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The Quest for Feminine Identity in Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*: A Feminist Perspective

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this work to my entire family, especially to my father, who taught me the ethical values of hard work, and to my mother, who has always kept praying for me.

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My sincerest appreciation goes to my supervisor Mr. Boulegroune for his patience, advice, guidance, attention to details throughout my dissertation. He, more than any other, has contributed to my academic growth.

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Abstract

This dissertation is an attempt to explore, from different feminist perspectives, the quest for feminine identity of a black woman, Janie Crawford, the protagonist of Zora Neale Hurston in *Their Eyes Were Watching*. The protagonist's experience in the aforementioned novel for gaining her natural womanhood has a number of controversial complexities. However, in order to break out from her passivity and to seek for her feminine voice, and thus her identity, Janie has to take a long journey throughout her marriages and against patriarchy that exists within her society. For that, to cover Janie's quest more properly, the work draws on three different feminist approaches: the feminist-Marxist, the feminist-archetypal and the feminist-psychoanalytic approaches. Moreover, the methods that are used in this research are the descriptive, analytic and interpretative ones. As for the findings, they are limited to Janie's confrontation to her obstructions in order to gain a sense of identity. Finally, the dissertation may be helpful for a possibly further research about the experience of black women, especially in the African-American works as Hurston's.

Key Words: *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, Zora Neale Hurston, feminism, black feminism, Marxist criticism, archetypal criticism, psychoanalytic criticism, feminist-Marxist criticism, feminist-archetypal criticism, feminist-psychoanalytic criticism, Karl Marx, Joseph Campbell, Sigmund Freud.

ملخص

تهدف هذه الأطروحة لدراسة من وجهة نظر نسوية مختلفة البحث عن الهوية الأنثوية للإمرأة السوداء جاني كروفورد بطلة رواية *عيونهم كانت تراقب الرب* للكاتبة زورا نيل هيرستون.

إن تجربة البطلة لكسب أنوثتها الطبيعية في الرواية المذكورة تتخللها عدد من التعقيدات المثيرة للجدل و على جاني من أجل الخروج من سلبيتها و السعي للحصول على صوتها الأنثوي و بالتالي هويتها أن تأخذ رحلة طويلة عبر زيجاتها و ضد النظام الأبوي القائم في مجتمعها و لهذا لتغطية مسعى جاني بشكل أكثر صحة إن البحث يعتمد على ثلاث نهج نسوية مختلفة وهي كالاتي: نهج النسوية الماركسية و نهج النسوية التوراتية و نهج نسوية التحليل النفسي و علاوة على ذلك إن المناهج المتبعة في هذا البحث هي الوصف و التحليل و التفسير ونتائج هذا البحث تقتصر على مواجهة جاني لهذه العقبات من أجل الحصول على إحساس بالهوية و أخيرا قد تكون هذه الأطروحة مفيدة في إحتمال إجراء بحث في المستقبل حول تجربة النساء السود خاصة ضمن الأدب الأفريقي الأمريكي مثل أعمال هيرستون.

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General Introduction

Before publishing her masterpiece *Their Eyes Were Watching God* in 1937, Zola Neale Hurston (1891 – 1960) had been considered one of the representative figures of the Harlem Renaissance. As one of the Harlem writers in the 1920s, Hurston befriended the likes of Langston Hughes and Countee Cullen, among other African American writers and activists. At the time of the Harlem Renaissance, the movement was known as the New Negro Movement. The black figures of the Harlem specialized in different disciplines of art and literary forms so as to establish a new black identity. The main objective was to abolish the stereotypes that were associated with African-Americans who were perceived as being hypersexual, savage, violent and idle.

The New Negro Movement was a response to the segregation of the blacks that had begun in 1876, when Jim Crow laws were initiated. These laws prohibited the mixing of whites and blacks in public facilities, such as public schools, public transportation, restaurants and drinking fountains. However, as one of the Harlem writers, Hurston is best known for her themes of racial heritage, stylistic innovations and contribution to anthropology. Those themes are manifestly employed in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, a novel that embraces the vivid imagery of black culture and the efforts toward theorizing the African diaspora and the struggle of women in the black community. This latter is what the story of the protagonist, Janie Crawford, revolves around.

As a regionalist work, the story is set in central and southern Florida. It epitomizes Janie's search for a self-formation throughout three cases of marriages. Janie's journey is the quest for fulfillment, self-awareness and psychological liberation throughout oppressive experiences she specifically had in the first two marriages with Logan Killicks and Joe Starks. Therefore, the novel is not only an account of Janie's struggle for a

meaningful life, but also a mirror that reflects the dark reality that challenges black women to achieve a voice in patriarchal society. Looking for that feminine voice, and therefore her identity, Janie has to search for herself throughout her marriages and against patriarchy that is rooted in her society.

The novel's protagonist, Janie, experiences a sort of a metamorphosis of her personality, which culminates in her maturity and self-awareness as a black woman. However, it is not easy to trace the forces that drive her towards such achievement. Thus, the major question that is put forward is as follows: How do psychological, social, and archetypal factors contribute to Janie's quest for an identity in Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*? To answer this question presupposes answering the following subsidiary questions:

1. How do other black women characters, like Nanny, reinforce the existence of patriarchy through their capitalist ideas? And how does Janie's rejection of these ideas contribute to the recovery of her self-identity?
2. How does the black cultural background contribute to the empowering and shielding of Janie as well as to the quest for a self-fulfillment throughout her journey?
3. How does Joe's death symbolize Janie's confrontation against patriarchy? And how does it contribute to Janie's psychological liberation and fulfillment?

The research aims to explain how the psychological, social and archetypal factors contribute to the existence of patriarchy. The research also tackles Janie's attitude to male domination in black society with reference to a number of theoretical conceptions.

Despite the contributions that are made by many researchers to approach the novel from a feminist perspective, Hurston's work still explores further feminist themes. Most of the previous academic researches attempted to explore only very few facets of the African

American literary achievements, especially when it comes to the experience of an African American woman. Thus, since women are oppressed by patriarchy in terms of economic, political, social, and psychological factors, the significance of the research is to explore the issue of feminine gender from different feminist lenses.

This study is not intended to be exhaustive, in the sense that only one area is going to be explored, i.e. how the nature of the character is shaped by different factors. Other elements of the novel are going to be ignored, if not explored at all.

In 1970, Alice Walker began her study of the Voodoo religion as an attempt to collect some information on black folklore. She ended up exploring *Mules and Men* and *Tell My Horse* by Hurston. Then, Walker considered Hurston as a role model in art, behavior, growth of spirit, intellect, and a woman whose existence was somehow to validate Walker's artistic and personal undergoing as a novice writer (Walker 4; Jordan 105). She once stated that there is no book more important to her, in past or future, than Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. The influence was inspiring that she wrote a poem entitled *Janie Crawford* (Freeman 451). However, Walker could not comprehend the early criticisms when she discovered that African American literary circles did not welcome at first Hurston's enthusiasm. Their negative comments pushed Walker to condemn them as misleading, deliberately belittling, inaccurate and that generally irresponsible attacks on Hurston were provoked by her racial and pragmatic ambivalence (Jordan 105). The results of these narrow-minded conceptions on Hurston demonstrate the ambiguity when it comes to race, sex and class in her novel. It illustrates even more that the novel is an account of appropriate fictional representation that is associated with modern black feminism (106). Consequently, Hurston's book established the early literary campaign concerning black women's struggle in African-American society.

The early critics were quite possibly offended by the portrayal of black men in Hurston's novel. Richard Wright's criticism was very damaging to Hurston's reputation. In *Between Laughter and Tears*, a review of African American life, Richard Wright regards Hurston's story as a novel of tradition which addresses the white audience and ignores what the overall movement is about. Wright explains that she tended to satisfy the white readers at the expense of Hurston's black chauvinism. Moreover, the novel holds no theme, no message or thought, but rather it is like a minstrel show (Fabre 251). In addition, Sterling Brown in *The Nation* also considers Hurston a failure in the depiction of Southern harsh side on the black people. Like Richard Wright, Brown views the novel to be anything but a story of her people. That is to say, the novel is unachievable as a great American novel (Patterson 47). In other words, the early critical reception of *Their Eyes Were Watching God* converged on the idea of Hurston's diversion from the current Negro Movement.

Despite the negative comments on Hurston's novel by African American critics, other waves of critics who emerged after the movement such as Robert Hemingway, Mary Helen Washington and Alice Walker maintained objective and respectful attitudes towards her audacity and talent. These waves of open-mindedness and sympathizing views are not only reflected in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, but also Hurston's independence, refusal to conventions, anthropological researches on the violence of the South and the Voodoo temples of Haiti (Jordan 106). These could possibly be the elements which make Hurston an influential writer regardless her race, gender and class.

Ranging from her feminine or racial identity, many critics such as Barbara Christian consider Hurston's work a uniquely fusion of the two. But one of the issues in shaping the right definition of black womanhood is the significance of individualism in the minority literature. According to Christian black women writers must emphasize on their

individual realizations as vital and radical incentives to their feminist campaign. Thus, the recognition of selfhood and fulfilling one's identity are viewed as an inherent feature of "women's literature"(Jordan 106). To a great extent, these features are embodied in Janie's search beyond herself in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*.

As far as the feminist approach is concerned and the theme of the feminine identity is to be explored in this research, the novel is seen by Yvonne Johnson as the first conscious effort by an American ethnic writer to impose the patriarchal literature and to give a voice to black women (Johnson 43). Henry Louis Gates Jr. and Cornel West came up with a positive critical account of Hurston's novel in that Hurston is actually the first writer to capture a black woman's successful journey "to find voice and to overcome male oppression"(Gates 132). Jennifer Jordan, on the other hand, argues that there has been a call for black feminist literature of self-fulfillment, such as *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, in which women have developed a feminine bonding and liberation through their sisters. Black feminists also insisted that the sisterhood does not bring isolation from one's racial culture and community, rather the liberation of black women from sexism and racism could represent the liberation of all black people in America (107). For this reason and more, Hurston succeeds in linking her studies on anthropology with black women's quest for racial and individual identity in African-American setting.

In spite of the limited scope of the novel's early reviews, several critics have recently extensively contributed to various issues of language and gender politics in Hurston's novel. Diana Miles and Todd McGowan have read the protagonist's voice in *Their Eyes Were Watching God* from a gender perspective. However, in spite of these studies, the idea that is raised at this point is that these critics have not covered all the gender issues inherent in the novel. Although the contributions of these critics have widened our understanding of the novel, yet Hurston's work demands for the need of

further explorations from different angles. Therefore, the novel still calls for a palpable support of Psychoanalytic, Marxist and Archetypal feminist interpretations. In other words, they are narrowly covered elements which could be considered as the pillars of this research.

Since the conducted research is a fairly deep involvement in the nature of Janie's search for identity in the novel, the qualitative method is more appropriate in such field of study as well as feminist elective criticism, whether social, psychological or archetypal criticism. As for data collection, the researcher has mainly had recourse to library research; data have been collected from libraries, the internet, periodicals, etc. Data sampling and procedures rely on the close reading of relevant primary and secondary sources. Finally, the analysis of data will be described, analyzed, and finally interpreted.

This dissertation is to be divided into a General Introduction, four chapters, and a General Conclusion. The General Conclusion includes the research problem, purpose, questions, significance, methodology, limitations, the literary review, and structure of the dissertation. The first chapter is a theoretical in which one explains all the literary ideologies and movements that relate feminism to this research. The second chapter is a Marxist-feminist critical analysis that explores the relationship between materialism and the women oppression: as Janie's grandmother's case in the southern states. Another issue that is to be investigated next is the consolidation of the patriarchal order by the other black women and how by refusing the material considerations Janie gains identity. The second chapter includes a feminist-archetypal investigation that relates the Voodoo's significance in the story to the whole framework of the study, besides to Janie's quest to self-fulfillment through the archetypal journey. The last chapter is an attempt to cover the feminist-psychoanalytic approach by applying Freud's theory on Janie's case to prove the mental subjectivity and its impact on Janie's life. This chapter includes, definitions of

trauma and the compulsion repetition theory, the argument, i.e. its application on Janie's marriages and Janie's psychological liberation. Finally, this study ends up with a general conclusion that sums up the main points that have already been discussed in the previous chapters and include one's findings and future perspective.

Chapter One: Theoretical Framework

1.1. Introduction

In spite of the controversies about Feminism as either one academic mainstream or multidimensional field, one will tackle in this chapter these different feminist concepts once literature is concerned. In addition, this chapter will cover also the history and the waves of feminism and the feminist different approaches such as the archetypal, Marxist and psychoanalytic feminism. Finally, since *Their Eyes Were Watching God* is considered as an African-American's novel, one will conclude this chapter to shed light upon the black feminism and its features.

1.2. Feminism and the Feminist Theory

1.2.1. Feminism in Literature

As far as the field of literature is concerned, Elaine Showalter believes that feminist criticism refers to the reinterpretations and assessments that could be found in the content of novels. It does not deal only with images of women and men in works of fictions but also their representations, the relation between them, representation of the institutions impinging on them and the way society shapes them. In other words, Showalter argues that feminist criticism involves a critical analysis of the shallow vision of the world, the people populating it and the kind of reality depicted. Broadly speaking, the examined themes concern the reality of man control of female bodies like marriage and seduction; Moreover, it tends to shed light upon men's control of women's economic status and ideas such as women's poverty, women's fear of poverty, women's access to work, women's education and other concerns (Talbot 146). However, it should be mentioned that feminist

criticism is not only a question of gender in literature, but it is viewed as a particular kind of political discourse in which the critical and theoretical efforts are committed to the struggle against patriarchy and sexism (Toril 117). Therefore, feminism (whether charged by literary or political aims) is regarded as a theory or movement which questions the inequality between the two genders.

The early images of women criticism had some rather shaky assumptions about the works of fiction that depicted the reality of women. Assumptions clashed with the demand for positive role models for women (Talbot 147). Despite the narrowness of the early criticism, they were politically motivated and committed to critical, oppositional reading.

There are two mainstreams in feminist theory. The first one is how women are presented in literature by male writers, the language used to describe women and woman's place in society. The second looks at how women are presented in female writings, their language to describe women and their place in society as well. "Phallogocentrism" is what was developed by Elaine Showalter to describe men's writings about woman, whereas "Gynocriticism" is the feminist criticism developed by women (Selden 521). By questioning the criteria which class the novels were defined (Phallogocentrism or Gynocriticism) Showalter contributed to distinguish the artificiality within literary analysis when dealing with feminism.

Another major feminist critic and one famous figure of the second wave of feminism is the American Kate Millet. Millet believes that Feminists must be pluralists in a way that they do not take the radical stance. This means that they accept all different ideas including the feminist ones even if they are "contaminated" by male-dominated ideologies. For instance, Millet asserts that some female feminists adopted the ideas that were produced by men. One of these cases is Mary Wollstonecraft who was influenced by male-dominated ideas of the French revolution. As a result of this, feminists should not

deny the fact that several men like John Stuart Mill had done efforts for understanding the women's position; simply, because those men were liberal. Therefore, the significance of feminist ideas does not lay on their origins, whether by men or women, rather they lay on their application and what sort of effects they hold. In short, Millet concludes, it does not matter if the given theory is formulated by man or woman, but "its effects can be characterized as sexist or feminist in a given situation" (Toril 119). As long as both (men and women) advocate equality and question sexism, the end is what matters regardless the nature of its means.

1.2.2. Critical History of Feminism

The history of feminism is more complicated than exploring its time-bound. However, one can cover slightly the early era when feminism first emerged in France, and then link it to the present era. As all the current feminist ideologies that struggled throughout history to gradually arrive at certain or common understanding of its campaigns, at least by academic scholars, individual perspective has always prevailed both history and the origins of feminism. That being said feminism is an offspring of long struggle in history, some critics like France in *Fin-de-Siecle* probes that definition of feminism and feminist arose rather immediately (Offen128). Regardless these historical hassles, exploring into history and the first signs of feminism is thus important to overshadow an overall notion, if not fully, on the meaning of feminism.

According to Marya Shéliga-Loevy in *Les hommes féministes, Revue Encyclopédique Larousse*, many scholars in field of women studies agree upon that the term "feminism" was first coined in France by Charles Fourier, the French philosopher, socialist and thinker in his book *Theorie des Quatre Mouvements et des destinées generales* in 1837. However, Karen Offen, in *Defining Feminism: a Comparative*

Historical Approach, believes that this claim was likely based only on secondary sources that advocated it without enough authentication. Digging further in Fourier's book, there is no mention of the word "feminism" although it must be said that Fourier was qualified as a feminist ideologist by the concepts of today's standards. The term "feminism" was recognized in France during the early 1890s (Offen 126). Since then it gradually began indicating for the emancipation of women.

Soon after, the usage of the term was proclaimed by the French Hubertine Auclert to describe her female associates in 1882. Auclert called for the women's suffrage; hence, the term was found in her periodical *La Citoyenne* (Offen 126). According to L. Cosson, Auclert also spoke of "chauvinisme masculin" at that time (125). The term Feminism echoed widely in the French press that it made Eugenie Potonie-Pierre and her colleagues in the women's group Solidarité adopt the word in 1892. Shortly thereafter, the world juxtaposed feminism with masculism (126). Then consequently, the term emerged to the political surface not only in France but also in the neighboring countries.

Before the turn of the century, the term Feminism was adopted in several European countries like Great Britain, Belgian, Spain, Italy, Germany, Greece and Russia. In 1896, at women's congress in Berlin, Potonie-Pierre appreciated the launching of the word "feminism" after her group had found it and brought it into circulation (Offen 126). Since then, the word Feminism had different taxonomies that indicate feminism in a way or another. It spread to assemble familial feminism, integral feminism, Christian feminism, socialist feminism, radical feminism, male feminism, and others (128). Both adversaries and sympathizers persistently argued on the question of who could properly be called a feminist. As for nowadays, these differences in view quickly raised several related questions to feminism, which brought about a controversy (129). These controversies in view still prove that the word feminism could not be defined as a mainstream ideology.

It was only in 1910 that the term “feminism” was commonly used in the United States by both the proponents and adversaries of the women's emancipation (Offen 127). However, many political parties used the terms controversially because the term "feminism" was not used by everyone to mean the same thing. Nevertheless, the common usage denoted the rights of women rather than the rights for equality to those of men. Even then feminism connoted a variety of sociopolitical criticism in which women are the center of its ideology and women are victims of men's privileges (128). In other words, the term traveled through time and space (before arriving at the United States) promoting more approaches which could contribute to denounce inequality between the two genders.

1.2.3. Waves of Feminism

Feminist theorists and scholars categorize feminism into three distinctive stages. The first feminist wave occurred in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The second took place during the 1960s-1970s periods, whereas the third one has existed from the 1990s to the present (Krolokke 1). However, each of these periods carry different of aims, controversies in view, and political approaches depending on the change which occurs once this movement comes to the political surface.

During the early appearance of feminism, it was referred to as the women's movement for the advancement of woman's causes and rights rather than an ideology for equality between the two genders. Basically, ideas such as women's suffrage emerged from social meetings. Those social clubs and groups were held by women as an attempt for women's exodus. Yet, it was viewed by society as nothing more than charitable undertakings and friendly membership to break the routine of the domestic life. As a result, those clubs soon began to meddle with educational framework so as to improve their intellectual capacities in the second half of the nineteenth century. It is worth to be

mentioned that these activities were not rebellious or riotous ones. Instead, the intellectual clubs were endowed with quiet and slow evolvement. This was due to the social conventions about the image of women that taught "true women" be more submissive in order to be socially accepted (Martin 161). Gradually with time, these clubs afforded a tool that women needed to shape their intellectual thinking and what they could therefore achieve. Consequently, these early women's socials gathering were a place of latent feminist organizations rather than intellectual meetings, gatherings to inspire women and gatherings that presented the unity of female sex (Cott 3). Needless to say, the clubs were not only considered as an educational shelter, but also they were seen as the turning point into more individualism obtained by women in the long run.

Many women reformers in 19th century such as Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Margaret Fuller, Sojourner Truth and Emma Willard did not only inspire the notions of equality awareness and self-development but also motivated the individualism of their sisters (Martin 15). The turn of the century also marked the change once feminism recurrently came to usage. The perspective of those activists soon shifted as well from their former aim, which is the women's suffrage, to more developed ideology. More importantly, the new language of feminism arrived to bring the end for the remnants of the old perspective of the movement (128). Thus, the new aim came along with new modern agenda.

Maybe one of the most influential early feminist writings is Mary Wollstonecraft. Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* is not only an important document in the early movement, but it is also considered as a philosophical influential concept of women's enlightenment. However, after turn of the 19th century, another influential voice emerged. This voice was Virginia Woolf, a British writer, who is greatly appreciated by the feminist world. She believed that women had no history, and therefore their history

lays on what men write about them to pass it to other men: "these colorful constructive events of their male history through a male lineage," yet women are passive from their part because they submit to that fact (Spender 1). Next to Mary Wollstonecraft's and Virginia Woolf's manifestations of liberal first wave of feminism, Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* in 1949 was a central canon of feminism who laid the groundwork for radical second wave feminism (Krolokke 6). It was only in the 1960s movements that the idea or concept of feminism had connotations to some form of radical rebellion and hence it marked the beginning of the second wave.

The liberation movements were the soul of the second movement. The movement was represented by women's protests like images of Gloria Steinem and others who called for women's liberation; they were witnessed flocking out to the streets loudly demanding equal pay, equal rights under the umbrella of women power. The wave is characterized by the ideas and actions undertaken by women and most importantly by its radicalism. It soon came to be known as "the women's liberation movement" (Krolokke 8). It extended through the early 1960s and lasted through the late 1980s.

The aim of the second movement was to reform women's legal and social statuses; however, the movement first took a radicalism course. During this period, feminist activists called for radical social, cultural and political demands (Krolokke 8). For instance, one of these feminist groups is the New York Radical Feminists in 1969 when they protested against the archetypal images that patriarchal societies have about them. According to those protesters, women were seen as cattle and that their appearance is more worthy than what they would do, what they could think, or even whether they were able to think at all. Carrying posters reading and signs as "Cattle parades are degrading to human beings," feminists made their message loud and clear. Women were victims of patriarchal

forces, commercialized and oppressed by "the beauty culture" (Krolokke 8). Through these protests, feminists could spread out the liberation's spirit to the coming generations.

The identity of second wave feminism was characterized by the growth of the other subsidiary criticisms like from black feminism, social feminism, and lesbian feminism and presented by daring works like Bell Hooks in *Ain't I A Woman? Black Woman and Feminism* (1981) and Trinh T. Minh-ha's *Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism* (1989). They questioned the white, middle-class, and heterosexual agendas and alongside with issues of gender, class, race, ethnicity, and sexuality. It was also a period in which a variety of terminology concerning the feminist task were originated such as "gynocriticism" by Elaine Showalter in *A Literature of Their Own* (1977), or as "womanism" by Alice Walker *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens: Womanist Prose* (1983) (Krolokke 13). Starting in the 1970s, second-wave feminisms have generated a huge amount of research and teaching on women's issues.

The Third Wave of feminism began in the early 1990s. First, it is known by its clearly distinctive aims of the women's movement, and secondly it was a response to "the setbacks" which second wave feminism failed to address. Criticisms that were born with the privileges that first and second wave feminists fought for such as lipstick feminism, girlie feminism, "riot grrl feminism", "cybergrrl feminism", "transfeminism", or just grrl feminism. The "Grrl" term often addresses the a young woman who is regarded as independent and strong or aggressive. It was originated in the 90s representing the sound of an animal roaring and therefore the human anger. Finally, Third wave feminists address themselves as "capable, strong, and assertive social agents" (Krolokke 15). Moreover, they are concerned more by the need to develop a feminist theory and its political tendency which is also an attempt to fill the gaps of the contradiction in opinion.

1.3. Feminism, Psychology and Psychoanalysis

Psychology is viewed as devoted to the study of the development of people, their cognitions and their behaviors within a diversity of social environment. However, it was considered as a young discipline that was founded as an institution in 1982 by the American Psychological Association. Since its establishment, psychology spread its dominion over the other academic fields characterized mostly by "Objective, quantitative, empirical, and value-free science"(Williams 184). Despite the fact that the early psychological engagements were concerned with animal experimentations, the targeted goal was to know more about the behavior of humans (Williams 184). With regards to feminism, Worell states that feminist psychology, like all feminist approaches, is only the product of what those feminist reformers in the field of psychology sought to achieve as the equality in gender. In spite of this, Worell gives specific goals that characterized this domain: to understand the injustice of patriarchal societies, to challenge it and to advocate that message on behalf of women (Williams 185). Broadly speaking, what feminists in the field of psychology advocate meets the same goals of what feminists in other domains also seek to accomplish.

Feminist psychologists in the second wave stood against the psychological theories, methods and their applications demonstrating they were sexist and did not conform to the conditions of women as they were the product of men depiction of women psyche (Nancy and Hope 1). Naomi Weistein's *Psychology Constructs the Female*, published in 1968, is considered as the early manifesto of this newly discipline in which she declares that psychology stripped the women from its "corpus of knowledge"(Williams

185). Since then, feminist psychologists made their presence through denouncing these images in the field of psychology.

Whereas Psychologists engage with the scientific study of human or animal mental functions and behaviors, psychoanalysis is branch of psychology that is associated with Sigmund Freud's theories, parley from the clinical works of Josef Breuer and others like Alfred Adler. In addition, their approach is different from the psychologists.

Psychoanalysis is seen as a method of searching through a person's subconscious memories for the source of their current difficulties, rather than focusing on conscious memories .Furthermore, the overall focus might be laid on that conflict between consciousness and unconsciousness mechanism such as neurosis, neurotic traits, anxiety, depression, repression and other emotional and mental disturbances (Fromm 14). In short, under the broad umbrella of psychoanalysis, there are a number of theoretical orientations regarding the human psyche.

Concerning the literature, psychoanalytic criticism is that literary criticism which takes the theories coined by Freud and his peers to analyze a literary work. Through psychoanalytic interpretations and analysis this criticism targets the literary fiction or non-fiction, the psychological framework and the personality's structure of the writer (Waugh 200). As Ellen Ronny writes psychoanalysis is not the interpretation of repetition rather "it is the repetition of a trauma of interpretation". It searches for "Castration" ,"Parental Coitus" ,"the Oedipus Complex",even "sexuality" within literature (Ronney 266).Therefore, it is a production of individual interpretation inspired by a given theory or analysis in this field.

Psychoanalysis criticism was thus extended to feminism. Psychoanalytical feminists believe that gender equality emerges from early childhood experiences, which lead men to see themselves as masculine and women as feminine. As a result, it maintains

these gender images which lead to male dominion. In return, it influences the individual psycho-sexual development within men and women. However, within literary studies, psychoanalytic approaches were not limited to the Freudian, Lacanian and Derridean theories (Ronney 267). Some other feminists could be interested more in the analysis that is done by other theorists.

Whether Freudian or Lacanian theory that is taken by feminist criticism in literature, they are all aim to introduce the object of feminist criticism and tackle the question of the women's oppression as their center.

1.4. Feminism and Marxist Criticism

Both feminism and Marxism view sexuality and work as their central means and objectives, yet both of these centers are taken away. MacKinnon makes the argument that Marxist theory is associated with a society as fundamentally constructed of the relations people form as efforts to do and make things that are highly needed to survive. Therefore, one's work is an essential tool for one's existence which is viewed as social process of "shaping and transforming the material and social worlds, creating people as social beings as they create value." In other words, the work is the activity by which people are categorized. Class is that working structure, production is the working consequence, capital is the working congealed form, and thus control is the working issue (1). In addition to that, Barbara Ehrenreich also views that Marxist theory aims to investigate the class dynamics of capitalist society. The Marxist theory brings to light these related issues in capitalist societies and gender inequality in the economic system. In the capitalist classes, the competent class are the ones who control what people depend on to live like factories, energy sources, and etc., whereas the greater minority are the working class who must work as necessity under certain conditions that are imposed by that capitalist realm

such as the payment. The irreconcilable antagonism in Marxism perspective is the relationship between those classes: the value of what those working class members provide under these circumstances is less in value than what they are paid by the capitalists (par 5). In spite of this latter, one should dig further into the intersection between Marxism and feminism and their relationships.

Although Karl Marx did not provide specifically lengthy analytic documents on the oppression of women, his work is seen as a source of methodological and theoretical groundwork to examine the oppression of women under capitalism (MacKinnon 14). Both of these theories, Marxism and feminism, deal with issues of gender and inequality, whether socially or politically. Chris Beasley, in her book *What Is Feminism? An Introduction to Feminist Theory*, believes that one of the fundamental arguments within feminist debates is that the unequal power within capitalism are derived from patriarchy and that "when exploring women's positioning" Marxist-feminists focus on "labor and economics" (Beasley 55; 61). Thus, Marxist-feminism is viewed as a branch of feminism which depends on investigating and explaining the methods in which women are oppressed through systems of capitalism and patriarchal property that is controlled by men (Ferguson par 2). In short, the aim of this theory is to explore oppression and inequality by more analytic and concrete means.

The oppression of women is the visible with observable concrete effects whether it is in the labor market, socioeconomic stratification, the domestic division of labor or bureaucratic authority structures. This is what Marxist feminism is characterized by once underlying relations between men and women (Gimenez 1). Therefore, Marxist feminists focus on concrete based analysis and interpretations. According to MacKinnon, it is based on "feelings" which are real. For instance, the major technique of analysis, structure of organization, method of practice, and theory of social change of the women's movement

are associated with conscious demonstrations. Within this consciousness, the impact of male dominance is concretely analyzed through women's experience (520). From the perspective of that experience, Marxist feminists tend to depict that powerlessness as their concrete evidence which is externally imposed by men.

Finally Martha E. Gimenez asserts that if feminists want to remain relevant to the majority of women, they must acknowledge that most of women are working category within the hierarchal classes of society whose fate is shaped by both by "gender oppression and class exploitation" (1). Therefore, it is needless to say those Marxist ideologies taken by feminists contribute more concretely in their campaign against sexism.

1.5. Feminism and Archetypal Criticism

In the seventh edition of *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, M. H. Abrams concerning the literary criticism points out: "archetype" indicates recurrent narrative designs, character types and actions, themes, or images that are said to be identifiable in a wide variety of works of literature, as well as in myths, dreams, and even ritualized modes of social behavior. The archetypal similarities within these diverse phenomena are held to reflect a set of universal, primitive, and elemental patterns, whose effective embodiment in a literary work evokes a profound response from the reader. For instance, the death rebirth theme is often said to be the archetype of archetypes. Other common archetypal themes are the journey underground, the heavenly ascent, and the search for the father, the paradise-hades image, the Promethean rebel-hero, the scapegoat, the earth goddess, and the fatal woman (12). Therefore, the interpretations of symbolism in the Voodoo religion as this study tackles are also considered as archetypal themes.

One of the early advocates of this criticism is Carl G. Jung who applied the term archetype to mean "primordial images", the "psychic residue" of repeated themes

concerning the human's experience in the lives of the ancient ancestors which survived in the " myths, religion, dreams, and private fantasies in works of literatures" (Abrams 13). In addition to Carl Jung's definition, Northrop Frye, *In Anatomy of Criticism*, defines the aim of archetypal literary criticism in poetry is to treat the poem not as an imitation of nature but as an imitation of other poems. It focuses on "conventions and genres, and the kind of recurrent imagery which connects one poem with another" (616). Levi-Strauss in *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature* argues that although we have no knowledge of any entire mythology, by such myths we do uncover and reveal the existence within any culture (Guerin et al 244). As a result, we would have better understanding of a given literary text which is inspired by other forms of literature and myths.

Feminist archetypal criticism is defined by Annis Pratt as that kind of criticism which engages in the analysis of texts to determine the gender's impact on literary works. One example of feminine archetype is the "Aphrodite/Venus" archetype that had the connotation of a powerful "feminine sensuality"; however, this characteristic is given some other attitudes toward it which differ according to gender and culture. Before 1700, women were seen as sensual as men, but they lack control. Since then, men and women were characterized differently. Men could experience "strong sexuality" and women are "ideally sexless" (103). Women were associated more with archetypes which denounced their true individual images such as the Eve's image.

Pratt emphasizes that the feminist archetypal criticism does not depend on the archetypal theories of Carl Gustav Jung or does it conform fully to Northrop Frye's. Despite the fact that aspects of Frye's and Jung's theories enriched feminist archetypal methods, other aspects have been critiqued. Therefore, one of these examples is the usage of "quest pattern" that is known as the journey of self-discovery undertaken by a young hero. Feminist archetypal critics tend to have other significant connotations which

distinguish between the quests of women and the quests of men heroes (104). One example of the journey taken by a woman is Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*.

Some feminist archetypal critics define women usage of archetypes as a process of "revisioning" materials originated from masculine writings. In other words, it is a process of "usurpation" of masculine images, symbols and recurrent themes to be adapted to women's psychological experiences. Furthermore, some feminist critics believe that not only myths are masculine, but the language itself is a masculine production (104). Nevertheless, the fact that feminists tend to have their own archetypal significances, does not necessary mean they cannot rely on the masculine materials.

1.6. Black Feminism in the US

1.6.1. Black Women and Feminism

Even though the results after the second wave of feminism made a difference in the life of women in the United States, the movement is often remembered as being "too white." Many black feminists responded to the women's liberation movement with writings that critically analyzed the second wave of feminism or provided missing pieces of the puzzle. However, there are different aims of each feminist ideology that does not concern only the gender but also the race. As Bell Hooks, in her famous book *Ain't I a Woman Black Woman and Feminist*, states "Racist, sexist socialization had conditioned us to devalue our femaleness and to regard race as the only relevant label of identification" (1). Unlike white feminists, black feminists though they share the feminist's campaign against sexism and patriarchy they had to take up the rooted sexism and racism in the American society from both lenses the African American and the white society.

In contrast to narrow characterizations of black feminist theory, Valerie Smith offers an expansive description arguing that it does not only refer to a written or practiced

theory that is held by black feminists "but also to a way of reading inscriptions of race (particularly but not exclusively blackness), gender (particularly but not exclusively womanhood), and class in modes of cultural expression" (Abel, Barbara, and Moglen 144). Therefore, Class, gender and race are the features of black feminism they seek to approach.

One must mention that "Womanism" stands as a term for this task by black feminists which was coined first by Alice Walker. After dealing with several works of Zora Neale Hurston such as *Their Eyes were Watching God* and other works of black female writers, Walker in *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens: Womanist Prose* came up with the term "acting womanish" (13). Many women of color in the 1970s had sought to expand the feminism of the Women's Liberation Movement beyond its concern for the problems of white middle-class women. The adoption of the term "womanist" signified an inclusion of race and class issues in feminism. Walker also used "womanist" to refer to a woman who loves other women, whether platonically or sexually (Brekke, Dalakoglou, Filippidis and Vradis 189). The term "womanist" is thus both an alternative and an expansion of the term "feminist".

It seems that the question of race and gender were always the debated issue when dealing with black feminism in the second wave movement. Being oppressed by both, Bell Hook notes that white feminists have not contributed to denounce that negative side of the oppression; rather they intended to romanticize it. Moreover, white feminists emphasize on the notion of black women are being strong while bearing that oppression. The "strength" that Hooks views is a negative aspect because their reality is ignored: "that to be strong in the face of oppression is not the same as overcoming oppression" (8). Because those who observe the black female experience from different lenses tend to romanticize the whole cause; Hooks comments that feminists of all colors should discuss the negative impact of

sexism on the black female lives (8). Hooks and other Black feminists call all feminists to understand that sexism and racism stripped, and still continue stripping, their femininity; therefore, romanticizing this struggle could confuse more their issue.

1.6.2. Sexism and Slave Experience

Hooks' book *Ain't I a Woman Black Woman and Feminism* is one of the few reliable references that one should explore when dealing with sexism and the slave experience in the United States. Hooks devotes an entire chapter to discuss a variety of incidences, cruel experiences, stages through which black women suffered and the cliché beliefs that were documented by sexist historians. Depending on documents, letters and essays which were written by women, Hooks argues that the traditional belief which is taken by scholars strips the facts about the black women's experiences and the impact of slavery on them. She emphasizes that sexist scholars have always demonstrated that the real victims are black men instead of the black women. She writes "Scholars have argued further that by not allowing black men to assume their traditional patriarchal status, white men effectively emasculated them, reducing them to an effeminate state" (20). She concludes that it is needless to argue on such assumptions since both (black men and women) suffered from the white's dominion.

Despite the fact that black men were stripped of their patriarchal order which characterized their ancestor's life in Africa, they were not stripped from their "Masculinity" because "black men were allowed to maintain some semblance of their societally defined masculine role". In fact, this subjugation that black males endured had an aftereffect on the black females during the slavery era. Consequently, Hooks comments that black women had to experience both oppressions from their men as an attempt to recover that subjugation and from their owner since they are enslaved (21). Moreover, when it comes

to the labor roles they had, black males were primarily exploited as a laborer in the fields whereas black women had to be exploited not only in fields but also in the domestic household. Speaking of this exploitation, black women performed as subjects: "breeder" or an object of white male sexual assault. Therefore, black women were the ones who were stripped from their feminine status when they had to labor in the fields alongside with black men. Thus, in light of this latter, Hooks calls those scholars to examine the dynamics of sexist and racist oppressions during slavery that black females experienced (22). Black males viewed working in household as feminine task and identified themselves by working in those cotton fields. They were characterized by their physical strength. On the other hands, women were dealt with like black males in most of the cases: "female slaves were beaten as harshly as male slaves" (23). During the slavery era, black women struggled to identify their roles by maids, laborers or breeders.

Hooks, throughout this chapter, deals also in length with two facts that scholars, as she believes, did not acknowledge truthfully. The first one is the hardship that women endured when they were brought in ships from Africa. The second fact is that they were subjected to sexual abuse by their owners. However, Hooks illustrates another major force that reinforced the patriarchy and sexism during the slavery period which is Christianity. She writes "because sexist religious doctrines had taught them that women were the seducers of men" (33). Frequently, black women regarded those who were sold for sexual purposes as "prostitution" regardless of the fact that it was beyond their desire. Christianity had to save some purity of those black women from their males because rape was considered as a sin; however, religion did not contribute to stop it. Religious life had huge impact on the perspective of black slaves (33). As a result, religion shaped also the sexist view of women that are expected to be submissive to the other gender.

When one examines the black female slave experience, sexism comes to sight as large as slavery is an oppressive force in the lives of black women. It formed the basis of the American social structure along with racial imperialism. Sexism was a production of the social and political order that whites brought to their slaves and it was therefore impacted on the fate of black women.

1.6.3. Images of African-American Women in American Literature

Barbara Christian in *Black Feminist Criticism: Perspectives on Black Women Writers* considers recurrent archetypal images of women in the most of American literary works such as the mother, prostitute and sorcerer are symptoms of racism. These archetypes aim to belittle a certain race to no "nonhuman level" because stereotype ideas contrast the "humaneness" (16). African-American women throughout their history suffered the most from such images since they are "triply marginalized" on account of race, class and gender (Purkayastha 1). These stereotypical patterns are seen by Elizabeth Schultz as what white culture, especially in literature, tends to convey about the black women. She states that they are paid the lowest wages; only recently they have been recognized in the political level; they are statistically "unwed mothers" and in the national myths they are designated by names which strip their identity (Schultz 2). Therefore, many black feminists like Schultz demonstrate that black women are conveyed in literature through narrowed scopes.

As a mark of inferior status, the white dominant culture contributed to impose those ideas on the black women. One of the most recurrent images is the mammy figure: an ideal of womanhood shaped by the white patriarchal culture like those found in Dilsey in Faulkner's *The Sound and Fury* (Purkayastha 1). France Beale gives further description about the mammy figures in literature "she had been forced to serve as the white woman's

maid and wet nurse for white offspring while her own children were more often starving and neglected" (92). Mammy, thus, was seen "physically unattractive" but generous. Her functions depended on the physical efforts; however, she is a harmless. She embodies servile and gross aspects of "femaleness and motherhood" that is not found in the "white lady hood" (Purkayastha 1). Mammy was also described in the fictions and novels by black literary men as God-like, superwoman, life giving, earth-mother figure who nurtures her children heroically. Nevertheless, others depicted her as "Eve" and "death dealing", whose role, however, as devotion and love giving mother is substituted by "self-sacrifice, self-denial and fierce mother-love" (2). The Mammy figure had different connotations that depend on the culture, either a superhero in the white literature or a self-denial mother in black literature.

Another predominant image was propagated throughout African-American literature is the prostitute image who is often depicted as sexually prowess, sexually hunger, libido and unmoral. She is supposed to enjoy the sexual experience with her master and therefore she is temptress and seductress. Moreover, she was seen as the antithesis of the purity of the white virgin womanhood. Images such as "Black Bitch" brought the black women more accusations of being morally disintegrated and corrupted (Purkayastha 2). Black feminists engage in imposing representation of colors like purity presented in whiteness while blackness suggests self-corruption and self-indulgence.

Because they are associated with the Voodoo religion, black women also were described as conjurers. For instance, some works deal with black women as being figures of an unknown world of spirits and practice of "Evil magic". The image of conjure woman portrays black women as powerful and fearsome. They were also seen as healers by the magical herbs, killers by potions of poison, spell casters or fortune tellers. These images condemned black women regardless their looks, skills or class (Purkayastha 2). As a result

of such images, the American society that was portrayed in the mainstream literature accepted females either to be ladies or colored women who are associated with magic.

In post-modernist works of fictions written by black women, the working black women is the prevailed image such as in Margaret Walker's *Jubilee* (1966), Ernest Gaines *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman* (1971), Ann Petry's *The Street* (1946), Louise Meriwether's *Daddy was a Number Runner* (1970), and Paule Marshall's *Browngirl and Brownstones* (1959). These works had female protagonist working as ranging from cook, house-keeper, gardener, weaver, midwife, and maid, who were physically uncomfortable jobs and emotionally exhausting as well. One of the examples of black working woman is Gwendolyn Brook's *Maud Martha* (1953) and Alice Childress' *Like One of the Family* (1956); the protagonists are portrayed "as domestics whose self-respect and sharp tongue prevent their degradation by their employers" (Purkayastha 3). These works illustrate that black women were portrayed artificially which led the black female authors to impose the archetypal assumptions adopted by the larger society about black women.

1.7. Conclusion

To conclude, like those common schools of any critical theory, feminist literary criticism does not trace its roots to a single author or ideology that established a unified theory. As an interdisciplinary theory characterized by broad range of disciplines, including history, sociology, psychology, and linguistics, feminist literary criticism combines a number of feminist approaches to literature, each embracing its own critical school or combination of methodologies. From this rich feminist realm, black feminism marks itself as one stream that advocates the rights of black women as they are apparently oppressed by gender, race and class.

Chapter Two: A Marxist-Feminist Analysis of Hurston's *Their Eyes were Watching*

God

2.1. Introduction

Their Eyes Were Watching God involves different feminist and Marxist dimensions regarding patriarchal domination, middle class vs. working class and capitalist ideas of some black bourgeoisies. The capitalist ideologies also dominate Janie's grandmother's mind, and compel her to teach the protagonist to submit and accept inferior gender status, thus asserting the argument that women as well as men contribute to the existing patriarchal order. Transmitting this system to her by her grandmother, Nanny, Janie experiences three marriages that make her realize that she can no longer live according to her grandmother's terms as a "commodity". Instead, she makes personal efforts to denounce capitalist and patriarchal obtrusions in order to live her life to the fullest. Janie's process of self-discovery brings to the surface a complexity that goes beyond the gender and class divide.

To overshadow how the other black women reinforce the existence of patriarchy through their capitalist ideas, one will explore Nanny's perspective. As a case like the rest of black women in the story, Nanny's capitalist views about marriage drive Janie to follow a path that opposes her dream of finding a man whom she loves. Then, one will explore Janie's social status in two exploitive marriages which deny her womanhood, besides to a patriarchal existence within her husbands' capitalist perspectives and dealings. Finally, by dismissing Nanny's ideas and patriarchal marriages, Janie gains a self-identity in her last union with Tea Cake. Through this latter, this chapter will explore how Janie changes from a commodity status in a capitalist realm to a woman with a self-realization and thus a self-identity.

2.2. Materialism and Submission: Case of Nanny before Janie's Marriage

Their Eyes Were Watching God begins to address two different perspectives in the first page, which are men's and women's: "Ships at a distance have every man's wish on board. For some they come in with the tide. For others they sail forever on the horizon"(1). Meaning their life and search for "the horizon" is determined by men whereas women are forced to follow this pattern. They must repress their dreams and never remember that they have them, instead their acts are associated with men's approval. Hurston wrote: "Women forget all those things they don't want to remember, and remember everything they don't want to forget. The dream is the truth. Then they act and do things accordingly" (1). The horizon is a metaphor of dreams which Janie seeks throughout the story to fulfill and a symbol of Janie's desire to search beyond herself. While Janie succeeds to confront patriarchal oppression; hence, shaping her identity through her personal achievement, her grandmother has limited dreams. Nanny's plan for her granddaughter is marrying a wealthy man who can provide Janie with all the material needs instead of marriage that is built on equal affection.

Janie's grandmother plays a major role in Janie's entire married life as she apparently participates in instilling patriarchal mentalities into Janie's young mind. Nanny arranges Janie's first marriage with Logan Killicks in a manner that supports the prevailing social and economic conditions. Nanny cannot comprehend the idea of love that Janie associates the marriage with, instead she mocks at her: "So you don't want to marry off decent like, do yuh? You just wants to hug and kiss and feel around with first one man and then another, huh?" (Hurston 13). She reasons that Janie needs to marry Logan, a local propertied farmer, not on the basis of love and affection but because of what Janie would gain from the arranged marriage. The need to protect her granddaughter prevails Nanny's judgement about love and thus marriage. In addition to that, what Nanny experienced of

slavery from white men and dominance from black men shaped those materialistic thoughts. She mentions to Janie that white man is the ruler of everything, and thus black is his servant and when white man orders, the black man supposedly follows, but instead "De nigger woman" does. Therefore, she is the mule of the world (14). In other words, as a black woman Nanny is well conscious that her social status is the lower among the other classes and races.

Nanny tries to teach that Janie should equally submit to the same fate as herself. She feels that it is socially imperative for Janie to dispel her romantic ideas about the marriage union and accept to provide labor and domestic duties that wife, according Nanny, must do. As a result, Janie will enjoy "big" social and economic protection from her marriage to Logan (Hurstons 23). Moreover, Nanny thinks that installing the sense of needing to marry man is only for a safety, and by marriage Janie protects herself: "it's protection". Nanny believes in what marriage could bring as a social privilege rather than marriage is a love union. Dominated by patriarchy and influenced by material things, Nanny considers economic wealth as the "prop" for Janie to "lean on" in a world that is ruled by men (15). While responding to Janie's dissatisfaction about her marriage to Logan, Nanny's language fails to address her concerns for Janie. Therefore, Nanny views marriage as a commercial venture. For instance, Nanny opposes Janie's ideals of loving husband, though poor, who may not even have a decent clothing. Pushing Janie to think of the benefits in getting married to Logan, Nanny alludes that Janie "can buy and sell" whatever she wants, and that she can "buy 'em and give 'em away" in a tone indicates Nanny's obsession with materialistic things (23). Her deprecating comments of the poor husband and encouraging ones about the wealthy old man, Lagan, illustrate the ideas of Nanny about the perfect marriage.

Despite Nanny's advice, Janie does not welcome the ideas of Nanny. Janie's angry tone explains how much she is dissatisfied with this marriage: "Ah ain't takin dat [Logan]'s land tuh heart "(Hurston 24). Janie's refusal constitutes an emotional protest that suggests her wish to dismantle the oppressive patriarchal with its capitalistic signs as she associates Logan with his property, "land", and not one of his qualities. Janie does not have in mind the material conditions; she rejects the capitalist patriarchal system altogether. This is also clear when she later complains to Nanny about her marital bed with Logan when they are married and that it is only her husband who does "all the wantin" (23). This one-sided "wantin," as Janie applies in her language explains the falling of Janie's platonic marriage. Nanny responds telling Janie that she should also turn around and desire her husband in a way that she dismisses Janie's angry pleas. Her reasoning is "a house bought and paid for and sixty acres of land" (23). Janie's attitude toward her new marriage is the primary attempts to dismiss this capitalist influence within her surroundings; however, it is not complete due to Janie's immaturity.

Nevertheless, such attitude proves that Janie's unconventional perspective of marriage does not meet with what her society values. For instance, in a patriarchal and capitalist setting, the women in her community, like Nanny, yearn for upper social status. The town's women judge Janie for her "faded shirt and muddy overalls" (Hurston 2). While women contribute in capitalism's firmness by their negative judgements and the materialistic considerations, Janie's perspective demonstrates that she is a different in her community.

As Nanny instructs Janie to accept that the only relation that she has with the man is that of property and property owner; such material considerations make Janie as an object of economic dealing. Henry Louis Gates agrees in *The Feminine "No!"* *Psychoanalysis and the New Canon* that it is, indeed, a "journey from object to subject."

Janie exists only as "an object" in a world dominated by such perspectives like Nanny's (McGowan 86). In addition to Gates' argument, Diane Sadoff also states that by such perspective Nanny encourages to oppress Janie and that is due to Nanny's history with "male dominance"(qtd.in Kafka 165). In spite of this, one must mention that Nanny's history involves sexual violations and economic exploitations since she was a slave to an upper middle class white family.

Considering how the slavery system functions for maintaining the sense of inferiority within black women, one can understand Nanny's yearning for a social upgrading and economic protection. In terms of social classes, Nanny, during her times in plantations as a slave, belonged to the bottom of social hierarchy. According to Angela Davis, the plantation masters institutionalized the use of slave women's bodies as breeding instruments to produce heirs for cheap labor (Davis 158). Likewise, Nanny's case is demonstrated by Bell Hooks when she writes about black women during the slavery era as being regarded maids, laborers or breeders (Hooks 23). The fact that even Janie's mother, Leafy, suffers sexual violation in the hands of her school teacher corroborates Nanny's notion of the black woman's role as "a spit cup" for "de men folks white or black" (Hurstun 20). As a result, Nanny's cooperation with the dominant white culture plays another key role in the oppression of her granddaughter.

Phillipa Kafka makes the argument that material considerations take precedence in Janie's arranged marriage with Logan in which Nanny seems to wait for "the best financial offer" in order to put Janie on sale in the marriage market (Kafka 165). Indeed, Nanny understands the marriage as a market and Janie as a commodity. To meet with the market's demand, women have to invest wisely their marriage making themselves a worthy product and saleable commodity. Moreover, in return of such efforts they will gain more economic protection. One must agree that in Janie's community, marriage is perceived as a

transaction which brings to the surface the sort of relations that is supposed to exist between men and women.

Like Kafka's argument, Sheila Jeffreys notes that patriarchal institutions like traditional marriage, e.g. the arrange marriage, contributes to the maintaining of traditional gender roles, preventing women from achieving social equality and reinforcing the idea that women exist to serve men. This latter contributes to increases the abuse of women. While such marriages reinforce the traditional paradigm of male-female interaction, they also preserve subordination of woman to the man in exchange of subsistence (44-45). The subsistence exchange evokes that the women are likely to be commodities which also recalls Janie's feelings of dissatisfaction with her grandmother when she feels like "in the market-place for sale" (Hurston 90). Indeed, the market-place does not only characterize Janie's first marriage, but it is also seen as the ways these black women, in Janie's society, tend to understand the constitution of marriage. Therefore, black women's ideas such as the obsession with material things, their judgements and marriage as a market-place blind them from perceiving how much they benefit the patriarchal system which oppresses them in return.

2.3. Materialism, Submission and Exploitation : Case of Logan Killicks and Joe

Starks

Nanny succeeded in persuading Janie that if she marries with Logan, she could find perfect love in material safety and wealth. Therefore, Janie submits to Nanny's desire of marriage with Logan. Nevertheless, it will not be too long for Janie to discover that her ideals about marriage are just disillusion of her own fantasies: "Janie's first dream was dead, so she became a woman" (Hurston 25). Everything begins to change when Logan informs Janie that she is "spoiled" and tells her that she must help him in his farm: "She'd

grab dat ax and sling chips lak uh man"(26). Logan exploits Janie with a prideful feeling and expects a total obedience. Logan reasons that by marrying her, he has done her a big "favor" in promoting her from her lower-class status (31). Therefore, Janie begins to recognize her position and class as she is forced to labor in Logan's farm. By looking for economic benefits, Logan imitates the white capitalist property owners, although property ownership is not in itself a racialized characteristic. Janie is assimilated into capitalism by working in his farm and thus she becomes a support of her husband's economic power.

Luce Irigaray writes that women become an embodiment in the structures of capitalism. In her analysis of works such as Marx's, Irigaray argues that through the use, consumption and circulation of women bodies, women cooperate for providing more conditions for making social life and culture, i.e. by labor force, productive children and domestic maintenance; they are nurturing the patriarchal and social order. Therefore, women are "reproduction of means of production" (Still 23). Close observation of Logan's investment schemes will reveal the way he assimilates Janie into his capitalist domain.

Integration into the bourgeois class structure reifies Janie into the object of Logan Killicks' possession. She becomes a living form of his capital and a commoditized woman who is caught in the circuit of male dominion. Janie's role in Logan's world is all use value. Women like Janie are two things at once "utilitarian objects and bearers". They function as "commodities" only to serve two forms: a natural form (breeding children) and/or a value form (such as laboring) "(Irigaray 175). Logan's perception of Janie as an additional labor force necessary for the creation of superabundant capital recalls the dual responsibilities of labor within which women always find themselves caught in capitalist societies. Guettel notes that in a capitalist society, "home "and "work demands" define the woman as privately owned and doubly exploited by the system (57). Due to the capitalist

utilitarianism advocated by Logan, Janie finds herself as a labor force and a domestic wife during her time with him.

Logan does not consider himself as equal to Janie in terms of economic competency. He is the master of Janie, and therefore he controls the means of production. In patriarchal families, when the means of production develops by the use of woman bodies. The man of family, like Logan, does not assure "... his reproductive power and had marked his products with his name". It is the function of private property and the patriarchal family where the social exploitation lays on one "class of producers, namely, women" (Irigaray 173). Logan capitalizes Janie's body and he consumes her. Their union is the site of investment that involves marital sex (giving birth to children) and Janie's body as a commodity. The male desire for power as expressed in capitalism manifests itself in "the possession of a woman" which "is certainly indispensable to man" as long as she represents a value of production (178). Janie, however, searches for equality with regards to the sharing of all chores, whether they occur in or outside the home. For instance, when Logan instructs her to chop and carry wood, she replies "Ah 'm just as stiff as you is stout. If you can't stand and not chop and tote wood Ah reckon you can stand not to git dinner" (Hurston 26). Logan rejects Janie's demand which illustrates Logan's capitalist understanding of women only as an implement of labor whose domestic life accompanies their exploitation in the labor market.

Examining the views of Marx and Engels about the liberation of women in *Marxism and the Women's Movement*, one finds that they argue that in capitalist societies the human relations are transformed into marketable commodities. Thus, women in this system become "instruments for production, reproduction and gratification" (Meyer 87). The commodity status, indeed, characterizes Janie's role in her marriage. Moreover, Marx states that by women assimilation to capitalist realm they develop the means of production

and the production of children. "Thus both production and procreation were put on a par making the relation between male and female" as a sign to those "between capitalist and proletarians" (Meyer 90). On the other hand, Engels gives a further understanding of the patriarchal dominance within the capitalist families as that found within Logan and Janie. Engels believes that the owner of productive means and surplus has the control over other members either class dominance in society or male dominance in home (Guettel 112). Engels views within such families the man who plays the role of the bourgeois; whereas the female is the proletariat and by their union individual families are just one economic unit that supports an overall capitalist society (Guettel 113). Knowing that proletariat members are the most likely rebellious class of any social order, Janie therefore resembles the oppressed criteria of that model and by running away from Logan is a clear attempt to dismiss the capitalist patriarchal exploitation.

Janie, then, escapes with Joe or Jody Starks. It is clearly that Janie does not love Joe because of ideas like love and "blooming trees" but for what he represents as a dreamer of the "horizon" like herself (Hurstons 17). When Joe reaches his dreams and becomes the Mayor of Eatonville his natures begin to change as a dominant husband. He asks for Janie to work in his store because he is too busy. Thus, the structure of property relations defines Janie's second marriage as well. However, by working in his store she is still a support to the property-owning husband within the bourgeois family structure. Both of Logan's farming business as "competitive capitalism" and Joe's investments as "monopoly capitalism" dominate and control Janie (McGowan 88). Being the merchant-class wife, Joe's monopoly investments offer Janie a social uplifting from the former status as a wife of landowner.

Joe's control of the town comes by organized monopoly such as the sole supplier of essential goods, post master, landlord and mayor (Hurstons 47-48). His former job that was

associated with banking in Atlanta where he worked for "for white folks"(47, 28).

Therefore, a man like Joe invests the institution of banking which plays a leading role in his monopoly. In monopoly capitalism, monopoly reigns as opposed to "the old type of capitalism, in which free competition predominated" (Lenin 39). This monopoly capitalist is identified by its shift from the anarchy of competition to more organized system which highlights the difference between Logan and Joe (McGowan 90). As known among monopoly capitalists, Jody does not want free competitions. He sends off Henry Pitts "to leave town" when he catches him with a wagon load of ribbon (Hurston 48). By this attempt, Jody suspects a conflict of interest that may later open competitions that go against his interests.

To a great degree, Joe's capital monopoly influences the manner in which he oppresses and controls Janie. He forces her to work in the store without paying her. Like Logan, Joe "does not dominate Janie by forcing her to labor but by turning her into a thing, transforming her into his commodity" ,she is the "clerks" in the shop (McGowan 89; Hurston 113). Joe "would hustle" Janie "off into the store to sell something" whenever he wants (Hurston 54). Joe forces her to work in the store and strips her of her womanhood in public by different ways. For instance, when Joe notices that Walter, a regular attendance in Joe's store, is brushing the back of his hand across Janie's hair without her awareness, Joe throws rage at Janie ordering her "to tie up her hair." Joe demonstrates that Janie's existence in store is only "for him to look at"(55). Because of Janie's sexual appeal, Joe thinks that he has a valuable asset in Janie that should be over checked. Barbara Christian argues by utilizing his patriarchal supremacy on Janie, he makes her "his showpiece, his property" (Christian 58).Therefore, Joe considers Janie nothing but a commodity that must be controlled and veiled.

The absolute and free ownership over certain land or property, the owner does not only have the power to "uncurtailed and unlimited, to possess the land" but the ability to alienate it (Marx 90). Meaning by possessing the power over his land and Janie, Joe possesses Janie's autonomous femininity which must serve as an agent of his masculinity. Janie's status as property alienates her from herself and from the social identification. Her alienation is a symptom of the inequities inherent to the bourgeois social structure. Her identity becomes as the spectacle that Joe uses to support his own social status and she becomes the simulacrum of herself in order to please him. This latter indicates that Janie seeks to reach for a more sensual and comfortable union with him, which means submitting herself under his control.

Janie voices her desire for more meaningful union when she says that she wants to "utilize" herself "all over" (Hurst 112). Janie's words serve as her call for a more sensually fulfilling relationship with Jody. However, it might also be interpreted as Janie's quest to utilize herself away from male dominance in search of her full identity and independence. To conclude, Janie's second marriage is characterized as "the unconditional supremacy of men over the female sex," instead of an equitable union (Engels 196). Being transformed into a property, Janie only manages to release herself from chattel-hood after Joe's death.

2.4. Janie's Final Journey to Self-fulfillment: Case of Tea Cake

After Joe's death, Janie marries a cheerful young man, Tea Cake, who has different authentic personalities. He is around twenty years old with no property. Janie likes finding new air in her life since Tea Cake gives her new experiences which she never experienced before: "Tea Cake and Janie gone hunting. Tea Cake and Janie gone fishing. Tea Cake and Janie gone to Orlando to the movies. Tea Cake and Janie gone to a dance. Tea Cake

making flower "(Hurstons 110). Unlike Janie's previous husbands, Tea Cake does not control Janie or he treats her as his property. Barbara Johnson states that Janie's liberation from the oppressed status, image, and property during her marriage with Tea Cake is "one of the most beautiful and convincing love stories in any literature" (McGowan 86). Tea Cake gives her freedom and equality, and with the way he treats her, she can fulfill the desire of love.

Tea Cake is no capitalist bourgeois. His affection for Janie is merely authentic; moreover, he has little to give her in the realm of materials. His status belongs to proletarian class. Janie's marriage to Tea Cake embodies a negation of the "terms of material relationship of marriage ordained by Nanny and realized by Logan Killicks and Joe Starks" (Gates 191). On one hand, Tea Cake works in the fields, speaks the language of his fellow field-workers, and acclimates to the black proletariat. On the other hand and according to Marx's and Engels' argument, women in capitalist bourgeois' families are the proletariat of domestic dominance (Meyer 90; Guettel 113). Therefore, Janie in her new family plays the role of the proletariat member in which she is Tea Cake's equal in work and performance.

Janie's emergence is one of "objectivity into subjectivity" and with Tea Cake Janie emerges to "fully as a subject" (McGowan 87). This transmission is due to the consciousness of his class which affirms the solidarity between him and Janie. As a result, it bolsters Janie's pursuit of self-realization. Tea Cake has removed from himself the symptoms of bourgeois ideology which obscure the processes of self-recognition and authentic truth: "He could be a bee to a blossom – a pear tree blossom in the spring. He seemed to be crushing scent out of the word with his footsteps" (Hurstons 65). Therefore, Tea Cake allows Janie to free herself from the bourgeois superstructure. That helps Janie to get rid of the anxiety of class and gender which effaces her whole self by particular

labor. Under the rule of her other husbands Janie became the incarnation of the labor-form. However, alongside Tea Cake she beholds the unity of the products of her self-love and thereafter the products of her affection towards Tea Cake.

Janie's final recognition of class consciousness is a major reason of her self-realization. One comes to know that before marrying Tea Cake, Janie carefully considers her suitors' proposals in an attempt to avoid, once again, marrying a bourgeois. This attempt is calculated to denounce bourgeois status when Janie refuses middle class suitors who approach her for her hand in marriage after Joe's death. For example, Janie refuses the "undertaker up at Sanford" who according to Pheoby, Janie's friend, has "a lovely place to take her to—already furnished. Better 'n her house Joe left her" (Hurstun 111). With a consciousness about her class, Janie attempts to denounce any capitalist bourgeois involvement in her life and by choosing Tea Cake she affirms it.

As the novel ends the reader beholds a full woman who is not affected by the surrounding mainstream perspective about marital considerations. Her journey develops her self-consciousness that immunizes her from getting exploited once again, i.e. being considered as commodity once married to a bourgeois. Rather, Janie feels a sense of affinity for the poor black husband. The poverty to which she becomes accustomed fulfills her far more than did her bourgeois lifestyles of her former husbands. Within her poverty and within the work ethic thereby engendered she can experience herself with freewill. Therefore, her journey is that of reification transformation.

Reification is the idea of associating something abstract like happiness as a material thing to make it easier to understand. This implies that objects are transformed into subjects and subjects are turned into objects. However, reification in Marxist theory is "linked to people's alienation from work and their treatment as objects of manipulation rather than as human beings" (Gordon par 1). After dealing with Marx's manifestations, the

theory was advocated by György Lukács in which he states that "reification requires that a society should learn to satisfy all its needs in terms of commodity exchange". He asserts that the human relationships became second to the needs of the marketplace in the modern capitalist societies (91). By the shift Janie endures from a product to a person, her class consciousness becomes a non-dynamic one in which it no longer alters from one class to another. Because of the bourgeois process of "self-objectification" which transforms the "human function into a commodity" and which highlights the dehumanizing "function of the commodity relation", Janie's new life with poverty becomes humanized, whole, and happy (Lukacs 92). The reconciliation between Janie and Tea Cake occurs because both recognize themselves in one aspect of the other. Due to Tea Cake's social class, Janie is not a thing for trade in an economy beyond her control. She is an agent of her emancipation, femininity and an autonomous self. Her self-fulfillment is not an incarnation of labor or of mercantilism, but a unified personality that possesses the control over every feminine faculty, heretofore absenting oneself from the male pursuit of capital and the capitalist dominant ideas such as Nanny's.

2.5. Conclusion

Janie's quest involves circulating ideas like the women's materialistic yearning for social upgrading and the men's exploitations to women as their commodities. Therefore, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, indeed, illustrates the Marxist views that capitalism destroys social bonds in favor of the commodities' value. Only when Janie removes herself from the capitalist superstructure, she is allowed to pursue an identity of her own accord. She denies the materialistic disdain that is inherited to the greed of property within the perspective of the women in her society. As Janie fails to find that identity in her first and second marriage, she finally finds a shelter within the company of Tea Cake, her third

husband. Thus, Janie revives once again the ideas of the horizon with a regard of better and thicker understandings since she is a full and mature woman. Even though Tea Cake holds no property and high social rank, but he resembles the key to Janie's self-fulfillment.

Chapter Three: An Archetypal-Feminist Analysis of Hurston's *Their Eyes were Watching God*

3.1. Introduction

Depending on her Voodoo's studies in Haiti, Hurston made sure to invest these findings from that expedition in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. As a result, Janie Crawford's journey explores several archetypal themes which are associated with the background of black folk. Whether within their languages or religious themes, Hurston rejuvenates the marginalized African and Haitian Voodoo culture in her story. Most importantly, Janie's story brings into the surface that mixture of related aspects between the African American background and black women's struggle. However, by including the Voodoo background, Hurston's book does not only hint at how black women background could inform their self-knowledge, but it also shelters them from the prevailing patriarchal dominance and reinforces their connection with one another. Therefore, the Voodoo culture offers these women an alternate path to self-autonomy and self-identity.

This chapter views the Voodoo's significance as a major background for black women. For that, one has to discuss a number of archetypal feminine images that operate as mythical allusions in the story and which make Janie seen as an embodiment of the feminine quester. Finally, by drawing on Joseph Campbell's account of the archetypal hero's journey, one has to explore Janie's quest for a self-fulfillment throughout her journey, challenging the society' stereotypes which do not allow women like Janie to exist naturally and freely.

3.2. The Voodoo's Background in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

According to Brenda R. Smith, Voodoo originated from African and European mystic dogmas and religious beliefs. Smith notes that the Voodoo's devotees attend to "strive for personal and communal power by achieving harmony with their respective individual natures and with the world in which they live" (par 3). Smith illustrates his definition about the Voodoo by the anthropologist Alfred Métraux's statement in which he argues that Voodoo has no specific accepted essences. It is simply that Voodoo is a syncretistic religion which has "no national church, no association of priesthood, no written dogma, no code, no missionization" (qtd.in Smith par 3). Voodoo is considered as a taboo and sinful practice within many cultures due to the conjuring, animal sacrifices, zombies, dolls, dances and the sounds of drums. However, Wade Davis, who studied the Voodoo of the Haiti, defines Voodoo as that kind of "dark mystical force" which makes it a "legitimate religion" (Handwerk par1). Smith also claims that Voodoo is accepted as a religion which can also integrate other new forms of "symbolic materials" to cope with the cultural changes in the society and politics as adaptability (Smith par 3). Regardless the reputation that Voodoo has as a practice of dark magic and witchery; however, it is considered as a legitimate religion in many places in the world especially in some parts in South America and Africa.

One must know that, as a diverse and complex religion, Voodoo has different sects which are mostly related to the place where it is practiced. Many critics like Alain Locke argue that Voodoo which is used in Hurston's novel is, indeed, a "folklorification" that is inspired from the Haitian Vodou (Cameron par2). The Haitian Vodou or Voodoo; however, goes beyond the spiritual muse because many habitants consider it as a lifestyle. For instance, the Haitians claim that if the Christian goes to church to connect with God, the "vodounist dances in the hounfour to become God" (Handwerk par 5). Moreover, Gordon

in *The Book of Vodou*, points out that the Haitian Voodoo/Vodou believers are called Vodouists who consider "Bondye", which means "good God", as an unknowable supreme creator. Vodouists do not directly worship Bondye because Bondye does not run the human affairs; therefore, Vodouists worship spirits that are called "Loa"(48). This latter has a significant function in interpreting Hurston's use of the Voodoo.

Métraux again argues that the fact that Voodoo lacks the standardized social frame or one ideological body does not mean that Voodoo also lacks the foundations of beliefs (qtd.in Smith 5). Taking into consideration that Loa is the central of Voodoo, one would explain why Vodouists worship such deities by addressing Smith's claim. The Loa is a kind of spiritual agencies which "personify the experiences, hopes, and aspirations of their devotees or followers and upon whom followers call for the remedy of ills, the satisfaction of needs, and for hope and survival" (par 5). Smith adds, by conjuring these spirits the devotees believe that they would speak to the Loa, which possesses the person or the Loa's servant. Loa can act and speak through that person in a way that Loa details the circumstances of what s/he is summoned for (par 5). In other words, the Haitian Voodoo is more than some set of mythical beliefs; rather, it is a religion with deep institutions and foundations, with its worshiping devotee and with its own divine principles.

Hurston writes in her anthropological account *Tell My Horse* that there are two types of Voodoo Loa in which the Rada Loa are the high and pure ones, whereas the Petro Loa are malicious and violent. When the Petro is summoned for a service there must be a promise to swear oneself to the petro; otherwise, it will take revenge (Smith par 5). By explaining these two aspects of Loa, one will see that Hurston's use of Voodoo merely depends on their embodiments in the *Their Eyes were Watching God*.

3.3. The Archetypal Feminine Images in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

Hurston's novel includes different incarnations of archetypes that may reveal her feminist tendency. As the story tells, there are various indications of Voodoo imageries; however, one will only focus on the feminine images that mark Janie as an archetypal hero/heroine. Therefore, these archetypes are the image of the Voodoo's Goddesses and Gods such as Erzulie Freda, Erzulie Danto and Legda Loa.

The first of these archetypes is the allusion of "Erzulie Freda". Janie is portrayed as the resemblance of "Erzulie Freda", or Ezili Freda, who is "the Rada Loa of love, beauty and elegance." Erzulie Freda is sought after as a desirable lover that all men want; therefore, she is considered the rival of the women in Haiti (Smith par 16). Métraux describes Freda, the goddess of love, as "a personification of feminine grace and beauty. She has all the characteristics of a pretty mulatto: she is coquettish, sensual, pleasure-loving and extravagant" (Métraux 110). By drawing a comparison, Janie is described as a beautiful black woman who is desired by other men even when she is married. The Narrator reveals that when the men notice her in the field where she works, they become attracted to her charms, black hair and sexuality (Hurston 2). As a result, the other women would express their envy and jealousy.

Métraux's descriptions of Erzulie Freda match Janie's appearance and attitude when he says Freda is "full glory of her seductiveness, with hair unbound to make her look like a long haired half-caste" (qtd.in Lamothe 165). Hurston writes about Janie in *Tell My Horse* "a beautiful woman of lush appearance firm, full breasts and other perfect female attributes" (384). Janie's sexual appeal makes the other women jealous. For instance, when Pheoby compliments Janie, she says "Gal, you sho looks good. You looks like youse yo' own daughter...Even wid dem overhalls on, you shows yo' womanhood" (Hurston 4). For a woman who is at the age of forty, Janie's appearance is considered attractive that even

made her friend show envy towards her. However, because Janie is a product of rape by a white teacher, she resembles many white features such as the light brown skin and the straight. Her physical appearance makes her the target of observation by other black women. Janie says that the kids would push her away and would tell her "not to be takin' on over [her] looks" (9). This shows that Janie was even envied for her looks when she was younger.

Some other similarities between Ferda and Janie are the attempts to search for a potential husband. If Ferda desires a certain man, she can make him her husband. That parallels the quest of searching for a man that Janie could love. In addition to that, Ferda is associated with blue color like Janie's favorite color (Lamothe 165). Thus, Janie's attractiveness and attitude bring about the archetypal image of Erzulie Freda and marks her as an object of sexual desire.

Hurston makes a well use of another archetypal image as well. While Freda intends to seduce men, Janie is more a reserved character. Therefore, the image that embodies the other Janie's qualities is the image of Erzulie Danto, the Petro Loa. Like Janie, Danto is a hardworking and an "industrious" country girl. She overbears aggressive. She wears "the blue denim" of humble women in Haiti (Smith par 17). Moreover, Danto is an unconventional Petro Loa spirit who is described as an independent woman. Furthermore, Danto has a dark black skin. Although she belongs to the working-class, like Janie, she is not proud of working as McCarthy Brown informs (qtd.in Lamothe 168). Another similarity could be Danto's and Janie's association with the dark color. Unlike Mrs. Tuner, the light skinned woman who "can't stand black niggers", Janie does not detest them (Hurston 141). Janie finds a love interest with Tea Cake, a dark skinned man. Lamothe continues to argue that Dano's dark skin parallels the blackness of the muck that is found in people whom Janie finds self-fulfillment (186). Janie's admiration for blackness draws

forth Danto's image which characterizes Janie's connections with black people in her community.

As a Petro Loa, Danto possesses the power of destruction and power to take revenge whenever she feels unpleasant. One can link this destructive power to the storm's symbol and its symptom in the story. The narrator describes the storm's destruction as a monster that preyed upon the habitants: "havoc was there with her mouth wide open" (Hurston 167). After the hurricane, Janie and Tea Cake suffered the after effects of such natural yet destructive phenomenon losing many things along such as the autonomy and the peace they had. The narrator indicates that the storm "had raged among houses and men. Tea Cake and Janie stood on the edge of things and looked over the desolation"(167). The destruction brings into the surface Danto's displeasure that is presented by her chauvinism for the blackness and objection for the racial and cultural supremacy of the whites (Lamothe 168). This is further clear, when African Americans in the muck community ignored the signs given to them that the "Hurricane [is] coming" (155 Hurston). Yet, they prefer to wait for the whites because "De white folks ain't gone nowhere. Dey oughts know if it's dangerous"(156). By submitting their fate to the whites and acting inferior at the expense of their own pride, this incident brings their downfall and several deaths. Lamothe states that Danto's revenge is indeed the consequences of worshipping the whiteness (168). For instance, one of the consequences is the death of Tea Cake shortly after the storm's incident by a bite from a rabid dog.

The image of Legda Loa is another symbolic significance in the story. He is the gatekeeper of the crossroad between the heaven and earth, the spiritual and material worlds and who provides "the way to all things" (Smith par19; Lamothe 164; Tell My Horse 393). The "Vodouisant" uses him as a bridge to the spiritual world of the Loa (Smith par 19). Janie searches "as much of the world as she could from the top of the front steps and then

[goes] on down to the front gate and [leans] over to gaze up and down the road" (Hurstun 11). Walking down to the gate symbolizes a crossroad and dazing up and down to the road evokes the embodiment of Legda since he is the gatekeeper. According to Hurstun in *Tell my Horse*, Legda also symbolizes the opportunity (115). When Janie is at the gate "looking, waiting, breathing short with impatience" and "waiting for the world to be made", her musing meditation brings about the waiting for that opportunity to be made (Hurstun 11). Therefore, it could be said that Janie embraces this feature of Legda which is the pursuit of opportunity for making better choices in one's life.

As Janie constantly ponders about the pear tree and the horizon, both indicate Legda's incarnation in the story. Smith writes that Legda is "the loa of ideal dreams, hopes and aspirations" (Smith par19). Janie's dreams of loving man is seen in the story as the road for a self-fulfillment; however, that dream dies when she is married with Logan: "Janie's first dream was dead, so she became a woman" (Hurstun 25). She is more depressed when she is with Joe Starks: "it never was the flesh and blood figure of her dreams" (72). It was only with Tea Cake that Janie could express her dreams freely.

3.4. A Self-fulfillment through the Archetypal Journey

Janie's journey does not only resemble the quest for more self-formation, but it also evokes the notion of the mythical journey. It was for Joseph Campbell, the mythologist, to shed light specifically on the archetypal journey of the hero in literature. Campbell studied well other noted mythologists such as Carl G. Jung and Northrop Frye, besides to Freud's psychoanalysis (Campbell 392). By drawing on Campbell's account of the archetypal hero's journey in his famous book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* and exploring the Voodoo's significance in the story, Hurstun's Janie is indeed the archetypal quester who completed the journey for self-actualization. According to Michael E. Salla in *The Hero's*

Journey Toward a Second American Century, Campbell's archetypal hero's journey involves twelve stages through which the hero will gain a self-discovery and psychological development (2). These stages are the ordinary world, the call to adventure, the refusal of the call, meeting with the mentor, crossing the threshold, "tests, allies and enemies", approach, the ordeal, the reward, the road back, the resurrection and finally the return with the elixir (Vogler 2-12 par). By fulfilling her own quest, Janie affirms that in order for black women to achieve a maturity and a feminine voice in a world surrounded by patriarchy, they have to break out from the stereotypes of gender.

Before engaging in her adventure for the horizon and the pear tree, Janie's maturity is deactivated at first because of the setting where she lives. Christopher Vogler argues that the hero in the ordinary world feels "uneasy, uncomfortable or unaware". Furthermore, the audience can relate to the situation or the dilemma of the archetypal quester. For that, "the hero is shown against a background of environment, heredity, and personal history" (Voglerpar 2). Janie is forced to marry Logan out of financial purposes rather than Janie's desire for a loving husband. She says to Nanny that "[I] don't love [Logan] at all" (Hurston 15). Her dilemma is the inability to find a love interest that can meet with her community's perspective about the black women as "de mule uh de world"(Hurston 14). Nanny and the society play the role of the external forces, driving Janie to comply with conventional roles that restrict black women. Janie's initial ideas of the horizon and pear tree are thus deprecated. In other words, the road for her self-fulfillment that symbolizes "Legda Loa" was interrupted by the society pressure.

Smith points out that Nanny's world is the "real or ordinary world" which contracts Janie's fantasies (par 20).The town, where they live, contributes to contaminate Nanny's dreams as well. There is a hint in the story when she dreams about a place far in the oceans "where de black man is in power" (Hurston 14). Lamothe believes that Nanny alludes to

Haiti, where there are signs of black autonomy. As a result, she imagines that black women are not the mule of the world within such allusions (162). However, after finding out that Janie kisses a boy, Nanny thinks that Janie is "a woman" who must get married (Hurston 15). Due to Nanny's history with slavery and the sexual abuses, she transforms her dreams into the concerns about Janie's material stability and social status. Therefore, by leaving her dreams aside, she embodies the society's conventions which portray black women as "work-ox and a brood-sow "(15). By marrying Logan, Janie begins a new chapter in her life into the journey.

However, Smith indicates that the inability to express her desire marks out the refusal of "the call to adventure" as she takes a path of her Nanny's plan (par 21). Janie's time with Logan makes her realize that "marriage [does] not make love" (Hurston 25). Therefore, "she becomes a [full] woman" (24). Being treated as the mule with Logan, Janie leaves him for a second husband who is supposed to revive the ideas of "horizon" (32). Nevertheless, Janie does not see in him the "blooming trees"(28). The fact that he speaks for the horizon, change and chance renews Janie's dreams for a romantic interest and fulfillment life. Thus, Janie is attracted to his "big voice" white-like attitude and stylish image (28; 48; 26). Lamothe believes that Joe represents "the false gods", i.e. the Christian God, by his political and economic authority. Furthermore, he is the primary challenger of Erzulie, the goddess of Haitian Voodoo (165). Being associated with "the other gods", Joe is not only portrayed as the oppressor of Janie, but he is the enemy of the Voodoo gods.

When she is with Joe, Janie stands for the image of Erzulie Freda, who is known for admiring "sweetened drinks and sweet food"(Smith par 23). Janie, on the other hand, drinks sweetened water (Hurston 27). Smith goes further to state that Joe and Janie relationship is more like the Haitian male devotees with Erzulie Freda. She is Freda, who

does not work and who is kept at home as menial labor (par 23). Eventually, by gaining material and social privileges, Janie's status reminds the reader of Nanny's initial plans.

Through a series of struggles with Joe in which Janie "wasn't petal-open" (Hurstons 71), Janie finally voices her opinion in public, taking back some of her power. She defends her womanhood from the insults of Joe about her age saying "Talkin' 'bout me lookin' old! When you pull down yo' britches, you look lak de change of life" (74-75). That moment marks the beginning of Janie's stance for herself. Consequently, she is forced to wear head rag inside the store later in a way that illustrates Joe's attempt to control Janie's femininity (55). This incident indicates the incarnation of the Petro Loa, Erzulie Danto who occasionally wears "moshwa, or head scarf" (Smith par 26). Smith also informs that Danto is the example of fearsome woman who grants her female devotee the power to overcome the tribulations which parallel Janie's defensive attitude (par 26). As a result, she and Joe are estranged. This causes Joe more psychological instability and therefore an illness that brings an end to Joe's life.

As Joe's death marks the beginning of another chapter in Janie's own journey, it also marks Janie's final rejection to Nanny's vision, her society's conventions and Joe's dominance which all limit her growth. On the other hand, Joe's death also brings about Janie's fully acceptance to "Call to Adventure" as Smith illustrates and because she is a quester, now she can be an active of her own agency (par 31). Janie meets a young man, Tea Cake, who is the first man to allow her to "play checkers" with him (Hurstons 96). Immediately, Janie becomes interested in him and his qualities.

Tea Cake and Janie relationship combines a number of Voodoo archetypes and the Loa allusions. Lamothe believes the fact that Tea Cake is seen as a man with "a sweet sounding name" evokes Janie's desire for "things sweet" which characterizes the image of Erzulie Ferda (166). Smith confirms that the attribution of Freda is seen when Janie begins

wearing the color blue, Erzulie's color, because Tea Cake admires Janie's blue dress (par 34). Tea Cake's last name is "Woods", a symbolism that qualifies him to the pear tree and therefore he attributes to the image of Legba Loa. Furthermore, Janie sees Tea Cake as "the son of Evening Sun" that parallels the descriptions of Legba as "the Orient, the East, the sun and the place the sun rises" (qtd.in Smith par 33). Janie is the embodiment of Erzulie Freda, Tea Cake black skin is the reminder of Erzulie Danto, and their union is the inspiration of Erzulie Legba. Therefore, their relation is embellished by the melding of three different aspects of Loa.

Tea Cake is "the mentor" in Janie's quest since he teaches her how to "fish", to "hunt", to "drive", and to do other activities that she has never done with her previous husbands (Hurstons 111). The mentor is the one who gives the quester the sense of guidance that assists her/him throughout the journey, and therefore, the quester gains a source of courage and wisdom (Voglerpar 5). With Tea Cake, Janie learns how to express her voice and forgets about Nanny's vision and the society's pressure. For that matter, Janie enters a new chapter or a "new world" of freedom and away from Nanny's ordinary world. Smith argues that Tea Cake, as a role of Legba, is the gatekeeper that facilitates Janie's "crossing of threshold" (par 35). Crossing the Threshold is when the quester leaves "the ordinary world" to enter a "new region with unfamiliar rules and values "(Vogler par 6). Tea Cake suggests leaving Eatonville when he says: "We goin' on de muck"(Hurstons 128). The new world here is "the muck" where Janie and Tea Cake will encounter many ethnic groups with new set of values.

In the muck, Janie develops a sense of social bonds with the community there in a way that she has never felt before in her entire life. She knows more about the natures of people, their values and codes. Therefore, as a quester, she encounters more "allies" and avoids people like Joe as "enemies ". They are "dancing, fighting, singing, crying,

laughing, winning and losing love every hour. Work all day for money and fight all night for love (Hurstons 131). She is integrated to these folks' daily life and becomes an accepted participant in the community. She becomes a working class that is equals to Tea Cake's status, bringing back another image of "figuration of Erzulie Freda's alter ego" (Smith par 36). This stage in Janie's story demonstrates that black women can achieve more agency and autonomy, not only with one another but also with their men.

Janie's "approach" is associating the vision of the pear tree and horizon with her marriage to Tea Cake in order to have union that satisfies her dreams. She tells her friend Pheoby before she and Tea Cake leave Eatonville: "Ah wants to utilize mahself all over" (Hurstons 107). It indicates that Janie has to utilize the vision of Legba again as Janie's primarily approach to find a fulfilling life with Tea Cake.

However, the archetypal quester must endure trials and "tests" along one's journey. By bringing the image of Erzulie Freda, Smith explains that Freda, who is everything good about love, is also everything "unattainable or painful"(par 38). Derek Collins argues that although Erzulie Freda guarantees a full love to her devotee; however, she cannot be truly satisfied (qtd.in smith par 38). This appears when Mrs. Turner plans to introduce Janie to her brother. Tea Cake slaps Janie when he knows about it to show Mrs. Turner "who is the boss" (Hurstons 148). This test in Janie's journey is significant because Janie learns that there are other aspects of self-realization, autonomy and independence that she cannot have with Tea Cake. Although Tea Cake facilitates her self-journey, but the integral aspects of Janie's identity and treasure of womanhood are still lacking.

When they survive the hurricane, Janie enters another stage which is "the ordeal of her journey." The ordeal of the quest is when the quester faces his or her greater fear or confronts death that brings a new life (Vogler par 10). After the hurricane, Tea Cake gets a deadly bite from a rabid dog. The incident determines the end of their union. The narrator

narrates that Janie searches for a divine miracle up in the sky which would save her husband like "a star in the daytime", "sun to shout" or even "a mutter of thunder". While she is worried about Tea Cake's health she condemns God saying: "He [God] knew everything. Did He mean to do this thing to Tea Cake and her?" (Hurston 178). These moments of Janie's hopeless grief illustrate that how much she cares for Tea Cake: "Janie hoped he was asleep. He wasn't" (Hurston 178). Therefore, his death marks her ordeal of journey.

After the "Ordeal of Journey", the quester must return to his or her ordinary world with the reward that s/he gained in new world. One learns that after Tea Cake's death Janie returns to Eatonville. However, Janie takes some seeds in her "Road back" to Eatonville as a remembrance. She says that "The seeds reminded Janie of Tea Cake more than anything else because he was always planting things" (191). Tea Cake, who symbolizes the vision of the pear trees and the incarnation of Legba Loa, is remembered through seeds. The seeds symbolize two concepts in the remaining story of Janie. The first concept which can be argued is that the seeds symbolize the "new life" of the creation and with that Tea Cake's identification of horizon did not die, rather it was "Resurrected". As the starting point of birth, seeds are also part of the cycle of nature as vivid and tiny units of larger trees. However, for the second concept, Smith continues to argue that the seeds are an indication of the fact that Janie has gained "the reward" as her share of the ordeal. Thus, seeds are the memories, imagination, and celebration of the power throughout her journey (par 47). Finally, this reward foreshadows the final stage to complete her quest.

Janie fulfills her journey when she goes back to Eatonville, the ordinary world. Janie, a mature woman, returns with the elixir that she gained during her time with Tea Cake. When the quester returns to his or her ordinary world, s/he then has the treasure that one has gained as a reward once the hero has been transformed (Vogler par 13). Moreover,

the elixir is the embodiment of "the illuminated knowledge of love, self and community". She returns a "complete woman" that incorporates the aspects of black culture (Smith par 48). Janie does not want to marry again or to be endowed with another vision of platonic romance as her initial quest. By her own efforts, she breaks the tights that restrict black women, social stereotypes and conventions that they are the "mule of society" (Hurstun 14). Her realization of her new self makes her as a woman who has the power of "livin' fuh [herself]" and the power of "God" (192). Although she still accumulates wealth from her husband Joe and higher social status, but her biggest achievement is shaping a full identity that meets her ideas in such society.

Furthermore, her return shows how the black folk culture contributes to the awareness of Janie as a quester throughout the journey. Indeed, the black culture that is embodied in the Voodoo archetypes shields Janie's identity from concealment as what happened to Nanny's. Commenting on her return, Smith continues to write that the dual aspects of Loa Erzulie in the Voodoo religion make Janie the substantiation of " the sensuality, grace, beauty and capacity for unconditional love" that Erzulie Freda is known for .On the other hand, she is "the industriousness perseverance, fierce loyalty, capacity for self-expression and autonomy" of Erzulie Danto" (par 48). Leslie Desmangles notes that the myths are effective implements which transcend our profane limitation of existence to other comprehensible notions (61). Janie's archetypal journey demonstrates that the mythic tales establish a potential means for identity that already existed within black women culture. The fact that Janie retells her account of that journey to her friend Pheoby identifies the process of the tale. Lamothe views that Janie's attempt to commemorate her story with Pheoby is a ritualization of the women's stories that would develop their own experiences (171). Smith also asserts that the significance of storytelling is to generate "the empowerment of women" within their communities. As an example, Janie's inner

development enlightens the collective consciousness of these women (par 50). Therefore, Janie's story is that reminder which functions as a myth for her own folks and which would inspire black women to identify themselves within background.

4.5. Conclusion

The mythical embodiments in Hurston's story make the reader grasp Janie's story as a story of survival, self-discovery and then self-fulfillment. It transcends Janie's search for a romance beyond the ordinary love stories for what it embraces of the African backgrounds, one's struggle and social stereotypes of women as objects, mules and breeders.

Furthermore, Janie's quest for obtaining an identity in her strict society is also a call that the mystic Voodoo and its symbolism could be the alternative path to selfhood for black women. In short, Janie embodies the image of the feminine heroic quester that seeks to gain the image of black womanhood, self-expression, and freedom from men's dominance which resonates for African American women and ultimately for African American culture.

Chapter Four: A Psychoanalytical-Feminist Analysis of Hurston's *Their Eyes were Watching God*

4.1. Introduction

Janie's psychological state is shaped by certain circumstances infused by her patriarchal settings: her family's history and especially her husband Joe. Therefore, Freud's theory of compulsive repetition as an effort to master trauma is what this chapter tends to explore. Knowing that these patriarchal driving factors are what lead Janie to revolt against Joe. Thus, the idea that regards Freud's theory of compulsive repetition in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* is the most fitting analytic application concerning her search for a feminine identity. For that, this chapter focuses on Janie's "unexpressed" disappointment and anger towards her paternal figures, Janie's repetitions of experience that her grandmother endured, and her psychological development from a passive woman to an expressive one. Finally, in order to have a feminine identity Janie has to confront patriarchy by liberating herself from Joe's dominance and marrying Tea Cake.

4.2. Trauma

The word "trauma" is originated from the Greek heritage to refer to the verb "to wound". It was not until 1980 that the American Psychiatric Association finally recognized the phenomenon of trauma, as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) referring to the symptoms of war shell shock, combat stress, delayed stress syndrome, and traumatic neurosis, and to responses to the human catastrophes (Caruth 3). However, according to the fourth edition of The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, trauma is defined as an event in which both of the following were present: firstly, the person experiences, witnesses, or is confronted with an event or events that involved actual or threatened death or serious injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of self or others; secondly, the person's response involves intense fear, helplessness, or horror (463). Thus,

it could be seen that trauma does not only involve some type of danger, but it is also characterized by a sense of powerlessness for the individual. That powerlessness causes a wound to the individual's psyche.

4.3. Repetition Compulsion

The term “repetition compulsion” was coined by Freud in his famous essay *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* to suggest a psychological phenomenon in which the traumatized person repeats a traumatic event that can be painful over and over again as an attempt to remember that traumatic incident. Freud asserts that the victim of repetition compulsion does not remember anything of what he has forgotten and repressed; eventually s/he unconsciously acts it out without knowing that he/she is repeating it (qtd.in Malcolm 28) Moreover, Freud mentions that trauma occurs from the repetition of very painful event and happens to someone who is not psychologically prepared for such an event, and therefore the victim is not able mentally, emotionally or psychically to grasp any knowledge of it. As a result of this inability, the trauma victim represses memories of the event itself or aspects associated with the event in the unconscious. However, Freud believes that repressed material does not remain completely forgotten and unexpressed. He states that the unconscious "has no other endeavor than to break through the pressure weighing down on it and force its way either to consciousness or to a discharge through some real action" (Strachey13). Freud notes that these actions are performed by the traumatized person unconsciously as s/he repeats the traumatic event or its aspects over and over again. Freud comments on these actions as painful experience that the victim drives oneself to the same painful experiences without consciously comprehends what s/he is doing and why (13). Therefore, the conscious part of the victim's psyche is passive and the unconscious one is active.

Freud demonstrates his account of the repetition compulsion by giving an example of a child that plays with a toy. When observing the child who was throwing his favorite toy from his crib, Freud reports that the child becomes upset at the loss of his mother. Therefore, the child reels the toy back in, to repeat this action over again. Freud calls that observation "fort/da" and theorizes that the child, whose mother has gone away, throws the toy as an attempt of protest (Strachey13). "Freud interpreted this game as the child's effort to master unpleasurable experience (specifically, the departure of his mother, to whom he was especially attached)" (Felluga par 4). However, the child expresses joy when pulling the toy back. Ruth White explains that the child attempts to master the "sensation of loss", by using the toy as a "surrogate for his mother" (par 2). In other words, the child throws the toy away to reenact the painful event of his mother's departure and pulls it back as the way to protest.

In the Fort/Da game, the painful event is repeated but with a change in its ending that yields some sense of satisfaction for the trauma victim. In other words, to break out the trauma, the victim must gain a sense of control in changing how the experience ends (Strachey14). Greg Johanson believes that "when the patient's repressed impulses are finally brought into consciousness, he will be convinced by the authority of his own experience"(par 28). Thus, the traumatized becomes now in an active rather than a passive and gains a sense of revenge through enacting aggression (Strachey15). In order for Janie to break out her unconscious traumatized status, she must have a control how she ends her painful experiences with her abusive husband Joe Starks. Through acts of aggression against Joe, she fulfills unconscious desires of revenge on patriarchal dominance.

4.4. Janie's Unconscious Traumatized Status

Janie's traumatized status is exposed to many factors especially in her childhood which is shaped by her psychological state. The first of these factors is her early struggle with self-recognition and self-denial. She comes to know from her Nanny's account that she is a production of rape and that she was an unwanted child who has been abandoned by her mother. The denial comes from her family history of sexual abuses by men; she is like her mother and grandmother: a production of that abuse. Furthermore, that denial contributes to make Janie a woman who cannot express any affection or kind of love toward her parental figures. She is not proud of her family heritage with patriarchal exploitations. The absence of parents as models for her results a psychological gap and a failure of self-recognition. She talks to her grandmother that she neither knows her mother nor her father (Hurston 8). Janie thinks of herself a white person like the Washburn's children until she observes a photograph and notices her difference: "But before Ah seen de picture Ah thought Ah wuz just like de rest" (9). That epiphany shatters her racial identity and marks the beginning of self-recognition as an outcast black woman.

Janie's denial to her identity as a product of rape and an outcast black woman develops into disappointment that she cannot express towards her father and mother. The early signs of that are when she is called by her schoolmates different names and insults. She says "they call me Alphabet 'cause so many people had done named me different names"(9). She is therefore alienated from her surroundings due to her father's reputation and what he has done to her mother. She is also warned that she cannot be proud of her roots and physical appearance. The children would tell Janie "not to be takin' on over [her] looks" because the children's mothers "told 'em 'bout de hound dawgs huntin' [Janie's father] all night long" to catch Janie's father "for whut he done" to her mother (9-10). Thus, Janie, by social considerations, cannot be proud of her father as parental model.

That sense of disappointment towards the parental figures is rooted in her family history as well. Nanny tells Janie about her mother, Leafy, that she was never proud of her: "And after you was born [Leafy] took to drinkin' likker and stayin' out nights, couldn't git her to stay here and nowhere else" (Hurston 19). Nanny implies that Leafy was never proud of Janie because she is a reminder of that abuse: "Ah even hated de way you was born" (Hurston 19). Ironically enough, what Janie experiences of disappointment in her family is the same as how grandmother feels. Nanny retells Janie about her years as a slave and that she fails to fulfill her dreams such as her "dreams of whut a woman oughta be and to do" (16). As the most of cases with female slaves, Nanny was subjected, silently and passively, to sexual abuse by her owner which affected Leafy's life later. Nanny says "Ah didn't want to be used for a work-ox and a brood-sow and Ah didn't want mah daughter use ddat way neither"(16). Therefore, Nanny is like Janie, unable to express how she feels toward her master when she was his slave.

Janie does not consider her family a model one that she could admire. She is traumatized in terms of disappointment, shame and distaste toward her father and grandfather who caused a deep self-injury by their violence. However, Janie could not express any negative judgements or comments about her father and grandfather. In her article *Disappointing Dads*, the psychotherapist F. Diane Barth argues that when the parents cannot be a model for their child, the child thus gains a trauma of disappointment. Inevitably, the child by such disappointment is angry; however, if child acts otherwise he gains a "wish for revenge and retaliation" which is the child's sense of "profound loss" (par 4). Throughout the novel there is no mention of expressive feelings of disappointments from Janie's part. Therefore, Janie is consciously unable to condemn her parental figures. Instead, she represses those feelings as unconscious way to avoid feeling of self-damage

and to avoid the fact that the patriarchal figures in her family are people whom she could not be proud of.

For instance, Janie's silence is presented when she does not mention any harsh comments about the abuse toward her mother. Janie knows that her mother was sexually abused like her grandmother; however, she does not believe that her mother's abandoning her is due to sexual abuse. Also, there is no indication that Janie misses her mother. The narration informs that "she had no interest in that seldom-seen mother at all" (Hurston 89). As Leafy's absence is clear, she does not consciously view her father as the reason for that maternal loss.

Stephen P. Thornton, on the other hand, states that Freud's ideas of neuroses are originated deeply from traumatic experiences that had happened in the past life of the patient "but which were now forgotten, hidden from consciousness" and thrown to the unconscious (par 4). It appears that Janie's conscious removes any negative feelings about her early life. Therefore, Janie is traumatized in a way that she compels herself to repress and throw all the negativity to her unconscious in an attempt to avoid remembering the painful experiences of herself and disappointment of her family.

4.5. Janie's Unconscious Repetition of Nanny's Oppressive Experience

As it has been mentioned, Freud states that a traumatized person is disable to remember the experience that one had; therefore, one's shelter is to unconsciously repeat that repressed experience (Strachey12). The oppressive experience that Janie replicates is with her second husband Joe Starks after she runs away from Logan. Her marriage to Joe is characterized by patriarchal and sexual domination, which is also an analogous to Nanny's experience. Joe Starks is depicted in the story as an independent, ambitious and authoritative character. These qualities also characterize her grandfather, Master Robert,

the salve owner. In their first encounter, one may come to know that Janie shares Joe's longing dreams and goals of being people who are different from the people in their community. The Narrator informs the reader: "they managed to meet in the scrub oaks across the road and talk about when he would be a big ruler of things with her reaping the benefits"(Hurst 29). They both start a journey to the "horizon" looking for success: "Janie pulled back a long time because Joe did not represent sun-up and pollen and blooming trees, but he spoke for far horizon. He spoke for change and chance" (29). She assumes that he represents everything she could not have in her life with Nanny and her first husband Logan. As a result, Janie seeks for an identity through her marriage with Joe as she associates her happiness with him.

Joe's appearance, imperious tone and greed for ruling position evoke a white man's power which unconsciously attracts Janie's libidinal desire for such men. Since her early childhood, all what Janie perceived about the white men comes from her Nanny. She told her "Honey, de white man is de ruler of everything" (Hurst 14). The ruling image matches with Joe's ego and other authoritative qualities. The way Joe expresses himself is asserted with his frequent phrase "I god" in his conversations either with Janie or with the other folks in the town (35-92). He often suggests that he is a "big voice" and others must consider him as a superior: "I god, Ah ain't even started good. Ah told you in de very first beginnin' dat Ah aimed tuh be uh big voice. You oughta be glad, causedat makes uh big woman outa you" (46). As a result to his ambition, Joe succeeds to be a "big voice" through being the mayor of Eatonville. Therefore, his moral qualities and ambitious character correspond to the image of a ruling white man. In other words, Joe resembles the aspects of Janie's grandfather.

The reader is informed through Nanny's narration about her past in second chapter that Marse Robert owns a plantation with a number of slaves. As a comparison, Joe's

ruling position as a Mayor of Eatonville is similar to the authority that characterized Marse Robert's position. Joe is seen by Janie as a stylish man who dresses and acts like "like Mr. Washburn" the white folks (Hurstons 27). Another similarity that keeps evoking the image of the plantation owner Marse Robert is the "big house" which makes all the other houses in Eatonville look like "servant's quarters surrounding it" (47). For a man who orders and guides the people to build Eatonville, Joe is being compared to a slave owner who makes people wonder if the "Slavery being over"(47). The slaves feared their master as the people in town fear Joe who "cowed the town...had a bow-down command in his face, and every step he took made the thing more tangible" (47). The kind of authority that characterizes Joe's is built on total domination.

As for Janie, she is treated like a property. She is a woman "with authority" that comes from her status as Joe's wife (Hurstons 46). Janie is like a slave to Joe; therefore, Janie is what Joe wants her to be. He owns her body, voice and all her individual aspects. Her identity clashes with her status as Joe's wife. He says about Janie: "mah wife don't know nothin' 'bout no speech-makin'. Ah never married her for nothin' lak dat. She's uh woman and her place is in de home"(43). As a comparison, Nanny's status was a slave who had no freewill and supposedly obeys only Marse Robert's orders. This latter is asserted in this quote by Nanny: "Ah don't know nothin' but what Ah'm told tuh do, 'cause Ah ain't nothin' but uh nigger and uh slave" (17). Joe forbids Janie showing her hair publically because Janie's hair attracts the men in town. Men in the store where Janie works wonder about it as they say "Nobody couldn't git me tuh tie no rag on mah head if Ah had hair lakdat" and thought that Joe made her wear it because he is afraid that some men "might touch it round dat store"(50; 51). The incident also symbolizes her feminine character that threatens Joe who is the embodiment of a patriarchal image. He symbolizes the masculine force that prevents Janie's self-acknowledgement as a feminine woman.

Not only Janie is banned from fully expressing her femininity, but Nanny also used to wear a rag as a female slave. Basically everything that Janie and Nanny have was owned by their men. They were directed how to dress, how to behave, often beaten and verbally abused. Janie as her grandmother "had learned how to talk some and leave some" (76). Therefore, both were physically and emotionally violated by patriarchal forces which denied them the right to express their femininity.

4.6. Janie's Confrontation against Male Dominance

Janie's attitude toward Joe changes from psychologically submissive to more expressive after she is slapped in public by Joe. The reader is informed that "something felt off the shelf inside her" and that image of Jody was "tumbled down and shattered" (Hurston 72). Janie comes to know after years that Joe had never resembled any vision of love. Those years made Janie repeat the enslavement experience of her grandmother. The narrator indicates that after those long years, Janie starts to imagine what if her life is different "from what it was" (76). As Joe's wife, Janie does not get any advantage from her husband except what money could buy. Therefore, she attempts gradually to confront against this setting.

However, when Janie engages in a conversation between men and her husband in the store, she begins to stand for herself as she attacks their sexist views about women: "it is so easy to make yo'self out God Almighty when you ain't got nothin' tuh strain against but women and chickens" (Hurston 75). Her attacks against male superiority is also marked when she insults Joe's masculinity. She says that "illusion of irresistible maleness that all men cherish" (79). According to Diane Sadoff, Janie insults Joe in front of his friends as an attempt to challenge his masculine pride and "[rob] him of his illusion of irresistible maleness." Janie learns to speak out and to use her voice as she insults his lack

of sexual charisma. These words are her weapon against his masculine domination. She attacks "his big voice" when she says Joe was too busy listening to his own "big voice" (17). This indicates that Janie aims to insult his two biggest prides, i.e. political and sexual potency, which forms part and parcel of his masculinity.

Her public emasculation of Joe is also an attempt to take revenge on his dominance over her own sexuality when he commands her to bind up her hair. As a result, she stops having sex with him after being humiliated. Moreover, she fights him back with words: "Here [Joe] was just pouring honor all over her; building a high chair for her to sit in and overlook the world and [Janie] here pouting over it" (Hurstons 98). When Janie verbally defends herself, she does so not just to recover her female identity but to protest against Joe's constant oppression (Bloom 205). That is to say, this incident also marks the beginning of Janie's confrontation against patriarchy.

Finally, Janie can speak of herself and voice her judgements towards Joe when he is at the edge of death because of illness. However, Joe gives her a ferocious look, which provokes her (Hurstons 84-85). As a response, she replies: "yuh got tuh die, and yuh can't live". Then, Joe cries and Janie continues her attack by telling him "Shut up!" She also wishes that a thunder and lightning would kill him (86). As she confronts Joe, his facial features change rapidly. Finally, he speaks his last words as he whispers "Git outa heah!" (87). Sadoff argues that Janie liberates herself when she kills off "metaphorically" Joe. His death symbolizes Janie's need to eliminate "her male oppressors"(Jordan 109). As it was mentioned, the traumatized person gains a sense of satisfaction by entering the painful experience and changing how it ends. Janie reveals such satisfaction by challenging Joe. Her final confrontation with him accelerates his death and, in this way, meeting him with anger. When Janie tells him, "yuh got tuh die, and yuh can't live" (Hurstons 86). The use of "got tuh die" and "can't live" suggests more of a personal death wish which sounds like

you will die, you won't live. Janie's words were like fighting words which convey her Janie's final attempt to stop Joe's oppressive authority. Thus, she unconsciously avenges her grandmother from the patriarchal dominance that infected her life during slavery as she liberates herself as well.

4.7. The Contribution of the Psychological Liberation from Dominance to Self-Fulfillment

As a possession, Janie is denied any self-defined goals and even the expression of her own opinions. Therefore, after twenty years she comes to realize that being Joe's wife means giving up on her own identity as a female and resigning her status to be rather a thing that Joe assimilates. Janie, indeed, liberates herself when she kills off "metaphorically" Joe (Jordan 109). Joe, seemingly, is the right man to Janie when they first meet one another, but he turns out to be only a hallucination of Janie's fantasies. In the end, he suffocates Janie's voice and treats her as a decorative object. When Joe dies, Janie, for the first time, can wear what she wants, talk to whomever she wishes, and go wherever she fancies. No wonder that, after a claustrophobic marriage that lasts more than two decades, Janie welcomes her sense of freedom from her dead husband: "This feeling freedom was fine. These men didn't represent a thing she wanted to know about" (Hurston 139-40). In short, for Janie, Joe's death serves as the beginning of new chapter in her life and new opportunity to explore one's self and to utilize the vision of the horizon again.

After Joe's death, Janie burns her head rags and lets hair swing free in one long braid, as a symbol of new liberations. A rich and attractive widow, she is courted by men from all South Florida, but Janie refuses to get married again: "not one suitor had ever gained the house porch"(Hurston 87). Janie becomes skeptical about men in a way she

does not want men to choose her; rather, she wants to choose the one she marries. As a result, she meets Tea Cake and runs away with him.

Certain criticisms have interpreted Joe's death as Janie's path to identify her status within a setting dominated by men where she could reveal freely every feminine aspect of her body, language, attitude and performance. Cheryl A. Wall in *Women of the Harlem Renaissance* argues that Janie's confrontations with her dying husband "is not an act of gratuitous cruelty, it is an essential step toward self-reclamations" (187). Cheryl states also that Janie becomes a different woman as she stands in front of a mirror and ponders of the lost years with Joe (187). Cheryl's claim is demonstrated when Hurston writes "the young girl was gone, but a handsome woman had taken her place"(83). Christopher MacGowan in *The Twentieth-Century American Fiction Handbook* makes the argument that the result of Joe's death symbolizes the revival of the horizon that she yearns for by the imaginative self-kept separate from her life with Joe(244). With full consciousness, Janie is no more under the symptom of men's rigid oppression since she becomes a mature woman.

Finally, by being free and independent woman, Janie is conscious that her psychological liberation is the sight of her union with Tea Cake. She had journeyed to that horizon, and in the resulting peace she can now make her own choices (MacGowan 245). Janie's quest to grasp an identity that the masculine world robbed her off revives as she chooses to run away with Tea Cake, a man who understands Janie best. For instance, unlike Joe who forces her to wear a rag and tends to control Janie's body, Tea Cake enjoys Janie's feminine features such as her hair. Therefore, Janie's hair becomes symbolism of liberation only after Joe's death as the horizon becomes the quest that she wants to fulfill: "She tore off her kerchief from her head and let down her plentiful hair (83).Janie's hair after Joe's death becomes her free-spirited self and reminds one of "the blooming tree" and "the horizon".

4.8. Conclusion

The protagonist in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, Janie, marries three different men: Logan Killicks, Joe (Jody) Starks and Tea Cake. As she struggles, every case of these marriages serve a stage for Janie to understand her status in a man's world. However, her marriage to her second husband, Joe, is the most abusive and dominant. Therefore, Janie has to endure twenty years of physical abuse and psychological repression before she comes to realize that Joe's death is the path for a self-fulfillment. When Joe dies and with the companionship of Tea Cake, Janie can for the first time express her femininity as she wears what she wants and do wherever she wishes. Thus, for Janie, Joe's death does not only symbolize the freedom from oppression of gender but also that psychological liberation.

General Conclusion

This research, which draws on different feminist perspectives, was set out to explore the search for a feminine identity of Janie, the protagonist, in Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. In spite of what has been discussed in the previous chapters, Janie's story is not only a demonstration that her account of journey is the quest for fulfillment, self-awareness and psychological liberation but also a mirror that reflects the experiences of the outcast black women in their societies. Moreover, since this research aimed to explore the issue of feminine gender from different feminist dimensions, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* proves itself as a representative work of the struggle of these women.

As far as the Marxist approach is concerned, one has to recall the nature of the question once again. The first question was put forward to address Nanny's perspective, i.e. like the other conventional black women in her community; she tends to reinforce the existing of patriarchy through her capitalist ideas about Janie's marriage. Depending on the Marxist-Feminist theory, one found out that the conventional woman in the African-American society is accepted as more a commodity than a woman with full control over her feminine agencies. However, it is fairly enough to say that by participating in installing the materialistic ideas, yearning for social upgrades and submitting to oppressive men, the black women share as well the blame for the maintaining of patriarchal domination over their bodies.

It could be argued that Nanny plays the role of the mainstream conventions which keep on confining the black women's liberation from the supremacy of gender and social status in a setting where capitalism reigns. To illustrate more, as it has been mentioned, the material considerations deeply marked in the American society are due to the historical context of long slavery system. More precisely, this rooted materialism consolidates the

idea that black women are like saleable commodities which have to invest wisely their marriages to meet with their society's demands. Thus, as a result to this massive capitalist influence, black women contribute to the men's oppression and controlling at the expense of their femininity.

In a way or another, the rejection of Nanny's ideas contribute to Janie's realization since there is a noted clash throughout the novel between Nanny's and Janie's perspectives of marriage and a perfect union with a man. However, By refuting all Nanny's principles of marrying rich men who, later, abuse Janie physically and emotionally; Janie , eventually, makes her way to more meaningful life with poor but loving man. Therefore, by rejecting the mainstream ideas about the women's greed for social status, she also proves that if women want to liberate themselves from oppression, they need to disregard all materialist considerations that make them only commodities in the hands of men.

As for the second question, it addresses the archetypal approach as one intended to involve the cultural background of the African-American women. It could be seen that the black women after a long experience of slavery have adopted the prevailing white culture at the expense of theirs. Furthermore, the majority of these women were caught in between; therefore, the issue of the identity, either black or white, makes appearance throughout Janie's story. By knowing that their culture, as Hurston hints, is traced back to the Voodoo background, one also discovered that by assimilating themselves into their origins, they could gain more sense of belonging and identity. As Janie demonstrates, the Voodoo embodiments within the story play the vehicle that drives her to a fulfilling life.

With regard to what was discussed about Campbell's account of the hero's journey, one spotted that Janie's journey is crafted as a mythic story of a seemingly ordinary black woman. Simply that her archetypal journey brings into surface the themes of this research, i.e. self-discovery, identity and fulfillment .For that and more, she takes her experience

beyond the common stereotypes of her gender and culture and whose efforts to voice her own identity eventually gains her knowledge and agency that is transformative and empowering.

The last part of the research looked into the psychological status of Janie as an attempt to apply Freud's theory of repetition compulsion. One suggested revealing that by Joe's death the traumatized Janie could gain a psychological liberation and self-fulfillment. In the end, it was revealed that Janie as an outcast black woman in her community suffers from men's violence which injures her more emotionally than physically. However, it was not until Janie comprehends her situation as a victim that she finally manages to collect the scattered pieces of her femininity. She learns that she should acknowledge one's self and by bringing out her repressed feeling of anger she could heal her psychic wounds. Furthermore, she does not allow enduring such experience when she chooses a man who deeply cares for her unlike the other husbands. Thus, by reducing the possibility of any traumatic experiences again, she enjoys more freedom which emancipates her womanhood and the lost identity.

After a close analysis of the novel from different feminist approaches, the research leads one to consider that Janie's search for herself escorts a number of obstructions that are reinforced by her history, society and psychology. As a black woman, her identity is denied due to different patriarchal forces which carry out economic, political, social and psychological aspects. These aspects are regarded as plural and multidimensional feminist causes to establish this research rather than monolithic ones. Eventually, as a master dissertation, the research is limited in scope and content. However, this dissertation may help to look into the experience of African-American women in the American literature. Finally, in a possibly further research, if there will be any, one may try to cover the would-be areas that this research does not tackle.

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