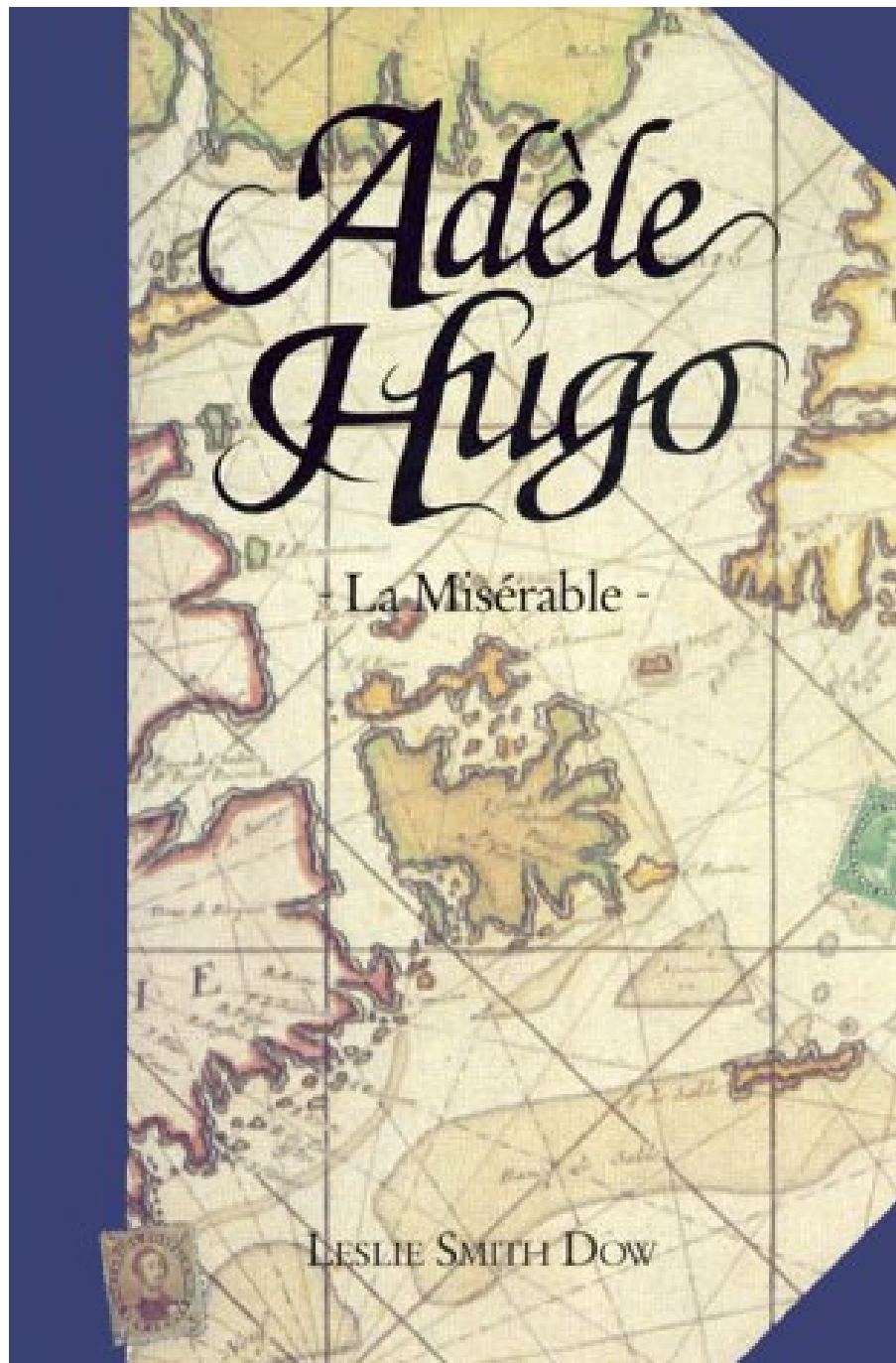


ADÈLE HUGO: LA MISÉRABLE BY LESLIE SMITH DOW



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Review

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Victor Hugo didn't much care for Adèle because he was never sure she was his daughter. Even so, he made her join the rest of his family as they shared his exile on the island of Jersey. Adèle was virtually imprisoned. The lack of outlets for her artistic gifts cramped her mind, and daily seances loosened her grip on reality. No wonder she fell in love with a feckless English soldier, Albert Andrew Pinson. His ardour for everything about her except her money cooled rapidly, but her passion for him burned white hot. Adèle dogged Pinson's footsteps, first to Halifax and then to Barbados, sometimes in a state of dementia. At last, a former slave rescued her from a Bridgetown street and took her home to France. Victor committed Adèle to an asylum, and there she stayed for the rest of her life, even though she was at times no less lucid than he.

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9 of 9 people found the following review helpful.

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2 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

Very Good

By tess of the dubervilles

I had watched the movie 'The Story of Adele H and I wanted to read about her.. This book was wonderful and very sad.. Poor Adele I think she may have had Borderline Personality disorder.. Not that I'm a shrink or anything :-)

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Good detail, too much personal politics

By Mark Kittell

My assessment of this book, one of the few providing a full examination of the subject, is an "average"--meaning that for its detail it is worthy of five stars, but the relative lack of objectivity by the author calls its credibility into question. Adele is of course a "victim" of the "patriarchy," although even Dow is forced to admit that her actions were in large part influenced by neo-feminist George Sand, and not for particularly positive results. We are told Adele supposedly had potential to be a great writer, even more so than her father, although this is just a "conjecture" on Dow's part, because much of Adele's writing was done in almost indecipherable code that only she could fully comprehend (and also could have been evidence of her growing madness). The credibility of the author is particularly questionable in regard to Adele's father, Victor Hugo--who even more than Albert Pinson is the "villain" of the story. Not only does Dow ignore his progressive politics which included support for universal suffrage, but attempts to degrade his literary accomplishments at every opportunity (there is no mention, for example, of the universally-acclaimed *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* or *Les Misérables*; to do so would expose her opinions to more obvious ridicule).

Victor Hugo in this narrative is nothing more than a womanizer, a domestic tyrant and a over-rated poet and

author of whom there is no logical explanation for his fame. As for Pinson, it has to be admitted that for all his personal failings, one could not truly blame him for his attitude toward Adele. After all, it was she who casually turned down his marriage proposal for the sake of her feminist theories, and her subsequent pursuit of him seemed to him evidence of a very bizarre and unstable personality (which was, in fact, the case). Sure, he took money from her like she used her father like a bank, but whose fault was that?

Still, the book manages to give the impression that a great deal of effort went to uncovering as much detail as possible into the life of Adele Hugo, and in fact there is no denying that sometimes fact can be more fascinating than fiction. Even Dow cannot entirely white-wash the sad reality of her life, since simply in its telling one cannot escape the sense of a life terribly misguided by emotional and mental instability.

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