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Le Journal International des Sachants (JDS) est une revue scientifique pluridisciplinaire dédiée à la valorisation et à la vulgarisation des résultats de recherches innovantes, de découvertes de pointe et de productions scientifiques originales et pertinentes dans divers domaines scientifiques. Disposant de comité scientifique et de lecture, la revue **JDS** offre ainsi aux chercheurs du monde entier, une plateforme de publication de haute qualité en favorisant le partage des connaissances et de la collaboration au sein de la communauté scientifique.

JDS est une revue évaluée par des pairs (*blind peer review*) et en libre accès "*Open access*" relevant des Editions Croco. Il publie les articles dans le domaine des Sciences Humaines et Sociales ; Langues et littérature ; Art, patrimoine et culture ; Sciences du Langage et de la Communication ; Sciences Economiques et de Gestion ; Sciences politiques et Juridiques. Dans sa vision d'ouverture, **JDS** encourage la collaboration interdisciplinaire entre les chercheurs de tous les pays africains et du monde.

Les articles proposés doivent respecter la ligne éditoriale de la revue. Ils doivent être originaux et n'avoir jamais fait l'objet d'une acceptation pour publication dans une autre revue à comité de lecture. Ils sont soumis à une sélection initiale par l'éditeur, puis à un processus rigoureux d'évaluation par les pairs en double aveugle avant publication.

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Resilience and Survival in Ernest J. Gaines' *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman* (1971)

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Abstract

This article explores the themes of resilience and survival in Ernest J. Gaines' *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman* published in 1971. It focuses on the psychological, social, and racial dimensions of endurance within the African American experience. Set in the context of systemic racism in the United States, the story highlights how characters navigate oppression, psychological violence, and social exclusion. It analyzes psychological and social resilience, exploring how characters maintain mental strength, dignity, and self-awareness despite discrimination, humiliation, and systemic marginalization. Drawing on Frantz Fanon's theory of internalized oppression (1963) and Carl Jung's 'collective consciousness', the article argues that resilience emerges as a conscious refusal to internalize racial inferiority and as a strategy of emotional and intellectual resistance. The article also investigates resilience through family and community, emphasizing the role of kinship, solidarity, and shared cultural practices in sustaining survival. Through Edward Said's theory of cultural identity and resistance, the study highlights how communal bonds function as counter-narratives to dominant structures of exclusion, reinforcing identity and collective memory. Finally, the article situates resilience within the broader framework of race and social injustice, examining how systemic racism, inequality, and institutional oppression shape communal bonds as counter-narratives to dominant structures of exclusion and reinforce identity and collective memory.

Keywords : community, psychological resilience, race, survival, social injustice.

Résilience et survie dans *L'autobiographie de Miss Jane Pittman* (1971) d'Ernest J. Gaines

Résumé

Cet article explore les thèmes de la résilience et de la survie à travers le roman d'Ernest J. Gaines, *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman*, publié en 1971. Il met l'accent sur les dimensions psychologiques, sociales et raciales de l'endurance dans l'expérience africaine-américaine. Située dans le contexte du racisme systémique aux États-Unis, l'histoire montre comment les personnages naviguent à travers l'oppression, la violence psychologique et l'exclusion sociale. L'article examine la résilience psychologique et sociale, en montrant



comment les personnages préservent leur force mentale, leur dignité et la prise de conscience de leur identité face à la discrimination et à la marginalisation systémique. À partir de la théorie de l'oppression intériorisée de Frantz Fanon (1963) et la notion de 'conscience collective' de Carl Jung, l'article soutient que la résilience se manifeste comme un refus conscient d'assimiler les représentations dévalorisantes et comme une stratégie de résistance émotionnelle et intellectuelle. Il explore également la résilience à travers la famille et la communauté, en soulignant le rôle des liens familiaux, de la solidarité et des pratiques culturelles partagées dans la survie collective. En s'appuyant sur la théorie de l'identité culturelle et de la résistance d'Edward Said (1978), l'étude montre que la communauté constitue un espace de préservation identitaire et de contre-discours face aux structures dominantes. Enfin, l'article situe la résilience dans le cadre plus large de la race et de l'injustice sociale, en analysant comment l'impact du racisme systémique et des inégalités institutionnelles sur les conditions de survie structurent les liens communaux en tant que récits défiant les structures d'exclusion dominantes et renforcent l'identité et la mémoire collective.

Mots-clés : communauté, injustice sociale, race, résilience psychologique, survie

Introduction

Ernest J. Gaines was an American novelist and short story writer best known for portraying the lives, struggles, and dignity of African Americans in the rural South, especially in Louisiana. He was born in 1933 on a plantation in Pointe Coupée Parish, Louisiana. He grew up in poverty during the era of segregation. At age 15, he moved to California, but Louisiana remained the emotional and imaginative center of his fiction. Much of his writing recreates the voices, landscapes, and social realities of the South he knew as a child. Gaines wrote several important novels, including *Catherine Carmier* (1964), *Of Love and Dust* (1967), *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman* (1971), *A Gathering of Old Men* (1983) and *A Lesson Before Dying* (1993).

The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman tells the story of a formerly enslaved woman who lives through a century of American history, from slavery to the Civil Rights Movement. Gaines' style is simple but powerful. He often uses oral storytelling traditions and realistic dialogue to give voice to people who were historically silenced. It focuses on the struggles of a Black family in a racist and unjust society in mid-20th century America. Gaines' work reveals how people cope with oppression, how they carry themselves with dignity, and how they protect their communities. The novel focuses on the themes of resilience, family, survival, and justice through the character of Jane Pittman. It is an example of the larger historical context of Black people who face oppression while trying to live decent and safe lives.

The main issue raised by this topic is to know how Blacks in Gaines' fiction in general, and in *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman in particular*, manage to deal with racial oppression, overcome their social obstacles and achieve resilience. To what extent is psychological



resilience important for them? What strategies do they resort to prevail in a context marked by nihilism and systemic denial of their rights? Based on psychoanalytic and postcolonial approaches, this paper seeks to demonstrate that they reach their goal by overcoming an overwhelming psychological burden by means of clinging to the values of family and community and an awareness of their historical responsibility towards their own community.

The novel is an excellent example of the daily lives of African Americans who are forced to deal with racial oppression. The story revolves around the lives of Black people and how they cope with their lives while trying to maintain their dignity and self-identification in the face of constant oppression from Whites. Resilience is another important theme used by Gaines in his story. Resilience is the capacity to survive and cope with adversity. It involves the ability to endure and survive against all odds.

Ernest J. Gaines wrote at a time when African Americans were experiencing both overt racism and social exclusion. He shows the various levels at which resilience is achieved by African Americans. Postcolonial theory, based on the ideas of Frantz Fanon on oppression and Edward Said on cultural domination, provides a good perspective for analyzing the narrative. Gaines' characters portray the resilience of the African American at a time when the white man's powers were trying to dehumanize them (Fanon, 1963; Said, 1978).

This article is structured into three sections that, although they present different areas of analysis, all portray the various levels at which the concept of resilience takes shape. They portray the fact that survival is a complex process involving the psychological, social, cultural, and spatial dimensions.

The first section explores the concept of psychological and social resilience, with particular emphasis on the African American characters' ability to cope with the challenges of discrimination, racial intimidation, and injustice. In a society characterized by discrimination and marginalization, resilience appears to be a psychological force that enables the individual to cope with the challenges of identity. Building on the concept of internalized oppression developed by Frantz Fanon (1963), the chapter explores the African American characters' ability to cope with the psychological challenges of racism without losing a sense of identity. Fanon argues that the colonial experience leads to a fragmented sense of self. However, the process of resistance to colonialism begins with a sense of self. In the stories developed by Gaines, the African American characters' sense of self appears to be developed through wit, composure, irony, and social maneuvering. In many instances, it is the ability to cope with the challenges of identity without resorting to open rebellion that appears to define resilience.



The second section of the text changes focus from the individual to the collective dimension of resilience. It discusses the role of family ties, social networks, and cultural practices in the resilience of survival in a hostile environment. Gaines presents the community not in romantic terms, as many people do, but as a necessary structure of support, protection, and affirmation. In the context of marginalized communities, community ties are a survival strategy. Family history, religious traditions, narratives, and memories are all a source of identity and belonging, and all of these are a source of resilience against cultural extinction and emotional instability. This dimension of resilience can be related to Edward Said's theory of cultural identity and resistance (Said, 1978). Said affirms that identity formation is impossible without resistance to the narratives of power structures, or to the narratives of dominant cultures. Also drawing from Carl Jung's theory of 'collective unconsciousness', we will see in this chapter how resilience has to be approached from the lens of a collective endeavor echoing Carl Jung's focus on "the inherited unconscious" In Gaines' text, community relations are a narrative of resistance to oppression, affirming the human value of the individual in a community context. The community becomes a space of resistance to oppression, and the individual is able to survive without losing his or her identity as a member of a community.

The third section establishes the context of resilience in terms of race and social injustice. African American resilience cannot be viewed without considering the historical context of slavery, segregation, and racial injustice. Again, Fanon (1963) argues that oppression is not only at the social level, but also there is a psychological level too, and this has to do with how oppression dehumanizes people. Gaines' characters are all subjected to racism in one way or another, and their survival can be viewed as a form of defiance and moral clarity. Race is not just a situational element in Gaines' works; it is a dominant driving force behind social mobility, interpersonal connections, and justice delivery systems. Social injustice takes the form of power imbalance, economic inequality, and cultural exclusion. However, the element of resilience is portrayed as a way of turning suffering into consciousness.

This section also reveals how Gaines reveals the irony of American democracy. The idea of equality is juxtaposed with racial inequality. Therefore, the element of resilience is not just a personal attribute; it is a political attribute as well. To be resilient is to bear testimony; to be alive is to bear witness to social injustice. Through the use of racialized social structures, this section illustrates that one can no longer talk about endurance without discussing resistance. The survival of African Americans is not just moral but is also, and more precisely, a political statement of existence. Resilience, therefore, is an act of definition. It is an act of not



internalizing one's oppression, of communal solidarity, and of creating spaces of dignity and meaning out of oppressive spaces. The paper ends with a summary of Gaines' main points, which emphasize survival as an act of adapting to one's oppressive reality and, more precisely, as an act of preserving one's selfhood, dignity, and cultural identity.

1. Psychological and social resilience

In *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman*, Gaines shows how African American characters survive constant social and psychological pressures. Psychological resilience is their ability to stay mentally strong despite daily oppression. Gaines demonstrates that survival is not only physical; it is also emotional and social. Characters must protect their self-respect while interacting with people who are biased or hostile toward them.

One way Gaines shows resilience is through wit and cleverness. The main character, Jane Pittman, navigates a society where white people hold power and control opportunities. She manages difficult interactions calmly and strategically, showing that resilience requires intelligence and careful observation. As Fanon (1963) argues in *The Wretched of the Earth*, oppressed people often develop "strategies of survival" to resist the psychological effects of domination. Jane's responses demonstrate this type of adaptive resilience. She does not openly challenge the white authority figures but finds ways to protect herself and her community from humiliation and harm.

Social resilience is also another factor that can be identified in the story. Gaines highlights the significance of navigating the social world cautiously in order to survive in a racially biased world. There are also instances wherein the characters utilize smaller groups that assist them in avoiding isolation and oppression. In the case of Jane, she communicates with the members of her social world, who assist her in disseminating information regarding the social world and enhancing her cultural identity. Said (1978) has also identified the concept of cultural identity, which can be applied. Gaines depicts African-American people as possessing cultural identity despite the attempts by the dominant culture to remove it, which assists the social world in surviving the pressures.

Indeed, throughout his writing career, Gaines devised narrative weaves that encapsulate the cultural peculiarity of the South in general and Louisiana in particular. His recurrent fictive town of Bayonne serves as a way to highlight the specific social stratification of Louisiana featuring mainly the Whites, the Cajuns and the Blacks. In comparison with his earlier novel, *Catherine Carmier*, published in 1964, Gaines presents in *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman* his readers with a very rich and diverse depiction of the Southern Blacks' folklore and



traditions. Their culture as well as their music are also put to the fore so as to show the preservation of a culturally rich community that is socially very resilient. Hicks points it out as the main strength of Gaines novel: “That power lies in Gaines's careful assimilation of Afro-American folk materials, particularly those of the South, in which his historical vision is absorbed and vivified.” (J. Hicks, 1977: 18)

Gaines also points out the emotional effect of oppression. The characters have fear, anger, and frustration, but they are able to manage these emotions so that they do not lead to negative consequences. The management of emotions is an important aspect of resilience. The characters in Gaines’ works would not have survived in a society filled with racial prejudice if they had not managed their emotions. By managing their emotions, the characters in Gaines’ works are able to uphold their dignity in the face of adversity (Gates & McKay, 1997).

At last, the psychological and social resilience of Miss Jane Pittman is the ability of the characters in the novel to adapt, survive, and uphold their dignity in the face of racial discrimination. Gaines has shown in his works that survival is about being “clever” and managing emotions and social interactions. This is in agreement with the works of Fanon and Said. It is also important to notice that Fanon was very radical in his approach. Even if Gaines is not as radical as the latter, he sometimes stages characters that display reactionary attitudes. One that comes to mind is Marcus in *Of Love and Dust*. Bonded out of jail, he is taken to the Hebert plantation to work in the fields. His rebellious stance urges him to court and have a love affair with Pauline Bonbon, the wife of the overseer Sidney Bonbon. What can be seen as a suicidal attitude is also a daring and brave defiance of the overseer who was feared by all the Blacks working on the plantation because of his cruelty. From a psychological standpoint, it is also a form of resistance for Marcus who cannot understand why it is admitted for Whites to have love affairs with Black women while it is denied for Black men to court white women. The narrator Jim Kelly, who is a rational and experienced middle-aged Black man, grows admiring of Marcus’ behavior:

I admired Marcus. I admired his great courage. And that's why I wanted to hurry up and get to the front. That's why my heart had jumped in my throat when the tractor went dead on me -I was afraid I wouldn't be able to tell him how much I admired what he was doing. I wanted to tell him how brave I thought he was. I wanted to tell them that they were starting something-yes, that's what I would tell them; they were starting something that others would hear about, and understand, and would follow. (E. Gaines, 1967: 270)

Marcus’ defiance that ends in his murder by Sidney Bonbon also shows the psychological effects of racial oppression. The latter resorts to extreme choices so as to fight against what he



perceives unfair and unequal. The next section underscores how resilience is achieved in Blacks thanks to the values and importance of family and a strong sense of belonging to a community.

2. Resilience through Family and Community

In *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman*, Gaines teaches that not just cleverness and control of emotions contribute to resilience, but family and community do too. These communities enable the characters to survive oppression while holding their heads high in an unfriendly world. Jane Pittman's family is very instrumental in her resilience. Gaines states, "Miss Jane looked at her children, and in their faces, she found courage she did not know she had" (E. Gaines, 1971: 73). This quotation shows that family is the source of emotional resilience that helps an individual find courage even in the face of adversity.

Community connections also enable the character to cope with daily racial injustices. Gaines describes how the community shares information, cautions each other about threats, and protects one another. For example, Jane says, "When someone comes to the door asking questions, we all know to guard our words and our faces" (E. Gaines, 1971: 77). Such community coordination demonstrates the strategies for survival. It demonstrates Fanon's (1963) argument that a sense of community awareness enables the oppressed to cope with the psychological impact of oppression.

The community also plays a role in teaching the character strategies for survival through observing the community members. Older members share lessons on how to cope with the oppression of racism. For example, Jane recollects her grandmother's words: "*Keep your head low, but your mind sharp*" (E. Gaines, 1969: 80). Such words emphasize the strategic nature of the character's survival. Said (1978) shows that community identity is strengthened through the sharing of knowledge. Gaines shows this through the sharing of lessons for survival within the community.

Indeed, the legacy of slavery and racial segregation have left a psychological scar, but also survival mechanisms that have been passed on from generation to generation. The memory of African Americans lives on through the sharing of knowledge and the inheritance of peculiar strategies and practices. This what the Swiss psychoanalyst Carl Jung calls the 'collective unconscious'. Thus, "while Freudian work stresses sexual impulses, Jungian approaches instead focus on the inherited unconscious" (S. Upstone, 2017: 75). In "The Significance of Constitution and Heredity in Psychology" (November 1929), Jung wrote:



The existence of the collective unconscious means that individual consciousness is anything but a tabula rasa and is not immune to predetermining influences. On the contrary, it is in the highest degree influenced by inherited presuppositions, quite apart from the unavoidable influences exerted upon it by the environment. The collective unconscious comprises in itself the psychic life of our ancestors right back to the earliest beginnings (C. Jung, 1929: 112).

Family and community resilience can be drawn on as sources of emotional survival. The characters can share their experiences of sorrow, fear and hopes, and thus be able to survive emotional stress. Gaines says, “When we gather, even the silence is a kind of strength” (Gaines, 1971, p. 82). This illustrates that the presence of people one can trust is comforting and gives one strength to carry on with survival.

Besides, *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman* is also about the saga of three generations of African Americans. This saga mirrors the evolution of Gaines from *Catherine Carmier* to the former novel in terms of his highlighting the collective struggle of the Black community to overcome their plight and recover not only their freedom, but also their dignity. Their resilience is all the more commendable in that it was achieved in a collective effort and a collective realization that their race issues transcend individuals and required a collective prowess. Hicks points it out:

The movement from Catherine Carmier to Miss Jane Pittman is from personal and racial history rendered as a kind of bondage, a solitary existential nightmare of dead ends and blasted families, toward history sensed as a natural cycle, wheeling slowly through the rebirth of a people, toward their inevitable collective liberation. (J. Hicks, 1977: 9)

The next section delves into the ways in which resilience is achieved in Gaines’ fiction through a fight against injustice and as a unified racial community.

3. Resilience, Race, and Social Injustice

This section of the paper explores Gaines’ use of resilience and survival in the story. Gaines illustrates that not only is it about personal strength, but there is also moral strength and community strength. Survival entails living with everyday dangers, social injustice, and protecting one’s family. By examining Jane Pittman’s survival strategies, it is clear that Gaines establishes the connection between personal experiences and social and political issues.

In the character of Miss Jane Pittman, Gaines demonstrates that the greatest test of resilience is against racism and injustice. Jane and her people are living in a world designed to subjugate the Black community. However, they are able to survive. Gaines depicts the effects of racism on African -Americans: “*They make you feel small, even when you know your worth*” (E. Gaines,



1971: 90). This quotation demonstrates the challenges racism poses to one's ego and identity. It is the ultimate test of resilience.

As a matter of fact, this was the main ordeal of African Americans. White people made most of them suffer from a complex of inferiority. They physically, emotionally and morally broke them. They tried to convince them that they were naturally inferior and bound to serve and obey them. Therefore, the first condition to emancipate Blacks was to overcome those hurdles one by one. This is the reason why DuBois talked about the notion of 'Double Consciousness' in his seminal work, *The Souls of Black Folks* (1903), to stress the conflicting identities that are difficult to reconcile and that create a major obstacle.

However, Ernest J. Gaines underlines the refusal of Blacks to give up and abandon the fight. To this purpose, he stages three characters that stand for three heroic figures in *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman*. The first one is Ned Douglass, the second one is Jimmy Aaron and the last one is Jane's own husband, Joe Pittman. Ned's story is particularly poignant because, rescued by Jane at the age of four, he witnessed the killing and dismembering of wandering ex-slaves by patrollers, including his own mother. Still, he refuses to surrender and vows to keep fighting as the Black American he is. He claims his birthright in dignity and warns other Blacks against fleeing for Canada or to Africa. He also states the difference between the nigger and the Black American:

Be Americans... But first be men. Look inside yourself. Say 'What am I? What else beside this black skin that the white man call nigger?' Do you know what a nigger is? ... First, a nigger feels below anybody else on earth. He's been beaten so much by the white man, he don't care for himself, for nobody else, and for nothing else... But there's a big difference between a nigger and a black American. A black American cares, and will always struggle. Every day that he get up he hopes that this day will be better. The nigger knows it won't... I want my children to fight. Fight for all-not just for a corner. The black man or white man who tell you to stay in a corner want to keep your mind in a corner too." (E. Gaines, 1971:110)

It might be argued here that Gaines, through the character of Ned Douglass, sees eye to eye with DuBois and rejects the idea of Marcus Garvey who advocated black Americans to return to Africa. DuBois wanted Blacks to fight for all their rights and he called for a strong Black leadership that can help propel the masses and help the latter to collectively get emancipated.

Also, Jane's survival mechanisms are an exercise in mental strength and social skills. Jane is cautious in her approach to survival. She is equally discreet and bold in her approach. For instance, Gaines writes, "*Jane never raised her voice, but everyone knew she would not be moved*" (E. Gaines, 1971, p. 92). This quotation demonstrates Jane's mental strength and



courage, which are necessary survival mechanisms. This quotation is also an exercise in Fanon's (1963) idea of the need for the oppressed to build up their psychological resilience against dehumanization.

Another theme that Gaines discusses is the effects that systemic injustices have on one's life. Jane experiences injustices at her workplace, in the streets, and in social gatherings. However, she manages to cope with these injustices without compromising her integrity. Gaines writes, "*Every day she walked the streets with eyes open, knowing who watched, who waited, and who could harm*" (E. Gaines, 1971, p. 95). This statement shows that for one to survive, they must be aware and have the ability to counter the threats they encounter intelligently.

However, Gaines also shows that resilience is also a moral attribute. Jane's actions, for example, are not motivated by a desire for vengeance but by a desire for protection. Jane writes, "*To fight with hate is easy, to fight with love is harder*" (Gaines, 1971, p. 98). This quote shows that moral resilience, or the decision to be courageous rather than hateful, is a key attribute of Jane's character. Gaines connects moral resilience with other social justice concepts, showing that it is a personal attribute.

In point of fact, another distinctive feature of Gaines' writing is his effort to stage Black characters that bring a humanistic response to the barbarity of the white oppressor. In *A Lesson Before Dying*, the young Jefferson is unjustly accused of a murder he did not commit. Even worse, his own lawyer calls him a 'hog' in an attempt to spare him a death sentence. He explains to the members of the jury that it is worthless murdering a hog. On hearing how the attorney spoke of Jefferson, his grandmother asks Grant Wiggins, a Black teacher, to raise the awareness of her grandson of his humanity and to teach him to die as a dignified human being. In his final attempts, Jefferson tells him of the necessity to deconstruct and demystify the myth that the white man constructed to justify its enterprise of dominance:

Do you know what a myth is Jefferson? I asked him. A myth is an old lie that people believe in. White people believe that they're better than anyone else on earth – and that's a myth. The last thing they ever want is to see a black man stand, and think, and show that common humanity that is in us all. It would destroy their myth. (E. Gaines, 1993: 192)

Gaines thereby showcases his postcolonial approach by trying to counter the narratives that white people weave to account for their horrible misdeeds. He lays bare their contradictions and demonstrates through the character of Grant Wiggins how to make their constructed myth crumble.



Lastly, Gaines proves the idea of learned and shared resilience in the face of racism and other forms of injustice. Jane's life has much to teach the younger generation about dealing with racism in a dignified manner. She teaches them, "*Remember who you are, and remember where you come from*" (E. Gaines, 1971, p. 101). By passing on knowledge and values, Jane makes sure that her community continues to survive not only physically but also culturally. Said (1978) argues that cultural identity is preserved through narratives and shared memories, and Gaines proves this in his narrative through Jane's teaching.

Conclusion

In conclusion, in his narrative, Gaines shows resilience in the face of racism and other forms of injustice as a state of mental, moral, and communal strength. Jane Pittman's survival strategies are not only a testament to her personal strength but also to the strength of her community.

Resilience is a multi-layered concept within African American narratives: psychological strength, communal solidarity, and opposition to racial injustice. With the incorporation of the works of Fanon on postcolonial theory and Edward Said on cultural identity, this article has explored the concept of resilience as a dynamic construct of self-identity and social critique. Resilience is not merely a state of endurance; it is a mindful choice to resist the forced acceptance of inferiority, a maintenance of dignity through communal bonds, and a perpetual struggle against social injustice.

In his narrative on Miss Jane Pittman, Ernest J. Gaines highlights the importance of resilience and survival as integral to the lives of African Americans under a racist social order and conditions of social injustice. Miss Jane Pittman is confronted with various challenges: threats from a racist social order and the need to protect her family. She shows strength, courage, and wisdom amidst these challenges from a racist social order. Gaines highlights that survival is not merely a matter of physical safety but of maintaining dignity, values, and community.

Family and the community are also essential for Jane's survival. Gaines teaches that people are stronger together. Ultimately, Gaines' story teaches us that resilience and survival are continuous processes. Even against unjust systems and societal challenges, people like Jane Putnam will go on to protect their loved ones, preserve their values, and struggle against oppression. Gaines depicts family and society as significant sources of resilience. The love, wisdom, and societal watchfulness that exist within Jane Pittman's society enable the characters to survive against systemic racism while holding on to their dignity and humanity. Miss Jane Putnam is an outstanding example of how the human spirit can survive adversity, learn from experiences, and motivate others to carry on.



Ultimately, this study demonstrates that resilience in *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman* is multidimensional: it is psychological resistance, communal solidarity, and political defiance. Survival becomes an act of self-definition and a form of enduring resistance against racial injustice.

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