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To Be a Female Slave: American Slavery and Women

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- **<http://www.slaveryinamerica.org/history/overview.htm>**

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ANNOTATION

This work focuses on the analysis of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe and slave narratives by Harriet Ann Jacobs and by Sojourner Truth. The main aim of the paper is to show how slavery disrupts slave mother-child relationships. It is explained who is depicted to be responsible for the intrusion into slave families, and how mothers act when the bond to their children is endangered. The paper also deals with literary techniques the authors use to emphasize the brutality of slavery as this would affect Americans' position on slavery.

KEYWORDS

Uncle Tom's Cabin, Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, Narrative of Sojourner Truth, American slavery, slave mother-child relationships

NÁZEV

Otroctví v Americe a ženy

ANOTACE

Tato práce se zaměřuje na analýzu *Chaloupky strýčka Toma* od Harriet Beecher Stoweové a vyprávění uprchlých otroků od Harriet Ann Jacobsové a od Sojourner Truth. Hlavním cílem je rozebrat jakým způsobem otroctví narušuje pouta mezi otrokyněmi a jejich dětmi. Zejména je tato práce zaměřena na to, koho autorky viní za narušení rodinných vztahů otroků a také tomu, jak se matky chovají, když jsou jejich děti v ohrožení. Část práce taktéž pojednává o literárních prostředcích, které autorky používají k tomu, aby zdůraznily brutalitu otroctví, a tak změnila pozici Američanů k otroctví.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

Uncle Tom's Cabin, Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, Narrative of Sojourner Truth, otroctví v Americe, vztahy mezi otrokyněmi a jejich dětmi

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INTRODUCTION

In the nineteenth-century America, slavery represented a major source of brutality, pain, cruelty and injustice in humans' lives. Nonetheless, harsh working and living conditions, severe methods of punishment, dissociation of slaves' families and consequent psychological deprivation, which occurred on daily basis in slaves' lives, provoked a furious reaction of many people. Those who strongly disagreed with the condition inflicted upon slaves attempted to end slavery. One of the ways was to display the horrors of slavery in literature as this would infuriate the Americans who would consequently fight for the end of this peculiar institution.

The paper is dedicated to the analysis of *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, the *Narrative of Sojourner Truth* and *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, three literary pieces written on slavery in the United States. The goal of this thesis is to show how slavery influenced slave mother-child relationships and what mothers are able to do to protect their children. Furthermore, it aims to show how the authors emphasized the brutality of slavery in their literary works.

The theoretical part briefly covers the historical background of the publications which portray slavery in the US. It clarifies the term slavery and deals with the origins and development of the system. It gradually proceeds to abolitionism which is clarified as well and it is mentioned how the abolitionists worked in order to cause a change in society. This movement is examined for the authors were anti-slavery activists and with their novel and slave narratives they aimed to awaken the American public to the conditions of people in bondage. Furthermore, it provides short description of the genres of the literary works, namely sentimental novel and slave narrative. Lastly, it summarizes basic facts about Harriet Beecher Stowe, Harriet Ann Jacobs and Sojourner Truth.

The analytical part consists of three chapters which deal with the influence of slave market on slave mother-child relationships. Firstly, it is discussed who the authors blame for the dissociation of slave families in their literary works. Secondly, the depiction of intrusion into families is looked at in greater detail. The next chapter of analytical part then examines which literary techniques and style the authors employed in order to be successful when persuading the public about the brutality and immorality of slavery. Lastly, the findings are summarized and specific features in the situation of mothers are pointed out.

1 THE BACKGROUND

1.1 Slavery in the United States

Since the paper examines the relationship between slave mothers and their children and the way slavery affects them, it is essential to characterize slaves' lives briefly and also outline the historical and literary situation in the United States in which the analyzed books were published. Slavery, which is addressed in the paper, is according to *Encyclopedia Britannica* defined as a condition in which one human being is owned by another. This fact was crucial for the ownership indicated the social status of slaves who were on the same level as property; therefore they were completely subordinated to their masters. Slaves were usually denied basic rights, for instance they could not leave their masters, were not allowed to choose their partner, hold any property, were not allowed to learn how to read and write and so on. Furthermore, slaves were held against their will and were obliged to obey their masters who usually took advantage of the fact that there is no legal protection of slaves and forced them to work under unfavorable conditions long hours for no wage at all.

As a result of slaves' position in society, their lives were full of pain and suffering. Namely, their living standards as well as their diet were very poor and this was reflected in their ill health for they suffered from malnutrition and many illnesses. Moreover, most of the slave owners and traders severely punished disobedience and usually subjected their slaves to abuse and torture. The suffering was not only physical but also mental because of the emotional deprivation which was caused by the division of families. Most slaveholders were disrespectful and often did not care about family relationships and they frequently separated families for it brought them profits. Gaspar and Hine assert that the most frequent reasons for separation were sale, inheritance and the mobility of slave owners. (Gaspar and Hine 1996, 13)¹ Slaves whose families were not torn apart did not have easy lives either. Parents could not take proper care of their children; mothers were not allowed to recover after pregnancy and childbirth and were soon forced to toil again on plantation. Their children soon experienced hard work at very low age and missed the attention and care of their parents as they could not be with them all the time.

¹ A prevalent part of the thesis had been written before the citation norm was changed to Chicago Manual of Style. Thus, with the consent of my supervisor, the author-date system is used in the paper as it is quite similar to ČSN ISO citation norm.

As far as the origins of slavery in the colonial America are concerned, slaves were transported to Virginia in 1619 for the very first time by Dutch settlers. (Schneider and Schneider 2007, 49) They were brought as indentured servants which meant that they were obliged to work for their employers for a fixed period of time to pay off the debt of their travel costs, and then they were freed. However, the Americans soon started to transport slaves against their will to the United States as the demand for cheap labor was increased. Southerners soon recognized the advantages of slavery and in 1641 Massachusetts was the first colony to legalize slavery. After that other Southern countries were gradually adopting the same practice. The Americans mostly brought slaves from the Caribbean, Africa and later they enacted a law of hereditary slavery, meaning that a child who was born to an enslaved mother followed her status. This proved to be very beneficial for slave owners as when slaves were accustomed to poor living conditions and hard work from an early age, they endured much more and lived longer than those who had to adapt to new conditions after very long and arduous journey on a ship from Africa or the Caribbean.

To understand the historical context of slavery in the US, it is important to note that the economic situation in the United States differed. While the economy in the Northern states was focusing on industry, Southerners were exercising their power in agriculture which was an ideal place for growing mostly cotton, sugar, rice and tobacco due to the warm climate. Plantations with these crops were cultivated by slaves who were forced to toil in very harsh environment, e. g. they had to pick up cotton in the scorching weather with no water for long hours under the supervision of a brutish overseer. The authors of the book *Slavery in America* claim that such working conditions were not appealing for free laborers thus the number of slaves was constantly rising. (Schneider and Schneider 2007, 50) For instance, when Alabama was settled in 1702, there were no more than 6,000 slaves in the entire colony but the number rose to 435,000 by 1860. (Miller et al. 1997, 38-39) In contrast, the slavery in the North was not so widespread and was ended sooner than in the South. It was because Northern economy focused on industry as it offered more profits and long winters were not suitable for agriculture. Additionally, many people, such as the Quakers, believed slavery was against human rights and to show that they did not own any slaves. After the American Revolution, Northerners enacted the Bill of Rights which guaranteed Americans their rights, for example they were promised equality before the law and parliament, the right not to be subjected to tyranny, the right not to be denied their liberty etc.

This made them conscious of the hypocrisy – they claimed liberty and equality and yet they enslaved blacks. These facts together with the rising abolitionist movement led to the end of slavery in 1804 in the North. However, the South did not take such steps and still profited from slavery as there were around four million slaves in the United States by 1860. (Schneider and Schneider 2007, 50)

The fear of the increasing number of slaves together with the spreading belief that slavery is immoral contributed to the strengthening of the abolitionist movement. According to James M. McPherson, a professor of History at Princeton University, the abolitionist is the "one who before the Civil War had agitated for the immediate, unconditional, and total abolition of slavery in the United States." (McPherson 1995, 4) The abolitionists employed a lot of methods to initiate the Americans about the immorality of slavery, namely they staged rebellions, made speeches against slavery, mailed pamphlets and published the shocking aspects of the institution in newspapers and literature. These efforts to end slavery redoubled after the enactment of Fugitive Slave Law in 1850 as this law allowed slave owners to recapture runaway slaves in the North and denied white Americans the right to help the fugitives. Especially the abolitionists were appalled by this situation because they believed that this made them the accomplices of slavery. That is why they strived hard to persuade the Americans about the inhumanity of slavery.

1.2 Harriet Beecher Stowe

One of the well-known abolitionists was Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811-1896), an American writer from Connecticut. Being horrified by the situation which is inflicted upon slaves, her moral response was to write openly against it. Stowe claims that her “heart was bursting with the anguish excited by the cruelty and injustice our nation was showing to the slave, and praying God to let me do a little and to cause my cry for them to be heard.” (Stowe in Ammons 1977, 161) Additionally, her family financial situation was bad so when her publisher made her an offer for writing, she accepted. In 1851-1852 *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* periodically came out in The National Era, an antislavery newspaper. (Ammons in Stowe 1994, ix) The story was very popular and as a result the novel soon came out in a book form bearing the name *Uncle Tom’s Cabin; or, Life Among the Lowly*. The novel met with an enormous success as the book sold more copies than any other book in the world except the Bible in the nineteenth century. (UTC, ix) This novel was so successful mostly because it brings the harsh realities of slavery before the public and it calls on them to question the injustice of slavery.

Furthermore, to the popularity of the book also contributed the fact that it is written in a sentimental style. This style is typical for nineteenth century domestic fiction and sentimental novel. *Encyclopedia Britannica* defines sentimental novel as “any novel that exploits the reader’s capacity for tenderness, compassion, or sympathy.” Stowe realized this style would be effective in having a moral impact on white middle-class audience especially mothers because they would react to the scenes that depicted forcibly divided families and other evil consequences of slavery. Even though some authors criticized the novel for its style (Crane 1996, 181), most of the Americans were immensely affected. For instance, an American congressman describes that he had been crying so much when reading the novel that he had to stop his railway journey. (Stowe 1994, viii) The novel led to the indignation among the American citizens and it eventually resulted in Civil War. After all, President Abraham Lincoln called Stowe as “the lady who started this great war.” (Stowe 1911, 203)

The issue of slave mothers as portrayed in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* is closely related to some of the events in Harriet Beecher Stowe’s life. She was born in Litchfield, Connecticut, in 1811, where she also grew up. Her family was very religious; her father was a Congregational minister and her five brothers later became ministers as well. (Elliott et al. 1988, 304) This fact is crucial

in Stowe's life because Christianity is reflected in her writing. She also placed her argument against slavery in a spiritual context and repeatedly addressed Christian mothers. (Robbins 2007, 23) When Stowe reached the age of five, her mother died and the pain Stowe felt helped her to identify with the pain experienced by African-American children and mothers who are sold apart under slavery. (Ammons in Stowe 1994, vii) This is one of the reasons why the indictment of the agony felt by the members of families is presented in the novel. In 1832, Stowe moved to Cincinnati, Ohio, where she witnessed the issues of slavery at close range. There she also encountered many fugitive slaves escaping from the bordering Kentucky whose first hand stories inspired her in writing. (Ammons in Stowe 1994, vii)

1.3 Slave Narratives

Not only white Americans but also many fugitive slaves themselves became anti-slavery activists after they escaped from the South. To raise the public awareness of the evils of slavery, the fugitives published stories about their lives in bondage. Audrey A. Fisch, the author of *The Cambridge Companion to the African American Slave Narrative*, claims that slave narratives were “an increasingly popular and effective political means of fighting slavery.” (Fisch 2007, 12) A slave narrative is a type of autobiography which firstly appeared at the end of the eighteenth century in the United States, and reached its popularity in the nineteenth century when the anti-slavery movement was spreading. According to *Encyclopedia Britannica*, slave narratives are accounts of slave’s life which were either written by the escaped slave personally or dictated to another author. They are considered as historical documents and are valued for their unique way of depiction as they are told from the perspective of slave’s first-hand experience and that is why they are also called “ego-documents.” They give us an authentic insight into the life of a slave with all its aspects, for it functions as a window to the “inside half” of the slave’s life. (Blassingame in Beardslee 1999, 38)

As far as the characteristics of slave narratives are concerned, this genre has some typical features. Being written from the chronological point of view, the biographies usually begin with the phrase “I was born” which is followed by the place and date of birth. (Bubíková 2011, 208; my translation) Most of the authors also mention how and when they learned about their condition of being only a slave and they depict its impact on them and their families. Then authors share the events of slave’s lives such as childhood, family life, master’s treatment, resistance to the slavery and potential escape to the free states. Finally, authors sometimes also mention the life in freedom which is still negatively influenced by the memories and fear from slavery. It is necessary to note that many works were not written by slaves themselves owing to the fact that it was prohibited by law to teach slaves to read and write because it might make them aware of their condition and revolt. That is why some slaves cooperated with white abolitionists in order to publish their biographies.

One of the most influential slave narratives is *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, an autobiography written by the African-American abolitionist Harriet Ann Jacobs (1813-1897). The

narrative was written under the pseudonym Linda Brent as Jacobs² was still afraid of her master who was threatening to recapture her in the North. The author was born in Edenton, North Carolina, as a slave. She was abused and oppressed by her master but in spite of all the suffering she did not give up her struggle for her and her children's freedom. After her escape, Jacobs became an abolitionist speaker and reformer in the North because she wanted to help those who were still in bondage. In 1861, she published *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl: Written by Herself*, a narrative where she addresses a difficult life in bondage and focuses on the sexual harassment that female slaves were subjected to on plantations and the anguish of slave mothers torn apart from their children. Her narrative is valued for it deals with the sexual abuse by her master which was not common at the time. Jean Fagan Yellin, who studied Jacobs's life for 20 years, claims that it is a writing of an "impure woman" on a "forbidden subject." (Yellin 1981, 486)

Another influential author is Isabella Baumfree (cca 1797-1883) who was born as a slave in Ulster County, New York. She was enslaved for about thirty years until she was emancipated in 1827 due to New York State's emancipation laws. (Fisch 2007, 234) After that she became an African-American abolitionist and a women's right activist and she changed her name to Sojourner Truth because she wanted to declare the truth about God to people. She is known for her speech "Ar'n't I a Woman?" which she delivered at the Ohio Women's Rights Convention and she is also famous for the *Narrative of Sojourner Truth: A Northern Slave*. The narrative was not written by Truth as she was not able to read and write, therefore when she decided to share the account of her life with the public, she had to cooperate with Olive Gilbert, a white abolitionist. The narrative was published in order to acquaint the readers with the shocking aspects of the institution, and to support Truth and Gilbert financially. (Irvin 1994, 473)

² The author's real name Jacobs is used in the whole thesis when dealing with the main character Linda.

2 THE INTRUSION OF SLAVE MARKET INTO SLAVE FAMILIES

The *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, the *Narrative of Sojourner Truth* and *Uncle Tom's Cabin* imply how the slave market, which is represented by white men aiming for profit, interferes in slave mother-child relationship. The authors deal with those issues in order to encourage their readers to fight for the abolition of slavery.

Slavery greatly influenced motherhood and the disrupted relationships between slave mothers and their children are depicted in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. It is crucial to point out that the author of the novel blames men for breaking family ties, for instance, Haley is a slave trader who wants to separate Eliza Harris and her son Harry. Stowe indicates that he is so cruel and hungry for a profit that he would be able to sell his own mother. (Stowe 1994, 30) His craving for money is clear from the very beginning of the book. In chapter I, he is introduced as “a low man who is trying to elbow his way upward in the world” and he does so by trading in slaves. (Stowe 1994, 1) He is so ruthless that he does not care when he invades Eliza's content family life and jeopardizes her motherhood by his decision to buy small Harry from Mr. Shelby, Harry's owner. His disrespect and cruelty are also demonstrated by his actions for he does not hesitate to violate mother-child relationships of other slaves in the book. In chapter XII, “The Select Incident of Lawful Trade”, Haley separates Hagar from her only remaining son Albert. Stowe intensifies the brutality of his action by portraying Hagar as a mother who deeply dotes on Albert since the rest of her family was successively sold out. Haley is aware of Hagar's desperation and frustration, yet he coldly acts against motherhood for he is concerned only with money. Elizabeth Ammons in the article *Heroines in Uncle Tom's Cabin* uses the term a “profit-hungry masculine ethic” which is responsible for the “displacement of life-giving maternal values.” (Ammons 1977, 167) Haley is a typical representative of this ethic. Lori Merish is of the same opinion and says that motherhood is influenced because of “the male realm of insensibility and coldness with the market and politics subordinated to concern with economic profit, which increases under slavery.” (Merish 1966, 22-23)

If we look closer at the men who tear black families apart depicted by Stowe, we learn that they behave according to the “profit-hungry masculine ethic.” (To use Ammons's phrase) It is because men were in charge of making money for their families so they often took the

opportunities to profit from trading in slaves. What is more, many of them used cheap slave labor in their business, at home and plantations. Such as the character Simon Legree, a slave owner, whose slaves work on his plantation which is “nothing less than an earthly prison for the damned.” (Berman 2000, 334) He regards his slaves merely as machines which help him to get rich; therefore he calls them an “implement for money-making.” (Stowe 1994, 298) Accordingly, he completely disregards their health condition, physical strength and family ties. His obsession with money makes him neglectful of his slaves who, according to him, do not deserve to be treated well, because this might decrease his profits as it is demonstrated in the following excerpt:

Well, donno; 'cordin' as their constitution is. Stout fellers last six or seven years; trashy ones gets worked up in two or three. I used to, when I fust begun, have considerable trouble fussin' with 'em and trying to make 'em hold out, -- doctorin' on 'em up when they's sick, and givin' on 'em clothes and blankets, and what not, tryin' to keep 'em all sort o' decent and comfortable. Law, 't wasn't no sort o' use; I lost money on 'em, and 't was heaps o' trouble. Now, you see, I just put 'em straight through, sick or well. When one nigger's dead, I buy another; and I find it comes cheaper and easier, every way. (Stowe 1994, 294)

The influence of the market on men is also displayed on Mr. Shelby, the owner of Eliza and her son Harry. In spite of the fact that he feels for his slaves and treats them humanely, he considers selling them due to his financial problems. “The fact is, sir, I'm a humane man, and I hate to take the boy from his mother, sir.” (Stowe 1994, 5) However compassionate he feels with Eliza and Harry, he is eventually persuaded by Haley to sell them apart. Later, Mr. Shelby excuses his deeds by saying that he is not “a monster, for doing what every one does every day.” (Stowe 1994, 28) This clearly illustrates how the slave trade influences the behavior of men for Mr. Shelby would never deliberately intrude into family relationships unless slavery made it possible and in fact even made his financial troubles almost inevitable.

As far as slave narratives are concerned, men whose greediness ruptures slave families are depicted as well. In terms of Jacobs' narrative, the author presents stories of slave families that were torn apart by slave traders just because it was a very lucrative business. “On one of these sale days, I saw a mother lead seven children to the auction-block. She knew that some of them would be taken from her; but they took all.” (Jacobs 2000, 16) The author notes that this happens because of the system which “perverted all the natural feelings of the human heart.” (Jacobs 2000, 142) Due to this, a lot of white men in the literary work tear slave families apart with clear conscience because slavery allowed it.

In the narrative, Dr. Flint, Jacobs' master, is depicted as a typical slave owner for he mistreats his slaves, subjects them to torture and he separates slave families for money. Dr. Flint's nature is portrayed as "restless, craving, and vicious" and all the time he "seeks whom to devour." (Jacobs 2000, 18) He sexually abuses his female slaves and when they deliver his children, he cruelly disrupts mother-child bonds by selling them. In the chapter "A Perilous Passage in the Slave Girl's Life," it is implied that this was very usual for him to sell female slaves who bears his child. "[...] his victims were sold far off to get rid of them; especially if they had children. I had seen several women sold, with his babies at the breast. He never allowed his offspring by slaves to remain long in sight of himself and his wife." (Jacobs 2000, 55)

Yet, his behavior to Jacobs is contrasting as when he gets an opportunity to sell Jacobs for a great sum of money, he does not consent to the bargain. This can be explained by the fact that he strongly longs for Jacobs's submission to his will and he intends to control her. Dr. Flint claims: "You [Jacobs] are my slave, and shall always be my slave. I will never sell you, that you may depend upon." (Jacobs 2000, 60) Since Jacobs is defiant, she rebels to his brutishness and resists by having a child with Mr. Sands, her white lover. Dr. Flint is strongly resolved to keep her even though it was very shameful for a white master like him when one of his slaves had children with another white man. Gloria T. Randle, an Assistant Professor of African-American Literature at Michigan State University, claims that Dr. Flint gets more pleasure in such a battle than from outright physical assault of her. (Randle 1999, 48)

His behavior intrudes in Jacobs's family life as her children are in his power and he can do whatever he wants with them and he uses this fact to manipulate and blackmail Jacobs. For instance, he claims that he wants to "break Ellen [Jacobs' daughter] like a horse." (Jacobs in Randle 1999, 52) The influence he has on Jacobs' relationship with her children is lasting because when she escapes from him and reunites with her children in the North, he still threatens to re-enslave her family again and this makes Jacobs very anxious.

The theme of the invasion into slave family is addressed in Sojourner Truth's narrative only marginally. Firstly, the massive intrusion into slave family that was common in the South at the time is emphasized. This is exemplified in the excerpt where Truth says that her mother had "some ten or twelve children; though Sojourner is far from knowing the exact number of her brothers and sisters; she being the youngest, save one, and all older than herself having been sold before her remembrance." (Truth 2000, 15)

Secondly, she stresses that the one who interferes in Truth's relationship with her son is John J. Dumont who is depicted as "being naturally a man of kind feelings, [who] treated his slaves with all the consideration." (Truth 2000, 29) His good nature is proven by his actions as he demands his wife to take care of Truth's child while she is toiling on plantation. Therefore, Truth respects him and she claims that she "looked upon him as a God." (Truth 2000, 33) In spite of this, he eventually sells Truth's son because he still deems money more important than Truth's tie to her son and by separating them he demonstrates he is a part of money-making realm as well.

Thirdly, the author mentions the typical outlook of slaveholders who are disrespectful and do not identify with the emotional deprivation felt by slaves. It is demonstrated in the part where Truth experiences a lot of anxiety and distress due to the division from her son. When Truth grieves for him and tries to find a way of getting him back, she asks her former mistress for help. Nevertheless, her mistress does not understand the pain Truth feels which is caused by the division. Her owner exclaims: "Ugh! a fine fuss to make about a little nigger! Why, have n't you as many of 'em left as you can see to and take care of? A pity 'tis, the niggers are not all in Guinea!! Making such a halloo-balloo about the neighborhood; and all for a paltry nigger!!!" (Truth 2000, 44)

This chapter shows how the slave market is depicted in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and slave narratives by Harriet Jacobs and by Sojourner Truth. The authors blame men who are so brutish and disrespectful of slaves that they coldly rupture slave families only for profit. However, men that have compassion for slaves are mentioned as well. Yet they sell slave children for economic reasons because the slave system allows it.

3 THE IMPACT OF SLAVERY ON MOTHER-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS

The following chapter analyzes slave mothers in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, in *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* and in the *Narrative of Sojourner Truth*, focusing on the hardships of motherhood in slavery, on the strength of the bond to their children and on the way mothers attempted to protect their children from slavery.

Stowe shows in the novel the detrimental impact of slavery on the relationship between mothers and their children and she also indicates what mothers are able to do in order to protect their children. The suffering of the female slaves is a reappearing theme and is connected with the characters of female slaves such as Eliza, Lucy and Cassy. Stowe deals with this issue because she realized that mother-child bonds are very strong and she understood what slave mothers must go through when their babies are taken away from them. Stowe herself lost a child so she could very well sympathize with slave mothers. She claims: "it was at his [Stowe's child] dying bed and at his grave that I learned what a poor slave mother may feel when her child is torn away from her." (Stowe 1994, viii) Not only did Stowe understand mothers, but she also wanted to help them by raising the public awareness of the horrors of slavery and that is why mother-child bonds are one of the major themes of the novel.

The first mother introduced in the novel whose love for her son Harry is pointed out is Eliza. "I never slept a night without him [Harry]; he was all I had. He was my comfort and pride, day and night." (Stowe 1994, 73) As can be seen from the excerpt, Eliza's maternal love is displayed as very deep. Joy Jordan-Lake, the author of *Whitewashing Uncle Tom's Cabin*, asserts the trend among domestic novels in the nineteenth century was to depict mother's love as "sacred, holy and divine." (Jordan-Lake 2005, 25) Eliza's maternal love is described similarly and she treasured her children so much that after their death, Eliza "mourned with a grief so intense as to call for gentle remonstrance from her mistress." (Stowe 1994, 11) As a result, this strengthens Eliza's tie to her son Harry and when their relationship is affected by slavery, she struggles to save it that is why she is determined to escape from her master and Haley. Her actions demonstrate the strength of the bond to her child because the only reason for her brave actions stems from the fact that she wants to protect Harry. Eliza puts her life in danger while crossing the river full of ice floes where she could easily die. "I didn't think I should get over, but

I didn't care! I could but die, if I didn't." (Stowe 1994, 72) She would have never fled from the Shelbys unless her relationship with her son had been threatened. (Sale 1992, 709) Moreover, to shield Harry, Eliza must not only leave "the only home she had ever known and cut loose from protection of a friend whom she loved and revered" but also part with the place where she grew up. (Stowe 1994, 43)

When the ruthless nature of slavery is considered, life was definitely hard for a slave and it was even more complicated and cruel for a slave mother. According to Ruddick, life may seem unfriendly to a mother, hence "she must be changing in response to situation [...] mothers not only must preserve fragile, existing life, they must also foster growth and welcome change." (Ruddick in Brinton, 1997) This is implied by Eliza's actions; when Eliza's bond with her son is about to be broken, she wants to preserve this "fragile, existing life" of her son Harry, and therefore she crosses the frozen Ohio River. While preserving the mother-child relationship, she also resists the masculine ethic, which is represented by Haley and Mr. Shelby. Jordan-Lake asserts that mothers in the novel do not hesitate to defy male characters when mothers' own ethics clashes with masculine ethics and are portrayed as "mother-saviors." (Jordan-Lake 2005, 29) In other words, she opposes Haley and Mr. Shelby's business by running away.

Another character on whom the disruption of mother-child relationship is shown is a quadroon Cassy. Stowe portrays her as a loving mother who "held on to those [Cassy's] children like death" and she spent happy days being together with her family. (Stowe 1994, 316-317) This quote indicates the greatness of Cassy's love for her daughter and son and the idea that protecting their offspring is a priority for mothers. In the novel, it is suggested that Cassy's bond to her children is so strong that she would do everything to preserve their relationship. She says: "when you've got mother's children, you can do anything with her." (Stowe 1994, 317) However, Cassy cannot interfere in the situation because she learns about the sale of her children after they are gone. As a consequence of not being able to nurture them, she becomes livid and desperate. It is described how the news struck her:

It seemed to me something in my head snapped, at that moment. I felt dizzy and furious. I remember seeing a great sharp bowie-knife on the table; I remember something about catching it, and flying upon him; and then all grew dark, and I didn't know any more, -- not for days and days. (Stowe 1994, 317)

In order to demonstrate the attachment of slave mothers to their children, Stowe portrays how much Cassy suffers after her family is divided. Her face is described as “deeply wrinkled with lines of pain” and her eyes as “the most remarkable feature” because they are “wildly, mournfully despairing.” (Stowe 1994, 304)

When Cassy conceives her third child, she is afraid that the same situation will arise again and her child will be sold. She is so frustrated by the injustice of slavery, owing to the fact that she was not able to protect her two children, that she hardly believes that there can be anything done to protect her baby from the evil institution. Wilma King says in her book *Stolen Childhood Slave Youth in Nineteenth-Century America* that the trauma of separation and the fear of never seeing each other were pervasive. (King 1998, 104) As a result, Cassy does not run away to spare the baby from the cruel fate in slavery but she gives the baby laudanum, a poisonous tincture of opium. It should be noted that despite Cassy’s regrets, she feels relieved for she does not have to worry about the oppressive life that awaits her child in slavery.

How I mourned and cried over it! and who ever dreamed that it was anything but a mistake, that had made me give it the laudanum? but it’s one of the few things that I’m glad of, now. I am not sorry, to this day; he, at least, is out of pain. What better than death could I give him, poor child! (Stowe 1994, 318)

It is essential to mention that the infanticide is not an expression of Cassy’s weak character. When we take into account that almost all mothers are attached to their children and love to see them grow, it must have been very difficult for a mother to commit such a crime and Cassy must have been totally devastated by her previous experience that she was able to murder a newborn. She can be called a “mother savior” (to use Jordan-Lake’s phrase) as well for she protects the baby from the world of slavery even though she does not maintain her child’s life. Actually, Cassy’s infanticide is perceived as “a bloody, brutal act of love for her children.” (Jordan-Lake 2005, 152) Brinton assesses the death of Cassy’s third child similarly as she notes that it is rational and ethical because of the circumstances, and the values and priorities of motherhood. (Brinton, 1997)

It is interesting that Stowe mentions that those who rebel against slavery in order to maintain a mother-child bond are not only slaves but also white women. One of them is Mrs. Bird, a wife of a congressman, and to show her disagreement with slavery, she helps Eliza and Harry and thus breaks the Fugitive Slave Law. She pities the situation in which slaves are placed

because she calls them “poor, homeless, houseless creatures. It’s a shameful, wicked, abominable law, and I’ll break it, for one, the first time I get a chance.” (Stowe 1994, 69) To understand Mrs. Bird’s disapproval of slavery and her courage to act illegally, we must bear in mind the fact that she can imagine what mother whose child is taken away goes through. It is because she has already lost one child for whom she grieved deeply. As a result, she would not hesitate to help a woman to protect her offspring, because she regards motherhood as sacred and precious. In chapter IX, she gives some clothes to Eliza and Harry and utters:

[...] if our dear, loving Henry looks down from heaven, he would be glad to have us do this. I could not find it in my heart to give them away to any command person-to anybody that was happy; but I give them to other more heart-broken and sorrowful than I am; and I hope God will send his blessings with them! (Stowe 1994, 76)

So far, women who took actions to protect their children have been dealt with. Nonetheless, Stowe also depicts cases when some mothers cannot do anything to help their children and she portrays their consequent desperation. In the chapter “Select Incident of Lawful Trade,” we are introduced to Lucy, a slave mother, whose child is taken away while she is asleep. Upon realizing what happened, Lucy’s reaction is described as a harrowing experience.

But the woman did not scream. The shot had passed too straight and direct through the heart, for cry or tear. Dizzily she sat down. Her slack hands fell lifeless by her side. Her eyes looked straight forward, but she saw nothing. All the noise and hum of the boat, the groaning of the machinery, mingled dreamily to her bewildered ear; and the poor, dumb-stricken heart had neither cry nor tear to show for its utter misery. (Stowe 1994, 113)

Lucy’s distress stems from the fact that she is no longer able to nurture her son and help him to live under unfavorable conditions. In other words, she has problems to accept the separation of her beloved son. According to King, a parent’s most difficult job was to ease the despair of parting. (King 1998, 104) The fact that the rest of her family was previously separated contributes to her hopeless situation as this made her attachment to her child even tighter. Hence, she resolves the situation by committing a suicide.

The destructive impact of slavery on motherhood is also reflected in the slave narratives written by Harriet Jacobs and by Sojourner Truth. Dedicating a great part of her narrative to this theme, Jacobs presents herself as a mother who loves her children more than her own life (Jacobs

2000, 92) like the heroines in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. "The New Tie to Life" and "Another Link to Life" are the names of the chapters where Harriet Jacobs delivers her two babies. These names indicate that her infants mean everything for her. Moreover, in the book, it is mentioned that mother-child relationship stood in the center of African culture for according to Jacobs's grandmother "nobody respects a mother who forsakes her children." (Jacobs 2000, 91) Likewise, Wilma King asserts that in traditional African society mother-child nexus was even more important than husband-wife relationship and it was unlikely that mothers would deny love for children under unfavorable circumstances such as slavery. (King 1998, 111)

However, Jacobs perceives the life of mother complicated under the slavery as she has no rights and no means to protect her children from Dr. Flint, her master, who molests her and regards her babies as "an addition to his stock of slaves." (Jacobs 2000, 61) However deep Jacobs's love for her children is, she prays for their death as she is dreading the life in slavery that awaits them. In the narrative, she declares that "death is better than slavery" (Jacobs 2000, 62) and this opinion occurs many times.

I WOULD ten thousand times rather that my children should be the half-starved paupers of Ireland than to be the most pampered among the slaves of America. I would rather drudge out my life on a cotton plantation, till the grave opened to give me rest, than to live with an unprincipled master and a jealous mistress. (Jacobs 2000, 31)

Jacobs's actions are akin to the actions of Cassy who commits infanticide. Both are aware of the fact that the death of their children would be painless release from the bondage. She speaks about her son's death several times as she realizes that her child is very likely to be tyrannized by Dr. Flint and it would be harrowing for both Jacobs and her child. She utters that she "wished that he might die in infancy." (Jacobs 2000, 62) She also claims that she "would rather see them [Jacobs's children] killed than have them given up to his [Dr. Flint's] power." (Jacobs 2000, 80) Besides, she speaks about the "mixture of love and pain." (Jacobs 2000, 62) However, as soon as her son starts getting really weak and might pass away, she goes through a difficult dilemma because the love she feels for him is so great that it makes her doubtful about his death. She eventually changes her mind and claims: "I had prayed for his death, but never as earnestly as I now prayed for his life." (Jacobs 2000, 62) On one hand, she wants to preserve her bond to her child; take care of her baby, provide him with loving home, help him and educate him. On the other hand, she is dismayed when she considers his life in the crude bondage of slavery.

As far as Jacobs's escape is concerned, her need to flee is mainly driven by the desire to protect her children for when she has a chance to escape to the North without her children, she does not do so. It is because the psychological effect of deserting her children was too great. (King 1998, 120)

I could have made my escape alone; but it was more for my helpless children than for myself that I longed for freedom. Though the boon would have been precious to me, above all price, I would not have taken it at the expense of leaving them in slavery. (Jacobs 2000, 89)

As Karen Sánchez-Eppler says in her book *Touching Liberty: Abolition, Feminism, and the Politics of the Body* Jacobs longs for a home for "her children's sake far more than for her own." (Sánchez-Eppler 1993, 89) The ambition to maintain mother-child bond is even so strong that Jacobs does not hesitate to risk her life and give up on some things that are of considerable importance for her. Particularly, drawing up a plan to save her children is very risky because it puts all her relatives and friends in danger. Jacobs's claim to freedom is complicated because she has a responsibility and connection to others. (Sale 1992, 709) Provided her master finds out about Jacobs's plans, her family, relatives and friends would be imprisoned. Besides, Jacobs must make great sacrifices. She must deny Aunt Martha, her grandmother, who emphasizes conformity towards masters and who wants her granddaughter, Jacobs, to stay. This is a huge sacrifice for Jacobs because her grandmother functions as a model for her; this is obvious when Jacobs talks about her as "a remarkable woman in many respects." (Jacobs 2000, 5) Therefore, when she makes her familiar with her plans to escape, Aunt Martha reacts: "Linda [Jacobs], do you want to kill your old grandmother? Do you mean to leave your little, helpless children? I am old now, and cannot do for your babies as I once did for you." (Jacobs 2000, 91) Later she adds: "If you go, you will make me miserable the short time I have to live. You would be taken and brought back, and your sufferings would be dreadful." (Jacobs 2000, 91) In spite of all this, Jacobs eventually disobeys and leaves in order to protect her son and daughter.

Jacobs's ambition to afford her children protection helps her to endure difficulties caused by her agonizing escape. Firstly, Jacobs does not flee straight to the North but spends nearly seven years hiding in a small garret in her grandmother's house. There, she is subjected to great physical and mental torture because her hiding place is very small and the lack of exercise causes her a lot of pain. Her limbs are slowly getting weak and she is getting crippled. Moreover, she

suffers due to coldness and dampness in the winter and scorching weather in the summer. Secondly, she is tempted by interfering to the situation outside for she can see what is happening through a small peephole. She can also hear her children to whom she longs to speak. (Jacobs 2000, 115) For example, when her son is being badly bitten by a dog, she cannot do anything. “O, what torture to a mother’s heart, to listen to this and be unable to go to him!” (Jacobs 2000, 123) The only thing that helps her to face the hardship is the love for her children. “Had it not been for the hope of serving my children, I should have been thankful to die; but, for their sakes, I was willing to bear on.” (Jacobs 2000, 127)

Jacobs portrays the situation after the escape from the South and points out that motherhood was still negatively influenced by slavery. In other words, Jacobs’s reunion with children is very happy; the meeting with her daughter Ellen is depicted as very cheerful and Jacobs is delighted to see her after so many years again. It is so because there is still a very close tie between Jacobs and her children. The author remarks: “There are no bonds so strong as those which are formed by suffering together.” (Jacobs 2000, 170) Consequently, she wishes to secure a home for her family where all of them could be together. Jacobs’s happiness is closely linked to being in freedom with her children. (Sale 1992, 709) The freedom is tough to reach since Jacobs is still a runaway slave who can be recaptured anytime and separated again from her children owing to Fugitive Slave Law. She even finds out that Dr. Flint is trying to bring her back. “Again I was to be torn from a comfortable home, and all my plans for the welfare of my children were to be frustrated by that demon Slavery!” (Jacobs 2000, 180) To conclude, even though she is in the free states, the mother-child tie can be broken easily again due to the Law. Jacobs’s dissatisfaction from the situation is even getting bigger because she still cannot forget horrifying experiences and memories from bondage and this bothers her. Although Jacobs is in the North, “the burden of these memories lay heavily upon her [Jacobs’s] spirit.” (Post in Jacobs 2000, 203)

Another perspective on slave motherhood is present in the *Narrative of Sojourner Truth*. In terms of mother-child bonds, Truth delivers five children yet she does not describe the relationship to her children and her maternal love in depth in the narrative. However, it is implied that the bonds to her children are strong since while torn apart from her son, she gets indignant and grieves for him “and the waters of affliction covered her soul.” (Truth 2000, 46) That is why Truth is strongly determined to protect her son and get him back. “And I’ll have my child again.’ These words were pronounced in the most slow, solemn, and determined measure and manner.”

(Truth 2000, 45) We also learn about her parents' love for their children as when they are parted, they deeply mourn for them. It is indicated in the part where Truth describes that her parents "would sit for hours, recalling and recounting every endearing, as well as harrowing circumstance that taxed memory could supply, from the histories of those dear departed ones, of whom they had been robbed, and for whom their hearts still bled." (Truth 2000, 16) This also reflects the fact that enslaved parents demonstrated an unfailing love for their children. (King 1998, 70)

Truth also depicts the impact of slavery on motherhood; especially the inability to take a proper care of her offspring and the tyranny from the side of slave owners. In particular, as Truth has to carry out the commands from her mistress or work on the plantation, she cannot calm her child down and feed it every time it starts crying. (Truth 2000, 38) Hence, her infant must be sometimes tended by another small child. This was very common for master's orders had to be obeyed in every situation regardless of slave's health condition and family status. As King notes, some slaveholders were insensitive to the woman's need to care of her children and this was quite frequent in the lives of Africans. (King 1998, 12) Moreover, they often tyrannized slaves and their children as this is demonstrated in the excerpt where Truth tells the story of a slave mother who is together with her infant tormented by a wicked slave owner:

He had a sick slave-woman, who was lingering with a slow consumption, whom he made to spin, regardless of her weakness and suffering; and this woman had a child, that was unable to walk or talk, at the age of five years, neither could it cry like other children, but made a constant, piteous, moaning sound. This exhibition of helplessness and imbecility, instead of exciting the master's pity, stung his cupidity, and so enraged him, that he would kick the poor thing about like a foot-ball. (Truth 2000, 83)

It is indicated that the hardships of motherhood emerge from the social position of slaves; they were legally unprotected for they were not regarded as human beings, e. g. Truth is called "thing, chattel, property" in the narrative. (Truth 2000, 37) Being a slave mother who gives birth to five children, she is referred to as "the instrument of increasing the property of her oppressors" (Truth 2000, 37) for she boosts her master's profits. This status in the society is crucial for her life as it makes her liable to be torn apart from her children.

Sojourner Truth also has to deal with the consequences of parting. Even though she eventually succeeds in getting her son back, it is indicated that the separation alters their relationship because her five-year old son denies his mother and refuses to trust her. It is because

his new master taught him to believe that his mother “was some terrible monster” (Truth 2000, 53-54) which is very painful and hard for Truth to accept. Yet she strives to get back his confidence as their relationship is very important for her.

To conclude, this chapter provided an insight into slave motherhood in antebellum South. Mothers such as Eliza, Cassy, Mrs. Bird, Jacobs and Truth are depicted as ready to do anything for children because they love them and want to protect them from the cruel life in bondage. Their love and determination are so strong that they bravely face hardships, make sacrifices and risk their lives. If they are opposed by the male realm, they simply defy it and pursue their actions. Cassy, Lucy and Truth demonstrate how difficult it is for a mother to deal with a parting with their offspring. As a result, Cassy commits infanticide and Lucy suicide.

4 THE DEPICTION OF MOTHER-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS

In terms of writing style, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, the *Narrative of Sojourner Truth* and *Uncle Tom's Cabin* are slightly different from each other. However, all of them tried to bring about political and social change that would condemn slavery that is why the authors use some literary tools when depicting slavery so that they would elicit more sympathy from their readers. This chapter explores how sentimental style and other literary techniques function in the literary works and how they affect the reader.

Sentimental style which Stowe used was typical for domestic fictional novel at the time, and it attempts to arouse an emotional reaction in the audience. Hence *Uncle Tom's Cabin* presents suffering and hopelessness in slaves' lives in order to emotionally influence the reader. Thus for example, in the chapter "Select Incident of Lawful Trade," a mother and her child undergo a difficult separation caused by an auctioneer.

"Come, now, young un," said the auctioneer, giving the boy a touch with his hammer, "be up and show your springs, now."

"Put us two up togedder, togedder, -- do please, Mas'r," said the old woman, holding fast to her boy.

"Be off," said the man, gruffly, pushing her hands away; "you come last. Now, darkey, spring;" and, with the word, he pushed the boy toward the block, while a deep, heavy groan rose behind him. The boy paused, and looked back; but there was no time to stay, and, dashing the tears from his large, bright eyes, he was up in a moment. (Stowe 1994, 103-104)

When portraying the impact of the market on the families, Stowe used "the graphic image of the bodies of slave mother and slave child torn from one another" to convey the psychological trauma of the separation. (Nudelman 1992, 946) To put it more simply, Stowe thoroughly illustrates how brutally the slave system interferes into a slave family life. The writer uses images such as the mother's "heavy groan" and the boy's eyes full of tears to suggest the painfulness of the parting.

It is crucial to point out that Stowe regarded sentiment as the medium of human conscience. (Crane 1996, 178) To understand that, we must bear in mind that Stowe, as a mother who lost her own child, could identify with slave mothers whose beloved children were taken away. She subsequently realized that evoking the same feelings at white middle-class women

would be a powerful way of having a profound impact on them. Above all, they are the ones who can be easily swayed by the scenes dealing with emotions, especially love for children, and would be saddened by the fact that children who are perceived as “pure, fragile, and innocent beings that are to be protected by adults” (Bubíková 2011, 210; my translation) are harmed by slavery. The middle-class audience is thus very likely to oppose slavery actively.

In order to stir up intense emotions, Stowe uses “striking scenes, vivid pictures and concrete examples aimed at the heart” throughout the novel. (Robbins 2007, 34) Such an example is found in the chapter “In Which It Appears That a Senator Is But a Man” where Eliza shares her love for Harry as well as her dismay that arose from the idea of losing her son with compassionate Mrs. Bird, a senator’s wife. Eliza’s distress together with the fact that she already lost two children leads her to the decision to escape and thus save her son from the sale.

"Then you will feel for me. I have lost two, one after another, -- left 'em buried there when I came away; and I had only this one left. I never slept a night without him; he was all I had. He was my comfort and pride, day and night; and, ma'am, they were going to take him away from me, -- to sell him, -- sell him down south, ma'am, to go all alone, -- a baby that had never been away from his mother in his life! I couldn't stand it, ma'am. I knew I never should be good for anything, if they did; and when I knew the papers the papers were signed, and he was sold, I took him and came off in the night; and they chased me, -- the man that bought him, and some of Mas'r's folks, -- and they were coming down right behind me, and I heard 'em. I jumped right on to the ice; and how I got across, I don't know, -- but, first I knew, a man was helping me up the bank." (Stowe 1994, 72-73)

Furthermore, the hardships of motherhood are portrayed as vividly as possible in the novel as Stowe wanted to emphasize the suffering caused by slavery. This is another feature of sentimental literature and it makes the story more realistic because the vividness makes the text come alive and thus it has bigger impact on the readers. The novel abounds in such detailed images; for instance, the pain experienced by the wife and husband who are separated is stressed in the chapter “The Husband and Father” where Eliza says goodbye to George who “stood silent; then there were last words, and sobs, and bitter weeping, -- such parting as those make whose hope to meet again is as the spider’s web, -- and the husband and wife were parted.” (Stowe 1994, 16) Another example can be found in chapter XXXIII where Cassy is introduced for the first time. Stowe managed to capture attention by saying that “it was her [Cassy’s] face that, once seen, could never be forgotten, - one of those that, at a glance, seem to convey to us an idea of a wild, painful, and romantic history.” (Stowe 1994, 304) Negative experience Cassy, as a mother,

has with slavery is transferred to this detailed description; namely the “painful and romantic history” implies what Cassy must have gone through.

Throughout the novel, these lifelike descriptions emphasize the shocking realities of slavery and convey feelings experienced by slave members. As the authors of *The Stowe Debate Rhetorical Strategies in Uncle Tom’s Cabin* claim, the readers must “cry for the message to be effectively transmitted.” (Lowance et al. 1994, 16) For this reason, the book contains a lot of scenes that appeal to emotions and call for compassion and help. This is exemplified in the chapter “Concluding Remarks” where the writer basically “dramatizes the root evil of slavery.” (Ammons 1977, 167)

And you, mothers of America, -- you who have learned, by the cradles of your own children, to love and feel for all mankind, -- by the sacred love you bear your child; by your joy in his beautiful, spotless infancy; by the motherly pity and tenderness with which you guide his growing years; by the anxieties of his education; by the prayers you breathe for his soul’s eternal good; -- I beseech you, pity the mother who has all your affections, and not one legal right to protect, guide, or educate, the child of her bosom! By the sick hour of your child; by those dying eyes, which you can never forget; by those last cries, that wrung your heart when you could neither help nor save; by the desolation of that empty cradle, that silent nursery, -- I beseech you, pity those mothers that are constantly made childless by the American slave-trade! And say, mothers of America, is this a thing to be defended, sympathized with, passed over in silence? (Stowe 1994, 384)

Not only does Stowe deal with emotions in the excerpt but she also stresses her belief that slavery is unjust by posing rhetorical questions in the novel. These questions, according to Irene Koshik, a professor of applied linguistics, work as a strong assertion. (Koshik 2005, 2) This helps Stowe to urge the readers to imagine what they would feel if they were parted from their children. The impact on them is also increased because the author directly addresses the mothers whose attachments to their children are usually strong so that they could identify with the emotional deprivation experienced by slaves.

In addition to it, rhetorical questions are also employed when discussing the impact that slavery had on women. It is exemplified in the scene where Cassy explains to Emmeline, the new Legree’s concubine, that she would thank those who “would shoot me down; for what use will freedom be to me?” and she also adds: “Can it give me back my children, or make me what I used to be?” (Stowe 1994, 356) Using these questions, Stowe shows the impact that slavery has on mothers who are separated from their children. Moreover, Cassy questions why slaves are

treated so harshly even though they do nothing worse than white Americans: “O, 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?” (Stowe 1994, 356) These exclamations add Stowe’s opinion to the story expressing her doubts about the humanity of the system which puts human beings into complicated situation. They also assert that slaves are human beings like the Americans and therefore they should be treated similarly.

To conclude, Stowe’s intention is to make the public feel outraged by the injustice of slavery as then they would actively oppose it. To persuade her readers about the inhumanity of slavery, she uses sentimental style. All in all, Stowe was successful as after the publication of the novel, people were certain that *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* made slavery “morally and intellectually indefensible.” (Elliott et al. 1988, 304)

As for slave narratives, most of them were published for the same reason, i. e. to initiate people to the horrors of slavery as well as to involve them in antislavery efforts. At the very beginning of *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, Jacobs states her purpose of wanting to earnestly arouse “the women of the North to a realizing sense of the condition of two millions of women at the South, still in bondage.” (Jacobs 2000, 1) She believed not much was known about the horrors of slavery in the North:

Northerners know nothing at all about Slavery. They think it is perpetual bondage only. They have no conception of the depth of *degradation* involved in that word, SLAVERY; if they had, they would never cease their efforts until so horrible a system was overthrown. (Jacobs 2000, xlii)

Therefore she decided to show how much she has suffered as this would encourage especially Northern women to fight for the emancipation of enslaved women. (Nudelman 1992, 959)

In terms of writing style, Jacobs’s work shares features of slave narratives, namely chronological account of events and realistic depiction giving the impression of credibility. Nonetheless, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* also contains elements of sentimental writing because sexual exploitation, endangered motherhood and dissociation of children from families, themes frequent on sentimental fiction, are the central themes of Jacobs’s slave narrative. Lucinda MacKethan, a professor of English literature, adds that Jacobs’s manuscript reflects in part the style, tone, and plot of sentimental or domestic novel because it was written by a woman and for women and stressed home, family, womanly modesty, and marriage. (MacKethan, 2013)

Similarly to Stowe, Jacobs intended to show the cruel consequences of the slavery to the public and in order to do so, the narrative contains many passages unfolding the tragedies of family separations which are caused by men who are obsessed with economic profit:

On one of these sale days, I saw a mother lead seven children to the auction-block. She knew that *some* of them would be taken from her; but they took *all*. The children were sold to a slave-trader, and their mother was bought by a man in her own town. Before night her children were all far away. She begged the trader to tell her where he intended to take them; this he refused to do. How *could* he, when he knew he would sell them, one by one, wherever he could command the highest price? I met that mother in the street, and her wild, haggard face lives to-day in my mind. She wrung her hands in anguish, and exclaimed, "Gone! All gone! Why *don't* God kill me?" I had no words wherewith to comfort her. Instances of this kind are of daily, yea, of hourly occurrence. (Jacobs 2000, 16)

In the passage, negative emotions like grief, fear and desperation of a mother are put forward. Johnnie M. Stover, who examines African American literature of the nineteenth century, states that Jacobs purposefully used the sentimental approach as her primary narrative paradigm in her book. (Stover 2003, 134) It is because she expected that these emotions would be very powerful when influencing her audience and transmitting her message that slave system is responsible for the pain experienced by slave family members.

When depicting hardships in slaves' lives, another technique Jacobs uses is switching from the first person narrative which helps her more successfully to convey the message that slavery places human beings into a difficult situation which causes their physical as well as psychological suffering. In the following citation, second person narrative is used to indicate how complicated it is to be a slave as it means being no more than property. Furthermore, the author implies that slaves' position is so excruciating that the reader cannot fully understand it:

O virtuous reader! You never knew what it is to be a slave; to be entirely unprotected by law or custom; to have the laws reduce you to the condition of a chattel, entirely subject to the will of another. You never exhausted your ingenuity in avoiding the snares, and eluding the power of a hated tyrant; you never shuddered at the sound of his footsteps, and trembled within hearing of his voice. (Jacobs 2000, 55)

Furthermore, to stress the emotional deprivation of mothers whose children are dissociated, Jacobs employs rhetorical questions: "WHY does the slave ever love? Why allow the tendrils of the heart to twine around objects which may at any moment be wrenched away by the hand of

violence?” (Jacobs 2000, 37) These questions are not used to elicit answers but they are actually incorporated in order to help Jacobs to put forth the view that children are coldly detached from their loving mothers thanks to the institution which allows trading in slaves.

As for the *Narrative of Sojourner Truth*, Sojourner Truth and Olive Gilbert also attempted to enlist the understanding from readers thus the authors appealed to the conscience by portraying the inhumanity of slave institution and its negative impact on slaves' lives. In terms of writing style, rather than employing various literary techniques to present the evils of slavery more efficiently, the narrative simply gives account of the episodes in Truth's life as this is typical for the genre of slave narratives. One of the distinctive features is that the narratives of bondage start with the phrase “I was born” and then they inform about the place and date of birth of the slave:

THE subject of this biography, SOJOURNER TRUTH, as she now calls herself--but whose name, originally, was Isabella--was born, as near as she can now calculate, between the years 1797 and 1800. She was the daughter of James and Betsey, slaves of one Colonel Ardinburgh, Hurley, Ulster County, New York. (Truth 2000, 13)

The simplicity in her style can be explained by the fact that Truth wanted the readers to truly believe her experiences under slavery as the incidents themselves would make an impact on them. Therefore, the narrative is written as authentically as possible rather than dramatizing the events which might make the impression of implausibility. Simply giving the record of her life under slavery, Truth does not exaggerate or dramatize the events and people's qualities as she only wanted to create a valid representation of reality. This is exemplified in the chapter “Commencement of Isabella's Trials in Life,” where Truth straightforwardly depicts how she suffers because of the cruel treatment by her master.

Then she [Sojourner Truth] suffered 'terribly--terribly,' with the cold. During the winter her feet were badly frozen, for want of proper covering. They gave her a plenty to eat, and also a plenty of whippings. One Sunday morning, in particular, she was told to go to the barn; on going there, she found her master with a bundle of rods, prepared in the embers, and bound together with cords. When he had tied her hands together before her, he gave her the most cruel whipping she was ever tortured with. He whipped her till the flesh was deeply lacerated, and the blood streamed from her wounds--and the scars remain to the present day, to testify to the fact. (Truth 2000, 26)

This style was characteristic for many slave narratives as the authors did not want to be assaulted for its veracity by the advocates of slavery. It was important for the slaves to portray the harsh realities of slavery truthfully. That is why Truth omitted some of the hard things she encountered in her life because the readers would not believe it. “They’d call me a liar! they would, indeed! and I do not wish to say anything to destroy my own character for veracity, though what I say is strictly true.” (Truth 2000, 82) Due to her simple style, Nell Irvin Painter states that Truth’s narrative is appreciated as straight-talking and authentic. (Painter 1994, 464)

Moreover, according to Margaret Washington, a professor of history, the narrative contains some features similar to sentimental novels (Washington 2007, 57) as scenes portraying and dealing with intense emotions are incorporated as well. For instance, one of those scenes unfolds the mental deprivation of Truth’s family whose members were dissociated. Sorrow and anguish of Truth’s mother are in the focus of the following excerpt:

At times, a groan would escape her, and she would break out in the language of the Psalmist--‘Oh Lord, how long?’ ‘Oh Lord, how long?’ And in reply to Isabella’s question--‘What ails you, mau-mau?’ her only answer was, ‘Oh, a good deal ails me’--‘Enough ails me.’ Then again, she would point them to the stars, and say, in her peculiar language, ‘Those are the same stars, and that is the same moon, that look down upon your brothers and sisters, and which they see as they look up to them, though they are ever so far away from us, and each other.’ (Truth 2000, 17-18)

The emotional brutality of family separation is emphasized in order to move her audience. It is essential to note, that Truth uses features of sentimental writing only marginally as opposed to Stowe for Truth rather focuses on the authentic depiction of her life, as it was already mentioned. Even though she does not employ the sentimental style so widely, the author conveys a message worth noting. (Painter 1994, 464)

Apart from using the sentimental features, she also directly addresses her audience when dealing with the cruelties inflicted on slave mothers. The most emphatic addressing is included in Truth’s quote about motherhood where she demands the readers to consider her position as a woman under the oppressive power of slavery. “Think, dear reader, without a blush, if you can, for one moment, of a mother thus willingly, and with pride, laying her own children, the ‘flesh of her flesh,’ on the altar of slavery-a sacrifice to the bloody Moloch!” (Truth 2000, 37) She uses such comments to draw attention to her view that slave mothers deliver their children to the hell.

Rhetorical questions are present in her narrative as well, especially in the part where Truth finds out about her sister's cruel death in slavery. "Oh Lord,' inquired Isabella, 'what is this slavery, that it can do such dreadful things? what evil can it not do?' Well may she ask; for surely the evils it can and does do, daily and hourly, can never be summed up, till we can see them as they are recorded by him who writes no errors, and reckons without mistake." (Truth 2000, 81) These comments are incorporated in the narrative because they function as a powerful technique when communicating the message and portraying powerful emotions.

In conclusion, this chapter shows that the authors deliberately emphasize the emotional deprivation of slaves in order to encourage the Americans to act against the institution. In terms of the novel, sentimental style, rhetorical questions, vivid descriptions are used extensively to suggest the pain experienced by slaves. Similarly, the authors of the slave narratives point out the psychological and physical suffering by employing features of sentimental writing. Yet they do not use it as much as Stowe so as to be taken seriously by their audience. Their language is more descriptive and straight as they try to give the authentic accounts of their lives under the oppressive system of slavery.

5 CONCLUSION

In the theoretical part of the thesis, a brief outline of slavery in the US is given, its origins and development are covered and the differences between the economy in the North and the South are pointed out. Key terms essential for this paper are clarified and the literary genres of the novel and slave narratives are explained. The authors together with their literary pieces are also shortly introduced.

Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, the *Narrative of Sojourner Truth* and *Uncle Tom's Cabin* depict many topics which are related to the issue of slavery. However, all of the authors stress the negative consequences of the massive family separation that took place in the United States. The second chapter of this paper aims to show who is responsible for rupturing slave families. In all three books, it is indicated that white men took advantage of the fact that the system deprived slaves of basic rights and allowed trading in slaves. As a result, this had disastrous impact on slave families as men, especially slave owners and slave traders, disregarded the importance of mother-child relationships and very often separated mothers and children because it brought them profits. When referring to the characters who deem money more important than the welfare of anyone else, some authors use the term "profit-hungry masculine ethic." In *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, typical representatives of these ethics are Haley, a slave trader, and Simon Legree, a slave owner; for they aim their attention for money so much that they intrude into families without guilty conscience. Mr. Shelby also tears Eliza apart from her son even though he is not so insensitive yet he justifies his actions by the fact that the system made his financial troubles inevitable and allowed him to sell Harry. This shows that Stowe mostly blames the institution for the injustice on slaves.

The same idea is found in both of the slave narratives. Jacobs points out the greediness of slave owners and traders who unfeelingly dissociate slave families. One of them is Jacobs' master Dr. Flint, who is so vicious that he brutally separates his female slaves from their children. Yet his behavior to Jacobs is different as he tries to control and make Jacobs submit to his will by keeping her children and blackmailing her and this influences the relationship with her children. Truth in her narrative also mentions the intrusion of slave market to families when she notes that all of her siblings were separated because the system allowed it. Her master who is caring and thoughtful also interferes in her family when he sells his son for it brings him money.

The third chapter examines the mother-child relationship under slavery in detail. In the literary works, slave mothers are pictured suffering because of their social position which makes them prone to be separated from their children. Nevertheless, they are determined to keep their children safe from harm and by this they demonstrate the strength of the mother-child bond. The authors depict mothers as tightly attached to their children for they regard their babies as the most important thing in the world. The fact that women are only slaves and have no rights does not change their resolution to protect their offspring. The unfailing love is demonstrated by the actions of mothers who risk their lives, make sacrifices and fight against their masters just for their children's sake. Namely, Eliza faces potential danger connected to the attempt of running away and she abandons her relatives and friends. Jacobs hides in a garret for seven years where she experiences horrible torture yet she bears on for the sake of her children. Likewise, Truth is pictured as a loving mother who treasures her son and would do everything to protect him although slavery intrudes in their relationship. Firstly, she cannot take a proper care of her son as she has to obey her master. Secondly, her son is illegally torn off from her and even though she manages to reunite with him, their relationship is already influenced by slavery as her son does not confide in his mother anymore.

Some of the depicted mothers perceive death as less brutal than the life in slavery. Cassy, being aware of the future that awaits their children in slavery, rather murders her infant, in spite of the fact that it is very painful for her. Similarly, Eliza puts herself and her son in a great danger of death while crossing a frozen river where she can immediately drown herself and her baby because she knew that if both of them die, they would avoid terrible suffering. Similarly, Jacobs regards the death of her son as a possible solution to the complicated situation. Lucy is depicted to be so desperate by the injustice of slavery that death seems to be a release for her. She cannot reconcile herself to the idea of never seeing her child anymore. The authors suggest that slavery places mothers into such a hopeless situation that it can be sometimes resolved only by death.

Since the purpose of the literary works was to contribute to the end of slavery, the authors wanted the readers to feel sorry for slaves as this would make them oppose slavery. Therefore when depicting the suffering and hopelessness in the lives of people in bondage, the authors use some literary techniques as it would help them to persuade the American public about the evil nature of slavery more easily. For instance, Jacobs and Stowe vividly describe the brutal partition of slave families to suggest the desperation and sorrow experienced by slaves. The message that

slavery is immoral is also put forward in the form of rhetorical questions which are incorporated in the works because they work as a strong statement and express authors' opinion more effectively. The rhetorical questions are sometimes accompanied by addressing the reader as this promotes reader's ability to condemn a change in society.

However, the most powerful tool employed by all the three authors is sentimental style. In *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, it is used quite extensively and there are numerous scenes vividly portraying slaves' intense feelings so that it would generate a public sentiment necessary for causing a change in society. In terms of the *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* and the *Narrative of Sojourner Truth*, the authors also use features of sentimental writing in order to show the destructive impact of slavery on mother-child relationship. The feelings, especially desperation, sorrow and anguish of mothers are exposed to the public. However, the extent to which they incorporate sentimental features differs; Truth uses sentimental style only marginally in contrast to Stowe. It is because the authors of the slave narratives had to give the impression of credibility so that their message would be taken seriously by public. The excessive use of sentiment might make the impression of implausibility; therefore, both of the authors of the slave narratives rather use straightforward language and do not exaggerate events experienced under slavery. All in all, the writing style was powerful as the novel and the slave narratives contributed to the abolitionist movement in the United States.

6 RESUMÉ

Cílem této bakalářské práce bylo rozebrat vztahy mezi otrokyněmi a jejich dětmi v románu *Chaloupka strýčka Toma* a v *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* od Harriet Ann Jacobsové a *Narrative of Sojourner Truth* od Sojourner Truth. Analýza je zaměřena na to, kdo a jakým způsobem narušuje mateřská pouta, a co jsou matky schopny udělat, aby ochránily své potomky. Část práce se věnuje literárním prostředkům a stylu, který je použit v literárních dílech při pojednávání o této problematice.

V teoretické části se nachází stručná charakteristika života otroků a historického kontextu otroctví ve Spojených státech. Pro život otroků byla klíčová skutečnost, že je zákon nepovažoval za lidské bytosti a neposkytoval jim žádnou právní ochranu. Díky tomu byli otroci obráni o základní práva, neměli povoleno se učit číst a psát, nesměli opustit svého majitele nebo si vybrat svého manžela či manželku. Byli naprosto podřízeni vůli svých majitelů, kteří zneužívali faktu, že zákon stavěl otroky na pozici pouhého majetku, a nutili své otroky pracovat v nelehkých podmínkách po dlouhou dobu a pod dohledem přísného dozorcího. Navíc je podrobovali psychickému i fyzickému týrání, neposkytovali jim dostatečné množství jídla a rozprodávali členy rodin za účelem zisku. Otrokáři byli chladní i k malým dětem, které oddělovali od jejich matek již v raném věku, a to způsobovalo velké psychické trápení členům rodiny.

Otroctví ve Spojených státech má počátky v roce 1619, kdy nizozemští osadníci přivezli takzvané smluvní služebníky, kteří byli na určitou dobu zavázáni sloužit svým majitelům a odpracovat si tak svou cestu do Ameriky, kterou by si jinak nemohli dovolit. Časem ale začali být otroci dopravováni do Ameriky proti své vůli a byli nuceni pracovat pro svého majitele do konce svého života, či byli prodáni někomu jinému. Vzhledem k tomu, že otroci nedostávali žádnou mzdu, představovali velice levnou pracovní sílu. Tato skutečnost byla klíčová pro enormní rozvoj otroctví v 18. a 19. století, jelikož v popředí zájmu mnohým otrokářů byl pouze zisk a otrokářství jim ho pomáhalo zvyšovat. Nejvíce byla otrokářská práce využívána na plantážích, kde podmínky pro práci byly natolik kruté, že se nezamlouvaly svobodným Američanům.

Avšak stejná situace nepanovala po celých Spojených státech. Ekonomika Severu se totiž lišila od té Jižní například kvůli delším zimám a chladnějším klimatu, díky kterému byla nevhodným místem pro zemědělství. Severní ekonomika se proto soustřeďovala především na rozvoj v průmyslu a ke svému růstu tolik nepotřebovala práci otroků. Navíc se problematika

otroctví neslučovala s názory mnohých Seveřanů, protože odebírala základní práva a špatně zacházela s lidskými bytostmi. Toto mělo za následek ukončení otroctví na Severu v roce 1804.

Jak již bylo zmíněno, ne všichni Američané souhlasili se systémem, který vykořisťoval jiné lidské bytosti. Proto vzniklo hnutí zvané abolicionismus, které mělo za cíl upozornit občany na krutost systému a vést k ukončení otroctví. Abolicionisté podnikali mnoho kroků, aby tohoto docílili, a jedním z nich bylo uveřejnění násilných činů a nepráv páchaných na otrocích. Jednou ze známých bojovnic pro práva otroků byla Američanka Harriet Beecher Stoweová, která svým románem chtěla pobouřit čtenáře proti otroctví. Její kniha byla natolik populární, že počet jejích výtisků prodaných v 19. století předčil Bibli, a tím se stala bestsellerem.

Avšak i otroci, kteří úspěšně uprchli na Sever, se často připojili k boji proti otroctví, neboť chtěli pomoci těm, kteří byli stále vykořisťováni v zajetí. Aby upozornili na situaci na Jihu, rozhodli se publikovat své životopisy, kde čtenáře obeznamují o brutalitě páchané na nebohých otrocích. Jednou takovou autorkou byla Harriet Ann Jacobsová, která ve svém vyprávění především poukazuje na sexuální zneužívání otrokyň a také na těžkosti způsobené otroctvím, se kterými se matky musí vypořádat. Přispět k ukončení otroctví se svým životopisem rozhodla i Sojourner Truth. Protože Truth neuměla číst a psát, rozhodla se spolupracovat na jeho vydání s abolicionistkou Olive Gilbertovou.

Analytická část pojednává o tom, kdo je zodpovědný za rozpad rodinných vztahů otroků. Všechna tři díla naznačují, že za rozprodání rodin nesou vinu muži, kteří své činy orientují pouze na zisk. V *Chaloupce strýčka Toma* je tato myšlenka vyjádřena činy dvou postav, jimiž jsou Simon Legree, který je majitelem plantáže, a Haley, jenž se živí obchodem s otroky. Jejich chování k otrokům je popsáno jako chladné a kruté, protože je považují za pouhý prostředek ke zbohatnutí. Proto jsou například schopni nemilosrdně oddělit matky od jejich dětí, přestože vidí, jaké potíže tím způsobují. Dalším mužem, který je zodpovědný za rozvrácení rodiny v románu, je Mr. Shelby, jenž je kvůli finančním potížím nucen prodat syna Elizy. Přestože soucítí s otroky a nenakládá s nimi tak nelítostně jako Haley a Simon Legree, nakonec také naruší pouto mezi matkou a synem. Autorka tímto naznačuje, že je to především systém, který nese vinu za rozšířený obchod s otroky, a tím pádem páchá nedozírné následky na životech Afričanů.

Tato myšlenka je rovněž vyjádřena ve vyprávění uprchlých otroků, neboť i zde jsou zastoupeni muži, kteří za účelem zisku rozprodávají členy rodin a tím krutě narušují vztahy mezi matkami a jejich potomky. Za nesnáze v životě Jacobsové je především odpovědný její majitel

Dr. Flint, který je charakterizován jako krutý a nemilosrdný a který si snaží svou otrokyni podmanit. Aby si Jacobsovou naprosto podrobil, vměšuje se do jejího vztahu s dětmi tím, že je drží ve své moci, jelikož si je vědom toho, že jsou pro ni natolik cenné, že by bez nich neuprchla na Sever. Co se týče Sojourner Truth, tak ta označuje tento systém jako trýznivý pro lidskou duši a poukazuje na ohromný rozsah, ve kterém se separace rodin odehrává, když vypráví o tom, že jejich deset až dvanáct sourozenců bylo prodáno. V životě Truth hraje klíčovou roli její majitel John J. Dumont, jehož postoj k otrokům se liší, protože se k nim chová humánně a pečuje o ně. Navzdory jeho ohleduplné povaze, Dumont stejně nakonec prodá jejího syna, protože mu to přinese zisk. To, že je schopný s čistým svědomím oddělit syna od matky dokazuje, že i on považuje peníze důležitější než mateřské pouto.

Třetí kapitola se zabývá vztahy mezi matkami a dětmi, které jsou ohroženy otroctvím. Přes všechny překážky otrokyně projevují silné odhodlání své potomky ochraňovat před krutými činy otrokářů či svých majitelů a tím prokazují neutuchající lásku ke svým dětem. Kupříkladu Eliza miluje své dítě natolik, že aby s ním mohla i nadále zůstat a uchránila ho před prodejem, prchá od svého majitele a vydává se na nebezpečnou cestu, kde ji pronásleduje otrokář Haley. Nejenže riskuje život svůj a svého syna, když přebíhá po ledových krách Ohio River, ale také neváhá opustit své příbuzné, rodinu a místo, kde vyrůstala. Cassy popisuje své utrpení po tom, co její dvě děti od ní byly brutálně odtrženy, aniž by tomu mohla zamezit. Své strádání líčí jako nesmírně bolestivé, neboť byla ke svým potomkům silně připoutána. Tato zkušenost s otroctvím pro ni je zásadní, neboť se snaží ochránit svého třetího potomka před krutým osudem v otroctví tím, že ho zavraždí. Příběhem Lucy, která svého potomka rovněž silně miluje, Stowe upozorňuje i na to, jak je pro matky těžké se vyrovnat s odloučením od dětí. Rodina Lucy byla rozprodána, a ona tak nachází u jejího syna jedinou útěchu. Proto, když je jejich pouto zpřetrháno a jsou odděleni, Lucy se s tím nedokáže smířit a raději spáchá sebevraždu skokem z lodě.

Vyprávění uprchlých otroků taktéž poukazují na sílu mateřské lásky. Jacobsová ukazuje, že láska k jejímu dítěti je větší než láska k jejímu vlastnímu životu, a díky tomu je schopná udělat cokoli proto, aby ho ubránila před nebezpečím. Po dobu sedmi let se ukrývá v malém půdním prostoru, kde trpí nejen nedostatkem pohybu a výkyvy počasí, ale i psychicky, protože jí chybí její syn a dcera. To vše je ochotna snést kvůli svým dětem, se kterými se nakonec úspěšně shledá na Severu, což ji sice učiní neuvěřitelně šťastnou, ale zároveň se stále obává opětovného zatčení od jejího majitele. V *Narrative of Sojourner Truth* autorka sice nepopisuje svou lásku k synovi,

nicméně po jejich odloučení líčí svou sklíčenost a zármutek. Tato bolest jí podnítlí k rozhodnutí, že svého potomka získá zpět za každou cenu. Síla pouta k jejímu synovi je rovněž demonstrována na faktu, že i po jejich opětovném shledání je Truth odhodlaná získat ztracenou důvěru svého syna zpět, protože jí stále záleží na jejich vztahu.

Čtvrtá kapitola reflektuje použití literárních prostředků ve vybraných dílech. Jedním z důvodů k publikaci knih bylo přispět k ukončení otroctví ve Spojených státech, proto se autorky snažily přesvědčit čtenáře o nedozírném vlivu otroctví a podnítlit je tak k odporu proti zavedenému systému. Ve vybraných dílech můžeme kupříkladu nalézt rétorické otázky, které slouží autorkám hlavně k účinnějšímu vyjádření názoru, že otroctví je nehumánní. Tyto otázky jsou často doprovázeny oslovováním čtenáře, čímž zdůrazňují to, že on se může dané situaci postavit na odpor a pomoci těm, kteří jsou stále v zajetí.

Část práce se zaměřuje na využití sentimentálního stylu, jenž vyjadřuje emoce jako strádání a bolest, a tím využívá čtenářova soucitu s postavami. Ten styl je záměrně využíván k věrnějšímu ztvárnění emocionální deprivace matek i dětí, ale také proto, že si byly vědomi skutečnosti, že při působení na čtenáře tento styl bude efektivnější. V *Chaloupce strýčka Toma* nalezneme mnoho scén zobrazujících kruté odtržení dětí od jejich matek, které se zaměřují zejména na vyjádření smutku, který členové rodiny zažívali. Stoweová se snaží co nejživěji vylíčit okamžiky separace rodin a důkladně popisuje následné psychické strádání. Důvodem je to, že se dokázala vcítit do pozice matek, jejichž děti byly odebrány, poněvadž ona sama přišla o syna. Bolest, kterou si prožila, ji nejenže podnítlila k tomu, aby apelovala za práva otroků, ale také ji inspirovala při psaní tohoto románu.

I v životopisech uprchlých otroků lze nalézt prvky sentimentálního stylu. Například detailně se zde objevují detailně vylíčené pocity žalu, utrpení a strádání, které jsou způsobeny roztrháním rodin. Jacobsová i Truth využívají prvků sentimentálního stylu k tomu, aby působily na čtenářovy city a pobídly je tak k resistenci vůči systému. Je však nezbytné zmínit, že nevyužívají tohoto stylu do takové míry jako Stoweová, jelikož kdyby události příliš dramatizovaly a přeháněly, mohly by být obviněny ze lži. Proto, aby jejich životopisy působily autenticky, se snaží vylíčit zážitky z otroctví co nejrealističtěji a jejich styl je více popisný a přímý.

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