Student Name

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AP American Experience

Uncle Tom’s Cabin Essay

In Uncle Tom’s Cabin, it shows in reality, how slaves were typically treated. Many slaves were beaten, and abused in many other ways. It would have been a hard time to stay true to your faith and trust in God that everything would pull threw. Harriet Beecher Stowe uses biblical similarities in the Characters of Uncle Tom’s Cabin by portraying Eliza, Eva, and Tom as Christ figures throughout the book, Eliza with the parting of the red sea, Eva and the last supper, and Tom and the crucifixion to show readers that slavery is a sinful institution.

Eliza Harris serves to reflect the biblical story of the “Parting of the Red Sea”. When Eliza escapes from the Shelby plantation, she then encounters the frozen Ohio River. As Eliza is about to cross the river Mr. Haley and his acquaintances are rushing after Eliza and her son Harry. Seconds before Eliza steps onto the frozen river, “A thousand lives seemed to be concentrated in that one moment” (67). In the book of Exodus all the people of Israel were in Moses’ hands. He felt the need to protect them and save them as much as Eliza wanted to do for the slaves and her son. As soon as Mr. Haley saw Eliza attempting to cross the river,” He threw himself onto his hose and…he was after her” (67). Just before Moses parts the sea, the Pharaoh and his men rush toward to stop them, just like Mr. Haley had tried to do to Eliza. When Eliza finally departures onto the frozen river,”…Her feet to her scarce seemed to touch the ground…” (67). As Moses’ people crossed the Departed Red Sea they are not walking on the water, but on the pure soil that God had provided them. God gave Eliza the strength and support she needed to cross, just as he gave Moses. When Moses had crossed the Red Sea, the pharaoh became angry just as Mr. Haley did. As impossible as it seemed to Haley, Sam, and Andy, “Instinctively cried out, and lifted up their hands, as she did it” (67). Both the Pharaoh and Mr. Haley were being punished for the slavery that they had sheltered. As Eliza is walking across the ice her, “Blood marked every step” (68). Both Eliza and Moses were sacrificing their own life for the life others. In both Uncle Tom’s Cabin and The Parting of the Red Sea, the slave owners are being punished. Even though Eva is technically a slave owner, because she is sacrificing herself, she is not being punished.

Just like Stowe used the parting of the red sea to bring out the Christ like figure in Eliza, she also interpreted The Last Supper for Eva. Eva and Topsy had formed a strong relationship with each other. Eva, like God, began to change the way Topsy behaves. Eva had overheard her mom yelling at Topsy. When Eva walked out on the veranda she noticed Topsy holding a bouquet of flowers picked from the garden. When Topsy had told Eva they were for her, Eva explains, “I can’t have too many, do bring them here Topsy” (324). Eva respects her people just like Jesus respected his. No matter what they were going through, who they are, and there previous sinful behavior both Eva and Jesus wanted them to feel as if they were loved, and belonged. Slavery was holding the slaves back from their happiness. The slaves were treated like they where nothing. Before Eva passed away, she wanted to give part of her to the slaves so they always remember to be faithful in the lord as she was. Eva says to her mom, “Mama, I want to give some away to my friends, while I am able to give it to them myself” (326). In the Last Supper Jesus broke bread and served wine to the disciples to eat and remember him. Just like Jesus Eva wanted the slaves to remember her, and to know that God will help them. The gathering of the last supper happened just before the crucifixion. Eva holds herself accountable for all the people just like Jesus. When she cuts her hair, she tells her mom“…I want to see all our people together” (326). Before Jesus died on the cross, they had last supper. All Jesus’ disciples were gathered in one area and told of what was to come ahead. Eva had explained to the slaves of what was happening to calm their fears. She wanted them to know she was sacrificing her life, for their life, and everything would be okay. Just as Jesus died for the people of Jerusalem to show that Christianity was real, Eva died to help show that slavery is bad. Tom, for the same reasons as Eliza and Eva, sacrificed himself to show that slavery was bad.

Tom has a strong faith in God. He had a faith that couldn’t get held back. Tom, like Jesus died to save the people that couldn’t save themselves. Legree tried beat and torture the faith out of Tom. When Legree threatens to kill Tom if he does not tell him where Cassy and Emmeline are Tom, “Felt strong in God to meet death, rather than betray the helpless” (468). As much as Jesus was disliked by the leaders of Jerusalem he still carried on in the ways he knew was right. Tom knew that he must stay faithful in the lord to help show others that faith overcomes any power. Tom like God only wanted the best for every person in the world. Whether they sinned or just didn’t have faith, he wanted to help them. As much as Legree mistreated Tom, he still was never able to form a hate toward him. While Legree is beating Tom, and just before Tom starts to fade away he mutters to Legree, “I forgive ye, with all my soul” (471). Tom forgave Legree even though he didn’t have faith in God, just as Jesus forgave the people that sinned against him. Both situations are trying to explain that something there doing is sinful. In the Bible’s case that is trying to show us that just because you have different beliefs doesn’t mean you’re wrong. In Uncle Tom’s cabin, it is that slavery is not the right thing to bestow upon. When Tom died, it affected many people’s lives. Sambo and Quimbo, who were previous slave overseers, saw that what they were doing was wrong. When Tom died, Sambo and Quimbo, “…Washed his wounds, and provided a rude bed of some refuse cotton” (471). After Jesus died on the cross 2 of his disciples that previously didn’t believe in Christianity washed his wounds and placed him in a tomb wrapped in white linen, just as Sambo and Quimbo had done for Tom. They were both wrapped in white showing that it was right what they sacrificed. Tom wanted the world to realize that slavery not only destroys the people they use, it destroys the people’s way of life.

Harriet Beecher Stowe was a white northern woman with a cause. She realized early on that slavery was not what God had wanted. Slavery was a cruel and devilish punishment. Stowe used her writing to show that slavery was immoral through her biblical similarities with Eliza and the Parting of the Red Sea, Eva and the last supper, and Tom and the Crucifixion.