

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

In 1619 slavery was practiced in the United States of America. The first African slaves arrived in Virginia. When the white discovered Africa, they took not only its natural resources but also its people. White people tried to kidnap native Africans to enslave them. They did not treat kidnapped people as humans. On the contrary, they treated them as their property. They could sell or buy them, ask them to work very hard without any payment, get them improper life, and abuse them.

Two authors who deal with the issue of slavery in their novels are Toni Morrison and Lawrence Hill. Toni Morrison is the first female black American who was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature. She also won the Pulitzer Prize in 1988 for one of her novels, Beloved. Lawrence Hill is the son of a black man and a white Canadian woman. He won a lot of awards, such as The American Wilbur Award in 2005, National Magazine Award in 2006, Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize in 2007, and Commonwealth Writers' Prize in 2008.

I have chosen Beloved by Tony Morrison and Someone Knows My Name by Lawrence Hill because in these novels the authors describe the impact of slavery very vividly. Beloved was written in the early 20th century. Morrison presents the protagonist as a woman slave in America. She describes the protagonist as a surviving slave who has escaped from slavery and run away from her master to get her freedom. In Someone Knows My Name, which was written in early 21st century, Hill presents the protagonist as a strong woman who struggles against slavery and tries to get her true freedom and goes back home to Africa.

As both authors make use of their protagonists to convey their ideas, I would like to discuss the portrayal of the protagonist of each novel. I think the protagonists in both stories are interesting to analyze. The protagonists in both novels are slaves. And, both of them are women. In Beloved, the protagonist is Sethe. She is a woman slave who tries to escape from the slavery that she experiences. Sethe is facing a trauma from her late daughter's ghost, Beloved, who always tries to ruin her life. In Someone Knows My Name, the protagonist is Aminata Diallo or Meena. She is an African woman who has been kidnapped and enslaved. She tries to get her freedom back and get her way home to Africa. She gets a lot of obstacles to reach her dream but she never gives up.

Both novels have the same issue, which is slavery, that each protagonist experiences. So, in analyzing these novels, I think the most suitable approach to use is formalism approach. The protagonists in these two novels are different in how they think and how they deal with the problems they face. It is interesting to analyze how a native African woman who has been captured and a black

American who was born as a slave behave when both of them face their problem in the United States. The problems they face are different. So, we can see how they struggle from slavery in different ways.

Statement of the Problem

The problems are stated as follows:

1. How do the authors portray the protagonists?
2. What is the authors' purpose in creating such protagonists?

Purpose of the Study

Based on the statement of the problems above, this study is done:

1. To show how the authors portray the protagonists.
2. To reveal the authors' purpose of creating such protagonists.

Method of Research

In writing this thesis, I start the research by library research, by first reading Beloved and Someone Knows My Name as the primary texts. I also read and compile some texts that are taken from books and the Internet. Then I analyze the novels and draw some conclusions.

Organization of the Thesis

This thesis consists of four chapters preceded by Abstract, Table of Content, and Acknowledgement. Chapter One is the Introduction, which consists of the Background of the Study, the Statement of the Problem, the Purpose of the Study, the Method of Research, and the Organization of the Thesis. Chapter Two is the portrayal of the protagonist in Someone Knows My Name. Chapter Three is the portrayal of the protagonist in Beloved. Chapter Four is the Conclusion, followed by the Bibliography and the Appendices, which consist of the synopses of the two novels and the biographies of the authors.