International Journal of Social Science Archives

ISSN: 2707-8892

Available at *www.ijssa.com*

International Journal of Social Science Archives, April - June, 2024, 7(2), 1044-1051

Women's Restraints: A Viewpoint from Beauvoir's Otherization Theory in Zora Neale Hurston's Their Eyes Were Watching God

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***Abstract*:** In Zora Neale Hurston's Their Eyes Were Watching God, women's constraints are depicted from the standpoint of Beauvoir's concept of otherization. Synopsis Using Simone de Beauvoir's theory of Otherization as a framework, this term paper examines how women's limitations are portrayed in Hurston's book Their Eyes Were Watching God. The main character, Janie Crawford, represents how being a Black woman intersects with her identity, influencing her experiences of marginalization and Otherization. In order to challenge established gender norms and highlight the possibilities for women to overcome social restraints, the study examines Janie's journey from conformity to self-discoveryThe notion of women as subservient is disrupted by Janie's leadership and her willingness to face oppression, which has feminist implications of agency and intersectionality. The enduring impact of her character highlights the continuous pursuit of self-empowerment and gender equality. This paper presents a thorough examination of Janie's experiences and their wider societal repercussions using Beauvoir's notion of Otherization, acknowledging the many ways in which women's identities and agency are compromised within patriarchal structures.

Key words: Depiction, God's Eyes, Otherization, Embodies, Self-empoverment Challenges

1. Introduction

Their Eyes Were Watching God, a book by Zora Neale Hurston, takes us on a trip through the intricacies of identification and self-discovery in the African American society in the early 1900s. The central theme of the narrative is Janie Crawford's quest for empowerment and self-realization. Beneath this personal journey, though, is a deep investigation of how society—men in particular—frequently views women as less significant and forces them into subservient roles. Black feminism was gaining traction at this time, and women like Hurston were questioning the stereotypical roles that Black women played in society. Black women in this era faced numerous obstacles as a result of the racist, sexist, and classist oppressive system. They had to fight against many kinds of discrimination, and Hurston wrote about these fights based on her personal experiences. The protagonist of the book, Janie Crawford, is a representation of a feminist woman who endures mistreatment in her marriages. She is objectified, silenced, and made a servant of males. Hurston uses Janie's tale to highlight how women are frequently reduced to supporting roles in society that are defined only in terms of men. Hurston's writing was initially attacked for ignoring the difficult parts of Black existence, but it eventually gained recognition as a significant body of work in African American literature. Hurston aimed to raise awareness of the injustice and oppression that Black women face within their own communities. Understanding why Hurston portrayed the effects of a dominant

society that treated women as inferior and subjected them to men is the researcher's main objective. They want to demonstrate how Hurston's depiction of women's suffering is a feminist work. The work has numerous instances that emphasize the status and restrictions of women, as seen by Janie's tale, which describes how she was considered as "Other" from an early age. This is being better understood by the researcher through the application of Simone de Beauvoir's notion of "Otherization." French feminist and philosopher Beauvoir questioned why society viewed women as less significant than men. She maintained that women were viewed as the objects of masculine dominance and desire, and that they were frequently defined in relation to males. In summary, Hurston's book paints a compelling picture of the challenges Black women face in a world where men predominate. Janie's experiences demonstrate this idea of Otherization, as she encounters marginalization due to her gender and color. Throughout her first two marriages, Janie is denied agency and made into an object for her husbands' pleasure, where she is viewed as a property to be managed. This serves to support the idea that males primarily use women to fulfill their convenience and wishes. It also draws attention to the manner in which society—mainly men—"Otherizes" women, making them seem less important or deserving of respect. Janie Crawford, a lady who defies expectations and social norms, is the protagonist of the story. The world she travels through is patriarchal, with men defining women's identities and worth. To better grasp this, we'll employ Simone de Beauvoir's concept of "Otherization," which elucidates the ways in which dominant groups shape the identities of affected groups. Feminist philosopher and prominent existentialist Simone de Beauvoir introduced the idea of Otherization. We would like to know how Janie's journey reflects the larger issues of women who are "Otherized" and how she breaks out from this pattern to establish her identity and agency by using Beauvoir's theory (De Beauvoir 122). Simone de Beauvoir's notion of Otherization provides a strong theoretical framework for our investigation. We'll look closely at a few key sections of Their Eyes Were Watching God to find examples of Otherization. Hurston's examination of women's realities and the limitations they face is highly consistent with this perspective. Through in-depth textual analysis, we will show how Janie challenges this pattern and defies the gender norms of her day. By analyzing Janie's growth and her interactions with other characters, we'll demonstrate how she confronts and overcomes the limitations of Otherization. In the end, we will have a deep understanding of how Zora Neale Hurston's literary works fight and question women's marginalization, contributing to the present conversation about gender norms and identity in literature. This study aims to provide light on the difficulties women faced in a male-dominated society where they were often perceived as less important and weaker. We will use feminist theory and Simone de Beauvoir's concept of Otherization to analyze how Zora Neale Hurston's book highlights the challenges faced by women living under the control of powerful men. We will also look at how the attitudes and ideals that pervaded a society ruled by men led to the unfair treatment of women. The book's main character, Janie Crawford, experiences racism and sexism as forms of oppression, which she endures continuously from her early years until she makes an effort to defend herself. During her whole journey, Janie is treated as an outsider since she can't fit in with a culture that views her as the "other." Her story reveals the underlying workings of society's treatment of women and highlights the challenges Black women face. It highlights the oppressive patriarchal system that mistreats and silences women and challenges conventional thought.

1.1 Research Questions

a) What larger societal ramifications result from the way Janie's leadership is portrayed in the context of inferiority and otherization?
b) How much does Janie adhere to or deviate from the presumptions that guide the male's behavior toward women?
c) How does gender inequality cause her husband to misinterpret Janie's?

1.2 Research Objectives

a) To evaluate Zora Neale Hurston's Their Eyes Were Watching God in light of Simone de Beauvoir's theory of Otherization.
b) To evaluate how Otherization has affected the novel's female characters.
c) To investigate the novel's contribution to feminist discourse and its applicability in the current discourse surrounding women's identity and rights.

1.3 Research Aims

The primary goal of this research project is to deliver an in-depth investigation of the complicated structures that

exist within patriarchal structures and result in women's marginalization and subjugation. It aims to make clear the underlying mechanisms that often treat women like objects and place them in submissive roles, disregarding their own perspectives. Moreover, this research aims to clarify the seeming passivity exhibited by certain women when confronted with exploitation and dominance, exploring the multifaceted causes of their unwillingness to speak up and resist being objectified.In order to accomplish these goals, this study will analyze and illuminate the different aspects of this complex problem by drawing on the ground-breaking concepts presented by Simone de Beauvoir in her landmark work, "The Second Sex." This research delves deeply into patriarchal structures in an effort to disentangle the complex web of power relationships, accepted social mores, and cultural influences that support the objectification and subjugation of women. This research aims to provide a profound understanding of the factors contributing to women's vulnerability in such systems and to shed light to the ongoing discourse on gender equality and the dismantling of oppressive structures.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The study's importance stems from its examination of how Zora Neale Hurston's Their Eyes Were Watching God both supports and refutes Simone de Beauvoir's definition of the otherization of women. Through this lens of analysis, the study illuminates the novel's continuing significance in illuminating the trials and victories of women who want to claim their agency, go beyond social expectations, and go on self-discovery journeys. This synthesis contributes to the ongoing discussion on feminism, gender roles, and empowerment by highlighting the importance of literature as a tool for examining and challenging societal norms and prejudices.

2. Literature Review

According to Ratnawati and Hernawati (2019), they observed God looking into opposition against the objectification of women. They assert that Janie Crawford has resisted objectification throughout her life by utilizing a range of coping strategies. Her encounters with other women, particularly her mother and Nanny, have influenced her perception of herself as a woman, which is where these strategies originate. Janie's ability to appreciate herself, her independence, and her self-reliance are the main reasons behind her resistance to objectification. Janie's ties with her mother and Nanny are the cornerstones of her strength and fortitude. She is strengthened by their example and educated by their struggles and life lessons. Her relationships with others are one of the most significant aspects of her resistance. Janie's refusal to accept Jody's objectification and her assertion of her intelligence and worth are clear examples of her self-esteem and respect. She refuses to let the expectations of men or her looks be the only things that define who she is. She is able to defend herself when needed because of her self-worth. The article Racism, Feminism, and Language in Zora Neale Hurston (2015) Neale Their Eyes Were Watching God by Hurston explores how Hurston tackles racial, feminist, and linguistic themes in her book.According to this article, opinions on Hurston's portrayal of African Americans' problems have been divided. A few of her male peers believed that she oversimplified racial issues. But a further examination of her work reveals a more nuanced viewpoint. Hurston adeptly depicts the obstacles encountered by women in addition to African Americans. Hurston's ability to portray these complicated topics without using hate or rage, which is something that many other African American male writers of her era, like Richard Wright, did, is one of her literary assets. Rather, she employs the persona of Janie Crawford to offer a compelling depiction of the African American woman's journey throughout the early 1991. Hurston gives close attention to the finer points of her characters, such as the hue of their skin and the words they employ. These components enable her to accurately depict African American women in that era. Despite social pressure to keep quiet, Janie Crawford has a distinctive voice because of her decision to speak in an African American vernacular. Their Eyes Were Watching God, according to Tasharofi (2018), is a potent examination of feminism and domestic abuse. The essay highlights that the aforementioned book is more than just a heartbreaking tale of love. It is a deft examination of themes related to race, gender, and class in America at that time. Hurston's work Their Eyes Were Watching God clarifies domestic abuse.It focuses mostly on feminism and the major issue of sexism within it. It centers on an issue known as domestic violence, which is the harm that spouses inflict on one another in their homes. This can occur when someone yells or strikes someone. The primary character, a black lady, experiences domestic abuse at the hands of her successive husbands. Every husband approaches it in a unique way. The purpose of this piece is to illustrate the black woman's resistance to this abuse. It's all about self-discovery. The subject of Black feminism in Hurston's book Their Eyes Were Watching God is the subject of this 2018 essay by Long Shi. Examining the book through the lens of black feminism is crucial, and this piece explains how it is portrayed. It talks on the struggles and

hardships of the African American women in the book, especially Janie Crawford, the protagonist. It draws attention to how Janie's journey in the book mirrors the challenges and goals faced by Black women in a sexist and racist society. The piece also looks at how Janie's connections with the many men in the narrative highlight the nuanced intersections between gender and race. It implies that the problems Black women face in their quest for strength and self-discovery are more broadly represented by the metaphors she encountered with these males. It is a significant work in the field of Black feminism because it provides a forum for examining the particular struggles and resiliency faced by Black women. After examining the body of scholarship on Zora Neale Hurston's novel Their Eyes Were Watching God, it was evident that feminism, domestic violence, postcolonial feminism, and Black feminism have all been studied in relation to the book. However, a crucial viewpoint that has been mostly disregarded and omitted in earlier research has been dubbed "Otherization" and is based on Simone DeBeauvoir's thesis. By using De Beauvoir's theory of Otherization to analyze the novel, this study seeks to close this gap. This essay aims to explore how this idea relates to the novel's characters, especially Janie Crawford, the main character, and how she is marginalized or viewed as the "other" or different in the story. By doing thus, it seeks to offer a novel viewpoint and its relevance to broader themes of race, gender, and identity.

3. Research Methodology

This study emphasizes textual analysis while using a qualitative research methodology. Textual analysis is the process of carefully analyzing and interpreting a text; in this case, Zora Neale Hurston's novel Their Eyes Were Watching God. This study's primary objective is to examine the text using Simone de Beauvoir's The Second Sex as a theoretical framework.

4. Discussion

Simone de Beauvoir explores (critically) the premise that women are perceived as other in society in her groundbreaking work The Second Sex. Says s

"**Man is defined as a human being**
and a woman as a female – whenever she behaves as
a human being she is said to imitate the male." (Page 22 of De Beauvoir).

De Beauvoir's comments underline the tendency in society to see women as "the other," that is, as someone whose identity is decided by males. This otherization, which weakens women's identities and casts them in a subservient position, is what defines women's oppression at its core. Furthermore, De Beauvoir investigates the idea of freedom and how it is restricted for women. As she notes, **"She is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential;**
she is defined and differentiated with reference to man
and not he with reference to her." She is the Other;
he is the Subject and the Absolute." (Page 23 of De Beauvoir).

De Beauvoir highlights how uneven power relations result from the otherization of women in this particular situation. Women's freedom is limited because they are perceived as "the Other" and do not have the same degree of subjectivity and autonomy as men. De Beauvoir also emphasizes how society frequently forces women into roles that prolong their subordination. She states,

"**Women have always been man's prey,**
and her destiny has been dependent on him."

This realization clarifies the historical context in which women's roles have been established by patriarchal norms. It shows how women's independence has been gradually curtailed by assigning them to positions that submit to the desires and expectations of males. As De Beauvoir's critique makes clear, it is imperative to challenge these restrictions and reconsider women's roles in society in order to achieve real gender equality. These quotes from Simone de Beauvoir's The Second Sex offer a profound comprehension of the constraints imposed on women's autonomy and the pervasive marginalization of women. They set the stage for a discussion of how these concepts are expressed in Zora Neale Hurston's book Their Eyes Were Watching God and how Janie, the main character, overcomes these constraints.

He hair was not going to show in the store ....
That night he ordered Janie to tie up her hair
around the store. That was all. She was there
in store for him to look at, not those others.

In a chapter of Their Eyes Were Watching God by Zora Neale Hurston, Janie is told to tie up her hair about the store. The book is a clear example of how women, like Janie in this instance, are introduced to the concept of "Otherization." This term refers to the practice of seeing some individuals or groups as less than human, which usually leads to their marginalization or objectification. It comes from Simone de Beauvoir's The Second Sex. In the book, Janie's husband Joe Starks objectifies and otherizes her. He has her tie up her hair so that other guys can't see her, trying to make her into something he owns and controls Restricting Janie's freedom and controlling her appearance is a form of otherization since it regards her as something that other people, particularly males, shouldn't see. De Beauvoir's theory of Otherization, as it relates to this literature, highlights how women like as Janie are sometimes positioned in the role of the "Other," treated less as distinct individuals with agency and autonomy and more like objects or possessions. This control over Janie's looks and her confinement to the shop for Joe to observe serve to further reinforce the concept that women are commonly objectified and denied the freedom to express themselves or connect with the world on their own terms. This line serves as an example of how Hurston's male characters objectify and manipulate women, like Janie, who are Otherized in the book. Understanding how gender relations are portrayed in the book—in which women like Janie are marginalized and denied their full humanity—is made easier by considering De Beauvoir's idea of Otherization.

"so she put on one of her bought dresses and
went up the new cut road all dressed in wine
colored red. Her silken ruffles rustied and
muttered about her. The other woman had on
percale and calico with here and there a head
rag among the olders ones". (Hurston 48-49)

The clothing choices Janie and the other women in the village choose serve as a painful illustration of how women are Otherized and how their agency is constrained within the framework of gender dynamics in the passage above from Zora Neale Hurston's book Their Eyes Were Watching God. The other ladies are depicted as dressing more simply in calico and percale, with some even donning head rags; Janie, on the other hand, is described as wearing a wine-colored crimson outfit that stands out as more opulent and stylish. The distinction in social and economic status between Janie and the other women in the neighborhood is emphasized by the difference in her clothes. According to Simone De Beauvoir, the practice of considering particular people or groups as inferior or different results in their marginalization. Janie stands out from the other ladies in this situation because of her clothing, which may indicate that she is more autonomous or sophisticated. Since Janie wears different clothes than other people, it can be interpreted as an instance of Otherization in which people view her as "Other" or an outsider. This paragraph also emphasizes how cultural norms and expectations—which are frequently upheld by men—reduce the freedom of women. Janie's attire contrasts with the traditional and conservative clothes worn by the other women, symbolizing her desire for freedom of expression. This illustrates how women, like Janie, have few options and are expected to live up to social norms that are frequently created by men.

'Thank you fuh yo' compliments, but mah wife
don't know nothin 'bout speech-makin'. Ah
never never married her for nothin 'lak dat.
She's uh woman and her place is in de home" (Hurston 51).

The line that follows is from Their Eyes Were Watching God by Zora Neale Hurston, in which Joe Starks cautions readers not to expect speeches from his wife, Janie. He believes that women should keep to themselves and communicate in private. The idea that women's roles and voices should be limited is linked to Simone De Beauvoir's concept of Otherization, which maintains that women are perceived as inferior or different in society (De Beauvoir 155). De Beauvoir explains in The Second Sex that traditionally, women have been seen as men's property or choice.

"You ain't got no particular place. It's wherever Ah need
yuh. Git uh move on yuh, and dat quick,".

In essence, he is otherizing her. This assertion echoes Simone de Beauvoir's findings in The Second Sex and illustrates how men in the book saw women as tools at their disposal. In The Second Sex, De Beauvoir examines the ways in which males have historically molded women's identities and roles. Women were often seen as tools or instruments to fulfill the desires or requirements of males. When Joe states that Janie belongs wherever he needs her, he is objectifying her. The only autonomous identity and purpose he finds in her is her service to him. Joe's directive to "get uh move on yuh, and dat quick" demonstrates the limitations placed on women's freedom. He

makes a strong assumption that Janie will obey him, which supports the idea that women should submit to men. This is in line with De Beauvoir's analysis of how cultural expectations and conventions limit women's autonomy. De Beauvoir claims that historically, women's freedom has been restricted and their status has been determined in relation to males in societies run by men. This is further supported by Joe's statement, which shows that he views Janie as a passive extension of himself lacking free will or action. Women like Janie encountered difficulties in expressing their own identities and ambitions, which are highlighted by this Otherization and restriction of freedom. It also reflects the larger socioeconomic milieu in which they lived. Janie challenges Joe Starks in Their Eyes Were Watching God, breaking gender norms when she submits to him for years. She says to him,

"You done lived wid me for twenty years
and you don't half know me at all. Ah'm
colored and Ah'm woman and Ah'm strong
and Ah'm hard and Ah love you" (Hurston .

This moment represents a significant subversion of gender norms. Janie's assertion that Joe

"don't half know me at
all" marks a crucial moment of gender
subversion in the novel (Hurston 86).

She challenges the assumption that women are easily understood or defined by men, which aligns with Simone de Beauvoir's ideas. De Beauvoir argues that women have historically been objectified and reduced to their perceived attributes, limiting their complexity as individuals. Janie's statement.

"Ah'm colored
and Ah'm woman and Ah'm strong and Ah'm
hard,"

She won't accept being boiled down to a basic, one-dimensional stereotype of a woman. De Beauvoir's argument that women should embrace their uniqueness and reject stereotypes is reflected in this subversion of gender norms (De Beauvoir 160). Gender standards are further challenged when Janie declares her love for Joe. Men tended to be more emotionally restrained, whereas women were expected in many civilizations to show their love and affection in an open manner. Janie defies gender stereotypes and asserts her agency by being open to showing her affection.

"***You ain't got no particular place. It's***
wherever Ah need yuh. Git uh move on yuh,
and dat quick" (Hurston 29.

As demonstrated in the example above, Simone de Beauvoir's findings in The Second Sex are echoed by Janie's experiences with Joe Starks, which provide a devastating depiction of women's suffering. According to De Beauvoir, women have traditionally been objectified, regarded like the "Other," and subjected to oppression by men. This objectification is reflected in Joe's claim that Janie should be at Joe's disposal and has no special place. Even though Joe's domineering actions cause her pain, Janie eventually musters the courage to stand up for herself and pursue independence. Her quest for resistance and self-discovery serves as the novel's main focus. Women, as De Beauvoir points out, have been denied the ability to determine who they are and have instead been socialized to accept their place as the "Other". Later on, Janie defied Joe, affirmed her individuality, and chose to part ways with him, all of which are symbolic of her resistance to the misery that was thrust upon her. She decides she can no longer live in servitude because she knows she deserves more. This tenacity and resolve are in line with De Beauvoir's advice to women to acknowledge their pain, oppose oppression, and claim their independence and uniqueness (De Beauvoir 144).

"Her place was wherever he was" (Hurston, p. 45).

Another instance of Janie's otherization and her eventual subversion of gender roles can be seen in the above passage. When she is married to Joe Starks, Joe, who becomes the mayor of Eatonville, expects Janie to conform to the traditional roles of a mayor's wife. He asserts,

"***Her place was wherever he was" (Hurston, p. 45).***

This passage emphasizes the notion that Janie is really Joe's public persona on steroids. Simone de Beauvoir's concept of otherization is exemplified by Janie's encounter with Joe Starks in Their Eyes Were Watching God. According to De Beauvoir, women have always been viewed as the "Other" in relationships with men because of their status as spouses or companions rather than as autonomous beings. This otherization is reflected in Joe's belief that Janie belongs wherever he goes. He doesn't care about her preferences or independence; he sees her mostly as a representation of his position and power. Janie plays the obedient mayor's wife at first, fitting into this

character. Nevertheless, as Janie challenges these gender norms, her character changes. She gradually starts to question Joe's authority and make her own decisions. She understands that she is more than just Joe's tool for achieving his goals.

Janie's desire for self-awareness and her final rejection of Joe's authority serve as examples of her journey from otherization to self-assertion. This modification is in line with De Beauvoir's view that women ought to define themselves independently of social conventions and according to their own standards.

"They seemed to be staring at the dark, but
their eyes were watching God"

Compared to her previous romantic relationships, Janie's marriage to Tea Cake represents a significant shift. Although the rumors in the village portray their tendency to ignore her and accuse her of having ulterior motives, Janie and Tea Cake's marriage is characterized by genuine love and friendship. The peasants' unfavorable opinions are clear illustrations of Simone de Beauvoir's theory of otherization. They are unable to see Janie's agency and her freedom to pursue her goals because they view their relationship through the prism of prejudices and assumptions. Their metaphorical "staring at the dark" refers to their inability to understand Janie's choices when they are not understood in the framework of social standards. However, Janie's friendship with Tea Cake provides greater insight into her journey toward independence and self-awareness. Unlike her previous marriages, when she felt pressured to conform to prescribed roles, Janie feels authentic and free with Tea Cake. Their love is real, and Tea Cake pushes her to enjoy life on her terms. In this context, the phrase "Their Eyes Were Watching God" takes on a deeper meaning. It suggests that Janie's actions are driven by her inner desires and her quest for spiritual and personal satisfaction rather than being affected by social conventions. She challenges gender stereotypes in a number of ways, such as her rejection of conventional wisdom and acceptance of a partnership based on love rather than money.

"***She was stretched on her back beneath the***
pear tree, falling through the universe. . . . He
drifted off to sleep and Janie looked down on
him and felt a self-crushing love"

Janie's activities in this paragraph show how she challenges gender expectations and uses her search for love and freedom as a tool for self-discovery. Again, comprehension of Simone de Beauvoir's idea of otherization is necessary to make sense of this change. Janie defies conventional expectations of women by choosing to work hard alongside Tea Cake. Women were expected to be emotionally and financially reliant on males in the past. However, Janie's choice to work in the dirt with Tea Cake demonstrates her determination to actively participate in their relationship and assert her independence. The way that Janie describes "falling through the universe" suggests transcendence and freedom. It symbolizes her realizing that she is not limited by societal duties but rather that her identity is wide and interwoven with the world. Tea Cake's commitment to her has been described as "selfcrushing," demonstrating the intensity of her sentiments and her willingness to defy social norms in pursuit of her own happiness and pleasure. This marks a significant sea change in Janie's journey towards self-awareness. She forms a stronger relationship with Tea Cake that transcends gender stereotypes and offers her the self-assurance to live fully. By showcasing her will to take charge of her own destiny, Janie dispels the myth that women ought to be timid.

"***She pulled in her horizon like a great fishnet.***
Pulled it from around the waist of the world
and draped it over her shoulder. So much of life
in its meshes! She called in her soul to come
and see" (Hurston, p. 184).

Janie's experience of managing Tea Cake's illness and eventually having to kill him in this tragic point of the novel illustrates her transgression of established gender roles as well as her otherization as a woman. The idea of otherization by Simone de Beauvoir is useful in comprehending this intricate circumstance once more. Tea Cake's condition puts Janie in a difficult situation because she needs to take immediate action. Being a woman, she is frequently expected to take care of and nurture her partner emotionally, acting as their caregiver and nurturer in a relationship. But Janie is compelled by circumstances to play a position that defies gender norms. She's got to make a decision that usually belongs to men—a life-or-death one. This is a stark contrast to her previous experiences as a woman who was objectified and oppressed by her husbands. It is significant to see the metaphor

wherein Janie uses a fishnet to pull in her horizon. It stands for her self-reliance and resilience in the face of adversity. Through assuming the burden of responsibilities, adventures, and magnificence, she metaphorically recovers her authority. By casting the horizon over her shoulder, it seems as though she is taking control of her destiny and the difficult choices she must make. Janie's desire to move beyond societal standards and her search for self-awareness are demonstrated by her call to her soul to come see. It implies that she is confronting existential issues related to life and death, taking ownership of her actions.

5. Conclusion

Janie Crawford, the main character of Zora Neale Hurston's book Their Eyes Were Watching God, embarks on a deep journey of self-discovery and empowerment. The concept of otherization is central to Janie's experiences, as Simone de Beauvoir elucidates in her seminal work The Second Sex. In order to express her agency and challenge gender norms, Janie must contend with social attempts to marginalize her as a woman. The pattern of textual evidence and analysis that has been employed to support this discussion illustrates how she overcomes these challenges. The objectification and subjugation of women in her day's culture is exemplified by Janie's early marriages. Logan Killicks, her first husband, considered her as a piece of property that needed to be handled, while Joe Starks, her second husband, attempted to suppress her and her dreams. These relationships represent the systemic otherization of women, wherein the goals and expectations of males shape their identity as individuals. Throughout her several marriages and her ultimate choice to be with Tea Cake, Janie has shown her desire for self-realization and love on her terms. Janie encounters moments of subversion during her travels, when she opposes conventional conventions and asserts her individualism. She defies gender norms by pursuing her goals and hobbies with enthusiasm, as seen by her decision to break up with Joe Starks and her relationship with Tea Cake. Since it demonstrates how she rejects gender conventions and takes control of her own destiny, the storm scenario, in which Janie must decide between saving her life and her own, is the ideal illustration of her agency and inner strength. Simone de Beauvoir's concept of otherization offers a useful framework for analyzing Janie's experiences. It highlights the ways in which society—and the males in her life in particular—tries to limit her choices, silence her voice, and define her only in terms of their desires. However, Janie's journey stands for the possibility of autonomy and self-awareness. By taking the vast net of life and carrying it on her own shoulders, she metaphorically reclaims her own agency. The themes of self-discovery, autonomy, gender roles, and otherization are skillfully woven throughout the narrative of Their Eyes Were Watching God. Janie Crawford's persona shifts from one that craves control and conformity to one that questions conventions and seeks the truth. Her story is a metaphor for the transformative force that emerges when women accept their agency, sever the ties that bind them to otherness, and take control of their own lives. According to Simone de Beauvoir, women may overcome their status as "the other" and become distinctive, just like Janie did in the novel.

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