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The Role of Women in H. B. Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*

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Annotation

This work focuses on the analysis of the female characters in the novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe. The main part of the text deals with the three issues which author of this work finds crucial when speaking about the heroines of the novel. These three issues are complementary and mutually closely connected. Together, they provide the reader of the novel and the reader of this work better and deeper understanding of Stowe's women characters. The author of this bachelor thesis engages firstly in the main characters of the novel. The characters of minor importance are either not mentioned or their example is used in order to make the point as clear as possible. However, they are not the key issue of this work. Consequently, the reader will not be acquainted with the total number of the female characters emerging in the story.

Key Words

Stowe; slavery; sentimental novel; abolitionism; feminism; religious belief; background; sacrifice; kitchen

Souhrn

Tato práce se soustředí na analýzu ženských hrdinek v románu *Chaloupka Strýčka Toma* od Harriet Beecher Stoweové. Hlavní část textu se zabývá třemi tématy, která autor této práce pokládá v debatě o hrdinkách románu za zásadní. Tato tři témata jsou navzájem propojena a vzájemně se doplňují. Dohromady poskytují čtenáři románu i čtenáři této práce lepší a hlubší porozumění ženských postav vytvořených Stoweovou. Autor této bakalářské práce se soustředí především na hlavní hrdinky románu. Postavy menší důležitosti buď nejsou zmíněny, nebo je jejich příklad použit za účelem lepšího vysvětlení určitého názoru. Nejsou však stěžejním bodem této práce. Proto čtenář nebude konfrontován s úplným výčtem ženských hrdinek vystupujících v příběhu.

Klíčová slova

Stoweová; otroctví; sentimentální román; abolicionismus; feminismus; náboženské přesvědčení; zázemí; oběť; kuchyň

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Introduction

Slavery is one of the sad episodes of American history. As every significant part of the past, even the institution of slavery has been displayed in art for many times. As for literature, no book impressed the American public in the nineteenth century as much as *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Beyond any doubt, Stowe's book belongs to the most noticeable novels about slavery. Nevertheless, its intensity is not solely in the depiction of the horrors of slavery. On the contrary, it is the power of maternal love, courage, endurance, faith or kindness that makes the story so absorbing. Although considered too sentimental by some critics (Cunliffe, 293), *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is indisputably a remarkable piece of American literary history.

Before Stowe's novel was published, slavery had been depicted in a literary genre called slave narratives. The most noticeable slave narratives include *A Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Venture, a Native of Africa* (1798) (Elliott 1988, 78), *Narrative of William Wells Brown, a Fugitive Slave, Written by Himself* (1847) (Elliott 1988, 358), *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written by Himself* (1845), followed by the second autobiography by the same author - *My Bondage and My Freedom* - ten years later (Parini I, 400 – 402) or *The Life of Josiah Henson, Formerly a Slave, Now an Inhabitant of Canada, As Narrated by Himself* (1849). Stowe named the last narrative as one of the sources for her book. (UTC, 398) The authors of slave narratives were also women; Ann Jacob's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1867) describes in detail her life full of sexual assaults and fear of the Fugitive Slave Act. (Parini IV, 284) In 1859, Harriet Wilson published *Our Nig; or, Sketches from the Life of a Free Black* which is a fusion of sentimental fiction and slave narrative. However, Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was more representative and influential. (Elliott 1988, 361) Even today, the book can tell its readers a lot about one of the important parts of American history and make them think about it.

The theoretical part of this bachelor thesis informs the reader briefly about the situation in the USA in the nineteenth century. The analytical part of this work engages in the female characters in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. It tries to explain the motives for the way they behave. Further, it deals with one of the most expressive features of the heroines - the ability to make sacrifices. Finally, this bachelor thesis attempts to

interconnect these two issues with the symbol of kitchen which plays a significant role in the nature of the women characters as well as in the novel as such. The females in the book reflect Stowe's attitude towards the institution of slavery, they represent her belief that women possess great mental strength and as loving mothers, they deserve to be glorified.

1. The Background

Despite the fact that Nathaniel Hawthorne called in 1855 the authoresses of sentimental literature angrily and mockingly “scribbling women”, (as quoted in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*¹, 504) there had been a woman writer whose work had been capable of contributing to one of the most important events in American history. The writer mentioned was Harriet Beecher Stowe, the work was her book *UTC* and the event was the Civil War.

Harriet Beecher Stowe was born in 1811 in Litchfield, Connecticut, as the seventh of nine children of the well-known Congregational minister Lyman Beecher and Roxana Foote Beecher. Roxana died when Harriet was five years old. Later, Stowe believed that her mother’s death explains her identification with the pain felt by slave children and mothers divided because of slavery. (*UTC*, vii) At the age of eight – in contrast to the majority of other girls who usually started studying at the age of twelve – she enrolled at the Litchfield Female Academy. (Rosenthal, 7) In 1832, the Beecher family moved to Cincinnati, Ohio, and four years later, Harriet married Calvin Stowe. These years in Cincinnati forced her to confront the issue of slavery because Kentucky, which Ohio borders, was a slaveholding state. When an epidemic of cholera swept through Cincinnati in the last year Stowe lived there, she lost one of her children, Charley. The family moved to Maine in 1850 - the same year, the Fugitive Slave Act became law. Stowe’s famous novel *UTC* appeared serially in the newspaper from 1851 to 1852 and it was published as a book in 1852. (*UTC*, vii – viii) The Southern sociologist George Frederick Holmes discussed the question of veracity of the book in the *Southern Literary Messenger* in December 1852. (Cunliffe, 294) To verify the novel’s facts, Stowe published *A Key to UTC* in 1853. The authoress of many books in her lifetime, (for example *The Minister’s Wooing* from 1859 or *Oldtown Folks* ten years later) Stowe was remembered mainly for *UTC*. (*UTC*, viii – ix) Harriet Beecher Stowe died in 1896 in Hartford. (*UTC*, 586)

To explain clearly what happened, it is essential to outline the situation in which the novel was created. The main theme the book deals with is slavery. Today, slavery is considered unacceptable by the majority of the world, even though it still exists in some

¹ Thereafter cited as *UTC* in the text.

places. However, the situation was not always the same. It is not necessary to go back in history to ancient Rome where slave-trade was a part of daily life. (Gibbon, 72) For this work, slavery in the USA in the nineteenth century is significant.

Slavery is defined as the state of a person who is in fact a property of another person and is forced to obey the owner and is under absolute control of that person. (Halsey, 936) All this is usually accompanied by actions that are considered abominable, such as mental and physical torture. However, the writer Kenneth M. Stamppp stresses that all slaveholders were not alike. Some of them used subtle, other ingenious and some of them brutal techniques to control their slaves. (143) Low living standards together with heavy labor and poor medical care were reasons for shorter life expectancy of slaves as well as their higher mortality rate than whites. (Stamppp, 318) Moreover, the exponents of slavery deny humanity because one of their aims is to create totally loyal and submissive servant without free will and ability to think about his fate, more like a monkey than a human being. (Kazin, 76)

Because of the climate, the South was an ideal place for agriculture and agricultural economy. Without a supply of slaves, southern agriculture would probably, at least in its early development, depend upon small farms that would produce staple crops. There was no crop cultivated by bondsmen that could not have been cultivated by a different form of labor. Slavery cannot be attributed to some unstoppable force in the economic evolution of the South. The use of slaves was a premeditated choice. Southerners did not create the slave system at one particular moment – they built it step by step over a period of many years. (Stamppp, 4 – 6) It is documented, however, that the first Africans were brought to Maryland and Virginia to labor in the tobacco fields among white servants in 1619. From the last quarter of the seventeenth century, the labor force from Africa prevailed because black servants became cheaper than the white ones. (Nash et. al., 51 - 52) The number was gradually increasing; in the period from 1700 to 1775, more than 350,000 Africans were brought to the American colonies. (Nash et. al., 70)

In the period between 1851 – 1852, when *UTC* appeared serially in the newspaper, and in 1852, when the book was published (ix), slavery was a very lucrative business. After the Nat Turner revolt in 1831, Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana banned the importation of slaves; however, during the profitable 1850s, all these states

permitted the slave trade again. (Nash et. al., 240) In 1850, the Fugitive Slave Law was made a law. This law enabled Southern slaveholders to claim their runaway slaves in free states. Moreover, all American citizens were ordered to help capture such slaves. (Eisenstark and Weber, 38 – 40)

Of course, not only Stowe, but many others opposed slavery. There was a whole long-standing movement that was called abolitionism. It started as a moral issue and later became a political issue. (Eisenstark and Weber, 1 - 2) The Fugitive Slave Law made abolitionists even more decided to end slavery because they saw hundreds of black people caught and forced to come back to the South. (Eisenstark and Weber, 38 - 40) When *UTC* was published, even those who had not seen these sad moments in person could at least read about it. The novel gave readers a thrilling indictment of the horrors of slavery and had a moral impact on both northerners and southerners; (Nash et. al., 310) in other words, many of the readers realized that “southern slavery was America’s most profound and vexatious social problem”. (Stamp, vii) Cunliffe claims that *UTC* infuriated the South because of being so glaringly anti-slavery. (294) In the book *The American People: Creating a Nation and a Society*, there is a chart displaying clearly and chronologically major causes and events leading to the Civil War; the chart involves also the publication of *UTC* as one of the important events. (321)

Among other events, the 1860 election is important; Abraham Lincoln won the presidency. Lincoln stood out against slavery; Southern leaders saw his election as the prelude to the ultimate extinction of their way of life if they remained in the Union. Consequently, seven South states broke away and formed a new nation, which they named the Confederate States of America. The legitimacy of secession, however, was not recognized by the Lincoln administration and most of the Northern people. They feared that the dis-United States would break up into several small nations. Tensions were increasing until they reached its peak on April 12, 1861, when the Civil war began. (Catton and McPherson, 2) Up to the fall of 1862, slavery was not an issue in the war; to this point, the war was fighting solely to save the Union. (Catton and McPherson, 100) In order to save the Union, the North had to destroy the Confederacy which meant to destroy slavery. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the institution of slavery could exist only by the tolerance of people who did not like it; that tolerance was destroyed by the Civil war. (Catton and McPherson, 174 – 175) In September 1862, the

president issued a preliminary emancipation proclamation and on January 1, 1863, he issued the final Emancipation Proclamation. It declared that unless the rebellious states returned to the Union, Lincoln would pronounce their slaves free. The war that started as a fight for salvation of the Union now became a fight that (as long as it would be victorious) would free the slaves. Two years before the Emancipation Proclamation, blacks had offered themselves as soldiers but had been turned away. However, by the end of the war, 186,000 blacks had served as the soldiers of the Union, the majority of them escapees from slave states. (Nash et. al., 335 - 336) The Civil war was finally over on April 9, 1865 (Nash et. al., 342), after four years during which it had consumed hundreds of thousands of lives² and billions of dollars. (Catton and McPherson, 263)

The fact that many readers in the nineteenth century enjoyed and liked the book is proved by the fact that it became a bestseller. (Cunliffe, 286) Stowe and other antislavery writers contributed to “disturbing the country to the point of civil war” (Kazin, 76) and Abraham Lincoln called her “the little lady who brought about the great big war.” (as quoted in Kazin, 76) If it had not been for the war, slavery would have existed even in the twentieth century. (Kazin, 122)

The success of the book *UTC* and its influence over the readers is (among other things) probably a merit of the fact that *UTC* is a sentimental novel. The adjective sentimental means “expressive of or appealing to sentiment, especially the tender emotions and feelings, as love, pity, nostalgia etc.” (*Webster’s Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of English Language*³, 1300) The purpose of sentimentality is to shape common sense and within the American context, the term “sentiment” has generally been used to dismiss representations that seem to arouse unwarranted emotional reactions. The three issues that sentimental novels deal with are lost families, lost homes, and broken bounds. These three topics are presented by a distinctive vocabulary and rhetoric. However, the presence of these topics does not require the term “sentimental” unless there is also one particular rhetorical trope – the apostrophe. The usage of the apostrophic address makes the text more appealing. (Parini III, 545) *UTC* sustains its didactic weight by melodramatic situations as well as by verbal humor.

² In the book *Civil War* by Bruce Catton and James McPherson, which was published in 2004, a remarkable comparison is detailed: the authors calculated that “if the same percentage of the American population lost their lives in a war fought today as in that war of 1861 – 1865, the number of American war dead would total more than 5 million.” (2)

³ Thereafter cited as *Webster’s Dictionary* in the text.

(Elliott 1988, 170) Stowe's intention was to persuade the white readers to recognize black people as humans who share the common sensibility and hence the common inalienable rights to life and liberty. (Parini III, 550) Even today, *UTC* arouses in its readers anger against the oppressors and pity for the oppressed (Elliott 1988, 170) because, as George Sand (the author of *Review of UTC*) asserts, Stowe can penetrate the hearts "with emotions so sad and yet so sweet". (*UTC*, 459)

UTC is not solely a sentimental novel. It is also a feminist text. (Parini IV, 132) This means that it contains the features of feminism. Feminism is defined as "the doctrine advocating social and political rights of women equal to those of men." (*Webster's Dictionary*, 523) According to this definition, feminism is primarily a social and a political issue. The women writers in the nineteenth century in the USA were aware of that; after all, a national women's right convention was held in New York in 1848. (Cunliffe, 284) A declaration of independence for women was issued there, called *Declaration of Sentiments*. This declaration demanded full legal, educational and commercial opportunity, the right to earn an income or the right to vote. (Thomsen, 51) In one of his books, Emory Elliott presents a remarkable note concerning the relationship between abolitionism and feminism: organized American feminism had strong roots in the antislavery movement, arising from the women's auxiliaries to male-controlled abolitionist groups of the 1830s and 1840s. In 1840, women delegates were barred from the floor of the World's Antislavery Convention in London; consequently, Elizabeth Cady Stanton began organizing for the first women's rights convention (which was, as written above, held in New York in 1848). Thus the two movements – for women's rights and for equality between whites and African Americans (which began with the abolition of slavery) have long been intertwined. (Elliott 1991, 218)

Many critiques have been written on *UTC*. Some of them, like *Review of UTC* by George Sand (1804 – 1876), celebrating the novel (Sand admits that *UTC* has faults, but advises the readers not to be disturbed about them) (*UTC*, 459 – 460). Emory Elliot explains why American critics of the age praised *UTC* so much: the novel combined all the elements of fiction that they were looking for. Moreover, *UTC* defined writing in general as a kind of visionary mode and thus made authoresses equal to the highest literary tasks. Additionally, the issue of the book was an inflammatory political issue, which Stowe deals with in a partisan spirit. (1988, 304) On the other hand, the black

writer James Baldwin saw Stowe's work in rather a bad light; in his critique from 1955, he called the book "Everybody's Protest Novel." (Cunliffe, 293) According to him, Uncle Tom is a caricature of black obsequiousness, too pious and loyal (far too good to be true) and the novel is a prejudiced book calculated to make white liberals feel comfortably outraged. (Cunliffe, 293) The author of this work agrees with Marcus Cunliffe and his opinion presented in his book *The Literature of the United States* - that *UTC* is a better book than Baldwin perceived it in his critique. (294)

Recognizing the dramatic possibilities of the novel, several playwrights soon turned it into melodrama. Since 1852 the play has undergone a number of transformations – it has been musicalized, filmed, or choreographed. Little Eva has been played by plenty of actresses, including Shirley Temple. The reason for such a durability of Stowe's book is probably the absence of American mythology; perhaps *UTC* has slipped in and filled the gap. (*UTC*, 454 - 455)

2. The Influence of the Religious Belief or the Background on the Opinion of the Women in UTC on Slavery

In the first chapter, some of the features of slavery were mentioned. Now, the author of this work will focus on slavery more from the woman point of view. Women, appreciating domestic values which are violated by slavery (*Outline of American Literature*, 44) - after all, slave-traders often took children away from their parents and thus divided families - are very likely to denounce slavery. In the nineteenth century, many American women did not agree with slavery. Consequently, Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society was founded in 1832. Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society was not the only attempt to highlight the problem of slavery. In 1833, Lydia Maria Child's *An Appeal on Behalf of That Class of Americans Called Africans* was published and during the year 1837, Angelina and Sarah Grimké presented their antislavery views in New England. (Elliott 1991, 142)

In H. B. Stowe's *UTC*, many women share the opinion that slavery is unacceptable; especially the women who are slaves and the women who perceive slavery in contradiction with Christianity. On the other hand, there are some women who support slavery (they have never been slaves). Stowe, by using the characters who

are rather immoral, shows that slavery is entirely bad. These characters are described more or less negatively and thus serve as examples of immoral people who deserve to be banished from society. The opinion of Stowe's heroines on slavery is influenced by their religious belief and their background.

The first aspect that forms the opinion of the women in *UTC* about slavery is the background. It was common to own some slaves if one could afford to buy and own them. Slave-trade operated as every ordinary business. If somebody had money, he could buy a horse, clothes, food or a servant – a slave. Even Thomas Jefferson had them. (Kazin, 58) Therefore, it is natural to imagine a woman from a rich family who considers slavery a part of common life.

Marie St. Clare is a perfect illustration of a woman from the upper class whose character has been corrupted by the living standards she has lived in since her childhood. Not only is her character spoiled by wealth; According to Eric J. Sundquist's book *To Wake the Nations: Race in the Making of American Literature* she is also a neurotic, nearly hysteric person. (1993a⁴, 428) When she met Augustine St. Clare, she was a member of fashionable society and "reigning belle of the season". (*UTC*, 132) It is easy to imagine her as a lady who is used to live a life of luxury and also to have slaves. Therefore, it is not surprising that her behavior towards her slaves is arrogant and even cruel – in the chapter "The Unprotected" she wants Rosa to be punished by whipping. Moreover, she invariably complains about the fact that she terribly suffers from headaches (*UTC*, 145) and she believes that she suffers so because of her slaves - she calls them "the plague of my life." (*UTC*, 146) A possible explanation of her egocentrism could be the fact that she was a spoiled child. For this reason, she is also spoiled as an adult. Her selfishness is clearly displayed in one scene, when she moans about being a martyr to her migraines and reproaches Mammy, her loyal slave servant, for sleeping too well and therefore not being able to wake up immediately when Marie needs it. (*UTC*, 145 - 146) To sum up, Marie St. Clare is a person who knows only a pampered life. Thereby, she does not regard slavery as something objectionable. Certainly, she is not one of the women who are depicted as "the primary agents of the antislavery activity" (Elliott 1991, 219) in *UTC*.

Miss Ophelia is Augustine's cousin from New England, more precisely from

⁴ *To Wake the Nations: Race in the Making of American Literature* is referred to as 1993a and another book by Sundquist, *New Essays on Uncle Tom's Cabin*, as 1993b.

Vermont; Mr. St. Clare calls her warmly “my dear Miss Vermont”. (*UTC*, 140) Her strongest principle is “conscientiousness.” (*UTC*, 137 - 138) To understand her nature, there is a short quotation about what Augustine St. Clare found out on his travels north, the area Miss Ophelia comes from:

You would think no harm in a child’s caressing a large dog, even if he was black; but a creature that can think, and reason, and feel, and is immortal, you shudder at; confess it, cousin. I know the feeling among some of you northerners well enough. Not that there is a particle of virtue in our not having it; but custom with us does what Christianity ought to do, - obliterates the feeling of personal prejudice. I have often noticed, in my travels north, how much stronger this was with you than with us. You loathe them as you would a snake or a toad, yet you are indignant at their wrongs. You would not have them abused; but you don’t want to have anything to do with them yourselves. You would send them to Africa, out of your sight and smell, and then send a missionary or two to do up all the self-denial of elevating them compendiously. (*UTC*, 154)

Miss Ophelia, a typical northerner, admits that there could be some truth in her cousin’s words. (*UTC*, 154) The idea that her attitude to slavery is deeply influenced by the background in which she was brought up is also supported by some critics. One of them, Jay Parini, explains that Stowe emphasized the involvement of the northern countries in slavery. Miss Ophelia, who comes from New England, which means from the north of the USA, is an advocate of the abolition of slavery. Nevertheless, she acts like a racist. Parini even calls her a hypocrite because she cannot stand touching Topsy. (Parini IV, 132) On the other hand, in order not just to criticize her, it should be admitted that she overcomes her habits. At the end of the novel she comes back to Vermont with Topsy and she takes care of her tenderly. This change of her attitude is closely connected to little Eva and will be described later in this work.

Little Eva, Marie’s daughter and Ophelia’s niece, lives with her family in New Orleans. As is a child from a rich family, she grew up among slaves. However, she is deeply affected by her father who disapproves of slavery. Consequently, it is more her family background (with the prevailing influence of the father Augustine whose nature is similar to Eva’s much more than Marie’s nature) than the fact that she comes from the social class whose members are rich enough to have slaves that modifies Eva’s attitude towards her black servants. Certainly, Evangeline St. Clare is a very interesting girl; as the reader can see throughout the novel, her character is remarkable. Despite her

age – she is five or six – she is mentally mature. To analyze this young lady, it is appropriate to start from the very beginning.

The first scene in which the reader meets Eva takes place on a ship floating down the Mississippi River to New Orleans. The reader finds out a surprising fact here – Eva travels with her father and Miss Ophelia. No mother is mentioned. Obviously, the relationship between Eva and Marie is not the same as her relationship to Augustine. The little girl loves them both, but her return home tells us more about Eva’s mother and her attitude towards Eva.

When Eva comes back, she runs to hug Marie immediately. The mother’s reaction is really apathetic. She rises from a couch with no smile, kisses the girl lethargically and scolds her: “That’ll do, - take care, child, - don’t, you make my head ache.” (*UTC*, 142) Evidently, poor Eva lacks maternal love and she looks up to her father. Although Marie does not give her daughter a sufficient amount of, Eva is full of love and other emotions. That is why Eric J. Sundquist calls her “a barometer of sentiment.” (1993a, 201) He also compares Eva and another little girl in the story, Topsy: “little Eva’s black counterpart is an African girl whose moral intensity (and saccharine characterization) is the equal of Eva’s.” It is interesting to contrast their eyes that can tell the reader something about the girls’ nature. This comparison demonstrates Eva’s mental maturity more visibly: Eva has deep spiritual gravity in her violet blue eyes, while Topsy’s eyes are dark and wicked, twinkling when she speaks. This indicates that Evangeline is kind, quiet and thoughtful while Topsy does not worry about anything and she likes playing tricks.

Eva’s philosophical nature and opinions could originate in the fact that she spends a lot of time with her father (whose character she apparently inherited) and she probably admires him and perceives him as a moral model. In fact, there is a certain passage in the novel which explains the relationships in the St. Clare family. The problems began when little Eva was born. Marie felt jealousy because her husband took great care of the baby. She regarded such a situation unfair - suddenly, she was not the center of attention. Marie cares solely about herself; on the contrary, Augustine’s love to Eva is tender and deep. They spend quite a lot of time together; his influence on Eva’s nature is considerable. That is why they share the same attitude towards their servants.

Eva’s father – “the only complex character in the book” (Kazin, 83) – feels

contempt for the slave system which enables him to live in luxury. (Kazin, 83). He owns some slaves, but he treats them well – as Eva says, “papa is very good to everybody.” (*UTC*, 131)

Another feature of Eva’s character is religiousness. During the conversation with her cousin Henrique, she asserts that she loves her servants and then she adds that according to the Bible, we must love everybody. (*UTC*, 237) Kazin even uses the term “too saintly” when speaking about her (83) and Sundquist “heaven-bound Eva.” (1993a, 352) Not only does she behave as if she were a messenger of God who intends to love every person (thereby, she cannot be an exponent of slavery which causes that so many people suffer), she also looks like an angel:

Tom, who had the soft, impressible nature of his kindly race, ever yearning toward the simple and childlike, watched the little creature with daily increasing interest. To him she seemed something almost divine; and whenever her golden head and deep blue eyes peered out upon him from behind some dusky cotton-bale, or looked down upon him over some ridge of packages, he half believed that he saw one of the angels stepped out of his New Testament. (*UTC*, 127)

For Elliott, Eva and Tom are the representatives of “evangelical reform.” (1991, 145)

Of course, the novel does not deal only with the St. Clare family. The story begins in Mr. Shelby’s house “in the town of P- in Kentucky.” (*UTC*, 1) The man is the owner of many slaves, including George Harris and his wife Eliza. Financial problems have forced Mr. Shelby to sell Tom and Eliza’s son Harry.

Eliza was brought up by Mrs. Shelby who is a woman of a strong religious belief. Mrs. Shelby owns some slaves, but she has “tried most faithfully, as a Christian woman should” (*UTC*, 28), to do the best to her servants; she cares for them and when giving them orders, she does so in a very polite way. Consequently, the reader cannot be surprised by the fact that Eliza is a Christian too. In one scene, she tries to calm down her husband George. She says that she wishes him to be a Christian, for God would deliver him. (*UTC*, 15) George’s answer is a refusing one: “I an’t a Christian like you, Eliza; my heart’s full of bitterness; I can’t trust in God.” (*UTC*, 15) On the other hand, Elliott mentions the fact that George describes his wife as his “living gospel”. (1991, 124) Speaking about the influence of the Bible on the novel, it is worth pointing out that in the nineteenth century, *UTC* was the biggest best-seller after the Bible. (Kazin, 75)

When Eliza hears Mr. Shelby's conversation with Mr. Haley, a slave-trader, she understands that she has only two options: to leave the house or to leave her son who is supposed to be sold. She decides to leave the home. The escape is dangerous. She has to pass a river which is full of ice-floes by skipping from one ice-floe to another. She manages to reach the safety of the river bank and later, she meets her husband again. The scene that takes place on the icy river is especially emotional and thrilling; therefore, this scene has been paraphrased in many other literary works. This is the beginning of Ishmael Reed's historical pastiche *Flight to Canada*:

I have done my Liza leap
& am safe in the arms
of Canada, so
Ain't no use your Slave
Catchers waitin on me... (Cunliffe, 393)

When describing the action to Mr. and Mrs Bird, Eliza says that she crossed the ice with the help of God. (*UTC*, 72) As a slave, she endures her fate patiently. "I always thought that I must obey my master and mistress, or I could n't be a Christian," (*UTC*, 14) she tells her husband in the chapter "The Husband and Father". George replies that it is so in her case for her master and mistress took care of her as if she was their own child. (*UTC*, 14) Obviously, there is a different relationship among Eliza and her masters then would be expected; they are more like her parents than like her owners. Thereby, Eliza does not fight against slavery. However, when her child is threatened by Haley, she seems to realize the horrors of slavery because for her, the idea of losing her son is horrific. During her escape, her religious faith helps her to manage something almost impossible when crossing the river; after all, Sam, another slave of Mr. and Mrs. Shelby, confirms: "It wasn't no less nor a miracle." (*UTC*, 63)

Speaking about Eliza's escape, Mr. and Mrs. Bird (already mentioned shortly above, who help her to recover from the shock, cannot be forgotten. Mr. Bird is a senator and Mrs. Bird, his wife, is said not to be a very courageous person: a turkey of a medium size is able to frighten her away and a big hound of moderate nature would do the same just by showing her its teeth. Only one thing can arouse her – because she is so gentle and sympathetic – cruelty. Only a sign of it would throw her into a passion. Her husband is a man of humane and accessible nature and he would not turn away a person

for being a runaway. Consequently, he does not do this to Eliza. Mr. Bird is not an exponent of slavery and his neither is his wife. In Mrs. Bird's opinion, the laws that support cruelty are unchristian. (*UTC*, 68) That means that she regards slavery as the institution that is in contradiction to Christianity. In the case of Mrs. Bird, both of the influencing factors play their role. Her social background (involving her husband who is able to stand out against the law supporting slavery and help Eliza) supports her religious belief which convinces her that slavery is unchristian.

The Birds help Eliza to reach the Quaker settlement. Since belonging to Quakers, the women in the settlement – Rachel Halliday and Ruth Stedman, who are the main women characters in the chapter “The Quaker Settlement” - oppose slavery and help runaway slaves. Rachel and Ruth live surrounded by their beloved. The whole chapter shows the reader a calm and peaceful image of family life. The children are tenderly cared for and the settlement seems to be a place where no quarrel is known. The center of this part of the story is Rachel's kitchen (which will be analyzed in detail in the fourth chapter of this work). It is evident that in this community of people, family is of the highest importance. To accept slavery, which destroys family life, is absolutely intolerable to Rachel and Ruth. The two women help Eliza as they can. Moreover, they heap the same amount of love, attention and sympathy on her as they heap on the members of their own families.

Another remarkable character in the novel is Cassy. She is a slave; although treated as a lady from the upper class for some time, she has never been free. Cassy tells Tom her story that begins with the following words: “I was brought up in luxury; the first I remember is, playing about, when I was a child, in splendid parlors...” (*UTC*, 314) The problem is that since her mother was a slave, Cassy is a slave too. Later, Cassy fell in love with a rich man, Henry, who loved her too; they had two children, but they never got married. Unfortunately, when Henry's cousin appeared, things became worse. Cassy gradually lost her children, husband and freedom. When she meets Tom, she is nothing more but a slave on Simon Legree's farm. However, Cassy does not want to give up; her indomitable spirit originates basically in the fact that the only thing she can lose is her own life. This results in her courage to oppose Legree as much as possible; Elliott calls her “a rebel.” (1991, 145) Logically, Cassy hates slavery and slave-traders, especially Legree – she hates him as she does the devil. (*UTC*, 312) At first, her

rebellious actions arise from Cassy's hopeless situation which is closely connected with her social status and the miserable background she has to live in. They are certainly not the result of her religious belief because she asserts that there is no God. (*UTC*, 312) In the chapter "The Victory" she confides to Tom that she has not prayed since her children were taken away from her. (*UTC*, 345) Nevertheless, moved by Tom's strong faith in God, she changes her opinion. Later, when she plans to escape with Emmelina, she says: "Oh great Almighty God! We are *all* sinners, but what have *we* done, more than all the rest of the world, that we should be treated so?" (*UTC*, 356)

Stowe described slavery via the characters of the novel. Surely, these characters were made by the authoress; their attitude to slavery may correspond to Stowe's attitude. After all, the majority of the heroines denounce slavery simply because Stowe was strongly against slavery. The women in *UTC* behave and think in accordance with their moral values. In Marie's case, the values are corrupted. She is not a person who could be called a moral model. The character of Marie, who is rather immoral, helps the reader to realize that the opposite values are right and moral. It is natural to reject her manners and opinions since it is natural to feel that they are wrong.

The heroines of the novel act in accordance with their religious belief or the background (or with the combination of both of these aspects). Parini states that the women in *UTC* are strong. (Parini IV, 132) (The only exception is Marie who cannot be considered a mentally strong person.) Their power may originate in the fact that their authoress, Harriet Beecher Stowe, was a woman of extraordinary mental strength because she was "the little lady who brought about the great big war."

3. The Idea of Making Sacrifices

As it was already mentioned in the first chapter, in the nineteenth century, women in the USA began to break the barriers of public silence; they spoke out on civil rights and education. The historical event contributing most to the initiation of the women's movement was the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848. (Thomsen, 50 – 51)

On the other hand, the writer Mary Kelley (*Private Woman, Public Stage* from 1984) stresses that the women writers willingly adopted the idea of taking care of family and home, as well as the idea of devotion, sensibility, salvation and sacrifice.

(Cunliffe, 286) Considering Harriet Beecher Stowe as a woman who was one of the authoresses (and thus also adopted the ideas mentioned above), the reader can see a similar attitude in her women characters. To illustrate that Stowe adopted the idea of sacrifice: she relinquished her authorship by claiming that she “did not write the book” and that “the story made itself.” (Elliott 1991, 65)

The idea of sacrifice in the novel can be introduced by the example of Cassy who is a female slave. Stowe perceived slavery as an institution “in which both slaves and wives – and especially slaves who function as wives and wives who function as slaves – are used and abused”. (Gilbert and Gubar 482) Cassy opens up to Tom by telling him that her soul and body are under her owner’s foot, that she has lived with him for five years, cursing every day and night. Then she adds that Legree has a new girl, only fifteen years old, just as Cassy was when she came to his house. (*UTC*, 312 - 314) This speech reveals the fact that Legree abused Cassy sexually and he intends to do the same to the young girl, Emmeline. Eric J. Sundquist is of the same opinion; he calls Cassy “Legree’s erstwhile mistress.” (1993b, 55) However, Cassy decides to get rid of this abuse by escaping together with Emmeline. Of course, she is still a slave, even as a runaway; but she is no longer abused by her owner. She is not a Legree’s plaything anymore, she becomes more independent. This situation can be also seen as a feministic feature: Cassy, a woman, gains a right that makes her equal to a man (Legree): she is not threatened by sexual assaults, she is not subordinate to him, she does not have to obey his degrading orders. On the other hand, Cassy adopted the idea of sacrifice as well. She tells Tom the following story: she loved a man and wanted him to marry her. By marrying a free man, she would also become free. The man convinced her that it was not necessary and Cassy’s love for him was so strong that she agreed and so relinquished her freedom. To sum up, she is able to fight for her women’s rights on one hand, but also to relinquish them because of love. The critic Gillian Brown mentions that domestic and feminist values (including self-denial and self-assertion) make the ideal woman. (Rosenthal, 50)

One of the main features of the heroines of the novel is their ability to make sacrifices. They are capable of relinquishing something important (such as the freedom in Cassy’s case) because they are willing to do so (or because they have to) or they see themselves as a martyr who has to suffer (which is especially the case of Marie St.

Clare).

Eliza Harris, Mrs. Shelby's slave, is one of the happier slaves at the beginning of the novel. Brought up by her mistress, she reached maturity without being treated as somebody's concubine (which would probably have happened if someone like Simon Legree had been her master because Eliza is a beautiful young woman) - on the contrary, she was treated as a petted favorite. Additionally, she was allowed to marry a bright and talented mulatto man, George Harris. Eliza is grateful for what Mr. and Mrs. Shelby have done for her and she likes them; when she decides to escape, she writes a letter to them in which she wishes them to be blessed and rewarded them for all their kindness. (*UTC*, 31) Nevertheless, she is still a slave. She is not free, and although treated well, Eliza and her child are still the property of Mr. and Mrs. Shelby, which is clear when her son Harry is sold to Mr. Haley. As Mrs. Shelby laments:

This is God's curse on slavery! - a bitter, bitter, most accursed thing! - a curse to the master and a curse to the slave! I was a fool to think I could make anything good out of such a deadly evil. It is a sin to hold a slave under laws like ours, - I always felt it was, - I always thought so when I was a girl, - I thought so still more after I joined the church; but I thought I could gild it over, - I thought, by kindness, and care, and instruction, I could make the condition of mine better than freedom - fool that I was! (*UTC*, 29)

It is exactly as she says: it does not matter how well the owners behave to their servants - a slave is still a slave. And this is also Eliza's problem. She could escape to the safety in Canada (where she would become a free person) earlier, but she did not because she likes Mr. and Mrs. Shelby; instead, she sacrifices her freedom in a way by staying with them.

Nevertheless, when she finds out that her son Harry is supposed to be sold, she automatically obeys the voice of nature and tries to rescue him. (Rosenthal, 73) This instinctive attempt to save her child leads to Eliza's famous crossing of the river full of ice blocks which proves that Eliza is capable of doing anything for little Harry. She does not care if she gets hurt or if she dies. Later at senator Bird's place, she recalls the action: "I didn't think I could get over, but I didn't care! I could but die, if I didn't." (*UTC*, 72) Senator Bird asks her what forced her to undergo such dangers and she explains that her son is all she has. (*UTC*, 72 - 73) Jane P. Tompkins, the authoress of an

essay *Sentimental Power: UTC and the Politics of Literary history*, speaks about “the sanctity of motherhood and the family” (*UTC*, 513, 522) in connection with *UTC*. Tompkins explains that sanctity, as a matter of religion, is connected with the Christian belief that the highest human appeal is to give one’s life for somebody else. (*UTC*, 507) In Stowe’s novel, Motherhood is saint - mothers in *UTC* are able to sacrifice anything for their children; in Eliza’s case her own life.

Of course, if Eliza died, her son would probably die too. As a little baby, he would not have a chance to survive in the icy water. This is another interesting phenomenon that concerns mothers in the novel. It is the desire to rescue their children from slavery at any cost, even if it means to sacrifice the children’s life. Because of the horrors that the children would experience, this paradoxical effort is understandable. Cassy can be the example. In her essay *Doing It Herself: UTC and Woman’s Role in the Slavery*, Jean Fagan Yellin points out the scene in which Cassy kills her baby to save him from living a life of a slave. (Rosenthal, 73)

Speaking about Cassy, her sacrifice cannot be omitted. Her story has been already mentioned; now, some further information will be added. When Cassy and her children are sold (not to Legree - first to Cassy’s lover’s cousin Butler), Cassy tells her new owner that she will rather die than live with him. However, she is not permitted to do so. Her children are also his possession and every time Cassy resists his will, he menaces by the threat of selling the children; so she is forced to submit to the commands of the man she hates (which happens later again at Legree’s place) because she does not want her children to be sold. Unfortunately, Butler does what she is afraid of anyway. Nonetheless, this action does not mean the end of his blackmail. The children are away, but Butler still uses them to control Cassy; he asserts that they will pay for her disobedience and that it depends on him whether Cassy ever sees them again - hence her subordination to this man. Gilbert and Gubar, the authors of *The Madwoman in the Attic: the Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*⁵, state that Cassy was diminished by the suffering she has endured (534) and Jean Fagan Yellin calls her “tragic mulatto.” (Rosenthal, 73)

In comparison with Cassy, Mrs. Shelby’s sacrifice seems to be almost paltry. When Mr. Shelby tells her that he has been forced to sell Eliza’s child because of their

⁵ Thereafter cited as *The Madwoman in the Attic* in the text.

bad financial situation, she is anxious to save the child. She claims that if she could save Harry, she would sacrifice everything. (*UTC*, 30) Then she suggests selling her watch, “the private possession that for all its practical use, is still primarily a personal adornment”. (Elliott 1991, 221) This seems to be a respectable gesture but nothing more (to compare it with Eliza’s action). On the other hand, Mrs. Shelby is not the mother, she is the owner. To her, it is natural to relinquish a thing in order to save some money, and thus to be able to keep Harry. Although small, this offering proves that this woman is capable of giving away something she likes for somebody else’s good.

Mrs. Bird’s sacrifice is peculiar. Peculiar for a simple reason: her husband is a senator and she is firmly resolved to break the law (the Fugitive Slave Act) if there is a chance to do so:

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! Things have got to a pretty pass, if a woman can’t give a warm supper and a bed to poor, starving creatures, just because they are slaves, and have been abused and oppressed all their lives, poor things! (*UTC*, 69)

Obviously, she does not mind being punished for breaking the law which forbids her from helping the escaped slaves. Despite the fact that anyone who helps runaway slaves is fined and imprisoned (Conlin, 307), she decides to do something banned which can cause problems to her rather than behave according to the law that is in conflict with her moral code.

The same attitude towards the law can be found in the case of Rachel Halliday, the inhabitant of the Quaker settlement where Eliza (with Mr. Bird’s help) finds a shelter for a while before pressing ahead her long journey to Canada. Rachel assures Eliza that she can stay as long as she wants. (*UTC*, 117) An offer like that is certainly against the law that inflames Mrs. Bird to a high pitch of fury because the law forbids people from providing food or a bed to the escaped slaves. Again, similarly as Mrs. Bird, Rachel is not afraid of acting in this way and she does not care about the punishment. She would also sacrifice her criminal integrity in preference to doing something she considers abhorrent.

Cunliffe emphasizes the fact that Stowe’s book is also a sentimental novel. (293) The sentiment seems to be shown mostly via Eva. During her short life, she absorbs all

the emotions she experiences and thinks about them deeply. To analyze the motive of sacrifice in Eva's case, there is an interesting quotation in *The Madwoman in the Attic*. In this quotation, the authoresses speak about Harriet Beecher Stowe and they come to the conclusion that "even her Christ is female." (482) Eva's self-sacrifice is similar to Christ's self-sacrifice in a way. The main difference is that "Christ died for our sins" (Mitchell, 240) and Eva seems to suck the sins committed by the people around her like a sponge. Consequently, this process gradually makes her exhausted to the point of death and finally kills her. This is displayed in one scene, when she is confronted with the cruelty of her cousin Henrique to his servant Dodo (both of them are still children). Eva is seriously shocked and tells Henrique he is wicked. (UTC, 231) After this incident, her health seems to be damaged. She becomes weaker and weaker and after some time she dies. Unfortunately, the death of children was quite common in the nineteenth century. Marcus Cunliffe describes the case of Margaret Fuller who once returned home and found the nursemaid crying – Margaret's little sister was dead. The nursemaid literally said: "I see yet that beauty of death." (294) Similarly, Eva's dying displays her divine beauty when lying on a death-bed: "so solemn, so mysterious, was the triumphant brightness of that face, that it checked even the sobs of sorrow." (UTC, 257)

A short poem introduces the chapter "Evangeline", in which the reader sees Eva for the very first time. The poem is about a shining star which is very fragile. (UTC, 123) Life is "too sweet an image for such glass." (UTC, 123) Evangeline also seems to be too fragile to live. When she is still alive, her opinions (not only, but mostly about slavery) are surely impressive. Nevertheless, "a woman's *dying* gospel is perhaps even more potent than her *living* one." (Elliott 1991, 125) Elliot's statement can be proved by the fact that after Eva's death, her aunt Ophelia changes her attitude towards her little servant Topsy radically. If she could not even touch her before, (Parini IV, 132) now she states that the girl has improved a lot. (UTC, 268) Moreover, Miss Ophelia stresses: "I want her to be mine legally." (UTC, 268) She intends to bring Topsy to a free state and give her liberty. (UTC, 268) In Eva's earthly life, her nature, her behavior to the others (especially to the slaves) and her mature point of view cause that her aunt and her father (and the reader) begin to realize better what is right. (Elliott 1991, 145) This impact is surely important. However, Eva's influence is really sealed up by her death, not her life;

in fact, her death is self-sacrifice and she brings eternal life through self-sacrifice. (Gilbert and Gubar, 482) And her self-sacrifice does not bring eternal life only to her memory, but also to her message of peace. Not only does Eva die full of divine sentences, she also points the way to the moral life. (Parini I, 274) In the essay about the sentimental power of the novel, Jane P. Tompkins explains:

Stories like the death of little Eva are compelling for the same reason that the story of Christ's death is compelling: they enact a philosophy, as much political as religious, in which the pure and powerless die to save the powerful and corrupt, and thereby show themselves more powerful than those they save. (*UTC*, 507)

The same authoress also claims that in Stowe's work, to die means to prove the supreme form of heroism. (*UTC*, 506) Eva's heroism is so great because she knows she is going to die. One day, she tells her father that she is leaving the world and that she is not nervous, she longs to go. (*UTC*, 241) Moreover, there is scene explains specifically the fact that Eva is a female Christ. (Gilbert and Gubar, 482) In this scene, her sentence "I can understand why Jesus *wanted* to die for us" (*UTC*, 240) is not only a statement of a clever and sensitive child. It is much deeper, it is a prelude to Eva's disease and death; in fact, it reminds of a confession. For Eva continues: when she saw the slaves on the boat, she felt she would be glad to die for them (*UTC*, 240) if her dying "could stop all this misery." (*UTC*, 240) The author of this work believes that by the words "all this misery" she means slavery as such, not only the suffering of the slaves on the boat. Because of the statements which are mentioned above, the whole gradual demise of Eva seems to be a plan rather than a coincidence. Eva is willing to sacrifice her own life to end slavery and she is successful, in a way. After all, it was this novel, *UTC*, which fanned hatred of slavery. (Hansen et al., 26) The last words of the little girl are: "love, - joy, -peace!" (*UTC*, 257) Eva's journey ends, her soul reaches these three values she believed in all her life. Her private struggle is over. In 1861, a real struggle – the civil war – begins, (Hansen et al., 9) the war that "killed the institution of slavery." (Hansen et al., 3)

Miss Ophelia's self-sacrifice originates in her prejudices. As already mentioned, Eva makes Miss Ophelia feel right. (Elliott 1991, 145) However, before Eva dies, Ophelia talks to Augustine and she does not deny that negroes are disagreeable to her

and she cannot help it. Augustine replies that Eva seems to be able to help the feeling. Miss Ophelia admits that she wishes to be like Eva who might teach her a lesson. (*UTC*, 246) Obviously, Ophelia is able to admit that she does not like slaves, but she is not able to get over the aversion. She calls the children of Augustine's slaves "little plague" (*UTC*, 207) and she cannot bear Topsy's touch at all. In other words: for Ophelia, to touch Topsy is the act of self-sacrifice. However, she has to do so because when Topsy comes to Augustine's house, she is awfully dirty and Ophelia has to wash her, although she approaches Topsy as "a person might be supposed to approach a black spider." (*UTC*, 208) Nevertheless, after Eva's death, Miss Ophelia changes her attitude towards slaves and slavery.

Marie St. Clare, Eva's mother, does not. She differs from the rest of the characters depicted in the novel. So far, the characters having one feature in common were mentioned in this chapter: the characters capable of sacrificing. This is not Marie's case. Marie is probably the most self-centred person in the novel. Nonetheless, even she has something to do with sacrifice. She demands the people around to sacrifice for her. As described in the second chapter of this work, she perceives incredibly selfish of Mammy to sleep so sound nights when Marie needs a little service almost every hour. In addition, she regards her husband Augustine as heartless for he can never realize what she has suffered for years, (*UTC*, 148) nor can he fully appreciate the exertions Marie has made with her daughter, little Eva. (*UTC*, 243) Surely, the word "exertions" sounds ironically when being stated by Marie because it is Augustine who cares for Eva tenderly, certainly not Marie. When Eva falls ill and she knows that her death is near, Augustine nurses her, hugs her and talks to her – while hysteric Marie goes to her own room and falls into violent hysterics. (*UTC*, 253)

Marie's behavior towards Eva (towards the rest of her family and especially towards her slaves, as well) is, at least, cold and arrogant. Throughout the whole novel, Marie seems to be unable to consider anybody else as important as herself. Her laments about how much she suffers and that Augustine can never realize it (*UTC*, 148) reveal Marie's deep conviction: she is a poor woman who has to bear all the difficulties that she comes across in her life. As the authoress of the novel states: Marie "considered herself, in every sense, the most ill-used and suffering person in existence." (*UTC*, 135) When Eva dies, Marie does not understand the way her husband expresses his sorrow at

all. He pretends that nothing has changed, but his cheerful appearance is only “a hollow shell over a heart that was a dark and silent sepulchre.” (*UTC*, 261) Marie claims that Augustine has forgotten Eva very easily and considers herself the only person capable of feeling grief. (*UTC*, 260 – 261) A couple of weeks later, Eva is followed by Augustine who dies too. Marie believes her suffering is the greatest, although she cared only about herself when they were alive. (Tang, 91) This quotation reveals how Marie perceives the situation:

Everybody goes against me! Everybody is so inconsiderate! ... But nobody ever does consider, -my trials are so peculiar! It's so hard, that when I had only one daughter, she should have been taken ! -and when I had a husband that just exactly suited me, -and I'm so hard to be suited! - he should be taken! (*UTC*, 282)

It is important to take into account that when this scene takes place, Marie intends to leave the house and return to her father's plantation; therefore, the slaves are supposed to be sold. Marie does not care about them at all; instead, obsessed with her own suffering, she tries to lessen her pain by whipping Rosa, one of the slaves, for being insolent. Literally, Marie says: “I'll bring her down, -I'll make her lie in the dust!” (*UTC*, 279) This is not a punishment anymore – Marie is simply so heartless that she wants to see anybody suffer as much as she, a hysteric martyr, does.

To return to real martyrs, it is proper to touch on Aunt Chloe, too. She lives quite a calm life with her family until the moment she is told that her husband Tom is sold. When the reader meets her for the first time, she seems to be happy (as Eliza until she finds out that her son is supposed to be taken away as well). Sundquist even asserts that Aunt Chloe is first seen as comic. (1993b, 99) The words to “get her ole man's supper”, (*UTC*, 17) followed by anxious interest over a stew-pan and anon with grave consideration lifting the cover of a bake-kettle (*UTC*, 17) – reveal three essential features of this woman: she has a gentle sense of humor, she is a good cook and, most importantly, she loves her husband deeply and tenderly. Christina Zwarg claims that Chloe's role is a role of a nurturer. (*UTC*, 572) Not only does Chloe love Tom, she loves her whole family and to care of its members seems to be highly important to her. However, this family well-being is interrupted by the report that Tom is supposed to be sold to a trader. To imagine fully what it means to Chloe, it is essential to analyze her

situation: she is a slave, therefore, a person lacking the freedom. Her family and the cabin where they live that give her a certain piece of freedom – or, at least, a sense of freedom. And the family - the center of Chloe's universe - is now supposed to be divided. It is only one person who has to leave, but for a family woman like Chloe it must be a severe blow, as if a part of herself was taken away from her. However, she can do nothing about it – she is a slave and it is her duty to obey her masters and to relinquish Tom. The only thing she can do is to deal with the sorrow. And although she is later allowed (by Mrs. Shelby) to work in Louisville as a confectioner and to save the money for Tom's redemption, Aunt Chloe and Uncle Tom are not reunited any more. (Sundquist 1993b, 149) Tom dies at Legree's place and poor Chloe has to deal with his demise again; however, now there is no hope for her to see him ever again.

Aunt Chloe is treated well by Mr. and Mrs. Shelby; she does not have to work hard. Nonetheless, other slaveholders are not so nice. Simon Legree, for example, owns a female slave called Lucy. She has to sacrifice herself physically, she has to work hard although in a condition of great suffering, trembling and wavering. At the last point of exhaustion, she faints and Sambo, Legree's black servant, takes a pin from his coat-sleeve and buries it to the head in her forehead to wake her up; then he commands her to go back to work. (*UTC*, 305 - 306) Surely, to work in such conditions means to be able to self-sacrifice; to be able to sacrifice one's health, in fact. Again, as in Chloe's case: Lucy has no other choice, she has to obey. She is a slave and this is her duty.

Some of the cases of making sacrifices described in this chapter are voluntary, some of them are enforced. In any event, they prove that the heroines of *UTC* have the strength to fight for what they consider the right thing.

4. The Kitchen as the Woman Sphere of Competence

The thirteenth chapter provides a description of the Quaker settlement whose inhabitants help Eliza to recover and hide before keeping on escaping to Canada. Not only does this chapter show the reader the Quaker way of living; it also reveals a lot about the role of the women and about the importance of their presence in the whole novel.

It is not difficult to answer the question why Stowe chose Quakers to shelter

Eliza. Quakers (or the Religious Society of Friends) became the first group to organize an opposition to slavery. (Eisenstark and Weber, 4) They were active in supporting the rights of African Americans. Also (this information is crucial for answering the question above), Quakers helped escaped slaves (Eisenstark and Weber, 63)

The very first paragraph of the chapter is a description of a kitchen. In fact, the kitchen seems to be the center of life in the Quaker settlement. The same room was also the center of Stowe's life; when her children were little, her life was filled with the labor of caring for them, running a household, cleaning and cooking. In spite of this all, she attempted to write *UTC*, often doing so at her kitchen table. (*UTC*, vii) The Quaker kitchen is very clean, neatly-painted and its yellow floor is without a particle of dust. (*UTC*, 116) The room is a domestically harmonious place. (Sundquist 1993b, 148) Such a description evokes a picture of a painstakingly maintained kitchen that is under the rule of a woman. Even the furniture is somehow feminine (or, better to say, maternal). One of the chairs, for example, is large, old and motherly; its wide arms breathe hospitable invitation. (*UTC*, 116)

A few paragraphs later, the reader meets Rachel Halliday. According to Stowe, Rachel is the embodiment of the word "mother". (*UTC*, 117) At this moment, it is proper to think of the term "sanctity of motherhood and the family" again (it has already been used on the page fourteen). Rachel Halliday makes this idea manifest and complete. Her domestic acts (such as preparing or serving breakfast) appear sacramental, her meals a communion analogue of Edenic unity. (Rosenthal, 49)

The second woman in the room is Eliza Harris and the third appears after a while: Ruth Stedman, a little short, round woman with a cheery, blooming face, around twenty-five years old. (*UTC*, 117)

All these women are mothers and it is interesting to compare them. Rachel, fifty-five or sixty years old, with her maternal appearance and gentle, loving nature (*UTC*, 116) represents wisdom and serenity. Ruth is the personification of merry, cheerful youth. And Eliza, as old as Ruth, stands for youth as well, and, because of all she has gone through, also sadness. She is pale and thin, with sorrow in her eyes; her girlish heart has become firm and old under the discipline of deep grief. (*UTC*, 116)

Rachel Halliday controls the kitchen and everybody in the room moves obediently to her gentle requests. (*UTC*, 121) Rachel's kitchen is the idyllic center of

Stowe's novel (Sundquist 1993b, 91) and the center of the kitchen is Rachel. In the essay *Domestic Individualism: Imagining Self Nineteenth-Century America*, Gillian Brown analyzes the issue of Stowe's perception of the ideal world, which is presented metaphorically in *UTC* by Rachel's kitchen:

Rachel's "simple, overflowing kindness" defines the perfect home, and that kindness includes helping runaway slaves. This defiance of the Fugitive Slave Law demonstrates the commitment of the Quaker community to God's love and familial feeling over man's law. In Rachel's kitchen the boys and girls share domestic duties under their mother's guidance, while their father engages in "the anti-patriarchal operation of shaving" [p. 103] [...] In Stowe's model home, domesticity is matriarchal and antinomian, a new government as well as a protest against patriarchy and its manifestations in slavery. [...] Her domestic advice carries an addendum to the household practices Beecher assigned to women: the duty of women to oppose slavery and the law that that upholds it. (Rosenthal, 49 – 50)

Stowe's idea of the new society was that it would not be controlled by men, but by women. Consequently, instead of placing it in the government, the courts of law, factories or marketplace, Stowe relocates the center of power in American life in the kitchen. (*UTC*, 522)

This idea of the authoress of *UTC* is connected with the anti-patriarchal role of the men: Stowe hoped that the bright reverse image of a man (represented by the Simon Halliday) would accompany the regenerative transformation of America. (Elliott 1991, 144 - 145) However, Simeon Halliday is not the only man in the novel who acts in the anti-patriarchal way. There is a remark in *The Madwoman in the Attic* according to which Uncle Tom can be identified as a stereotypical Victorian heroine – domestic, pious and self-sacrificing. (482) Some male characters' behavior even reminds of rather female manners. When Sambo and Quimbo, Legree's black savage servants trained in brutality and savageness as well as in cruelty and hardness, beat Tom to the point of death, they are suddenly moved by his prayers. They moan that they have been awfully wicked to him and then they weep (*UTC*, 359) which does not seem to be a typical masculine reaction.

Dinah, the stubborn and capricious head cook of the St. Clare family, supervises a kitchen too, but apart from Rachel's kitchen, Dinah's kitchen is rather disorganized. There is a long discussion between Miss Ophelia and Dinah in the chapter "Miss

Ophelia's Experiences and Opinions", during which it gradually emerges that Dinah uses diverse drawers and cupboards as places for hiding her hair-combs, old shoes or ribbons (instead of putting dishes or cutlery there), nutmegs are kept almost everywhere throughout the room or that she wraps up meat in a tablecloth and lights her pipe in the kitchen. Such an approach is regarded as unacceptable by Miss Ophelia; she decides to restore order in the room. Dinah is aggrieved by that because as a slave woman who functions as a cook, she asserts her agency in the kitchen. Being a slave, she has no right over her own body, she has no voice; and by this agency, by her control over the kitchen, she affirms her right to become a speaking subject. (Abarca, 140 - 141)

Gillian Brown's opinion is that the character of Dinah serves as a symbol of the intrusion of the market economy into the privacy of home. Stowe uses Dinah's promiscuous housekeeping to show how slavery disrupts the cult of domesticity and undermines women's housework by bringing the confusion of the marketplace into the center of the family shelter – into the kitchen. (Abarca, 140 - 141)

It is essential, however, to remember that it is not literally Dinah's kitchen. Since Dinah is the servant of the St. Clare family, the kitchen belongs to the St. Clare family – or, more precisely, to the lady of house – to Marie St. Clare. In this work, it has been said that Marie is not a very good mother. Now, it is the time to add: nor is she a very good housewife. Housekeepers such as Mrs. Shelby are capable of producing a harmonious and orderly system; Marie St. Clare (being inactive, improvident and unsystematic) is not such a housekeeper, nor was her mother before her. Therefore, it cannot be expected "that servants trained under her care should not be so likewise." (*UTC*, 179) To Ophelia, Dinah's (that means Marie's) slovenly kitchen suggests moral laxity. In the chapter "Miss Ophelia's Experiences and Opinions" (however humorous it might seem), Stowe tries to show her point that domestic disorder reflects moral disorder. (Rosenthal, 109) Stowe could not choose a better person to demonstrate moral disorder on than Marie St. Clare. Since a lot has been already said about her hysteric nature in this work, it is not necessary to repeat it again. To sum up this paragraph shortly: Dinah may be careless, but it is primarily Marie's fault that the kitchen is so slovenly; after all, if she was alarmed by the state of the kitchen, she would hire somebody more competent than Dinah. Marie is the mistress and she wants her slaves to be obedient, so if she ordered Dinah to clean up, she would have to clean up; the untidy

kitchen is mainly the result of Marie's indifference.

Meredith E. Abarca (the authoress of the book *Voices in the Kitchen: Views of Food and the World from Working Class Mexican and Mexican American Women*) assesses Dinah more positively. She does not see her as a careless person, but rather as a shrewd rebel doing things her own way. In Abarca's point of view, the head cook of the St. Clare family is innovative when hiding varied things in the drawers: Dinah "recreates a new purpose and function for each drawer." (142) In Abarca's interpretation, this manner is not sloppiness; instead, it is Dinah's resistance to the boundaries established by her master. (142) By doing things her own way (the way that Miss Ophelia finds most peculiar), Dinah "constructs the kitchen into her *own* space." (142) Additionally, Abarca sees a certain system in the chaos of Marie's kitchen – she perceives Dinah as a person who rules the logic of her kitchen space. By the disorganization of the room, the cook expresses her affiliation with a different culture (and to a different cultural practice), to a culture that refuses to be subsumed by dominant culture. (142 - 143)

The person who has to set the kitchen aright is Miss Ophelia. (Sundquist 1993b, 23) Ophelia's character has been analyzed in this work, so it is sufficient only to remind that although full of prejudices at the beginning, in the end she turns to disagree bitterly with slavery (she tries her best to help Rosa not to be whipped and she becomes to like Topsy). It is surely not a coincidence that the kitchen belonging to Marie, who is one of the advocates of slavery, must be saved by someone who becomes an opponent of slavery.

Dinah is similar to Chloe in that way that they are both black women, slaves and cooks. Stowe provides the main difference between them: Chloe, in contrast to Dinah, is trained and methodical. Their kitchens have a common feature – they are usually full of people. In Dinah kitchen, there are "various members of that rising race which a Southern household abounds" (*UTC*, 180), helping to shell peas or peel potatoes; Dinah calls them "young uns". (*UTC*, 183) Chloe is surrounded by the members of her family (Tom, two woolly-headed boys and a baby) and often also young George Shelby. Both cooks have their kitchen full of people, but whereas in Dinah's case it contributes to bigger chaos, Aunt Chloe is perfectly able to deal with it. They govern their kitchens in completely different ways. This may be connected with the fact that their mistresses are

totally different too. The connection between Marie and Dinah (and their kitchen) has already been explained. Similarly, the relationship of Mrs. Shelby and Chloe can clarify the state of Chloe's kitchen. Apart from Dinah's kitchen, which is situated in the house, Chloe's kitchen is in the cabin, not in the house; nevertheless, she cooks for the members of the Shelby family, she is their cook (and their property, in fact). Mrs. Shelby differs from Marie as a housekeeper; she is one of the women that have "domestic talent". (*UTC*, 179) Thereby, it is not surprising that Aunt Chloe, one of her black servants, is systematic and used to follow an orderly system of domestic habits. Via the characters of Dinah and Chloe, Stowe demonstrates the strength and weakness of their owners – she points out Mrs. Shelby's ability to manage her household and Marie's inability to do the same. No matter if black or white, every woman can be a good or a bad housekeeper. Not astoundingly, in the example of Marie and Mrs. Shelby, the woman who disapproves slavery (although having some slaves – whom, on the other hand, she treats as the members of her own family) is the good homemaker and the woman who supports slavery (and her behavior towards her slaves is cruel) is the bad one.

Eric J. Sundquist believes that all these kitchens have a specific function in the novel. According to him, Dinah's, Rachel's and Legree's kitchen form a certain scale, a scale which he calls "a range of home models". (Sundquist 1993b, 23) The range runs from the maternal, ordered Quaker home and kitchen of Rachel Halliday, down through Dinah's chaotic kitchen to the drunken hell of Legree's house. Sundquist states that this range of home models displays the gradual failure of maternal influence. (Sundquist 1993b, 23) Moreover, – because there is no reason for omitting Chloe and her kitchen – another meaning appears more visibly after adding Chloe's kitchen in the scale. The range Rachel's kitchen – Chloe's kitchen – Dinah's kitchen – Legree's house reveals even more visibly how slavery corrupts household. The peak of the scale symbolizes the "Edenic" (Rosenthal, 49) kitchen in the Quaker settlement, where slavery is not tolerated; conversely, the members of the settlement help runaway slaves. Rachel is followed by Chloe whose mistress behaves with love and respect to her slaves. Dinah's kitchen is not assessed as well as the previous one because in comparison to Chloe's kitchen, it is messy and Marie, in contrast to Mrs. Shelby, approves slavery and treats her servants badly. The lowest position is occupied by Legree, the slave trader who

owns Cassy and Tom and is much worse than Marie in every way. His home is of “desolate and uncomfortable” (*UTC*, 298) appearance.

Elliott speaks about the “contamination of economic forces” (1988, 361) By showing how cash dominate the slave system, Stowe’s effort is to separate family and home from the contamination. (Elliott 1988, 361) Again, the range described above can be used to explain this influence of economy; however, by “economy” is meant only the part of economy that is connected with slavery. It is not primarily money as such, it is money made by slavery that has a malignant impact on household.

Parini claims that the women in the novel practice politics in the parlor, abolition in the sheds by plantation, and oratory from sick beds. Thus, Stowe explodes the idea that women’s sphere involves only family and domestic matters. (IV, 133) Nevertheless, the kitchen is a crucial symbol in *UTC*. Surely, the women in the novel do not appear only in the kitchen, they might practice politics, oratory or abolition in various places, but the kitchen remains the symbol of woman care and control. The book is matriarchal; (Elliott 1988, 305) mothers in the book are sacred and are the center of the center of the family life – of the kitchen.

The kitchen does not automatically represent a prisonlike place (Abarca, 140). On the contrary - in *UTC*, it is the place of woman freedom, the place controlled by women who can govern it at their will. Stowe transforms the established image of the kitchen as the place where women are captured into the place where women are free and can give orders. It is their sphere of competence and women seem to be superior to men there. This is explicit especially in Dinah’s case – Augustine St. Clare tries to “induce systematic regulation” (*UTC*, 181) in her kitchen, but his intension is undermined by Dinah’s actions. (Abarca, 142) Augustine, although a man, is defeated by Dinah; she is on the higher position in the kitchen, no matter that he is her master. Moreover, Stowe uses the kitchen as a tool to reflect the housekeeper’s character.

5. Conclusion

The theoretical part of this work summarizes the basic facts about the authoress of *UTC* and about the novel. It deals briefly with Stowe’s life and it explains why her novel became so important and successful. The crucial terms, such as slavery, sentimental

novel or feminism are clarified. The history of slavery in the USA is analyzed and because its history is connected to the Civil war, a brief outline of this conflict is provided as well. Additionally, reactions of some critics are added in order to show how the book was accepted by the experts.

The analytical part consists of three parts. All of them deal with female characters who are the inseparable elements of the novel. The first reason for their importance is evident: the authoress of the book was a woman. Secondly, *UTC* is a feminist text which implies that women have a significant function in it.

The aim of the second chapter is to reveal which factors influence the opinion of the women in *UTC* on slavery because the particular role of the individual characters proceeds mainly from this opinion. The heroines' point of view is defined by their religious belief or the background they live in. Women who are slaves disagree with slavery because they have gone through the severities that slavery is connected with. It is primarily the partition of families and the resulting loss of children or husband. Additionally, some slave women undergo physical punishment or are abused sexually. Slaves like Eliza or Cassy hate slavery simply because they know what it means to be a slave, to suffer from this social status. Some female slaves find consolation in the faith in God which makes them stronger and more resistant to their harsh fate. Cassy, despite the fact that she abandoned faith when she lost her children, finally finds it again thanks to Uncle Tom.

On the opposite side of the scale, there are white women who are free. However, this fact does not automatically mean that they are the advocates of slavery. In fact, the majority of free women in *UTC* disapprove slavery because it is in conflict with their religious belief, they perceive slavery unchristian. Also, their background may support their bad point of view on the institution of slavery. It is, again, especially the separation of slave mothers and their children that even free women (women, who never experienced such a situation in person) regard as inhuman. The only negative woman character (speaking about the main characters in the story), Marie St. Clare, is described as a corrupted person, used to be cruel to her servants. Despite the fact that she is of the opposite opinion on slavery than the rest of the female characters in *UTC*, this opinion is caused mainly by the background she has lived in as well. She approves slavery because her class considers it perfectly normal. Eva, on the other hand, is more affected

by her understanding of Christian doctrine; Ophelia follows the opinion of the community she was brought up in, but Eva's opinions persuade her to change her own attitude. The Quakers (Rachel Halliday and Ruth Stedman) live in the peaceful community where the role of family is absolutely crucial; thereby, it is unthinkable for them to stand by the institution of slavery which has the power to divide families. In Mrs. Bird's case, her background and their religious belief are complementary.

One of the main features of the women characters in the novel *UTC* is the idea of making sacrifices (which is the issue of the third chapter of this work). The heroines in *UTC* are able to suffer for their children, for love or because they have to since they are treated cruelly as slaves. Some of the women in the novel offer their life for a higher purpose (like Eva St. Clare whose self-sacrifice has a religious meaning; in fact, she plays the role of a feminine Christ); other heroines sacrifice their freedom or material wealth. Some of the acts of sacrifice could be seen as the act of despair, like Eliza's famous escape: she knows she can die, but she does not give up and crosses the river anyway. She does not care about the consequences and risks her own life to save her son's freedom. On the contrary, Eva's self-sacrifice is not the act of despair, it seems to be a gradual demise, quite lengthy, which gives the girl the time to spread her message of peace and to show the way to the moral life. This message is immortalized by her death. Sometimes, the women are capable of killing their own child to save it from living a life of a slave, as in Cassy's case. Similarly, if Eliza died when crossing the river, her son would die too; however, it would still mean to rescue him because he could not be a slave then. Simply, Eliza and Cassy do everything to prevent their children from becoming the slaves of a cruel master, even if it costs the children's life. Cassy can also be used as an example of a woman who is able to relinquish her freedom in the name of love – she sacrifices her freedom because of the father of her children whom she loves very much. Eliza behaves in a similar way, when staying willingly with the owners she respects and likes. Mrs. Shelby is capable of relinquishing a part of her wealth. She decides to sell a thing that is precious to her in order to save somebody else. In her case, it would be pointless to sacrifice like Eva. On the contrary, more money is needed in the situation; thereby, material sacrifice could be more helpful. Miss Ophelia, on the other hand, has to sacrifice herself in a totally different way: she has to get over the disgust she feels towards Topsy. Later, influenced by her niece's thoughts, she

manages to overcome the prejudices. Moreover, she actually likes Topsy in the end. Aunt Chloe and Lucy are both female slaves; one of them has to relinquish her beloved husband and the second one has to work to the point of exhaustion, to touch the bottom of her physical strength. Rachel's and Mrs. Bird's disobedience to the law that forbids people from helping runaway slaves can result in a serious problem - to go against the law means to expose oneself to the danger of being imprisoned. Nevertheless, they do not hesitate to take the risk. Marie St. Clare does not sacrifice anything, but the motive of making sacrifices is present even in her case. She perceives herself as a martyr whose self-sacrifice is the biggest. To sum up, the feature of self-sacrifice appears in varied forms, but is common to all these heroines.

In the fourth chapter, the author of this work engages in the symbol of kitchen which Stowe uses as a tool for showing the significance of the feminine (maternal) influence as well as for the harmful impact of slavery on family life. In Stowe's conception of female characters, the kitchen plays a remarkable role: the ability of the women characters to manage the kitchen (and, as a result, the whole household), helps the authoress to describe their nature. In the fourth chapter, the author of this work tries to point out the connection of the heroines' nature with the state of their kitchen together with the opinion these characters have on slavery. These three factors (kitchen, nature, opinion) complement each other and contribute to creating the whole character of each heroine.

The final conclusion of this bachelor thesis is that the role of the female characters in *UTC* is determined by their opinion on slavery which originates in their religious belief and their background; the feature they have in common is self-sacrifice in various forms (even Marie, who is the most egocentric female character in the novel deals, at least in her own eyes, with this feature) and the kitchen is the important symbol that provides better understanding of the heroines.

Resumé

Druhá polovina devatenáctého století patří k nejbouřlivějším kapitolám dějin USA. Je tomu tak především kvůli krvavému konfliktu trvajícím od roku 1861 do roku 1865 – Občanské válce. Její vypuknutí bylo následkem rostoucího napětí mezi státy Unie a Konfederace a v počátcích byla především bojem za udržení Unie, které hrozilo rozdrobení se na více malých států. Nicméně postupem času se do hry dostala i otázka otroctví, a to z velmi jednoduchého důvodu: Jih z otroctví značně profitoval, proto porazit otroctví znamenalo porazit Konfederaci. Ačkoli otroctví by zřejmě i bez války bylo odsouzeno k zániku, Občanská válka jeho rozklad pomohla značně urychlit.

Zvyšující se nechuť k instituci otroctví nezačala válkou, nýbrž se vyvíjela po dlouhou dobu před ní. Abolicionistické hnutí, které proti otroctví ostře vystupovalo, bylo ve svých začátcích spíše záležitostí morální, postupně se přetavilo ve věc politickou. V období prudkých změn, kterými americká společnost procházela, se dostávalo ke slovu i téma feminismu a ženy mohly být na veřejnosti slyšet více, než bylo dosud možné.

Jednou z žen, která se rozhodla promluvit prostřednictvím knihy, byla i Harriet Beecher Stoweová, narozená roku 1811 v Litchfieldu ve státě Connecticut. Přestože později sama popírala své zásluhy, upřít jí je nikdo nemůže, stejně jako slávu, kterou jí *Chaloupka strýčka Toma* přinesla. Kniha reflektuje poutavou formou problémy tehdejší doby a díky faktu, že se jedná o sentimentální román, jenž apeluje na čtenářovy city, dostala se do podvědomí tehdejších lidí s nebyvalou rychlostí a úspěchem – byla nejprodávanější knihou hned po Bibli. Zároveň se jedná o text feministický, a není proto divu, že ženy hrají v románu důležitou roli.

Obecně se dá říci, že v knize je více kladných hrdinek než záporných. Ať už se jedná přímo o vzory ctnosti a prototypy matky nebo o úsměvné figury, společné je jim to, že buď jejich náboženské přesvědčení či vliv prostředí, v němž žijí (popřípadě oba jmenované faktory) jim brání souhlasit s otroctvím, způsobují, že je otroctví neslučitelné s jejich morálním uvědoměním. Otrokyně jako Cassy či Eliza s otroctvím nesouhlasí, neboť osobně prožily některé z hrůz, jež otroctví doprovází. Paní Shelbyová sice několik otroků vlastní, avšak její chování k nim je více než vstřícné; ani ona otroctví neschvaluje. Stejně jako manželka senátora Birda a Rachel Hallidayová

pokládá otroctví za instituci, jež je svou povahou v rozporu s křesťanstvím.

Výrazným protipólem je těmto kladným postavám vysloveně záporná postava Marie St. Clare, která, opět následkem prostředí, v němž vyrůstala a žije, má oproti ostatním ženám převrácené hodnoty. Přepych a rozmazlování způsobily, že je sobeckou až krutou ženou beze špetky porozumění ke svým sloužícím, ženou schvalující otroctví beze zbytku. Sestra jejího muže, Ofélie, je ze začátku pokrytcem, který sice s otroctvím nesouhlasí, otroků samotných se ale štítí. Vlivem své neteře Evy je však v průběhu děje proměněna v ženu, která neváhá vzít pod svou ochranu malou otrokyni Topsy, vzorně se o ni stará a touží jí darovat svobodu. Proto, ač není zpočátku bezchybná, nemůže být Ofélie považována za postavu zápornou; ne tak, jako Marie.

Eva, Mariina dcera, je ovlivněna faktem, že tráví poměrně značné množství času se svým otcem. Jeho přístup k otrokům se výrazně liší od přístupu Marie; zatímco ta je nemilosrdná, Augustine se snaží jejich trestání vyhýbat. Není proto divu, že Eva vidí své sloužící jako bytosti sobě rovné. Navíc je silně nábožensky založená a její víra ji vede k lásce ke všem bez rozdílu barvy pleti.

Její matka mezi ostatními hrdinkami vyniká (opět v záporném smyslu slova) i v dalším výrazném rysu, jenž je vlastní ženským postavám, které Stoweová ve svém románu stvořila. Tímto rysem je schopnost přinášet oběti, přičemž ovšem nemusí jít vždy nutně o oběť nejvyšší (dobrovolně se vzdát vlastního života pro dobro jiné osoby). Zatímco kladné hrdinky jsou schopny oběti, Marie vidí samu sebe jako mučednici, ve skutečnosti se ovšem musí spíš její okolí obětovat pro ni.

Mariino egocentrické vystupování je v přímém kontrastu s chováním její dcery, malé Evy. Podle některých autorů dokonce Eva hraje v příběhu roli ženského Krista. Za života je plna lásky ke svým bližním, Tomem přirovnávána k andělu. Její snad až přecitlivělá povaha však nemůže vydržet vědomí, že kvůli otroctví takové množství lidí trpí; Eva vstřebává bolestiplné dojmy, jež v ní krutost otroctví vyvolává, až se u ní objeví první známky jakéhosi vysílení. To se pozvolna stupňuje, nakonec dívenku opouštějí poslední zbytky životní síly a ona umírá. Jakkoli podivná se Evina nemoc zdá, ještě podivnější jsou její sdělení o tom, že musí odejít, ale nebojí se; odejde ráda, když tím pomůže zastavit všechno utrpení, potažmo otroctví. V tomto ohledu Eva skutečně jedná jako jakási obdoba Krista. Její smrt potom činí její poselství míru a lásky nesmrtelným. Ne všechny postavy se dokáží obětovat tak krajním způsobem, přesto

však se u nich schopnost přinášet oběti v různých formách vyskytuje. Paní Birdová a Rachel Hallidayová neváhají ve jménu věci, kterou pokládají za správnou obětovat svou trestní bezúhonnost. Porušování zákonů by jim sice mohlo způsobit nemalé problémy, avšak tyto ženy přesto neváhají následovat hlas svého svědomí a podat pomocnou ruku těm, kdo to potřebují, tedy uprchlým otrokům.

Oběť paní Shelbyové se v porovnání kupříkladu s Elizinou obětí zdá malicherná, avšak přesto má svůj význam. V jejím případě by ani nemělo smysl se obětovat tak, jako třeba Eva St. Clare. Prodejem svých hodinek hodlá paní Shelbyová získat finanční částku, která by mohla přispět ke zlepšení její a manželovy finanční situace; tím pádem by nemuseli prodávat Elizina syna. Z tohoto činu je vidět, že i žena uvyklá jistému pohodlí je schopna se něčeho vzdát, aby pomohla jiným. Z jejích slov je navíc patrné, že utrpení, jež otroctví působí jejím služebným, je pro ni samu bolestné.

Jednou ze služebných paní Shelbyové je také kuchařka Chloe, jejíž manžel je Tom. Jakožto otrokyně nemůže Chloe dělat nic jiného, než přihlížet, jak je její manžel prodán a odveden pryč. Její oběť spočívá v tom, že se musí vyrovnat se ztrátou blízkého člověka, otce svých dětí, kterého již nikdy více nespatří.

Jiná otrokyně, Lucy (patřící Šimonu Legreemu) přináší oběť tím, že dře na plantáži do úmoru, i přesto, že je naprosto vyčerpaná. Stejně jako Chloe, Eliza i Cassy je pouhý otrok, tedy majetek jiného člověka. Musí se proto podřídit okolnostem a pokusit se snést veškeré těžkosti, které s sebou status otroka přináší.

Stěžejní myšlenkou Stoweové byla v románu idea rodiny přecházející až do glorifikace, svatosti a nedotknutelnosti rodinného života. Centrem rodinného života je kuchyň, která se v *Chaloupce strýčka Toma* stává důležitým symbolem. Je třeba si uvědomit, že v konceptu kuchyně tak, jak jej pojala Stoweová, se již nejedná o zažitou představu jakéhosi vězení, místa, kde je žena držena silou povinnosti. Naopak, v kuchyni se žena stává svobodnou, má právo udílet příkazy, vytvářet skrze kuchyni celý domov. Dokonce i mužské slovo má zde menší váhu než ženské.

V románu může čtenář narazit hned na několik domácností. Podle některých kritiků Stoweová pestrou řadou kuchyní, které jsou v románu popsány, ukazuje, jak ekonomický vliv narušuje chod domácnosti a že tyto dvě sféry by od sebe měly být odděleny. Avšak je nutno dodat, že nejde primárně o peníze jako takové, co autorka pokládá za škodlivé; jde o komplexnější představu. Otrokářství, jakožto instituce, která

obchoduje s lidskými bytostmi, je ve své podstatě založena na peněžních operacích. Takové peníze považuje Stoweová za špatné. Fakt, že otroctví působí na domácnost zhoubně, je dobře vidět v řadě od idylického obydlí Rachel přes skoro stejně poklidné, avšak s pronikajícím vlivem otroctví v případě Chloe, dále přes neuspořádanou kuchyni Diny (jejíž paní není nikdo jiný než Marie), až po surového otrokáře Legreeho - s narůstajícím vlivem otroctví klesá kvalita vedení kuchyně od ideálu až po její nejhorší možnou podobu.

Eric J. Sundquist uvádí škálu kuchyní, na níž demonstruje, kterak s mizející péčí ženské ruky dochází nenávratně k rozkladu. Jeho stupnice zahrnuje kuchyň Ráchel Hallidayové, Dininu kuchyň a kuchyň Šimona Legreeho. Sundquist však do své stupnice nepřidal Chloe, jež se stará o svou malou domácnost příkladně, avšak je sama majetkem, její rodinný život je ohrožován nebezpečím, které představuje otroctví. Bez Chloe škála uváděná Sundquistem dobře demonstruje autorův záměr: ukázat, že bez ženské péče kvalita vedení kuchyně upadá. Avšak jsou-li využity příklady Rachel, Diny a Legreeho, není důvod, proč by neměla stupnice zahrnovat i Chloinu kuchyň; spolu s ní potom spíš než upadající vliv ženské ruky škála ukazuje zkázonosný vliv otroctví na domácnost.

Stowe rovněž prostřednictvím kuchyně reflektuje charakter její majitelky. Například v Dinině případě nejde ani tak o kritiku černé kuchařky, jako spíš o kritiku její paní – Marie St. Clare. Je totiž především její vina, že kuchyně Diny je v tak chaotickém stavu; jako paní domu jí náleží právo nespokojeného sluhu prodat a pořídit si jiného. Jistě není náhoda, že Mariinu zanedbanou kuchyň musí uvést do pořádku Ofélie. Jinými slovy: to, co zastánkyně otroctví, záporná postava Marie, dělá špatně, musí být napraveno ženou, která vidí otroctví negativně (a ačkoli se zpočátku k otrokům chová s odstupem až odporem, nakonec je schopna překonat své předsudky a změnit svůj postoj vůči nim). Dina se v několika směrech podobá Chloe: obě jsou ženy tmavé pleti, obě jsou kuchařky; jejich kuchyň je věčně plná lidí a v obojím případě tato kuchyň spadá pod velení jiné osoby. Na rozdíl od kruté Marie je však Chloina majitelka k otrokům velmi milá. Chloina kuchyň vyhlíží značně upraveněji než Dinina, paní Shelbyová tak nemůže být kritizována takovou měrou jako Marie.

Fakt, zda paní domu podporuje, či nepodporuje otroctví (kterýžto názor je dán jejím náboženským cítěním a zázemím), se odráží v její schopnosti vést domácnost.

Stowe tak jednotlivé složky navzájem propojuje a dokresluje tak jednotlivé ženské postavy v jejich celistvosti.

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