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**The Influence of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*: Its Appraisal
and Critique**

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Čestné prohlášení

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ABSTRACT

The thesis *Uncle Tom's Cabin: Its Appraisal and Critique* deals with Harriet Beecher Stowe's work *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and the reactions that the novel has aroused. The main aim is to outline Stowe's intentions for writing the book and to refute the misconceptions and stereotypes that became associated with *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Based on the authoress's upbringing, the content of the novel is explained and negative criticism that followed the novel's publication is opposed by means of slave stories, witnesses, letters, articles and law excerpts. The origin of certain stereotypes is explained in the historical and political context and a contemporary view on *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is given. Stowe's work is justified and the misrepresentations it has undergone are explained.

Introduction

The thesis *Uncle Tom's Cabin: Its Critique and Appraisal* is devoted to the responses, both positive and negative, the book *Uncle Tom's Cabin* has evoked and its impact on American society throughout the time.

When Harriet Beecher Stowe was writing her novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852), her main aim was to point out to the humaneness, which she believed was by nature indigenous to all mankind, and to draw attention to the issue of slavery. For Stowe, all people were equal in the sight of God, and she firmly believed in what the Declaration of Independence claimed: "*that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.*" (archives.org)

Uncle Tom's Cabin's success was unforeseen. Published in March 1852, the book sold 10 000 copies during the first week and 310 000 copies were sold within its first year (Winship, 2002). *Uncle Tom's Cabin* became one of the most popular books of the century. It became the second most sold book, right after the Bible, and was also the first American novel to sell more than a million copies. It has never gone out of print, and it was translated into tens of languages. Uncle Tom's plays were played all over the United States and also in European countries, such as Britain and France (Claybaugh, 2003, p. xiv-xv).

When the Civil War ended in 1865, and President Abraham Lincoln added the Thirteenth Amendment to the US Constitution abolishing slavery, Stowe became a hero to African American people. At the same time, she was hated by the Southern slave owners who blamed her for being the cause of the Civil War.

The first chapter of this thesis explores Harriet's life and her family background that was essential for writing the novel. The second chapter summarizes *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and explains the nature of the main characters. The third chapter is concerned with the negative reactions the book has aroused. Chapter four is devoted to Beecher's defense in her work *A Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Chapter five depicts the positive reactions to *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and chapter six describes Uncle Tom's plays, songs, and products that emerged with the novel's success. Discussed are also stereotypes that became associated with the novel's characters. The last chapter interprets Stowe's novel in historical context and gives an explanation to the contemporary approach to *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

1 Harriet Beecher Stowe

1.1 Stowe's upbringing and education

Harriet Beecher Stowe was born on June 14, 1811, as the seventh child of a minister Lyman and Roxana Beecher in Litchfield, Connecticut. Lyman Beecher, a minister, described himself as "harnessed to the chariot of Christ"(Hedrick, 1994, p. 4). Harriet was only five when her mother died of tuberculosis. Despite Harriet's young age, Roxana had profoundly influenced her. She "became pure spirit with them all, an ideal, the family's Virgin Mary, the symbol of all that was most perfect in womanhood."(Wilson, 1971, p. 32) A reference to such a perfect mother can be found in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, where a "lost soul" – Augustine St. Clare, remembers his mother's kindness, good nature, and strong religious belief.

Following her mother's death, Harriet went to live with her Grandmother Foote at Nutplains. Her grandmother and Aunt Harriet impersonated women who were independent but motherly and affectionate. Such strong, intellectual and tactful women that flawlessly fulfilled their household duties are found in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in the characters of senator Bird's wife and the slave owner's wife Mrs. Shelby.

Back at Litchfield, Harriet, surrounded by black servants, experienced their strong emotions expressing either grief or happiness and listened to their spirituals. Lyman Beecher believed that his children needed to be equipped with polemical skills "for the battle with the principalities and powers"(Hedrick, 1994, p. 15). For that reason, at the age of eight, Harriet entered Litchfield Female Academy. In 1823, her sister Catharine Beecher opened Hartford Female Seminary, where now 13-year-old Harriet entered as a student and later was employed as a teacher, preacher, and writer. Her preaching was not like her father's evangelical Protestantism but was based on women's culture with less judgmental spirit. Harriet's belief was not based on "God as a distant being, callous to good works and ready to cast most humans into the fiery pit"(Reynolds, 2012, p. 9) but she felt God as a friend with whom she could be intimate. Harriet wanted religion accessible to common people and wanted it to be based on democracy and social equality.

Stowe had grown into a woman with the education equivalent to a man, a democratic mind and a belief that it was a duty to be useful. Harriet's sister Catharine had a significant influence on Harriet. She was the Director of Hartford Female Seminary and organized petitions against The Fugitive Slave Law. During this time, Harriet developed her moral

philosophy, which led to her spectacular career: to act according to one's best will: "Ere long they will find that under the dominion of conscience and a correct public sentiment they have rulers they cannot sway away like teachers of flesh and blood." (Hedrick, 1994, p. 60)

1.2. Stowe's marriage, her religious and anti-slavery views

In 1836, Cincinnati, Harriet married Calvin Ellis Stowe, a professor of Greek who "went on to become one of the leading biblical scholars of the time"(Reynolds, 2012, p. 18). Harriet and Calvin were both educated, devout Christians and had seven children, one of whom, Charles, had died in his infancy. Calvin's position was poorly paid and for them to stay above the poverty level, Harriet had to write fictional stories for magazines with the sole purpose of making money.

In Cincinnati, Stowe became involved with the abolitionists. Slavery became an issue no one could ignore. Harriet's brother Henry, who was the editor of Cincinnati Journal, enabled Stowe to write about antislavery issues, under the pseudonym "Franklin". In 1839, Harriet hired a slave girl from Kentucky, whom she later helped to escape. She became the epitome for Eliza and her escape in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (Hedrick, 1994, p. 121). Stowe started contributing to *New-York Evangelist* writing "morally instructive stories such as the temperance tale *The Drunkard Reclaimed*"(Hedrick, 1994, p. 133). Her range of themes was wide, from the domestic and western pioneer stories to Christian preaching.

In 1842 Harriet's brother George couldn't bear the Calvinist doctrine calling for Christian Perfection and shot himself in his garden. Like George, Harriet was also struggling with perfectionism. Having strived hard to be a perfect mother, wife and a good Christian, she was destined to fail. Exhausted and helpless she realized that it is not through perfection but through the suffering of the lowliest and most oppressed that one finds salvation. The picture of martyr's death came to her mind: the death of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* hero. "Stowe turned her human weakness into a source of divine strength and fixed on a historical and religious reality that linked her experience as a woman with that of a slave."(Hedrick, 1994, p. 157) In 1845 a sketch called *Immediate Emancipation* was published. In it, Stowe attacks slavery as a system while pointing out that people living in it may be righteous and generous.

In 1848, she gave birth to Samuel Charles, who succumbed to cholera in his infancy. For Harriet, Charlie was a special child, whom she compared to infant Jesus. The impersonation of Charlie in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was little Eva, an angelic creature (Hedrick,

1994, p. 190-192). Harriet's words "Is there a peculiar love given us for those that God wills to take from us"(Stowe to Ellen, 1850) expressed her notion of children who are brighter and more beautiful than others. This tragic event led to Harriet's, now even stronger, sympathies with slave mothers: "It was at his dying bed, and at his grave that I learned what a poor slave mother may feel when her child is torn away from her." (Stowe to Cabot Follen, 1852)

1.3 Anti-slavery literary writings, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*

In 1850 the Beechers moved to Brunswick, Maine, where Calvin Stowe accepted a teaching post at Bowdoin College. In the same year the Fugitive Slave Law was established, "authorizing local governments to seize and return escaped slaves to their owners and impose penalties on anyone who aided in their flight"(history.com). The Fugitive Slave Law brought a lot of crime, where free black men, living and working, especially in Boston, were being kidnapped and re-enslaved. Stowe's reaction was writing a story called *The Freeman's Dream*, in which a farmer refuses to give food to a family of fugitive slaves out of fear of the new law and later is tormented by his consciousness. Harriet's sister Isabella Beecher responded to Stowe's story: "Hattie, if I could use a pen as you can, I would write something that would make this whole nation feel what accursed thing slavery is." (Stowe, 2017, p. 35) Harriet replied: "I will write something. I will if I live."(Stowe, 2017, p. 35) Her aim in writing *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was to make the audience hear the voices of the oppressed.

The novel dealt with the slavery issue in every possible angle. Each of the stories is carefully thought through and stresses different aspects of slavery. The equality of slaves and white men as both human beings is the main theme. The hypocrisy of slavery institution is displayed through the politicians and their "convenient laws" that reduced African Americans to "articles" so as not to be "haunted" by their Christian belief and the Bible. Hedrick was of the opinion that "Stowe's inchoate politics and her tangled race, class, and sexual allegiances account for the complexity and contradiction of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. But it was precisely her stirring of these deep currents that created the volatile narrative that moved so many people." (1994, p.216)

The book was published on March 20, 1852, and soon gained many negative but many more positive responses. Praise was coming not only from the USA but mainly from England, Ireland, and Scotland. On April 1, 1853, Harriet was on her way to England to receive a petition on behalf of the slaves, signed by half a million women. Her success in Great Britain was immense and the sale of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* reached a million and a half

copies. Stowe became an ambassador of the American culture and had met many important figures (Hedrick, 1994, p. 232).

1.4 Stowe and President Lincoln

On April 12, 1861, the Civil War began. Stowe foresaw "a long, grave period of severe self-denial which will task the resources, physical, mental and moral, of our Northern states"(Stowe, *Independent*, April 1861). On July 31, 1862, Harriet appealed in the *Independent*: "The time has come when the nation has a right to demand, and the President of the United States a right to decree, their freedom."(Stowe, *Independent*, June 1862)

On September 22, President Lincoln issued the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, freeing all the slaves of the rebellious states. Stowe had challenged Lincoln on his famous utterance: "What I do about slavery and the colored race, I do because I believe it helps to save the Union; and what I forbear I forbear because I do not believe it helps to save the Union," (Lincoln to Greely, 1862) by saying: "What I do in favor of the Union, I do because it helps to free the oppressed; what I forbear, I forbear because it does not help to free the oppressed." (Stowe, *Independent*, September 1862)

In December 1862 Harriet went to the White House to meet President Lincoln himself. Stowe mentioned her visit in a letter to her sister as "a very droll time that we had at the White House"(Stowe to Eliza Stowe, December 1862) and to her husband she reported: "I had a real funny interview with the President." (Stowe to Calvin Stowe, December 1862)

With the post-Civil War Reconstruction issues, the voice of the women weakened and the work of literary women was labeled as "sentimental", "didactic" and "bad art" (Hedrick, 1994, p. 350). Stowe's reaction was: "You will see that the position of a married woman, under English common law, is, in many respects, precisely similar to that of the negro slave." (Stowe, *Hearth and Home*, 1869) With the masculinization of literature, not only Stowe but all the women writers were put down.

Stowe died on July 1, 1896, surrounded by her family. Her life was spent in fighting for the better of humanity. Be it the wrongs of slavery or the exploitation of women.

2 Uncle Tom's Cabin

2.1 Mr. Shelby sells Tom and little Harry; Eliza's escape

The book, published in 1852, is set in Kentucky, during the winter, around the same year. The opening scene portrays a conversation between Mr. Shelby, a plantation owner, and a slave trader, Mr. Haley. The kindhearted Mr. Shelby is forced to sell two of his slaves, Uncle Tom and a five-year-old boy, Harry, on account of his debt to Mr. Haley. Uncle Tom is a devout and hard-working slave, managing Mr. Shelby's plantation. During their talk, Mr. Shelby describes Tom as "a good, steady, sensible, pious fellow"(Stowe, 2016, p. 4). Coincidentally, Eliza, Harry's mother, overhears their conversation and decides to run away with her son. Her husband George, a slave from a nearby plantation, had just fled for Canada, on account of his master's cruel treatment. Eliza tries to convince Uncle Tom to leave with her, but his pure heart and faith in God do not allow him to betray Mr. Shelby's trust. To Eliza, he remarks: "Mas'r always found me on the spot – he always will. I never have broken trust, and I never will."(Stowe, 20016, p. 34) Mrs. Shelby, a religious woman, disagrees with her husband to sell their slaves, even though she understands it was the only choice they had.

2.2 Eliza is helped by Senator Bird

A hunt for Eliza and Harry starts, leaving Eliza with the only choice – to cross Ohio River by jumping from one floe to another. Upon reaching the other side, exhausted and injured, she is helped by the family of Senator Bird, who has just voted for the Fugitive Slave Law bill. Just before Eliza knocks at his door, Senator Bird's wife is talking to her husband: "You ought to be ashamed, John! Poor, homeless, houseless creatures! It's a shameful, wicked, abominable law, and I'll break it.....if a woman can't give a warm supper and a bed to poor, starving creatures, just because they are slaves." (Stowe, 2016, p. 68) Senator Bird, being moved by Eliza's story, realizes the inhumanity of such law, and drives Eliza with her son to a Quaker family, where she is soon reunited with her husband George. The Quakers help them to get safely on a ship that is leaving for Canada, after being chased by Haley's slave hunters.

2.3 Uncle Tom and the St. Clare's family

Uncle Tom leaves with Haley to New Orleans to be sold "down the river". While traveling on a steamboat, Tom befriends an angelic looking little girl, Evangeline St. Clare, who is coming back from New England with her auntie Miss Ophelia and her father Augustine St. Clare. Incidentally, Little Eva falls into the river. Tom saves her, leaving St. Clare indebted to Tom.

Eva convinces her father to buy Uncle Tom to become her loyal companion and devoted listener of the Bible. To Tom Eva "seemed something almost divine....he half believed that he saw one of the angels stepped out of his New Testament." (Stowe, 2016, p. 124) She loves and cares for all the household members regardless of their origin. The dominant figure in the household of St. Clare's was Eva's mother, Marie St. Clare, a self-centered, cold-hearted woman. In contrast to Marie stands Miss Ophelia: an active and self-reliant woman from New England who is very critical of the lazy way the Southerners lives their lives. "The higher circle in the family agreed that she was no lady; ladies never kept working about and she did." (Stowe, 2016, p. 201) Augustine purchased for Miss Ophelia a slave girl Topsy, who was about eight or nine years of age, blackest of her race and naughty in nature, to teach and transform her into a mannered child. While Miss Ophelia was trying to educate this 'creature' that "never was born, never had no father nor mother, nor nothing,"(Stowe, 2016, p. 205), little Eva and Uncle Tom spend their time together, reading from the Bible or discussing their Christian beliefs.

2.4 Little Eva's death

After some time, Evangeline's health began to fail. Little Eva, instinctively knowing she will die, is trying to convince her father to free all the slaves. Augustine, although not religious, but with a kind heart, promises to do so. While lying in her bed Eva talks to her father: "Dear papa, how I wish we could go together!To our Saviour's home; it's so sweet and peaceful there." (Stowe, 2016, p. 235) Before little Eva dies, she gives each of the household members a lock of her hair and tells them that she loves them all and begs them to become Christians. Even the naughty Topsy is moved to tears, as no one ever expressed any kind feelings to her. On her death bed, the poor child calls for all the servants: "I want you to remember that there is a beautiful world. I am going there and you can go there. But, if you want to go there, you must not live idle, careless, thoughtless lives." (Stowe, 2016, p. 245) Her death leaves everyone heartbroken. Augustine promises Tom and the other slaves their freedom. Before managing to do so, he is stabbed to death while trying to separate two intoxicated men fighting in a café. Instead of freeing the slaves, Marie St. Clare sells them at the public auction. Simon Legree, a cruel, villainous man, buys Tom and other slaves.

2.5 Legree's plantation; Uncle Tom's death

Legree's only aim is to make money. To him, slaves are an 'article' to fulfill this goal. It is cheaper for him to purchase new slaves when they die due to exhaustion and disease than to

treat them when sick. They live in sorrowful conditions without proper food and clothing, miserable state of mind, with their hearts numbed and hardened. Tom brought with his kindness a hope for a better life. Legree felt threatened by Tom's compassionate nature and faith in God, and so he tried to break Tom's spirit by his brutality. After Tom had refused to flog his fellow slave Lucy, as a punishment for helping her to fill up the basket with cotton, he is mercilessly beaten by Legree's right hands, slaves Sambo and Quimbo. Before being beaten, Tom exclaimed: "No! no! no! my soul an't yours, Mas'r! You haven't bought it! It's been bought and paid by one that is able to keep it." (Stowe, 2016, p. 303)

Casey, a quadroon slave, who was Legree's mistress, was nursing Tom until his full recovery. Her beauty made her Legree's mistress, filling her heart with hatred. Tom, through his strong faith in God, gave Casey a new hope to a better life. Together with another slave girl Emmeline, Casey plans an escape. Even though Tom has a chance to run away with them, his righteous character prevents him from doing so. The consequence of his staying and not revealing their hiding place is his death. As a punishment, Legree beats him so severely that Tom dies from the injuries. Before doing so, Legree has the last conversation with Tom about where the slave women are: "Tom, Tom, don't you you'd better be reasonable? --heave that ar old pack of trash in the fire, and join my church!This yer religion is all a mess of lying trumpery, Tom." To that Tom replies: "No, Mas'r, I'll hold on. The Lord may help me, or not help; but I'll hold to him, and believe him to the last!" (Stowe, 2016, p. 330)

Before Tom breathed his last, George Shelby, the son of his first master, arrives to buy Tom. Young George is horrified upon seeing dying Tom. But for Tom, his death is a victory: "Mas'r Geogre! Bless the Lord! It is, --it is, --it's all I wanted!I have been poor fellow; but that's all past and gone now. I'm right at the door, going into glory! O, Mas'r George! Heaven has come!" (Stowe, 2016, p. 353)

Stowe had remarked at the end of her novel: "A day of grace is yet held out to us. Both North and South have been guilty before God. Not by combining together, to protect injustice and cruelty, and making a common capital of sin, is this Union to be saved, — but by repentance, justice and mercy; for not surer is the eternal law by which the millstone sinks in the ocean, that stronger law, by which injustice and cruelty shall bring on nations the wrath of Almighty God! (Stowe, 2016, p. 379)

3 *Uncle Tom's Cabin* critique

3.1 Anti-*Uncle Tom's* novels

The immense and unexpected success of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* led to various reactions from the pro-slavery Americans. Their worries about the book's popularity were not unjustified. The number of readers was increasing as well as the tension between the Northern and the Southern states. It did not take a long time and first pro-slavery publications appeared. Some of the most known were *Life at the South; or "Uncle Tom's Cabin" As It Is* (1852) by William H. G. Smith or *Aunt Phillis's Cabin* (1852) by Mary Eastman.

The main purpose of these novels was to portray the life of black slaves in the South as a better one when compared with the life of free blacks living in the North. The fugitive slaves were depicted as living in poverty, and violence, while the Northern abolitionists were called hypocrites, only pretending to help black people. The Southern slaves, who were according to the pro-slavery writers better off, stood in contrast to free blacks and poor whites living in the Northern States. The Southern plantation owners not only fed and sheltered their slaves but also instructed and taught them (Reynolds, 2012, p. 153-159). Such reaction to Stowe's novel was most likely due to the Southerners' fear and helplessness they felt due to the book's increasing popularity.

3.2 The critics

One of the Southern pro-slavery critics, George Frederick Holmes, accused Stowe of misusing religion to promote extremism. He wrote that "Mrs. Stowe throws an ultra Christian hue over all her writings.....Yankee school mistress eaten up with fanaticism, festering with the malignant virus of abolitionism, self-sanctified by the virus of a Pharisaic religion, devoted to the assertion of women's rights and an enthusiastic believer in many neoteric heresies." (Holmes, June 1853) Holmes was not the only pro-slavery reviewer accusing Harriet of being a radical reformer and abandoning the domestic sphere. She was seen as a women's rights activist, who tries to stand on equal ground with men. Reviewers criticized and called her by many insulting names such as "foul-mouth hag", "the man Harriet" or "a perfect female Hercules". (Reynolds, 2012, p. 44)

Other critics blamed her for exaggerating the suffering of the slaves. For them, the poor people in the Northern states were enduring more hardship since they had no master to look after them. Such criticism was unfounded because Stowe was concerned with social

inequality as well. In *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, there are many passages where Harriet expresses her perspective on the low working-class people. During the conversation between St. Clare and Miss Ophelia, Augustine noted: "Look at the high and the low, all the world over, and it's the same story, — the lower class used up, body, soul and spirit, for the good of the upper. It is so in England; it is so everywhere." (Stowe, 2016, p. 181)

Even though the book was published in 1852 and the Civil War took place in 1861, many critics saw promoting such antislavery work as dangerous. Stowe was accused of making the North more hostile to slavery and some Southerners were even afraid of possible slave rebellions. One of them was Henry Field James, who in his *Abolitionism Unveiled* (1856) "predicted that the South would be devastated by blacks who acted in the spirit of Stowe's militant slave George Harris." (Reynolds, 2012, p. 151) Later on, Thomas Dixon, the author of *The Man in Gray: A Romance of North and South* (1921) stated that without *Uncle Tom's Cabin* there would have been no John Brown, and thus no Civil War. (Reynolds, 2012, p. 164) A correspondent of the *Fairfield Herald* ironically wrote: "...go on, Mrs. Stowe; your mission is a high and holy one; let not the favors of Yankeedom, or the denunciations of the South, deter you from your purpose. Whether true or false, your words widen the breach between us, and you may live to see the 'physic work' until this accursed Union shall be severed in twain." (quoted in Hirsh, 1978, p. 307)

3.3 Woodward, Hart, Gauthier, Lemoine

A pro-slavery Southerner A. Woodward wrote an essay *A Review of Uncle Tom's Cabin; or, An Essay on Slavery* (1853) that deals with the matter of slavery as seen by Southerners. He begins with the reminder that the union of the States was based on the slavery compromise and it would never have taken place, had the right to hold slaves as property become illegal. For Woodward, therefore, whoever opposes slavery violates the law of the land. His words were directed to Stowe: "How dares Mrs. Stowe inculcate disobedience and open resistance to her country's laws? Great God! Shall our country ever be freed from dark and damnable deeds of religious fanatics?" (Woodward, 1853, p. 17)

Woodward's main concern was what would happen with all those four million slaves were they to be set free. For him and other Southerners, the African race was inferior to the white one. They were seen as wild beasts that would wander around without restraint and control (Woodward, 1853, p. 18). Crime among the free blacks was according to him ten-fold

higher than among the Southern slaves. Were all the African people freed, their sustenance would be mainly from theft and the whites would be forced to kill them.

Stowe was accused of hypocrisy because her main aim, according to Woodward, was to make money and not the wellbeing of the poor slaves. As proof, he mentions her visit to England where she had gone on a tour after the success of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Woodward comments that Harriet was not to be found among the lowly – "No! no! she has made money enough by her "life among the lowly" and now she is preparing to take her stand among the aristocracy of England." (Woodward, 1853, p. 31)

Another fabrication, according to Woodward, is Stowe's complaint about the lack of laws protecting the slaves. From his point of view, there were laws that not only punished men for the cruel treatment of slaves but also forbid barbarous abuse of horses and other animals. At the same time, Woodward admits that slaves were often being punished by their masters for their crimes. Regarding slave families separation, he claims that slaves were separated as a consequence of their misconduct. Contrary to white men, the slaves are just whipped and transported down the South (Woodward, 1853, p. 74).

Most essential to Woodward was the origin of Africans. They cannot and will not make equals with the whites because "they are at the bottom of the social ladder, and there they must and will remain, as long as they are among the whites" (Woodward, 1853, p. 76).

Another critic of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, a Canadian Adolphus M. Hart, wrote a review *Uncle Tom in Paris: or, Views of Slavery outside the Cabin* (1854). To him, the book became famous mainly for its being performed as a play in which black characters were portrayed for the first time. In Hart's opinion, slavery will exist regardless of the clergymen's weeping over Uncle Tom. As a reason, he determines that a certain race is more distinct and exceptional than another. His view seems to be in agreement with Woodward's superiority of Anglo-Saxon race. Hart came to the conclusion that the Africans can never hope for any amelioration of their social condition (1854, p. 14).

The explanation given by Hart comes from the words of "one of the ablest contemporaneous writers France has produced" (1854, p. 15) – Theophile Gauthier. Gauthier asks: "Are those black phantoms really of our species, who seem to have been made with another clay than that red earth, with which God modeled Adam?" (Hart, 1854, p. 16) Gauthier sees the African race as savages living in primitive barbarity that do not improve

their way of life. They live in constant war between each, torture their children and men barter their wives for a bottle of tafia.

To Gauthier, slavery has been an improvement for the black race and a way to improve their civilization. The use of a whip under the hand of a severe master was an appropriate way of education because the Africans have "the head and the skin hard." (Hart, 1854, p. 19) If these blacks were not brought from Africa, they would "never have thought of the gates of the Heavenly Jerusalem." (Hart, 1854, p. 20) Gauthier dismisses Stowe's argument that the state of servitude prevents blacks from any ambition towards self-improvement. As an example, he names the Greenville Sharper's colony of free blacks at Sierra Leone or Free Community on the Coast of Africa. Neither of these places flourished and "soon became a wreck" (Hart, 1854, p. 25). Gauthier concludes that Africans do not seem to improve either in moral or physical condition and live as savages as they did in the past.

Hart's essay mentions Mr. Lemoine who criticized Stowe's work in the *Journal*. His opinion seems to be similar to that of Woodward regarding the position of the blacks. Were they to become freemen, they would be accepted neither by the South nor by the North. The democrats would reject them as well as the aristocrats. The separation of the two races is not only on the physical scale but also on the moral one. He mentions: "Most of the democrats, who preach in favor of abolition, do so more for the honor of the principle, than from love of their equals, for they do not regard the blacks as their equals." (Hart, 1854, p. 28) Lemoine points out that the abolitionists do not seem to understand that to give slaves their liberty must also include admitting them to the common society.

Lemoine adds another point of view – that of material necessity. Ladies in England are used to wear fine cotton clothes and sweeten their tea with sugar, while the English gentlemen love their cigars. Without slaves, there would be no cotton, sugar or tobacco. And without cotton, clothes factories would be forced to shut down and millions of workers would become unemployed. (Hart, 1854, p. 32)

Gauthier closes by stating that to set millions of slaves free would be a greater evil than slavery itself. He also warns against their education because it gives freedom and it is in the masters' interest to withhold it from the slaves. The interest of the community must be considered over the interest of the slaves.

4 Harriet Beecher Stowe's defense of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*

4.1 The dispute between Stowe and Joel Parker

The first impulse for Stowe to defend her book may have been the dispute between Stowe and Reverend Joel Parker that originated by Stowe inserting a sentence in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* that Joel Parker uttered. He was according to the editor of New York Observer "gibbeted as a monster by the pen of lady philanthropist." (quoted in Hedrick, 1994, p. 227) The words attributed to Joel Parker were describing slave trade as lawful: "...a trade which is the vital support of an institution which an American divine tells us has *no evils but such as are inseparable from any other relations in social and domestic life.*" (Stowe, 2016, p. 111) Parker's reaction was a complaint to Harriet: "After painting a scene of shocking inhumanity, you hold me up to the public, in an odious light, by representing me as uttering sentiments that seem to justify for or, at least palliate the cruelties which you have described." (Parker to Stowe, 1852, in Hedrick, 1994) Stowe was under the attack of Parker and his defenders largely for being a female who dares to doubt the minister. He challenged Stowe to prove that the pro-slavery sentiment she charged him with occurs in the clerical circle. Her reply to Parker was: "When clergymen are guilty of any prominent heresy...it is customary for the remainder of the Church to clear themselves from complicity with such heresy by some public act." (Stowe to Beecher, 1852 in Hedrick, 1994, p. 230) This was the impetus for Harriet to gather materials for *A Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin* and publish it only a year after *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

4.2 *A Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin*

4.2.1 Tom

In the introduction, Stowe proclaims: "This work has been a collection and arrangement of real incidents; of actions really performed, of words and expressions really uttered." (Stowe, 1853, p. 1) The book is divided into chapters according to the characters in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, starting with Uncle Tom. Harriet stated that she had received many letters with the same content – the authors of these letters new Uncle Tom in such and such a Southern State. She had also received a book called *Sketches of Old Virginia Family Servants*, with the preface by Bishop Meade who cites in it a master's last will: "I emancipate and set free my servant, David Rice; my confidence in him has been unbounded....His intelligence is of a

high order, his integrity above all suspicion, and his sense of right and propriety correct, and even refined." (Stowe, 1853, p. 49)

The excellence of these slaves, as explained by Stowe, is thanks to their simple, affectionate and childlike nature. Many of them had become Christians upon listening to the Bible or religious stories. According to Stowe, the African race is very different from the white one, especially regarding their ability to transform experiences into vivid sensations with a lively imagination. Harriet writes: "Like the Hebrews of old and the Oriental nations of the present, they give vent to their emotions with the utmost vivacity of expression." (Stowe, 1853, p. 56) Compared to the Anglo-Saxon race, that is cool, logical, and practical, but misses the tolerance for other races' mannerisms, the Africans are more empathetic and trusting.

4.2.2 Simon Legree

The character of Simon Legree was condemned by many Southerners as being too brute and villainous. Stowe's reason for introducing Legree, who was a Northerner, was to refer to the contrast of the honorable Southern men, such as St. Clare and Mr. Shelby. The Southern law gave legal power to the master that was "absolute despotism over body and soul" (Stowe, 1853, p. 86). The slave had no protection of his life but that of his master's character. Harriet gives an example of a judge who, before making any decision, must go through a long training. But what kind of training a master has, before practicing his power over his slaves? Men like Legree are found all over the States, but in comparison to the slave States, in the free States, this sort of men cannot practice absolute power over the body and soul of the slave given to them by the law.

A friend of Harriet Stowe, Rev. Mr. Barrows, stated that while on a visit to New Orleans planter estate, he had the following conversation with a planter: "Do you consider your estate a fair specimen?" The planter replied: "There are two systems pursued among us. One is, to make all we can out of a negro in a few years, and then supply his place with another; and the other is, to treat him as I do. My neighbor on the next plantation pursues the opposite system. His boys are hard worked and scantily fed; and I have had them come to me, and get down on their knees to beg me to buy them....I do not make much money out of my slaves." (Stowe, 1853, p. 92) Such similitude can be seen in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in Simon Legree who pursues the first system.

Slaves working on plantations were referred to as hands. These hands were often advertised as in the notice from Mr. James Steward from Broad River posted to *Fairfield Herald*, Winnsboro on November 4, 1852. Mr. Steward proudly boasts of the amount of cotton his slaves picked. "I send you the return of a day's picking of cotton, not by picked hands, but the fag-end of a set of hands on one plantation, the able-bodied hands having been drawn out for other purposes. By twenty-two hands – women, boys, and two men: –4880 lbs. of clean-picked cotton from the stalk. One of the number has picked in the last seven and a-half days, eleven hours each day, 1900 lbs. clean cotton. When any of my agricultural friends beat this, in the same time, and during sunshine, I will try again." (Stowe, 1853, p. 96) By men like Steward or Legree, slaves were not even considered creatures, as the kinder masters used to call them, but simply numbers, machines that are changed for new ones when broken.

4.2.3 Topsy

The character of Topsy became the stereotype of the blacks as being frivolous, vain, fond of show and interested only in trifles. Topsy was the representative of children grown up in slavery. They were active and creative but apparently devoid of the principle of conscience on account of living in degrading condition and utter hopelessness of rising above it (Stowe, 1853, p. 115). As an example Harriet reprinted a letter received by Dr. Pennington, once a fugitive slave: "There lies buried down in the heart of the most seemingly careless and stupid slave a *bleeding spot*, that bleeds and aches, though he could scarcely tell why; and that this sore spot is the *degradation* of his position." (Stowe, 1853, p. 116) His words describe what the law made of human beings who were unlucky to be of black color.

4.2.4 Augustine St. Clare

The good-spirited St. Clare is a representative of the Southern gentlemen who himself was dissatisfied with the slavery system. Harriet cites from numerous letters sent to her by Southern slave owners who had a similar view as St. Clare. As an example, a letter written by a slaveholder posted to the *New York Evening Post* is given: "I am a slave-holder myself. I have long been dissatisfied with the system; particularly since I have made the Bible my criterion for judging of it. I am convinced, slavery is not in accordance with what God delights to honor in his creature." (Stowe, 1853, p. 139)

4.2.5 The Slavery Law

Many Northerners did not fully understand what slavery was and what rights the master had over their slaves. Harriet outlines the institution of slavery by quoting several definitions of a slave given by different Southern states. A law of Louisiana (Civil Code, Art. 35, 1847) says: "A slave is one who is in the power of a master, to whom he belongs. The master may sell him, dispose of his person, his industry and his labour; he can do nothing, possess nothing, nor acquire anything, but what must belong to his master." The Supreme Court of North Carolina (Wheeler's Law of Slavery, 246, State v. Mann, 1829) states: "A slave is one doomed in his own person, and his posterity, to live without knowledge, and without the capacity to make anything his own, and to toil that another may reap the fruits." (Stowe, 1853, p. 164) It is clear that these definitions of slavery are designed to oppress, rob and degrade men that are in the eyes of the superior white race considered as savages and beasts. Even though the men who make these laws may be fully aware of the inhumanity, to preserve such a profitable institution as slavery was, they had to make this evil justifiable and therefore "make the power of the master absolute, to render the submission of the slave perfect." (Stowe, 1853, p. 165-166)

4.2.6 The poor whites

Harriet had not forgotten in her defense the poor whites who were according to the critics living in worse conditions than the slaves. Stowe blamed the Southern States for making the working class jobless on account of the slavery institution. As an example, a family of poor whites living in the North is given and the same family living in the South. While the Northern family has a chance of providing education to their children in public schools with a church nearby, the same family living in the South does not have such an opportunity. No common schools were nearby plantation farms and churches were far away. Slaves were trained to all kinds of work from the blacksmith, carpenters to coopers and masons, leaving the poor whites without work. The only ambition for them was to gather enough money, by any means, and to "buy a nigger or two and begin to appear like other folks." (Stowe, 1853, p. 450) Often the slaves were in morals, manners, and education superior to the poor whites because of their upbringing in a respectable family, which due to some misfortunes was forced to sell them. This class of whites was despised by the upper class and their only way of relief was to deprive the slaves of any comfort by their cruelty and brutal behavior (Stowe, 1853, p. 447-451).

5 The Book's appraisal

5.1 Journals' praise

Uncle Tom's Cabin's success was not expected by anyone. Stowe herself had hoped that the book would earn her enough money to buy a silk dress. Public response was unequalled to any other book not only in the amount of sale but also in international importance. Many newspapers were printing favorable reviews such as the *Albany Evening Journal*: "Uncle Tom seems likely to make both ends of the world meet. Like another Peter the Hermit, he has set on a pilgrimage through Christendom preaching a crusade against unjust and sacrilegious rule." (Hirsh, 1978, p. 304) The anti-slavery journals began to publish slave stories filled with masters' cruel treatment under the title "Facts for the Next Edition of 'Uncle Tom's Cabin'". Hirsh also mentions that the *Liberator* reported the book being adopted as a Sunday school text in Peoria and Pittsburgh. The *New York Tribune* gave an account that *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was rented for twenty-five cents in places such as San Francisco, where the book's copies were scanty (Hirsh, 1978, p. 305).

The *Putnam's Magazine* printed an article called "Uncle Tomitudes" in which an unnamed Southern Senator and a slaveholder narrates: "A friend of ours was sleeping one night in a strange house, and being annoyed by hearing somebody in the adjoining chamber alternately groaning and laughing, he knocked upon the wall and said, "Hallo, there! Are you sick or reading 'Uncle Tom's Cabin'?" The stranger replied that he was reading Uncle Tom." (Putnam's Magazine, 1853, p. 101)

The article begins by praising *Uncle Tom's Cabin* as a book that is unequalled in the history of literature and stresses that this immense success all the men were laboring to acquire was accomplished by an American woman. The triumph was not achieved because of the book's superiority but on account of it being a live book, which will continue to live when other books will become forgotten. The book's miraculous success is also ascribed to its perfect timing when America was entering a new Era in the literary world. The new machinery allowed for more books to be printed at a cheaper cost with a wider audience. In England, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* became even more prosperous. According to the author of the article, over twenty different publishers printed millions of copies. Soon the reaction to the book's popularity was its dramatization. Six London's theaters were playing *Uncle Tom's Cabin* at the same time and Stowe's family was glorified, having the same attention as Napoleonic family. (Putnam's Magazine, 1853, p. 99)

As a proof of the book's success was the emergence of works written to counteract the novel impressions. This phenomenon was something new in literature, only validating the merit of the work. Nowadays *Uncle Tom's Cabin* represents a sentimental novel, but in the antebellum era, the book talked to its readers, awakening their attention, touching their sympathies and arousing their curiosity compelling them to read the whole story. Critics condemned the book for its deficiency in artistic ability, but it is for that reason it became so popular. It may lack the delicacies of language or scenery descriptions which can be found in Irving, Hawthorne or Cooper, but the religious sentiment in Uncle Tom was in agreement with most of the Christian world (Putnam's Magazine, 1853, p. 99-101).

5.2 The strengthening of religiosity

Uncle Tom's Cabin had an impact not only on strengthening the religiosity but also stimulated the sale of the Bible globally. Many people embraced Christianity or rekindled their belief, including the German poet Heinrich Heine, who had regained his faith after reading the novel. Heine wrote in his *Vermischte Schriften*: "...after I have whirled about all my life all over the dance-floors of philosophy and yielded myself to all the orgies of the intellect, I now find myself on the same stand-point where poor Uncle Tom stands,—on that of the Bible. I kneel down by my black brother in the same prayer! What a humiliation! With all my science I have come no farther than the poor ignorant negro who has scarce learned to spell." (quoted in Stowe, 1878, p. xxxvii)

5.3 Temperance encouragement

Another new and reformatory feature the novel communicated was the encouragement of temperance. Like her father, Stowe stressed the dangers of alcohol abuse. The amount of alcohol consumed by a single American in the mid-1820s was seven gallons per year (Reynolds, 2012, p. 54). People from all backgrounds were drinkers and Harriet felt the need to express her objections. In *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, many of her stories are interwoven with drinking scenes. A heavy drinker and brute such as Legree is contrasted with desperate drinking of a slave woman, Prue, who has been exposed to years of sexual exploitation. Throughout the whole book, drinking contrasts with the upright, temperance characters who prefer their strong tea (Reynolds, 2012, p. 55-58).

5.4 The political impact

The political impact Stowe's work had was non-negligible. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was published during a time when the Whig Party was divided over their position on slavery. The popularity of the novel gave an impulse to antislavery politics in the North and was even mentioned in prominent political speeches, such as the speech of Joshua Giddings. "A lady with her pen, had done more for the cause of freedom, during the last year, than any savant, statesman, or politician of our land." (Frederick Douglass' Paper, December 31, 1852) Harriet used whatever influence she had to spread her antislavery message by distributing her novel to politicians. Later on, Stowe used the money she had received in Britain to fund antislavery newspapers and lectures and on the education of free blacks (Reynolds, 2012, p. 150-151, 161-163).

5.5 British acknowledgement

Not ever imagining, Stowe has begun a social revolution on womanhood. Upon reaching the coast of England, in April 1853, not only was she greeted with an unprecedented welcome but also received a petition on behalf of slavery, signed by over a half million of women from England, Ireland, and Scotland. When in Scotland, during a public meeting in Dundee, one of the speakers valued Stowe's work for having upraised the American literature: "We have long been accustomed to despise American literature – I mean as compared with our own. I have heard eminent litterateurs say, 'Pshaw! The Americans have no national literature.' It was thought that they lived entirely on plunder – the plunder of poor slaves, and of poor British authors...let us hear no more of the poverty of American brains...Had it produced only *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, it had evaded contempt just as certainly as Don Quixote" (Stowe, 1854, vol. 1, xxxvi) The British saw the novel as an original for its national theme and could sympathize with the character of Uncle Tom even more, since slavery had already been abolished in their colonies. At the same time, they empathized with the poor and oppressed on account of the Reform Act of 1832 and authors such as Charles Dickens or Charles Kingsley who wrote about the poor and lowly (Hedrick, 1994, p. 232-234).

5.6 Sentimental power

Jane Tompkins, a contemporary author, concentrates in her *Sentimental Power: Uncle Tom's Cabin and the Politics of Literary History* (1985) on the sentiment that *Uncle Tom's Cabin* had evoked. She discusses today's changed perception of sentiment now attributed to the

novel. According to her, the novel belongs to the genre, "whose chief characteristic is that it is written by, for, and about women." (Tompkins, 1985, p. 269) Harriet used the sentiment to appeal to the readers' emotions and employed language that is accessible to everyone. The twentieth-century critics dismiss such description as not fulfilling the standards quality literature is supposed to have. Tompkins continues to argue that sentimental novels operate on different principles than masterpieces. The main concept includes family and social institutions, political and social equality and above all religious belief. These are the principles of power that relate to the individual through human feelings. For that reason, stories like the death of little Eva and Uncle Tom are not only the epitome of sentimentalism but are also the synonym for heroism. Death does not symbolize defeat but victory. Their dying is the representation of martyrdom just like that of Christ (Tompkins, 1985, p. 270-271).

5.7 The change of heart

The novel's political power, based on religious conversion, may seem to modern readers as not credible because the novel did not stop the southern plantation owners from doing their business. Stowe's main aim was not to change the law but to change the individual. At the end of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, she is asking the reader: "But what can any individual do? Of that, every individual can judge. There is one thing that every individual can do, — they can see to it that *they feel right*....the man or woman who *feels* strongly, healthily and justly, on the great interests of humanity, is a constant benefactor to the human race." (Stowe, 2016, p. 375) Stowe understood that laws by themselves would be useless were they not the impersonation of the people's belief. She also understood that if slavery was abolished without people's heart change, the moral conditions that produced slavery would persist (Tompkins, 1985, p. 275-277).

In the preface to the London edition of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Elihu Burritt highlights the success of the novel for being read regardless of the social rank. From the aristocracy to the cottages of the poor, the cries and laughs were heard and emotions were shared on account of Uncle Tom and his stories. Within half a year more tears of sympathy for the slaves' suffering were shed than in the whole history of slavery. Burritt concludes that Stowe rightfully belongs to the new school of the humanitarian era. Through her book, she teaches the Christian faith and many hearts are turned back on the right path (Burritt in Stowe, 1852, p. v-vii).

6 *Uncle Tom's Cabin* everywhere, stereotypes that followed

6.1 Uncle Tomism

In a short time, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* became known worldwide. Songs, plays, and tie-ins of great variety appeared. The *Liberator* stated: "Even our diplomacy stands aghast at the rushing, swelling, flood of Uncle Tomism which is now sweeping the Continent." (The *Liberator*, March 4, 1853) Uncle Tom products, the Tomitudes, were spreading through Europe. Many people soon realized that Uncle Tom handcrafts were a way to easily earn money. The market became flooded with plates, busts or silverware with the scenes from *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Goods, such as jigsaw puzzles, card or dice games with Uncle Tom theme were sold. Chinaware, trinkets, candlesticks, snuffboxes, spoons or biscuit tins were among many other handiworks. Uncle Tom's name was also given to all sorts of goods with political interpretation such as Uncle Tom's Shrinkable Woolen Stockings, Uncle Tom's Improved Flageolets or Pure Unadulterated Coffee. The book's influence stretched even to fashion: Ladies were wearing scarves printed with scenes from the novel and gentlemen "the St. Clare hat"(Hirsh, 1978, p. 316; Reynolds, 2012, p. 132-136).

6.2 Uncle Tom's songs and plays

A main feature of Tomism was *Uncle Tom's Cabin* songs. The *Dwight's Journal of Music* reported that: "Every music publisher must have his 'Little Eva' song just now....Verily, 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' has much to answer for, in calling forth such a rank crop of musical weeds." (July 1852) Songs such as "Little Eva", "The Death of St. Clare" or "I am Going There" were according to *New York Tribune* (September 1853) sung at nearly every house. Even Stephen C. Foster, later known as the father of American music, composed a song "Old Folks at Home" that was later played in the most famous *Uncle Tom's Cabin* play written by George Aiken (Hirsh, 1978, p. 311-312).

At first, Harriet was not much in favor of rewriting *Uncle Tom's Cabin* as a play. She believed that even a play moral enough "would make the public hungry for less exalted fare, and soon there would be five bad plays to one good"(quoted in Reynolds, 2012, p. 139). Nevertheless, already on 27 September 1852, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* play written by George Aiken was played in Troy, New York. The *Times* reported that "the finest citizens in town, many of whom had never dared enter a theater before, were attending"(14 October 1852). Aiken's play became the longest-running play in American history. His play focused on

religiosity as much as Stowe's novel did. Emotional scenes were appealing to the audience and were lightened through the comic character of Topsy. Even though Aiken slightly changed the storyline, much of Stowe's language was preserved and the issue of slavery was not forgotten (Hirsh, 1978, p. 323, Reynolds, 2012, p. 140-142).

Among the audiences attending the play were people from various backgrounds. Names such as Horace Greeley, Mark Twain and also Henry James appeared among those who were moved by the play. Henry James later wrote about *Uncle Tom's Cabin*: "If the amount of life represented in such a work is measurable by the ease with which representation is taken up and carried further, carried even violently furthest, Mrs. Stowe's picture was conclusive: it simply sat down wherever it lighted and made itself, so to speak, at home."(quoted in Williams, 2002, p. 45) The play's political importance lied in the wide response from working-class people. Folks from different backgrounds were converting from pro-slavery to antislavery. The young workers from New York and Boston, who previously enjoyed the "negro hunts", become so influenced by *Uncle Tom's Cabin* that the Fugitive Slave Law was repealed (Senior, 1856, in Reynolds, 2012, p. 147).

6.3 Uncle Tom in Russia

The novel reached even to Russia, where it was banned until 1857. However, through French and German translations the book became an inspiration to Russian revolutionaries who wanted to liberate the poor serfs and peasants. John MacKay (2013), the author of *True Songs of Freedom: "Uncle Tom's Cabin" in Russian Culture and Society*, mentions that since 1857 over 100 editions of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* have been published. It was thanks to the accession of reform-minded Tsar Alexander II that the book was published. The reaction to the novel was so powerful, creating an antislavery passion that in 1861 Tsar abolished serfdom. MacKay criticizes the reactions to *Uncle Tom's Cabin* of the elite that saw *Uncle Tom's Cabin* as a pedagogical device to keep the simple people in order. After the revolution, the book was censored and edited to fit the socialist ideology. It was depicted as a contrast to American racial inequality (Bellows, 2017, p. 311-313).

Karen Smith (1996), in her essay: "Resurrection, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and the Reader in Crisis," wrote about the inspiration Stowe was for L. Tolstoy who considered her to be "one of the greatest productions of the human mind" (quoted in the introduction to *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, 1986, p. 10). Tolstoy shared with Stowe the same desire for a better society and both were trying to reach that change through their writings. Smith compares *Uncle Tom's Cabin*

with Tolstoy's *Resurrection* (1899). The imagery of both novels portrays the suffering of the poor with the purpose to "construct a stable identity for the reader in a time of social crisis." (Smith, 1996, p. 351) Contrary to Stowe, who was and still is viewed as a sentimental lady writer, Tolstoy is regarded as one of the greatest realist authors of all times. A Russian-born Harvard professor, Leo Wiener, concludes in *The Russia Review*: "It may be asserted that *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was ...the prime cause for the progressive ideas in both countries."(Wiener, 1917, p. 9-10)

6.4 Stereotypes and the white race supremacy

The popularity of the play had a positive effect on the acceptance of freed slaves. It was the first time African Americans became performers in Uncle Tom plays and as a consequence black people were getting roles in other plays too. Many of them were not only talented actors but also musicians. Spiritual songs started to be sung along with the plays. These songs were a way of expressing their cultural heritage and celebration of emancipation (Reynolds, 2012, p. 179-181).

Nevertheless, with the increased number of "Tom" companies producing *Uncle Tom's Cabin* play, the message of humanity and equality of all people was getting lost due to modifications done to the play. It was becoming more of a minstrel show than melodrama. With these changes, and preconceptions about African people, the characters became stereotyped, the supremacy of the white race was emphasized and the blacks were assigned submissive roles. Williams, in her book *Playing the Race Card: Melodramas of Black and White from Uncle Tom to O.J. Simpson* (2002), argues that even though the minstrel shows of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* were standing behind a devastating judgment of African Americans because of the stereotypes, the stressing of the differences between the two races actually led to closer contact between them (p. 70).

In contrast to Stowe's portrayal of the slaves, the plantation life was romanticized and the slaves were characterized as carefree and contented with their masters. Uncle Tom's personality and his physical features were changed. From a martyr, he became a passive, feminized old man. It was this altered Uncle Tom that became embedded into the people's minds and became the stereotype representing black people. The minstrel show took over and the blacks were fitted into the role of a "simian buffoon, agile, tuneful, rhythmic, but all the funnier for being imperfectly human"(Furnas, 1956, p. 271).

6.5 The situation after the Civil War and Uncle Tom's change

After the Civil War, the blacks were free men, but the mentality of the Southerners as slave owners was deeply rooted. The idea of blacks having equal place next to the whites was not accepted by them and soon the Black Codes, a law limiting the rights of African Americans, was passed with blacks working on the fields just as they were as slaves (Reynolds, 2012, p. 183; Aaron, p. 6-8). An example of the white supremacy was John L. Sullivan, a professional white racist boxer, who played the brute Legree during the 1901-1902 touring show. Sullivan was praised for his realistic performance. During the whipping scene, he actually injured the actors, despite the fact that they wore inch-thick padding under their costumes (quoted from *Chicago Daily Tribune* in Reynolds, 2012, p. 200).

The racist stereotype that was assigned to African Americans was further fuelled by Thomas Dixon. According to him, the black man was "half child, half animal, the sport of impulse, whim and conceit"(Dixon, 1905, p. 292-293). His two books, *The Leopard's Spots* (1902) and *The Clansman* (1905), which had a big success, especially in the South, supported the ongoing lynching of African Americans and the segregation. Dixon blamed Stowe not only for the Civil War but also for the cruelty of the Reconstruction period. In his novels, he created the opposite characters to Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. The blacks become the villains and the whites their victims. As a supporter of KKK, Dixon advocated the idea that "the beginning of Negro equality as a vital fact is the beginning of the end of this nation's life."(Dixon, 1902, p. 244) The second version of American history has started to shape in which the Radical Republican Northerners were blamed for a crime of giving the political and social rights to blacks (Reynolds, 2012, 214-224).

The main reason for such reverse scene imagery was the white supremacists' fear of losing control over the African American men. The representation of Uncle Tom as a white-haired man with stooped shoulders and a subservient gaze was a way to ensure the inferiority and servitude of blacks. Was Tom to remain the same character whom Stowe described as: "large, broad-chested, powerfully-made man, of a full glossy black and steady good sense, united with much kindness and benevolence" with strong faith (Stowe, 2016, p. 20), the racist idea of white men's superiority would not have succeeded. Uncle Tom was transformed into an old servile emasculated black man bowing to white supremacy. Due to this stereotype, he became an insult for the next generation of African American writers, activists, and intellectuals (Wellen, p. 14-16, 25).

6.6 The return of Uncle Tom

Some African Americans, such as the Atlanta University professor W. E. B. Du Bois, believed that Stowe's message of equality between the two races must be restored. He believed that Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* lifted the detested race of blacks and brought sympathy of the whites. In his *Book Reviews*, he wrote: "Thus to a frail overburdened Yankee woman with a steadfast moral purpose we Americans, black and white, owe gratitude for the freedom and union that exist today in the United States of America." (Du Bois, Aptheker, 1977, p. 17) Du Bois together with other African Americans initiated black activism and at the same time, Stowe's novel was experiencing a return by means of many silent movies based on *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. The most famous were *Uncle Toms [sic] Cabin; or, Slavery Days* (1903) produced by Edwin S. Porter or J. Stuart Blackton's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1910) (Reynolds, 2012, p. 226-229).

From World War I until the fifties a new era of tie-in Uncle Tom products appeared. Uncle Tom was pictured on different consumer products, such as Uncle Tom's Salted Peanuts, Uncle Tom Health Food or Uncle Tom's Root Beer. Walt Disney came up with a cartoon *Mickey's Mellerdrammer* (1933), the Jungle Jinks had *Uncle Tom and Little Eva* (1932) and the Tex Avery films produced *Uncle Tom's Bungalow* (1937). The African American stereotypes were still present however there was progress to the racial discrimination cause.

Stowe became a tool to establish race consciousness between African Americans, but ironically by denouncing Uncle Tom as a hero. On account of the racial stereotypes and image of Uncle Tom as being spineless, subservient to whites, Alain Locke, the father of Harlem Renaissance, stated: "The days of 'aunties' 'uncles', and 'mummies' is....gone. Uncle Tom and Sambo have passed on."(Locke, 1997, p. 5) Du Bois himself was called Uncle Tom for praising Stowe's work together with other African American figures that were not militant enough. Among these were Jesse Owens, Jackie Robinson, Louis Armstrong and most importantly Martin Luther King, Jr. for his nonviolent protests. His death became the repeated death of Uncle Tom and as such was a representation of new freedom (Reynolds, 2012, p. 253-261).

7 *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in the historical context

Since the publication of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, the novel has gone through innumerable critiques: both positive and negative. Even today new interpretations of the novel emerged. Reviewers, recent or past, are unfortunately looking through the contemporary mind of the time, not picturing the mentality of the people when Stowe wrote her book. Many, such as J.C. Furnas (*Goodbye to Uncle Tom*, 1956) or James Baldwin (*Everybody's Protest Novel*, 1949), lament over Uncle Tom's portrayal as a resigned Christian who submits to the supremacy of the whites. However, these stereotypes emerged later as the Southerners' reaction to the power *Uncle Tom's Cabin* has had on people. To have a true understanding of the novel, one must, therefore view it in historical context.

7.1 Frederick Douglass's acknowledgement of Stowe's work

A good source of the African American perspective was provided by the newspaper *Frederick Douglass' Paper* with Frederick Douglass as the representative of the black race. Robert Levine's essay, "Uncle Tom's Cabin in Frederick Douglass' Paper: An Analysis of Reception" (1992), concentrated on the novel's influence following the years after *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was published. Levine quotes a review attributed to Douglass that appeared in 'Literary Notices' in *Frederick Douglass' Paper*: "We are well sure that the touching portraiture she has given of 'poor Uncle Tom' will, of itself, enlist the kindly sympathies, of numbers, in behalf of the oppressed African race, and will raise up a host of enemies against the fearful system of slavery...Mrs. Stowe's truly great work is destined to occupy a niche in every American Library, north of 'Mason and Dixon's Line'." (*Frederick Douglass' Paper*, April 8, 1852, in Levine, 1992, p. 73) Stowe's main aim was to raise sympathy and feeling towards black people. Levine further quotes from *Douglass' Paper* an article written by William G. Allen, a free black teacher, who praises the piety of Uncle Tom, but adds that "there should be resistance to tyrants, if it need be, to the death." (*Frederick Douglass' Paper*, May 20, 1852, in Levine, 1992, p. 75). Although Uncle Tom was later labeled as a submissive, feminized servitor to the whites, it was he who refused to submit to Legree's order to flog Lucy and to disclose the hiding place of Casey and Emmeline.

7.2 Equality of all mankind

Stowe's novel was belittled on account of being written by a white female that did not experience the life in the South and therefore could not have known the realities and the true nature of blacks. But for Stowe, all men were created equal and through her stories in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, she outlined this equality. As an example stands the gradual change in the attitude of Miss Ophelia towards Topsy, the representative of the stereotyped careless and ignorant black slave. Stowe not only showed that the "creature" is capable of learning but also experiences deep human feelings. At Eva's death bed, Topsy and Eva share sincere affection. Little Eva states her love for Topsy as another human being and Miss Ophelia overcomes her racial prejudice and develops real feelings also. Stowe challenged not only racism but also the Calvinist doctrine of one's born evil proneness that is represented by Topsy (Reynolds, 2012, p. 80-81).

Harriet's main representation of the equality between whites and blacks was through religion. Her main characters, Tom and Eva, are portrayed as reading from the same Bible, sharing the same God, whose words apply to all, regardless of their status or race. The stress on the ability of all people to read and understand the Bible is done by transferring the authority from the church to an uneducated slave, Tom, and a child, Eve. Harriet believed that "the Catholic Church stifled independent thinking by pitting priestly intermediaries between the individual and the Bible" (Reynolds, 2012, p. 32). By making the Bible available to everybody, she gave hope for a better life, the after-life, to the poor slaves. By the influence of Alexander Kinmont, a Swedish visionary who insisted that "the Africans have innate ability to communicate with God in a more direct, unmediated fashion than the other races" (Kytte, p. 141), Stowe tried to bring the African Americans closer to the Anglo-Saxon race and lessen the stereotype of their inferiority (Reynolds, 2012, p. 39).

7.3 Education and identity

Through the character of George Harris, Harriet stressed the importance of education and one's own identity. Not only does George succeed in his escape but also manages to reach Canada with his wife Eliza and son Harry. Later he receives a degree from the University in France and travels to Liberia. Like any man, he longs to belong somewhere, to have his home: "The desire and yearning of my soul is for an African *nationality*...Where, than, shall I look? On the shores of Africa I see a republic, – a republic formed of picked men, who, by energy

and self-educating force, have, in many cases, individually, raised themselves above a condition of slavery."(Stowe, 2016, p. 365) George impersonates the new African American that "has a right to argue, remonstrate, implore, and present the cause of its race" (Stowe, 2016, p. 366). Ironically, on account of George's departure to Liberia, Stowe was labeled a racist. She was seen as someone trying to purify Americans of the black race. But on the contrary, Harriet saw the differences between the two races, and the stereotyped inferiority of black people. She understood the black man's desire to have his own land (Pottelberghe, 2009, p. 73).

7. 4 Voice of the women

Stowe and her female characters in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* were often misinterpreted as being female activists. Without a doubt, she did stress the importance of women's rights, nevertheless, it was in the domestic sphere. Harriet put the home and family at the center of life. This way she wanted to refer to the housewives that were often treated as the property of their husbands without having any rights. For that reason, she gave voice to the women in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Through their speeches, Harriet expressed her view on the corrupted male-dominated institutions, and their view on slavery (Reynolds, 2012, p. 45-47). It is on account of Mary Bird's argumentation that her husband, Senator Bird, acknowledges the cruelty of the Slavery Law. Stowe's heroines display a wide range of characters but they are most of all mothers. Motherhood may be considered as the main theme of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, for it is the mothers whose role is significant. They nurse the new generation and it is their responsibility to bring up children that are not only good Christians but mainly compassionate creatures. In her concluding remark Stowe clearly blames the mothers for how their sons turned out into slave masters and sends a clear message:

"If the mothers of the free states had all felt as they should, in times past, the sons of the free states would not have been the holders, and, proverbially, the hardest masters of slaves; the sons of the free states would not have connived at the extension of slavery, in our national body; the sons of the free states would not, as they do, trade the souls and bodies of men as an equivalent to money, in their mercantile dealings." (Stowe, 2016, p. 375)

Conclusion

Stowe's work *Uncle Tom's Cabin* has undoubtedly earned its place among literature that will not be forgotten. The novel's message, even though over 150 years old, is still appealing to modern readers. Racism and inequality between races, not only between whites and blacks, are present and are still the source of conflicts and wars. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* became engraved in the American minds and hearts. Even though it went through many changes, its main characters were stereotyped and Uncle Tom even became the epithet for someone weak and subservient, the book continues to live on and is again and again rediscovered.

The success of Stowe's work lies in her upbringing, her experience with African Americans and mostly her motherly nature. Thanks to the democratic upbringing, proper education and religious environment, Harriet acquired the right mixture of literary, philosophical and religious schooling for her future career. A loving environment, daily listening to the slave stories and motherhood completed the perfect synthesis of a woman that feels for the poor, is capable of standing up and fighting for their rights.

With the loss of her son and the new Fugitive Slave Law, Harriet was determined to write her masterpiece. *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, a novel filled with a sentiment that aimed at the people's hearts, was an instant success. The sincerity of Stowe's writing affected millions of people in the United States and Europe as well. The novel did not appeal only through emotions, but also through hidden irony that attacked the Slavery law and the whole slavery system. Stowe saw all people as equal to one another. Slaves were as much human beings as their masters. Being of a strongly religious nature, she understood that no man has the right to take other men's freedom.

Reactions to *Uncle Tom's Cabin* were immediate and either highly positive or strongly negative. Most of the hostile critique was coming from the South. The Southerners were rightfully afraid that the book may increase the antislavery atmosphere in the North and cause further conflicts. Stowe was insulted by the reviewers and anti-*Uncle Tom's Cabin* books were written to refute the cruelties done to the slaves. Slaves were portrayed as joyful, content with their life and devoted to their master.

Stowe's reaction to the hostile critique was the book *A Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin*, published just a year after *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. This work provided the evidence to her

novel's characters, including hundreds of other stories and articles or advertisements that Harriet's family gathered or were sent to her by other people. *A Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin* also mentioned the law concerning slavery in the Southern States – the definition of a slave and what were the slave's rights. By citing these laws, she demonstrated that they had no rights whatsoever and were treated not as human beings, but as animals and property.

A positive critique was coming not only from the Northern States but also from Britain and other countries, such as Russia. Stowe was celebrated as a hero who had the courage to oppose the wrongs of slavery. Thanks to her, many people, who were pro-slavery, changed their minds and hearts and started to support the antislavery movement. Harriet's success in Britain was unprecedented. The novel sold more copies than in the United States and thus Stowe became one of the first American authors accepted by the British.

The book was followed by an Uncle Tom mania. In no time Uncle Tom plays with Uncle Tom songs were played all over the States and Britain as well. Uncle Tom products of all kinds, including housewares, fashionable items or food with Uncle Tom's name were produced. Later the plays evolved into minstrel shows, changing Stowe's melodrama into a comic stage performance. Instead of true character depiction, the stereotypes about African Americans were adopted. Uncle Tom was no longer the strong, spiritual, devoted hero, but became the synonym of an old, weak, servile man. The Southerners needed to reinforce the superiority of the white race and *Uncle Tom's Cabin* served this purpose well. Despite the Black Code laws, Ku Klux Klan and later Jim Crow laws, they were bound to failure. The position of the black Americans gradually strengthened through figures such as Martin Luther King, who was called Uncle Tom, for his peaceful approach towards racial equality.

Uncle Tom's Cabin was misinterpreted and misunderstood in every possible way and deepened old stereotypes and prejudice many Northerners and mainly Southerners had. The novel's sentimentalism was criticized, yet it was this melodrama with its moral laws that became an instrument to political and social changes. Stowe addressed people with real feelings, hoping that their humane side will overcome the material one and the benefits that slavery offered will become unjustified. It is only recently that Stowe's novel has been removed of its stereotypes and is looked upon as a work dealing with race, sex and, social injustice. Her work is valued again for its sentimentalism and humanity.

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RÉSUMÉ

Bakalářská práce se zabývá dílem Harriet Beecher Stowe *Chaloupka strýčka Toma* a reakcemi, které román vyvolal. Hlavním tématem je nastínit záměry Stowové pro napsání knihy a vyvrátit chybná pojetí a stereotypy, které byly později s *Chaloupkou strýčka Toma* asociovány. Na základě autorčiny výchovy je vysvětlen obsah a styl zpracování *Chaloučky strýčka Toma*. Negativní reakce na dílo jsou oponovány prostřednictvím příběhů otroků, svědectví, dopisů, článků a výňatků ze zákonů. Vznik stereotypů asociovaných s knihou je vysvětlen v historickém a politickém kontextu a dílo Stowové je oproštěno od zkreslení, kterého v průběhu času nabylo.

ANNOTATION

Jméno a příjmení:	Petra Kostková
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Vedoucí práce:	Mgr. Petr Anténe, Ph.D.
Rok obhajoby:	2019

Název práce:	Vliv díla <i>Chaloupka strýčka Toma</i> : Jeho uznání a kritika
Název v angličtině:	The influence of <i>Uncle Tom's Cabin</i> : Its appraisal and critique
Anotace práce:	Bakalářská práce se zabývá dílem Harriet Beecher Stowe <i>Chaloupka strýčka Toma</i> a reakcemi, které román vyvolal. Hlavním tématem je nastínit záměry Stowové pro napsání knihy a vyvrátit chybná pojetí a stereotypy, které byly později s <i>Chaloupkou strýčka Toma</i> asociovány.
Klíčová slova:	Otroctví, náboženství, rodinné vztahy, zákon o otrocích, vzdělání, stereotypy, sentiment
Anotace v angličtině:	The thesis deals with the work of Harriet Beecher Stowe's work <i>Uncle Tom's Cabin</i> and the reactions that the novel has aroused. The main aim is to outline Stowe's intentions for writing the book and to refute the misconceptions and stereotypes that became associated with <i>Uncle Tom's Cabin</i> .
Klíčová slova v angličtině:	Slavery, religion, family relations, slave law, education, stereotypes, sentiment
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