CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Literature is an interpretation of man’s mind using language as its medium which most commonly refer to works of the creative imagination. According to Wellek and Austin Warren (1977 : 3) “Literature is said to be creative, an art, what an author has produced”. This statement explains that literature is a product or works which needs creativity created by the author. Literature describes life, and life mostly consist of social fact although literary works also imitates nature and human subjective world. Literature is related to the society, which is the author is also part of it. Individual and society are building material of literary works which related to each other. Individual learns from society and society itself is established by individual.

Literature has three major generic divisions, i.e. poetry, drama, and narrative fiction. One of those which will be discussed is narrative fiction. Narrative fiction is a sort of literature that belongs to prose (novel, short story, etc) and it refers to a work that tells something imaginatively. Novel is one of the narrative fiction which is classified as one of literature genres. Novel almost always concentrates on character and incident and usually contains a plot. In writing the novel, the author often describes the events use a mythological, political, sociological, psychological, historical, or other approach. We may also interpret the author's message by understanding the story.
Uncle Tom's Cabin by Harriet Beecher Stowe is one of the novel that brings out issue in the society. Uncle Tom's Cabin published in 1852 and has slavery as its major theme. Stowe explores the idea of slavery because of her own experiences and what she has witnessed in the past which demonstrated to her the evils of slavery. She uses the characters to represent ideas of a time when slavery was the biggest issue that people were dealing with. Uncle Tom's Cabin was an unexpected factor in the dispute between the North and South.

As we know, slavery has existed since long time ago. It happened not only in America, but also other countries. Slavery is a system under which people are treated as property to be bought and sold and are forced to work. Slavery in America began when the first African slaves were brought to the North American colony of Jamestown, Virginia, to aid in the production of lucrative crops. Slavery was practiced throughout the American colonies in the 17th and 18th centuries, and African-American slaves helped build the economic foundations of the nation. The invention of the cotton gin in 1793 solidified the central importance of slavery to the South's economy. Cotton is terribly important, not only to the South, but to the nation. By 1840, cotton is more valuable than other so the value of slaves is tremendous. The cotton crop that slaves produced makes America important to the world.

Most slaves lives on large farms or small plantations. Slave owners make their slaves completely depend on them. They are prohibited from learning to read and write, and their behavior and movement is restricted. Many masters take sexual liberties with slave women, and reward obedient slave behavior with favors, while rebellious slaves are brutally punished. Slave marriages has no legal basis, but
slaves do marry and raise families. Most slave owners encourage this practice, but nonetheless do not hesitate to divide slave families by sale or removal.

Slavery has many impacts to them who include in it. Through slavery, slaves are separated from their families. Slaves aren’t allowed to speak in their native languages, and it doesn’t not allow them to effectively communicate. Masters also prevent their slaves from learning to read and write, so the potential for them to be able to communicate was severely limited. Slavery put slaves at huge disadvantages, which has taken them over a century to fight, and they still have not completely overcome this misery. Slavery has left an impact on African-Americans as a whole. Memories of slavery will always be held within them. Their restrictions as slaves and the impact of slavery after emancipation have all negatively affected the culture that they have created. This is what *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* wants to show to the reader and to the world about the cruelty of slavery that affects black people behavior and culture.

*Uncle Tom’s Cabin* is written after the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, which made it illegal for anyone in the United States to offer aid to a runaway slave. The novel seeks to attack this law and create the emancipation and freedom for all people. Stowe believes that blacks have sufficient innate ability to serve as equal citizens in a free society and make both equally suitable for freedom. The novel also persuades the readers that slavery is evil and intolerable in the civil society. In the novel, Stowe explores the question of slavery, which the slaves and masters have both positive and negative relationship. But unfortunately most of them are negative which slaves are abused and mistreated by their masters as if they are not an human being.
Uncle Tom’s Cabin opens as Mr. Shelby, a Kentucky plantation owner and a slave trader named Mr. Haley discuss how many slaves Mr. Shelby will need to sell in order to solve his financial problem. Mr. Shelby decides to raise money by selling two of his slaves to Mr. Haley. One of them is Uncle Tom, a middle-aged man with a wife and children and Harry, the son of Mr. Shelby’s maid Eliza. Mr. Haley takes Tom to a slave market and sells Tom to Simon Legree, an evil and violent man who makes his slaves work until they die then buys a new one cheaply in a never-ending cycle. Simon Legree often beats his slaves and uses them as prostitutes. Stowe takes the readers into the Legree plantation, where the evil of slavery appears in its most hideous form. This harsh and barbaric setting, in which slaves suffers beatings, sexual abuse, and even murder, introduces the immorality of slavery.

The idea which is portrayed in the novel focuses on the arbitrarily act towards black people as slaves. I am interested to analyse the theme of slavery in Uncle Tom’s Cabin because the novel clearly illustrate the evil and inhumanity of slavery in America which slavery is an important issue to talk about. The novel illustrates not only the suffering of the slaves themselves, but also the way that slavery as something that harms everyone which involved in it. It also shows the struggle of black people face their masters and ready to bear such a worse treatment if sometimes they don’t do something as told. They are treated like an animal which brought into a slave market and become the tools of trading between the slave holders. It is a serious problem to discuss because it concerns with human right.
One of the evils of slavery is the possibility that a slave can be completely detached from his or her family. Slaves’ fates are completely detached from their own needs and actions. They can’t work with their way or build homes and lives for themselves because if they do so, it might all be taken away the next day. The master’s hatred to their slaves is utterly evil and unrestrained. No law, no person, no religion will stand in his way when he wants to do the actions arbitrarily on an innocent man. This is the moment which Stowe wants to show to the reader and makes them realize the full horror of slavery.

The major impact that can be seen through the novel are mostly negative. Slavery cause suffering for the slaves. *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* describes slavery is frequently a brutal institution, in which slaves were whipped, beaten, abused, straved, worked to death, sexually violated and even murdered. It also shows another forms of suffering, such as the separation of families and the degradation of the human spirit. The degradation of slavery has prevented black people from developing their ability. In order to convince the readers that slavery is morally wrong, Stowe depict all the different ways in which slaves suffer.

Harrier Beecher Stowe has a specific moral aim to encourage the American public to see slavery in its true light and demand abolition. *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* is a novel with the purpose, to edify, to teach and to transform society. As a protest literature, it objects to the institution of slavery and the effects it has on themselves, their family and on society. It also follows the quests of several characters to find their right as human being. Although some of the characters ends in tragedy, but some of them reaches the freedom.
1.2 Problem of the Study

Fundamentally, research and scientific inquiry are intended to answer some question in order to improve and enrich our knowledge. Referring to this statement, my curiosity about the novel deals with slavery and its impact to the black people as the novel’s main theme and leads me to point out some questions as the problems of the study, those are:

1. Why does slavery happen towards black people in Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*?
2. What does the impact of slavery?
3. How does the slavery cause suffering to the black people?

1.3 Objective of the Study

The objective of the study is related to the problem of the study and tend to answer the problems. Based on the problems above, the answers for those questions as the objectives of the analysis are:

1. To explain about the slavery and how it happens to the society in America as portrayed in Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*.
2. To find out the impact, especially the major suffering they (black people) bear as the results of the slavery.

1.4 Scope of the Study

To prevent vagueness and subjectivity, it is important to make the limitations in order to get the objective result and make the data more specific, does
not go far from the topic and become a comprehensive analysis. There should be a scope that shows the summary of the related topics which is discussed in the thesis. Since the novel has slavery as its major theme and focus on the immorality, I would like to analyse the impact of slavery, especially the suffering that characters endure in Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*.

1.5 The Significance of the Study

The analysis of this thesis is expected to give benefits, especially for myself and the readers generally. The expected significances are:

1. Theoretically, this thesis will enrich the literary study generally, especially related to the novel and its relation to the social problem such as slavery.

2. Practically, this thesis will become a reading source which help the readers understand the story of the novel *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* and as an addition for study of literature related to the social issue. This thesis will show the readers the facts and ideas about slavery that happens in America and its impact to the victim and society. It makes the readers more aware about slavery which is concerned with human rights.