



**Studies in Literature and Language**  
Vol. 15, No. 6, 2017, pp. 1-13  
DOI:10.3968/10211

ISSN 1923-1555[Print]  
ISSN 1923-1563[Online]  
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[www.cscanada.org](http://www.cscanada.org)

## Description of Subjugated Woman in ZoraNaele Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*: A Feminist Analysis

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Received 24 October 2017; accepted 18 December 2017

Published online 26 December 2017

### Abstract

This study aims to explore the subjugated woman in male dominant society in ZoraNaele Hurston's novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. *Their Eyes Were Watching God* has become the most widely read and highly acclaimed novel in the canon of African-American Literature. One of the most important and enduring books of the twentieth century, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* brings to life a Southern love story with the wit and pathos found only in the writing of ZoraNeale Hurston. The novel follows the fortunes of Janie Crawford, a woman living in the black town of Eaton, Florida. This study spotlights how women live under social restrained destiny; where they suffer letdown, thwarting, dismay and mocking. Subjugation against women which transcends all natural, ethnic and class boundaries. Women are mistreated by patriarchy financially, politically, socially and mentally. Where there is patriarchy, the woman is the other. She's objectified and marginalized, characterized just by her distinction from "ale standard". All women's activist movement specifically advances social change and women' equality. A woman is not considered an equal, but rather the other, and thus inferior to a man. All these problems and incidents are dangerous for women's identity. The research deals with major aspects of hegemonic masculinity, and violence against women. This research will study the threats to female identity in the light of Lois Tyson's feministic views.

**Key words:** Subjugated women; Objectified and marginalized; Zora Naele Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*; Women' equality; Lois Tyson's feministic views

Qasim, J. G., Ehsan, M., Quratul, S., Muhammad, Z. K., & Atta, M. (2017). Description of Subjugated Woman in ZoraNaele Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*: A Feminist Analysis. *Studies in Literature and Language*, 15(6), 1-13. Available from: <http://www.cscanada.net/index.php/sll/article/view/10211>  
DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3968/10211>

### INTRODUCTION

From the very birth of Eve, women have been suffering from the oppression of men as all the powers, authority within family and state entirely remained in the hands of men. Women are subjugated by the male dominant society as well as colonial oppression. In modern and advanced world where women want to become strong, independent and prosperous, patriarchal forces pull them to gain their vested interests. Likewise, in post- colonial countries, women are in double oppression. One is patriarchal oppression while other is colonial oppression. Although female protection rights are being provided day by day yet the whole system is male dominated oriented.

Postcolonial literature reflects the European colonization in Asia, Africa, Middle East and somewhere else. Postcolonial literature discusses issues and problems of the nations that have been colonized. Colonized were oppressed politically, culturally, economically, physically, psychologically and many other ways. *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by ZoraNaele Hurston is the good example of postcolonial literature. Janie, the heroine, is oppressed and marginalized by various forces in many different ways. Postcolonial literature examines the consequences of European conquest and domination of

the colonizers. It reflects how colonizers' power controls the dominated territories.

Colonizer and colonized is the terms that really denote to master and slave respectively. *Their Eyes Were Watching God* shows that white people of America believe that white Americans are cultured and civilized. On the other hand, they believe that the blacks are yahoo, uncivilized and uncultured. In the perspective of postcolonial feminism, Janie's husbands always try to dominate her. Being male their dominance is the result of patriarchal and colonial ideology. So, we see that they are double colonizers. Feminist theory describes how female characters are presented in a text. It analyzes the position of women in patriarchal society. Feminism and postcolonial studies are linked when both describe how women are treated in these territories. Being colonizer the position of male is always high and prestigious.

According to Learner (1989) patriarchy was process of almost 2500 years. Being victim of patriarchal dominance, racial and post-colonial oppression women began to raise their voice. One of the factors of domination of male over female is economic power of male members of society. In Victorian and Rhy's world, freedom and independence of woman was not appreciated. Likewise in the African American history woman status was no more than mule. ZoraNaele Hurston is the feminist writer to open the new avenue for the woman to research or redefined their identity.

Savory Fido (1990), explores the battle of marginalization about Caribbean woman and literature. ZoraNaele Hurston expresses the human relationship and behavior with reference to their culture, color, race and nationality. ZoraNaele Hurston discusses how male dominance in society silences the voice of female. How they make woman of color, tongue less, eyeless and earless. The black woman represents the mule of the world, could never do according to their desire and will. They are demanded to remain keep silent and do their role as a good wife. Black body has always been beaten and exploited by insiders and outsiders male members of the society. Therefore, black woman is double marginalized and she is colonized not only by the white colonizers but also by the black ones (As cited in Mubeen, 2015).

Double marginalization is much discussed in post-colonial feminist criticism. In this system, female suffers oppression of colonialism and patriarchy. In this regard Janie's identity is much affected after marriage. Jonathan Culler (1997) observes that a person's identity is acquired how she/he is treated, which names are awarded to him or her or used to introduce her/him and what kind of position she holds in a society ( as cited in Mubeen, 2015).

Post-colonial literature deals with European colonization in Asia, Africa, Middle East or elsewhere while *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by ZoraNaele Hurston is good example of post-colonial discourse. Janie

is oppressed and exploited by society. She is colonized by the dominance from patriarchal and colonial ideology. So it can be said that she had been double marginalized.

ZoraNaele Hurston was born in Alabama on January 7, 1891. She spent her early adulthood studying at various universities and collected folklores from the south, the Caribbean and Latin America. She published her findings in *Mules and Men*. Hurston played an important role in Harlem Renaissance 1937, an era of unprecedented achievement in the black American art and literature. She is considered a new Negro movement follower. She is great literary figure in African-American literature. She published her master work of fiction, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (Hurston, 1937).

*Their Eyes Were Watching God* is a novel which portrays not only one negative side about a "nigger" woman's struggle with negative fixed being the mule of the world but on the other side of her incessant struggle to form herself, to voice her desire and to reshape her identity, Janie's journey starts from self-doubt to self-fulfillment from speechless to speech from impossibilities to possibilities. Her coming back to town never means an end in itself but instead she continued her struggle to better herself.

*Their Eyes Were Watching God* is full of bodily passion and embedded desire to love and to be loved as a "nigger" woman. Hurston marks out her Janie as a nigger woman. Janie married respectively to Logan, Mayor Jody and Tea Cake. Janie is the woman who left her first and second husband while the third one was murdered by her, whom she loved very much.

#### **A. Research Objectives**

- To investigate how the black women have been subjugated by patriarchy and colonial forces.
- To highlight the situation of double marginalization of women in African culture.
- To investigate how patriarchal and colonial forces affected the identity of Janie.
- To highlight the effects of racism and sexism on African American women.
- To explore the status of woman in 21<sup>st</sup> century.

#### **B. Research Questions**

- i. How is Janie double marginalized in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*?
- ii. How does invisible "I" become visible in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*?

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## **1. LITERATURE REVIEW**

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Patriarchy describes power relationship between men and women. This term is used to describe a social phenomenon. Wably explains patriarchy as a system which rejects the notion of biological domination which says men and women are different because of their biology or bodies and are therefore assigned different

roles. Regarding the existence and origin of patriarchy, the traditionalists believe that men are born to dominate women.

Walsh (1917) describes that most of the women suffer because of their subordinate position in society. Women achieved their first role in politics in Italy. They were given the right of argue and disobey their husbands in British parliament. In 1979 Marquis de Condorcet favored the equality rights of woman. (Walsh, 1917, p.7).

Wollstonecraft (2006) in *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* argues that women are not inferior but equal to men. So, they should have dependent of their own money. Women should be financially strong. When a woman helps a man how can she stand with him? Women should educate themselves because education makes them able to cope with them equally.

Feminism describes the issues of women. It is a movement which aims to set free woman from hard clutches of patriarchal forces. Simone de Beauvoir (1949) has described the roots of feminism in her book *Second Sex*. She throws lights upon the status of women that is not similar to men in political law because of partiality. Cioux (1976) A French feminist argues *In the laugh of Medusa* woman writing is very necessary to understand their demands, desires and ambitions because their identities are misrepresented in male writings. (As cited in Mubeen, 2015, p.13)

Kristeva (1986) in her article *Women's Time* describes the stages of feminism. Man has portrayed woman in negative sense. They were criticized in negative sense. While, their own writings presented and portrayed in positive sense. Woman writings were presented in second wave while they wave focused on gender differences. Woman has similar problems all over the world. Women in Arab have been trying to make her voice. Zainab Fawaz was first Arab feminist writer. She exposes that men and women have the same characteristics (Kristeva, 1986).

Ehsan et al. (2016) reported in a paper that deals with violation of human kind especially women at the time of partition of Subcontinent in 1947 and present era with reference to Sidhwa's *Ice-Candy-Man*. It also tells us how mankind suffers the calamities of holocaust. We identify with that sadism is any corporeal, poignant, oral, institutional, structural or devout conduct, stance, strategy or stipulation that ebbs, eclipses or obliterates others and ourselves. In other words, Violence contains of proceedings, nomenclature, sentiment, configurations or organizations that bring about corporal, psychosomatic, societal or ecological smash up and/or avert people from triumph their chock-a-block human latent. Violence can be intensely ordered into the arrangement of associations, surrounded by social as well as economic factors and opinionated provisions, and flush in the mores of a community and of an inclusive orderliness. Hence, universal violence can in twist be derivation grounds

of divergence, as well as behavioral retort to an explicit variance condition. The paper scrutinizes the diverse types of maltreatment raze to the privileges of human beings particularly women at the time of the partition of subcontinent and present epoch with theoretical paradigm of John Galtung's theory of violence 1969 applying on Sidhwa's *Ice-Candy-Man*.

The main purpose of Ehsan and colleagues' paper is to show or underlying the problems of women in Bapsi Sidhwa's novel *Ice- Candy-Man*. The paper shows the real picture of the era that how the males behave with the women. Bapsi Sidhwa presents disobedience of human rights and bad conditions during the partition of subcontinent in 1947. Through the character of Lenny, Sidhwa provides the scene of how the political changes affect the people of Subcontinent. The novel really represents the scene that how women suffer at that time and they spent their time. Men using their mind powers to fulfill the needs and use women in negative way, all stress on women. Sidhwa as a writer tells about the power mind and skills of women. Enriched with feminism paper shows the real happening of society and a pain full truth (Ehsan, et al., 2017).

Ehsan and colleagues' study aims to explore the sexual harassment and violence against women in a feudal society in the novel *My Feudal Lord* by "Tehmina Durrani". Paper spotlights how women live under social restrained destiny; where they suffer letdown, thwarting, dismay and mocking. Physical violence is usually accompanied by psychological abuse and in many cases by sexual assault. Wife beating is a century old phenomenon; which transcends all natural, ethnic and class boundaries. We can see the same condition in Durrani's *My Feudal Lord*, where women are not only ill-treated by their husbands but also by the feudal lords of their areas. All these problems and incidents are dangerous for women's identity. The study deals with major aspects of hegemonic masculinity, sexual harassment and violence against women in the light of Kristeva's feministic views (1980, 1983, 1986, 2008) (Ehsan et al., 2015).

Showalter (1985) divided the feminism history into three parts: a) The feminism phase, b) The feminist phase, c) Female phase. Yeazell (1987) expresses that in this period the writers adopted the tradition of literary form of writings and it took the appearance of male writers. Second wave is called feminist phase and it continued (1880-1920) Female writer Ruth (1987) named this phase advocacy and protested because female writers did not adopt dominant culture and value but prevailing culture and value was challenged. A new change came in after the death of George Eliot. The third phase (1920-to present) is phase of female. In this phase female rejected altogether the whole system of imitation and protest and expressed their ideas, thought and feeling purely.

ZoraNaele Huston wrote, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937) about the quest of twentieth century blacks

to pursue beauty, individuality and affirmation. Her writings and life are characterized by a spirit of human contradiction and imagination (Finkelmen, 2005). Janie is watched and stared by her community members. She is visible in terms of body and invisible in terms of power. According to Collins, "Staring" generates a dual consciousness is African American women, in which black women become familiar with the language and manners of the oppressors. Hurston's novel seeing and being seen are highly politically charged acts. In her work looking is not just confrontational challenge. As we see in *Their Eyes Were Watching God* we find Janie, in her childhood, lives with a family of white and her grandmother Nany also. (Hill, 2005, p.89)

Marginalization means, people are not considered to be part of society. Marginality means exclusion from the benefits of social life at individual, interpersonal and social levels. People who are marginalized are deprived of all the facilities of life. Particularly they are stigmatized and their contribution in society is delimited. As a result they become isolated in society. Most common result of marginalization is material deprivation such as food and shelter. Marginalized people are not considered to be a part of society. The marginality is better explained in relation to the concept of centre. The marginalized are those who are always in struggle to enter in the center. They are recognized to be aloof. There are many forms of marginality which are experienced by different kinds of people. The perception of marginality is determined largely by gender, sexual preference, age, ethnicity and geography. Those who are seen as marginalized are mostly female, blacks, disable, heterosexual, exiled, immigrants, rural indigenous, foreign out cast and all those who take the positions different from centre. Marginalization has different factors. The main grounds of marginalization are often, economic, political, idealistic or religious, ignorance, fear, sexism and racism. Marginalization generally refers to women in feministic perspectives. The victims of marginalization are generally, minorities, women, slaves and multi-cultural people. Although patriarchal forces had been marginalizing women yet the emergence of women novelists in India has considerably affected the attitude and thinking of the patriarchal society. Feministic writers in "India" like Rama Mehta, Kamla, Markandya, Deshpande, and Arundhati Roy have extraordinarily portrayed a vivid picture of the agonized female psyche. Feminist writers in India today proudly uphold their cause of "womanhood" through their write-ups (Shriang, 2005, pp.1-2).

In United States, women of African origin have always been conscious of race, class and gender oppression in their lives. Since slavery, they had to struggle hard to eradicate the various injustices in their community by individuals and groups. Although Black Feminism was not widely used until the Black women's movement in

the 1970s, yet Black feminist scholars have been using it for the sake of strategies and action is in the past. The main motive of Black movement was women's tradition of courage, independence under brutal position of slavery and racism. Black women movement initial motive was economic necessity and employment outside the locality. Black feminists throw light on the issues such as political theory and practice that directly influence gender and sexual oppression in Black Women's lives.

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## 2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

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This research is purely based on qualitative approach that is a feminist theoretical analysis with different perspectives of Feminist theory is applied with reference to subjugation of woman in the context of *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, a novel written by ZoraNaele Hurston. The researcher has represented that how ZoraNaele Hurston has discussed female subjugation and male patriarchal attitude. The situations, dialogues and character's description are used as codes to be analyzed through the lens of postcolonial feminist criticism. Researchers point out that still feminism is necessary to judge different cultures and societies. Researchers' aim is to implement the theory of feminism on ZoraNaele Hurston's novel in the perspective of patriarchy. This project consists of technique of interpretation and textual analysis. Researchers have also focused on the historical material in order to analyze the social factors in which author wrote the novel. Researchers have concluded the findings with the help of interpretation and primary sources. Feminism theory and related books and article on feminist theory have been primary and main sources. Other feminist texts are also included in this research to take an example that this particular text can be interpreted through feminist theory. Intensive study of different feministic writers has been analyzed as the main source of investigating how Zora's *Their Eyes Were Watching God* can be read under the perspective of feminist theory. This research studies the threats to female identity in the light of Lois Tyson's feministic views.

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## 3. DATA ANALYSIS

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Hurston, the author of four novels: *Jonah's Gourd Vine*, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, *Moses, Man of Mountain* and *Seraph on the Suwanee*. She established her dominant and distinguished career as black female novelist through these novels.

As a nigger woman Janie is seen and defined by her visual differences, her interracial looks and colored skin. Janie is seen at Eatnville with Jody when he sees her in windows of bed room. He reduces her into an object of inspection. By articulating his "big voice" he silences Janie.



As far as Janie is concerned “being seen as a nigger woman” is not enough for her. More crucially, she has to speak as a woman of color. Otherwise she could never be a subject who can voice herself; instead, she could only be displayed, observed and then defined as an object of inspection. However, Janie’s voice, declares what Janie could be, on the other hand it also enables her to reinvent her identity, whenever she needs it. When Nanny forces Janie to marry Logan Killick:

“Brother Logan Killick. He is a good man, too” “Now Nanny, no ma’am! Is that what he been hang in round here for? He look like some ole skull head in de grave yard” (p.16)

Kawash (1997) also closely questions the role that visibility plays in racial issues. “The modern concept of race is therefore predicated on an epistemology of visibility but the visual becomes an insufficient guarantee of knowledge”.

Without seeing Mrs. Turner’s looks, one may according to what she has said, suppose her to be a white who is racially biased against black. In other words, Mrs. Turner looks black but she sounds and act like a white:

Mrs. Turner was milky sort of women that belonged to child-bed. (Ibid.)

As far as Joe Starks is concerned, all he wants and desires is to be a big voice in all black community and he loves obedience out of everybody under the sound of his voice. Janie’s self in this sense, is somehow diminished and bilateral by Jody’s big voice. Jody was much busy listening to his “own” big voice.

Jody is blind to the real and simple truth; Janie is more than a “bell cow among the gangs”, nor is Janie simply a “major’s wife”. She is human being like himself with a voice of her own and a self which she can give voice:

Everybody come right forward and make merry.  
I god, its mah treat. (p.49)

Mary Helen Washington has persuasively argued an object in that text. Janie is often passive when she should be active. She is deprived of speech when she should be in command of language because she is made powerless by her three husbands and by Hurston’s narrative strategies. She is voiceless in the court scene where she is accused of committing the awful crime of murdering her third husband Tea Cake. She is voiceless because her voice is over whenever by both voices; white and black. Janie’s identity is explored again, when Janie’s first husband Logan decides to buy another mule:

Mah husband tuh buy mule fuh me tuh plow.  
He left me cullin’ up seed P’taters. (p.34)

So that he can push Janie to work for him. He has predicted receiving bitter complain from his young wife for he studies Janie’s face and waited for her say something.

As Elliott Butter Evans (1989) clearly points out, Hurston seems to trivialize the incident in the text no brutal beating at all. He slapped her to show that he was boss. Furthermore it appears that Hurston is describing a culture in which violence against Woman was normal. It seems that Hurston is demonstrating how an independent Woman can be captured, bound, diminished and domesticated by patriarchal forces and romantic mythology that sworn abuse in the name of true love:

Husband and wives always loved each and that was what marriage meant. (p.25)

Hurston indeed points out the identity of black womanhood which is manifested in so many forms such as sexual violence or the misrepresentation of black women’s sexual desire and that is the main reason why black woman always find it very difficult to be the desiring subjects:

Time came when she fought back with her tongue as best she could, but did not do her any good. It just made Joe do more. He wanted her submission and he’d keep on fighting until he felt he had it. (p.84)

In *Their Eyes Were Watching God* the identity of black people especially black woman Janie’s is described swing like a pendulum which Americans like to see. Between the laughter’s and tears Janie’s voice is silenced not only by the white people but also black males. Hurston portrays Janie’s as a ‘nigger woman’ who is asexual and who follows the fundamental rules imposed by her husbands and black community. Hurston explains Janie a sensual woman who has close relationship with others, where she could explore the world around her to express her sexuality:

Den all de rest of yo’ natural al life you kin live lak you oughta.  
Kiss me and Shake yo’ had. When you do dat, yo’ plentiful hair breaks lak day. (p.41)

Janie debated the matter that night in the bed. Black female sexuality is not always something proper or comfortable at least for most black female critics, feminists and writers. Black women are considered sub-human inferior to the white women while Hurston breaks the rules established for black woman. She lets her black heroes and heroines speak for sexuality, freedom etc. Female voice is always waiting for an ideal listener, a listener who would recognize the true identity of them:

These men did not represent a thing. She wanted to know about. She already experienced them through Logan and Joe. (p.108)

Patriarchal society has its own order and conventions. People consider Janie a “nigger”, who should have good manners that manners are as, Janie come and be kissed. They were amazed how Janie behaved against the patriarchal conventions and gender restrictions. Janie’s marriage to a man who is several years younger and the way she dresses herself in funeral accuse her of being an

outsider who breaks the gender code of “nigger” woman. To realize her identity Janie has to suffer great pain because she was an outsider of that patriarchal society. Where town people not only accept the patriarchal rules but also practice the rules in the society:

Laughing at him, and now putting the town up to do the same. Joe Starks did not know the words for all this, but he knew the feeling. So he struck Janie with all his might and drove her from the store. (p.95)

When she had explored the identity of nigger woman she came to town to share her discovery with town folk. She was so brave enough to experiment with her body and she expressed the pain and pleasure of female sexuality to her adventures.

Knowing herself as a “nigger” woman is not satisfactory for her. She goes beyond where woman is expected to labor and not to love. She is in the quest of her identity goes from restriction to fulfillment. She should be, first of all, aware of some fundamental questions about herself. Who am I? What is the restriction of nigger woman in white male dominated society? What are her possibilities? To get answers of the above questions, she has to suffer for years. Janie’s awareness of her identity as a black woman indeed is the prologue of herself discovery journey:

She had been getting ready for her greater journey the horizons in search of people; it was important to the entire world that she should find them and they find her. But she had been whipped. Like a cur dog and run off down a back road after things. (p.106)

Janie’s identity is established because of her skin. Unquestionably, Janie is a born black woman. She is not aware of her blackness until, it is discovered by the white-male dominated gaze. Janie’s self-discovery journey does not end with the exploration of colored woman. At the age of sixteen, her first stir of “sexual yearning” realizes her as a young, beautiful and attractive woman like a pear tree in full bloom:

She bolted upright and peered out of the window and saw Johnny Taylor lacerating her Janie with kiss. (p.14)

Janie’s identity reveals to her in layering. She was at the age of sixteen sitting under pear tree. She is summoned to behold a revelation:

She saw dust bearing bees sink into the sanctum of a bloom thousand sister-calyxes arch to meet lone embrace and the ecstatic shiver of the tree from root to tiniest branch creaming in every blossom and frothing with delight so this was a marriage. (p.15)

Hurston recommends that Janie’s identity cannot be seen only as a woman with pugnacious breasts but she is a woman who actively desired to be loved. Janie explores herself and her identity that are not defined by others. As for as her marriage is concerned Nanny considers the purpose of the marriage of a black

woman is to get the material benefits. That’s why Nanny forces Janie to get material progress by marrying Logan killicks.

After marriage with Logan, Janie’s self-identity is discovered by her. Janie finds her marriage an embodiment of loveless relation. So called protection of loveless marriage proves to her a prison house without love:

“Brother Logan Killick He is good man, too”  
“Now, Nanny, no ma’an! Is dat what he been hang in round her for? He looks like some ole skull head in the grave yard”.  
(p.10)

In Nany’s opinion, marriage will prevent Janie from suffering of material life. Janie’s lawful husband, despite his wealth, is not an attractive man in Janie’s eyes. Her dream for marriage is shattered because she could not make love as she dreamed. Janie is a courageous woman. In her quest of self-identity she goes on without wasting time on the death of her first dream. She is eager to determine new dreams:

“No doubt what Logon wants to do is not to love her make her [Janie].  
“The very man made mule of the world.”

Janie on the other hand refused to become mule by Logan. She leaves Logan for

Stark. Because Janie perceives that Stark will be her liberator and shape her a real woman. After marrying with Jody Janie becomes a position woman.

Janie becomes Mrs. Mayor that results in destruction of her close relations with others, especially with her black community. On the other hand, Jody is not the person who praises her as the “pretty doll baby” but he is now god like figure who always silences her voice by his big voice. Janie feels that Jody is a man who establishes his own kingdom by weakening and silencing his people:

Jody told her to dress up and stand in the store all that evening, Everybody was coming sort of fixed and he did not mean for nobody’s else wife to rank with her. (p.48)

Janie’s identity is much crushed by her relation with Jody after marriage. She learns very soon in her matrimonial life that how she should have pressed her teeth together. She was very soon aware about herself and that Jody could be a mayor, store owner or god but never be a good husband who realizes her identity: “She got nothing from Jody except what money could buy, and she was giving away what she did not value” (p.90). The blurred identity of Janie results in separation. She left the bedroom and took to living in the parlor. Marriage was no more a bed of roses. Bedroom transforms into desert whereas, parlor becomes place of full of merriness and joy. The spirit of marriage fades away from its proper place, Janie was consciously aware of the split within her inside and outside selves.

Janie is attending funeral for the sake of patriarchal norms. On the death of Jody she feels happy. She is happy inwardly but participates in funeral for the sake of patriarchal order and norms. She comes out from the clutches of patriarchal society. Unquestionably Janie's self-discovery journey takes her to travel from isolation to participation, speechless to speech-endowed from confinement to liberty:

Before she slept that night she burnt up every one of her head be rags and went about the house next morning with her hair in one thick braid swinging well below her waist. (p.106)

No doubt, male female relationship is not established on love and respect but is determined by the patriarchal structure of power and sexual differences. After murdering her husband she is seen dangerous women. In this sense Janie's asserts to the world that she has a life worth living. All her life she is always ready to exchange love. She wants to live free from any bondage of male dominated structure or relation.

*Their Eyes Were Watching God* is a novel that is sensual, physical and teeming with description of bodily pleasures and pains. In the novel we see Janie with an intense corporeal existence; she is endowed with physical and erotic desires that are odd with her womanhood. On returning the town, she is an attraction for the town people because of her swinging buttocks and "Pugnacious breast" Janie is eroticism incarnate. Janie in this regard is an object to examine, to look at and to gaze upon. But in reality they have their own desire that Janie's body is expected to fulfill even if Janie keeps silent. Janie's firm buttocks or ample breasts, in men's eyes speak sexually and hold men's gaze.

In the social order of male dominated society "rape is part of a system of male dominance". Whites are the boss of black women and to prove the authority black women demonstrate complete obedience and submission before their masters. The white owners tend to use sexual exploitations as the means for maintaining full control of the evil and sexually loose nigger women. The identity of nigger women is exploited and their identity as human being vanishes. They are called animal and description of their existence is regarded as non-human.

Nanny could not understand the notion that marriage without mutual respect and love would provoke more sexual violence in the name of protection and love. In fact Janie's three marriages to Logon Killicks, Jody and Tea Cake all explored her to be the victim of domestic violence. Although Janie received, to some extent, social status of being a landowner's wife yet the devaluation of her black womanhood continued not only at the hand of white men but also at the hands of black men.

Jody's very words, "snatch [ing] off Part of a woman's clothes while. She [isn't] looking and the street [are] crowded" deeply humiliate Janie in front of the people. Though she is Mrs. Mayor Janie still fails to

acquire the proper respect for her womanhood. No doubt, social status as well as material success could not protect black women from being the target of oppression and male violence because black womanhood fails to win respect and consideration.

Jody kept on slapping Janie until "She had a ringing sound in her ears". Whenever Janie fails to cook well, she has to face physical beating. In fact, Jody is the presentation of male dominant society. Janie fails to serve and please Jody, the lord of family. Sexual violence is accepted and justified as a sign of passion. Tea Cake no doubt is Janie's "bee man" who brings passionate love into Janie's life rather than treating her as a mule ploughing the field or one of the commodities displayed in the store. Tea Cake does not want Janie to "work for" him; instead he enables Janie to play checkers, to hunt and to go fishing. Nevertheless Tea Cake beats Janie off and on.

No one can deny that Tea Cake loves Janie deeply and passionately and Janie also loves Tea Cake genuinely. However, Tea Cake beats Janie to show people that Janie is "his" and nobody else could cast greedy eyes on her include Mrs. Turner's younger light skin brother. The novel also explores the supremacy of patriarchal society. The action of beating Janie reassures that Tea Cake is the only one who has the overall charge of Janie's respect, attention and body. What Tea Cake really offers his beloved is not love, mutual respect or understanding but the anxiety and strict control that nearly chokes Janie to death:

"Knock her teeth down her throat" Dat would look like she had some influence when she ain't Ah jus' let her see dat Ah got Control. (p.174)

It is strange enough that instead of accusing Tea Cake of physical violence against Janie, women are eager to view Janie's bruised body as the ineradicable mark of Tea Cake's deep love. Black women who adopt patriarchal ideology that sexual violence is expectable and forgivable whenever it comes to heterosexual relationship are indeed subjected to male supremacy but they are even ignorant of it. The internalized sexism leads to self-contempt of their womanhood. However, the male dominant society efficiently functions by means of marginalizing, silencing and misleading women in the name of "true love":

That night he ordered Janie to tie up her hair around the stored that was all. She was there in the store for him to look at, not those others. (p.65)

Janie is defined by her visual difference i.e. interracial looks and colored skin. On the first day, when Janie was coming back to Eatonville, Joe was gossiping with a small group of people in the porch, while Janie could be seen through the bedroom window getting settled. She was not allowed to tell stories or share gossip in porch talk because she was a black woman. Janie is regarded as



an object of inspection just like the commodity displayed in Jody's grocery store. Jody's big voice silences Janie and brings Janie's subordination which maintains his unchallenged supremacy as "Mr. Mayor".

Janie's light skin and long hair make her lustful and visible. In this regard Michelle Wallace argues, black women have to speak for their own sake because of their visibility. Black women are more marginalized. In American culture women are allowed to speak their own words about their being as a woman of color. For Janie it is not enough that she is a nigger woman but she has to speak as a woman of color. Because she is not regarded as object of inspection that could be displayed and observed. Janie's identity is described by others who view her. They only observe her on the visual differences in the community. But Janie always reinvents her identity wherever she needs by voicing herself:

She had learned how to talk some and leave some. (p.90)

All the time African Americans are marked by their different looks and color. In this way Janie's identity is created on racial differences. This results in Janie's distorted vision. This distorted vision creates greater disorder than blindness. Hurston crowns her black community as the lords of sounds and voices rather than as lord of vision. That's why Hurston opens her story in a porch full of voices and sounds where the people of her community i.e. black people gather to gossip with each other to retrieve their humanity-humanity that is always humiliated by their white masters. Samira Kawash also closely questions the role that visibility plays in racial issues. The modern concept of race is therefore predicated on an epistemology of visibility; but the visible becomes an insufficient guarantee of knowledge. One may without seeing Mrs. Turner, suppose her a white who is racially biased against blacks. No doubt Mrs. Turner looks black but she sounds and behaves like whites.

The stories of black people bring them back to life. In this stream, voices announce that visual differences are deep in the body. Therefore, it is the voice that enables the blacks to speak- the speaking subjects that desire to speak, to be heard, to love and to be loved. In this connection, Joe Starks is the man who wants and desires to be a big voice:

Yeah, Ah'm nearly nearly forty and you'se already fifty. How come you can't talk about dat sometimes instead of always pointing at me. (p.93)

In the all blacks' community and the sound of big sound Jody loves obedience out of every body. Thus the identity is displayed in the novel by the voice. It is sound that determines the identity of people. To achieve her identity, Janie wants to make her low voice a big voice. On the other hand, when one fails to have his/her voice be heard, he loses the power of being a subject,

speaking for his/her own sake. Janie was much surprised and bewildered when Jody bans her opportunity to give a speech in public. Janie is left wordless and powerless since she could not understand what to do or not:

Look heah, Brother Mayor, whutyo' wife done took and done, it was cut comical, so everybody laughed at it'uh woman and uh knife, no kind of a knife, don't b' long tuh gether. (p.92)

Logan in this regard, could not put up with Janie's words, though her words are true and powerful. However, Logan could not put up with Janie words since the words spoken by Janie would force him to admit the plain truth. She is not mule that could be bought on the market or used for farming. She is human being like Logan who has a voice and the deep desire to be loved unquestionably. If Janie were not an object like a mule or a tool, then Logan will lose control of her and could not objectify her more. However, Janie breaks the silence and become visible in the absence of an addressable other. After all what is the difference between silence and monologue without an addressable other? As Mikhail Bakhtin (1997) has claimed:

This orientation toward the listener is usually considered the basic constitutive feature of rhetorical discourse [...]. Every word is directed toward an answer and can't escape the profound influence of the answering word that is anticipate [...] All rhetorical form, [...] are oriented toward the listener and his answer" (Clarke, 2001; Kaplan, 1996, p.103).

However, for black, especially a nigger woman, "who is like a branch without roots" is not easy to have an ideal listener. For whom she could express her invisible identity.

In addition, the "nigger" men are not only the ones who would be hostile to Janie's identity. In fact Nanny's warnings that Janie should give up her youthful dream and get married with a wealthy man so that she should replicate the tragic fate that has befallen on her. Nanny does set up the major hurdles in Janie's identity quest. Janie is being marginalized not only by white community but also by the blacks. Nanny not only fails to read the inner feelings of her granddaughter but also accepts the norms and traditions of male dominant society. She willingly accepts the nigger woman's plight of inferiority by silencing her granddaughter:

She slapped the girl's face violently and forced her head back so that their eyes met in struggle. (p.17)

It seems that despite her best interactions, Nanny does not know how to free herself and Janie from the restrictions of a world which seeks to silence them. Nanny is concerned only with her own views. She does not listen to Janie to find out what she wants. She does not give ear to Janie's hopes and dreams.

Although Nanny has been marginalized on account of color and gender yet she continually silences Janie without hearing her ideas about it. Neither a black man



nor a white woman gives voice to her ambitions and desires. Janie is a “nigger” woman. How could she voice her desires, hopes, dreams and above all her identity without the permission of “Others”.

Janie is far from dumb as other nigger women in her community. She is in fact a “born orator”. She wants to materialize her desires and dreams without any fear of black and white patriarchal society. Janie, sometimes, prefers to stay silent instead of voicing her feelings. So that she may prevent herself from getting into trouble or violent quarrels. Time and again she remains silent against oppression of male dominant society.

Janie speaks against patriarchal society in the journey of the quest of her identity. Time came when she [Janie] fought back with her tongue as best as she could. But in the matter of Jody she was not successful. But it made Jody do more. Jody’s Prime aim was the submission of Janie. He keeps on fighting till he is certain he has done it. So gradually she pressed her teeth together and left to hush. How woman’s self is demolished in that society. In Janie being “nigger” woman could do nothing but to obey.

In this connection Janie’s silence does not mean that she would not fight back for her own sake. She actually knows how to gather and save her energy to launch a surprise attack. In that society Janie’s identity was invisible to her community. On the other hand Jody always aims at humiliating Janie by “bad mouthing” before the folk so that others attention would not approach to his aging body.

But this time Janie being ‘born orator’ wants to realize her identity. She is not ready to be marginalized or oppressed by Jody. She openly expresses her feelings and breaks the barriers of silence and expresses her thought efficiently:

Talkin’ about me look-in old! When you put down yo, bitches, you look lack the change of life. (emphasis added, p.79).

On hearing the dialogues through the mouth of Janie at first he could not believe the words are uttered by Janie. He was receiving the words of Janie as if they were of foreign language. In male centered world it was impossible and unexpected from a woman especially a nigger one to articulate such words.

Like Logan, Janie’s words vividly evoke his deep fear that he is getting old day by day while on the other hand his young and beautiful wife would quit him sooner or later. Janie’s journey from invisible to visibility is very vivid because she is no more one of the goods displayed in his store window. Actually Janie’s words for Jody means, to leave him helpless, powerless and impotent. Jody became mad on listening to her words because he did not expect to hear such words from her lips. Thus Janie’s words demolish the castle of male-centered society.

The identity of woman is again dehumanized in the patriarchal culture of that society. Woman again is dehumanized as a chicken a cow or an “it” that is thoughtless and voice less in male-centered society. It is not surprising how the “nigger” women are marginalized and their identity is crushed relentlessly by their masters. The “nigger” men have been used as brutes carrying heavy burden for white folks. But these “nigger” men unknowingly shift their burden onto their black women. Jody the “big voice” is the icon of oppression and marginalization around the folks he had. Especially for nigger “women” he was always eager to silence them. In the matter of Janie, he made great efforts to marginalized Janie to satisfy his “I god”; a god who has ultimate power to make everyone to bow down to him whenever his voice is heard in the ears of folks.

Jody behaves like god, on the occasion of becoming Mayor of Eatonville, he lights up the town. He really wants to announce that he is the creator of light:

I god, Ah bought dat varmint tuh let in rest.  
You didn’ot have gumption enough tuh do it. (p.68)

Jody acts like as if he were God. As if God is dividing the light from darkness on the first day of creating the earth. Even people call him “my Lord” or our mayor but they hardly believe him to be their lord from the core of their hearts.

Jody fails to articulate his “self” although his big voice helps him to be a Mayor, to be an honor of store and post office:

Like Logan, over the outgoing Joe stark with his big voice that shapes a community Can’t express his inner emotions and insecurities to his wife. (p.286)

Apparently Jody is outstandingly successful in his so called marital life. Comparatively he is weak in his soul for his self is lost in his big voice. Jody has no self, and has no idea about it. He only exercises his power by straining nothing but woman and chicken. After marriage with Janie he had chief aim to make Janie obey him. He also had strong desire to make Janie a big woman. Furthermore, he wants Janie to be “his Janie.” He can tightly control her without knowing herself.

Mrs. Turner approaches Janie to settle the date of meeting between Janie and her younger brother Taylor. Tea Cake cannot repress the awful fears inside him and slaps Janie around her waist. Racine (1994) pointed out accurately about Tea Cake’s inability to materialize his innermost feelings:

The slap also represents for the inability to articulate.... Ors lack of voice. Tea Cake beats Janie because he does not know how to verbalize his fear of losing her. Tosomeone else who is lighter skinned African- American like Janie someone of innately greater value in white society. (p.290).

If Tea Cake had revealed his real worries and gradually growing anxiety Janie would have ensured him that she would not leave him for anyone else. Although

Janie loves him very much yet he cannot imagine. Tea Cake beats Janie just only to show that he was the boss of her and in that male-centered society it was a vital role for male to show their dominance time and again. Again we see the identity of Janie is crushed and reduced to be his property. Janie is considered a commodity and each of her three husbands consciously assure the male dominant society. Three husbands are fully conscious of this commodity.

In the novel one can hardly find any white character. Moreover, if we find any in the novel he/she [white] is presented as cold and flat character who belongs to upper class and has done wrong to blacks in the past. Hurston uses the black vernacular to express the notion of blackness. Benesch (1988) classified *Their Eyes Were Watching God* as Afro-American folklore. At first glance, it looks as if *Their Eyes Were Watching God* were the story of a woman's resistance to male oppression and of her search for identity. If there was not the abundant use of the Black English, which in itself ties the text to a specific natural back ground, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* might easily be taken as the story of a white woman representing the omniscient problems...of human existence (pp.627-628).

Janie's identity is between the devil and deep sea. She wants to materialize her dreams while on the other hand Nanny forces her to marry for material pursuit because Nanny had been victim of slavery. She does not want that her granddaughter would face the effects of slavery in any form. Nanny often reveals the patriarchal society endeavors to make women submissive to their husband:

White man throws down de load and tells de nigger man touch picks it up. He picks it up because he has to but he does not tote it. He hands it to his women folks. De nigger woman is the de mule uh de world so far as Ah can see. (p.14)

Paquet (1990) in her article *The Ancestor as Foundation in Their Eyes Were Watching God and Tar baby* claims that the ancestral role in Literature is "as a barometer of cultural integrity in contemporary African American literature. Slavery has the major impact on the black groups. During the times of discrimination in the case of African Americans, ZoraNeale Huston's experiences with identity and the communal memories are described in "How it feels to be colored me". She has described how slavery has affected her life:

Someone is always at my elbow reminding me that I am the granddaughter of slaves. Slavery is the price I paid for civilization. (p.16)

Hurston here mentions that despite having aloof from slavery she will always be associated with it. As far as Janie's identity is concerned she never defines herself outside the scope of her material involvement. Despite being with her friend Phoebe, she fails to achieve the communal identification with the black women or black

community around her. Janie is marginalized with the behavior of her husbands'. Furthermore, she deals with the issue of gender as well as social discrimination. She was double marginalized on the above two bases. New Nigger movement started for new identity, in which all African American could find them. Harlem Renaissance, for new Negro identity looked forward but also back at the past. It needs for a new black identity. In the novel Janie first has to come to terms with her ancestral past before she can fight the oppression of her husband and the rest of the black community.

Janie's self-realization comes to expression at the end of the novel when she finally realizes, her identity as comes to term with her blackness. The factor of gender, race and class all have been illustrated through the character of Janie in the novel. All above said factors contributed to her oppression as a woman. Janie had been marginalized on the above said basis. Janie has the roots in white and black world means, Janie is mixed race. She is clearly distinguished race, gender and class. She becomes 'other' which is not included in the group. Because she belongs both white and black and both lower and the upper classes.

Black stereotypes images in the novel are savagery, gambling and domestic violence which are made visible through the characters of Logon, Joe and Tea Cake. Not only Janie is oppressed and marginalized by black stereotype but also by white stereotypes as well. Some black characters embrace white values and norms. Logon kellicks establishes himself as Janie's master revisiting colonialism with Janie as his slave. He treats Janie badly and without respect.

Tea Cake takes up the role of white colonizer when he behaves Janie as her possessor. By sharply defining borders of race and gender, one instantly creates "the other". Janie is perceived as 'the other', because she is both white and black. Although she chooses to identify herself with the black community yet in the end she comes with the stereotypes of blackness and her class as she is striving to move up in class. In the quest journey of her identity she faces many problems and hurdles. She comes to know about her blackness, stereotype images and her identity.

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## CONCLUSION

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The research is being carried out with the purpose of exploring the elements that ZoraNaele Hurston has raised by writing *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. The objective of research is clearly mentioned in the preliminary chapter one that indicates the purpose of research that is to discuss the structures of subjugation of women in a society, and to highlight the condition of marginalized women in an already marginalized community. To meet the objective of research, the researcher has

developed two research questions. One general question is:

How Janie is double marginalized in *Their Eyes were Watching God*? And the second particular question is:

How does invisible "I" become visible in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*?

Through this project, it comes to know that no doubt, Zora has presented her ideas towards

Women's subjugation far back from this century but its value is not reduced now-a-day.

Women play major role in society and if they are subjugated they cannot play their role in a positive way for their generation progress. So, their right of freedom, expression and economic dependency should be provided to them.

A detailed examination of ZoraNaele Hurston's novel *Their Eyes were Watching God* has successfully showed that how patriarchal ideology in literature leads to subjugation of women. ZoraNaele Hurston has presented her voice in this novel that how they are struggling to raise their status. Economical dependency of female is also discussed by the writer. In Janie's time, women's property belonged to male authority. Janie's property was possessed by her husband and she was economically weak to face all her social problems. So, Zora wants to show that women are also subjugated economically.

Traces of feminist postcolonial are also discussed by ZoraNaele Hurston. Janie is doubly colonized. She faced oppression of colonialism and patriarchy. An inquiry of *Their Eyes were Watching God* has successfully showed that Butler's (1989) theory of *Gender Performativity* is also present in the role of and Janie.

Relationship between Janie and her husbands are also analyzed in the light of

Ortner's (1974) theory. Ortner argues that associating female to nature and male to culture brings gender difference and oppression. This idea is also helpful in the character study of Janie and her husband's. Her three husbands being male try to subjugate Janie as it was their culture's instinct to suppress the nature of Janie.

To conclude, the researcher is pertinent to express that she has done a thorough examination of *Their Eyes were Watching God* and found out that ZoraNaele Hurston dealing with the issue of subjugation of women is justified in the sense that it is exploring all those issues related to theory of feminism and in this sense different perspectives of feminist theory are identified like patriarchal patterns, male stereotypical dealing of female "others" as well as female subjugation and exploitation in the name of sex. Her portrayal of women in patriarchal society shows their subjugation and how do they face challenges in taking different roles. Suffering is always there for them and Zora wanted to convey this idea through her novel. Being female she also suffered and she wanted to portray this victimization thorough her writings. In this perspective, her portrayal of Janie remained successful

to depict her thoughts and ideas. Zora's depiction of subjugation of women is positively represented in her writings. Through her character Janie, she has depicted suffering of women and subjugation in a society. Being a woman, she suffered hardships and tried to face it but cruel behavior of patriarchal society forced her to bear all these hardship.

In short, ZoraNeale Hurston has created a seemingly feminist character, to which many black women can relate due to the recognizable issues that Janie faces in her marriages. Zora has created has very strong character to give voice to the feminist thoughts. In this way she has contributed her share to the development of feminism.

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