

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

Having analyzed the freedom through the protagonists in Zora Neale Hurston's Their Eyes Were Watching God and Toni Morrison's Beloved, I come to the conclusion that one's characteristics play an important role in affecting one's decision to have their own freedom. Janie's being free-spirited, forward-looking, and self-committed lead her to get the freedom in a much easier way than Sethe, who keeps looking back to the past, feeling guilty, and pretending not to have a failing decision in her life.

Each of the stories uses a female protagonist to define particular journeys to reach one adequate freedom. Both protagonists have different ways to reach their concepts of freedom. The protagonists' characteristics lead them to have the ending of their stories differently. In Their Eyes Were Watching God, Janie seems to be stronger and more focused on getting the freedom that she wants, while in Beloved, Sethe seems to be distracted by her past life and more focused on her past life.

Furthermore, both of the novels draw attention to the oppressive affects of the “stereotypical representation of women as sex object, wife, and mother” (Palmer 14). They depict the negative view of the feminine identity and position and identify femininity with a number of undesirable attributes, including passivity, dependence, indecisiveness and a propensity for excessive self-sacrifice.

In Their Eyes Were Watching God, Janie is described as a woman who undergoes much oppression from her spouses. She has to do as her husbands say, be as her husbands want, and step back from the society since she is able to be the front woman. She is also defined as a woman who has the ability to break free. Although she seems weak, she actually has the power to lead her own life. In other words, she can establish her own freedom. She shows her need to find the right spouse for herself until the end of the story. She keeps on searching someone to be at her side and share the same concept of freedom. It is possible for Janie to have an active freedom because she is not a mother who is immanent and not free like Sethe in Beloved. She moves forward and believes in herself in reaching freedom. In gaining freedom, Janie has a bigger opportunity than Sethe.

In Beloved, Sethe is described as a mother who undergoes much oppression from her motherhood. She has to be able to raise, protect, and love her children at that time. She is also defined as a woman who has the ability to break free. Different from Janie, although she seems strong, she actually does not have the power to lead her own life because she has to break free from the notion of motherhood which makes women vulnerable to male control and manipulation. In other words, she cannot establish her own freedom. She has to undergo many

responsibilities as a mother and is blamed for her failure. As seen through the feminist perspective, Sethe is not going to have any active freedom at all because she is a mother of four children and she has two daughters who bind them together into a more complicated relationship (Charvet 114). At the end of the story she remains guilty because as a mother she is immanent and not free (Charvet 107).

The act of oppression and limitation of freedom happens because there are different classes within the society. In the eye of feminism, the society in here is male-made society. This differentiation seems to be some kind of subordination toward women. The differentiation is also seen as the stratum in gender. Women are labeled as the Other who are not allowed to have the same rights, power and opportunities as men. The notion of women is given by men who seem to determine the positions and rules in the society. This subordination toward women is rejected by both of the protagonists but in gaining their freedom, they do it in different ways as they have the notion that “motherhood makes women more vulnerable to male control” (Palmer 99).

The difference between the two stories is displayed by the actions of the women of subordination. In *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, Janie as the subordinated woman succeeds in achieving her goal, which is to be free as an individual. She survives the oppression from men: her spouses. In *Beloved*, Sethe as the subordinated woman cannot endure the great pressure from the oppressor: the notion of motherhood given by men. Sethe, who wants to have her family complete and free from slavery but is unable to bear and rear her children, finally decides to take a dreadful act by killing her daughter. Although the actions of the

subordinated person in both stories are different, they are similarly considered to be women who are able to try to break free and to be powerful because they go beyond the limitation made by men.