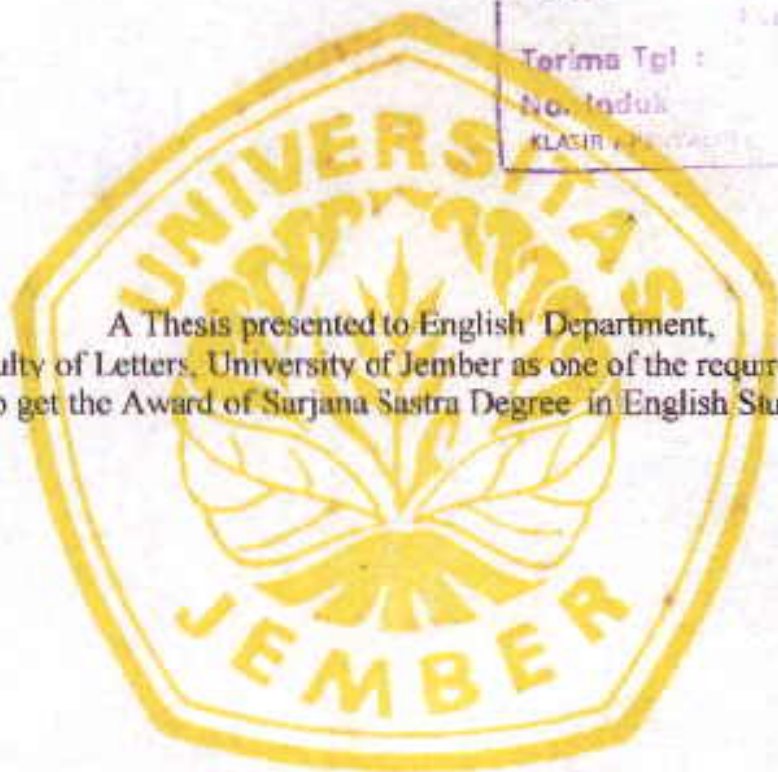




UNIVERSITAS JEMBER

# THE REFLECTION OF AMERICAN SLAVERY IN HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW'S FIVE POEMS

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## APPROVAL SHEET

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## **PAGE OF DEDICATION**

**This thesis is dedicated to:**

- My wonderful parents, Soemarto, S.H, and Wahyu Tri Handayani
- My lovely sister, Renya Rystiana Whardani, AMd., S.H.
- My dearest brother, Haryawan Prakosa, S.E.
- My beloved, Ilham Wahyudi
- My Alma Mater

**Motto:**

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغَيِّرُ مَا بَقِيَ حَتَّىٰ يَخْتَرُوا مَا بَالِقُلُوبِهِمْ

*"...Verily! Allah will not change the good condition of a people as long as they do not change their state of goodness themselves..."*

*(Ar-Ra'du: 11)*

**(Interpretation of the Meanings of the Noble Qur'an, translated by Dr. Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din Al-Hilali, ph.d. and Dr. Muhammad Muhsin Khan)**

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My best praise is due to Allah SWT who has been giving me His blessings and mercies so that I could finish writing this thesis. I would like to deliver my warm regards unto Prophet Muhammad SAW who has brought and guided me to the light of the truth.

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Allah SWT gives his creature a chance to live to struggle and this is one of the proofs. May this thesis be useful to all of the readers who care about literature and humanism.

Jember, July 19, 2005

Ratih Setya Rahayu

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 The Rationale

There are three major forms of literature, namely – novel, drama, and poetry. Poetry is different from any other forms of literature. Poetry is the most condensed and concentrated form of literature, saying most in the fewest number of words (Perrine, 1983: 523). Its language is using patterned language that is different from daily conversation language. Poetry is a literary work in metrical form or patterned language (Shaw, 1905: 292). Poetry as a work of literature reveals its beauty through language and the imagination of the poet. A poet creates poetry in order to either entertain or educate. Many poems try to be entertaining and instructive, both amusing and edifying at the same time (Reaske, 1966: 8). Sir Philip Sidney says, "Poetry is speaking picture, with the end to teach and delight" (Bhurton, 1974: 136). Poetry is hard to understand because the words overflow spontaneously from the deep feeling of human being, especially the poet. Wordsworth states that

"For all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: but though this be true, poems to which any value can be attached, were never produced on any variety of subjects but by a man, who being possessed of more than usual organic sensibility, had also thought long and deeply."

(Bhurton, 1974: 141)

Keats says, "If poetry comes not as naturally as the leaves to a tree, it had better not come at all" (Bhurton, 1974: 141).

Life is always interesting to discuss. Most poets take life as the subject of their works. They express other's experiences or their own in the form of literary works.

Poetry takes all life as its province. Its primary concern is not with beauty, not with philosophical truth, not with persuasion but with experience. Beauty and philosophical truth are aspects of

experience, and the poet is often engaged with them. But poetry as a whole is concerned with all kinds of experience.

(Perrine, 1983: 522)

A poet creates his good, brilliant, and critical idea of life in pretty words in the form of poetry. We can say that poetry often comes as the reflection of life. Matthew Arnold states that "Poetry is at the bottom is a criticism of life, the greatness of a poet lies in his powerful and beautiful application of ideas to life, to the question: How to live" (Bhurton, 1974: 37). There is a relationship between poetry and life. We can get an understanding of society by understanding of poetry because sometimes poetry is created from the interference of society and on the other hand, the spirit of life comes from poetry. Reaske states that "We arrive at a greater understanding of people and of our society by arriving at an understanding of poetry: there is indeed a relationship between "the literature we read and the life we lead"" (1966: 10).

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was the most popular American poet in nineteenth century. He was very productive to establish his achievement from the late nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth. Nearly every school-age child in the United States and most of those in Britain were required to read some of his lines (Magill, 1982: 1745). He gave an important contribution to the important relationship between America and Europe literature (Unger, 1974: 487). He has the ability to make his moral reflections arise out of experience; emerge from the substance of the stories he tells, the images he presents. He sees the phenomenon around him, slavery rooted that is in society. The blacks got bad treatment from the whites. They treated the blacks as slaves that had to serve them all life. Through his work he criticizes the life of Negro that cannot be separated from slavery. As a poet, Longfellow creates poetry that reflects the life of American Slavery. He cannot accept the fact about the condition of Negroes that always live under slavery during their lives. The whites took their freedom as the real essence of men. The blacks have a great hope that slavery will be abolished so the Negroes will get the better position as human being, which have the authority toward their lives and their freedom. Meanwhile, in fact slavery still exists even though some efforts for abolishing slavery had been done.

Poetry always concerns with life, but poetry cannot change any social conditions. The poets may not stop what happen in life and may not change the destiny of man or nation. The poets only try to speak about their condition. Eberhart (1979: 87) states that, "Poetry may not change the fate of nations, but poets should do and speak from their consciences against every kind of tyranny and evil. They defend the best part of man and sustain cultural values in society."

This thesis is concentrated on Longfellow's five poems. Those poems are: *To William E. Channing*, *The Slave in The Dismal Swamp*, *The Witnesses*, *The Warning*, and *The Slave Singing at Midnight*. These poems generally talk about slavery. Moreover, these poems particularly declare the sympathy and endorsement for the slave's rights. This work, somehow, is very appealing since, Longfellow, as the "white" author, affirmed himself to probe Afro-American people in slavery time of America. The explanation above motivate the writer to choose Longfellow's five poems that reflect the existence of slavery in America as the subject of the study in this thesis.

### 1.2 The Problem to Discuss

The problem of this study deals with slavery that existed in America. Some people are for and some people are against slavery. Negroes as slaves experienced bad and inhuman treatment. They had to live under pressure because the blackness of their skin. The Thirteenth Amendment forbids slavery and that Negroes are said to have equal right with other races. In reality, slavery had not been really abolished.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow as a white American Poet writes poems on slavery which considered to be cruel and inhuman institution that should be abolished. The problem to discuss in this thesis is a question on the ways that the poet had applied in his poems to criticize slavery institution.

### 1.3 The Scope of the Study

The study is limited on five poems of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow which contents deal with slavery. Those poems are *To William E. Channing*, *The*

*Slave in The Dismal Swamp, The Witnesses, The Warning, and The Slave Singing at Midnight.* All of those poems reflect slavery in America that made the Negroes face hard and sorrowful life.

The materials of discussion are taken from the text of the poems. It means that the analysis is based on the content of the poems. The scope of the study focuses on textual analysis.

#### 1.4 The Approaches to Use

To get an appropriate analysis, two suitable approaches are applied. Sociological approach is applied to know the condition of Negroes during the era of slavery. This approach is used to understand the social milieu in which the poet responded to. The use of sociological approach starts from the assumption that literature and society are two parts that cannot be separated. Scott (1962:123) states that literature is not created in vacuum; it is the work not simply of a person, but of an author fixed in time and space, answering to a community of which he is an important figure, because he is an articulate part. It means that literature is the reflection of society. It comes as a response toward the phenomena that happens in society.

Historical approach is applied to know the history of Negro in America. It comes from the idea of Semi (1993: 65), which says that literary work is historical fact because it is human creation in a certain period that brings its spirit. This approach will help us to search the history of Negro in the age of slavery, and their struggles for freedom that started in the earlier period, in the slavery period. Longfellow reveals this condition through his poems that will be discussed in this thesis.

Through these approaches we can see reciprocal relation between literature and society. As Hary Levin States:

“...the relation between literature and society is reciprocal. Literature is not only the effect of social causes; but it also the cause of social effect.”

(in Scott, 1962: 126)

### **1.5 The Method of the Study**

The method of analysis in this study is deductive one. It will start from the specific explanation to the general one. This study is also done by means of library research in which the materials, the data, and information are collected from several books and dictionaries (Nasution, 1999: 10).

### **1.6 The Goals of the Study**

There are some purposes of writing this thesis. The first is to prove that Longfellow's five poems are reflection of American slavery. The second is to know the life of Negroes in America and how they did the efforts for the survival to get freedom. The last aim is to apply knowledge that the writer has got in Faculty of Letters, especially the study of poetry. It is hoped that this simple thesis will be a useful contribution to give further information about American literature, especially Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's work.

### **1.7 The Organization of the Thesis**

This thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter one presents introduction which is divided into seven sub chapters. Chapter two describes the biography of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. Chapter three concerns with the history of American slavery and the influence to American literature. Chapter four is the main discussion about Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's five poems as the reflection of American Slavery. The whole discussion of this thesis concluded in chapter five.

## CHAPTER II

### THE BIOGRAPHY OF HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was born at Portland, Maine, on February 27, 1807. He was the second of eight children. His mother's name is Zilpah. She was the biggest influence of Longfellow's literary interests and inspired him with her own religious motivated idealism, including a lifelong hatred of war and violence. His father, Stephen Longfellow, was a lawyer, a trustee of Bowdoin College, and Congressman from Maine. He was an advisor to his son who provided him with financial aid as well as encouragement at the beginning of his career.

In 1821, Longfellow entered Bowdoin College, at Brunswick, Maine. Beside his formal education in Bowdoin, he also received the informal education by joining in the Peucinian, a literary society with a well-stocked library. The reading and critical discussion of papers of its meetings sharpened Longfellow's growing desire for a literary career. He was graduated in 1825 and was offered to continue his study in Europe to get his professorship. The offer was quickly accepted, and on May 15, 1826, Longfellow sailed from New York. For three years, he was in France, Spain, Italy, and Germany.

Assuming his professional duties in September 1829, Longfellow discovered that he had virtually to establish a new area of studies and to provide its materials; between 1830-1832 he edited or translated six texts in French, Spanish and Italian. His competence in basic instruction, skill as a lecturer, and courtesy to student quickly made him an influential teacher. Further, he was making a professional reputation.

After a short courtship, Longfellow married in 1831 to Marry Storer Potter, a delicately attractive girl interested in mathematics and poetry, who made a self-effacing but effective helpmate. In 1833-1834 *Outre-Mer: A Pilgrimage beyond the Sea* was published. In 1834, George Ticknor, Smith Professor of Modern Languages at Harvard College, designated Longfellow as

his successor. Once more preparatory study abroad, Longfellow and his wife left for Europe in April 1835. He added Dutch, Danish, Icelandic, Swedish, and some Finnish to his store of languages, acquired a thorough knowledge of German romantic literature. The violent emotional experience originate in his wife's death. Marry's health had always been uncertain; she was pregnant, and the rigors of Scandinavian trip exhausted her. Back in Holland, she suffered from a miscarriage; infection subsequently developed, and on November 29, 1835 she died. Longfellow was haunted by loneliness and often acutely depressed.

In spring of 1836, his spirits slightly improved, Longfellow visited the Tyrol. In July, at Interlaken, he encountered the wealthy Bostonian Nathan Appleton and his family, and with the beautiful, talented and sensitive young Frances Appleton he fell in love. In August he had to leave for America, his love unreturned; this began an extended courtship, long unpromising and broken off by Fanny after publication of the autobiographical *Hyperion* in 1839. A chance meeting four years later became a reconciliation of their courtship, and on April 17, 1843, Longfellow received a note from Fanny that set him walk at top speed from Cambridge to Boston through a transfigured day, and into one of the happiest marriage on July 13, 1843. Her father, a wealthy cotton-mill proprietor, presented the couple with Craigie House as a wedding present. Longfellow's life now flowed on placidly, in the Congenial Cambridge society.

1839, he published *Voices of the Night*, his first collection of poems, some of which, including the sensationally popular *A Psalm of Life* had been previously printed in magazines. *Ballads and Other Poems* followed in 1841; *Poems on Slavery* was written during his return from brief third European trip in 1842. *Poems on Slavery* might be not only Longfellow's sympathy toward the slave's suffering life, but also his impression toward the slave's life in facing and bearing the oppression. Both attitudes supported his position as the abolitionist. His sympathy expresses Longfellow's religious convictions toward Unitarianism. A poetic drama, *The Spanish Student*, in book form in

1843. The years from 1843 to 1860 were Longfellow's most fruitful. Besides editing and contributing to three collections of verse, he wrote many of his best shorter poems, gathered in *The Belfry of Bruges and Other Poems* (1846) and *The Seaside and the Fireside* (1850), *Tales of A Wayside Inn*; a novel *Kavanagh* (1849); and his most successful long poems *Evangeline* (1847), *The Golden Legend* (1851), *The Song of Hiawatha* (1855) and *The Courtship of Miles Standish* (1858). Many of the volumes sold in numbers and with a speed unprecedented in American publishing history. Longfellow observed the sharpening prewar tensions closely and with growing concern. The opening of hostilities made him sad because of his abhorrence of slavery and his hatred of war.

Then tragic experience of his life happened, on July 9, 1861, Longfellow was resting on a bed, in an adjoining room, his romantically loved wife was sealing locks of their daughters' hair in packets. Then a spark or a drop of hot wax ignited Fanny's flimsy summer dress. A blaze and in agony she ran to Longfellow, whose efforts to beat out the flames left him critically burned. During the night, Fanny died. While she was being buried, Longfellow lay helpless in bed. Physically he made a thorough recovery, although the circumstances of Fanny's death had a strong consequence; the scars on Longfellow's face made further shaving impossible, and thus was created the bearded image. Psychic recovery came slowly, and the inner wounds never completely healed. His suffering toward the tragic death of his wife was reflected in his sonnet *The Cross of Snow* was written in 1879, when Longfellow came upon a picture of a mountain in whose ravines lay a cross-shaped deposit of snow, and found there the image of his endless pain. *The Cross of Snow* was published posthumously; like another sonnet, the *Mezzo Cammin* of 1842, it seemed to Longfellow too personal for being printed.

Initially forcing himself to resume as an escape from grief, Longfellow was soon engaged in some of his most ambitious undertakings. The three series of narrative poems constituting *Tales of A Wayside Inn* were published in 1863, 1872, and 1874 respectively; the translation of the whole of *The Divina*



*Commedia* occupied the years from 1865 to 1867; the *New England Tragedies* appeared in 1868 and *The Divine Tragedy* in 1871, two works that were linked with *The Golden Legend* to make up the complete *Christus* in 1872. From 1876 to 1879 Longfellow acted as an editor, in practice as editor-in-chief, of the thirty one volumes of *Poems of Places*, which included several of his own contributions. Meantime, a but slightly diminished flow of shorter poems, including the fine sonnets, continued, filling most of *Aftermath* (1873); *The Masque of Pandora and Other Poems* (1875); *Keramos and Other Poems* (1878) and *Ultima Taule* (1880).

The last European journey in 1868-1869 was an almost royal progress. He received degrees from Cambridge and Oxford, and was given a private audience by Queen Victoria. Victor Hugo saluted Longfellow as a man who brought honor to America. He was clearly the uncrowned poet laureate, and he played his part to the end. On March 12, 1882, he finished ten six line stanzas of *The Bells of San Blas*. His health began to fail before the work was completed and he died from peritonitis after a short illness on March 24, 1882. His project, a project on poetic drama *Michael Angelo* was uncompleted because of his death. After his death, he became the only American to be honored with a bust in the Poet's Corner of Westminster Abbey.

According to Rene Wellek and Austin Warren, to relate the literary work with social development one applies three terms. One of them is the sociology of the writer. It is related to Longfellow's existence as a member of American society. The sociology of Longfellow includes his social life, attitude and ideology. They show the situation or issues of which the writer has taken part (Wellek, 1956: 196). Knowing Longfellow's biography will help the writer to analyze Longfellow's five poems.

## CHAPTER III

### THE HISTORY OF SLAVERY IN AMERICA AND ITS INFLUENCE IN AMERICAN LITERATURE

#### 3.1 The History of Slavery in America

Slavery is a wide variety of conditions whereby one person subordinates another, usually by the exercise of physical coercion, and exerts some proprietorship, either legally or customarily (*Encyclopedia Americana Vol.24, 1998: 19*). Florentinus states "Slavery is an institution of the law of nations, whereby someone against nature is made subject to the ownership of another" (in Garnsey, 1996: 64). A slave is a property for the owner. For the masters, slaves are investment and property that should be protected (Sowell, 1989: 253). The master or the slave owner has the right over slaves, so the slave is often treated badly and inhumanly. The slaves cannot have their own freedom. The owners take their basic right to be free. The masters are brutal to their slaves. They treat the slaves not as men but as animals. Negroes might be overworked and mistreated, women slaves might become the paramours of the masters. The relationship between the owners and slaves were never close. The communication of them only through the command by the owners. The masters should never unbend toward their slaves, but communicate with them only happened through command (Garnsey, 1996: 56). For the owners, nothing could be appreciated from the slaves. Their lives were only for serving their master. Seneca states that:

" It is a mistake for anyone to believe that the condition of slavery penetrates into the whole being of a man. The better part of him is exempt. Only the body is at the mercy and disposition of a master. The mind, however, is its own master."

(in Garnsey, 1996: 66)

Men have enslaved one another for two reasons: first, as a form of punishment, either for transgressors in social behavior or for vanquished

warriors; second, as a response to the demand for men and women to serve as laborers.

Slavery in America was introduced on the North America, since 20 African had landed at Jamestown, Virginia brought by a Dutch ship in the 1619. Firstly the Negroes were brought not as slaves but as indenture servants in which they worked for their masters for a certain period of five to seven years. In the later development their status became one of servitude for life. This was full and complete slavery. Negroes were bought and sold to serve as coachmen and household servants. The slave trade was a nasty business. The slaves often separated from their family. Husbands were often separated from their wives and children from their parents (Blake, 1963: 123). The slave system became thoroughly established in cultivation of tobacco and rice.

Cotton, never an important in America crop until after the revolution, became the dominant staple. Rapidly, expanding demand from England, France, and the industrial North led to the extension of cotton culture into the new states of the Old Southwest. Slavery, a decadent institution during the latter part of the eighteenth century, of Eli Whitney's cotton gin, a machine for separating the seeds from cotton, in 1793, created a greater demand for slaves to work the new lands opened up in the Southern and Southwestern United States. The American slaves were viewed not only as a unit of potential labors but also as a commercial asset. A direct connection existed between the transatlantic slave trade and the growth and prosperity of the individual American plantation colonies. The colonists quickly realized that slavery afforded both the fastest and easiest method of providing the labor force for developing the colonies.

Early 1773, Massachusetts blacks petitioned for their freedom. By the early nineteenth century, slavery had been abolished in the northern states. With freedom, blacks began to create their own institutions, especially churches. Lack of adequate public school kept most free blacks in ignorance, but only minority managed to acquire more than the basic of education. In

1823 the first Negro, Alexander Twilight, graduated from college. In 1826, John Russwurm received a degree from Bowdoin, in Maine, and like many educated blacks he used his training for the better position and better treatment of his race.

In Southern states, slaves produced the most important American cotton crop until 1860's. The great plantations dominated the region's economic and political life. Southern states declare slave codes that prohibited slaves from making contracts, learning to read and write, owning property, or moving freely. A patrol system gave all whites, a regulation of controlling all blacks, whether they were slaves or freemen. Most slaves worked on the plantations. They cultivated cotton, tobacco, rice, and sugar cane. Although they worked from sunup to sundown, they managed to revive their own cultural lives, centered on music and religion.

Slaves participated in two kinds of Christian worship: they attended in their master's churches, and held what were called "shouts."

"The shout was an African ring dance, with singers and dancers who accompanied themselves by clapping or tapping, hand clapping, and thigh slapping in intricate rhythm. In the shout, music-making and dancing served as a means of communicating with God, and shouters danced until the Holy Spirit possessed them."

(Encyclopedia Americana Vol.4, 1998: 28c)

Slaveholders tried unsuccessfully to suppress the shouts, toward which they felt fear that the slaves would be encouraged on rebellion.

Slaves in all areas felt an intense dislike for the institution that subordinated them, regardless of their conditions of slavery, as manifested by slave revolts, protests, and resistance. One slave in North Carolina ran away from her master 16 times. "Communities of runaways, called maroons, which existed in most of the slave colonies throughout the period of slavery, stubbornly defied recapture and incorporation into the formal system" (Encyclopedia Americana Vol. 24, 1998: 23).

The world of the American slaveholders began to fall apart during the eighteenth century, as the slaves became more rebellious. In 1772, Lord Mansfield, The English Chief Justice, declared that slavery was illegal in England. Antislavery societies were founded in England in 1787 and in France 1788. In the Southern United States, many Negroes sought to restrict the life and activities of the slaves. During nineteenth century, slavery came under criticism not only from religious seats but also from secular thinkers on political reform, who saw it as an obnoxious form of special privilege, contrary both to reason and humanity. Furthermore, the problem of slavery created a provocative political issue between the pro-abolitionist North and the proslavery South, especially over the question of refugee slaves.

Slavery was national rather than regional issue in America. The matter of slavery made the condition of the South and the North is not in stable condition. The south as proslavery side wanted to extend slavery, while the North as antislavery side wanted to be abolitionist. This condition led those two regions into Civil War in 1861. On September 22, 1862, President Lincoln issued the Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, stating that on January 1, 1863, he gave freedom to the slaves. In December 1865, The Thirteenth Amendment was issued and slavery was prohibited. In 1865 the war ended with the surrender of the Southern state. Although emancipation had resulted from the Civil War, the Negroes of the country had not yet actually achieved the rights as citizens. The Fourteenth Amendment ratified in 1868, guaranteed Negroes the rights of citizenship. The fifteenth Amendment ratified in 1870, explicitly guaranteed their political rights.

After the Reconstruction Period, and the withdrawal of the union soldiers, the Negroes' condition was almost emerged in the South. The Supreme Court which well known as Jim Crow laws legalized the segregation facilities between white and Negro. Negro was not allowed to vote, to have job, and to attend white school. Segregation was developed by white American as a means of insuring social, political, and economic

distance between the races. To keep the Negro subservient, it was necessary to keep him poor and uneducated.

During the First World War, thousand of blacks began to leave the South. Jobless, discrimination and violence caused the Great Migration of the Negroes to the North. They were tired of sorrowful life, having their children grow up without getting good education, remaining in fear and hopelessness. They moved to the North to seek a new life with the better future.

Sometimes literary works are created because of the effect of social condition. Knowing the historical background of American slavery will make the analysis on Longfellow's five poems become easier. The history will help the writer to find out the reflection of American slavery toward Longfellow's five poems.

### 3.2 The Influence of Slavery in American Literature

Slavery and the Civil War have intrigued popular writers. Through their works, the writers want to record the life of Negroes as the victims of slavery in the form of literary works. Slavery has been a great inspiration for them to create their works. Many writers were interested in writing all about slavery that was one of the black's bitter experiences.

One of the writers whose work is dealing with slavery was Harriet Beecher Stowe. On March 20, 1852, Stowe published the first edition of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, a bitter indictment of slavery. This novel was published only nine years before the beginning of Civil War, it was important in dramatizing the abuses of slavery to the American people.

"This book was to shape pre-Civil War America's image of the slave and his master, it defined the issues all Americans had to face. It revealed the cruelty and horror of slavery and the human and noble qualities of a people held in bondage. Its major point was that the Negro wanted his freedom from system founded in brutality and evil, and that he would fight and die for that freedom and the freedom of his family and friends" (Lincoln, 1967: 46).

Another writer who concentrated her work on slavery was Margaret Mitchell. In 1936, she published a novel, *Gone with the Wind*. Mitchell's historically accurate battle scenes fascinated American readers, intricate plot, detailed accounts of white economic ruin during Reconstruction, and vivid portrayals of Scarlett O'Hara and Rhett Butler. Nevertheless, *Gone with the Wind* is clearly a white interpretation of slavery and the Civil War. In this novel, the black characters are filtered through a white lens. Although Mitchell portrays blacks with kindness, she never sees them as equals or penetrates their deeper emotions.

Following those two writers who brought the issue of slavery into their works, Lorraine Hansberry published a drama, *The Drinking Guard*. It showed the balanced treatment of slavery. This drama is an objective study of Southern slavery in the 1850's. Hansberry illustrated that the evil systems may try to consume the individual, but he or she can triumph through the personal strength and courage. For her, slavery was an evil and all consuming. This situation had to be eliminated because slowly but surely, it will destroy America.

In 1842, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow published *Poems on Slavery*. The reality in the slave's life was reflected in *Poems on Slavery* was a part of American's historical life. Meanwhile, *Poems on Slavery* was also a part of America's literary work. Longfellow as a white poet, had given a great contribution to Afro-American life even though *Poems on Slavery* was a minor contribution to America's literary work.

Those explanations above are some examples of the influence of slavery in American literature. They show that literary work could be historical record. The author's create their works to respond the social condition in society where they live in.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

Slavery is one of major issues in American history. It is a system of brutality and coercion. Harshness is a general practice in slavery. Slavery is part of the American society and system. The historical fact of slavery has recorded a picture of Afro-American's plight life as a slave. From his arrival in America to his life in plantation, the slave never had a proper life as humankind. They are always treated badly by their masters. Along their lives the slaves engaged with physical and psychological oppression.

*To William E. Channing, The Slave in the Dismal Swamp, The Witnesses, The Warning, and The Slave Singing at Midnight* were published on 1842. Longfellow, as a poet, criticizes the cruel institution of slavery through the poems. All of the poems above present slavery during its period. They consist of the reflection of slavery in America. Those five poems represent several real scenes during slavery period, such as: the suffering of the slave in the slave ship, the inhumanity in the auction, master's bad treatments during the slaves lived and worked in plantations as well as the abolitionist movement. They are not only Longfellow's sympathy toward the slaves' suffering lives, but also his impression toward the slaves' lives in facing and bearing the oppression. Both attitudes supported his position as the abolitionist. The glorious character is seen since Longfellow as a "white" abolitionist struggle for the "blacks" rights as human being.

It is true that the five poems in this thesis reflect slavery in America. The poems reveal the slaves' lives as the life struggle and ability to afford the suffering. *To William E. Channing* is Longfellow's endorsement to the 'apostle' of Unitarianism, *The Slave in the Dismal Swamp* is a description of suffering because of the slavery, *The Witnesses* shows the horrifying scene from the slave ship. However, the last two poems, *The Warning*, and *The Slave Singing at Midnight*, are focused on slave's endurance. Since Longfellow had chosen to stand as an abolitionist, these poems become expression of his attitude toward



slavery in America. Longfellow really disapproved of slavery. He describes the slave's ability in inking along the suffering oppression. The slaves' lives as chattel and livestock were experienced from the first time they were brought to America. They were treated badly by the slave traders while they were waiting for the auctions. Meanwhile, after the slaves were sold, he got other bad treatments from the master and his overseers. Besides the tortured, slave also faced the separation from their families. The slave's children learned to understand along trip during the auctions. The male slaves faced the oppression, which disrupt and weaken his sense of responsibility and dignity for his family. Moreover, the slavery time in America was a period of racial and cultural provincialism. Africans were prohibited to practice their culture. Americans whipped out their identity as African. However, the skin colour still created some problems. Most people believe that colour symbolizes something. Therefore, black means bad, evil, and sin.

After analysing the five poems, which reflect the American slaves' life in this thesis, it can be summarized that slavery is inhuman institution that should be abolished. The oppression and mistreatment that slave got was not appropriate to human rights. All men are created equal, no matter what his social status, and colour of skin is.



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## APPENDIX I

### THE POEMS

#### TO WILLIAM E. CHANNING

The pages of thy book I read,  
And as I closed each one,  
My heart, responding, ever said,  
"Servant of God! well done!"

Well done! Thy words are great and bold;  
At times they seem to me,  
Like Luther's, in the days of old,  
Half-battles for the free.

Go on, until this land revokes  
The old and chartered Lie,  
The feudal curse, whose whips and yokes  
Insult humanity.

A voice is ever at thy side  
Speaking in tones of might,  
Like the prophetic voice, that cried  
To John in Patmos, "Write!"

Write! and tell out this bloody tale;  
Record this dire eclipse,  
This Day of Wrath, this Endless Wail,  
This dread Apocalypse!

## THE SLAVE IN THE DISMAL SWAMP

In dark fens of the Dismal Swamp  
The hunted Negro lay;  
He saw the fire of the midnight camp,  
And heard at times a horse's tramp  
And a bloodhound's distant bay.

Where will-o'-the-wisps and glow-worms shine,  
In bulrush and in brake;  
Where waving mosses shroud the pine,  
And the cedar grows, and the poisonous vine  
Is spotted like the snake;

Where hardly a human foot could pass,  
Or a human heart would dare,  
On the quaking turf of the green morass  
He crouched in the rank and tangled grass,  
Like a wild beast in his lair.

A poor old slave, infirm and lame;  
Great scars deformed his face,  
On his forehead he bore the brand of shame,  
And the rags, that hid his mangled frame,  
Were the livery of disgrace.

All things above were bright and fair,  
All things were glad and free;  
Lithe squirrels darted here and there,  
And wild birds filled the echoing air  
With songs of Liberty!

On him alone was the doom of pain,  
From the morning of his birth;  
On him alone the curse of Cain  
Fell, like a flail on the garnered grain,  
And struck him to the earth!

## THE WITNESSES

In Ocean's wide domains,  
Half buried in the sands,  
Lie skeletons in chains,  
With shackled feet and hands.

Beyond the fall of dews,  
Deeper than plummet lies,  
Float ships, with all their crews,  
No more to sink nor rise.

There the black Slave-ship swims,  
Freighted with human forms,  
Whose fettered, fleshless limbs  
Are not the sport of storms.

These are the bones of Slaves;  
They gleam from the abyss;  
They cry, from yawning waves,  
"We are the Witnesses!"

Within Earth's wide domains  
Are markets for men's lives;  
Their necks are galled with chains,  
Their wrists are cramped with gyves.

Dead bodies, that the kite  
In deserts makes its prey;  
Murders, that with affright  
Scare school-boys from their play!

All evil thoughts and deeds,  
Anger, and lust, and pride;  
The foulest, rankest weeds,  
That choke Life's groaning tide!

These are the woes of Slaves;  
They glare from the abyss;  
They cry, from unknown graves,  
"We are the Witnesses!"

## THE WARNING

Beware! The Israelite of old, who tore  
The lion in his path,—when, poor and blind,  
He saw the blessed light of heaven no more,  
Shorn of his noble strength and forced to grind  
In prison, and at last led forth to be  
A pander to Philistine revelry,—

Upon the pillars of the temple laid  
His desperate hands, and in its overthrow  
Destroyed himself, and with him those who made  
A cruel mockery of his sightless woe;  
The poor, blind Slave, the scoff and jest of all,  
Expired, and thousands perished in the fall!

There is a poor, blind Samson in this land,  
Shorn of his strength and bound in bonds of steel,  
Who may, in some grim revel, raise his hand,  
And shake the pillars of this Commonweal,  
Till the vast Temple of our liberties  
A shapeless mass of wreck and rubbish lies.



## THE SLAVE SINGING AT MIDNIGHT

Loud he sang the psalm of David!  
He, a Negro and enslaved,  
Sang of Israel's victory,  
Sang of Zion, bright and free.

In that hour, when night is calmest,  
Sang he from the Hebrew Psalmist,  
In a voice so sweet and clear  
That I could not choose but hear,

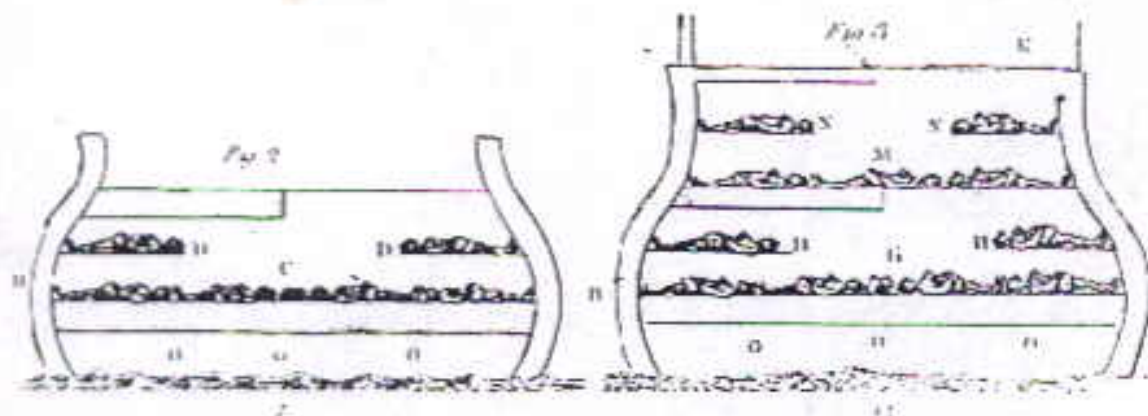
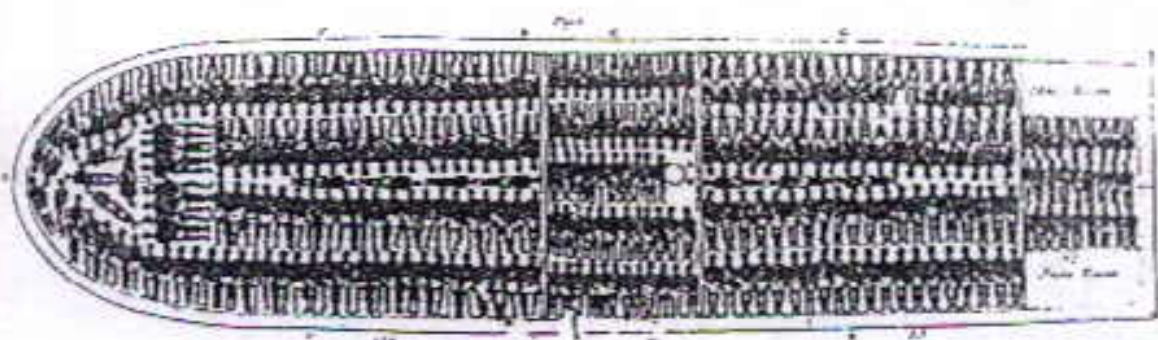
Songs of triumph, and ascriptions,  
Such as reached the swart Egyptians,  
When upon the Red Sea coast  
Perished Pharaoh and his host.

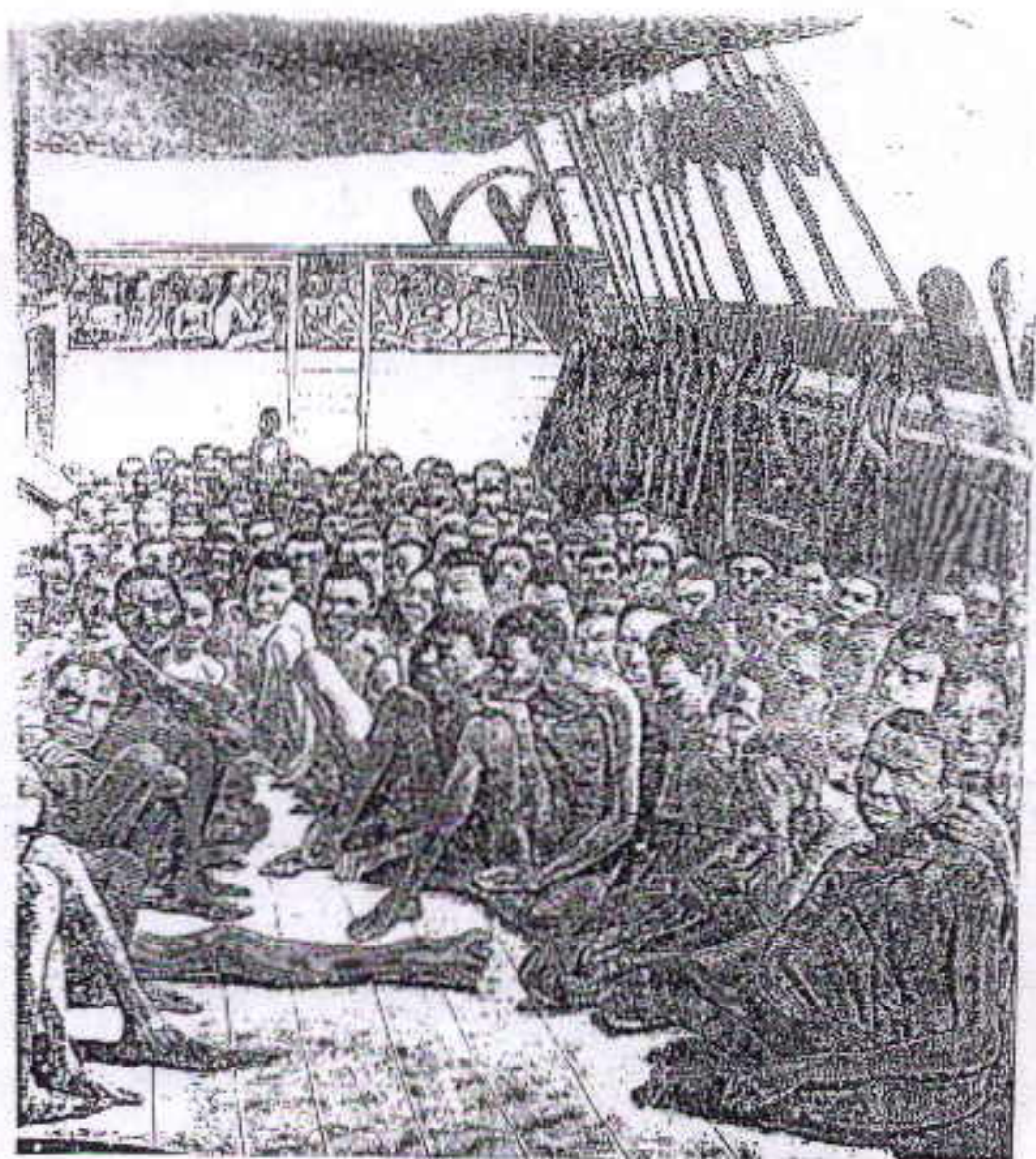
And the voice of his devotion  
Filled my soul with strange emotion;  
For its tones by turns were glad,  
Sweetly solemn, wildly sad.

Paul and Silas, in their prison,  
Sang of Christ, the Lord arisen,  
And an earthquake's arm of might  
Broke their dungeon-gates at night.

But, alas! what holy angel  
Brings the Slave this glad evangel?  
And what earthquake's arm of might  
Breaks his dungeon-gates at night?

APPENDIX II  
THE PICTURE OF THE SLAVE SHIP





(Graebner, 1970: 410-411).