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THE AFRO-AMERICAN WOMAN PORTRAIT IN ZORA NEALE HURSTON'S *THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD*

Marilene Bauer dos Santos[1]

RESUMO
Neste artigo, fazemos uma análise do papel da protagonista Janie Crawford na obra *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937), da escritora, antropóloga e folclorista afro-americana Zora Neale Hurston. A autora, por meio da voz ficcional da mulher negra e do discurso vernacular da sua raça, inserida na primeira comunidade negra – Eatonville – nos Estados Unidos, apresenta, nessa obra, a imagem de uma mulher afro-americana do início do século XX, que, mesmo carregando o estigma dos seus ancestrais, foge do comportamento-padrão do seu grupo étnico, demostrando sua consciência individual que a identifica como um ser inserido no universo.
Palavras-chave: Mulher. Gênero. Raça.

ABSTRACT
In this article, we write a literary analysis about the protagonist's role Janie Crawford in the novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937) from Afro-American folklorist, anthropologist and writer Zora Neale Hurston. The author, through the fictional voice of the black woman and through the vernacular speech of her race inserted in the first black community – Eatonville – in the United States of America, presents, in this novel, an image of an Afro-American woman at the beginning of the XX century that even carrying the stigma of her ancestors escapes from the standard behavior of her ethnic group by demonstrating her individual consciousness as a human being inserted in the universe.
Keywords: Woman. Gender. Race.

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1 INTRODUCTION

The objective of this article is to carry out a literary analysis, taking into consideration race and gender aspects, about the role of the black character Janie Crawford in Afro-American Zora Neale Hurston´s *Their Eyes Were Watching God* novel.

Indeed, this paper focuses on the behavior of the black female type character previously mentioned and her intra-racial marital relationships with her three consecutive spouses, namely: Logan Killicks, Joe Starks**,** and Vergible Woods – as known as Tea Cake –; as well as her relationship with her relatives, specifically with her maternal grandmother, Nanny, who raised her with white children, and her relationship with her best friend Pheoby Watson. It also aims at examining her interaction with the black community where the plot is set in, her sexuality and her self-growth.

All those analyses are crucially important in order to understand what the protagonist is searching in her marriages, in the places she moves to, at a time when women, especially the black ones, were not supposed to leave husbands as they were subordinated to them financially and socially. It is worth mentioning that the use of black vernacular speech and telling story resource play significant roles on the novel making the scenes to seem real to the reader and the use of symbolism and metaphor also play key roles in Janie´s life.

Thus, considering the historical, cultural, and social context may influence in fictional universe, a panoramic framework of gender and race elements will be delineated in section one. In section two, Nora Neale Hurston's biography will be exposed in order to brief her contribution in Afro-American literature. The plot summary and the critical analysis about the protagonist´s life will be drawn, taking into consideration gender, race, sexuality and language. Finally, in the conclusion, the considerations about the protagonist and the author's writing will be broached.

2 GENDER AND RACE READING

In order to analyze Hurston's novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, it is of primary importance to broach this literary production in terms of gender and race. Hence, this section will lie in these aspects that embody the black female main character´s portrait.

According to Paulina Palmer, to one understand the construction of femininity it is necessary to comprehend the distinction between sex and gender because "while the sex of the individual depends on anatomy, gender is a culturally constructed artifact" (1989, p.13). She adds that femininity and its construction in fictional themes are investigated by theorists under social and philosophical/ psychoanalytical perspectives. The former refers to "the oppressive effects of the stereotypical representation of women as sex object, wife and mother". The latter refers to the "familiar set of polarities" produced by a "phallocratic culture" whose ideas are: "man: mind, culture" and "woman: body, nature" (1989, p.14).The motif body/ nature corresponds to "the body and sexual reproduction along with their polluting ailment desires and pains" (1989, p.25).

Palmer also points out the woman´s negative images presented in novels and short stores are "a number of undesirable attributes, including passivity, dependence, indecisiveness and a propensity for excessive self-sacrifice" (1989, p.14).

Moreover, the author cites that the female body image appears in woman´s fiction under the "male gaze", which may control "not only her appearance buy also her identity and sense of self-worth" (1989, p.35).

In *Gênero em Debate*, Eni de Mesquita Samara also approaches gender concept as a cultural understanding resulting of the socialization process throughout history. Samara claims that, according to the most radical feminists, "home is the place where the woman´s oppression culture most occurs". She adds that during the XIX century in the United States, the housewife and femininity´s images were consequences of judgments coming from her husband, the community, society and herself. According to those feminists, "piety, pureness, submission and domesticity were the most appreciated virtues and were translated into mother, sister, daughter and wife roles" (1997, p.41).

Rachel Saihet, however, highlights historian Joan Scott´s point of view, who broadens the gender concept. To Scott, gender means more than women and men differences as "gender is also the one first way to mean power relationships". The historian concludes that "gender is the mode to understand

the most complex relationships among diverse ways of human interactions" (1997, p.67).

Furthermore, when dealing with Afro-American women's struggles, one must consider their roles in the United States society considering their race as well. Hence, reviewing the black woman representation in American history – and it is accounted for slavering roots –, it is noticeable that the black woman has occupied a subordinated position in the hierarchic society being doubly oppressed due to her color and gender as Robert Staples claims that "the role of the Black woman has been affected by racism extant in white America. Thus, she faces a unique dilemma: being Black and being female" (1973, p.10).

Another characteristic that describes the black woman in literature has to do with friendship. Black women talk about their experiences as Mary Helen Washington asserts in *Reading Black, Reading Feminist:* "Women talk to the other women in this tradition, and their friendships with other women – mothers, sisters, grandmothers, friends, and lovers- are vital to their growth and well-being". She adds that this resource is "a tool, allowing women writers to represent women more fully" (1990, p.35).

Washington cites Janie Crawford character in *Their Eyes Were Watching God* the only black woman "who reveals in her sexuality, and significantly, even in this seemingly idyllic treatment of erotic love" (1990, p.37).

Additionally, Maya Angelou discourses about Afro-American writers´ inspirations for race writings. According to the author, during the eighteen century, the inspiration for Afro-American fiction was a manifestation in which black writers voiced the effects of slavery, suffering, violence, silence, humiliation and brutality. To them, writing was a kind of liberation, an authentication to express their own history with no spokesperson.

Significantly, the author asserts that it has lasted till contemporaneity; and this self-writing is remarkable by their unique use of their own language. Their voices are marked by an authenticity, a meaningful way to footprint their places in history. Thus, according to Mae Gwendolyn Henderson, one of the greatest features about black reading " is its interlocutory, or dialogic, character, reflecting not only a relationship with the "other(s)", but an internal dialogue with the plural aspects of self that constitute the matrix of black female subjectivity" (1990,p.118).

The author refers to Bakhtian´s ideas of dialogism in which "each group speaks in its own "social dialect" – possesses its own unique language – expressing shared values, perspectives, ideology, and norms". Thus, to her, subjectivity is "constituted as a social entity through the role of [the] word as medium of consciousness" and then "consciousness, like language, is shaped by the social environment" (1990, p.118).The author provides this primary approach of dialogism to make reference to "the creative consciousness of people who write novels", who "privileged" by a social positionality that enables them to speak in dialogically racial and gendered voices to the other(s)both within and without"(1990,p.119).

Henderson claims that black women writers speak dialogically and dialectically, that is, black women speak on behalf of many *consciousnesses* as they " speak from a multiple and complex social, historical, and cultural positionality" in a particular way. The author turns to black feminist critic Barbara Christian´s "creative dialogue" idea to refer to a multiple "*dialogic of differences*" expression based on this complex subjectivity; she, however, turns to Hans-Georg Gadamer's idea of " dialectical model of conversation" to say that "black women enter into a *dialectic of identify* with those aspects of self-shared with others"(1999,p.120).

Henderson explains the Gadamerian model which presupposes that identification is the way in which "one claims to express the other's claim and even to understand the other better than the other understands [him or herself]" .Besides, in the relationship between "I-Thou", one must experience the other as the other truly, "not to overlook [the other's] claim and to listen to what [s/he] has to say to us" (1999, p.120). She writes that this conception is important to understand black women´s writing since they speak to heterogeneous races and genders simultaneously.

In addition, speaking on behalf of plural voices, Herderson discourses about another aspect which is relevant when dealing with black fictions. She affirms that "in their works, black women have encoded oppression as discursive dilemma" and significantly "silence is an important element of this code" (1999, p.124).

To the author, this voiceless expression has roots in the past when black women had no right to say anything, as she states: "it is not that black women, in the past, have had nothing to say, but rather that they have had no say" (1999, p.125). Thus, she comments, their absence was replaced by otherness´s writing/reading.

Importantly, she cites the use of metaphor in black writing that embodies the writing aesthetic as an act of interpretation and " this symbolic function of the language" works as a tool that allows " the expression of the suppressed or repressed aspects of black female subjectivity "(1999,p.134).

3 THE MARK OF ZORA NEALE HURSTON

Zora Neale Hurston (1891-1960), an anthropologist, folklorist and writer, is one of the most contributing voices that represent the race consciousness art. She is one of the pioneers and one of the major talents of the black literature of the beginning of the XX century. Hurston paved the way for other significant writers like Toni Morrison, Gloria Naylor and Alice walker.

Hurston was born in Notasulga, Alabama, and was raised in the town of Eatonville, Florida, the first American black community. Her father was a Baptist preacher and a mayor of the city for three terms and her mother was a school teacher. Her mother died when she was thirteen. As she did not get along with her father´s second wife she left home to live on her own.

Hurston is inserted in the Harlem Renaissance Movement's birth whose proposal was to represent the black art likewise any other kind of expression. She was part of group of artists such as poets, dramatists, painters, sculptors, dancers, composers, novelists and some other intellectuals. The theme of their work was related to race problems. Not only did those writers want to insert African art in American society, but to valid their African legacy as the black oral and vernacular expression which include folktales, sermons and spirituals.

The Harlem Phenomenon was a reflection of the huge movement from the southern rural area to the northern urban area after the end of World War I, in 1918. The epilogue of this war offered an atmosphere for social, political and economic manifestations.

Hurston moved from Washington, D.C, where she had studied at Howard University and began her writing career, to Harlem, New York, to look for a job as a writer. In New York, she studied anthropology at Barnard College, where she worked with Franz Boas, and the greatest anthropologist of the XX century. Her significant folkloric marks in fictions come from her anthropological rural resources she used to do in Eatonville, Jamaica, Haiti, Honduras, and in the Caribbean.

During her thirty-year-writing career, she wrote one autobiography, two books of folklore, four published novels, several essays, short stories, articles and plays. Her first laurels started in 1925, at a literary award sponsored by Opportunity magazine, she got four awards: a second-place fiction prize for her short story Spunk, a second-place award for her play Color Struck and two honorable mentions.

Her novels are: Jonah's Gourd Vine (1934), Their Eyes Were Watching God (1937), Moses, Man of the Mountain (1939), Seraph on the Suwanee (1948). Her folklore books are: Mules and Men (1935) and Tell My Horse (1938); and her autobiography are Dust Tracks on a Road (1942).

As Rachael Farebrother states in *The Collage Aesthetic in the Harlem Renaissance*, "Hurston' s singular representation of Afro-American culture is fleshed out in a discussion of language" and she adds an analogy that Hurston used to compare white writing to black one. The author describes Hurston´s argument which is: "the white man thinks in a written language and the Negro thinks in hieroglyphics" (HURSTON, 1995, p. 831 apud FAREBROTHER, 2009, p. 113). Farebrother cites Hurston´s words:

> Frequently the Negro, even with detached words in his vocabulary – not evolved in him but transplanted on his tongue by contact – must add action to it to make it do. So we have "chop-axe", "sitting-chair", "cook-pot" and the like because the speaker has in his mind the picture of the object in use. Action. Everything illustrated. So we can say the white man thinks in a written language and the Negro thinks in hieroglyphics" (HURSTON 1995, p. 831 apud FAREBROTHER, 2009, p.113).

Plus, "Hurston´s close-up technique", Farebrother writes, is a way to approach the reader to the "each cultural fragment that she isolates". Thus, Hurston enables the reader to be in touch with her "lists of metaphor, simile, double descriptive

and verbal nouns". Huston, purposely, may shift the form of discourse, from "standard English towards dialect" in order to either play an observer role or to give authority to the character. (2009, p. 130). This resource is very present in *Their Eyes Were Watching God* whose narrator speaks in standard English, whereas the characters speak in black rural dialect in their unique grammar and vocabulary.

4 THE WOMAN PORTRAIT

Their Eyes Were Watching God novel narrates the story of Janie Crawford, a black woman in a journey of self-discovery. During her voyage, she faces many experiences which are full of significances that may lead her to her maturation. Hence, in this section, we aim at, firstly, exposing the plot summary in order to let the reader know the storyline, and, secondly, at analyzing the protagonist's character, her struggles and she conflicts as well their literary signification.

4.1 PLOT SUMMARY

This novel narrates Janie's story, an almost forty year-old woman who has come back to Eatonville after her disappearance with a young man named Tea Cake some years ago.

Janie meets her friend Phoeby that thinks Janie has come back because Tea Cake has taken all her money and run off with some young girl. Janie says he did not do that and she has returned to Eatonville because Tea Cake has died.

Janie starts telling Phoeby about her entire life, beginning by her childhood. Janie has never seen her father and her mother ran away when Janie was still a little kid. She was raised, in West Florida, by her maternal grandmother, Nanny, a former slave who worked in a white employer´s house. Janie used to play with the employer´s white children and she did not know she was not white until she was six years old, when she looked her in a picture and saw she was colored.

At sixteen, her grandmother catches her kissing a boy named Johnny Taylor. She says Janie has become a woman and she does not want her grandchild to be kissing one man and another since she deserves a good husband. Besides, she says she does not want Janie to be the mule of the world as a nigger woman, referring to her bad time being a slave, raped by her master and whipped as well as referring to her daughter' time , who has been raped, too, at seventeen by a school teacher.

Janie marries Brother Logan Killicks according to her grandma´s plans. He is much older than her and ugly. She longs for love but it has never arrived. She complains about her marriage to her grandma, but she says she has got properties, so why to worry about love.

Time goes by. Janie's grandmother dies and Janie learns love is not something that comes with marriage. She gets frustrated day after day and her husband is only worried about buying mules and to put her to plow their land.

One day, when her husband goes to Lake City to see a mule he intends to buy, Janie goes outside the house and she perceives a good-looking man coming down the road. He approaches her gate and asks for some water. His name is Joe Starks and comes from Georgia to Florida with some money to settle a town only for colored people. They talk and he learns that she is married and that her husband treats her like an employee, not like a wife. He is very good at words and tells her she was not made for that kind of thing, but to sit on a chair on the porch and to be treated well. He convinces her with his speech, so she leaves her husband and goes with Joe Starks to Green Cove Springs where they get married. Soon, they head to Eatonville, the place he wants to make out of black people. He sets a store there, gets a post-office, builds roads and brings lights. In a short time, Joe Starks is elected the mayor of the city. The more he gets involved with his role of mayor, the colder their relationship becomes. He forbids her to indulging in the folks' conversation, as according to him, 'she is Mrs. Mayor Starks'. Janie feels being oppressed by her husband as he is demanding and does not listen to her. To Joe, she has gotten the very place in the world that many women would like to have: the highest chair to sit on and she is not delighted with that.

After twenty-four years of marriage, Janie finds out that that sort of life is not part of her dreams and it culminates when Joe slaps her face. That was a turning point in her marriage. After a long period of silence and submission, Janie starts treating Joe in the same bad way he treats her, that is, she starting insulting and ridiculing him. Joe, then, decides to stop sleeping with Janie, so he moves to a downstairs room of their house.

Janie keeps running the store and living in her lonesomeness. She indulges that time to ask her some questions and to enjoy her freedom. Some men approach her trying to take advantage of her financial condition, but they do not represent something she is looking forward to experiencing since she has already experienced through her former husbands.

One day, before Janie closes the store, a young tall man comes into the place. He asks for some tobacco and they chat a little. The man´s name is Vergible Woods, whose nickname is Tea Cake. After that evening, he starts coming to Janie's store very often. They get along with each other since he shows Janie a world she has never seen. He teaches Janie things she has never learned with Jody as he thought she could not learn it; they spend time fishing, hunting, dancing and going to the movies in Orlando. As Janie spends much time hanging out with Tea Cake, the community starts gossiping about his intentions with her because she is a lady of properties, he is fifteen years younger than her and he has no job.

Janie sells her store and leaves Eatonville with Tea Cake. They go to Jacksonville, to a place where Tea Cake gets a job to work in the rails. There, they get married and Janie faces her husband's first bad habits. One night, he steals her two hundred dollars and goes to a pub to have fun with his friends, and, in order to repair his bad behavior he promises her to get her money back on gambling as he is a very good gambler.

Soon, he invites her to move to Everglades, to live on the mock, a place where his folks make money raising cane, string-beans and tomatoes. There, he plants beans and during the time he has to wait to reap them he proposals her to go hunting. Janie gets exciting about it as Tea Cake teaches her how to shoot. They have a very busy night life: they go to the pubs, pool-rooms; lots of people gather together at their house, they tell stories and listen to Tea Cake playing his guitar. Sometime later, Janie starts working on the plantations too, as Tea Cake wants her near him all the time.

After living two years on the mock, a fierce hurricane hits Everglades. Everybody leaves the area as soon as possible. Janie and Tea Cake, however, decide to stay there. As soon as they realize the huge impact of the hurricane they try to run away, but it is too late. On their useless attempt to run to Palm Beach, they are drifted by the hurricane. When they are swimming in the flood water, Tea Cake, attempting to save Janie, is bitten by a raged dog.

They survive and go back to their house. After three weeks later, Tea Cake gets sick. Janie calls a doctor. He says Tea Cake has rabies and he should have taken a serum shot as soon as he got bitten. Janie asks the doctor to do everything is possible to save her husband. The doctor alerts Janie Tea Cake may attack her and bite her. She takes care of him all night long while the doctor goes to Palm Beach to bring some medicine.

Tea Cake gets insane and tries to shoot Janie, who in self-defense shoots and kills him. On the same day, Janie is judged for murder, however, due to the evidences, she is not considered guilty. Janie buries Tea Cake in Palm Spring, where he sleeps among roses and holds a brand new guitar Janie puts in his hands.

Janie cannot stay on the mock because it means Tea Cake. She gives everything away and keeps only a package of garden seeds with her because it reminds her of Tea Cake since he was always planting. She comes back to Eatonville where she starts telling her friend Phoeby why she has come. She says she has returned because Tea Cake, the young man who she has run away with two years ago, has died. She tells the whole story of her life and tells her friend she can retell the folks in the town if she wants. Janie goes upstairs to her bedroom and thinks of Tea Cake. To her, Tea Cake will not be dead until the day she stops feeling and thinking.

4.2 THE CHARACTER´S PORTRAIT AND HER JORNEY

According to Edward Morgan Foster, the character's archetype built by the author comes from his inspiration as well as because "there is an affinity between him and his subject-matter which is absent in many other forms of art." As the characters are supposed to be human beings the novelist "gives them names and sex, assigns them plausible gestures, and causes them to speak by the use of inverted commas and perhaps to behave consistently." Foster adds that this creation is linked to other relations in the fiction as well to other aspects outside the fiction, as he claims: "they may

be created in delirious excitement; still, their nature is conditioned by what he guesses about other people, and about himself, and is further modified by the other aspects of his work "(1927,p.39,40).

All this make-up happens when "the novelist takes his pen in his hand, gets into the abnormal state which it is convenient to call "inspiration", and tries to create characters" who "have to fall in with something else in his novel; this often happens (...), and then the characters have, of course, to modify the make-up accordingly"(1927,p.46).

During this creation process, "love" is one important element that comes to his mind "and without intending to do so he makes his characters unduly sensitive to it". And, as a novelist he has autonomy to conceive it as a permanency, on the contrary of real life, as Foster states: "Any strong emotion brings with it the illusion of permanence, and the novelists have seized upon this. They usually end their books with marriage, and we do not object because we lend them our dreams" (1927, p.49).

After this definition of characters, we can move to the characterization of Janie in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. Janie is the central character and the development of the narrative is toward her role. Her actions are related to other characters' actions which contribute to the dynamic of her performance and to the conclusion of the plot.

Her evolution in the fiction is, in the light of Foster's conception, typologically a round character type. According to Foster, a round character is the one which is complex, a profound psychological fictional being who can present many attributes and "it is capable of surprising in a convincing way" as well as "it is only round people who are fit to perform tragically for any length of time and can move us to any feelings except humour and appropriateness" (1927, p.66).

Janie's portrait is presented, at the beginning of the story, through a third person's perspective. At this point of the narrative, Janie does not have a name; she is just delineated as a woman and this artifice used by Hurston in the creation of the character may have been made on purpose in order to let the reader interested in the development of the story and in the materialization of protagonist in the course of the story. Janie´s psychological state is also presented at the beginning of the story. She is emotionally shaking due to the death of her last husband, Tea Cake, who she had to kill in self-defense as he had got rabies from a dog during a hurricane attack and had tried to kill her. In the follow excerpt, the author describes that Janie did not come from the burial of sickness, but from "*the sodden and the bloated*", so it may mean Janie came from a death made of sacrifice as she did not want to kill her husband, but to choose her life:

> So the beginning of this was a woman and she had come back from burying the dead. Not the dead of sick and ailing with friends at the pillow the sudden dead. She had come back from the sodden and the bloated (1.3).

Her physical description is also presented at the beginning of the narrative. She is introduced as a loose hair woman around her forties in overalls. This image is viewed by other characters in the plot that seem to observe a kind of inappropriate behavior by Janie, as follows:

> What she doin coming back here in dem overhalls? Can't she find no dress to put on? – Where's dat blue satin dress she left here in? – Where all dat money her husband took and died and left her? – What dat ole forty year ole 'oman doin' wid her hair swingin' down her back lak some young gal? (1.6).

Janie's attitude concerning her appearance shocks the community because when she lived in Eatonville with them she was the mayor's wife and she had to dress up and her hair had to be tied according to the mayor´s orders. After the mayor´s death and her union with Tea Cake on the muck she changes her appearance according to her desire. Janie's swinging down hair may symbolize her individuality since she is out of the standard behavior of black women, who must have their hair short or tied up.

Janie's physical appearance also shocks the community in terms of her sexuality, Janie does not look like to be in her forties, she looks like to be younger and it teases their minds as "*the men noticed her firm buttocks like she had grape fruits in her hip pockets"* and her unconventional hair is viewed as " *the great rope of black hair swinging to her waist and unraveling in the wind like a plume"* and her breasts

are figuratively tough as " *pugnacious breasts trying to bore holes in her shirt*" (1.12).

Looks low also represents her shaggy appearance as it is described in another passage of the fiction: "*The women took the faded shirt and muddy overalls and laid them away for remembrance. It was a weapon against her strength and if it turned out of no significance, still it was a hope that she might fall to their level some day*" (1.11). According to the folks, they want to keep this event in mind – Janie´s faded shirt and muddy overalls – in order to use it against her if they do not have another artifice and this may be an index that someday she may fall to the same position of her folks.

The townspeople's observations regarding the way Janie left and returned Eatonville suit what was presented previously in this article in Gender and Race Reading by Eni de Mesquita Samar who claims that during the XIX century in the United States, the housewife and femininity's images were consequences of judgments coming from her husband, the community, society and herself and that "piety, pureness, submission and domesticity were the most appreciated virtues and were translated into mother, sister, daughter and wife roles" (1997, p.41).

It is noticeable the negative judgments made by the community about Janie's image like her loose hair, her appearance in muddy denim overalls and faded shirt, her attitude of getting involved with a younger man. Besides all the above excerpts that describe the folk's attitudes towards Janie, the third person narrator foreshadows the above circumstances through the following opening:

> It was the time for sitting on porches beside the road. It was the time to hear things and talk. These sitters had been tongueless, earless, eyeless conveniences all day long. Mules and other brutes had occupied their skins. But now, the sun and the bossman were gone, so the skins felt powerful and human. They became lords of sounds and lesser things. They passed nations through their mouths. They sat in judgment (1.4).

Janie, on the other hand, is not interested in playing the idealized feminine roles such as "piety, pureness, submission and domesticity". She does not worry about being misjudged by the townspeople, as well as she does not want piety from them when she comes back to Eatonville and Phoeby suggests her to tell the folks about what happened to her and to Tea Cake. She just tells Phoeby: "*Ah don't mean to bother wid tellin' 'em nothin', Phoeby 'Tain't worth de trouble. You can tell 'em what Ah say if you wants to. Dat's just de same as me 'cause mah tongue is in mahfriend's mouf*" (1. 52).

So, Janie tells her story to her friend Phoeby in flashback and the starting point is in her childhood when she had to face her first struggles. The protagonist did not have a childhood that was worthwhile remembering and that is why she has not gotten good memories from that time. Janie is the result of a rape committed by a white teacher upon her black mother. Janie had never had any contact with her father and her mother left her when she was very little. The only kind of care she got from her relatives came from her maternal grandmother. She tells that episode of her life to Phoeby with some sorrow which is revealed in this sentence: "*Ah ain't never seen mah papa. And Ah didn't know 'im if Ah did. Mah mama neither. She was gone from round dere long before Ah wuz big enough tuh know*" (2.3).

Besides not having any emotionally and financially support from neither a mother nor a father, Janie had a harsh experience being raised by her grandmother. She did not use to call her grandmother any tender name as grandma, except Nanny, as she tells Phoeby: *"Ah never called mah Grandma nothin' but Nanny, 'cause dat's what everybody on de place called her"* (2.3).

Janie was raised with the white children of The Wasburns, the family for whom her grandma worked for taking care of the children. Janie assimilated the Nanny name designated by the white family due to her place in the stratified society.

Additionally in her childhood, Janie experiences a conflict of identity. At six year old she learns she is not white as The Wasburns´ children with whom she has been raised together. She tells Phoeby she knows her color heritage incidentally when she "*looked at depicture and everybody got pointed out there wasn't nobody left except a real dark little girl with long hair standing by Eleanor."* She realizes she was a stranger for herself as she says: "*but Ah couldn't recognize dat dark child as me. So Ah ast, 'where is me? Ah don't see me"* (2.6).

Janie also receives the racial definition from other people. Through the picture imaginary, Huston lets the reader know the stereotyped judgment of the racist culture historically rooted in slavery when "everybody *laughed, even Mr. Washburn. Miss Nellie, de Mama of de chillun who come back home after her husband dead, she pointed to de dark one and said, 'Dat's you, Alphabet, don't you know yo' ownself?*" (2.7).

The fact of being called Alphabet due to many different names she has gotten may mean Janie was not a significant person since names are connect to one´s personality and identity. This fact also reinforces the weight of the stigma of her slaver ancestors who used to be treated like objects by their owners and had no identity because there was no place for them in an oppressed and subjugated society where they were called just as niggers or Negroes.

Significantly, Janie's conflicts perpetuates in her youth and adulthood. The third-person narrator voices her beginning into sexual life when she was sixteen. The episode was a turning point in Janie's life in which leads her on a quest for maturity.

Hurston raises this stage in Janie's life through metaphors, that, when Janie talks to Phoeby she realizes that her "*conscious life commenced at Nanny's gate*". Janie's sexual life started when she kissed a teenager boy called Johnny Taylor over the gatepost. This circle in Janie's life was predicted metaphorically by the narrator in the afternoon before the kiss, when Janie spent "most *of the day under a blossoming pear tree in the back yard*" and "*it had called her to come and gaze on a mystery. From barren brown stems to glistening leaf-buds; from the leaf-buds to snowy virginity of bloom*". Then ,she "*saw a dust-bearing bee sink into the sanctum of a bloom; the thousand sister-calyxes arch to meet the love embrace and the ecstatic shiver of the tree from root to tiniest branch creaming in every blossom and frothing with delight* ". Admired, Janie thought: "*So this was a marriage*!"(2.12-14).

Janie's sexual awaking may be compared to the process of the pollination in which she let to be an innocent girl like the "*sanctum of a bloom*" which receives the "*dust-bearing bee*" which can be *a "glorious being"* who may cause her some orgasm like *"some ecstatic shiver of the tree"* that for her is translated into "*marriage*".

Janie's vision of sexuality is symbolized as a perfect harmony with nature, in which Hurston feels free to reveal the black woman´s spontaneous sexual desire. It is explicated that Janie is vulnerable to her sexual instincts and she does not try to control them; on the contrary, she is willing to satisfy them, as Janie is "*looking, waiting, breathing short with impatience. Waiting for the world to be made*".

Unfortunately, Janie's dream is ruined when her grandmother catches her kissing Johnny Taylor at the gate and she realizes "*that was the end of her childhood*". Her grandmother´s eyes "*diffused and melted Janie*" (2.19-20).

Hence, her grandma interprets a kiss as something very dangerous, and for her, this sexual manifestation is a sign that Janie has become a woman. Consequently, by assuming it can endanger her granddaughter's future, she sees no other way, but letting Janie know that she will provide her a husband immediately**.**

Janie disagrees she has become a woman and says she does not want to get married as she does not know anything about a husband. Her grandmother, however, remains firm. She tells Janie she does not want her to be kissing and hugging guys around .She adds she does not want anybody to cause her any harm. She mentions what happened to her past as a slave and to Janie's mother who was raped. Nanny brings up these memories and she warns Janie "*de nigger woman is de mule uh de world"* (2.44).

Nanny is referring to the role of the Negro in the slavery's time and to the scars it has left over black women who wanted to be more than slaves, more than the scum of humanity. She adds: "*Ah been prayin' fuh it tuh be different wid you. Lawd, Lawd, Lawd!*" (2.44).

Here, it is notable Robert Staples' point of view about the dual dilemma of being black and being female. Huston, in the following episode, also manifests, through Nanny's voice, Maya Angelou´s observation about the Afro-Americans' inspirations for race writings. According to this author, as mentioned previously in this article, Afro-American fiction was a manifestation in which black writers marked, through such authenticity way, their miserable place in history. Huston provides the reader the testimonial of whom can speak with the original black language, in this way, allowing more reality to the psychological environment.

Janie´s grandmother tells Janie how much the white men exploited the black men; the black women, however, for being considered inferior to men and for being black, were the most exploited human being, at a such low level, to be considered as non-human who can be used by others, even by people of the same race.

> Honey, de white man is de ruler of everything as fur as Ah been able tuh find out. Maybe it's some place way off in de ocean where de black man is in power, but we don't know nothin' but what we see. So de white man throw down de load and tell de nigger man tuh pick it up. He pick it up because he have to, but he don't tote it. He hand it to his womenfolks. De nigger woman is de mule uh de world so fur as Ah can see (2.44).

In order to protect Janie not to be the *" de mule uh de world "* and as she foresees she is not going to live longer to take care of Janie, she provides her a husband, Logan Killicks. Thus, Janie naively married Logan Killicks and "his often-mentioned sixty acres" (3.2).

Janie dreaming about "*husbands and wives always loved each other, and that was what marriage meant*" (3.2), enters Logan´s house that "was *absent of flavor*", but "anyhow *Janie went on inside to wait for love to begin*" (3.5). Three months go by and Janie discovers her marriage was not like meeting of the pear tree's bud and the bee. So, Janie goes to gate again, "*when the pollen again the sun and sifted down on the world", and "*wait*[s]a bloom time, and a green time and an orange time*". Finally, she recognizes her first conflict in her youth and she starts learning about life .Through the third person narrator's perspective, the reader realizes that "*she knew now that marriage did not make love*", that "*Janie's first dream was dead"* and thus "*she became a woman*"(3.31).

Hurston, by giving Janie voice, portrays a housewife's image which does not suit the negative reflections of an oppressed black woman presented in novels and short stores as pointed out by Palmer in this article, such as "a number of undesirable attributes, including passivity, dependence, indecisiveness and a propensity for excessive self-sacrifice" (1989, p.14).

Janie's marriage ending is marked by conflicting situations which will lead to other phase in Janie´s live. Logan seems to treat Janie like his slave who must work for him as his former wife used to. He wants her to plow the land and to chop the wood. Janie surprisingly refuses to do what he wants, by saying: "Ah'm *just as stiff as you is stout. If you can stand not to chop and tote wood Ah reckon you can stand not to git no dinner"* (4.2). Logan thinks Janie is not behaving properly as a domestic black woman, as she is not passive and dependent, she is not respecting him. According to Logan, his wife has no right for voice, and the way Janie is behaving she thinks she is a white woman, as he says "*Ah thought you would 'preciate good treatement. Thought Ah'd take and make somethin' outa yuh. You think youse white folks by de way you act*" (4.42). Janie replies him by saying: "*S'posin' Ah wuz to run off and leave yuh sometime*" (4.43).

Janie shows her decisiveness after "*she gave Logan's speech a hard thought and placed it beside other things she had seen and heard"*. She concludes that "*Logan was accusing her of her mamma, her grandmamma, and her feelings, and she couldn't do a thing about it"*. Hurston presents Janie's process of consciousness through an analogy of cooking some meat, "*the sow-belly in the pan needed turning. She flipped it over and shoved it back. A little cold water in the coffee pot to settle it. Turned the hoe-cake with a plate and then made a little laugh*. Through this analogy of cooking process, such as first letting the meat cooking, secondly flipping and shoving it back, thirdly making coffee and then turning the cake, it is like she is organizing her thoughts, like turning them over and over, considering what she "has seen and heard" and finally making her decision by asking herself "*what was she losing so much time for?*". Thus, as Janie could not hide her joy by laughing when she finished all the food process and setting other things, Janie could not avoid "*a feeling of sudden newness and change came over her"* to *" hurr[y) out of the front gate and "* leave her husband by "*turn[ing] south "*(4.58).

Turning south, Janie enters her second marriage in which she is still wondering what love is. However, she just changes from escaping from chopping woods, plowing the land and from a "sixty *acres*" husband to be a store´s employee and a mayor´s wife.

It takes Janie more twenty-four years to wait for love and to learn in the hard way that good intentions and promises can be deceiving. At the beginning of the marriage Janie is admired for having a man like her husband, Joe Starks , a " *man wid principles* " that " *talk[s] about when he would be a big ruler of things with her reaping the benefits* " , that " *spoke for change and chance*", and that used to say to her : "*You aint never knowed what it was to be treated lak a lady and ah wants to be de one to show yuh*" (4.29,31).

As time goes by, Joe shows his chauvinist vision as he thinks Janie does not have intellectual skills to make a speech as he does and that the role of a wife is to be at home. Here it is explicit what was discoursed previously in this article about the construction of gender, that, according to Paulina Palmer, in fictional themes, the femininity is explored under a social perspective referring to "the oppressive effects of the stereotypical representation of women as sex object, wife and mother" (1989, p.13)

And the blooms off of things are taken day by day as Joe aggrandizes his deeds as a mayor and undervalues Janie's character. When Janie questions him about their relationship by saying: "it *jus' looks lak it keeps us in some way we ain't natural wid one 'nother. You'se always off talkin' and fixin' things, and Ah feels lak Ah'm jus' markin time. Hope it soon gits over*" (5.130), he does not take anything what she says into consideration as he is only concerns about himself and what he can make out of her in favor of his interests, as he says: "*Over, Janie? 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,'cause dat makes uh big woman outa you*" (5.131).

Hurston marks Jody´s voice of subordinator graphically through the negation adverb in capital letter: *"Her hair was NOT going to show in the store. It didn't seem sensible at all. That was because Joe never told Janie how jealous he was*" (6.31).His jealousness is beyond love boundary, it is regarding to property issues, one more prize he could appreciate and keep away from other men´s eyes. His jealousness is not related to Janie as a human being, embodied by feelings, thoughts and self-desires. To him, "She *was there in the store for him to look at, not those others*" (6.21).

Joe's superiority was related to everything which surrounded him. Hurston, through her hieroglyphic writing described in section one of this article, shows the way his things were announced. Hurston´s aesthetical style means to compare the Afro-American oral tradition to the ancient Egyptian form of writing. The following fragments epitomized her unique way to describe objects by using compound-words:

> The rest of the town looked like servants' quarters surrounding the "big house" "; "[...] and look at the way he painted it – a gloaty, sparkly white"; "[...] and then he spit in that gold-looking vase that anybody else would have been glad to put on their front-room table";" [...]. But he went further than that. He bought a little lady-size spitting pot for Janie to spit in (5.130)

Hurston, through Jody's speech, marks the phallocratic culture regarding gender presented in fictional themes, as mentioned by Paulina Palmer in this article, whose antagonistic visions define "man: mind, culture" and "woman: body, nature" (1989, p.14).

Janie keeps silence, but her silence is not an agreement to Jody's voice. She, "*gradually, pressed her teeth together and learned to hush*". Janie, after twenty-four years of marriage realizes that "the spirit of the marriage left the bedroom, therefore, only her body was there, as "*she put something in there to represent the spirit like a Virgin Mary image in a church*". Her illusion about love with Joe was over as "*the bed was no longer a daisy-field for her and Joe to play in*", that is, It was a place where she went and laid down when she was sleepy and tired (6.184).

As a profound psychological fictional being, Janie is sensitive to some unsetting questions, so "*sometimes she stuck out into the future, imagining her life different from what it was. But mostly she lived between her hat and her heels, with her emotional disturbances like shade patterns in the woods – come and gone with the sun"*. Through this passage it is possible to read that, in her cyclical internal conflicts, Janie swings from her dreams of a meaningful existence based on love to her current situation based on stable financial situation with Jody. She tries to rationalize her live with her

husband and then she figures out that "She *got nothing from Jody except what money could buy, and she was giving away what she didn't value*". Janie concludes that what Jody has given to her – a house, a store – is not important to her. So, she starts questioning herself what to do; she wants to find a way like she tried when she left her first husband. At that time, she went to the gate and was wondering to find the pollination; now however, she considers she is not that young girl anymore:" *Now and again she thought of a country road at sun-up and considered flight. To where? To what? Then too she considered thirty-five is twice seventeen and nothing was the same at all*" (7.1-2).

From that day on, Janie has voice and she speaks on the same level as Jody. One of the events is when she was insulted by Jody because she had cut a piece of tobacco wrong. Right after he humiliates her by meaning she makes mistakes because she is getting old, the third person narrator points out the new positions which Janie is assuming. Janie, by her own, shows Jody her intelligence has nothing to do with her appearance. The narrator seems to be always supporting Janie and witnessing everything. In this passage, Hurston evidences one of her linguistic marks through which she shifts the form of discourse, as mentioned previously by Rachel Farebrother , from "standard English towards dialect" in order to either play an observer role or to give authority to the characters who speak in black rural dialect with their unique grammar and vocabulary.

It is possible to observe in this footnote that the narrator´s voice follows the Standard English. The verb tense of *take*, for example, is correctly marked as *took*, the spelling of all words are also correct, the clause "*Janie took to the middle of the floor to talk right into Jody´s face*" is well-structured, whose syntax contains a subject (*Janie*) that follows a verb phrase (*took to the middle of the floor to talk right into Jody´s face*) with its terms jointly correctly. However, it is noticeable that in the black rural dialect spoken by Janie and Jody there is a unique spelling as "my" becomes "mah", "to" becomes "tuh", "a" becomes "uh", "can" becomes "kin", " I" becomes "Ah", "what" becomes "whut", "old" becomes "ole". Other feature is that the initial or final "th" is replaced by "d" as in "with" and "that" that become "wid" and "dat" respectively. Also, there is missing the auxiliary verb "did" as in Whut´s dat you say, Janie?" that in a Standard English would be "what´s that did you say, Janie?" .The singular or plural second person of the verb to be in the simple present tense which is "are" and when it is contracted is "´re" becomes "´se" as in "you´se". Also, in "You ain't no young courtin' gal", there is a double negative marked in "ain´t" and "no".[2]

All Janie's years of silence due to Jody's oppression comes towards him in a huge discharge of revenge in front of those people whom Jody used to talk from a high position. Hurston tactically describes how his masculinity was affected: "*Then Joe Starks realized all the meanings and his vanity bled like a flood. Janie had robbed him of his illusion of irresistible maleness that all men cherish, which was terrible*" (7.27). Janie publically removes his mask veiled by his pride and his reputation like "*she had cast down his empty armor before men and they had laughed, would keep on laughing*" (7.27). Jody is defeated by a woman and "*there was nothing to do in life anymore. Ambition was useless. And the cruel deceit of Janie! Making all that show of humbleness and scorning him all the time!* (7.27).

Even knowing Jody is sick and he is about to die, Janie manages to tell Jody everything she has not told him so far, she tells him that his promise of marriage was a deceit, how much he has suppressed her identity, by modeling her according to his needs

[2] The narrator: "Janie took to the middle of the floor to talk right into Jody's face, and that was

Something that hadn't been done before."

Janie: "Stop mixing' up mah doings wid mah looks, Jody. When you git through tellin' me

how tuh cut uh plug uh tobacco, then you kin tell me whether mah behind is on straight or not."

Jody: "Wha-whut's dat you say, Janie? You must be out yo' head."

Janie: "Naw, Ah ain't outa mah head neither."

Jody: "You must be. Talkin" any such language as dat."

Janie: "You de one started talkin' under people's clothes. Not me."

Jody: "Whut's de matter wid you, nohow? You ain't no young girl to be gettin' all insulted 'bout yo' looks. You ain't no young courtin' gal. You'se uh ole woman, nearly forty."

Janie: "Yeah, Ah'm nearly forty and you'se already fifty. How come you can't talk about dat?

Sometimes instead of always pointin' at me?" (7.13-21).

of a mayor, thus silencing her thoughts: "*Ah run off tuh keep house wid you in uh wonderful way. But you wasn't satisfied wid me de way Ah was. Naw! Mah own mind had tuh be squeezed and crowded out tuh make room for yours in me"* (8.39).

When Jody is dying, Hurston shows that Janie takes control of her life. When she thought what had happened to Jody she also "*thought about herself"*. Then she realizes that *had told her girl self to wait for her in the looking glass. It had been a long time since she had remembered. "* Janie notices her transformation as she sees her innocence was replaced by maturity and a beautiful woman: *"She went over to the dresser and looked hard at her skin and features. The young girl was gone, but a handsome woman had taken her place*" (8.45).

Janie's process of freedom continues after Jody's funeral. It seems that she needed to get rid of the material which had represented her prison – the head rags –.Hence, " *Before she slept that night she burnt up every one of her head rags and went about the house*" (9.3).

During her process of self-knowledge, Janie acquires self-confidence through which she realizes "*She had found a jewel down inside herself and she had wanted to walk where people could see her and gleam it around"* (9.4). She used to enjoy her freedom by having good time with her friend Phoeby. There used to have some admirers who were interested in marrying her, but Janie did not to want to "*hurry. Such things take time to think about"* (9.16).The reader can observe that Janie´s experiences have played a great role in her attitudes. The innocence of her youth, which made her to enter into two marriages impulsively, has been replaced by her maturity of a woman. Although Janie becomes more rational due to her maturity, she still dreams about love as the encounter of the pear bloom and the bee. Her sixteen years' idealization of love comes to her mind again when she meets Tea Cake, the guy who is twelve years younger than her, whom she falls in love with and becomes her third husband: "He *looked like the love thoughts of women. He could be a bee to a blossom – a pear tree blossom in the spring. He seemed to be crushing scent out of the world with his footsteps*" (11.68).

Hurston pictures Janie's consciousness about Tea Cake's representation in her life. Even though Janie is aware of their age difference, she realizes it is extremely strong and that she decides to live it, by not hiding her emotions; differently from her marriages with Logan and Jody, whose former husband wanted her to be his slave and the latter wanted her to live in a confinement, deprived of speaking and showing her herself: "*He drifted off into sleep and Janie looked down him and felt a self-crushing love. So her soul crawled out from its hiding place*" (13.83).

With Tea Cake, Janie was happy loving him and she could socialize and have a relationship in which she had voice. They both were involved with the community where they lived: "*The house was full of people every night. That is, all around the doorstep was full. Some were there to hear Tea Cake pick the box; some came to talk and tell stories*" (14.30). She felt she was inserted in the same social class of the community; among them she did not have to behavior superior as she had to be when she was the mayor's wife. Janie "would *think of the old days in the big white house and the store and laugh to herself."* Her life changed in many aspects that, sometimes, she thought "*What if Eatonville could see her now in her blue denim overalls and heavy shoes?"* Everything was a surprise: "*the crowd of people around her and a dice game on her floor!"* Janie feels free with Tea because only there "*she could listen and laugh and even talk some herself if she wanted to. She got so she could tell big stories herself from listening to the rest*" (14.31).

For Janie, loving Tea Cake also meant dying. She experiences pain and a kind of guilt when she sees Tea Cake is dying from rabies because he saved her from the mad dog when they were escaping from the hurricane. She wished she could die by drowning when they were attacked by the hurricane than to be killed through Tea Cake´s death: "*But to kill her through Tea Cake was too much to bear. Tea Cake, the son of Evening Sun, had to die for loving her"* (19.104).

Tragically, in the climax of the novel, Janie surprises the reader when she is capable, to protect herself, to kill the man she has really loved. When she realizes Tea Cake is not there anymore, that his body was taken by the ferocious animal that bitten him, she is strongly enough to shoot him. Perceiving he is not sane anymore and that he takes a riffle to kill her, Janie shoots him first. Janie, "desperate *fear for her"*, knew she could not think with her soul, but

rationally as "*she saw him stiffen himself all over as he leveled and took aim"*. Janie, by his scaring yes, noted *"the fiend in him must kill and Janie was the only thing living he saw*. (19.151).Hurston, in this episode, shows how Janie faces Tea Cake´s death. It possible to say she faces it naturally, even though she had to sacrifice her love. It is seems her consciousness was relieved as "*She had wanted him to live so much and he was dead"*; even sad, she was thankful for being able to experience love through him: "[...] *thanked him wordlessly for giving her the chance for loving service. She had to hug him tight for soon he would be gone, and she had to tell him for the last time*" (19.153)

Not only did Janie have to face Tea Cake's death, but the effects of the other's judgments about her homicide. Her trial was made of white people and, Hurston, through the third person point of view, details all the process in which Janie had to go through in order to be considered guilt or not guilt for killing Tea Cake.

The language plays an important role in this process, so Hurston uses language as a social code in a way to differ the black people from the white ones. It is possible to say there is the presence of Bakhtian's conceptions of dialogism. As previously mentioned in this paper, according to him, "each group speaks in its own "social dialect" – possesses its own unique language – expressing shared values, perspectives, ideology and norms. This resource of use of language may be presented when Janie is put into jail for killing Tea Cake and she knows she has to face all the white Jury. Thus, it seems that Janie, knowing she was going to talk to a group of people who uses a different communication code, switched her speech on the trial, from her dialectic to Standard English. It probably happened when the third person narrator observes that "*They all leaned over to listen while she talked" and* therefore "*first thing she had to remember was she was not at home*". Maybe, Hurston meant " *remember she was not at home*" she had better not use the black dialectic as this was her code to share values with her community and at that moment " *she was in the courthouse fighting something and it wasn't death*", thus in the court she had better use the code of the communication, Standard English, of the other group – the white ones – in order to be able " *to let them know how she and Tea Cake had been with one another so they could see she could never shoot Tea Cake out of malice*" (19.169-170).

In addition, regarding to Bakhtian's idea about language as a tool to share value, perspective and ideology, it is worthwhile mentioning that during the episode that Janie was in the court to be judged for killing Tea Cake, besides the white people who were there to judge her, Janie "*saw all of the colored people standing up in the back of the courtroom*". This group of colored people who lived with Janie and Tea Cake on the mock seems to share ideas as they wanted Janie to go to jail as they admired Tea Cake. They wanted to testify as, for them, Tea Cake was a good guy and did everything to make Janie happy; Janie killed him because of another man. It is noticeable they shared same idea about Janie as "*many were there against her that a light slap from each one of them would have beat her to death."* Janie "*felt them pelting her with dirty thoughts*". And the narrator adds: "*They were there with their tongues cocked and loaded, the only real weapon left to weak folks. The only killing tool they are allowed to use in the presence of white folks*" (19.156). Hurston means they can only use their voice as device of power against Janie before the white because it was the only right left from the oppressive period of whites upon the blacks.

Moreover, another voice acquired by Janie is to reveal a woman´s consciousness about male repression. After a long period of silence and domination in her second marriage with Jody Starks, Janie´s verbal expression, by using a kind of language which is not appropriated to women, sounds like a way to fight for equality. In this way, when Janie says: "*Stop mixing' up mah doings wid mah looks, Jody. When you git through tellin' me how tuh cut uh plug uh tobacco, then you kin tell me whether mah behind is on straight or not"* (7.14), by meaning "*mah behind"* her buttock, it is noticeable Jody´s negative reaction because he says: " *Wha- Wuts dat you say, Janie? You must be out yo head", "Talkin" any such language as dat"* (7.17).

5 CONCLUSION

Taking into consideration Zora Neale Hurston´s female protagonist in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, Janie Crawford, was inserted in the early twentieth century's society, which destiny was at

the mercy of the environmental circumstances, that is, being black, being a non-parental-uneducated-poor woman, it is possible to say she succeeded in her search of love, to acquire self-confidence, and the most importantly to find a place for herself by experiencing gains and loses.

In addition, it is also possible to mention that Huston characterized Janie as an uncommon woman whose depiction anticipates, in relation to the time of the fiction, conducts that are assumed by today's women. For instance, she did not care to leave one marriage to join another on the same day; as well as to marry a guy much younger than her, always moved to find love.

It may be said that the protagonist, at the end of the story, concluded she has learned about life as she has lived it fully. At this level, she has gotten a huge understanding about the individual learning as a whole. She asserts that there are two things people must do by themselves as anybody cannot do them for themselves: to trust God and to go in searching of your life's purposes:

> It's uh known fact Pheoby, you got tuh go there tuh know there. Yo' papa and yo' mama and nobody else can't tell yuh and show yuh. Two things everybody's got tuh do fuh theyselves. They got tuh go tuh God, and they got tuh find out about livin' fuh theyselves (20.9).

Moreover, it is worthwhile adding Hurston's tactics on the characters' black dialect language. It shows her authenticity in black writings. Her skill enriched the mood of the fictions and thus became the reading verisimilar.

Additionally, it is noticeable that Hurston's background as an anthropologist valued the African culture bringing its traditional story-tales as well as its own customs as folklore and beliefs. Throughout the novel, the townspeople used to get together at the porch of the mayor's store to tell tales about creatures or trick their folks. One day, they tricked one folk of themselves telling him his mule was used by the women of the community as a washing board and hangers as his mule was so thin that only its bones could be used to do something: *"Yeah, Matt, dat Mule so skinny till de women is usin his rib bones fuh uh rub-board, and hanging things out on his hock-bones tuh dry"* (6.15).

Significantly, it is worthwhile mentioning why the author chose *Their Eyes Were Watching God* as the name of the book. Throughout the fiction, it was noted that nature was made by God, so he is present everywhere. For Janie, for example, God would bring her hope as "She *knew that God tore down the old world every evening and built a new one by sun-up. It was wonderful to see it take form with the sun and emerge from the gray dust of its making*" (3.31).

It is possible to say that he is also omniscient as in some passages of the fiction the characters assert that God knows or knew about something. For instance, Janie says that God knows she would not do anything to hurt Jody: "*[…] but God in heben knows Ah wouldn't do one thing tuh hurt nobody. It's too underhand and mean*" (8.6).

Thus, from a religion perspective, "*Their eyes were watching God"* could be interpreted that the characters are so dependent to God that even when "*They seemed to be staring at the dark, [but] their eyes were watching* God" (18.39).This strong faith put on God would be explained by the historical aspects when black slaves' fate was determined by the whites, who denied them equal opportunities.

However, it also manifests the hope in God, who does not deny to whoever trusts in him, the perspective of a better world, in which justice may be present and solidarity may fraternize to everybody. This is also Hurston´s purpose that, being aware of the differences between blacks and whites and between men and women, made out of her writing an instrument of denunciation against the oppression and an instrument of affirmation of the right to identity and difference.

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