Our society is socially stratified and constituted of systemic inequalities. Despite a heightened awareness of this issue, inequalities continue to manifest themselves today. The purpose of the following research and analysis is to investigate how these social inequalities are perpetuated on an ideological level. By disclosing how ideology is internalized and reproduced, we can gain a greater understanding of the complex mechanisms by which structural inequalities operate.

*Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston follows protagonist Janie Crawford as she negotiates her way through life as a black woman in Florida in the early 20th century. The class conflict and colorism seemingly endemic to the black communities Janie lives in are, in fact, not endemic to them at all—the failure to abolish oppressive divisions within the black community is a result of the failure to reject the central fantasies that coordinate the white social reality. The systemic oppression found within the black communities are present because the directive ideology and its associated fantasies from the predominant white culture has reproduced itself within the black community. By examining the process of social stratification in the town of Eatonville and other black communities detailed in the novel and discussed in critical scholarship, we can see how Hurston strategically discloses the pervasive white influence behind structured systems of oppression.