

Their eyes were
watching god a
streetcar named
desire comparison
paragraphs



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While Janie and Blanche have their similarities, they are also very different.

Blanche is born white and affluent; Janie is born black and poor. Blanche grows up on an old plantation in Mississippi, and Janie is raised in Florida by her grandmother, who has a house in the backyard of a white family she works for. Janie is brought up with their children; in fact, until she sees a picture of herself standing next to them, Janie does not realize she is black.

While Janie eventually learns to not care about what people think of her and become self-sufficient, Blanche is always depending on others. She relies on Stella to take care of her. When Stanley threatens to send Blanche away, she quickly begins a relationship with Mitch, hoping to secure her future by marrying him. However, this is unsuccessful: Blanche eventually goes insane after she is raped by Stanley, and is sent to an asylum in the country. In contrast, Janie gets everything she wants out of life: sexual love and adventure.

Tea Cake provides for her sexually and allows her to be the person she wants to be, unlike her previous two husbands, who each had their own ideas as to how she should act and live out her life. When Pheoby attempts to dissuade her from seeing Tea Cake, she tells her " Ah done lived Grandma's way, now Ah mean tuh live mine" (Hurston 114). Janie has been living the life her grandmother planned out for her, but she is unhappy, so she has decided to start over and go her own way.

Janie is the better feminist protagonist for her time period; unlike Blanche, she makes choices based on her own beliefs and desires rather than worrying about how those around her may perceive her. In *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, Zora Neale Hurston uses vivid imagery and metaphors paired <https://assignbuster.com/their-eyes-were-watching-god-a-streetcar-named-desire-comparison-paragraphs/>

with a unique dialect in order to paint a colorful picture of black life in West Florida during the 1930s. The more “literate” language of the narrator paired with the “uneducated” way of speaking in the dialogue creates a sort of balance that is not often found in literature.

Her distinct, melodic, and almost poetic style of writing flows almost effortlessly with the contrasting speech of the characters. Hurston’s use of local color helps to give the reader a better image of her characters’ background and way of life, particularly in the scene where Eatonville holds a funeral for Matt Bonner’s mule. The funeral is not a somber occasion as one might expect it to be: it consists of shouting and chanting. Hurston writes, “Everybody enjoyed themselves to the highest and then finally the mule was left to the already impatient buzzards” (Hurston 61).

This scene alone is effective in portraying much of the customs and culture of the people of Eatonville, as the funeral is more of a celebration than a bereavement. Lastly, Hurston’s use of slang gives the reader insight into the language of the time, and while it may be somewhat coarse, its use does not affect the tone of her writing. *Their Eyes Were Watching God* is memorable not only because of its story, but because of its originality in style as well. The pear tree, which grows outside Janie’s grandmother’s cabin, is important throughout *Their Eyes Were Watching God*.

Janie, in her youth, often spends time underneath it, thinking about love and its connections to marriage. The tree and its cycle through the seasons are a symbol for the stages of sexual maturity, “from barren brown stems to glistening leaf-buds, from the leaf-buds to snowy virginity of bloom” (Hurston 10). Under the pear tree, Janie sees “a dust-bearing bee sink into the <https://assignbuster.com/their-eyes-were-watching-god-a-streetcar-named-desire-comparison-paragraphs/>

sanctum of a bloom; the thousand sister-calyxes arch to meet the love embrace and the ecstatic shiver of the tree from root to tiniest branch creaming in every blossom and frothing with delight” (Hurston 11).

This represents the kind of sexual love that Janie desires and believes will come to her through marriage. However, the pear tree is desecrated when Janie’s grandmother forces her into marrying Logan Killicks, a man Janie finds to be very unattractive, in order to secure her the “ comfortable” life she herself was unable to have. When she leaves Logan for Joe Starks, a wealthy man looking to build up a town of only black people and make himself mayor, she thinks that she will finally have “ flower dust and springtime sprinkled over everything. A bee for her bloom” (Hurston 32).

Her image of Joe, however, is changed when he hits Janie for messing up his dinner, and she no longer has “ blossomy openings dusting pollen over her man, neither any glistening young fruit where the petals used to be” (Hurston 72). Janie does not find the love she desires until after Joe’s death, when she meets Tea Cake, who is much younger than she is. The pear tree is especially significant because during the time period *Their Eyes Were Watching God* was written in, it was unheard of for a woman to acknowledge her sexuality, an important part of feminism, and is arguably the most important metaphor in the story. With *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, Zora Neale Hurston asserts her view that the idea of never-ending racial oppression is degrading and a falsehood, that “ the man himself must make his own emancipation” (Gates 199). She responds to the Harlem Renaissance movement, centered on rising above oppression through the arts, by almost entirely leaving out racial issues from her novel.

Unlike other black artists and writers of her time, she believes that not acknowledging racism and discrimination will have more of an effect on society than constantly speaking out on its ways. With this method, Hurston effectively makes her point, as her unusual ideology stands out against the repetitive voices of her contemporaries. Works Cited Hurston, Zora Neale. *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2006. Print.