

**RACIAL DISCRIMINATION AGAINST BLACK WOMEN IN
ZORA NEALE HURSTON'S *THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING
GOD*: AN ANALYSIS WITH A SOCIOLOGY OF LITERATURE
APPROACH**

AN UNDERGRADUATE THESIS

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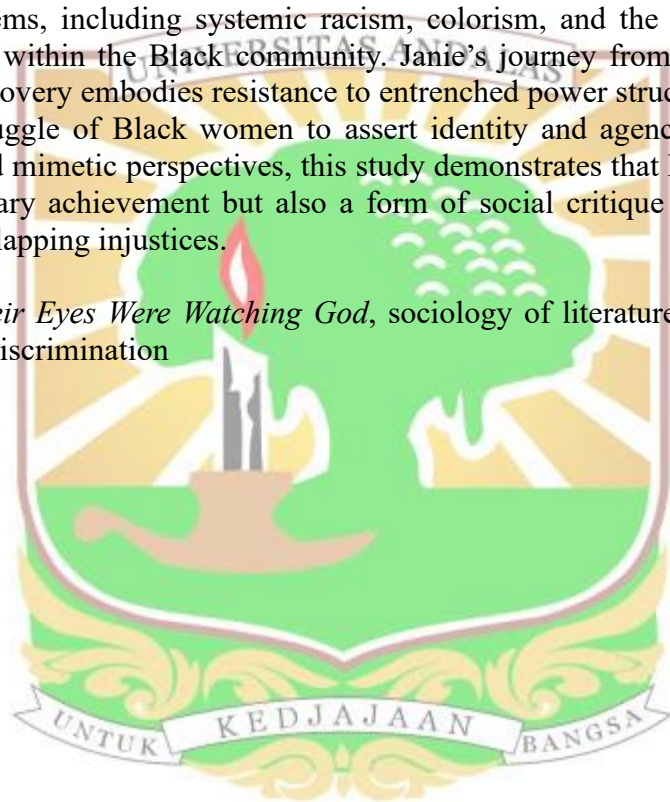


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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes how Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937) represents the discrimination experienced by Black women as a result of both racism and sexism. Using a sociology of literature approach supported by a mimetic framework, the novel is interpreted as a social document reflecting and criticizing the historical and cultural realities of early 20th-century America. The research employs qualitative descriptive analysis, focusing on the character of Janie Crawford and the novel's intrinsic, plot, setting, point of view, and symbolism as supporting data to uncover the layered oppressions she faces. The findings reveal that Hurston portrays Black women as subjected to "double and multiple oppression" rooted in patriarchal and racial systems, including systemic racism, colorism, and the internalization of colonial values within the Black community. Janie's journey from enforced silence toward self-discovery embodies resistance to entrenched power structures and reflects the broader struggle of Black women to assert identity and agency. By combining sociological and mimetic perspectives, this study demonstrates that Hurston's work is not only a literary achievement but also a form of social critique that exposes and challenges overlapping injustices.

Keywords: *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, sociology of literature, mimesis, Black women, racial discrimination



ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini menganalisis bagaimana novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937) karya Zora Neale Hurston merepresentasikan diskriminasi yang dialami perempuan kulit hitam akibat rasisme dan seksisme. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan sosiologi sastra yang didukung kerangka mimetik, novel ini ditafsirkan sebagai dokumen sosial yang merefleksikan sekaligus mengkritisi realitas sejarah dan budaya Amerika pada awal abad ke-20. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif, berfokus pada tokoh Janie Crawford dan unsur intrinsik novel penokohan, alur, latar, sudut pandang, dan simbolisme sebagai data pendukung untuk mengungkap bentuk-bentuk penindasan yang ia alami. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Hurston menggambarkan perempuan kulit hitam mengalami “penindasan ganda dan berlapis” yang berakar pada sistem patriarki dan rasisme struktural, termasuk rasisme sistemik, colorism, dan internalisasi nilai-nilai kolonial dalam komunitas kulit hitam sendiri. Perjalanan Janie dari keterbungkaman menuju penemuan jati diri merepresentasikan perlawanan terhadap struktur kekuasaan yang menindas dan mencerminkan perjuangan perempuan kulit hitam untuk menegaskan identitas dan kemandiriannya. Dengan memadukan perspektif sosiologi sastra dan mimetik, penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa karya Hurston bukan hanya prestasi sastra, tetapi juga bentuk kritik sosial yang mengungkap dan menantang ketidakadilan yang saling bertumpang tindih.

Kata kunci: *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, sosiologi sastra, mimetik, perempuan kulit hitam, diskriminasi rasial

