

Review

Invisibility of the I's in “Their Eyes Were Watching God”

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Accepted 31 December, 2011

Janie Crawford, the female protagonist of *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston, is a black woman. To be black and to be a beautiful woman entails the extreme visibility in case of body in the society. Janie is under the oppressing gaze of the patriarchal society and through strengthening the invisible inside and hiding it from the disciplinary power structure; she manages to return the gaze, to gain the autonomy. In this study, we will discover the way Janie learns to free herself from the shackles of suppressing society by changing the way she looks.

Key words: Visibility, invisibility, vision, look, gaze, seeing, othering, power, body.

INTRODUCTION

In this study, the concept of invisibility in *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston would be investigated around. As a folklorist, ethnographer, novelist, short-story writer, storyteller, galvanizing personality, and emblematic figure of the celebration of black culture by the Harlem Renaissance, Zora Neale Hurston not only wrote about but also lived the quest of twentieth century blacks to pursue beauty, individuality, and affirmation. Her writings, and her life, are characterized by a spirit of humor, contradiction, and imagination¹ (Wintz and Finkelman, 2005). In her masterpiece, Janie is a black woman and being black in a society of that special era, early 20th century, means being invisible, and on the margins of society at large. As a result of this invisibility, they are forced to leave the circle of power and remain on the margin. They cannot control their bodies and their invisibility. Bodies have definite forms and cannot be altered; instead they can control their spirit and their soul.

Janie Crawford is born invisible, grows up invisible and is forced to be kept invisible all through the novel. She is on the margins of her society by being barred from participating in the rituals, traditions and distribution of

power. She creates a special version of spirituality in which no one can enter and no one can be oppressive. The invisibility of an individual would be more oppressive when her voice and image be silenced and erased, not by choice, but by force.

In this novel, Janie frees herself from the shackles of 'othering', the image that is imposed on her and it is not her. The image that the society wants to see and ignore the one that is undesirable. Characters such as Nanny and Janie "in *Their Eyes*, and characters from other Hurston's works, could model stories of women freeing themselves from the extremes of 'othering', binary images set upon them by the dominant Anglo culture and sometimes by the men in their own culture" (Fulmer, 2007).

INVISIBILITY

It is believed by critics that "controlling vision means controlling what we see, how we define the world. Visual power, then, brings political power, since those who determine what is seen determine what exists"(Clark, 2001). Janie is watched and gazed at by her community members; she is visible in terms of body and invisible in terms of power. When she returns from burying Tea Cake, she is seen by porch talkers, "their eyes flung wide open in judgment". Although, they are "eyeless" all day long, when they see her, the narrator explains that "the porch could not talk for looking" (Hurston, 1990). Collins believes that, "in order to survive, those of us for whom

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¹ She wrote *Their Eyes Were Watching God* in 1937.

oppression is as American as apple pie have always had to be watchers". This "watching" generates a dual consciousness in African-American women, one in which Black women "become familiar with the language and manners of the oppressor, even sometimes adopting them for some illusion of protection" (Collins, 2000).

African Americans were mostly an invisible race all through the history. This state of invisibility is not because of a fault in the physiology of body but because of "the psychological "construction of their *inner* eyes," which conceptually erases their existence. He/she is not a full person in their eyes, and so he/she either is not taken into account at all in their moral calculations or is accorded only diminished standing". So, based on this concept "From the beginning it will be relational, not monadic; dialogic, not monologic: one is a subperson precisely because *others*—persons—have categorized one as such and have the power to enforce their categorization" (Milles, 1998).

Janie, though, in an all black community of Eatonville, is subjected to the same oppressive ideas. She appears in the community only to disappear. She is seen and at the same time not-seen. She is marked by men on the porch because of her physical beauty. They notice her body but not her experienced soul. The narrator tells us that, "the men were saving with the mind what they lost with the eye" (TE, 2).

To control vision is to control what we can see and hence our worldview. Visual power brings political power. Those who determine how we should see or what we should see also determine if something exists or not. In *Their Eyes*, black bodies, especially black women bodies are strongly visible. For a woman like Janie, visibility is very crucial in her identity formation. But, she needs a kind of visibility that leads not to exploitation.

Within this country where racial difference creates a constant, if unspoken, distortion of vision, Black women have on one hand always been highly visible, and so, on the other hand, have been rendered invisible through the depersonalization of racism.

Even within the women's movement, we have had to fight, and still do, for that very visibility which also renders us most vulnerable, our Blackness.... And that visibility which makes us most vulnerable is that which also is the source of our greatest strength (Clark, 2001; p. 600).

Janie tries to redeem her vision all through the novel. Janie is a beautiful woman, so her body is visible to her community. This visual image of her body can be the source of both her vulnerability and her strength. The visible presence of Janie's material body "reflects the complex historical and cultural forces which have created her, and it offers her a unique, individual identity" (Clark, 2001; p. 601). Body plays an important role in power

relations²; it is an object of knowledge and a target for power's exercise. Foucault sees power as a strategy. Power transmitted by or through the powerless. Foucault believes power to be 'intentional' but 'non-subjective'. Foucault believes that individuals neither possess power nor are crushed by it. He explains that, "one of the prime effects of power is that certain bodies, certain gestures, certain discourses; certain desires come to be identified and constituted as individuals" (Smart, 1985; p. 73). Foucault describes the body as "the illusion of a substantial unity and a volume in perpetual disintegration". He believes that bodies are subject to change (Mills, 2003; p. 83).

Through these strategies and techniques of exercising the power, the human body becomes subject to anatomy or to discipline³. So in a way, power strategies create spaces which render people visible and observable in order to make it possible to change them and control them. The exercise of disciplinary power tries to punish the non-conformity. This power, according to Foucault remains invisible while those who are subject to such power are visible.

In this schema, subjects were to be individualized in their own spaces, to be visible, and to be conscious of their potentially constant and continuous visibility. Given that those illuminated by power were unable to see their observer(s), the latter condition, a consciousness of being in a visible space, of being watched, effectively ensured an automatic functioning of power (Smart, 1985; p. 83).

So, in such power relations, there is no need to use force to exercise power; the individual assumes responsibility and become the principle of his/her own subjection. Based on these concepts of power and body by Foucault, we may refer to Janie and how she is seen and at the same time invisible to the members of her community. Janie lives in a society in which women are defined by their outer beauty and not their inner beauty. In this society, there is an interesting blend between

²According to Foucault, the disciplinary power targets two things: first the individual bodies and second the species body. This disciplinary power is "a type of power that operates by attaching individuals to normative.

Self-understandings and practices that render them docile and useful at the same time. Disciplinary power "subjects" individuals in both senses of the term: It subordinates them and makes them subjects in a single stroke." See Also Gary Gutting, *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) 382.

³ According to Smart, "discipline is a technique of power which provides procedures for training or for coercing bodies (individual and collective). The instruments through which disciplinary power achieves its hold are hierarchical observation, normalizing judgment, and the examination. The concept of hierarchical observation signifies the connection between, visibility and power, that an apparatus designed for observation induces effects of power and that a means of coercion makes those subject to it potentially visible" (80).

looking and listening and speaking. There is an interesting scene in the novel regarding this concept. Joe is ridiculing Janie's body:

"T'ain't no use in getting' all mad, Janie, 'cause Ah mention you ain't no young gal no mo'. Nobody in heah ain't lookin' for no wife outa yuh. Old as you is."

"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'm 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."

"Great God from Zion!" Sam Watson gasped.

"Y'all really playin' de dozens tuhnight."

"Wha_ _ whut's dat you said?" Joe challenged, hoping his ears had fooled him.

"You heard her, you ain't blind," Walter taunted. (TE, 97)

This passage can be interpreted in many different ways, ranging from Janie's toppling the god-like image of Jody and her coming to voice to the way both Joe and Janie starts to see the world. In this passage "Joe's perception is becoming inadequate for the major change at hand, and that second, Janie is going through a radical shift in her way of seeing and behaving" (Levecq, 1991; p. 91).

We can interpret the visual both as an act of objectification and it can serve as an action. Looking can be a strategy of resistance. Bell Hooks explains: "all attempts to repress our/black peoples' right to gaze ... produced in us an overwhelming longing to look, a rebellious desire, an oppositional gaze". With this gaze, African Americans declared, "Not only will I stare; I want my look to change reality" (Clark, 2001; p. 603). In Hurston's novel, seeing and being seen are highly politically charged acts. In Hurston's work, looking is not just confrontational challenge. Her fiction is full of examples of women's need to look, see, understand, and use language visually.

The first reference in the novel to the act of seeing in regard to Janie is in her childhood. She lives with a white family and her Nanny, her grandmother. One day the white family shows a picture to her. Janie tries to find herself in the picture: Janie narrates, "So when we looked at de picture and everybody got pointed out there wasn't nobody left except a real dark little girl with long hair standing by Eleanor. Dat's where Ah wuz s'posed to be, but Ah couldn't recognize dat dark chile as me. So Ah ast, 'where is me? Ah don't see me.'" (TE, 9) She does not see herself but she is visible to others and to power structures of society. This passage reminds us of what Zora Neale Hurston talks about in her introduction to *Mules and Men*:

From the earliest rocking of my cradle, I had known about

the capers Brer Rabbit is apt to cut...But it was fitting me like a tight chemise. I couldn't see it for wearing it. It was only when I was off in college, away from my native surroundings that I could see myself like somebody else and stand off and look at my garment. Then I had to have the spy-glass of Anthropology to look through at that. (Hill, 2005; p. 47).

Janie learns to see herself not through the eyes of dominant power in her society but through her own eyes or her own 'spy-glass'. She learns to look at herself and see her beauty. All these experiences are gained after passing many stages in life. Her clear-eyed view of herself at the end of the novel allows her to rise above the objectifying gaze of disciplinary power. She learns to differentiate between her inside and outside and hide her inside from the gaze of power. She knows she should put some notions outside for the people of her community to see and handle. Janie "initially subjected to the defining and objectifying power of a communal gaze, learns to employ vision in ways that are self-affirming rather than self-sacrificing. Returning to Eatonville at the novel's start, Janie finds herself in a position very familiar to her: the object that all eyes are upon"(Clark, 2001; p. 604).

One of the important places in which people see and are seen is the porch in the novel. In this space, the materiality of seeing is emphasized by characters including Janie. Porch is a place to talk, gossip, play checkers, signify, engage in courtship games, play music and see. All through the novel, we are told that Janie tries participating in the porch talk while married to Joe but she is forced to remain invisible; however, in her third marriage to Tea Cake she starts to create her own space. This happens because Janie's vision grows as she matures in her experiences.

When the novel begins, this scene introduces the porch talkers to readers: Janie comes back from burying Tea Cake. She had come back from the sodden and the bloated; the sudden dead, their eyes flung wide open in judgment" (TE, 1).

These dead eyes, "obviously do not see, or at least do not see the living beings who observe them, and their correlation to the porch occupants implies a similar hopelessly blind state. As they sit and look at Janie, their vision does not impart new knowledge. They are reduced to pairing their new sight with old ideas" (Hill, 2005; p. 88).

When the porch sees Janie they cannot talk because they are looking, but this looking does not amount to new notions. Their vision fails them because of the wrong way they trained themselves to look. They cannot discern something new; they just look at the outer appearance of Janie. Hill believes that Hurston "establishes the porch as a space demanding careful conduct lest one fail to see

correctly. Its inherent demand for performance designates it a place where true insight is often overwhelmed by a need to be seen and heard" (Hill, 2005; p.89). So, in an interesting way, Janie though visible in case of body becomes invisible in case of identity. The men, porch talkers, look at her body and see her as sexed and women, looking at her outer look. Both men and women ignore her essence in that men reduce her to body parts and women ignore her identity. The rest of the novel indicates that the members of her community are watching her for years. Their gaze is out of weakness. As Cain suggests:

Watchers are passive, weak, desirous, envious, feckless, helpless, ignorant, and enthralled. Spectating is not a sign of power but of want thereof; power belongs to the object of attention, who is often, in fact, Godlike. The most signal body on the scene in *Eyes*, from start to finish, is Janie's, the ship of every man's dreams (Cain, 2004; p. 98).

The first paragraphs of the novel suggest a line between genders in society:

Ships at a distance have every man's wish on board. For some they come in with the tide. For others they sail forever on the horizon, never landing 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 do not want to remember, and remember everything they do not want to forget. The dream is the truth. Then they act and do things accordingly. (TE, 1)

We can interpret this passage in terms of men shipwrecking themselves upon gazing on Janie's body. The last of these men is Tea Cake "the insane man/dog. And, we will see just how close they have come to taking Janie down with them. It is a danger Janie realizes as well. That is why in the end, she seeks simply to escape communal scrutiny, taking refuge in the upstairs bedroom of her house where she can wind herself in memory"(Cain, 2004; p. 99).

Janie has a vision that is both realistic and optimistic. She watches the world waiting to be made like her. This is her vision in her early steps of black consciousness. She is figured in this early stage as possessing the will to look upon the world with eyes that see beyond the normal realm of possibility but maintain a hold on reality. She has the "vision of the artist" (Hill, 2005; p. 83).

Janie tries to transfer her vision to Phoeby by her act of storytelling; however, she prefers to clarify the limited vision of porch talkers, so that later puts her story in sharp contrast to their words. She says that porch talkers use their mouth to see. The porch talkers are from those types of individuals who sit on their porch looking but not

seeing things. Janie is an individual who strives for the horizon

When Janie begins her story, it is dark but she has a revelation for Phoeby. Stuart Burrows says that "in order for vision to become knowledge, we must not only see but understand what we are seeing. We must see, that is, in terms of something else" (Hill, 2005; p. 92). Janie can articulate her visionary language only to a friend who is exposed to vision.

She begins her story by telling her friend that she did not see her parents when she was a child. She is unaware of her age and history. Then, we are shown a scene which was referred to earlier, the scene in which she is shown her picture. She shows no dissatisfaction toward being black when she is pointed to in the picture. Due to her ignorance of her race, she fails to see herself truly.

The next stage is her Nanny's house in which the pear tree "called her to come and gaze on a mystery" (TE, 10). So, Janie's search for identity begins by watching silently. This means both silence and seeing.

Next, we are shown the different language of Nanny and Janie. Nanny sees the surface of things. She orders Janie: "Ah wants to see you married right away" (TE, 13).

In the end, Janie tells Phoeby that she hate Nanny for trying to impose a false vision on her. Janie explains the difference between their worldviews:

It was all according to the way you see things. Some people could look at a mud-puddle and see an ocean with ships. But Nanny belonged to that other kind that loved to deal in scraps. Here, Nanny had taken the biggest thing God ever made, the horizon- for no matter how far a person can go the horizon is still way beyond you- and pinched it in to such a little bit of thing that she should tie it about her granddaughter's neck tight enough to choke her (TE, 89).

So, when she is young she learns the language of vision but in her first and second marriage she is forced to revise it. She is different from her community members in using their vision.

She uses her visions for inner growth, while the porch talkers for entertainment. It is in this stage of Janie's life that the concept of visibility and invisibility comes to surface. Take this example from the novel. After Joe dies Janie gaze upon her handsome face and her plentiful hair: "she starched and ironed her face, forming it into just what people wanted to see" (TE, 87).

Janie knows well that her community has objectifying look. So, she prepares her outside look to be visible to her community and hide her inside state of consciousness. Her inside invisible self has power but she, still, is not ready to reveal it. Du Bois talks of this psychological state:

The Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world, - a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others...one ever feels his twoness (Hill, 2005; p. 103).

Logan and Joe fail to interpret Janie's look; however, it is Tea Cake who uses his spy-glasses and sees beyond Janie's veil. Tea Cake is the one who helps Janie make her invisible self visible. She gets mature enough to understand and comprehend the invisible state of her race and her emotions and reveal her power. When she is asked by Tea Cake if she regrets marrying him she answers: "If you kin see de light at daybreak, you don't keer if you die at dusk. It's so many people never seen de light at all. Ah wuz fumblin' round and God opened de door" (TE, 159). Janie's fate depends on her vision and the ability to interpret what she sees.

As the spaces, in which she lives, widens and grows, her visibility grows too, by space I mean the amount of community presence and participation. If we refer to the description of her house with Logan, his first husband, the narrator tells us that: "it was a lonesome place like a stump in the middle of the woods where nobody had ever been. The house was absent of flavor too (TE, 21-22). Later in the novel, we are witness to Janie's and Joe's house: "It had two stories with porches, with banisters and such things. The rest of the town looked like servants' quarters surrounding the "big house" (TE, 47). And, finally when on the muck with Tea Cake: It is a simple shack but we are told that "Tea Cake's house was a magnet, the unauthorized center of the "job" (TE, 132).

Her looking process, also, changes from her first marriage to the last one. Logan chooses Janie based on what he sees. She looks at Logan and she sees a man that, "look like some old skullhead in de grave yard"(TE, 13). In this stage, Janie lacks authority, so she is forced to marry Logan.

Then, Jody comes. He is attracted to her beauty. "He stopped and looked hard, and then he asked her for a cool drink of water"(TE, 26). And Janie, a step further in her journey, tries to look back and return the gaze: "she got a good look at the man"(TE, 26) and she was "proud of what she saw. Kind of portly, like rich white folks"(TE, 32). As Clark interprets this passage: "What Janie sees is whiteness, and her valuation of this sets her on a path that will take twenty years to reverse. Looking at Joe's silk shirt, she overlooks his language of hierarchy, his desire to be a big voice. She has privileged the wrong kind of sight, a vision that fails to see into blackness and thus fails to see through language" (Clark, 2001; p. 604).

Janie abandons her vision of pear tree for vision of horizon. That is why she chooses to go with Joe. She

understands later that Joe's language lacks vision. She forces herself to think of a promising marriage with Joe, in which she is promised to be treated like a lady and sit on the chair ladylike. This, according to Clark is "an infantilizing position where she can overlook the world and yet also be subjected to its envious eyes" (Clark, 2001; p. 605). But this is not going to happen and things change in a bitter way for Janie, Joe limits Janie. He acts as if Janie is like a doll for him, so that whenever he wants, she should act beautifully and show her to public and in other times cover her beauty:

He wants her to be both present and absent, both visible and invisible, a task he attempts to accomplish by insisting that she keep her hair tied up in a head rag because he sees the other men not just "figuratively wallowing in it" but literally touching it, and she "was there in the store for him to look at, not those others". Joe wants to engage privately in scopophilia within a public forum, without subjecting Janie herself to this public gaze. Once she is fixed by gazes other than his own, he loses his exclusive ownership of her body (Clark, 2001; p. 605).

Jody tries to mimic white hegemony while displaying Janie in his store. Cain believes that:

Her bodily disposition is a sign of a particular social "order." This order is endorsed by the community, at times grudgingly, at times with enthusiasm; it is fraught with the tensions of hegemony. It is not too much, however, to say that for years Janie has been helping, albeit grudgingly, to perform Eatonville, propping it up through her quiet acquiescence to the dictates of Starks (Cain, 2004; p. 96-97).

Janie makes her revenge by exposing his lack of insight and maleness at the same time. She says, "When you pull down yo' britches, you look lak de change uh life," in defense of herself. He tries to answer back but one of the men in store taunts him, "You heard her, you ain't blind". So she exposes his body to communal gaze. In a way we can suggest that Joe is entrapped in his own gaze (TE, 75).

Before Janie and Tea Cake get married, Janie has a fear in her heart.

One image of woman is very visible in the community and that is the image of Annie Tyler, a middle aged woman who goes with a young lover only to return a short time later devastated and humiliated.

Mrs. Tyler with her dyed hair, newly straightened and her comfortable new false teeth, her leathery skin, blotchy with powder and her giggle.

Her love affairs, affairs with boys in their late teens, early twenties for all of whom she spent her money on suits of

clothes, shoes, watches, and things like that and how they all left her as soon as their wants were satisfied.

Then when her ready cash was gone, had come Who Flung to denounce his predecessor as a scoundrel and took up around the house himself. It was he who persuaded her to sell her house and come to Tampa with him. The town had seen her limp off. The undersized high heel slippers were punishing her feet that looked like bunions all over. Her body squeezed and crowded into a tight corset that shoved her middle up under her chin. But she had gone off laughing and sure. As sure as Janie had been (TE, 118).

This is exactly what porch talkers wish to happen to Janie. In their blindness, they gaze to see the same thing and image in Janie when she returns. Janie is a little worried over the concept of body. The thought of a middle-aged woman with a young boy is already in the minds of community. She has to signify what is accepted in the society. When Janie verbally kills Joe, her "killing insult demonstrates her apprehension of exactly what it is she is supposed to be signifying and adroitly signifies upon that signification, calling attention to an important slippage in Jodie's body, which is like "candle grease".⁴

Tea Cake is different from the previous two husbands in that he does not let the controlling defining gaze of the community define him. When Janie describes him she says, "he was a glance from God" (TE, 102). Clark interprets this figurative sentence: "This metaphor highlights Tea Cake's connection to the visual; he recognizes the need to combine voice with understanding, remarking that Janie needs 'tellin and showin' to believe in love (Clark, 2001; p. 607).

So Tea Cake acts like a guide for Janie. Janie has to learn by herself how to look and how to interpret the world. Some critics believe that Janie's problem in the beginning of her journey is not lack of vision but rather it is seeing the world with white eyes. Janie learns to look further as time passes. She is not content with the surface reality of things she sees. In one instance we read:

She stood there until something fell off the shelf inside her. Then she went inside there to see what it was. It was her image of Jody tumbled down and shattered. But looking at it she saw that it never was the flesh and blood figure of her dreams. Just some-thing she had grabbed up to drape her dreams over. In a way she turned her back upon the image where it lay and looked further. She

had no more blossomy openings dusting pollen over her man, neither any glistening young fruit where the petals used to be.... She had an inside and an outside now and suddenly she knew how not to mix them (TE, 67-68).

An interesting point that is not mentioned by many critics is the clothes Janie uses in burying Tea Cake compared to Jody. On the day of Joe's death, Janie dress like mourners but her clothes are not integrated: she has a veil and we are told that "the funeral was going on outside...weeping and wailing outside" (TE, 88). But on the day of Tea Cake's funeral, "she went on in her overalls. She was too busy feeling grief to dress like grief" (TE, 189). This feeling and its relation to clothes make readers notice her integrity at the end of her journey.

Janie learns to value her vision and see herself better when she is with Tea Cake. She looks in the mirror and sees her beauty. She accepts that she is a colored woman with integrity. The next step for her is to find God. God is referred to first in the title of the novel. And, once again in the hurricane section: "They sat in company with others in other shanties, their eyes straining against crude walls and their souls asking if He meant to measure their puny might against His. They seemed to be staring at the dark, but their eyes were watching God" (TE, 151).

Clark suggests that "one approaches God not just in darkness but by looking through darkness, to see God where others see blackness. In so doing, she enables a kind of vision that deifies darkness, replacing the emptiness with presence, presence in blackness". She continues to say that "by having her characters watch God in darkness, Hurston redefines rationalist and masculine control of the gaze, transforming scopophilia into spirituality. Her enabled gaze does not make women specularizable, for it takes place in darkness; rather, it makes God view-able and blackness visible"(Clark, 2001; p. 609).

Last but not least, in trial scene Janie make the audience "see" rather than listen passively.

She had to go way back to let them know how she and Tea Cake had been with one another so they could see she could never shoot Tea Cake out of malice. She tried to make them see how terrible it was that things were fixed so that Tea Cake could not come back to himself until he had got rid of that mad dog that was in him.... She made them see how she could not ever want to be rid of him (TE, 178).

She learns to make presence out of absence. She learns to control her visibility and her invisibility. Janie becomes both spectator and participant in her own life: "To speak the body, for an African American woman, means to recognize its visual racial difference as well as affirming its sexual identity. Hurston's mind-pictures and seeing-voices reclaim the physical world of pear trees and the

⁴ This is Janie's greatest blow, because what matters even more than the illusion Jodie holds of his "irresistible maleness" is his belief that other men read his possessions as signs of his bodily potency. Hurston sees through to the homo (-anti-) social core of Eatn'ville, where a man needs armor because there is no excuse in the eyes of other men for lack of strength and the pity of others is "merciless" (Cain, 2004; p.116).

beauty of the visible presence of blackness" (Clark, 2001; p.611). In the end of novel, Janie reaches a peace of mind, in which she is "putting down the burden of the body by making it unavailable to prying eyes" (Cain, 2004; p. 113).

The novel ends with this paragraph:

Of course Tea Cake wasn't dead. He could never be dead until she herself had finished feeling and thinking. The kiss of his memory made pictures of love and light against the wall. Here was peace. She pulled in her horizon like a great fish-net. 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 (TE, 193).

Here, the most revealing part, to show visibility appears. She sees Tea Cake and everything engulfs in a peace-like atmosphere for her. The most visible thing for her becomes the most invisible thing for the community that is her soul. The novel's "ultimate resistance then lies in Janie's carving out an individual visible narrative and identity" (Hollingsworth, 2010; p. 276).

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