FEMINISM APPROACH-BASED CHARACTER ANALYSIS ON ZORA NEALE HURSTON’S THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD

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APPROVEMENT

Feminism Approach-Based Character Analysis on Zora Neale Hurston’s Their

Eyes Were Watching God Novel

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ABSTRACT


This analysis is aimed at finding out the character of Janie Crawford as a main character viewed from feminism concept. The writer uses descriptive-qualitative analysis as the method to analyze the relationship both the main character and the feminism concept.

In this analysis, the writer finds out the main female character, Janie as independent woman, struggler, courageous, responsible, self-confident, outspoken, mature, and decisive woman. She also finds out that Janie is a person who realizes of her oppression and makes her courage to struggle against the cruel patriarchy and defeat everyman. She deals with the oppression according to the feminism concept.

According to feminism concept, woman is aware on her oppressed status in society and household. Feminist suggests that women can stand up and be independent. They can survive and overcome the oppression and repression by men, to avoid themselves from objectivity of men. Those things are done by Janie in Their Eyes Were Watching God novel. Janie prefers to leave her husband, so that she gets her real identity and freedom.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

All praises be to Allah SWT. The real writer’s guide, who mysteriously guides him in the process of making this thesis. Peace and salutation be upon the greatest prophet Muhammad SAW, his family, companions and adherents.

On this occasion, the writer wants to say many thanks to his beloved parents and sisters, who always pray for my success in the night and the day. Their sacrifice will never be equally paid. The writer also wants to give his gratitude to Inayatul Chusna, M.Hum, as the writer advisor for her time, guidance, patient, kindness, and contribution in correcting and helping him in finishing this thesis.

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Jakarta, September 25th 2007

The writer
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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma of the university or other institute of higher learning, except where due acknowledgement has been made in the text.

Jakarta, September 25th, 2007

Ajeng Annisa Safitri
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

In the early of the 20th centuries, the issues of women equality in economic, politic, social, etc, which called feminism started to flourish after it born in the 18th centuries. It started to flourish based on most of history that women have generally has fewer legal right and opportunities than men do. Therefore, feminist’s criticism comes up to fight for their equal rights. “Feminism” is a movement, and a set of belief, that question gender inequality. Feminist believes that women have been subordinated through men’s greater power, variously expressed in different arenas such as social, economic, politic, and household aspects.

Weedon (1987) explains about the concept and theory of feminism, that a concept of feminism is a politic, some direct politic change a relation in a power of life between men and women in society. This power includes all of the structure of aspect of life: family, education, culture, and authority. Those aspects of life decide who, what, for whom and to be what kind of women are.1 If the concept of feminism is a politic, it is about theory that is recognized as a women’s view toward a system of patriarchy.

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1 Sugihastuti Suharto, Kritik Sastra Feminis Teori dan Aplikasinya,(Yogyakarta: PUSTAKA PELAJAR, 2002), p.6
Based on the concept of feminism Mary Wollstonecraft, an English feminist, wrote a book that convinced many people that women were the equals of men. Around 1850, a group of feminist in the United State issued a “Declaration of independent for women” with the help of famous Susan B. Anthony; the feminist began to be heard. Both in Europe and America women began to fight for their rights. Gradually the feminist idea grew.

According to the feminist, the traditional values become the basic cause of the inferiority or the subordinate position for women. Traditional values, such as in Victorian era, propose to all women for only be good wives and only live in private and domestic sphere to take care the household, and to be passive and dependent on men. They ought not to be active in public sphere.² It means that women are confined by many rules in household and societies. Those values are being inhibited by women to be their identity. Feminist believes that when women profess the traditional thought she becomes dependent individual. Usually she depends on men: father, brother, or husband.

New word for “Sexism” or “gender” opened a new page or horizon in women’s life, neither related to the family, sexes, and job, or something related to education and training. Gender are differences between men and women in their characteristic that formed by the social construction or culture. Gender comes from human thought, and human itself can change it from time to time. Such as, in

traditional thought, men are strong, rational, masculine, and courageous, etc. women are gentle, beautiful, emotional, maternity, etc.

The feminist movements’ impact is widely known in 1960’s, not only for women, but also widely to all society of America. Those movements create an awareness of the societies about the inferiority of women situations. Many arenas of the society give a great supports to increase women’s status.

Feminism is a social theory or a kind of women’s emancipation movement, which focuses on the efforts of societies’ awareness onto the suppression and gender injustice upon women in societies. Nevertheless, more than a social theory, feminism is a “leader” for both women and men who want to change this situation; the enclosing societies that inhibit women’s right.

As an interdisciplinary field of study, women’s studies incorporate theoretical insight from several academic disciplines, including anthropology cultural studies, economics, history, philosophy, politics, psychology, and sociology. In turn, feminist scholarship has made significant contributions to these disciplines. Women’s studies also draw on feminist theories that primarily seek to understand and explain women’s experiences. Therefore, the feminist tried to liberate women from their inferior knowledge. They do their struggles by making women as a field of study, so that gender studies or woman studies have occurred after occurred before. In relationship to literature, there is a new mainstream, which tries to discover about

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women in literary work and anything related to women in literary work. This is primary concept of feminism on literary criticism. The study aims to enrich the knowledge about experiences, needs, and life of women. Afterwards the study that makes women as a field of study that occurred in the literary works is denied as feminist literary criticism.

There are many approaches to study the literary work, but to study the image of women in the literary work will be better to use feminism approach. It can be analyzed through that approach if the literary work related to a woman as one of the character in the story or talked about women. For some examples of literary work, which based on feminism approach, we can take a novel written by William Shakespeare’s *Midsummer Night’s Dream*.

*A Midsummer Night’s Dream* drama is one other example of literary work, which extends feminist movement. It presents the patriarchal order by bringing all the female characters under the rule of their husband or their father. However, the female characters are subordinate through men’s power. In short, the play presents the return to the patriarchal order, precisely, it happens during the reign of Elizabeth I.

In this case, the writer analyzes one of the literary work through feminist approach. That work is an African-American Novel, entitled Their *Eyes Were Watching God* written by Zora Neale Hurston. The writer chooses this novel because the main character is a woman who represents feminism concept, which raises high level of women struggles and powers. The novel is meant to show an image of a

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black woman, which is unable to find her identity\textsuperscript{5} under her husband’s authority and her society laws. Therefore, the writer can choose a feminism concept to know the image and woman’s movement in this novel.

*Their Eyes Were Watching God* is a novel by African American writer Zora Neale Hurston published in 1937, set in central and southern Florida in the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century. The main character is a beautiful *mulatto* (black and white crossbred) named Janie Crawford, who tells the story of her life and journey through an extended flashback to her best friend, Pheoby Watson. The story that Janie tells is about love, how Janie sought love in four relationship and marriages. First, she looked for love from the grandmother who raised her. Next, she sought love from Logan Killicks, who became her first husband, an old corpulent potato farmer, who Nanny (grandmother) believed offered Janie security. Her second relationship involved Joe Starks, a mayor. Janie’s final relationship was with migrant worker Tea Cake, who gave Janie the love that she had always desired. Her life with Tea Cake is a final love journeys in her life.

The novel tells about a woman in self-awareness of her love life, her relationship journeys. It is based on principles of self-exploration, self-empowerment, and self-liberation. The writer assumes that Janie’s personality traits indicate strong feminist values. This woman struggles to have her freedom and liberation from men

\textsuperscript{5} Identity is an individual or society’s awareness, which is, declares that I am different with you and we are different with them. Equally, the identities that individuals adopt in order to define themselves are produced, at least in part, from the cultural and social context in which we find ourselves and from which we draw certain assumptions about ‘human nature’, ‘individuality’, and the ‘self’. (Judy Giles and Tim Middleton, 1999)
oppression. Therefore, the writer is interested to analyze it more deeply through this paper.

B. FOCUS OF THE STUDY

This research focuses on the study of feminism on Zora Neale Hurston novel entitled *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, which is only analyzing the character of Janie Crawford.

C. RESEARCH QUESTION

Based on the background of the study and the focus of the study above, the writer would like to propose the statements of the problem as:

1. What are the characteristics of Janie as a main character in *Their Eyes Were Watching God* Novel?
2. How do those characteristics reflect the Feminism concept?

D. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The researcher hopes the result of this study can give some significant information for other researchers who want to do a deeper study about feminism on *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, especially, or in another literary works.

E. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
1. **The Objective**

   The purpose of this research is to analyze a woman's conditions and to prove the existence of feminism movement in *Their Eyes Were Watching God* novel. This study tries to describe:

1. Janie’s characteristics in the novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God*.
2. The reflection of Feminism concept on Janie’s characters.

2. **The Method**

   The researcher tries to prove the woman’s transformation and feminist movement based on this novel using the Descriptive-Qualitative method by finding the problems evidence taken from the woman characters in it, and relating them to the theory of feminism.

3. **Technique of Data Analysis**

   The researcher uses the Textual-Analytic technique based on qualitative data related to the novel of *Their Eyes Were Watching God* and the theory of feminism approach to explain the concept of feminism through the woman characters and their action.

4. **The instrument**
The instrument of this research is the writer herself, and she did it by reading the whole text of *Their Eyes Were Watching God* novel, underlying the dialogue of some characters about the main character and analyzing the data to get the characteristics that relate with the feminism concept.

5. **The Unit of Analysis**

The unit of analysis is the text of *Their Eyes Were Watching God* novel (1937) written by Zora Neale Hurston, published in 1937 by Harper and Row, New York, and other references that have connection with the object as secondary data.

6. **Place and Time**

This research began in January 2007 in the library of faculty of Adab and Humanities, State Islamic University “Syarif Hidayatullah” Jakarta, library of American Corner, Faculty of Culture Studies’ library of University of Indonesia, and Woman Studies’ library of University of Indonesia.
CHAPTER II
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A. Feminist Movement

Feminism is a social concept or a kind of women’s emancipation movement that focuses on the efforts of societies’ awareness onto the suppression and gender injustice upon women in society. However, more than a social concept, feminism is a concept about equality between men and women in politic, economic, education and social; or organized activities, which struggles women’s right and their needs. Thus, feminism takes sides to women, who are discriminated, exploited, and ignored.

The feminist movements’ impact is widely known 1960’s, not only for women, but also widely to all societies of America. This movement has long political history, developing as a substantial force, in two big countries America and Britain, throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Feminist movement creates an awareness of the societies about the inferiority of women situations. Many arenas of the society give a great supports to increase women’s status. The movements itself can be divided into three waves.

The first wave of feminist movement began in the 19th century, precisely in 1848. In that year, a convention was held in Seneca Falls, USA. The convention tried
to declare another version of the Declaration of Independence, which did not represent the women aspiration that declared, ‘All men are created equal.’ Therefore, to bring the equality between men and women, the convention declared another version; ‘All men and women are created equal’. This event is the first bar of feminist movement and noticed in history as women great rebellion.\(^7\) Then, in the middle of 1960’s, there is a second wave of feminist movement. This second wave movement is born by the publishing of The Feminine Mystique, written by Betty Friedan.\(^8\) The second wave of the feminist movement conveys specific objections; trying to condemn the sexual discrimination, sexual insulting and getting a fairer house job description. Finally, the movement of feminism rises into the third wave, as known as “the rebirth of feminism”\(^9\) which gives a new formulation to bring a new concept of life for women. Moreover, it also produces fundamental transformations in many fields of life.

Therefore, all of educated feminists try to absolve the women from all oppressions and science restrictions. One of their efforts is to make them as an object of study. As the result of their efforts then emerge gender studies and women studies in all sorts of program of studies. These studies enhance our knowledge about experience, importance, and women’s life. Women studies comprise many topics related to women, such as women history, women labor, women psychology, lesbianism, etc.

\(^7\) Soenarjati Djajanegara, *Kritik Sastra Feminis*, (Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2003), p.1
\(^8\) *Ibid.* p. 10
B. Feminist Literary Criticism

Feminist literary criticism appears contextually in western; directly related to development of socio-economic-politic-and western culture since 1960s.\textsuperscript{10} Feminist literary criticism is one of component in women studies, which establish in western as a social movement for \textit{grass root}\textsuperscript{11} society. Since women study is considered as a part and package of political feminist agenda, for feminist critics, all interpretations have political values. Feminist critics analyze how women are showed, how the text discusses gender relations and sex differentiation. From the feminist perspective, literary is always affected by the context or culture, because the literature is a part of culture itself.

Feminist literary criticism is a literary criticism formed by feminist theory or politic of feminism. Its history has been developed from classic works of nineteenth-century women authors such as George Eliot and Margaret Fuller to cutting-edge theoretical work in women's studies and gender studies by "third-wave" authors.\textsuperscript{12} In the most general and simple terms, feminist literary criticism before the 1970s in the first and second waves of feminism is concerned with the politics of women's authorship and the representation of women's condition within literature. Since the

\textsuperscript{10} Sugihastuti Suharto, \textit{Kritik Sastra Feminis Teori dan Aplikasinya},(Yogyakarta: PUSTAKA UTAMA, 2002) p. 4

\textsuperscript{11} Grass root is a technical term in social studies which describes the under class in society.

\textsuperscript{12} \url{http://www.cddc.vt.edu/feminism/Kristeva.html} retrieved on August 13th, 2007
arrival of more complex conceptions of gender and subjectivity and third-wave feminism, feminist literary criticism has taken a variety of new routes and considers gender as terms of Freudian and Lacanian 'psychoanalysis,\textsuperscript{13} as part of the deconstruction of existing relations of power, and as a concrete political investment. It has been closely associated with the birth and growth of queer studies. Moreover, the more traditionally central feminist concern with the representation and politics of women's lives has continued to play an active role in criticism.

Briefly, feminist criticism aims to reinterpret literature from a female point of view. This is accomplished in several ways. Some feminist critics seek to interpret the works of male authors, with particular attention to women characters, in order to explore the moral, political and social restrictions women traditionally faced. Other feminist critics choose to analyze the works of women authors that have been previously overlooked by male critics. Nevertheless, feminist criticism challenges and opposes an opinion and traditional view and men’s superiority toward women’s basic attitude and how women feels, thinks, acts, and how women generally perceive a life. However, feminist criticism also makes a problem out of prejudice towards women which is formed by men, and did not let about men’s dispose for dropping women on being trifling characters. This case has opened as much as a problem, as example there is an \textit{ecriture} feminine\textsuperscript{14}, which is about woman’s writing in style and language.

\textsuperscript{13} http://www.cddc.vt.edu/feminism/literarycriticism.html retrieved on 13 August 2007
\textsuperscript{14} Ecriture Feminine means a women’s writing.
Feminist literary criticism appears contextually in literary text especially in novel and rather rare in drama or poetry. In novel for example, it can be analyzed by using some approaches in feminism approach. By using feminist criticism women’s experience, feels, and their thought are identified. A Doll’s House is example of literary works, which convey feminist movement. This literary works represent female character that supports the feminist movement. The main character is a female who strives to be self-motivated. That is why some text of literary work can be analyzed by using feminist literary criticism.

Based on the feminist’s critic’s statement and the comments revealed by some critics above, Their Eyes Were Watching God can be analyzed by using the concept of feminism. The movement of feminism focuses on removing the self-awareness of women about their under-developed position in society. It is very important because most women, who live in a patriarchal society, do not aware that they are opposed by patriarchy. This concept assumes that living in a capital society is not the only casual factor of women’s under-development.

Women can be liberated from this oppression if the capital economic system is changed into an egalitarian society. They must begin in family, as the main institution in society, in which a wife has a freedom to own herself.

C. Character and Characterization.

When the reader reads a literary works, especially, a novel which the reader knows that the persons in a fiction are represented as a fictional, and yet they behave
more or less, as real people might behave. They are psychologically consistent; their words and their actions are coherent. Character is showed at perpetrator of presented story or the player of the story. A character is someone in a literary work who has some sort of identity, (it needs not be a strong on), an identity which is made up by appearance, conversation, action, name, and (possibly) thoughts going in the head.¹⁵

a. Major and Minor

Major character or central character is a character that holds on an important role. This character is very dominant and always appears in each conflict. On the other hand, there is another character appears only few times or she/he might be in a short portion, and this character is known as minor character.¹⁶

b. Protagonist and Antagonist

Another common term in drama is protagonist. Protagonist character deals with truth and conflicts with other characters. While antagonist character forces and often gives any trouble or conflict to the protagonist one.¹⁷

Meanwhile, characterization is a portray of clear picture about someone, which presents in a story.¹⁸ Characterization means how the writer tells the reader about the physical and non-physical characteristic of the person told in the story.

Characterization or personality, is defined, as in fiction, by what the characters do, by what they say, by what others say about them, and setting in which

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¹⁶ Encyclopedia Americana: Volume 6, 1985 p.366
they move. The characters are also defined in part by other characters whom they in some degree resemble or from whom they in some degree differ.\textsuperscript{19}

An author may choose one of three methods to present a character. A character may be drawn with a few method personality traits or with complex collection of them. There are three methods of characterization:

1) Direct

Sometimes character may be presented by narrator or by the author itself through his explanation in the story. Instead, indirectly; readers must learn about characters from the character’s own words, action or comments by other around them.\textsuperscript{20}

2) Static and Dynamic

If a character changes or grows during the course of the play, he or she is dynamic. Meanwhile, if a character that does not change in any significant way during the course of the work is static.\textsuperscript{21}

3) Flat or Round

Round character according to Perrine is “complex and many sides; they might require an easy for full analysis. It undergoes a permanent change in some aspect of character, personality or outlook.\textsuperscript{22} Major characters are likely to be round, while minor characters to be flat. Flat character is one embodying a “single idea

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., p.746
\textsuperscript{20} Encyclopedia Americana: Volume 6, 1985 p.367
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., p.367
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., p. 367-368
or quality”. The flat character something called a “type” or “caricature”. For it can be summed up in sentence.23 Flat characters usually have small part in the story.

From those explanations, the writer concludes that characterization is a method used by the author in developing the story and character is the product of the story. Therefore, as explained above, character is a person in literary work and characterization is the way in which a character is created.

On the novel, the reader can know the portrayal or representation of character from character’s action, words, and everything, which relates to the character in a story through the various activities either verbal or nonverbal and through the events that happened.

The author presents the readers with many clues to know representation of character in the novel; readers also have to know their characteristic. From the characteristic readers can know what they like are. These clues are comparable to the ways by which we evaluate people in the novel through:

1. Action, for example, we can judge people or a character by the way they act and speak, particularly in crucial situation.

2. A person’s speech, like his or her action, can be very revealing. For example, in addition to showing such thing as age, nationality, education, all of which serve as identification. Speech can reveal

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23 Literary Terms: A Dictionary, Third edition, revised and enlarge by Karl Beckson and Arthur Ganz, 1990, p.91
habits of mind and the reaction to people and events both sharply indicative of character.

3. Description, for example, the reader can see physical appearance, it can be a clue to character, but the writer of fiction seldom stresses it.

4. Environment, for example, the presenting of a person’s surroundings, particularly those he deliberately chooses, including the recreation he keeps contributing to an understanding of his character.

5. Thought, for example, is to reveal a person’s thought as an act of omniscience. Mental states, such as nervous, anger, horror can be indicated by physical reaction, such as sweating palms, etc.

6. Explanation, explanation is an outright statement by the author about his characters.²⁴ For example is that the author can give a statement in his text about the character that he made.

Those descriptions can be concluded that characterization is the process by which a writer makes the character or characteristic seems real to the reader or also can say that characterization is the method used by a writer to develop a character or characteristic in his story.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH FINDING

A. The Character of Janie Crawford

A character is someone in a literary work who has some sort of identity (it does not have to be a strong identity), an identity which is made up by appearance, conversation, action, name, and (possibly) thoughts going in the head. The presentations of the characters can be flat, round, static or dynamic. These types are depending on the role of characters in the story.

The way characters are presented is called characterizations. Characterization means how the writer tells the readers about the physical and non-physical characteristic of the person told in the story. It might be done by giving description in her words or by being shown in her actions or her thought. A characterization is a spoken contact between the writer and the reader.25

_Their Eyes Were Watching God_ is a literary work, which describes life experiences of a female character in the middle of patriarchal world. Janie Crawford is the main character in this novel, who struggles for her voice and her acquisition of the identity of a woman. As a central figure, Janie is a dynamic character. At the beginning of the novel, Janie undergoes three marriages, and gets oppression experiences from each husband and her grandmother. They consider Janie as their

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property to be used, as they want. Janie becomes weak, spoiled, and accommodate. However, on the last stage, in the climax, Hurston shows how Janie developed into an independent, more obtained her own voice and place in the social hierarchy. Janie has developed a strong sense of self. She directly attempts to become equal and struggles for her self-fulfillment. Her self-awareness in men’s oppression is achieved from her developed maturity in life and marriage. She changes into a strong woman with her own voice.

Janie is a complex character, at first, Janie is not seen as a woman with strong personality. She accepts many events and treatments in her life passively, which is known as a type of feminine. Therefore, she often shows as a round character, because she often displays the inconsistencies and internal conflict found in most real people.

B. The Analysis of Janie’s Characteristics

Characteristics are the qualities or features of people that belong to them and make them recognizable which someone see in them and seems typical to them.

This chapter focuses on the development of Janie’s characteristics into a feminist character. In this novel Hurston uses Janie’s narrative of her story to phoeby as the driving force in the narrative. Through Janie’s attempt to achieve a voice in the

\[\text{\textsuperscript{26}}\text{The stereotyped characteristic of feminine women includes passive, fragile, dependent, non-competitive, receptive, afraid to the risk, emphatic, non aggressive, maternal, unambitious, emotionally labil, intuitive, having low pain, tolerance, sensitive to inner feeling and to responses from other people. (Crowley and Susan Himmelweit; 1992)}\]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{27}}\text{ Collins Cobuild, \textit{Advanced Learner’s English Dictionary}, 4\textsuperscript{th} ed, (Great Britain: Harper Collins Publisher, 2003), P. 225-226}\]
novel, she is able to assert herself as an African-American woman in society, provide evidence of her feminine growth, and symbolize a new found of self-awareness.

Literary critic Maria J. Racine also shows the problems faced by woman’s inability to achieve her voice in *Their Eyes Were Watching*. Racine’s critical commentary, voice and inferiority in Zora Neale Hurston’s *Their Eyes Were Watching God* mention some of the narrative techniques used by Hurston in the text to illustrate differing levels of inferiority. Janie shows that woman also has a self-confidence to face public sphere, also struggles for self-fulfillment. She is much more braves to decide to leave her husbands after she experienced several oppressions from her three husbands, also her grandmother.

The characteristics of Janie Crawford are complex. In the early, Janie is described as a victim of circumstance, and subject to her position in life. From the beginning, she is taught to be passive and subject to whatever life gave her. As she grew older, she began to realize that she must give in to her desires and not suppress them. Through various conflict and experience that she faces, Janie becomes an independent woman, struggler, courageous, self-confident, outspoken, mature and decisive woman.

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28 Voice is metaphorically meaning of a right to express an opinion, but in this case, according to feminism concept, voice is the way to shows self-realization of woman to the patriarchal system and society law.
Janie is treated as being inferior. This treatment is shown directly by Janie through her monologue’s inward and her statement. She gets inferior feeling from her three husbands. In the beginning of the novel, her grandmother insisted her to marry Logan Killicks, but actually, Janie does not want to. Finally, Janie marries him to fulfill her grandmother’s dreams.

Yeah, Janie, youse got yo’ womanhood on yuh. So Ah mout ez well tell yuh whut Ah been savin’ up for uh spell. Ah wants to see you married right away.

(Hurston, p.12)

Yeah, Janie, you got your womanhood on you. So I must well tell you what I been saving up for your spell. I want to see you married right away.)

Her grandmother considers that Janie is mature enough to get married. Therefore, Nanny insists her to marry with Logan Killick, a mature man who is able to keep her. Meanwhile, Janie is unable to refuse her grandmother decision.

Her inferior treatment appears once more while Janie and Joe in Eatonville like people thoughts that she has a higher status then the town’s people. At a certain time Janie tried to interact with them, but Joe would not let her. This led to the way she is treated in society. In fact, Janie wants to become a part of her society.

“Janie loved the conversation and sometimes she thought up good stories on the mule, but Joe had forbidden her to indulge. He didn’t want her talking after such trashy people.” (Hurston, p.50)

(Janie loved the conversation and sometimes she thought up good stories on the mule, but Joe had forbidden her to indulge. He didn’t want her talking after such trashy people.)

30 Inferior is a situation of low or lower in importance or quality. In this case, it shows woman’s oppressed condition towards man’s superiority.
Janie feels inferior too, it happens on Joe’s welcoming party. The people elect him as mayor of Eatonville to speak in front of them. Afterwards, people ask Janie to give a speech, but Joe does not want Janie to show up herself and ability.

“*And now we’ll listen to uh few words uh encouragement from Mrs. Mayor Starks.*” (Hurston, p.40)

(Now we will listen to her few words her encouragement from Mrs. Mayor Starks.)

Joe knows that Janie has ability to give a good speech. Then, Joe answers by saying that his wife cannot say anything, she just can do household activities. Joe does not give Janie a chance to talk. He, however, is forgetting of Janie’s feelings. He is too busy thinking about his work and Eatonville. He wants her running the store, which she does not really want to do.

*The burst of applause was cut short by Joe taking the floor himself.*

“Thank yuh fuh yo’ compliments, but mah wife don’t know nothin’ ‘bout no speech-makin’. Ah never married her for nothin’ lak dat. She’s uh woman and her place is in de home.” (Hurston, p.40)

(The burst of applause was cut short by Joe taking the floor himself. “Thank you for your compliments, but my wife doesn’t know anything about any speech-making. I never married her for nothing like that. She is just woman and her place is in the home.”)

Janie is treated as being a stupid woman, who does not know anything except keeping the household and staying at home everyday.

Janie’s suffering also appears when Joe always orders Janie to keep the store everyday besides keeping and cleaning the house. At certain time, in the store when Joe asks for a bill of kegs buying and he cannot find it. Then Janie tells him that the bill is on the table, but once more Joe cannot find it and become angry to Janie,
then Joe blames Janie for poor bookkeeping and for being a stupid woman.

Nevertheless, Janie defends herself by her brave answer immediately:

“Aw look around dere, Jody. Dat bill ain’t apt tuh be gone off nowheres. If it ain’t hangin’ on de nail, it’s on yo’ desk. You bound tuh find it if you look.”

Wid you heah, Ah oughtn’t tuh hafta do all dat lookin’ and serachin’. Ah done told you time and timeagin tuh stick all dem papers on dat nail! All you got tuh do is mind me. How come you can’t do lak Ah tell yuh?”

(Hurston, p. 66)

(“Aw look around there, Jody. That bill ain’t to be gone off nowheres. If it ain’t hangin on de nail, it’s on your desk. You bound to find it if you look.”

With you heah, I oughtn’t to have do all that loking and searching. I done told you time and time again to stick all them papers on that nail! All you got to do is mind me. How come you can’t do like I tell you?”)

Janie is not allowed to show her hair in front of people, this thing happens because of Jody Starks’ jealousy. However, Janie is not pleased with this condition; she likes to show her beautiful hair.

“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.” (Hurston, p. 51)

Janie has been oppressed by society and the laws of society. She is not only oppressed because she is *mulatto* (some kind of white products), but also she is a woman. In each of her three marriages; Logan Killicks as first husband, Joe Starks as second husband, and Tea Cake as third husband, Janie feels inferior among them. All of them expect her to do things the way they want, and treat her like a slave. Janie is not allowed by men to strive for her dreams or desires because she is a woman. In this situation, it seems that it is a combination of societies oppressive and the
repression of Janie’s feelings inferior and desires that hold her back from her goals to get her freedom.

- **Surrender**

  Surrender is the way someone to submit the fate and accept it. As Janie surrenders to face all of her suffer that had become her fate, so she just obeys what her grandmother wanted to, which is to get married to Logan even she never loves him. Janie was married to Logan when she was sixteen and she never enjoyed her marriage. Yet she is tired to surrender and accreted her fate. Then she tries to face the truth, and accept it at the first.

  “There are years that ask questions and years that answer. Janie had had no chance to know things, so she had to ask. Did marriage end the cosmic loneliness of the unmated? Did marriage compel love like the sun the day? Finally out of Nanny’s talk and her own conjectures she made a sort of comfort for herself.” (Hurston, p. 20)

  There are years after Janie gets married with Logan Killick and Jody Starks, she begins to ask for her question about unhappy marriage. She feels surrender and lonely. Her marriage with her husbands does not give a happiness and pleasure. Nevertheless, she tries to accept and endure it.

  On the opposite of her passiveness, there is a feeling of opposing her husband who represents part of patriarchy system. Although it has to deal with various conflicts, such as Janie is treated as inferior wife by her husbands and she feels surrender, she finally succeeds to do anything she needs to be done. Through
various conflicts and situations that she faces, Janie becomes an independent woman, struggler, courageous, self-confident, outspoken, merciful, mature and decisive woman.

- **Independent**

  Independent is a characteristic of a human who does not depend on other people or things; is not controlled by other people or things. Janie is an independent woman. At the beginning of the novel, Janie was characterized as dependent girl, who lives in her grandmother’s house; it can be seen from Janie’s dependence to her grandmother’s decision to do her own acts. It is caused by her living with her grandmother since her childhood. Her independence grows up since her marriage. It continued after Joe Starks (her second husband) died, she gets her freedom and independence to manage her life and financial as she is pleased by continuing her husband’s store by herself, as quoted below:

  “She kept the store in the same way except of evenings she sat on the porch and listened and sent Hezekiah into wait on late custom. She would have the rest on her life to do as she pleased” (Hurston, p. 85)

  (“She kept the store in the same way except of evenings she sat on the porch and listened and sent Hezekiah into wait on late custom. She would have the rest on her life to do as she pleased”)

  Janie is able to keep the store and manage the financial by herself. She also can manage her own money and authority as free as her life now. Janie can contribute

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something to herself. Since she has to keep her husband store well and her husband cannot keep it without her.

- **Courageous**

  Courage is the ability to control fear when facing danger, pain and opposition.\(^{32}\) In addition, courage also means the ability to give opinion and brave to face the risk. Her courage is to speak all the right things in her mind. Her courage appeared when Logan Killicks always oppressed her. She has enough strength to say "No", as Janie’s words and decision for not being oppressed by her husbands treatments and leaves him for the sake of getting her freedom as woman.

  "The years took all the fight out of Janie’s face. For a while she thought it was gone from her soul. No matter what Jody did, she said nothing. She had learned how to talk some and leave some.” (Hurston, p. 72)

  Her courage appeared once more when Janie gives the men in the porch\(^{33}\) a lecture, saying that they know little about women or chickens. She points out that God talks his inside business to women as well as men. She tells that, because the men on the porch, including Joe, discuss about Mrs. Robbins' terrible begging behavior and the endless patience of her unfortunate husband. They begin to humiliate Mrs.Robbins that her husband will not beat her, for she is small and frail like a baby chicken, as quotation below:

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\(^{32}\) *Ibid.*, P. 299

\(^{33}\) Black men and women’s attitude in Eatonville is always sitting in the porch to make a conversation or just take a rest.
“Sometimes God gits familiar wid us womenfolks too and talks His inside business. He told me how surprised he was ‘bout y’ all turning out so smart after Him makin’ yuh different; and how surprised y’ all is goin’ tuh be if you ever find out you don’t know half as much ‘bout us as you think you do. It’s so easy to make yo’ self out God Almighty when you ain’t got nothin’ tuh strain against but women and chickens.” (Hurston, p.70)

(“Sometimes God give familiar with us women folks too and talks His inside business. He told me how surprised he was about you all turning out so smart after Him making you different; and how surprised you all is going to be if you ever find out you don’t know half as much about us as you think you do. It’s so easy to make your self out God Almighty when you ain’t got anything to strain against but women and chickens.”)

At this point, it seems like woman is a great creation of God. However, God is surprised by His own creation. As Janie’s courage to speak about woman’s power is same as man, which is woman deserves to have equal right in many opportunities as men do.

• Struggler

Shortly, after Joe’s death, Janie became the figurehead of her personal ship. Over time, she had a growing feeling inside her mind after all experiences that she faces. She chooses a new path to seek her dreams and her identity\(^\text{34}\). As hurston’s said in the several paragraph in chapter 9 about Janie as figurehead of struggler woman;

> “Janie laughed at all these well-wishers because she knew that they knew plenty of women alone; that she was not the first one they had ever seen. But most of the others were poor. Besides she liked being lonesome for a change. This freedom feeling was fine. These men didn’t represent a thing she wanted to know about. She had already experienced them through Logan and Joe. She felt like slapping some of them for sitting around

\(^{34}\) Feminists told that identity is not a purpose, but it is a starting point for self-consciousness. (Maggie Humm, *Encyclopedia Feminisme*. 2002)
grinning at her like a pack of cheesy cats, trying to make out they looked like love.” (Hurston, p.86)

There is a depiction from quotation below, about a new life of Janie, after her struggle in seeking an identity and a better life after her two husband’s repression and oppression. She gets her own life and her freedom from her life. Janie's realization is that she plays a role in creating her own world; she does not have to live by traditional standards but can demand what she wants from life. She struggles to remain faithful to her dreams.

- **Decisive Woman**

  Decisive woman is having or showing the ability to decide quickly. In the other word, woman is able to make a quick decision for her fate. In patriarchal society, woman has no excuses to decide what she really wants, because men and only men who have authority to control everything. Moreover, it is true, through the character of Janie who always obeys her husband’s command; the patriarchy takes part in this novel. In the beginning, Janie is shown as obedient grandson who obeys her grandmother decision for insisting her to marry with Logan Killicks, also a wife who always obeys her husband’s rules and always controls her behavior. As a wife, Janie cannot do something that she likes.

  For example, when Janie’s grandmother arranges her to marry Logan Killicks; she assures that Janie will have a safe and secure life with this man. Nevertheless, Janie realizes that this marriage does not mean love will come along
with it. Not only there is no love in this marriage, but also Logan is quite unkind to her. He frequently tells Janie that she is lazy and spoiled; Janie soon tires of this and decides to leave him, as quotation below:

*S’posin’ Ah wuz to run off and leave yuh sometime. Ah might take and find somebody dat did trust me and leave yuh.* (Hurston, p.29)  
(Suppose I was to run off and leave you sometime. I might take and find somebody that did trust me and leave you.)

Her courage appears too; when Janie slept, Tea Cake stole her money. When she wakes up, he is never back. She waits and waits; at noon, she discovers that her two-hundred dollars are missing. However, suddenly, Tea Cake comes home, and tells her that he assures that he has not spent it on another woman and teases her about doubting his love for her. Then Janie tells him that she will kill him if he ever goes off to have fun without taking her again. Janie has her courage for making a decision by threatening and overcoming of Tea Cake’s bad attitude.

*“Lookah heah, Tea Cake, if you ever go off from me and have a good time lak dat and then come back heah tellin’ me how nice Ah is, Ah specks tuh kill yuh dead. You heah me?”* (Hurston, p.119)  
(“look, Tea Cake, if you ever go off from me and have a good time like that and then come back and telling me how nice I is, I speak to kill you dead. You hear me?”)

- **Self-Confident**

Janie is a self-confident woman, the reader can see from jealousy of a folk’s town to her, a wealthy, middle-aged woman who has taken off with a younger man. They are also curious about Janie, for she has returned to town after her marriages
over with her husbands; she dresses in poor clothes but still look young and self-confident. Janie believes that she still has a self-value of honorable woman. As her best friend says when they met for the first time after long time ago, Phoeby said that Janie has become a good woman, and more self-confident.

“Ah see you is. Gal you sho looks good. You looks like youse yo’ own daughter. “they both laughed.” Even wid dem overhalls on, you shows yo’ womanhood and confident.” (Hurston, p.4)

(‘I see you is. Gal you so looks good. You looks like you your own daughter. Even with them overalls on, you shows your womanhood and confident.”)

**Outspoken**

Janie’s deep heart does not hide the truth. She tells Joe not to mix up her work in the store with her female body. When he tells her she is out of her head, she tells him it is not as she is. She tells him that she is not old and that she needs to make a good look at himself, so she changes immediately into a different person; a good and beautiful woman. Both Joe and the customers are shocked to hear Janie speak this way. Joe feels his manhood has been challenged, as quotation below;

“Naw, Ah ain’t no young gal no mo’ but den Ah ain’t no old woman neither. Ah reckon Ah looks mah age too. But Ah’im uh woman every inch of me, and Ah know it. Dat’s uh whole lot more’n you kin say. You big-bellies round here and put out a lot of brag, but ‘tain’t nothin’ to it but yo’ big voice. Humph! Talkin’ ‘bout me lookin’ old! When you pull down yo’ britches, you look lak de change uh life.” (Hurston, p.75)

(“Now , I ain’t no young girl no more but then I ain’t no old woman neither. I reckon I looks more age too. But I’a a woman every inch of me, and I know it. That’s a whole lot more than you can say. You big-bellies round here and put out a lot of brag, but that ain’t anything to it but your big voice.
Humph! Talking about me lookinh old! When you pull down your britches, you look like the change a life)

Janie receives many responses from her family and friends, when she expresses herself. When she is young, her grandma hits her because of saying that she is not interested in Mr. Killicks, and because she kisses another boy under the pear tree. There are times when the whole town would not understand her actions, and she would have to explain herself to the community. Through speaking her mind to her different husbands, she is able to see who really loved her and interested in her opinions and ideas. When she speaks her mind, the people in the town are able to reflect upon what she was saying.

“Hambo said, ‘yo’ wife is uh born orator, Starks. Us never knowed dat befo’. She put jus’ de right words tuh our thoughts.” (Hurston, p.55)
(Hambo said, “Your wife is a born orator, Starks. Us never knewed that before. She put just the right words to our thoughts.”)

• Mature Woman

Janie’s life experiences have made her face the wild of marital life. She gets many experiences since got married. Therefore, she knows what is good for her. Reader can see when Janie decides to marry Tea Cake after her second husband is dead. People around her appreciate that she supposed not marry immediately after Joe is dead, because it is not a good decision. However, as Pheoby says that Janie is a grown woman and knows what she wants and what she does.

“Dat’s de way it looks. Still and all, she’s her own woman. She oughta know whut she wants tuh do.” (Hurston, p.106)
(“That the way it looks. Still and all, she is her own woman. She ought to know what she wants to do.”)

Janie also explains how she has tried to live in her grandmother's way, and now she is going to try it her own way, living for love, as quotation below:

“Dis is uh love game. Ah done lived Grandma’s way, now Ah means tuh live mine.” (Hurston, p.108)
(“This is your love game. I done lived Grandma’s way, now I means to live mine.”)

As Phoeby appreciates Janie as grown woman too in quotation below:

“Ah see you is. Gal, you sho looks good. You looks like youse yo’ own daughter.” “Even wid dem overalls on, you shows yo’ womanhood.” (Hurston, p.4)
(“I see you is. Gal, you sure looks good. You looks like use your own daughter.” Even with them overall on, you shows your womanhood.”)

C. Feminism Perspective on Janie’s Character

The role of women in Their Eyes Were Watching God is an interesting interpretation of women’s right during that period. It seems that women are concerned half way between two worlds; in other hand, they are African-Americans who have just earned their right to freedom, in other hand, they are women, who are in fact not having the same rights as men. According to book A Vindication of the Right of Woman by Mary Wollstonecraft, one of the feminist, argues that equality of right and opportunities should be extended women in all areas of life.35 In other

words, women should have opportunities in all sectors for example in politics, economy and social life.

Based on the feminist movement existed in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, the writer analyzes through feminist approach, by using a concept of feminism. All of women’s problems never stop up to now. Women have been struggling for equal right over the past 150 years. This struggle is meant to show their existence in public society, in order to get their right and their identity, as independent women. Therefore, feminists’ critics struggle to destroy the patriarchal system that they believe as a root of women’s oppression.

The differentiation between woman and man is shown at the first chapter of novel of *Their Eyes Were Watching God*: “Ships at a distance have every man’s wish on board. For some they come in with the tide. For others they sailing until the Watcher turns his eyes away in resignation, his dreams mocked to death by Time. That is the life of men. Now, women forget all those things they don’t want to remember, and remember everything they don’t want to forget. The dream is the truth. Then they act and do things accordingly.” (Hurston, P.1)

From the quotation above, it seems that men’s dreams are always constant, in other words; men always get their dream and aims by which is superiority towards women. They are always the one who get the freedom in life. However, contrary for women, they only focus on what is pleasurable to think about their dreams control their lives when men’s dreams are “at a distance”. However, women are being subordinate position from men.
In the particular scene, Janie’s husband Logan Killicks is discussing to buy a new mule, yet he is talking to Janie like the one she is a mule that he can load up with his chores and she will go out and make his work easier. It is one of oppressions and suffers among Janie’s life. Nevertheless, contrary with the wishes of her grandmother, husband, and even society she live in, Janie lives her life the way she wishes.

Relating to the nature of feminism, Janie explained “anti and free” from oppression by her ways to face and to solve the problems, the domination and the hegemony of men, in this case are her three husbands; Logan Killicks, Jody Starks and Tea Cake’s domination.

Through the story, Janie describes unfairness, repression and oppression that women feel. It is showed in Janie’s adolescent treatments and pressures from her grandmother and her three husbands. Janie, as a black woman, struggles to escape actual slavery, but in fact, in the real world the black men have assumed themselves as slaveholders. As Logan Killicks sees Janie as a slave in the quotation below:

> You ain’t got no particular place. It’s wherever Ah need yuh. Git uh move on yuh, and dat quick. (Hurston, p.30)

(You ain’t got no particular place. It’s wherever I need you. Give to move on you, and that quick.)

Logan is the first antagonist that Janie encountered in the story. He is there for one purpose, to destroy Janie’s new sense of self-awareness. Logan demanded things of Janie that she did not wish to do and tried to push her for being a perfect wife.

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36 Mule is a stupid or obstinate person. (Pocket Oxford Dictionary)
Janie does not love Logan, nor did he love her. She does not know what she wanted, but she is sure that she does not want Logan Killicks. Her life is controlled by others in the first three stages, first her grandmother, then Logan Killicks, and Joe Starks. By the end of Logan Killicks section, Janie assesses the growing deterioration or getting worse of their relationship and asserts herself for the first time by running away with Joe Starks; this brave decision is one of self-awareness by Janie. It is only when she is released from her marriage to Joe by his death that she begins to take her own freedom of life and her options and make her own decisions.

Janie also shows her struggle against the society, which oppresses woman in some aspects, such as in the aspects of social classes. It shows when people discuss the status of Janie as an orphan, a mulatto, a wealthy widow, and a heterosexual. Janie thought it should be changed to anew social relation (family, community and society), where a woman (equal with man) become a subject in making decision. It is also showed by how she behave when she against her grandmother’s decision, when she left her three husbands and becoming independent woman and life as her own ways and choices.

Those brief analyses of Janie based on the primary concept of feminism. The study aims are to enrich the knowledge about experiences, needs, and life of women. Feminist literary criticism according to Annette Kolodny is a tool to help analyze a text, which tells about women according to sexual stereotype in literary
criticism, and it shows that ideology or ways, which does not satisfy, are used to analyze woman’s writing unfairly and insensitively.\textsuperscript{37}

Based on the feminist’s critic’s statement and the comments revealed by some critics above, \textit{Their Eyes Were Watching God} can be analyzed by using the feminism approach. The movement of feminism focuses on removing the self-awareness of women about their under-developed position in society. It is very important because most women, who live in a patriarchal society, do not aware that they are opposed by patriarchy. This theory assumes that living in a capital society is not the only casual factor of women’s under-development.

All oppression that experienced by Janie in \textit{Their Eyes Were Watching God} novel, made her against toward men domesticity. From childhood, Janie always feels the oppressions that are done by men. First, she is pushed by her grandmother to marry Logan Killicks, which she does not in love with him, and then by her three husbands.

Janie is the character who reflected feminism movement concept. All her experiences of life journey are the feminism includes become her self-awareness. Her self-awareness can overcome all oppression and inferior treatments by men and realize that she can stand up for freedom and happiness through men’s superiority.

A. Conclusion

*Their Eyes Were Watching God* is a novel written by Zora Neale Hurston, one of famous African-American authors. The black woman’s experience on a quest for her own identity and freedom; reach for new sense of self-awareness inspired her to write this novel.

In this novel, Hurston describes about black woman experiences particularly through main female character, Janie Crawford’s. The novel tells about Janie as a main female character that through four stages of life in her quest for respect, independence, and happiness. Her life is controlled by others in the first three stages, first her grandmother, then Logan Killicks, Joe Starks, and Tea Cake.

In this thesis, the writer tries to know the characteristics of Janie and the feminism concept that occur in Janie’s character. Therefore, from the analysis, the writer can see that Janie is a person who aware of unfair treatment from her husbands. It implies in her characteristics based on Janie’s behavior and attitude through her reaction to event, dialogue about her thought and her speak to the others character, direct author description, discussion of environment, reaction of others about or to the character and conversation of others about Janie.
Through feminism concept, the writer focuses in Janie’s characteristic that implies a feminist concept; independent, courageous, outspoken, decisive, and mature. Although Janie placed as an inferior and surrender woman who got a suppression and oppression treatment from her husband, nevertheless, Janie then placed in a strong position in facing the unfair treatment or society. With her courage and very determined will, Janie started her new life by leaving her husbands.

From those explorations of a strong female character’s consciousness of Janie, the writer analyzes that it has made Janie as a feminist character who lived in the environment that dominated by men and she tried to against it. It seemed that Janie has feminist perspective; therefore, she struggles to against what she thought that was not right and contradicts with her mind and principles.

The success of Janie in fighting against her husbands and the patriarchy system that adhered is the end of *Their Eyes Were Watching God* novel. Janie’s courage to make decision by leaving her husbands can be said as her success to be free from the patriarchal system and the reflection of the concept of feminism.
B. Suggestion

The writer suggests for those who are interested in the study about literature, on prose subject, especially in Their Eyes Were Watching God novel by Zora Neale Hurston, they can use feminist literary criticism approach, in comprehending and enhancing the image of women in the novel. Anyone who is interested in doing deeper study about this novel may use many approaches and many point of views. Besides that, the writer also expects that the research will be useful to the reader who wants to analyze woman character through feminism approach in any kind of literary work.

Finally, the writer hopes too this thesis can give a positive contribution in literature study, especially for the students of English letters department, letters and humanities faculty, State Islamic university of Jakarta, as an additional reference in studying African-American novel.
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