

Chapter IV

Uncle Tom's and George Harris's reactions to slavery

In the previous chapter, the writer has already discussed about the influence of Uncle Tom's and George Harris's character traits in their reactions to get freedom. The writer finds out that Uncle Tom and George Harris have different character traits because they get freedom differently, spiritually and physically.

Based on this finding the writer will only focus on the analysis of Uncle Tom's and George Harris's reactions. Their reactions will be analyzed based on their character traits. In this chapter, the writer will analyze Uncle Tom's reactions first, then George Harris's.

4.1. Uncle Tom's reactions to slavery

In Uncle Tom's Cabin, Uncle Tom is described as a passive person. Here, He has never against his master by doing any kinds of action to get his freedom because he thinks that it will against the Lord. Uncle Tom just wants to take his freedom when the God permits him. He does not want to escape from his master's plantation although Cassy offers him the way of escape by killing Legree. Tom says: "No!" said Tom, firmly. "No! good never comes of wickedness. I'd sooner chop my right hand off!" (394). Tom does not want to do that since he thinks that killing Legree is not a right thing to get freedom but it is wicked.

Moreover, Uncle Tom tries to advise Cassy to love the master Legree as her enemy rather than to hate and kill him. Tom says: "No, ye poor, lost soul that you mustn't do. The dear, blessed Lord never shed no blood but His own, and that He poured out for us when we was enemies. Lord, help up to follow His steps, and love our enemies" (394). By saying that, it seems that Tom will love his enemies as God did. That is why he does not want to escape by killing his master. He believes that God will give him liberty if the time comes. It can be seen through Uncle Tom's saying "I shall have freedom, Misse, in God's time (393). As a result, Tom does not want to hurt the enemies but love them. He thinks that love can give people victory. "We can love and pray over all, and through all, the battle's past, and the victory's come, - glory be to God!" (394). Because of Uncle Tom's strong faith, there are some reactions that he does to get his freedom spiritually.

4.1.1. Uncle Tom sacrifices his life by helping others

Uncle Tom likes to help other people who need him. In this case, Tom knows about Cassy and Emmeline's escape, but he does not want to tell his master, Legree. He realizes that he risks his life by doing it, but he does not care about that. Moreover, he prefers dying to betraying to his friends because he thinks that Cassy and Emmeline really want to get freedom from slavery. The writer finds out that Uncle Tom is willing to sacrifice his life for his friends since he is loyal to his friends.

Tom heard the message with a forewarning heart; for he knew all the plan of the fugitives' escape, and the place of their present concealment; - he knew the deadly character of the man he had to deal with, and his despotic power. But he felt strong in God to meet death, rather than betray the helpless (409)

Moreover, the writer finds out that Tom is also willing to help his master Legree and also the other slaves, Sambo and Quimbo to make them realize that their way to treat slaves is wrong; therefore, he does not want to leave the plantation. A proof can be seen through Uncle Tom's words: "No," said Tom; "time was when I would; but the Lord's given me a work among these yer poor souls, and I'll stay with 'em and bear my cross with 'em till the end. It's different with you; it's a snare to you, - it's mor'n you can stand, -and you'd better go, if you can" (395). From Uncle Tom's quoted words, the writer finds out that Tom

believes that God has already sent him to save his master's and also the other slaves' soul in the plantation; therefore, he prefers staying to leaving because he can help them from doing a cruel thing. In this case, Uncle Tom behaves like Christ who is willing to suffer with man because he loves man. It is proved through his words: "I'll stay with 'em and bear my cross with 'em till the end". The writer finds out that Tom is faithful to God since he wants to keep his faith until he dies. By being loyal to his friends and faithful to God, Tom has already proved that he has a Christian faith.

4.1.2. Uncle Tom accepts his death by forgiving others

Uncle Tom always forgives other people who hurt him. In this case, Uncle Tom forgives his cruel master Legree even though his master often treats him cruelly. Here, the writer finds out that Uncle Tom has to accept his master Legree's cruel treatment because he does not want to tell his master where Cassy's and Emmeline's hiding place is. Although Legree forces him to speak by threatening to kill him, Tom still does not want to say anything. Whereas, Legree cannot stand any longer with Tom's attitude then tortures him until he speaks. Legree says: "Pay away, till he gives up! Give it to him! -give it to him!" shouted Legree. "I'll take every drop of blood he has, unless he confesses!" (411). Because of the torture, Uncle Tom has hard wounded and Legree lets him lie down on a rude bed without curing it. Later, he died because he cannot stand with his wound. At last his breath, Tom is not angry or even enthusiastic to take revenge on his master; moreover, he tries to forgive his master. Tom says: "I

forgive ye, with all my soul!”(411). During Tom’s last breath, George Shelby comes by at Legree’s plantation to buy Tom, but he is too late. Tom has already gone and could not be saved. When George Shelby sees what Legree has done to Tom, he tries to curse Legree. However, Tom does not want to blame his master but forgives him. Tom says: “Hush, Mas’r George! - it worries me! Don’t feel so! He an’t done me no real harm, - only opened the gate of the kingdom for me; that’s all!” (417). Because of Tom’s reaction, the writer finds out that Tom is a forgiving person since he is willing to forgive his master even though his master has been cruel to him. As a result, he accepts his death as his freedom.

Both of Uncle Tom’s reactions above, the writer finds out that Uncle Tom wants to get freedom for his soul. A proof can be seen through Uncle Tom’s words when he is going to die: “Bless the Lord! it is, - it is, - it’s all I wanted! They haven’t forgot me. It warms my soul; it does my old heart good! Now I shall die content! Bless the Lord, oh my soul!” (416). From Uncle Tom’s words, the writer finds out that Uncle Tom feels happy to face his death because he could help his friends and also forgive his murder, Simon Legree. Here, the writer finds out that Uncle Tom uses Christianity as his survival technique since he believes that only God who can help him in gaining his freedom spiritually. This is contrast with George Harris who has been an active person. The writer finds out that George is an active person; therefore, he uses many ways to get his physical freedom.

4.2. George Harris's reactions to slavery

George Harris has different reaction from Uncle Tom that has already discussed in the beginning. The writer finds out that George Harris is an active person. In the novel, he is described as a person who has strong-will and courage to get his freedom. Because of those qualities, George is willing to take any risk to get his freedom. Here, the writer finds out that George Harris wants to get his freedom since he thinks that freedom is the right for anybody. A proof can be seen on the quotation:

What is freedom to George Harris? To your fathers, freedom was the right of a nation to be a nation. To him, it is the right of a man to be a man, not a brute; the right to call the wife of his bosom his wife, and to protect her from lawless violence; the right to protect and educate his child; the right to have a home of his own, a religion of his own, a character of his own, unsubject to the will of another (381).

Based on the statement above, the writer finds out that George Harris really wants to get his freedom because he wants to get a better life for his family and himself. That is why he tries to get his freedom even though he has to put his life into danger. Here, the writer finds out that George wants to escape to Canada since he thinks that Canada is a safety country that can protect him so he can live there

forever peaceably. A proof can be seen through his speech toward Mr. Wilson when he is trying to escape from his lawful master. George says:

Sir, I haven't any country, anymore than I have any father. But I'm going to have one. I don't want anything of your country, except to be let alone, - to go peaceably out of it; and when I get to Canada, where the laws will own me and protect me, that shall be my country, and its laws I will obey (110).

To get his destination, George has to escape from his master's plantation. Here, the writer finds out that George does two reactions to get his physical freedom, such as protest the law and escape. The two reactions will be elaborated below.

4.2.1. George Harris protests the law

The writer finds out that George is intelligence. He uses his intelligence to break the law in his country, Kentucky, because he assumes that Kentucky is not his own. A proof can be seen through George's speech toward Mr. Wilson. George says: "My country again! Mr. Wilson, you have a country; but what country have I, or any one like me, born of slave mothers? What laws are there for us? We do not make them, - we don't consent to them, - we have nothing to do with them; all they do for us is to crush us, and keep us down (109). When George speaks to Mr. Wilson, it shows that he does not really make the laws since he, here, does not consent and has not do anything with them. All they do for slaves is

to crush them. Because of that, the writer finds out that George does not like the law in the country and then he protests the law which treats him and the other slaves like animal, besides that the master can sell any people and do everything what he or she likes with them. Every master thinks that slaves are only slaves and they can do everything what they want to do with them. A proof can be seen through George's speech toward Mr. Wilson. George says:

Why, now comes my master, takes me right away from my work, and my friends, and all I like, and grinds me down into the very dirt! And why? Because, he says, I forgot who I was; he says, to teach me that I am only a nigger! After all, and last of all, he comes between me and my wife, and says I shall give her up, and live with another woman. And all this your laws give him power to do, in spite of God or man (110).

From the quotation above, it seems that George tries to protest the law in his country since he thinks that the law is morally wrong and cruel, it gives power to his master to do everything with slaves. Here, George attempts to get his freedom by protesting against the law. In this case, the writer finds out that the only thing that George wants only to be free like anybody.

4.2.2. George Harris escapes from slavery

After protesting the law in his country, George tries to escape from his master's plantation. Here, the writer finds out that George tricks his master to escape from his master's plantation through his smartness. A proof can be seen through his speech toward his wife, Eliza. George says: " Well, then, Eliza, hear my plan. Mas'r took into his head to send me right here, with a note to Mr. Symmes, that lives a mile past. I believe he expected I should come here to tell you what I have. It would please him, if he thought that it would aggravate 'Shelby's folks,' as he calls 'em. I 'm going home quite resigned, you understand, as if all was over (18). From the quotation above, George tries to trick his master. He pretends to his master that he has already given up, so his master will satisfy and ignore him then he has a chance to escape from his master's plantation. Here, the writer finds out that George's trick is successful.

Moreover, George escapes to Canada successfully by disguising as a Spaniard. It happens because he is a mulatto, so everyone who meets him will not be easy to recognize him. It is proved when he meets Mr. Wilson, his old boss at the bagging factory, at the tavern. Mr. Wilson seems fool that he does not recognize George although he has already been in front of him and George says: "I am pretty well disguised (106). From George's action, it shows that George is intelligence to change his appearance by disguising as a Spaniard. It makes Mr. Wilson nervous to discover that George has fled from his lawful master and he tries to return George to his master by quoting the Bible "But you know how the angel commanded Hagar to return to her mistress, and submit herself under her

hand; and the apostle sent back Onesimus to his master” (107). Based on the quotation above, Mr. Wilson tries to persuade George to return to his master. Yet, George does not care at all about Mr. Wilson’s saying then George replies: “ I am armed with pistols and a bowie-knife (108). It means that George will fight for liberty with his last breath. The writer finds out that George has a strong-will to get his freedom till Mr. Wilson cannot change his mind.

Another reaction that George Harris does to get his freedom is to join his friends. George says, “I’ve got some preparation made, - and there are those that will help me; and in the course of a week or so, I shall be among the missing”(18). It means that George cannot escape by himself, so he tries to join his friends to get his freedom. First, George chooses to join Jim because Jim has ever been to Canada. Therefore, George will ask Jim to guide him to go there since George believes that Jim knows all the ways to Canada. George says: “Meanwhile, he is going with me as far as Ohio, to put me among friends that helped him, and then he will come back after her” (112). The writer finds out that George can escape successfully because of his friends’ help. One of his friends’ helps is to help George escape to the Quaker’s settlement. It shows that George also joins the Quakers to get his freedom.

One of the Quakers who help George is Phineas. Here, Phineas tries to help George to find the way to Canada. A proof can be seen on the quotation “ Ah, well, friend,” said Phineas,” but thee’ll need a driver, for all that. Thee’s quite welcome to do all the fighting thee knows; but I know a thing or two about the road, that thee doesn’t” (187).

In Uncle Tom's Cabin, George has strong-will, so he will be against everyone who prevents his destination to get freedom. It happens when he has to fight with Marks and Tom Loker on his way to Canada. Here, Marks and Tom Loker try to capture George, but George defends himself. The writer sees that George is really willing to get Canada although he has to die. It can be seen when George shoots Tom Loker because Tom Loker does not want to retreat and tries to capture him. Because of the shoot, Tom Loker wounded and then he changed his mind to help George, his family and his friends to escape to Canada. Tom Loker informs George that Marks and his friends will arrive at Sandusky before they go to Canada, so they have to disguise. The writer finds out that George, his family and his friends are successful in their disguise and finally they can reach Canada safety. A proof can be seen on the quotation:

The bell rang; the boat stopped. Scarcely seeing what he did, he looked out his baggage, and gathered his little party. The little company were landed on the shore. They stood still till the boat had cleared; and then, with tears and embracings, the husband and wife, with their wondering child in their arms, knelt down and lift up their hearts to God! (385).

From the quotation above, the writer finds out that George and his family and his friends, Jim and his mother, could reach Canada. They cannot express their happiness to get their freedom that they want for so long then pray to the God for

His mercy. Here, Stowe uses poem to express their happiness in getting their freedom.

“’Twas something like the burst from death to life,
 From the grave’s cerements to the robes of heaven;
 From the sin’s dominion, and from passion’s strife,
 To the pure freedom of a soul forgiven;
 Where all the bonds of death and hell are riven.
 And mortal puts on immortality,
 When Mercy’s hand turned the golden key,
 And Mercy’s voice hath said, Rejoice, thy soul is free” (385)

From all George’s reactions above, the writer finds out that George Harris is quite a different slave with Uncle Tom, for example. He is neither a martyr nor is he even pious. He is discouraged at the lot life has handed him, especially because he cannot live up to his enormous potential and keep his life and child safe. Thus, the characters of George are effective because put a more human face on Stowe’s representation of slaves, in contrast to angelic Tom, George is also an example of a slave with his own agency who is willing to die for his freedom. He said: “If any man tries to stop me, let him take care, for I am desperate. I’ll fight for my liberty to the last breath I breathe (110).