

PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA  
MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND SIENTIFIC RESEARCH  
UNIVERSITY OF MOHAMED KHEIDER – BISKRA-  
FACULTY OF ARTS AND FOREING LANGUAGES  
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**An Account of Slavery in Harriet Beecher Stowe's Novel**  
***Uncle Tom's Cabin 1852***

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for a  
Master Degree in English

*Option:* Literature and Civilization

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***2014 / 2015***

## ***Dedication***

*This work is dedicated to my dear parents for their sacrifice, confidence, patient, understanding, and support during all the years of my studies.*

*This work is also dedicated to Uncle Sadouki Mohamed.*

*To my adorable brother and sisters.*

*To my sweet lovely sister*

*Mayssoun Minnatou Allah*

*To my dear friends*

*Sadouki Chaima & Aissat Karima*

*Djihad, Hadjar and Imane*

## *Acknowledgments*

*First of all, my thanks go to Allah who gave me the power to accomplish this work.*

*A special thanks with deep respect to my supervisor for her guidance, academic support and soft spoken advice.*

*Also, I would like to express sincere thanks and appreciation to the members of the jury.*

*Moreover, I wish to express my great thanks to the staff of the English department and library.*

*Special thank to Aissat Karima*

## Abstract

This dissertation attempts to investigate the aspects of slavery highlighted by Harriet Beecher Stowe in her novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* to convince her reader about the cruelty of slavery and to show them how much slaves suffered in America. Also, the controversies and the impact that the novel played in the issue. It hypothesized that *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was written as a response to the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, and through the book sale alone; it is clear that the novel has a drastic effect. It also hypothesized that; while the novel outraged people in the South, it brings the issue of slavery to many northerners who have no idea about the destructive effect of slavery on slaves and their families. By following a thematic based approach, a historical approach, and by the reliance on the related documents, reviews and critical analysis; the researcher founded that the novel was the outcome of Stowe's life and the struggle of her nation regarding slavery. The researcher also found that in spite of its controversy; *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was a successful novel. Through Stowe's emotional portrayal of the destructive effect of slavery and her focus on the following aspects: Slaves treated as property, family separation and the physical abuse of slaves; combined with her strong faith in Christianity; her message appeals to everyone read the novel.

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## General Introduction

American History is deeply linked to slavery problem, from the beginning of the nation existence, slavery represented a point of tension between different section of American population .It is widely known term, man was subjected to slavery when mankind has tended to execute power over one another and so it comes in to being as a major issue in American politics and literature.

With strong conviction that literature and history are intimately connected, and writers often endeavor to transform historical events into works of art, Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote *Uncle Tom's Cabin* as a response to the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850.The novel was written at a moment when the dispute over slavery was very pervasive.

In her novel; Stowe portrayed the dehumanizing and destructive aspects of the institution to convince her reader to protest this law and slavery in general.

### 1. Statement of the problem

The present work aims to show the aspects of slavery highlighted by Stowe in her novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*; in order to convince her reader about the horror and cruelty of slavery and to show them how much slaves suffered in America.

### 2. Research questions

Seeking to uncover the theme of thesis, the following questions could be raised:

- 1-What are the aspects of slavery highlighted by Stowe in her novel?
- 2-What are the social and political circumstances that surrounded the emergence of the novel?
- 3-What were the different reactions to the novel?

4- Was the novel successful in conveying the message intended by the writer?

### **3. Hypotheses**

These questions in return, led the researcher to formulate the following hypotheses:

- *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is written as response to the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 and through the book sales alone, it is clear that the novel has a drastic effect.
- While the novel outraged people in the South, it successfully brings the issue of slavery home to many northerners who did not previously witness such a destructive and dehumanizing aspects of slavery on slaves and their families.

### **4. The Content of the Thesis**

The present dissertation's frame work is divided into three chapters.

Through the first chapter, the researcher provides a historical political and social overview of slavery in America; to understand the context in which the novel was written and to show the circumstances that led to the emergence of the novel.

The second chapter entitled the historical and literary angle of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is devoted to study the history of the novel and the different reaction to it. Also, in this chapter the researcher will provide a literary interpretation to the novel to find out the main points that agitated the readers.

The third chapter examines the aspects of slavery which Stowe heavily emphasized by depicting many incidences from the novel that demonstrate the destructive effects of slavery on family, also the moral and physical abuse of slaves.

## **5. Scope of research**

The main concern of the analysis is slavery in Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's cabin* and its aspects, effect and relationship to the surrounding social and political environment.

## **6. Methodology**

The work will follow a thematic based approach to better understand the issue of slavery in this novel. A historical approach will also be used to understand the social and political context that produced *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. The researcher will rely basically on the related documents, reviews and critical analysis.

## **7. The significant of research**

The significance of the thesis lies in giving information and adds the reader's knowledge about Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and to show that the novel cannot be separated from Stowe's experience and the history of her nation. This research is attempts to prove that literature is not only that kind of writings produced for entertainment and pleasure, but it is intimately connected to history and the real life since the novel discusses one of the major issues that the American society lived. It is important for readers because it is allows them to understand the issue discussed through the eyes of a literary work.

## **Chapter One**

### **Social and political Overview of Slavery in America**

#### **Introduction**

Regarded as one of the darkest periods of human history, slavery was the first historical form of exploitation under which a slave becomes the private property of the slave owner. In America, slavery had long complicated and tragic history .People suffered under the institution, legislation, compromises attempted and addressed what became the central political issue of America in the early nineteenth century.

#### **1.1. The origin of slavery**

Slavery is a wide variety of forms inherited as a practice that had long been and always existed in almost every society known to man since ancient civilizations. The system existed in ancient Semitic tribes, Egypt, Roman, Greeks, Spartans and in most European nations. Sage (2010:311).

The slaves may be people of any race who captured as a result of religious persecution, political oppression or war .At ancient time; slaves were domestic servant, possess property and took many position of authority. Harrold (2010:13).

## **1.2. Slavery in America**

Slavery was first introduced to America in 1619 with the first arrival of Africans to the British North American colonies at Jamestown, Virginia aboard a Dutch warship. These twenty black men were sold shortly after their arrival as indentured servants (worked for a term of years, could marry and owned property) .They were set to work in the tobacco with white indentured servant from England but with serious difference between their position and that of the white. O’Callaghan (1990:15). According to McManus (1988,cited in Harrold 2010:15) , the increasing British control over the Atlantic Slave Trade and the rising price of white servant during the next forty years, made black slaves the dominant working force in most of British colonies.

### **1.2.1. The Middle Passage**

The transit of African slaves to America or the “Middle Passage” was a shocking experience for blacks. For many, it was the first time they had seen the sea, the ship or people with white skin. In the ship, slaves were sitting so close to each other that there was no possibility to change their position or lying down. The conditions reached its worst form when men chained by neck and leg and could not easily move, also when slaves were forced to remain below decks for a long period of time. The end of the Middle Passage brought another hardship for African slaves who found themselves examined and purchased by consumers like objects. Kolchin (1993:20.21).

### **1.2.2. Slave codes**

The seventeenth century saw the emergence of slave codes which are a number of rules and laws to control slave's life. Slave codes prohibited blacks from marriage and education. It also made it illegal for them to own property, weapons or to testify against white in court. Hejzlarova (2010:5).

### **1.2.3. The extension of slavery in America**

Slavery spread through all the British colonies (became United States). By 1790, in population of four million, there were nearly 700.000 slaves; 40000 of them living in the South .Harrold (2001:15). By 1810, there were 1.2 million slaves from 7.2 million people in the country of Thomas Jefferson who proclaimed in the Declaration of Independence that "all men are created equal". The history account shows that even Thomas Jefferson, George Washington and other leaders of the movement for American independence and liberty, were large scale slave owners. O'Callaghan (1990:44).

In defending their peculiar institution, many southerners gave religious justification. Verginia reverend; Thornton Stringfellow, for instance supports slavery because he saw that:"Jesus has not abolished slavery by a prohibitory command". Torr (2004:17).

Others believed that white racial superiority justifies slavery. In his "Mud-Still" speech, James Henry Hammond claimed that:

" In all social systems, there must be a class to do the menial duties, to perform the drudgery of life. That is a class requiring but a low order of intellect and but little skill. Its requisites are vigor, docility, fidelity, such a class you must have, or you would not have that other class which leads progress, civilization, and refinement...Fortunately for the South she (the government) found a race adapted to that purpose to her hand. A race inferior to her own, but eminently qualified in

temper, in vigor, in docility, in capacity to stand the climate, to answer all her purposes. We use them for our purpose, and call them slaves.” Torr (2004:18)

#### **1.2.4. South versus North**

Although they were part of the same country, the North and the South, were very different. The difference that became most clear was between the South where slavery was solidly established as a system of labor, and the North where it was not. Kolchin (1993:27).

The South has a fertile soil and a climate ideal for agriculture and the ability to grow many different crops. Southerners grew crops like cotton and tobacco in large plantations owned by wealthy people –aristocrats-who live in expensive houses. After Eli Whitney invented the cotton gin in 1793, cotton became the king of southern economy. The cotton gin was a machine that separates the seeds from the fiber much faster than it could be done by hand. The cotton industry began to develop rapidly in the South and by 1820; the productivity of plantation was eight thousand times than in 1791. Slavery became the basis of economy in the South. Southerners saw slaves as best servants for growing cotton and prosper their economy; they fiercely boost the peculiar institution in the South. O’Callaghan (1990:21.46).

In northern states, slavery never becomes the basis of economy. The North has a soil and climate not so suitable for agriculture, slaves serve in variety of works; such as skilled crafts, home service and day labor. Kolchin (1993:27). By the early 1830, northern states enjoyed an economic and industrial growth with the establishment of the first railroad, commercial farms, factories and nation market. Sellers (1991, cited in Harrold 2001:28.29). The North also advanced ideologically, American Revolution’s principles of democracy, liberty of all men and natural rights; inspired many northerners to freed slaves

who constitute only a small proportion of the population. Kolchin (1993:78.79). O'Callaghan also argued that many northerners opposed slavery for moral and religious reasons. As a result, many states have passed legislation to prohibit slavery inside their boundaries. In 1808, northern abolitionists persuade congress to make it illegal for ships to bring any African slaves to America. Although northerners does not interfere with the existence of slavery in the South, they were fiercely concerned about its extension in new territories in the West. (1990:44).

### **1.2.5. Increasing disagreement between the North and the South**

The failure to deal comprehensively over the extension and the spread of slavery in new territories; led to rising amount of struggle between the South and the North.

#### **1.2.5.1. The Missouri Compromise 1820**

By the 1820, the Missouri compromise comes to settle the dispute between southern states and northern states after the admission of Missouri as a slave state. Congress admitted Maine as a free state in order to maintain the balance between free states and slave states. Sage (2010:313). The Compromise also prohibited slavery in the North of Missouri and in western territories. Despite the fact that the legislation was accepted by both sides, it did not definitely end the disagreement over the issue of slavery. O'Callaghan (1990:45).

#### **1.2.5.2. Nat Turner Revolt 1831**

In 1831, a religious black man named Nat Turner led one of the bloodiest and most shocking rebellions in Southampton country, Virginia. The revolt caused fear throughout the South; with more than sixty whites were killed in the massacre and more than one hundred blacks were hanged for it. The rebellion was seen by many abolitionists as a direct



response to slave owners who claimed that black slaves were happy and satisfied under the peculiar institution .Torr (2004:16). After the revolt; a Virginian legislator passed a law that makes it illegal for blacks to preach or read and write. D’Almeida (2013:11)

During the same year; William Lloyd Garrison began denouncing the horror of slavery in his publication *The Liberator*. In his newspaper’s opening manifesto, Garrison proclaimed that he “...will be as harsh as truth, and as uncompromising as justice...on this subject” of slavery. Torr (2004:16)

### **1.2.5.3. The Compromise of 1850**

The gaining of new lands from the Mexican war; opened the discussion over the issue of slavery once again .Congress voted for another compromise in 1850.The legislation admitted California as a free state, settled Taxes-New Mexico dispute, decided that all other territories in Utah and New Mexico were allowed to choose between becoming a free or a slave territory under the principle of popular sovereignty. Also, as part of the Compromise, the slave trade (not slavery) was banned in Washington D.C, and a Fugitive Slave Act was passed to capture the fugitive slaves. Sage (2010:316-317).

#### **1.2.5.3.1. The fugitive Slave Act 1850**

The most controversial part of the 1850 compromise, it was first passed in 1793.The law made it easier for southerns to recapture their escaped slaves. It also imposed penalties on any one who did not respect the law, assist the refugee to escape or obstructed his capture. This new legislation motivated bounty hunters men who had long offered reward by slaveholders for the recapture of runaways to began searching for fugitive slaves in free states. O’Callaghan (1990:47).

The new legislation fined any one who refused to make an arrest with 1000\$, and the same penalty plus six months in jail to any person who helps a runaway. Jiji (2010).

According to McPherson, the 1850's law is more beneficial for slave owners who under the early law of 1793 had to cross state lines and find their fugitive slaves first, then prove in legal trail that the slaves were their property. With the new law, they were no longer obliged to prove their ownership by judge, they only required to assert before a commission appointed specially for the task. (1988:78)

The Fugitive Slave Law brought the issue of slavery to the North more closely than before. Stage (2010:314). The idea of helping slaveholders to catch runaways and sending them back to the South; highly challenged northerners' belief that they have a moral duty to react severely and violently against the cruelty of the system. Finkelman and Stewart (1997, cited in Harrold 2007:79). O'Callaghan argued that many northern judges refused to enforce the law, other people provided food, money, cloth and safe places for fugitive slaves, they also mapped out escaped routes and hid slaves till they reach Canada whereabouts they get their absolute freedom. During that time, the Underground Railroad or the organized and secret network of people who helped runaways; was one of the most successful instruments used to flee to Canada. (1990:47)

As a response to the Fugitive Slave Act, Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in 1852. The novel derived from her observation of slavery in Kentucky and her experience and contact with fugitive slaves during her eighteen years residence in Cincinnati. MacPherson (1988:89). The novel which describes the atrocities of slave life, gained a huge popularity in the North, while it roused an intense resentment in the South. Sage (2010:326)

#### **1.2.5.4. The Kansas Nebraska Act 1854**

The bill wrote by Democratic Senator Stephen Douglas with his hope to construct a transcontinental railroad which unifies the country. The Act carved the territories to the west of Missouri into Kansas and Nebraska. Douglas wants to get support from southerners, so he allowed settlers of these territories to decide under the principle of popular sovereignty whether the state would be slave or free. Sage (2010:326.327). The Act repealed the Missouri Compromise that banned slavery in western territories of Missouri and outraged northerners who feared that Kansas would become the next slave state. Northern abolitionists gathered in Lawrence which was burned later by proslavery group. In revenge; an abolitionist attack led by John Brown caused a murder of many southerners. This massacre became known as the Bleeding Kansas. O'Callaghan (1990:47).The Bleeding Kansas made a slight preview of a coming war between American's free states and slave states. Jiji (2010)

#### **1.2.5.5. The Dread Scott Decision 1857**

In 1857, a religious enslaved man called Dread Scott, had been taken by his master to free state. when Scott sued for his liberty, the American supreme court declared that black slaves whether enslaved or free were not American citizens and have no right to sue. The court also claimed that Missouri Compromise that prohibits slavery in western territories is unconstitutional. O'Callaghan (1990:48).

The decision outraged northerners and boosts their efforts to oppose the bondage; because they saw it as an obvious southern victory; since it gave slaveholders the right to put their slaves to work even in free states. Stage (2010:331)

### **1.2.5.6. John Brown Raid 1859**

On October 19, 1859, John Brown with a number of his followers; incited a massive slave uprising when they attempted to seize the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Virginia. The band fought with strong conviction that peaceful solutions to the problem of slavery are more and more remote. Rosbach (1982, cited in Harrold 2001:87). The attack failed and Brown was quickly tried, convicted of treason and hanged. Southerners saw the attack as a sign of northerners' willingness and preparation to use violence in fighting slavery. O'Callaghan (1990:48)

### **1.2.5.7. The presidential election of 1860**

The election took place amid the struggle between the South and the North. It was between the Republicans nominated Abraham Lincoln who strongly opposes the extension of slavery, and Stephen Douglas; the leader of the Democratic Party. But fearing that Douglas would not be a strong advocator of the extension of slavery, southern states put forward a candidate for their own to oppose Lincoln. The Democratic Party split: Northern democrats nominated Douglas while southern democrats nominated John C. Breckinridge. Sage (2010:334). Although southerners voted strongly against Lincoln and threatened that the South would secede from the Union if he won and became president, on the Election Day; Lincoln defeated the other candidates with great support from northerners and became the American president. O'Callaghan (1990:47).

### **1.2.6. The Secession Crisis and the Civil War**

The victory of the Republican Abraham Lincoln in the 1860 election brought the secession of South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Florida, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas and the formation of the Confederate State of America or the Confederacy. Sage (2010:336).

On March 4, 1861, in his Inaugural address, Lincoln pledged not to interfere with slavery in the South, but warned that he would not tolerate any attempt to break up the union as he stated “You have no oath registered in Heaven to destroy the government, while I have a most solemn one to preserve, protect and defend it”. O’Callaghan(1990:50) .

On April 12, 1861; the Confederate; which composed of the seceding southern states firing on the Fort Sumter of Charleston, South Carolina; led to the initiation of the Civil War. As the war began; northern states enjoyed considerable human and material resources; with population of twenty two million people and great manufacturing capacity which provides a better supply of weapons, food and everything else they need. O’Callaghan (1990:50) .In the other hand, South strength lies in a combination of its defensive position (Southern defending their home since almost all the war’s fighting took place in the South) and better military leadership including Jefferson Davis. Sage (2010:343).

Kolchin claimed that; although the issue of slavery was the point that initiated the conflict between the South and the North; slavery was neither the root cause nor the direct initial aim of the civil war. Southerners fought to maintain certain state right in particular the right to secede from the union .Northern in the other hand; fought primarily to maintain the union .As the war progressed ,the slavery issue rose to the fore over and over so Lincoln embraced a new war aim which is the emancipation of slaves. (1993:201-202)

In September, 1862, following the union victory at the bloody battle of Antietam; Lincoln issued the primary Emancipation Proclamation which declares that from January 1, 1863; all slaves were to be free only if they lived in areas that were part of the Confederacy. Barny (2006:202). O’Callaghan argues that despite the fact that the Emancipation Proclamation did not put an end to slavery, it completely changed the goal

of the war from a struggle to preserve the union to great struggle to both preserve the union and abolish slavery. He added that; by initiating the Proclamation, Lincoln aim was to give more enthusiasm to the North (since he knows that southern states would easily defeated without slaves). (1990:51)

The 1863 witnessed the major turning point in the history of the civil war. The victory of union troops at Gettysburg and Vicksburg battles gave northern control over the Mississippi and split the South in two. Stage (2010:358-359-360-361)

During the same year, Lincoln delivered famous speech in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania in which he stressed on the American principle of democracy as he said "fourscores and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal ".O'Callaghan (1990:53).

On April19, 1865, the Civil War was over by the victory of the North and with calculable human and economic destruction; more than 600.000 dead on both sides also ruin of the South infrastructure. Nevertheless, the Civil War put a final answer to two disturbing questions that had long split the United States of America; it decided finally that America was a united nation and put an end to slavery. O'Callaghan (1990:52)

### **1.2.7. Reconstruction**

According Barney (2006:202), reconstruction involved restoring the nation union and providing rights to freed slaves after the end of destructive Civil War.

After the assassination of Abraham Lincoln on April14, 1865 by the actor John Wilkes at Ford's theater, Washington, Androw Johnson, the new American president began to introduce plans to reconstruct the South socially and economically and reunite it with the rest of the nation. O'Callaghan (1990:54)

During this period, congress passed the Freedmen's Bureau to assist the lost African Americans whom the war had freed and provides them with all what they need .Barney (2006:202).

Kolshin (1993:210) argues that the reconstruction program included also guarantees of both civil rights and voting rights for slaves:

- The Thirteen Amendment passed in 1865, abolished slavery in America. Pauwels (2002:11)
- The Fourteenth Amendment passed in 1866, delegated the citizenship to all persons born or naturalized in the United States and encouraging the Southern states to enfranchise black men. Pauwels (2002:11)
- The Fifteenth Amendment passed in 1870, extended the right to vote to all citizens regardless of their race, color or previous condition of servitude. Pauwels (2002:11)

Although the Thirteen Amendment put an end to slavery, racism, inequality between blacks and white and section between North and South, remained long after its abolition. Moreover, American history as a slaveholding country; continued to challenge the ideals of liberty and democracy that most Americans have about their country. Torr (2004:19)

## **Conclusion**

Slavery constitutes one of the wicked chapters in American history that has divided the country and weakened the noble principle up on which the nation was found. After the compromises between the South and the North and the treat of slave rebellion, American long debate over the issue was finally resolved by bloodshed and violence.



## Chapter two

### The Historical and Literary Angle of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*

#### Introduction

Throughout American history there has never been a more efficient way to expose national problems than through the written world. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is one of the literary works that continued to interest and inspire critics and readers, it was written by Harriet Beecher Stowe during a time in history women were relegated to domestic life and were not allowed a position of influence in society.

In *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Stowe incorporated many debated issues of her time; she explores the sensitive treatment and the hardship of slave families under the bondage.

## 2.1. Biography of the author

Harriet Elizabeth Beecher was born on June 14, 1811 in Litchfield Connecticut .She was the daughter of Roxana; woman devoted to prayer and Lyman Beecher; an eminent congregational and Calvinist theologian who taught his children to define their beliefs and think for themselves .He was also active in the anti slavery movement preached a series of sermons against slavery. Foley and Michael (2007:8).

Harriet attended the Hartford Female Seminary School in 1823 by her older sister Catherine Beecher. After finishing her studies; she became an assistant teacher in Hartford Female Seminary .Pennell (2006:116). In 1832,the new position of Lyman as the president of Lane Theological Seminary; obliged the family to move from New England to Cincinnati which located in the Ohio River and the border between free state (Ohio) and slave hold (Kentucky).In this new environment ,many of Stowe's opinion and attitudes toward slavery were formed .At that time she learned both sides of the issue of slavery and viewed for the first time some of the destructive effects of the system .She also became familiar with the underground railroad which is a net work of people and safe houses for helping fugitive slaves reach freedom. During this period, Stowe started her writing career when her first story published in magazine; she then began writing poems, articles for religious publication, biographical sketches, children books and studies of social life. Foley and Micheal (2007: 8).

In 1836, Harriet married Calvin Stowe .The couple had seven children, their six child Charley died in Cholera epidemic before he was two years. The agony of this loss awakened in Harriet a deep understanding of the pain and the sorrow a slave mother may feel when her child sold away and separated from her. In letter to her friend Eliza Gabot Eolln, Stowe wrote: "It was at this dying bed and at this grave, that I learned what a poor

slave mother may feel when her child is sold away from her , in the depth of sorrow, which such anguish might not be suffered in vain!”. Foley and Michael (2007: 9). According to Belasco, the harsh fact that Stows could not help her dying son gave her a strong feeling of anger and pain. This pain brought the inspiration to *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* and determined Stowe to help others as it mentioned in her memoire that she could only recover from death by doing something that could help others. Belasco (65, cited in Luksikova 2013, 20).

In 1850, the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law which is a damaging piece of legislation that make it easier for southerns to recapture slaves whose escaped from their owners, was the major inducement for Harriet Beecher Stowe to write *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. She wrote the novel with strong desire to point out the responsibility of the whole nation for allowing the existence of slavery anywhere in its borders and to convince reader about the necessity of ending this system. Foley and Michael (2013:20). Although Stowe had not previously been as active in the anti slavery movement, she accepted her sister in law’s plea to “write something that will make this whole nation feel what an accused thing slavery is” Ann Douglas (1986,7-8 cited in Leeman 1).

The popularity of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* which was published on March 20, 1852; made Stowe famous and gave her the opportunity to speak publicly against slavery and solid platform to change public opinion .She continued to write about slavery and published her second novel :*Dred ,A tale of the Great Dismal Swamp* (1856). Luksikova (2013,21).

Stowe died on July 1, 1896; she was buried in the Academy cemetery in Andover Massachusetts. Pennell (2006:118)

## 2.2. Background of the novel

*Uncle Tom's Cabin* first appeared as a serial novel of forty one installments in the *National Era*; a weekly antislavery journal, from June 2, 1851 through April 11, 1852. Al- Sarrani (2011:4). Due to its popularity as a serial, *Uncle Tom's Cabin or Life among Lowly*, was published in book on March 20, 1852. Foley and Michael (2007:9).The book breaks all sell records and became the second bestselling book after the Bible with about three million copies have been sold in the United States. The book sold more than 5.000 copies in less than two day and 30000 copies in its first year and. Jiji (2010). *Uncle Tom's Cabin's* popularity was built up gradually among readers .By 1853, the novel travelled the world and was translated in many different languages: German, French, Welsh, Italian, Spanish, Norwegian, Portuguese, Slovenian and even to Arabic in1953.Al-Sarrani (2011:17)

*Uncle Tom's Cabin* was Stowe's direct response to the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850. During her eight years in Cincinnati, Stowe exposed to many debates over the issue of slavery. Winship (2002:311). She wrote the novel with great conviction that the basic cause of slavery; lays in the unawareness of people about its harm. In her concluding remark, she argued that she wrote *Uncle Tom's Cabin* because she felt that people did not know what an evil slavery is , if they did ,they surly would not approve the Fugitive Slave Law. She stated that "these men and Christians cannot know what slavery is, if they did, such a question could never be open for discussion". Stowe (2012:482)

The novel was based on Theodore Weld's *American Slavery As It Is*. The book regarded as one of the publication of antislavery movement that attacks the morality of slavery and slave owners. Torr (2004:28) .Stowe also was inspired to write the novel by *the Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*. Jiji (2010)

*Uncle Tom's Cabin* was not only a popular novel, it also created an immediate and profound controversy in America which was divided at that time both politically and geographically by the issue of slavery. In the North the work gained an enormous popularity. Paul Laurence Dunbar wrote a sonnet titled "Prophet and Priest", in effort to exalt Stowe's courage and dare to write a novel depicting the institution and condemning its existence. Al-Sarrani (2011:5). The novel was also praised by Russian novelist Leo Tolstoy. Sage (2010:326)

In the South, the novel was received quite differently, in some region it was band, in others, it was neither sold nor advertised .The novel outraged southerners who read it. Claybough (xv). Fearing that Stowe's attack on slavery law will destroy their society, they reacted powerfully against her contribution to the debate over the issue and her condemnation of slavery; claiming that slavery was not cruel as she depicted and that slave states should not hold all the responsibility and blamed for slavery. Brophy (479).They also described the work as insulting to the South. Letostok (2004:12).The critic Tompkin saw that the novel was written by a woman who knows nothing about the peculiar institution, nor the living condition of slaves. Paz (2014:4-5).

Furthermore, Stowe received a personal attack upon her femininity; she was criticized for being unwomanly in tackling political issue, and less decently in investigating moral and sexual abuse of female slaves. Listostok (2004:14.15).

Another significant southern reaction to *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was the outbreak of literary efforts to counteract Stowe's novel through the publication of a number of Anti-Tom novel like: Mar H.Eastman's *Aunt Phillis's Cabin, or southern life as it is* (1852), Robert Criswell's *Uncle Tom's Cabin contrasted with Buckingham Hall, The planter's home or a Fair view of both sides of the slavery question* (1852), John W.Page's *Uncle*

*Robin in his Cabin in Virginia and Tom without one in Bosten* (1853). These novels tend to focus on the struggle between slave owners and abolitionist and show that Stowe portrayal of the life of slaves in the South is a lie. Claybough (xvi)

As a response to southern criticism that her work has no basis of truth, Stowe published in 1853; *A Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin, presenting the original facts and documents upon which the story is founded together with corroborative statements verifying the truth of the work*. *The Key* is a collection of advertisements, articles, testimonies, newspapers, court records and slave narratives. Letostak (2004:12). The book sold more than 90,000 copies in its first month and it assumed that its reception in the North was more positive even than that of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Letostak (2004:14).

In publishing *The Key*, Stowe's aim was to silence her critics who doubt the authenticity of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and convince them to accept the book's message and contribute to the abolition of slavery. Letostak (2004:14).

In spite of the controversies surrounding the emergence of the novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* gave a dimension to the evil of slavery that the abolitionist pamphlet never could. Jiji (2010). It helped to create antislavery thoughts and made the abolition of slavery more appreciable. It also contributed to many changes in American history. Brophy (493). The novel was credited by Lincoln with having incited the American Civil War as he said when he met Stowe: "So you are the little woman who wrote the book that started this big war." Sage (2010:326). As a result, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* became part of the American popular culture; it was adapted to stage performance and provided the basis for board games, puzzles, cartoons and silent films. Pennell (2006:115-116)

## 2.3. Literary analysis of the novel

### 2.3.1. Plot Summary

Everything begins when Arthur Shelby is about to lose his farm because of debt, he made a decision to raise his need through the sale of two slaves whom he has to a slave trader named Haley. One of these slaves is Uncle Tom; a middle-age man who has a family made up of his wife, and his kids. The second slave is Eliza's son Harry. Arthur's wife, Emily dislikes that action from her husband because she gave a promise to Eliza that her child is in safe and he will never be sold to anyone, also because she saw Tom good companion.

While Eliza hears what the couple debate about the sale of Tom and Harry, she makes a decision to escape with her son. Eliza flees that night, leaving a notice paper to her mistress Emily in which she apologizes for her escape. Tom in the other hand sold by Haley and took in a riverboat through the Mississippi River. During this trip, Tom rescues a young girl called Eva when she falls down into the river. As a gratitude; Eva's father Augustine St. Clare purchases Tom from Haley and travels with him and his family to New Orleans. Tom and Eva start to become close friend, because of the strong faith in Christianity that they have both inside themselves.

When Eliza runs away, she gets with her husband; George Harris who escaped formerly from the bondage, together they make up their minds to go to Canada. The couple was chased by a slave hunter called Tom Loker. When he attempted to capture them, he was shot by George. Fearing that Loker may die, Eliza persuades her husband to bring Loker to Quaker settlement where he can be healed

In New Orleans, St.Clare discusses slavery with his cousin Ophelia who feels a racial prejudice toward black people. Although he is one of the slave owners, St.Clare disagrees with her, and in attempt to change her view regarding blacks; he buys black girl named Topsy, and demands from Ophelia to teach her.

After Tom has been with St.Clare for two years, Eva becomes very sick and died, before she died, she undergoes through a viewing of heaven which she talked about and shared it with people living around her. Eva death brings many changes. Ophelia promises to left behind her prejudice toward blacks, Topsy makes a decision that she will improve herself to the best. St.Claire also converted to Christianity and promises to give Tom his freedom, but he unfortunately dies before he realizes his pledge. After his death his wife Marie; did not realize his pledge and she sold Tom to a villain man named Simon Legree. Tom was taken by his new master to Louisiana where he meets other slaves who suffered from the cruel treatment of Legree who sized all the opportunities to beat and abuse his slaves. Legree did as much as he could to make Tom's life hellish. Tom in the other hand was industrious, patient and very religious man. In the plantation, he meets Cassy; a slave woman who was sexually used by Legree. Cassy lost her son and daughter when they were sold, she kills her third child because she felt incapable to see another one sold.

At that time, Eliza, George, and Harry succeeded to cross Canada and the hunter Loker returns back from the Quaker settlement after he cured his injury .In spite of his suffering and tiredness, uncle Tom's kept reading his Bible faithfully and helps his friends; he motivated Cassy to flee with Emmiline ;another slave girl who was sexually abused by Legree. After they escaped from Legree's plantation, Tom rejects to inform Legree about the place of Cassy and Emmiline. As a result, Legree beats him severely and commands his followers to murder him. While he is lying down in the ground, Tom forgives Legree and those who tortured him to death. Influenced by his strong faith and goodness ,those



overseers become good Christians. Before Tom emits his last breath, George Shelby; the son of Arthur Shelby and the friend of Tom, comes to purchase Tom in order to give him his freedom but he found himself too late because Tom died.

During their travel to get freedom, Cassy and Emmiline met George Harris's sister and travel with her to Canada. Cassy discovered that Eliza is her daughter whom she lost. The family gets back its unity and travelled to France, then to Liberia. At the Shelby plantation, George Shelby fulfilled his vow that he will act against slavery and gives freedom to all his slaves; telling them to remember uncle Tom whenever they look at his cabin and to be thankful to him ;for his great sacrifice and true faith in Christianity. Masal (2012:2)

### **2.3.2. Characters**

#### **2.3.2.1. Uncle Tom**

The protagonist of the story, pious and honest as said by Shelby:”Tom is a good, steady, sensible pious fellow. He got religion at a camp meeting four years ago, and I believe he really did get it .I have trusted him ,since then with everything I have ;money, house, horses and let him come and go round the country ;and I always found him true and square in everything”. Stowe (2012:4) .In spite of the betrayal of his master, Mr. Shelby who promised his freedom but later sold him to Haley to settle a financial debt, Tom remains loyal to Shelby as well as to his next masters and denies to escape.

Uncle Tom sadly leaves his family. As Haley takes him on boat to the Mississippi to be transported to a slave market, Tom acquaints himself with a little girl Eva and save her life when she accidently falls upon the river. Her father St.Clare; a kind master buys Tom and take him to his house in New Orleans. After the death of St.Clare, Tom is sold to Simon Legree, a villain master who wants to train him as a driver but Tom repeatedly refuses to

use violence and was whipped several times for his disobedience. Although Tom's character criticized and ridiculed by many as docile and submissive, Stowe shows that his passivity owes not to stupidity or weakness; but to his deep religious values and strong Christian faith .Tom determined to spread some of the love, hope and good will of his religion helping to elevate the pain and suffering of his community under slavery. (Analysis of Major Characters, Themes, Motifs & Symbols).

In spite of Tom acceptance to his fate and his recurring denial to runaway and seeks his own freedom, he encouraged others' attempts to obtain their freedom; Tom supported Eliza and her son escape from Shelby plantation as well as that of Cassy and Emmeline from the Legree plantation. Based on his values ,Tom also practice a kind of resistance as it illustrated when he refused Legree order to beat a slave girl : "yes Mas'r,I 'm willing to work night and day, and work while there's life and breath in ,but this yer thing I can't feel it right to do-and Mar's ,I never shall do it never! Stowe (2012:389).

Tom dies after Legree unsuccessful attempt at breaking his religious faith. According to Elizabeth White; Tom's death reveals that powerless person can became powerful by selflessly dying for others. White (7)

Tom became a symbol of martyr who suffers, beaten and even killed rather than betrays his friend. His death dramatizes self-sacrifice as a mean of effecting changes in society. White (12).

#### **2.3.2.2. Eliza and George Harris**

George and Eliza represent slaves who escaped their bondage with the help of the underground Rail road to Canada due to their intelligence and bravery. Eliza was a beautiful quadroon woman brought by her mistress Mrs. Shelby from girlhood. She was

married to George Harris; a symbol for rebelling, intelligent man who find his inferior status unfair and who is eager to do everything to gain his freedom. He cannot understand why one race should serve another “My Master! And who made him my master? That’s what I think of what right has he to me? I’m a man as much as he is .I’m a better man than he is.” Stowe (2012:19).

Forced by her motherly love as well as her strength of spirit, Eliza decides to escape to Canada when she realized that Mr. Shelby sold her little son. Her crossing of the Ohio River patches of ice illustrates her sacrifice, courage and strong desire to save her son. Berlant saw that Eliza “models the need for the slave courage to invalidate morally injustice laws” (1998:639). At the end, George, Eliza, and their son Harry got their freedom after crossing into Canada.

### **2.3.2.3. Arthur Shelby**

The owner of Tom in Kentucky who sold Tom and Eliza’s son as individual piece regardless of their family tie with the only intention of financial profit. His wife Emily is a loving Christian woman who does not believe in slavery and refuses the idea to sold Tom and Eliza’s son; because she understands well Tom’s relation to his family as well as to her and especially understand Eliza relation to her son since she is a mother. White (6). Stowe uses Mr. Shelby; an educated and kind man to illustrate that; no matter if the master is kind or wicked, slavery is always a bad thing that makes villains of all practitioners; and not only the most cruel master.(Characters list).

### **2.3.2.4. Haley**

A slave trader who considers slaves ‘articles ‘or properties which can be bought and sold for financial profit, he views them as non human being whose lives is evaluated only

by their market price. Despite his ruthless and violent nature, Haley frequently declares himself to be a good man who treats his slaves well. Haley sells children separately from their mothers as he did with Eliza, Hagar and Lucy. He also uses dogs and chains in order to hunt refugees and keep slaves under his control. (Characters list).

#### **2.3.2.5. Simon Legree**

Louisiana cotton-plantation owner, who embodies the whole evil of slavery. He is the cruel and barbarian owner of Tom who considers the beating and suffering of his slaves the best entertainment for him. Legree grew up with a kind loving mother and brutal father. He ignored his mother's advice and followed his father, at an early age he broke away from her and sought a life at sea. He later received a letter from his mother with a curl of her hair. His mother wrote that she was dying and that she blessed and forgave him. Legree has been deeply affected by the death of his mother. His only weak point is his belief in superstition; which takes by slaves as a powerful advantage and instrument to prevent his cruelty and mistreatment. (Analysis of Major Characters, Themes, Motifs & Symbols).

According to Elizabeth White, the destruction of Legree is the consequence of three powers that joined to fulfill a kind of justice: the power of the mother he rejected her value, the power of the woman; Cassy whom he owned and sexually abused, and the power of the child Eva who was willing to die to free the slaves. White (8-9)

#### **2.3.2.6. Eva**

Evangeline is the angelic daughter of St. Clare and Marie, she is a good, Christian girl who condemns the existence of slavery and sees no difference between races. Tom becomes her best friend after he saved her life. (Characters list).

Before the time of her death; Eva became more influential and effective, she understands well how to exercise the power of the powerless and do what she wants. White (8).

According to Elizabeth White, Eva death brings real change, her pure spirit and love converted the unmanageable Topsy to a neatly arranged Christian life, also the sorrow and pain caused by her death, leads Ophelia to change her traditional racial prejudice and to love Topsy. Her early death seen as a condemnation of a world that caused her a great pain and by dying, she rejected the future life as a wealthy girl. White (9).

### **2.3.3. The significance of the title**

*Uncle Tom's Cabin* refers to the house of Tom and his family in Shelby plantation at Kentucky. The house represents a kind of liberty for Tom who spends most of the day with his wife and children reading the Bible .When Tom sold to Haley, he loses his cabin, family and freedom. The subtitle "*Life among lowly*";demonstrated as Alfred Kazin argued in the Reader's Digest 1991 edition of the book; Stowe's intention to show that slavery is a system of rule based on profit. (What's up with the title?).

### **2.3.4. Setting**

The story of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* happened around the 1850s in the American South (Kentucky and Louisiana). Eliza and George's escape takes them through Ohio and several northern Quaker settlements then into Canada.

### **2.3.5. Point of view**

The story is told in the third person and omniscient narrator .Throughout the novel; Stowe follows the life of many characters like Tom, Eliza, George, Cassy and others. She

was able to describe their physical appearance as well as presents their inner thought and struggle. The novel also told in the second person point of view, throughout the novel, Stowe wrote passages addressed to “you” ,”thou” ,”ye” to make a direct appeal to the readers to persuade experience of emotion.

### **2.3.6. Motif**

#### **2.3.6.1. Christ figures**

Since the conflict between Christianity and slavery is one of the major themes discussed in the novel, the recurrent idea of the Christ is obviously clear. Eva and Tom; the most perfect characters of the story died in strong religious conviction, their sacrificial death to achieve rescue and help for others is linked to Christ. As illustrated by Stowe, Tom’s death leads Emmeline and Cassy’s escape and to freedom of all slaves in Mr. Shelby plantation. In the other hand Eva sacrificial death, leads St.Clare conversion to Christianity and to Ophelia recognition and denunciation of her own racial prejudice. Stowe uses the motif of Christ; like death and sacrifice to underline her basic point about Christian goodness and value. (Analysis of Major Characters, Themes, Motifs & Symbols)

### **2.3.7. Symbols**

#### **2.3.7.1. Uncle Tom’s Cabin**

The cabin of Uncle Tom became the symbol of Tom’s goodness and eagerness to be beaten and even killed rather than goes against his Christian values of love and loyalty; or betray his friends. When George Shelby free his slaves, he tells them to remember their freedom and dedicate themselves to lead a Christian life like Tom whenever they look at the Cabin. (Analysis of Major Characters, Themes, Motifs & Symbols).

### **2.3.7.2. Geography**

*Uncle Tom's Cabin* uses the geographical division between the American South where slavery solidly established; and the North which represents freedom of slaves to symbolize the wide gulf between freedom and slavery. (Analysis of Major Characters, Themes, Motifs & Symbols).

### **2.3.7.3. Eliza leap**

The leap of Eliza from the South to the North bank of the river crossing the half frozen Ohio River, symbolizes the process of leaving from slaveholding states to Free states or the slave journey to freedom. Eliza's strong desire to reach freedom and her ability to control her fear made her a heroine. (Analysis of Major Characters, Themes, Motifs & Symbols).

### **2.3.8. Themes**

It is important to note that despite the fact that *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is dominated by single theme which is the evil of slavery, no one can deny that the conflict between slavery and Christianity and the power of women in the context of slavery are others major themes in the novel.

#### **2.3.8.1. The conflict between slavery and Christian values**

In *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Stowe illustrated that not only slavery and Christianity are uncompebale; further she uses Christianity as an instrument to challenge the existence of slavery "Stowe carefully constructed the story to be leaden with religious symbolism in an effort to bring light to one thing she felt should end slavery." (Margrave). She uses Christianity as a major mean to assert her message. She was convinced that true Christian,

cannot accept slavery. Stowe demands from her reader to act Christ-like and fight the bondage. Lestostak (2004:21)

Stowe shows that based on their belief in Christianity, many people decide to follow God commandments rather than perform legislation. She mentions the example of the Quakers; the pure Christians who assisted runaway slaves and were active in the abolition of slavery. “I can read my Bible, and there I see that I must feed the hungry, clothe the naked and comfort the desolate, and the Bible I mean to follow” Stowe (2012:88).

Stowe uses the character of Legree; the non religious man who practices slavery and Tom; the virtuous Christian martyr who tried hard to spread love and follows the Christ command; to prove that slavery and Christianity are completely opposing and contradicting concepts. (Analysis of Major Characters, Themes, Motifs & Symbols).

### **2.3.8.2. The power of woman**

Although Stowe wrote *Uncle Tom's Cabin* before the wide spread of the women's right movement and the emergence of feminism; she uses female characters as a way to change the old perception of woman in society man had all the power. She presented women as equal to men in intelligence and courage. Paz (2014:12).

In *Uncle Tom's Cabin*; Stowe strongly linked her political intention to abolish slavery with her desire to improve the position of women in society. Pottelberghe (2009:16). Through some of the female characters; she indirectly shows how women can help in social reforms within their own domestic sphere. Al-Sarrani (2011:9). Through Eliza; she emphasizes the role of woman in the context of slavery and the struggle of motherhood in saving the family. Eliza determined to take any kind of risk to protect her little son, she has to cross the frozen Ohio River at night, when she reached the North,



Eliza finds Mr. Bird who was forced by the Fugitive Slave Law to return her to Haley. But influenced by his wife Mary who strongly opposed the legislation and claimed “You ought to be a shamed, John! Poor, homeless, helpless creatures! It’s a shameful, wicked abominable law, and I’ll break it, for one, the first time I get a chance and I hope I shall have a chance, I do!” Stowe (2012:88). Mr. Bird helps Eliza. Stowe shows through the character of Mary that women could change her husbands’ political opinion regarding slavery.

According to Masal, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* confirmed the great positive influence of women in society and paved the way for the women’s right movement in the following decades .Masal (2013:2).

## **Conclusion**

*Uncle Tom’s Cabin* is an American novel that broke the sale records of all earlier American bestsellers and grows to be one of the strongest antislavery books of the abolitionist movement. As a response to the novel, articles, essays, games and plays appeared in honor of or in reaction to *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*.

In this chapter, the researcher demonstrates that Stowe’s desire to write against slavery comes primary from her own past and the struggle of her nation regarding the issue .The chapter also give a literary interpretation to the novel and shows that; whether practiced by kind or cruel master, slavery always inject misery in the lives of slaves. It also sheds light on two other

themes in Stowe's novel which are the conflict between slavery and Christianity, and the moral power of women in the context of slavery.

## Chapter Three

### The aspects of slavery highlighted by Stowe

#### Introduction

Slavery system that violated human rights and took many rights from the enslaved was evidence in Stowe novel. In her book, she does not limit herself to one aspect of slavery; instead she analyzed the issue from different angles by providing a variety of stories about slaves .Throughout the entire novel, Stowe demonstrated the most dehumanizing aspect of slavery, explores the sensitive treatment and hardship of slave families under the system and described vivid scenes in which slaves are beaten, killed, families are torn apart, children are sold from their parents arms and women are sexually abused.

#### 3.1. Slaves treated as property

An important aspect of slavery that runs through Stowe's novel and was heavily accented; is the harsh fact that slaves were considered property.

The peculiar institution defined black as chattel. Davis (1981:8). In his book, *Slavery in America*, Liston argued that the most dehumanizing aspect of slavery; lays in

the fact that slaves were treated as property rather than as persons. Since they regarded as property, slaves do not have the same privileges that whites entitled to. The slave could not travel, change his social and religious opinions with his friends, also he could not learn to read or write without the guidance and permission of his owner. Liston (1970:82, cited in Torr 2004:40). Under the peculiar institution, black slaves experienced a remarkable amount of interference in their daily lives. Slave owners treated them as permanent children and enforced restricted rules to control them. These rules told them when to go to bed, when to rise in the morning and how long to work. This strict governed way of slave life, describes the basic feature of slave owner paternalism. Kolchin (1993:118).

Stowe wrote *Uncle Tom's Cabin* as a protest to individualistic values and humans' rights because she saw slavery as a symbol of a system of value that placed financial gain above all else, a system as her subtitle "*The Man That was a Thing*" suggests; reduces a human being to a thing. Lowance (1994:100 cited in Paz, 2014:10). Throughout the novel, she criticized the materialistic value of slavery which considers slave as object, property of other human being and as a matter of profit or loss. Her aim was to show that black slaves have the same rights that white people entitled to, and should not be treated as property. Paz (2014:9)

Over the course of the novel, Stowe describes many incidents of slaves being treated as property. She point out that when Eliza runaways with her son, Haley employs two men to help him regain his property. Stowe (2012:71-72). She described the way slave owners treated slaves and checked them before buying as if they checked animals "Haley here forced his way into the group, walked up the old man, pulled his mouth open and looked in, felt of his teeth, made him stand and straighten himself, bend his back and perform various evolutions to show his muscles, and then passed on to the next, and put him through the same trial."Stowe (2012:130). On their way to their newly owner home,

purchased slaves had their hands cuffed so they would not escape. "Pushing his three purchases together and producing bundle of hand cuffs, which he proceeded to put on their wrists and fastening each hand cuff to a long chain he drove them before him to jail." Stowe (2012:133)

In her novel, Stowe did not deny the physiological dimension of being treated as property. She point out that; when slaves are treated as property they lose their self worth and become different persons. She also shows that, since slaves are the property of the slave owner, there is no governmental protection from his physical abuse and cruel treatment. She mentions the example of Prue, the slave woman who was bitterly whipped to death by her master. When Miss Ophelia asked if there are laws to protect slaves against such aggression; St Clare replayed that, since the law considered slaves to be property, people have all the right to destroy their possession. Stowe (2012:241). St .Clare links the law with his inability to punish Prue's killer as he said:"If minded, brutal people will act like themselves. What am I to do? They have absolute control, they are irresponsible despots. There would be no use in interfering; there is no law that amount to anything practically, for such case." Stowe (2012:239).

### **3.2. Family separation**

"Why are parents lose their children, brothers, their sisters or husbands their wives? Surely this is a new refinement in cruelty ,which, while it has no advantage to atone for it, thus aggravates ,distress ,and adds fresh horrors even to the wretchedness of slavery" Equiano ( 26cited in Meyer 2010:22)

Although slaves' great struggle to lead a normal lives by relying heavily on their families which provide them with the basic refuge from the cruelty and the harshness of the bondage, the refuge is always threatened by their masters recurrent interfering in their families .Kolchin (1993:142). The worst form of interference in slave family was the

forcible separation of family member by the sale which caused a long disturbance to families. Even children were not immune; they were taken from their parents and employed far away to make home visit hard or impossible. Kolchin (1993:125).

In his essay *Literature: An Intellectual Document*, Juliash (2010:66) argued that; in the world of slavery, the trader gives no consideration to slave family; husbands, wives and children could be split without pity. Master believed that there are no place to family connection, even marriage between slaves was regarded illicit. The above account by George who; although was married to Eliza, his master did not allow him to live with her; shows the cruel fact. “Don’t you know a slave can’t be married? There is no law in this country for that, I can’t hold you for my wife, if he chooses to part us.”Stowe (2012:21)

Stowe wrote *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* with strong ambition to make people aware of the injustice of slavery and demonstrates the inhuman disintegration of family and community values that the system caused. The novel based on her observation and experience during her stay in Cincinnati where she witnessed many incidents of black families separated and sold away from their families. She had written letters from a slave woman to her husband who separated from her during his enslavement in Kentucky. Kissel (24). Stowe also wrote that the death of her son , awakened on her a deep understanding of the pain a slave mother feel when her child sold away and separated from her ”It was at this dying bed and at this grave that I learned what a poor slave mother my feel when her child is sold away from her” !” . Foley and Michael (2007: 9).

Throughout the entire novel, Stowe focuses on the concept of family; she presented black families and the harshness they endure as victims of the institution which prevents their attempt to preserve the family ties and provides stability and security for their children. Pennell (2006:129). At the beginning, she introduced the family as a save

place which offers a chance to escape the harshness of the out world. Also a safe place where children experience their first emotion with their parents. Pottelberghe (2009:15). This safety is sooner broken up and brings about a long phase of suffering for Eliza and Tom when Mr. Shelby agrees to sell Tom and Eliza's son to Halley, only for financial necessity in spite of his wife pleading that splitting the family is wrong according to Christianity. Stowe (2012:39).

Stowe again alerted readers to the cruelty of breaking up families when she mentioned the story of Hagar, the slave mother who atrociously separated from her young child. In the auction, Halley bitterly refused to purchase her along with her child in spite of her plea. "By me too, Mas'r, for de dear Lord's sake!-buy me,-I shall die if you don't!" Stowe (2012:132). Halley also sold Lucy's ten month child to another wealthy family without her knowledge. Stowe (2012:141)

Stowe tells a disturbing and shocking story about Cassy; a slave mother who torn from her children. Cassy said that her master "showed me the money, the price of their blood" Stowe (2012:398). The quotation demonstrates perfectly the fact that slave owners consider the separation of slave family as a matter of business. Meyer in his dissertation: *Slave Family Separation in the Slavery Debates*, saw that the slave owners; not only reduce human children to money; further they describes them as blood which signifies their figurative death since their mother will never see them again. Meyer (2010:9). The agony of losing children, led Cassy to kill her third child to prevent herself the pain of having her child taken from her again. Stowe (2012:400).

Al-Sarrani saw that; by including tragic incidents happened to mothers whose children are sold or to be sold, dead and lost, Stowe aim was to make white specially women; experience the feeling of the slave women in order to sympathize with them and

contribute in putting an end to the institution. (2011:9). Throughout the novel, Stowe invoked maternal emotion to impress upon the reader and fight the institution which destroyed family's ties. Wellen (23). She constantly addressed mothers, whom she expects they can influence others .White (7). Stowe used Eliza to insert her belief. Eliza said: "If it were your herry mother your willie, that were going to be torn away from you by a brutal trader tomorrow morning; how fast could you walk". Stowe (2012:55-56). Another quotation that demonstrates that Stowe speaks to white mothers is when Eliza asked Mrs. Bird: "have you ever lost a child? ".Stowe (2012:92).

Slavery intensively affected the permanence of slave marriage, Channing claimed that : " The slave is stripped of his right to his wife and children; they belong to another and maybe torn from him at his master's pleasure. " Lowance (384, cited in Meyer 2010:8). In *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Legree paired Lucy to Sambo without listening to her objection that she was already married. Stowe. (2012:280). Mammy also was separated from her husband when her mistress Marie brought her. Marie told her that she must never expect to see her husband in her life again and insisted on her to marry somebody else. Stowe (2012:187). Marie denies that blacks could feel any emotion concerning the family as whites. She said to Ophelia:

"Don't you believe that the Lord made them of one blood with us? Said miss. Ophelia,shortly.

- "No, indeed, no I! A pretty story, truly! They are a degraded race."

- "Don't you think they've got unmoral souls? Said Miss Ophelia.

"...as to putting them on any sort of equality with us, you know, as if we could be compared, why, it's impossible! Now, St Clare really has talked to me as if keeping Mammy from her husband was like keeping me from mine. There's no comparing in this way. Mammy couldn't have the feeling that I should. Its different thing



altogether of course, it is, and yet St. Clare pretends not to see it. And just as if Mammy could love her little dirty babies as I love Eva!" Stowe (2012:191-192).

This belief is similarly expressed by Haley who denies that blacks could feel any emotion to their children or among themselves. In his conversation with Mr. Shelby, Haley argued that: "You see, when I any ways can, I take a little care about the unpleasant parts, like selling young uns and that,...get the gals out of the way...out of the sight, out of the mind, you know when its clean done, and can't be helped, they naturally get used to". Stowe (2012:10). Stowe's reply for this denial of family affection was clearly seen through Eva, who used by Stowe to insert her belief and asks some of the questions of her time. (Margrave) .Eva tells her father that slaves should not separate from their children, because slaves love their children as much as he loves her.

Over the course of the novel, Stowe focuses on the concept of family disturbance. She points that in the world of slavery; even the existence of parents is no longer acknowledged as said by Topsy; who separated from her parent in early age and never saw them."Never had no father nor mother, nor nothing." Stowe (2012:264)

Family separation is one the wicked aspect of slavery that no one can deny its injurious effect on slave heart; said by one the characters: "The most dreadful part of slavery, to my mind is its outrages on the feelings and affection-the separating of families."Stowe (2010:134).Stowe saw the separation of slave family as a psychological destructive force that proves to be the greatest hardship for slaves. She calls her reader to recognize that family ties are important to black slaves as they are important to whites. Pennell (2006:132).

### 3.3. The physical abuse of slaves

Another hardship of slaves that was heavily accented in Stowe's novel was the cruel physical treatment of slaves:

“Scenes of blood and cruelty are shocking to our ear and heart. What man has never to do, man has never to hear. What brother man and brother Christian must suffer, cannot be told us even in our secret chamber, it so harrow the soul! And yet, oh my country! These things are done under the shadow of the law? O'Christ! Thy church sees them almost in silence”. Stowe (2012:450)

According to Theodore Weld, slaves in America treated with barbarous inhumanity; they are overworked from dawn to dusk with chains at their feet, they terribly flogged, hunted and shot down or torn in pieces by dogs if they try to flee. Torr (2004:32)

Under the peculiar institution, the physical punishment was one of the myriad ways used by slave owners to create bitterness, anxiety and maintain command. It assumed by many that the bad master was one who subjects his slaves to cruel physical punishment, in contrast to the good master who rarely or never did. The most common punishment that symbolizes the essence of slavery, was whipping, and there were rare slaves who totally escaped the lash. There were also other ways to drive the slave; methods that include stocks, jails, public humiliation, deprivation of privileges. These methods were commonly associated with physical torture. Kolchin (1993:120).

In *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Stowe demonstrated that slave owners' power and strength; overwhelmed slaves and rendered them physically incapable to take control over themselves. Juliash (2010:68).

Throughout the novel, she portrayed an awful incident of physical oppression. The first scene of torture occurred to George who was severely beaten by the child of his

master, George said: " He tied me to tree and cut a switches for young master, and told him that he might whip me till he was tired,-and he did do it!" Stowe (2012:20). In addition of being severely beaten; slaves were also forced to watch their kinship being whipped. D'Almeida (2013:9). George painfully described to Mr. Wilson the suffering of his sister by her master; he said : "I have stood at the door and heard her whipped when it seemed as if every blow cut into my naked heart, and I couldn't do anything to help her ,and she was whipped..."Stowe (2012:122-123)

Stowe also portrayed the awful scene of torture that caused Prue's death. Prue's master kills her because of her constant drunkenness; which is brought on because most of her children are sold and her one remaining child dies of neglect and hunger when she is not permitted by her master to care for him. Prue was one of the victims of cruel master; who locked her in cellar and punished her till death."...they had her down cellar,-and there, they left her all day,-and I heard them saying that the flies had got to her and she is dead". Stowe (2012:238). Before her death; Prue confesses to Tom that if white people going to heaven, she will be required to work there as a slave for them. She dramatically said that she would rather go to hell to escape the brutality and mistreatment of her master and his wife than go to paradise with them."I looks like gwine to heaven",said the woman; "an't thar where white folks is gwine?S'pose they d'have me thar? I'd rather go to torment, and get away from Mastr's and Missis." Stowe (2012:238-239). This quotation exactly reflects the cruelty of slave owners and the suffering endured by slaves.

In *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Simon Legree embodies the evil, harshness and cruelty of the bondage .He is the representative of slave owner's domination, invasion and menacing power which exerted in the most inhuman manner possible .Lant (52). Legree brutally beats his slaves, who in nearly all situation; did not deserve beating. He harshly beats Tom after he refused to whip the woman whom he helped in the cotton field."...taking up a

cowhide, and striking Tom a heavy blow cross the cheek, and following up the infliction by shower of blows” Stowe (2012:389) .After Cassy and Emmiline escape, Legree warned Tom that he will kill him if he did not tell what he know about the women’s direction. Legree violently said: ”I’ll conquer ye,or kill ye!one or’t other...I’ll count every drop of blood there is in you and take them one by one,till ye give up! Stowe (2012:449-450). Tom tells Legree that he would rather die than betray his friends. Legree flogged him to death.When George Shelby told Legree that he will testify against him,Legree coldly replied that testimony of collared blood; means nothing in all southern courts. Stowe (2012:458).

Stowe also portrayed the sexual abuse inflicted upon female slaves, in her novel; she demonstrated the cruel fact that slaveholders can control slave women’s “body and soul”. Stowe (2012:361).

Slave females were victims of sexual barbarous mistreatment. They were exposed to all forms of sexual abuse .If the worst punishment of slave men consisted of whipping and mutilation, women were mutilated, whipped; as well as raped and sexually abused. Rape was one of the basic features of slaveholder’s economic mastery and overseer’s control over female slaves. Davis (1981:9).

Over the course of the novel, Stowe portrayed the violent sexual abuse of female slaves by their masters. She shows that slave women are sold to provide their owners with pleasure as it appears when Haley wants to buy Eliza; he said to Mr. Shelby: “there’s an article, now ! You might make your fortune on that ar gal in Orleans, any day. I’ve seen over a thousand, in my day, paid down for gals not a bit handsomer.” Stowe (2012:7). Mr. Shelby replied:”I don’t want to to make fortune on her” Stowe (2012:7). These quotations reflect how slave women are seen and treated as sexual objects by white slave owners.

Stowe also pointed the example of Legree who exerts his power in the worst most inhuman way possible and strains the feminine virtues of slave women. Lant (51-52). Cassy was the symbol of a slave woman whose condition of the bondage involves sexual abuse by white men. Pennell (2006:130). Emilline faced the same fate that Cassy has endured; she was the victim of rape and sexual abuse because of her status as human merchandise. Her mother wishes that her daughter were not handsome and attractive, she asked her to make her hair combs all out flat so she will look less attractive and not be noticed by men who purchase female slave for the pleasure. Emilline's master tells her to go and curl her hair because when she look attractive; he will gain extra money. He said: "Then curls may make a hundred dollars different in the sale of her. Stowe (2012:361-363) In the auction the trader "put out his dirty hand, and drew the girl toward him, passed it over her neck and bust, felt her arms, looked at her teeth and their back against her mother. Stowe (2012:365). Emmeline became the property of Legree whose desire for her became clear when she arrived at his plantation. He promised her presents, earning and privileges."I'll give you a pair ear ring when we got home, if you're a good girl ,you needn't be so frightened; I don't mean to make you very hard, you will have fine times with me, and lived like a lady, only be a good girl. Stowe (2012:375).

Through Emmiline, Stowe protests the life of shame endured by slave women under the peculiar institution, she demonstrated that feminine virtue must be protected and maintained at all cost. Lant (54).

## **Conclusion**

In *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Stowe shows the misuse of whites' power over black. She portrayed how slaves were treated as property of the slave owner, tortured and how they had to endure horrible living condition while serving their masters. Stowe shows slavery as

hurtful and harmful to slaves physically and emotionally .She focused on family separation which was a constant threat that enslaved people lived with. Through Eliza painful dramatic and frightened flee, Tom’s heartbroken to his wife and children, the separation of Hagar from her son, the brutal whipping endured by George, Prue and Tom, Stowe wrenched an emotional effect upon her reader.

D’Allmeida saw that; Stowe ideological frame of mind which based on her Christian value and abolitionist sensitivity; justifies her focus on the following aspects of slavery: Slave treated as property, separation of families and the physical abuse of slaves by their owners. (2013:30)

## General Conclusion

Slavery had been part of the American history since the foundation of the country. This system that dehumanizes blacks and used their efforts to improve the economy; split the nation into two struggling parts: the North and the South. While northern states opposed slavery for moral and ideological reasons; southern states saw the system as the basic for their economy.

In 1852; Stowe wrote *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, the bestselling and most influential book in the American as a response to the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 that made northerners participant in the crime of slavery.

Through the present study, we attempted to show that the novel was the outcome of Stowe's own life and the struggle of her nation regarding slavery. By following the life of many slaves, telling their stories and providing readers with dramatic depiction of the harshness and inhumanity of slavery in the South, Stowe attacked the institution and pointed the harm it inflicted on slaves and their families. She illustrated that slavery made stable and secure family life difficult and impossible. She also shows that enslaved people are morally and sexually abused and could not legally marry because the law considered them property.

In the dissertation, we illustrated that Stowe criticized the lack of slavery's moral value by focusing on certain aspects of slavery. She explores the hash fact that slaves were considered as the property of the slave owner. She also showed that slave families have no protection under law because they may be broken up and deprived from their basic right to live together at any time by the decision of the owner or the force of necessity. Moreover, Stowe portrayed vivid scenes of barbarous torture endured by slaves.

By focusing on these aspects of slavery; Stowe proved that blacks are human beings like whites; endowed with the same qualities and affection toward their families, she call her white readers; specially women to sympathize with slaves and to imagine themselves as mothers in similar situation, losing their children.

Through her emotional portrayal of the destructive impact of slavery on slaves and their families; combined with her strong belief in Christianity, Stowe's message appeals directly and successfully to everyone read the novel. Her narrative made northerns understand exactly that slavery was an oppressive, abusive and dehumanizing system.

The novel created an immediate controversy and exacerbates the conflict between the South and the North that led to the civil war which put an end to slavery.



## Glossary

**Abolitionists:** were black and white people who sought to end slavery during the eighteenth and nineteenth century.

**Antietam War:** On September, 17, 1862; the army of the Potomac under the command of George McClellan, mounted a series of powerful assaults against Robert E. Lee's forces near Sharpsburg Maryland. The war ended with the victory of the union troops.

**Chattel:** refers to a personal possession.

**Confederacy:** was an unrecognized federation of secessionist American states from 1861 to 1865. It was originally formed by seven slave states in the South.

**Freeman Bureau:** was an office initiated by Lincoln to assist former slaves to endure the life of citizens after the end of the civil war.

**Liberator:** an anti slavery American newspaper.

**Paternalism:** refers to the policy of protecting the people one has control over, but also of restricting their freedom.

**Peculiar Institution:** was a euphemistic term that white southerners used for slavery. It comes to general use in 1830. Its implicit message was that slavery in the South was different from the very harsh system existing in other countries, and that slavery in the South had no impact on those living in the North.

**Popular Sovereignty:** refers to the policy of letting the people in new territories to decide for themselves whether to accept slavery or not

**Quaker:** a Christian group that arose in mid seventeenth century in England. They dedicated themselves to achieve an inner understanding of God without the use of clergy or ritual. The Quaker contributed to many social reforms and peace efforts to abolish slavery.

**Vicksburg war:** fought from May 18 to July, 4, 1863. It was the final major military action in Vicksburg campaign of the civil war. It ended with the defeat of the confederacy troops by the union troops.

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## ملخص

هذه الأطروحة ترمي إلى دراسة جوانب العبودية التي تم تسليط الضوء عليها من طرف هاربيت بيتشر ستاو في روايتها كوخ العم توم لإقناع القراء بوحشية نظام العبودية و تبيان معاناة العبيد في أمريكا.

بناء على الفرضيات القائلة أن الرواية جاءت ردا عن قانون العبيد الهاريين لسنة 1850 وان نسبة مبيعات الكتاب تدل على نجاحه و كذلك فرضية انه على الرغم من موجة الغضب التي أثارها في الجنوب الأمريكي ; نجحت الرواية في نقل الصورة الحقيقية للعبودية لسكان الشمال الذين ليس لهم أدنى فكرة عن الأثر السلبي لهذه السياسة على العبيد و عائلاتهم ومن خلال إتباع منهج تاريخي موضوعي وبالاعتماد على تحليل الوثائق المتوفرة تمكن الباحث من التوصل إلى معرفة أن الرواية هي انعكاس لحياة الكاتبة و كفاح بلادها ضد العبودية.تم كذلك التوصل إلى انه على الرغم من الجدل الذي أثارته ; تعد رواية كوخ العم توم من انجح الروايات على الإطلاق. من خلال رسمها العاطفي للتأثير السلبي للعبودية و تركيزها على الجوانب التالية : معاملة العبيد كملكيات خاصة, الانفصال العائلي و العنف الجسدي ارتبطت بقوة مع إيمانها بالدين المسيحي, نجحت ستاو في إيصال رسالتها لكل من يطلع عليها.

