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**The Quest for Female Identity and Gender Inequalities in
Their Eyes Were Watching God by Zora Neale Hurston**

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Dedication

In the Name of Allah, the Most gracious, the Most Merciful.

I would like to dedicate this achievement to the closest soul to my heart, my beloved grandmother, may her soul rest in peace.

Then, to my family, especially my kind hearted father, my mother, and my supportive sisters; Dalal, Amal, Ferial and Fedwa and my dear brothers.

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Abstract

Zora Neale Hurston, Famous for her rejection and rebellion against the double oppression of both racism and sexism that the African American women had to face in their patriarchal communities. This dissertation aims to study her novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God* 1937 using a black feminist approach to analyze, the protagonist's , Janie Crawford, quest for her female identity, starting from her early childhood to the moment of her self-assertion, highlighting the experience of objectification she received in her first two relational unions, in addition to all the factors that contributed in the creation of her rebellious character. Moreover, This research centers on the novel's representation of gender inequalities between men and women in different life aspects. The findings of this paper show that the heroine, in the end, defies the patriarchal norms of her society and achieves her dream of becoming the independent free woman that she always desired to be.

Key words; Identity, gender, patriarchy, sexism, black feminism, objectification, Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

ملخص

زورا نيل هرستن مشهورة برفضها وتمرد لها ضد الاضطهاد المزدوج للعنصرية والتمييز على أساس الجنس الذي كان على النساء الأميركيات من أصل أفريقي مواجهته في مجتمعاتهن الأبوية. تهدف هذه الأطروحة إلى استكشاف روايتها "عيونهم كانت تراقب الرب 1937 باستخدام نظرية النسوية السوداء لتحليل سعي البطلة، جاني كروفورد، لبحثها عن هويتها الأنثوية، بدءًا من طفولتها المبكرة وحتى لحظة تأكيدها لذاتها، كما تهدف لتسليط الضوء على تجربة التجسيد التي تلقته في زيجاتها الأولى و الثانية ، بالإضافة إلى جميع العوامل التي ساهمت في خلق شخصيتها المتمردة. علاوة على ذلك يركز هذا البحث على اللامساواة الموضحة في الرواية بين الجنسين الرجال والنساء في مختلف جوانب الحياة. تظهر نتائج هذا البحث أن البطلة في النهاية تتحدى الأعراف الأبوية في مجتمعها وتحقق حلمها في أن تصبح المرأة الحرة المستقلة التي طالما رغبت في أن تكونها.

Résumé

Zora Neale Hurston, célèbre pour son rejet et sa rébellion contre la double oppression du racisme et du sexisme que les femmes afro-américaines ont dû affronter dans leurs communautés patriarcales. Cette thèse vise à explorer son roman "*Their Eyes Were Watching God*" 1937 en utilisant une approche féministe noire pour analyser, la quête de la protagoniste, Janie Crawford, pour son identité féminine, depuis sa petite enfance jusqu'au moment de son affirmation de soi, en soulignant l'expérience d'objectivation qu'elle a reçue dans ses deux premières unions relationnelles, en plus de tous les facteurs qui ont contribué à la création de son caractère rebelle. De plus, cette recherche porte sur la représentation romanesque des inégalités de genre entre hommes et femmes dans différents aspects de la vie. Les conclusions de cet article montrent que l'héroïne, en fin de compte, défie les normes patriarcales de sa société et réalise son rêve de devenir la femme libre et indépendante qu'elle a toujours voulu être.

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General Introduction

During the period of the Harlem Renaissance, the wave of Black Feminism was at its extreme, a great number of black women earned a reputation for themselves and made a revolution against the typical portrayal of women within black society. One of the most eloquent names of that period is Zora Neale Hurston, known as the first loud voice of black feminism due to her writings centered on black women's autonomy and their struggle of being females in male dominated world. Hurston began writing short tales as early as 1920. Her works fell into obscurity and got ignored by the literary audience for many years, because her novels were criticized by her contemporary male writers who saw her narratives as an oversimplification of the racial issues that black people were dealing with at that time. However, later on, she earned popularity among African Americans thanks to an essay entitled "*In Search of Zora Neale Hurston*" written by Alice Walker who considers her a role model for all female African American writers.

Hurston published plenty of works such as *Mules and Men*, *Mule Bone*, *Sweat*, and many other works, in which she discussed the themes of identity, gender inequality, discrimination, relationships, and independence. *Their Eyes Were Watching God* is Zora's chef-d'oeuvre. It appears to be a beautiful love story of a black man and woman, However, this love story, in fact, tells about the quest of a silent black woman to find her identity. Janie Crawford the protagonist of this novel is a black woman who beholds feminist values, she narrates to her friend Phoebe Watson her life story and the three relational unions that she went through. Janie's first marriage was arranged by her protective grand-mother to Logan Killicks, an old farmer who is supposed to guarantee Janie's protection and security, however, he violates her and treats her as if she was an animal. Janie runs away with Jody Starks, her second husband, where she encounters herself again suppressed and used as an adjunct to her husband's prestige as the mayor of the town. Joe dies, and Janie meets Tea Cake who helps her achieve her suppressed desires to become a free spirit. With him, she

blossoms from a voiceless teenager to a fully independent woman.

This research uses the black feminist approach to analyze the main character's journey of questing her female identity, from her early childhood to moment of herself assertion, highlighting the experience of objectification that she suffered from in her first two relationships. In addition to all the factors that contributed to her development of self-reliance, and her liberation from all kinds of restrictions. Furthermore, this research investigates the notion of gender roles and the great discrimination that black women suffer from in the patriarchal community of Eatonville which promotes a higher position to men compared to that of women. showing the different types of gender inequalities presented in the novel

The Research Problem

Their Eyes Were Watching God is a novel written by the prominent African American writer Zora Neale Hurston, it narrates the story of a young black women's journey in the pursuit of self-identification and self-realization. In this novel, Hurston demonstrates the traditional gender inequalities that makes the female submissive, obedient, and an object to men's needs. Meanwhile, promotes men to a higher degree. The present research is an attempt to show the protagonist's quest for her identity as a female and to show how women in that patriarchal society receive discrimination.

Major Research Question

How does the protagonist consolidate her female identity in spite of the established gender inequalities in Hurston's novel *Their eyes were watching god*?

Subsidiary Questions

-In what ways does Janie Crawford's journey change her personality and develop her ability to decide her own life?

- How does Janie's relational experiences contribute in shaping her feminist character?
- To what extent does Janie conform or diverge from the assumptions that underlie the male's attitude towards females?
- How do Janie's husbands represent gender inequalities?

Research Aims

This study aims to demonstrate *their eyes were watching God*'s protagonist's search for her identity as a female, and to highlight the factors and the experiences that affected her journey becoming an individual of free will. It also aims to shed light on the discrimination of gender that African American women receive in the black community.

Research Objectives

By collecting sufficient data concerning the current topic, the major objective of this study is to construct a comprehensive survey of some hidden concepts represented in Hurston's novel to bring a better understanding of the protagonist's pursuit of her identity as a female in addition to highlighting the inequalities based on gender in the novel. Also, this research is to delineate the methodology used in analyzing the literary work according to its historical and biographical background.

Research Methodology

In this research, the researcher uses the qualitative method and the descriptive technique to study how the author portrays the struggle that the heroine faces as a woman. Moreover, the research method includes an overall reading of the primary source Zora Neale Hurston's novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. In addition to an in-depth reading of the author's biography, to comprehend the circumstances in which the novel was written. The black feminist Approach is used to explain the author's status and viewpoints which are reflected in her work. The findings of this research will be supported by credible sources,

such as books, papers, articles, and dissertations, to offer a credible conclusion to this dissertation.

Significance of the Research

This research about *Their Eyes Were Watching God* novel by Zora Neale Hurston would help acquire knowledge about the author, as it would provide an understanding of the work from a different angle. It would shed light on the feminist perspective in the novel which will help undergraduate students to conduct their research on it using a Feminist approach.

Literature Review

This study examines the Quest for female identity and gender discrimination in Zora Neale Hurston's novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. Based on the researches that the writer of this thesis made, many previous works were made on this same novel exploring its different themes.

The first paper is an article entitled "*The Cognitive Construction of the Self in Hurston's Their Eyes Were Watching God*" by Bernard Patrick. S from Franklin and Marshall college published in 2007. This work examines the exploration and representation of the self as cognitive construct in Hurston's novel. Bernard in his analysis shows the self as a cognitive derived, constructed agent is central to the novel's discourse on self-formation and the constructivist philosophy that underlies it. as he posits that cognitive paradigms such as knowing, seeing, thinking, and speaking, and their capacities to engender knowledge and perception, identity and consciousness, memory and narrative, language and speech are central to the novel's exploration of the self.

The second paper is also an article written by Zahra Mahdian Fard and Bahman Zarrinjooee entitled "A quest for identity in Zora Neal Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching*

God” Published in *The International Journal of Literature and Art* in 2014. This paper applies Fanon’s (1925-1961) theories of the psychological impacts of colonialism on the colonized people. At the end it concludes that through a psychological process the heroine’s journey ends with her transformation to an integrated and self-aware individual.

The third paper entitled “Resistance against Women’s Objectification in Zora Neale Hurston’s *Their Eyes Were Watching God*” conducted by Mala Hernawati in 2020, from Gadjah Mada’s university of Indonesia. This article points on the problem of objectification of black women in the twentieth century. It uses the same method of this thesis in the employment of the theory of objectification by Martha Nussbaum (1995), in addition to the additional features added by Langston Rae (2007). This paper shows that Janie at the end suffered nine types of objectification. The writer also employs Kumea Shorter-Gooden's resistance strategies in the evaluation of the main character's strategies for resisting all types of objectifications imposed on her by her two first husbands Logan Killicks and Jody Starks. Additionally, this work finds out the way in which Janie Crawford's rebellion and opposition to objectification is fueled by the notion of self-definition.

The fourth work is an article entitled “Black Feminism in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*” by Long Shi From Pingdingshan University of China published in 2020. This paper uses the black feminist approach and it centers on the main character’s struggle that makes her seek her own female rights and fulfill herself in the community of Eatonville. The study also highlights the stages that the heroine goes through in the course of her pilgrimage toward female rights, these stages can be ordered as; Janie’s loss, Janie’s awakening, and Janie’s fulfillment. Findings show that Janie achieves her goal and becomes an independent female

individual bursting her voices in the male dominant world which expresses black feminist consciousness

This dissertation will be divided into; a general introduction, two chapters, and a general conclusion. The first chapter of this research is split into two sections, one section will be devoted to the exploration of the contextual background of the study, And the other section is theoretical in which the researcher explains all the literary theories used in the analysis of this research; namely, black feminism, the objectification theory and the types of gender inequality by Amartya Sen. The second Chapter of the dissertation include a black feminist analysis of the novel's main character. In addition to an examination of the gender inequalities shown in the novel.

I. First Chapter: Contextual and Theoretical Background of the Study

I.1. First Section: Contextual Background

Introduction

African American women confronted multiple kinds of struggles and suppression. They lived under a tripartite system of oppression in which they received the harshest treatment. They were obliged to fight against sexism, racism, and classism, due to that reason, African American women had to adopt an independent movement to defend themselves against all types of discrimination imposed on them. Zora Neale Hurston, the leading figure of the Harlem Renaissance, like any other black female, has been a victim of oppression, as a result, she has been able to depict the hardships black women went through and to create a revolutionary effect against the established status of the African American females. In her novel, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* 1937, which is considered a black American's literary classic, and one of the most outstanding works in modern literature of black feminism, Hurston depicts the story of an African American female, who suffers from the unfair patriarchal system that make her silenced, objectified and maltreated by men. However, she refuses to accept this situation and rebels against the traditional norms of her society. Finally, she stands to quest for a female identity with full rights and dignity.

I.1.1 African American Literature

African American literature can be defined as literary works composed by Americans of African descent; It appeared as a form of protest that implies the culture and tradition of the repressed black people. Generally, it focused on the role of African Americans within the large American society. This literature is an art form that emerged from the collective social situation in which the Afro-Americans found themselves. Black authors show the hardships of their black people through their artistic and creative expressions in the form of plays, poems, fiction, and stories. The history of black people is marked with slavery (1619-1865) which is

characterized by continuous dehumanization, humiliation, exploitation, and racial segregation .For centuries Europeans and Americans ignored black people's ownership of cultural, ethnic, and linguistic values, to prove their claim, they developed racial theories of inferiority in which they classify the African American man with lower species (Sudarsan 3,4)

black women had to face a twofold struggle, they were double burdened, they suffered both racial prejudice and sexual abuse by the white masters and black males. African American women treated as slaves were depicted as animals and prostitutes as they were portrayed as innately lascivious, and this was only to justify black women's sexual exploitation by whites. This depiction of black women led to the creation of the imposed derogatory images of black Jezebel whore. Hence, the objectification of Black Americans and their internalization of stereotypes imposed on them allow one to speak about a 'racialized 'identity of African American people. (Sudarsan 5)

The vision of African American literature has undergone a great transformation over time. There are some noticeable periods of Afro-American literary tradition. Begins with the early period of slave narratives (17thc.-early the1920s) that documents slave's physical, psychological, moral, and spiritual damage and harsh conditions that they suffered from under slavery, this period started with the works of writers such as Phillis Wheatley who composed the first African American book in which she proved that "*Negros, Black as Cain,*" were not by nature inferior to whites in matters of the spirit so they could "join the angelic train" as spiritual equals to whites (Andrews 15) . Followed by The Harlem Renaissance (1920-1940) which is regarded to be the African-American intellectual and artistic rebirth, as Allain Locke called it "a spiritual coming of age" through this movement African American intellectuals sought to demonstrate their growth of a 'common consciousness' and their rejection of the 'old Negro' and his self-hated Negative images. Among the most prominent writers of the period were Claude McKay, Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen, Zora Neal Hurston, Nella Larsen,

and Jean Toomer. In their work, they reconsidered black history and black identity, explored black folklore, the black vernacular, and oral tradition (Sudarsan 20,26)

The Civil Rights Movement and the Black Arts (or Black Aesthetics) Movement of the 1960s and 1970s; The artists of this period Richard Wright, Ralph Ellison try to balance between the demands of being a black writer and various tensions. They present "Black Material", however, at the same time they tend to move away from racial focus and try to stress the universal human experience Arriving at the postmodern moment in African-American literature started in the 1970s and continues to the present day (Sudarsan 27,31)

One more conspicuous trend within the body of African-American literature is the African-American women's literary tradition among its most representative black female writers including Toni Morrison, Alice Walker, Maya Angelou, Known by common themes such as racial and gender inequality, fate and condition of black male and female writer, the peculiarities of the formation of black woman's identity, her search for selfhood, her position and roles in the multicultural society, and black woman's consciousness (Sudarsan 32, 44)

These female writers were particularly influenced and inspired by the pioneer female writer Zora Neale Hurston who tried to make the point that a human being creates and defines himself through his art of speaking. She was convinced that individuals and communities 'voice themselves into being, that they achieve identity and continuity through the telling of themselves" (Gray 481)

I.1.2. The Tragic History of African American Women

Black male slaves witnessed harsh treatment within the inherent system of slavery due to race issues. However, black women were subject to double oppression, in terms of race as well as gender. Women were exploited racially, sexually, physically, and mentally, they experienced all kinds of ill-treatment that stripped them of their humanity. In the first chapter

"Sexism and The Black Female Slave Experience" of Bell Hook's book *Ain't I A Woman?* she examines the effects of racism and sexism on black women and reports experiences of the previously enslaved women emphasizing the cruel, unjust treatment that placed them on an equal scale to the black males only in terms of work required. The latter led to the association of the black women's status with the mule. Hurston describes it in her novel as: "white man throw down de load and tell de nigger man tuh pick it up. He pick it up because he have to, but he don't tote it. He hand it to his women folks. De nigger woman is de mule uh de world so far as Ah can see" (Hurston 186)

In the previously mentioned book, Hook challenges the old views that assume that black males and females experienced the same hardships and witnessed the same plight during the years of slavery. Moreover, she assures that the black female went through much worse conditions, undergoing physical, verbal, and psychological assaults that later affected her sense of womanhood. Because, besides working on the farms, black woman was "exploited as a worker in the domestic household, a breeder and as an object of white male sexual assault" (Hooks 22). Additionally, black women were white men's easiest sexual target. Because when a slave denies the sexual advances of her slaver risks being sold, beaten, raped, and having her "husband" or children sold. Many slave women conceded to sexual relations with whites, reinforcing the belief that black women were lustful and available. This covered crime is explained by Angela Davis, the African American activist, as not just a matter of a white man trying to fulfill his "sexual lust" But it is "an institutionalized method of terrorism which had as its goal the demoralization of black women" in Hooks' words (Hooks 27).

Historically, a Black woman was perceived as the inferior and the unrecognizable other, less than a woman and worse than a black man. these stereotypical enduring and

derogatory images about black womanhood were set by the white supremacy "the elite group" to maintain the established racism, sexism, and poverty.

While white women were portrayed as models of self-respect, self-control, and modesty - even sexual purity and all sacred, idealized traits of womanhood, black women were associated with all the negative images, conceived as dirty, lustful, and primitive. In addition to the enduring stereotypes imposed on them, such as the image of the mammy, the obedient submissive servant, and the loyal devoted mother that was established only to justify black women's domestic exploitation by their white masters. This mammy image was replaced by the stereotype of the prostitute "the jezebel, whore, or 'hoochie'" (Collins 81), which became the dominant image of black women in American popular culture. The Jezebel stereotype is defined as a black woman with an uncontrollable appetite for sex that cannot be fulfilled by black men. It emerged during the slavery period justifying the sexual relations between white males and black females, especially sexual unions involving slavers and slaves (Pilgrim 2).

I.1.3 Zora Neale Hurston's Biography

Zora Neale Hurston is considered an early feminist, the foremost talented female writer of the twentieth century. An exceptional Folklorist, Anthropologist who recorded cultural history, and an American author who wrote about contemporary issues in the black societies in the 1900s. She became a central figure of the Harlem renaissance, due to her famous novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God* in addition to other works she wrote.

Hurston was born on January 7, 1891, in Notasulga, Alabama, as the daughter of John Hurston and Lucy Ann (Potts) Hurston were former slaves. At the young age of Hurston's life, she moved with her family to Florida where they flourished and where her father became the mayor of the town. In 1917 Zora completed her high school studies at Morgan College and

went to Howard University where she earned an associate degree after the publication of one of her earliest works in the university's newspaper "*The Hilltop*".

She has always been interested in studying black culture thus she traveled to Jamaica and Haiti for her anthropological investigations on African rituals, as a result of this research she published her work: *Tell My Horse: Voodoo and Life in Jamaica and Haiti*. In 1925, she moved to New York City when she earned a scholarship to Bernard College, graduating three years after with a BA in anthropology. During this time of her residence in New York, Zora befriended and joined many black intellectuals, artists such as Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen, and many others of the Harlem renaissance whose proposal was to represent black art, and to insert their African culture including their vernacular, spirituals, folktales...etc in the American community (Bauer dos Santos 70)

Zora Neale Hurston was ignored by the literary mainstream; her works fell into obscurity for decades. Until 1975 when the African American author Alice Walker wrote an essay entitled "In Search for Zora Neale Hurston". Through this essay, walker helped collect, discover and revive the forgotten works of Hurston to make them again a center of interest for many critics and readers all around the world (Biography)

Hurston started writing at an early age of her life, eventually, she grew to be one of the most influential writers of black literature. She was a source of inspiration for numerous writers of the twentieth century such as tony Morrison, Alice Walker, Ralph Allison. During her thirty-year-writing career, Hurston wrote many novels, essays, short stories, books, articles, plays, and an autobiography, among them *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, *Barracoon*; *The Story of the Last "Black Cargo"*, *Every Tongue Got to Confess*, *Mule Bone*, *Dust Tracks on a Road* ., in which she discusses the themes of identity, gender inequality, discrimination, relationships, and independence. In these works, Zora proved her talent and got praised four awards; a second-place fiction prize for her short story "*Spunk*" a second-

place award in drama for her play “*Color Struck*” and two honorable mentions, sponsored by Opportunity magazine (Lieberman)

I.1.4. *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, Summary of the Novel

Their eyes were watching God, narrate the story of Janie Crawford, A girl of mixed black and white heritage, with a deep sense of individuality and selfhood, goes on a journey in search for identity defying norms and rebelling against traditions in order to reach her happiness.

The novel starts when Janie Mae Crawford returns to her hometown to Eatonville nearly two years after having left with a man who is twelve years older than her. The residents of Eatonville or the porch sitters welcome Janie back with scorn and derision, exchanging nasty gossips about her. Phoebe Watson, Janie's best friend, visits her on her porch then Janie starts narrating her life story. The whole issue begins with the scene when Janie sees a bee pollinating a flower in the back yard of the pear tree, and since that day, she becomes obsessed with finding true love. When Janie becomes sixteen years old, her grandmother Nanny catches her kissing a boy then decides it's the end of her childhood, and it's time for her to get married so she can protect her from having a child out of wedlock.

Janie's first marriage to the local potato farmer Logan Killicks is arranged and executed by her protective grandmother. Her husband Logan is neither attractive nor romantic. In addition, he is reliable, abusive and always treats Janie as a child obliging her to obey his orders. However, Janie is hotheaded so she refuses. When Logan Killicks threatens to kill Janie for not following his orders, she leaves him and runs away with Joe Starks. The second husband Starks is a charming and ambitious man who dreams to become a leader in the black community. He takes Janie and moves to Florida, the first all-black city. Janie enjoys her new status as the mayor's wife but over time she finds out that Joe Starks is not

much different from her first husband. Just as Logan, Joe becomes controlling and always attempts to restrict Janie's freedom by silencing her. Ultimately Janie arrives at the end of her patience thus she revolts against his mistreatment to her lashing out at him insulting his manhood and his pride. This relationship ends after twenty years of marriage, Starks falls ill and dies. Janie becomes the landlord and owner of his store. In the beginning, she mourns; but later on, enjoys her freedom as a single woman (Over)

In the meantime, Janie meets Vergible Woods, known as Teacake, a man who is twelve years younger than she, along with Teacake, she finally finds the passionate love that she always dreamed of because Teacake encourages Janie to speak out and to be herself, unlike her two previous husbands. The couple gets married and moves to the Everglades of Florida, where they live a simple life working with the migrant workers. Unfortunately, events get a darker turn. A hurricane hits the area with divine ferocity. Teacake and Janie flee to higher ground to save themselves when a rabid dog tries to attack Janie, so Teacake intervenes and saves her life, however lucklessly, he gets himself bitten and contracts rabies in this process. Due to that reason, Teacake becomes aggressive that he tries to shoot Janie when she finds herself obliged to kill him to save her life. Janie is put on trial for murderer; however, she is pronounced not guilty. Hence, the all-white jury sets her free. When teacakes funeral is over, Janie returns to her house at Eatonville (Shmoop)

In the resolution of the novel; Janie finishes telling her story to Phoebe feeling huge stock of satisfaction and inner peace because she believes that she lived a full life as she has always desired and because she finally found her true identity, "Two things everybody's got tuh do fuh themselves. They got tuh go tuh God, and they got tuh find out about livin' fuh themselves." (Hurstun 09)

I. 2. Second Section: Theoretical background

I.2.1. Keywords in The Research

Identity as a term refers to the state of having unique identifying characteristics held by no other person. It is related to one's eyes (how he sees himself) or others' eyes, both linked to the way of watching and seeing. The idea of identity or selfhood dates back to ancient times of the fourth century BC. In the seventeenth century, the French philosopher Rene Descartes stated that " I think, therefore I am" (Descartes 25). This changed the discussion and meanings of the concept. Since then, the individual became a matter of interest for many critics, scholars, and novelists (Fard 93)

Knowledge about identity or the sense of selfhood has been one of the most complicated and ever-developing issues in literary and critical studies. Terms such as man, woman, body, self, person, individual, I, subject, and human, all have been repeatedly used in literary and critical discussions in relation to identity. In the mid-nineteenth century, while monarchy was on the decline, capitalism was on the rise, It coupled with a desire for self-discovery. Capitalism expanded the definition of the person and Self-Discovery to encompass new considerations(Fard 93)

Gender interacts with but is different from sex, while sex refers to the multiple biological and physiological characteristics of females and males, such as chromosomes, hormones, and reproductive organs. Gender and sex are related to but different from gender identity. Gender identity relates to the person's deeply felt, internal, and individual experience. It refers to the social characteristics, norms, behaviors, and roles constructed by the patriarchal systems to distinguish between one's femininity and masculinity (Kari)

Henceforth, gender inequality refers to the unequal valuing of the roles of women and men. This inequality is the unequal treatment of women and men in laws, policies, and access to resources and services within families, communities, and society. Discrimination of gender

mainly affects women and girls; since it displays superior power and status to males, leading to their objectification and domination of women exposing them to risk of sexual abuse and unacceptably high levels of violence. (Kari)

Simon de Beauvoir demonstrates that, according to men's consciousness, women are considered to be 'other'. she argues that gender is an arbitrary construction. *Gender Trouble* by Judith Butler in 1990, influenced the academic world. In her book, she claims that the foundations of gender categories are not fixed and that there is no requirement to mobilize around a specific identity, however, it is required to subvert the identity and displace gender norms in a specific community.

In its literal meaning, the word Patriarchy signifies the rule of the father or the patriarch. this concept was used originally as a description of a specific type of "male-dominated family" the large household of the *patriarch* which included women, junior men, children, slaves, and domestic servants, all under the rule of this dominant male. Currently, this concept is used "to refer to male domination, to the power relationships by which men dominate women, and to characterize a system whereby women are kept subordinate in a number of ways" (Bhasin 3).

Patriarchy is referred to by Frederic Engels as the earliest system of domination. He establishes it as "the world-historical defeat of the female sex." (Engels 2). This means that Patriarchy was a form of political organization that distributed power unequally between men and women (Facio)

In the second half of the twentieth century, feminist theorists updated and broadened their comprehension of patriarchy. The social sciences had abandoned it because it was thought to apply and describe ancient civilizations. However, for many feminists, patriarchy is much more than ancient civilizations and extends beyond "the unequal distribution of

power between men and women in certain elements of modern cultures," as many dictionaries still define it.

The term 'patriarchy' is commonly used by feminists to characterize the power relationship between men and women. They utilize it as a concept, and like other concepts, it is a tool for understanding women's experiences. The concept of patriarchy is defined differently by different scholars. For instance, Walby defines "patriarchy as a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women" (Walby 20). She explains it as a system that rejects the established notion of biological determinism which claims men and women to be naturally different, and that they are assigned different roles according to their biology or bodies. The patriarchal system exaggerates biological distinctions between men and women, ensuring that males are always in the dominating, or masculine, positions and women are always in the inferior, or feminine, roles.

In its broadest sense, patriarchy refers to the manifestation and institutionalization of male control over women and children throughout the household, as well as the spread of male domination over women in society as a whole. It implies that "men hold power in all the important institutions of society" and that "women are deprived of access to such power" However, it does not imply that "women are either powerless or deprived of rights, influence, and resources" (Lerner 239). The patriarchal system is so strong that "men are usually able to secure the apparent consent of the very women they oppress" They do it "through institutions such as the academy, the church, and the family, each of which justifies and reinforces women's subordination to men" (Millett 35).

Sexism is defined as prejudice or discrimination based on sex or gender, particularly against women and girls. The term sexism emerged from "second-wave" feminism in the 1960s and 1980s, most likely modeled after the term racism used by the civil rights movement (prejudice or discrimination based on race). Sexism is the belief that one gender is superior to

or more valuable than the other. It limits what men and boys can and should do, as well as what women and girls can and should do. The term sexism was coined to raise awareness about the oppression of girls and women, but by the early twenty-first century, it had sometimes been expanded to include oppression of any sex, including men. Basically, sexism serves to maintain patriarchy, or male dominance, through the ideological and material practices of individuals, collectives, and institutions that oppress women and girls based on their sex or gender. Economic exploitation and social dominance are common forms of oppression (Masequesmay)

Misogyny, or hatred of women, is the most extreme type of sexist ideology.

Misogyny- ridden societies have high rates of violence against women, such as domestic violence, rape, and the commodification of women and their bodies. Women are frequently abused on an individual and institutional level when they are viewed as property or second-class citizens. For example, a woman who is a victim of rape (at the individual or personal level) may be found guilty by the judge or the jury (at the institutional level) because of how she dresses (Masequesmay)

I.2.2 Black Feminism

Women have always subjected to oppression, and suppression and are highly marginalized. They are doomed to endure from womb to tomb. Women all over the world are seen as having limited access to choices, knowledge, talents, as well as some basic human liberties.

A woman has always been expected to put herself second to men. Her qualities should include shyness, selflessness, humbleness, decency, loyalty, and many morals that she must have. Ann Fergusson states that " in every age, woman has been seen as mother, wife, mistress and as sex object—their roles in relationship with man!" (Shukla 2)

Feminism is an ideology that advocates for equality of sexes in the institutional, social, and cultural environment. It also emphasizes the unsuitability and scarcity of dominant ideologies, as well as the spiritual, social, intellectual, financial, and ethnic equality of women and men. It also aims to liberate women from what appears to be an endless cycle of sexual and biological colonization. Feminism requests equal voice and self-expression and thus is a protest against male superiority and subordination of women.

Women of African descent saw that the feminist movement was primarily interested in the small minority that had formed the movement. Several authors and scholars reacted to Western feminism because it focused solely on gender discrimination while ignoring variations of race and class, which are inextricably linked to sexual identity. It lacked the breadth to include the presence of black women and also other women of color. Black female's contributions to the movement were never recognized, and their endeavors went unnoticed. The racial discrimination of black women was so overt that the word "women" meant "white women" and "blacks" meant "black men." Black women have always been mistreated, portrayed negatively, and subjected to atrocities. This harsh and pitying racial attitude of white females against black women inevitably helped in the emergence of women's organizations whose main intention was to fight racism.

Black feminism emphasizes the interconnectedness of sexism, racism, and class oppression. Black feminist critics attempted to create a voice for the concerns of double marginalization and double jeopardy caused by their being black and female. Their thought emphasizes and exacerbates masculinity bias and racism as major causes of the persecution of the black female community. Black feminists faced several difficulties, including convincing other black females that feminism was not a white women's movement, convincing and commanding white women to form a coalition with them, and fighting to end the misogynist inclinations of Black Nationalism. Black theorists such as Bell Hooks, Angela Davis, and

Patricia Hill Collins emphasized the exclusion of black women due to race, gender, class, and identity. Kimberle Crenshaw, the black feminist scholar, states that "black women are sometimes excluded from feminist theory and antiracist policy discourse because both are predicated on a discrete set of experiences that often does not accurately reflect the interaction of race and gender" (Crenshaw 140).

Bell Hooks in her *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Centre* (1984) critically argued that women "who are most victimized by sexist oppression . . . who are powerless to change their condition in life have never been permitted to speak" (Hooks 1). she believes that white women were very contradictory in believing that the movement was theirs, disregarding the fact that women are differentiated by finer distinctions, including sexism, racism, and class privilege. Hooks writes about her memories in feminist groups, claiming that white women were very patronizing to non-white women. They did this to remind them that it was they who enabled these women to be involved in the feminist movement. They never regarded them as peers because they are black and women. Sojourner Truth was among the first feminists to draw white women's attentiveness to black slave women and convince them that women could work just as hard as men. She gave a speech in Ohio in 1852 for the women's rights movement saying:

and ain't I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arm! . . . I have plowed, and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me—and ain't I a woman? I could work as much as any man (when I could get it), and bear de lash as well—and ain't I a woman? I have borne five children and I seen 'emmos all sold off into slavery, and when I cried out with a mother's grief, none but Jesus hear—and ain't I a woman? (Hooks 160).

black women writers examine challenging and sophisticated social issues. They express the indescribable and incomprehensible pain, oppression, and violence of slavery. In her book *Ain't I A Woman: A Memoir*, Bell Hooks depicts the situation of black women: where she

describes them as one of the most diminished female groups in American society and shows how they have been the victims of unrelenting male violence and brutality. Because black women have been stereotyped as the "bad" woman by both white and black men, she has been unable to buddy up herself with men from either group to obtain safety from the other. Neither group believes she is deserving of concern.

Black feminist critics came up with their feminist theories. They concentrated solely on the writings and background of black women, not only in the United States but also in other places. Their main agreement is to investigate how race, class, and gender identity affect women's lives. One of the most prominent and important principles of black feminist thought is the demonstration that black feminists are involved with issues such as economic security, racial discrimination, and patriarchy that the white women's movement has failed to address.

I.2.3 The Theory of Objectification

Objectification is a notion central to feminism. Martha Nussbaum defines it as "... the seeing and/or treating of someone as an object: One is treating as an object, what is not an object, what is, in fact, a human being" (papadaki 8) She states that there are seven features involved in the idea of objectification:

Instrumentality: treating the person as an instrument or a tool for his purposes.

Denial of autonomy: treating the person as lacking in autonomy and self-determination.

Inertness: The objectifier treats the object as lacking in agency, and inactivity.

Fungibility: treating the object as interchangeable (a) with other objects

Violability: The treatment of the object as lacking in boundary- integrity, as something that it is permissible to smash, or break up.

Ownership: treating the object as something that is owned by another, can be bought or sold, etc.

Denial of Subjectivity: Treating the object as if his experiences and feelings need not be taken into consideration

In addition to the seven features presented by Martha Nussbaum, Rae Langton added three more objectification features;

Reduction to the Body: the treatment of a person as identified with their body, or body parts;

Reduction to Appearance: the treatment of a person primarily in terms of how they look, or how they appear to the senses.

Silencing: the treating a person as if they are silent, or cannot speak (papadaki 8)

features involved in objectification, are problematic when they are at their extreme, in Kantian terms: they are inconsistent with proper regard for humanity. Objectification, then, is of a negative kind, according to Nussbaum, if the objectified individual's humanity is denied. Treating people in one of these features represents a negative form of objectification because it doesn't respect their dignity as human beings (Papadaki 18)

Immanuel Kant's ideas on sexual objectification have been very influential in contemporary feminist discussions on this topic. In his Lectures on Ethics, Kant argues that when people exercise their sexuality outside the context of monogamous marriage, they risk being reduced to "objects of appetite", meaning; mere tools for sexual purposes. Kant states in the Lectures" ... as an object of appetite, a person becomes a thing and can be used and treated as such by everyone. ... [he/she is] used by all and sundry as an instrument for the satisfaction of sexual inclination" (Kant 163, 165)

feminists Catharine MacKinnon and Andrea Dworkin, influenced by Immanuel Kant's conception of objectification, argue that men in our patriarchal societies deal with women as mere instruments for their purposes. Mackinnon states that women "exist to the end of male pleasure" (MacKinnon 173). Similarly, Dworkin writes "The whole world outside man himself is viewed as the object world... Man uses objects – women, children, animals, sensate beings called objects as a matter of course – to feel his power and presence. ... A man must function as the human center of a chattel-oriented sensibility, surrounded by objects to be used so that he can experience his power and pleasure" (Dworkin 104)

Objectification, for Kant, involves the lowering of a person, a being with humanity, to the status of an object. Martha Nussbaum employs Kant's concept of "humanity." Following Kant, she defines it as an individual's rational nature and capacity for rational choice. Humans are distinguished from animals and inanimate objects by their humanity. It bestows on humans "dignity," an absolute value that must always be respected in moral choice and action. Kant famously argued that "every human being has a legitimate claim to respect from his fellow human beings and is in turn bound to respect every other" (Kant 209).

It has been pointed out by some feminist thinkers that women in our society are more identified and associated with their bodies than are men, and they are valued for how they appear to a greater extent than men. Bartky argues that women in the patriarchal societies undergo a kind of fragmentation "by being too closely identified with [their body]... [their] entire being is identified with the body, a thing which... has been regarded as less inherently human than the mind or personality" (Bartky 130). As a result, we find that women constantly tend to fix their bodies and appearances to be compatible with the feminine standards of beauty and appearance of their time, they make practices that aim to build a body of a certain size and shape .in order to be socially accepted. Some feminists state that, in the process of changing their appearance constantly, women put themselves in a situation similar to objects

to be gazed upon. This huge focus on women's appearance dismisses the attention on her personality and makes her fragmented. Bartky claims that a woman is objectified through this fragmentation when her body is separated from her person and is thought of as representing the woman (Bartky 130).

Bartky demonstrates that objectification involves two persons, one who objectifies and one who is objectified, nevertheless, the objectifier and objectified sometimes can be the same person. In patriarchal societies women feel constantly watched by men, as a result, they feel the need to look sensually pleasing to them (Bartky 65) In being obsessed with their bodies, women learn to see and treat themselves as objects to be looked at only from the outside. This is what leads females to self-objectification. She states that the woman “[takes] toward her own person the attitude of the man. She will then take erotic satisfaction in her physical self, reveling in her body as a beautiful object to be gazed at and decorated”. Such an attitude is called ‘narcissism’, which is defined by Bartky as the infatuation with one's bodily being (Bartky 131).

I.2.4. Gender Inequality

In her essay “*Many Faces of Gender Inequality*” Amartya Sen states that the devastated world in which we live is distinguished by a profoundly unfair distribution of a load of adversities between men and women. Gender inequality exists in almost every country. nevertheless, Inequality between men and women can take many various forms. Indeed, gender inequality is a collection of distinct and interconnected issues, rather than a single phenomenon (Amartya). Several types of inequality can be as illustrated below;

Mortality Inequality: In some parts of the world, gender inequality directly affects life and death, taking the brutal form of unusually high female mortality rates and a consequent preponderance of men in the total population, as opposed to the preponderance of women

found in societies with little or no gender bias in health care and nutrition. Inequality in mortality has been widely documented throughout North Africa and Asia, especially in China and South Asia.

Natality Inequality: Gender inequality can present itself in the form of parents preferring the newborn baby to be a boy rather than a girl, which is common in male-dominated countries. There was a time when this could only be a hope (a daydream or a nightmare, depending on your point of view).

Special Opportunity Inequality: the presence of significant gender disparity in many sectors of education, training, and professional work. Higher education opportunities may be significantly less for young women than for young men. Indeed, gender imbalance in higher education and professional training may be seen in some of the world's wealthiest countries, including Europe and North America.

Professional Inequality: Women frequently suffer a higher disadvantage than men in terms of employment as well as promotion in job and career. A country like Japan may be relatively equitable in terms of demographics or basic infrastructure, and even, to a large extent, in higher education, yet advancement to higher levels of job and profession appears to be considerably more difficult for women than for males.

Household Inequality: There are frequently fundamental disparities in gender relations within the family or household, which can take many different forms; family arrangements can be quite unequal in terms of sharing the burden of housework and child care. It is common in many societies to assume that while men will naturally work outside the home, women can only do so if they can combine it with various unavoidable and unequally shared household duties. This is sometimes referred to as "division of labor," though women might see it as "accumulation of labor." This inequality extends beyond unequal family relationships

to include derivative inequalities in employment and recognition in the outside world.

Furthermore, the established fixity of this type of "division" or "accumulation" of labor can have far-reaching effects on professional knowledge and understanding of various types of work (Amartya Sen)

Conclusion

Zora Neale Hurston's novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God* has received mixed reviews over the writer's portrayal of African Americans' struggle. In this novel Hurston masterfully represents racial and gender issues without resorting to the anger and hostility that can be seen in most of the works of her contemporary African American male writers. That's why many of these writers, namely, Richard Wrights criticized the novel because they viewed it as an oversimplification of racial discrimination issues of that time. Nevertheless, Hurston in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, does not only investigate racism between blacks and whites, but rather she broadens the concept of racism to discuss gender and sexism. The novel also exposes the patriarchal notions of a society as well as the multiple levels of oppression which a black woman had to face in the beginnings of the twentieth century. At the end of this novel, the heroine violates all the traditional norms and makes the exception; becoming a free independent woman.

II. Chapter :Black Feminist Analysis of Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

Introduction

The struggle against sexism includes being denied self-realization and self-affirmation, or the actualization of one's aspirations and desires and the placement of a positive value on them. the novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston, is not just Janie's narrative emotional relationships in life to her companion Phoebe Watson, but also a personal quest for identity; Janie's identity as an independent African-American woman.

From the beginning, Janie is taught to be passive and subject to whatever life gives her. As she grows older, she starts to realize she must give in to her desires and not suppress them. At the end, Janie values her existence as a human being, especially as a woman who fights to gain her own emancipation in spite of the restriction of African-American community in the early twentieth century which made it impossible for women to achieve self-realization and self-affirmation through imposing male dominance and male-dominated guidelines, controlling black women's fate in all life aspects .

In the analysis of this novel the researcher tries to follow Janie's journey in her search for her female identity from her early age arriving at the point of her self-realization, and to demonstrate all the incidents and experiences that encouraged her throughout the journey. Moreover, to highlight the structures of gender and its depiction in the black society. The end of this analysis shows how Hurston's protagonist Janie Crawford protests against the fixed concept of gender and how she breaks the rule and constructs herself and her identity rebelling against the norms of the black patriarchal community.

II.1 Black Feminism in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

In her journey to find "the self" that she looked for since an early age, the heroine goes through stages; Janie's awakening, Janie's resistance, Janie's fulfillment, till finally arrives to develop a feminist understanding, she matures into an independent lady who raises her voice in the world without bearing attention to the restrictions put by society. not to forget the independence of personality and the economic growth that she achieved. expressing the notions of black feminist consciousness.

Bell Hooks in *Feminist Theory: "From Margin to Center"* mentions that African American women, with an unusual position, were not only at the very bottom of the occupational ladder collectively, but also the lowest in American social class". *Their Eyes Were Watching God* is viewed as the first African American novel that depicts the awakening of African American women. Black women have been oppressed racially, sexually, physically, and mentally in American society. They have been subject to domestic violence and marital rape. They have also been exploited for labor by both white and black men (Rupalee 111)

The black men treat women as if they are their property. This bad treatment is due to patriarchal notions that provide a higher status to men. Simone de Beauvoir asserts that the female becomes "the other", an object whose existence is defined and interpreted by the male, who is the dominant being in society. Always subordinate to the male, the female finds herself a secondary or nonexistent player in society (Bressler 182).

II.1.1 Nanny as a Representative of the Female Struggle

through the story of Janie's grandmother, the novel shows how African American women were oppressed by their society "De nigger woman is de mule uh de world so fur as Ah can see" (19). Nanny proves to her granddaughter that, while the black male is under the

domination of his white master, he attempts to exercise his power over the black woman. She claims: “de white man throw down de load and tell de nigger man tuh pick it up. He pick it up because he have to, but he don’t tote it. He hand it to his women folks” (Hurstons 19).

During the period of slavery, Nanny was a victim of racism and sexism at the same time. She was raped by her white owner and was threatened by the white mistress to sell her baby Leafy. Fearing that her daughter would be sold to other slave owners she escapes from the plantation master and hides in a shabby place till the abolishment of slavery.

Unfortunately, the tragic fate that faced the mother occurs to the daughter again, Janie's mother, leafy was also sexually exploited by her white school teacher, and Janie was born as a result of that (Shi 3)

The experiences of Nanny who lived under the oppression of racism and the patriarchal system leave a deep impact on her, affecting her way of raising her granddaughter Janie. Because of the fear that Janie would face the same fate as her mother and her grandmother, the protective Nanny obliges her to marry Logan killicks. This marriage was primarily to guarantee Janie’s economical security. During those times, it was extremely difficult for a woman to advance both socially and economically. In Nanny’s point of view marriage appears to be the only way for a black woman to acquire social status. she chooses for Janie a middle-aged man with sixty acres of land. Janie is forced to obey her grandmother’s orders; thus, she gets married to Logan Killicks. (Rupalee110)

Despite the fact that Nanny was not opposed to Janie's education, she saw her marriage to Killicks as a source of security and protection at the social and the economical scale. Nanny valued financial security and protection over Janie's sexuality and love (Rupalee110). When Janie complains about her bad relationship with killicks Nanny says: [y]ou come heahwidyo“ mouf full uh foolishness on uh busy day. Heah you got up prop tuh

lean on all yo“ bawn days, and big protection, and everybody got tuhtip dey hat tuh you and call you Mis“ Killicks, and you come worryin“ me „bout love. (Hurston 22)

II.1.2 Janie’s Development of Feminist Character

Janie confronted many types of physical and emotional abuse during her three marriages. Her relationship with her first husband, Logan Killicks, is like the “slave master”, he obliges her to work in his barn. As he treats her like an animal; in short, Janie becomes his second mule. He says to her: “You ain’t got no particular place. It's wherever I need you" (Hurston 42). Moreover, in her marriage with Joe Starks, unlike with Logan, Janie wasn't forced to labor, but she was treated as an instrument and a property. Joe deprived Janie's liberty in many aspects, such as her hairstyle, clothing, freedom of speech, and communication with normal people (Rupalee 111). Even her third husband Tea Cake treats her brutally: "[h]e had whipped Janie.... Being able to whip her reassured him in possession" (Hurston 140). He is of the opinion that: "Ah beat her tuh show dem Turners who is boss" (Hurston 141).

Janie despises Logan and Jody's abuse; thus, she punishes them knowing exactly how to pay back their maltreatment. Logan's idea of masculinity is based on his ownership and possession, and because he considers her to be one of his possessions, she punishes him by abandoning him and running away with Jody. Furthermore, her revenge against Jody is more aggressive and abusive. Janie recognizes that her second husband values his masculinity because it is part of the picture, he wants to project to the townspeople in order to appear like a mayor (Qashgari 37). As a result, she confronts and insults him in the store in front of the community of Eatonville, she says “ Talkin' 'bout me lookin' old! When you pull down yo' britches, you look lak de change uh life." (Hurston 99). Jody passes away soon after this incident, Lester argues that because of this bomb that Janie explodes in Jody’s face, he “dies twice—metaphorically and then shortly thereafter quite literally” because he refuses to be

looked at with pity by others. Although Janie rebels against Logan and Jody, she bears Tea Cake's mistreatment because he makes her feel the "vulnerabilities of love and passion" (Lester 81)

In her journey, the heroine goes through stages in order to achieve "the self" she looked for since an early age; Janie's awakening, Janie's resistance, Janie's fulfillment, not to forget the independence of personality and the economic growth that she accomplished and that could be witnessed by time and history, expressing the notions of black feminist consciousness. Finally, Janie develops feminist understanding as she matures into an independent lady who raises her voice in the world without bearing attention to the restrictions put by society.

II.1.3. Black Women's Struggle With Colorism Within Black Society

Another aspect that the novel highlights is the colorism that the black woman has to struggle against even within the African-American society. Hurston broadens the concept of racism and makes it include racism within blacks themselves. Light-skinned women are more preferable to black man rather than a black-skinned woman. In *Their Eyes Were Watching God* Janie who is of a mixed black and white race with Caucasian features is desired by many black men in Eatonville's community. Her brown hair, light skin, and thin lips make her more beautiful than other women in her society.

Despite being a black woman Mrs. Turner is as racist as white people She thinks that the white features are more beautiful than black features. In Mrs. Turner's opinion "Her thin lips were a source of pride. To her way of thinking all these things set her aside from Negroes" (Hurston 134, 136). She publicly shows her hatred for the black people when she says

A can't stand black niggers. Ad don't blame de white folks from hatin' em' cause Ah can't stand „emmahself. (...) Ah hates tuh see folkslak me and you mixed up wid „em. (...) Always cuttin' de monkey for white folks. If it wuzn't for so many black folks it wouldn't be no race problem. De white folks would take us in widdem. De black ones is holdin' us back (Hurstun 135).

Mrs. Turner urges blacks to marry lighter-skinned people in order to "lighten up de race" (Hurstun 188). She admires Janie for her "coffee-and-cream complexion" (Hurstun 134) That's why she blames her for marrying the black-skinned tea cake, nevertheless she thinks that this fault decision can be corrected if Janie divorces tea cake and gets married to her brother. People like Mrs. Turner blame their black brothers and sisters for the deplorable situation that African Americans suffer from. This way of thinking encourages racism even within the black race itself (Rupalee 110)

II.2. Janie Crawford's Objectification

Objectification of women is primarily an outcome of the patriarchal system of society in which men hold the belief that they are superior to women in all aspects of life. As stated by Lois Tyson "Patriarchy treats women, whatever their role, like objects: like objects, women exist, according to the patriarchal system, to be used without consideration of their perspective, feelings, or opinions" (Tyson 91). In the early twentieth century, African-American women in the southern states of America confronted double jeopardy because of both patriarchy and racism. In this community, the roles of men and women have a rigid definition in which women's work spheres are limited only to the domestic field, while men have no problems working in public (Hernawati 245)

In *Their Eyes Were Watching God* Janie as an African American woman experiences objectification through her marital relationships with her two first husbands Logan Killicks and Jody Starks. Although Janie's marriage to Joe Starks elevates her status from low to upper

class, however, it does not alleviate her disadvantaged situation Janie is still unable to live her life freely. Their marriage is more of a master-slave relationship than a harmonious union.

Based on the previously explained theory of objectification by Martha Nussbaum(1995) and the additional types of objectification that were added by Rae Langton (2007) this paper shows that the Protagonist Janie confronted nine types of objectification; instrumentality, denial of autonomy, inertness, violability, ownership, denial of subjectivity, reduction to the body, reduction to appearance, and silencing (Hernwati 248)

Instrumentality

Jody Starks, Janie's second husband demands that she dress up like a lady which is an attempt to distinguish her from all other women in Eatonville and utilize her as a tool to obtain social prestige. He buys her a new expensive dress so that everyone who comes into the store will have their eyes on her. Therefore, she must appear beautiful and noble, as a mayor's wife should. Using Janie as a showy object implies that Jody sees her as a practical way to gain pride, which clearly takes into account the fact that Janie receives her husband's instrumentality (Hernawati 248)

Jody told her to dress up and stand in the store all that evening. Everybody was coming sort of fixed up, and he didn't mean for nobody else's wife to rank with her. She must look on herself as the bell-cow, the other women were the gang So she put on one of her bought dresses and went up the new-cut road all dressed in wine-colored red. Her silken ruffles rustled and muttered about her. The other women had on percale and calico with here and there a head rag among the older ones (Hurstons 48)

Denial of Autonomy

Joe Starks is the decision-maker in all aspects concerning Janie, because he believes that she is a person who is unable to choose things for herself and that she will always need somebody's guidance, he states that women, like animals, are not capable to think and decide

for themselves, therefore they should be controlled by men "Somebody got to think for women and chillun and chickens and cows. I god, they sho don't think none theirselves" (Hurston 95). For instance, when Janie decides to choose the dress that her friend sent to her in order to wear it for the speech night, her husband orders her to wear the new magenta dress. Despite her dislike for this dress, she eventually wears it since Joe insisted. As a wife, Janie assumes that what her husband thinks is definitely the best for her. This evidence can be classified as an act of denial of autonomy because it shows how Jody underestimates Janie's self-government. In feminism, men and women have equal rights to choose what is best for them in all aspects. However, this is not the case in their marriage. Jody forbids Janie from deciding what she will wear, demonstrating how Jody disregards Janie's right to self-determination (Hernawati 248)

Inertness

According to Nussbaum it is the treatment of a person as lacking in agency, and perhaps also in activity; It happens mostly when Janie sees people gather at the store and wishes to be like other women in the town who can sit with men and talk about different stories as any normal human being. However, Jody would never give her permission to do so. He would rather see Janie in the store and do her job as he always tells her, which eventually deprives Janie of social interaction. Janie loved the conversation and sometimes she thought up good stories on the mule, but Joe had forbidden her to indulge (Hernawati 248). He didn't want her talking after such trashy people "You'se Mrs. Mayor Starks, Janie. I god, Ah can't see what uh woman uh yo' stability would tuh be treasurin' all sat gum-grease from folks dat don't even own de house dey sleep in'Tain't no earthly use. They's jus' some puny humans playin' de toes uh Time." (Hurston 63)

Jody forbids Janie to make any activities, he always deals with her as a person that is passive. He is successful in making Janie believe that she lacks strength. Whenever Janie has

the desire to interact with others, Joe would hustle her off inside the store to sell something, eventually, Janie feels stuck in this situation that "She had to come to hate the inside of that store anyway... The store itself kept her with sick headache" (Hurstons 64).

Violability

Janie is a victim of physical abuse by her husband Starks, as her relationship with her husband deteriorates with time, she is hurt by him multiple times however he refuses to admit that he has been too violent with her. One day, when Jody finds out that the food is not well-prepared, he gets angry and eventually slaps Janie in the face "Joe had looked forward to his dinner as a refuge from other things. So when the bread didn't rise, and the fish wasn't quite done at the bone, and the rice was scorched, he slapped Janie until she had a ringing sound in her ears and told her about her brains before he stalked on back to the store" (Hurstons 84)

Ownership

The relationship between Jody and Janie is more of ownership than a partnership, the expression "the Mayor's wife" shows that Janie is owned by her husband. Jody asks Janie how she feels about being "Mrs. Mayor." By this question: "Well, honey, how yuh lak bein' Mrs. Mayor?" (Hurstons 54). He emphasizes the word "mayor" to be the major point of his question. Jody appears to be very proud of his position of power and influence, using the term "Mrs. Mayor" implies that he considers Janie to be something possessed by a mayor, someone whose status is plainly higher than hers (Hernwati 249)

Denial of Subjectivity

When Tony invites Janie to deliver a speech in order to encourage her husband, Jody refuses to say "Thank you fuh yo' compliments, but mah wife don't know nothin' 'bout speech-makin'. Ah never married her for nothin' lak dat. She's uh woman and her place is in de home." (Hurstons 51). From the way he carelessly proceeds his speech, saying no words

about how he has declared Janie's incapability to make a speech, shows how Jody disregards Janie's feelings whether he hurts her or not (Hernawati 250)

Reduction to Body

In general, an elderly woman's body is frail and unfit, when Janie grows old her husband frequently remarks on her age by pointing to her body for everyone to see. As a result, Jody objectifies her by stating that her body is no longer lovely and that she is identifiable by her age and figure.

Jody mentions multiple times that she needs to be aware of what she is doing since she is no young girl anymore. For him, a nearly forty-year-old woman must be looking unattractive since her body is getting weaker and not beautiful anymore which shows how Jody identifies Janie from the way she looks (Hernawati 250) . He says

You ain't no young girl to be getting' all insulted 'bout yo' looks. You ain't no young courtin' gal. You'se uh ole woman, nearly forty. . . Tain't no use in getting' all mad, Janie, 'cause Ah mention you ain't no young gal no mo'. Nobody in heah ain't lookin' for no wife outa yuh. Old as you is (Hurstons 93-94).

Reduction to Appearance

According to Nussbaum it is treating a person primarily in terms of how they look, or how they appear to the senses; asking someone to reduce or add something to change their appearance without their will is considered objectification, the act of reducing to appearance. Jody objectifies Janie when he orders her to wear a head rag in order to cover her hair because saw another man staring at it with admiration "He hair was NOT going to show in the store. . . That night he ordered Janie to tie up her hair around the store. That was all. She was there in the store for him to look at, not those others" (Hurstons 64-65).

Moreover, Jody's ideas of the mayor's wife who is supposed to look different from the rest of women in town make him order Janie to wear the magenta dress and stand in the store all evening by this he is identifying Janie from her appearances (Hernawati 251)

. Silencing

When Janie is invited to speak in front of Eatonville's community, her husband silences her asserting that she is incapable of doing so and that he did not marry her for these purposes. A man with authority is born with a natural good speaking skill, According to a patriarchal individual who values men's position above women. However. This is not the case for a lady. Jody believes this because he is a patriarchal man. If Jody regards Janie as a human person, he should allow her to talk even though she has never done so before. It demonstrates his treatment of Janie as an object by preventing her from speaking simply because an object does not speak (Hernawati 251)

II.3 Janie's Quest for Identity

Although *Their Eyes Were Watching God* is about Janie's relationships with other people, it is primarily about Janie's search for spiritual enlightenment and a strong sense of her own identity. Janie is alone when we first and last see her. The novel is not about her search for a partner, but about her search for a secure sense of independence. Janie's struggle for self-identity is evident throughout the novel as she moves from one marriage to the next. As time passes, her search takes several wrong detours, but she eventually discovers her true identity. She learns about herself and how she should live via her marriages with Logan, Joe, and Tea Cake.

Janie Crawford returns to Eatonville nearly two years after having left with the young Teacake. Janie expresses to her friend Phoebe her anger and contempt towards the female community in Eatonville particularly the porch sitters proving that during the time she spent

far from Eatonville she changed a lot and became a different person, distinct from the females of her community. She starts narrating her life story; starting from her early childhood up to the moment of her return; she says that she spent her childhood in the backyard of a white family's house where her grandmother worked as a housemaid

Ah was widdem white childun so much till Ah didn't know Ah wuzn't white till Ah waz round six years old. Wouldn't have found it out then, but a man come long takin pictures and without askin' anybody [...] Round a week later de man brought de pictures for Mis' Washburn to see and pay him which she did. So when we looked at de picture and everybody got pointed out there wasn't nobody left except a real dark little girl with long hair standing by Eleanor. Dat's where Ah wuzs'posed to be, but Ah could n't recognize dat dark chile as me. So Ah ast, 'where is me? Ah don't see me (Hurston 24)

This quote is an evidence of Janie's earliest moment of self-recognition. At an early age, Janie was unconscious of her blackness, before this incident, she saw herself as a normal youngster among other white children, and her identity was subconsciously formed, identified by her similarity to other white children "before Ah seen de picture Ah thought Ah wuz just like de rest" (Hurston 9). This visual representation that is based on her skin color make her different from the other white children; at this point she is aware that she is a black girl. The experience of looking at the picture shows Janie's restlessness to find her identity, self to see what she looks like, the sentence "where is me? Ah don't see me". (Hurston 24) is essential since it demonstrates a great amount of Janie's character. Words like "me" and "Ah" repeated three times in a short sentence demonstrate her strong enthusiasm for her own identity (Fard, Zarrinjooee 94)

Moreover, what is worth mentioning is Miss Nellie's reaction to Janie's inability to see herself in the photograph "Everybody laughed, even Mr. Washburn. Miss Nellie, de mama of de chillum said, 'Dat's you, Alphabet, don't you know yo' own self?'" (Hurston 24).

Miss Nellie introduces the term "self" with the verb "know," meaning that blackness is instantly identifiable; she wonders why Janie is unaware of this white presupposition. Here Janie reaches for the first time some sort of recognition of both her selfhood and her blackness (Fard, Zarrinjooee 95)

When Janie grows older, she spends the majority of her day under the blossoming pear tree in the backyard, She witnesses nature's perfect union of harmony, Hurston in her narration describes it as “it had called her to come and gaze on a mystery, From the leaf buds to snowy virginity to bloom” Janie arrives at point in her life where she undergoes internal transformations. The phrases like “visiting bees”, “tree soaking”, and “bursting buds” (Hurston 27) show a rise in Janie’s consciousness, her desire to love and be loved and to see and be seen result in her first kiss with Jonny Taylor, Janie’s first attempt to find what she was looking for “Janie’s identity” or true self is now quite perplexing because she is unsure of what she truly desires, this confusing state of mind remains till the moment when Joe Starks enters her life as the perfect alternative for the dull Logan Killicks (Dhakal 115)

Janie's marriage with Starks launched her into a new chapter in her quest for identity. Jody succeeds to convince Janie that he will help her realize her dreams, However, she discovers later on that Jody's power only suffocates her. As her relationship with Jody deteriorates, she begins observing herself “one day she sat and watched the shadows of herself going about tending store and prostrating itself before Jody, while all the time she herself sat under a shady tree with the wind blowing through her hair and her clothes” (Hurston 68).Following Jody’s death , Janie goes to the looking glass, where she had told herself to wait for her, then she discovers that a beautiful woman has taken her place. She rips the head rag that Jody has forced her to wear and lets her long hair down “The weight, the length, glory was there. She took careful stock of herself, then combed her hair and tied it back up again” (Hurston 76) at this stage, she obtains a new understanding of her own identity, In a lengthy

paragraph, Hurston describes how Janie has changed in the six months since Jody's death, stating that she talked and laughed in the store at times and was happy except for the store.

In her first two relationships, Janie was not fully conscious of her internal desires, she was only a minor player in the decision to marry Killicks and Joe Starks. However, her third and final marriage to Tea Cake, on the other hand, required her full consciousness and presence in the decision-making process. With Tea Cake, Janie flourishes "He set it up and began to show her and she found herself glowing inside. Somebody wanted her to play. Somebody thought it natural for her to play." (Hurston 91-92)

Tea Cake made Janie acquire the ability to speak up, Her control of speech reaches a new level as she learns to be silent when she chooses. She adopts the idea of silence as a sign of strength rather than passivity. Janie has evolved significantly, she becomes a new person capable of determining her own life, identity, and fate, meaning her liberation from patriarchal norms and guidelines (Dhakal 116)

II.4. Janie's Self-realization

Janie's self-fulfillment is the road to self-definition. Finding a perfect voice, according to Elaine Showalter, is "to find a new language, a new way of reading that can integrate our intelligence and our experience, our reason and our suffering, our skepticism and our vision" (Showalter 39). Similarly, Tea Cake has a significant meaning for Janie, as she says in the novel, "he done taught me the maiden language all over" (Hurston 13). Janie is given instruments by Tea Cake to help her find her own voice.

In his article "*An African-American Woman's Journey of Self Discovery in Zora Neale Hurston's Their Eyes Were Watching God*," Ken Silber asks the question of what a woman of color needs to achieve self-realization in a world dominated by male attempts to restrict her (Silber 281). In this article, he contends that the protagonist Janie Crawford does not achieve

self-actualization until after Tea Cake dies (Silber 280). However, a deeper examination would show that This assumption pays insufficient attention to Janie's previous relationships and the significant events she went through in her life before meeting Tea Cake, these experiences put Janie on a path to self-fulfillment and made her acquire more knowledge about herself and about the things she desires (Hawkes 2)

Janie demonstrates her self-affirmation first, by leaving her husband Logan Killicks for Joe Starks; second, by going against the patriarchal rules and guidelines of her community in Eatonville; and last, by putting herself on the same scale with a man in a violent situation where her ability to hurt him was equal to his ability to hurt her. The marital relationships that Janie lived left an impact on her because of male dominance; both her first husbands uphold the tradition of treating women as an object they own. Janie's self-fulfillment is not achieved after Tea Cake's death, but before she even gets to know him. Her relationship with him represents the realization of the self' she knew existed deep within her including during her previous unhappy marriages. Only with Tea Cake, she completes her self-realization journey because she gets the opportunity to realize equality with a man. Janie's self-defense against Tea Cake, which results in his murder, is not the most significant event in her journey to self-realization; it is only a part of it. killing him demonstrates that she appreciates herself even more, even though she loves him but values her relationship with Janie above all others. Her domesticity is not threatened by her freedom and equality with Tea Cake (Hawkes 3-10).

II.5. Gender Inequality in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

Based on the data analysis the writer of this research found that There are some types of gender discrimination faced by women in *Their Eyes Were Watching God* such as natality inequality, mortality inequality, basic facility inequality, special opportunity inequality, professional inequality, ownership inequality, and household inequality. And that

these inequalities have their effect on the victims, physically and psychologically as they might affect

According to the World Health Organization (2002), some of the physical consequences of gender discrimination include injury, bruises, contusions, and fractures, physical disability, chronic health problems (irritable bowel syndrome, gastrointestinal disorders, various chronic pain syndromes, hypertension, and so on), and even death. Furthermore, the victim of sexual subordination may suffer from sexual and reproductive health issues (Chairunnisa 3)

Mortality Inequality

In this novel, the relationship of master and slave in violation of women and sexual subjugation shows mortality inequality which is viewed in the domination of men over women. Alsaleh in *Gender inequality in Saudi Arabia: Myth and reality* contends that in some countries where men have more power than women, they control them in all aspects of life, including clothing, driving licenses, travel rights, and marriage. Mortality inequality is reflected in the way that Janie's grandmother, Nanny, a black woman slave, was raped by her master and became pregnant. Even if it means causing her harm, she was obliged to obey her master's orders. (Chairunnisa 3)

Nanny suffered from the effects of this inequality especially when the master's wife became furious after discovering that Nanny had given birth to her husband's child. Nanny was terrified and worried all the time of the possibility that this woman would kill her or her baby. Thus, she ran away and opted for being a single mom for her child because she believed that anyone could mistreat her child. She did not want to marry since she had lost trust in others.

Nativity Inequality

Natality inequality is reflected in Hurston's novel through Janie's story as a baby. When Leafy, Janie's mother was a student, she was raped by her school teacher, as a result, she got an unwanted pregnancy, Leafy chose not to abort her pregnancy in spite of the bad nutrition and the bad condition. After bringing her baby into the world she had a depression which made her neglect and abandon her daughter, leaving her alone with her grandmother who played the role of the mother and the father to Janie. (Chairunnisa 3)

Effects of gender inequality experienced by Leafy, are seen in the psychological problems she faced, Leafy was in a stressful situation because of the pregnancy; thus she released her depression by drinking alcohol, staying out nights. Furthermore, the impact is also seen on her family and dependents. Especially, her daughter Janie who was ignored and bullied by her friends at school because of the tragic incident that occurred to her mother as they mocked her because she did not have a father(Chairunnisa 5)

Special Opportunity Inequality

According to Glick and Fiske (2006), the majority of female jobs are in the domestic field, such as nursing, daycare workers, house cleaning, and supporting jobs such as the receptionist. Joe Starks' act exemplified special opportunity inequality when he refused to allow Janie and forbade her from making a public speech after his election as the Mayor of Eatonville because she was a woman and making a speech was not a skill of a woman. Every individual has the right to express his ideas and opinions. However, Joe Starks denied Janie's unique opportunity in her life (Chairunnisa 3)

Household Inequality

According to the Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime (2002), types of spousal abuse in domestic violence include physical abuse, sexual abuse, psychological abuse, destruction of property and pets, verbal abuse, and isolation. Janie was physically and verbally abused by her first and second husbands, Logan Killicks and Joe Starks. This abuse

is seen in her relationship with Logan which was more of a master and slave relationship, not a husband and his wife. In addition to Jody who is ambitious and megalomaniac, he dominated Janie's life and restricted her freedom in all aspects forbidding her to interact with her community members because of her status as the mayor's wife. As the result of this inequality Janie suffered from feelings of fear and loneliness, as she began to withdraw from others till she arrived to an uncommunicative person (Chairunnisa 4)

Professional Inequality

Janie experienced professional inequality when she worked in the store and had to debate with her husband, Joe Starks. He made a comparison between a man's and a woman's understanding. He stated that women understand only one thing when they see something, but men have the ability to understand many things when they see one thing. "...leadership positions stereotypically require masculine traits, and simply being male is associated with status and authority." (Glick and Fiske 167)

Furthermore, the nanny draws a reflection of professional inequality; she tells Janie about her thoughts on black women's positions at work. She says that because women have the lowest rank at work, they have to do what men could do by themselves, but women have to do it for them just because they are women "de white man throw down de load and tell de nigger man tuh pick it up. He pick it up because he have to, but he don't tote it. He hand it to his women folk De nigger woman is de mule uh de world so fur as Ah can see" (Hurston 19).

On the surface, gender appears to be stable because it is supported and reproduced by power structures in society; however, individual interventions may destroy these structures and recreate the concept and shape of gender. Janie is completely under the spell of her society's power structures, but she changes herself and. She destroys the established gender dichotomies when she learns to play checkers, learns to shoot, go fishing, dress as she likes, as a result, changes the succeeds to fix the concept of gender (Hozhabrossadat 124)

II.6. Janie Crawford's Struggle Against the Patriarchal Community

In her novel, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, Hurston put emphasis on the description of the quality of society and the mentality of the black people in Eatonville. the social context in which the protagonist lived shows clearly the struggles and hardships that any black woman can face while living within a patriarchal society (Rouibi 45)

In this novel, the heroine, Janie Crawford was born in a traditional black society in the town of Eatonville, However, she was surrounded by many white kids who used to bully her because she lived in the backyard of a white family. Moreover, Janie was defined since her childhood, her friends used to laugh at her calling her alphabet because she did not have a single name, everyone was calling her the way they wanted and according to their vision "Dey all useter call me Alphabet 'cause so many people had done named me different names" (Hurston 11). People in the environment she lived in did not identify her by who she really was, rather they gave her a false image about herself; As a result, Janie learned to look over her own identity and do whatever she thought suited her (Rouibi 46)

One of the main reasons behind Janie's marriage to Logan Killicks at an early age was the patriarchal and oppressive community in which she grew up. Nanny, Because of her long experience as a former slave, forced Janie to marry an old man in order to protect her from sexual abuse which is common in their society. (Rouibi 47)

Honey, de white man is the ruler of everything as fur as ah been able tuh find out. Maybe it's some place way off in de ocean where de black man is in power, but we don't know nothin' but what we see ... De nigger woman is de mule uh de world so fur as ah can see. Ah been praying' fuh it tub be different wid you (Hurston 17)

Janie's society proven to be truly patriarchal and materialistic once when she became Joe Starks' widow with all the money and the labor he left. People from all around began to offer their services to her, not to aid her, but because they believed that a woman without a man cannot live properly and need the assistance of a male at all times since "Uh woman by herself in uh pitiful thing" (Hurstons 107). And that "god never meant 'em tuh try tuh stand by theirselves" (Hurstons 108). Janie, however, had a large knowledge about the way of thinking of both men and women in her community, at this stage she has learned to distinguish between the sight of affection and the look of profit, and that all these ostensibly assisting men were only seeking for power through women on whom they impose their masculinity.

To reach such a level of consciousness Janie has paid an expensive price that costed her half of her life, that's why she can never be fooled again. Janie shows this awakening to her friend when she was telling her about the freedom she enjoys after Jody stark's death (Rouibi 47). Phoebe says "Sh-sh-sh! Don't let nobody hear you say dat, Janie. Folks will say you ain't sorry he's gone" however, carelessly, Janie replays "Let'em say whut dey wants tuh, Pheoby. To my thinkin' mourning oughtn't tuh last no longer'n grief" (Hurstons 111).

After Jody stark's death, the people of Eatonville ashamed of Janie for not being sorry for the death of her husband, and for being hanging out with another man who is younger than her, In that period, the town's people had nothing else to talk about but Janie's story and her picnics and journeys of fishing and haunting with tea cake(Rouibi 47). The couple gave little regard to what people said about them; they enjoyed their relationship together "Day after day and weak after weak" (Hurstons 130). The forty years old lady, Janie, reacted in the same regardless manner, when she returned to Eatonville after running away with tea cake, the porch sitters received her with the harshest judgments and comments, only because these people were envious, greedy, astonished, and curious about why she has returned alone without the twelve years younger boy, they wanted to know what she has been

through after leaving the town. Dian Matza states that "clearly jealous of Janie's good looks, pride, and defiance the townspeople hide their feelings behind their criticism of her manners, for they don't hesitate to note that she fails to converse when she passes them" (Hurst 48). In this scene, Janie passes by them completely ignoring their comments, because she felt mature and wise enough not to respond to their gossip, especially since she knew it was the only thing they were good at and they would talk about her anyway.

Hurston in the description of those gossipers says "They made burning statements with questions, and killing tools out of laughs. It was mass cruelty. A mood comes alive. Words walking without masters" (Hurston 2) this statement demonstrates that the judging persons instead of asking Janie about the entire truth, they sat there cynically forming incorrect judgments about her. These judgments were like masks that concealed their dread of her might, which was visible in the way she looked and walked by them with pride (Rouibi 48)

Conclusion

In this novel, Janie Crawford is more than a heroine, an independent woman, struggler, courageous, responsible, self-confident, outspoken, mature, and decisive woman. Although she is placed as an inferior, with her courage and very determined will, she is able to overcome the restrictions placed on her by the oppressive forces and people in her life. As a young woman, Janie had no complaints about her role in society and fit in as most young people do. Eventually, Janie made it her purpose to outgrow this mold, defying her societal role and fulfilling her dream of becoming the assertive woman she always wanted to be.

Janie undergoes twenty years of physical abuse and psychological repression, she goes through three marital relationships, each case of these marriages represents a new stage for Janie to understand her position in a man dominated world. Her marriage with her second

husband, Jody stark, is the most abusive and dominant. His death is the only way for Janie to achieve self-realization, for her, Joe's death does not only represent freedom from gender abuse, but also her psychological liberation. The last stage is when Janie Kills Tea Cake shows her attachment to life. Her vitalism forces lead her to kill Tea Cake in self-defense, thus ending necessarily his life in the name of the "possibility of more life"

General Conclusion

Since Zora Neale Hurston wrote her novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, the world's perception of African American women has significantly changed. This novel proved that the black woman, like any other female in the world, can assert herself and achieve her liberation from oppression and dominance. This research aimed to investigate, from a black feminist lens, the main character's quest for her identity as a female and to investigate the different types of gender inequalities in the novel.

Based on the conducted research and the different articles, books, and websites found concerning this same topic, we found that, Hurston's female protagonist, Janie Crawford, is placed in the early twentieth century's community, in which her fate is at the mercy of the environmental circumstances, it can be said that before reaching the final point of finding her true identity, Janie had passed through many stages in her life that contributed to her change of character and her development of feminist features. The three marriages that Janie had, represented each stage. Her marriage to her second husband Starks was the most influential because it was the most abusive, his death paved the way to the psychological liberation of Janie from all types of objectification.

Despite being black, being a non-parental- under-educated, and a poor woman, it can be said that Janie succeeded in the search for her identity, that ultimately, she valued her existence as a human being, and especially as a woman who fights to gain her emancipation, she broke the rules and protested against the traditional norms of the black patriarchal society, and became free independent woman mentally, emotionally and economically. In addition, this research's results show that Hurston emphasizes the notion of gender inequalities between men and women. The master and slave kind of relationship is predominant in most of Janie's relational unions and the African American community in general, this patriarchal

society that promotes men to higher positions compared to that of women makes the struggle even more difficult for black women to achieve their self-assertion.

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