

## After Reading Projects

Name \_\_\_\_\_

For the past few weeks, we have been reading Zora Neale Hurston’s novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. While the reading has been challenging, numerous class discussions and student/teacher interactions have moved along our thinking -- helping us to make meaning from the text -- while we seek our own personal connections to the characters and the novel as a whole. In the following few days, you will be asked to complete two assignments that will help to *further* enhance your ability to create knowledge from the text.

**Requirements:** Each student will complete one project from the list below. Please check the box that corresponds to your projects. Each project must be typed. You will be given submission instructions when schools begins. DUE: Tuesday, August 15, 2017.

- #1: QUESTIONS AND INTERPRETATIONS
- #2: STYLISTIC IMITATIONS
- #3: THEMATIC INVESTIGATION
- #4: NOVEL CONNECTIONS
- #5: CHARACTER INVESTIGATIONS –GENDER ROLES

### Project Task Assessment Guide

Exemplary/ Accomplished (42-50)	Promising/ Developing (35-42)	Beginning (25-35)	Evidence Is Missing (0-25)
<p>Well-crafted, thoughtful, detailed, focused responses critically and insightfully evaluate the text and/or the questions. Ideas enrich reader’s understanding of the author and/or the text. Selects, interprets, and analyzes information. Few errors.</p>	<p><i>Thematic connections are developed on broad terms; responses are complete; some appropriate detail. Ideas presented help to build understanding of the text and/or the author. Selects/ analyzes information related to topic. Some errors.</i></p>	<p>Work is complete, but simplistic; ideas / interpretations / analysis lack focus and/or clarity. Connections to text are unclear or difficult to follow. Errors interfere with meaning / reading of the text.</p>	<p><i>Off-task Work is brief/ incomplete. Contains factual inaccuracies. Content without much commentary.</i></p>
<p>Work is highly creative, well-developed, and highly imaginative. Well-chosen language clearly conveys essence of voice; choices and appropriate / believable; links to text are dynamic and complex.</p>	<p><i>Work is carefully created and adequately developed. Some language choice / descriptions are not fully developed; most choices are precise and believable. Links are appropriate.</i></p>	<p>Work is complete, but overall presentation lacks careful attention to detail. Voice is thin / flat; choices are simplistic, overt, and/or vague; links to text are appropriate, but general and/or underdeveloped.</p>	<p><i>Off-task Not enough evidence to warrant a score. Product is limited in scope.</i></p>

## After Reading Activities

### Activity #1: QUESTIONS AND INTERPRETATIONS

**There are levels of questioning:**

Level 1 Questions (Literal—who, what where)

Level 2 Questions (Interpretive)

Level 3 Questions (Synthesizes, Evaluates, goes beyond the text—Universal Application)

**Below are Level 2 and Level 3 Questions. Construct an ACE response for each of the questions below. Be sure to cite your evidence and include the page number (Hurston #).**

#### *Level 2 Questions*

1. Why does Janie stay married to Joe?
2. Why does Nanny wed Janie to Logan Killicks?
3. Why does Logan want to marry Janie?
4. What does Logan's desire to marry Janie say about his views on marriage?
5. Where does Janie place her dreams? At what personal cost?
6. How can young women today relate to Janie when she is forced to marry Logan?
7. What is Hurston suggesting by giving Janie the childhood name of Alphabet?
8. According to Hurston, what are men's dreams?
9. What is the attitude of the porch sitters and talkers towards Janie?
10. What other pieces of literature use the narrative structure of "telling a story to a friend?"
11. Why is the flashback a powerful structure for the theme of TEWWG?
12. Why didn't Janie have children? How would that have changed the story?
13. What does it mean, "You've got to go there to know there."
14. How is Janie's journey every woman's journey?
15. How do "acts of loving service" make sense to you today?

#### **Level Three Questions**

1. What loving decisions to adults make for their children that are essentially not in the best interest of the children?
2. How important is your own experience in knowing who you are?
3. Must one experience in order to know?
4. How is everyone's life a journey toward self-knowledge?
5. What are the dangers and disadvantages of putting dreams outside the self?
6. Do men and women really have such different dreams or notions of self?
7. Why do people feel the need to sit in judgment over others?
8. What makes for a successful relationship?
9. Why do so many relationships seem to be based on dominance and power?
10. Why are we critical of women who marry younger men yet not critical of men who marry younger women?
11. What is a trophy wife and is that harmful to both wife and husband?



## After Reading Activities

### Activity #2: STYLISTIC IMITATION (CONTINUED)

- 4) Cultural References -- Be sure to include references to the historical and cultural setting. Feel free to use cultural references from our Panel Presentations or from other references found in the novel.
  
- 5) Imagery -- What kinds of imagery will you include in your piece? You may use symbols, metaphors or motifs present in the novel, or you may create your own. What does your imagery represent -- what ideas are you trying to convey by using imagery?
  
- 6) Purpose -- What is the purpose of your additional chapter? What message will you convey? Will you continue with a theme already present in the novel or embark on a new direction? How will your message affect/involve Janie?

## After Reading Activities

### Activity #2: STYLISTIC IMITATION (CONTINUED)

#### STUDENT SAMPLE #1: STYLISTIC IMITATION

As the sun rose on the horizon of Eatonville, a blossom was about to grow into a splendid sphere of sweetness on the pear tree. The birds and the bees had become one in an intoxicated dance that would soon create a treasure like none other...life.

Janie's fine pool of ebony hair tickled the small of her back as she awoke from a dream in which she and her Tea Cake frolicked in the warm water and basked in the moonlight of the Glades. Her hazy state of bliss was soon interrupted by a churning feeling in her stomach which soon had her sprinting to the wash room to vomit. A cold ripple of sweat formed on her forehead as she heaved for the last time. She slowly got up and shuffled her way back to the bedroom. She stuck her head out the window just in time to see Phoeby crossing the street, heading to the store.

"Phoeby honey," she called out. "I sho could use sum help heer."

"Wuz that chu say, Janie?" Phoeby replied.

"I says, I sho could use sum help up heer," Janie called out, a little bit louder this time. Phoeby nodded and walked across the street, into Janie's house.

"Janie...you's okay?" Phoeby called from the bottom of the stairs.

"I think I jus caught a bug o' sumtin."

"Want me to get da docta?"

That sho would help me out, honey."

"You jus wait right heer and Ah'll be right back with Docta Richadsun."

Phoeby slammed the door behind her and Janie fell into a limp mass of sweat and dizziness on her bed. She tried to move her legs to get comfortable but she just didn't seem to have the strength. About the time she gave up Phoeby was back with Doctor Richardson.

"Janie girl...you's burnin' up."

"I know, Docta. Ah've been feelin' a might bit preclar since Ah woke up dis mornin'."

"You's thrown up?"

"Yup, right thing afta Ah's been awake. You s'pose Ah's gone an caught me a bug?"

"Ah dunno. Lemme give you a look ova."

He looked in her ears and eyes. He took her temperature and checked out her heartbeat. Then he felt around her stomach and checked out her womanhood. He felt a little bit awkward, hardly knowing her and being the only white man in Eatonville. Nonetheless, his discovery made the full examination worthwhile.

"Janie...you ain't gone an caught yoself a bug, you's gone and caught yoself a chile."

'Whut chu say, Docta?"

"I know ya heard me Janie. Ah'll be headed on my way now. Don't be drinkin' none of that devil's brew, ya heer me? It could be bad fo yo chile. You take good care of yoself, get plenty of res and eat plenty."

Both Phoeby and Janie were speechless. With the sadness that the son of the golden sun had vanished, a new moon arose. A seed had been planted and the blossom had grown into the core of a fruit...a baby was growing inside of her.

## After Reading Activities

### Activity #3: THEMATIC INVESTIGATION

Attached are a variety of materials that will allow you to examine the importance of tree imagery in Hurston's novel and make connections both to other pieces of literature and to your own lives. Students will complete all five of the tasks.

Excerpt from Beloved, by Toni Morrison.

Something in the house braced, and in the listening quiet that followed Sethe spoke.

"I got a tree on my back and a haint in my house, and nothing in between but the daughter I am holding in my arms. No more running – from nothing. I will never run from another thing on this earth." ...

"What tree on your back? Is something growing on your back? I don't see nothing growing on your back."

"It's there all the same."

"Who told you that?"

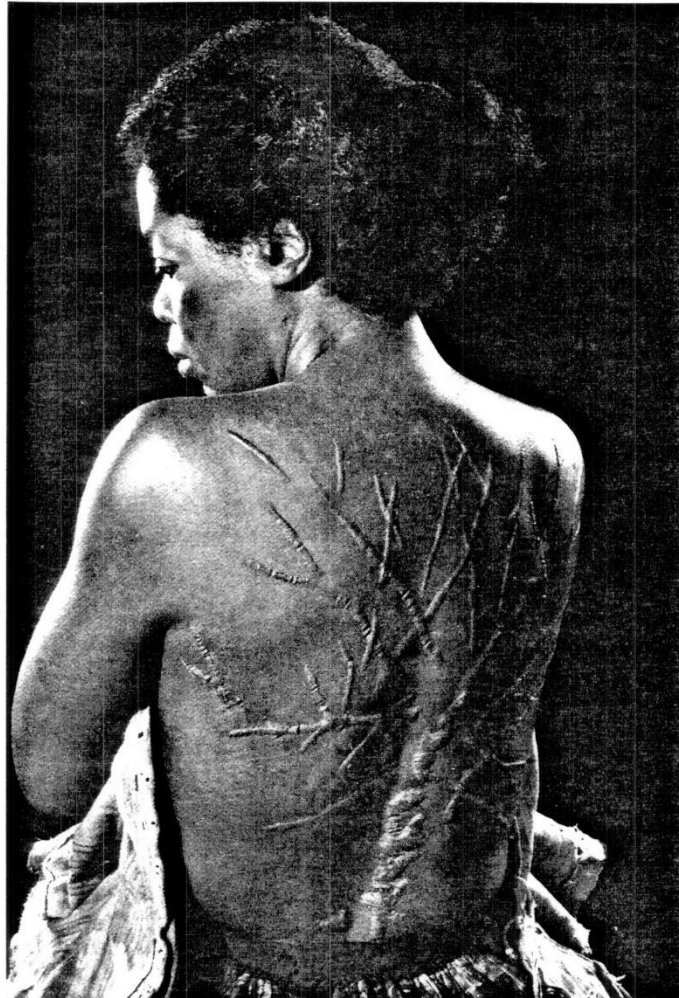
"Whitegirl. That's what she called it. I've never seen it and never will. But that's what she said it looked like. A chokeberry tree. Trunk, branches, and even leaves. Tiny chokeberry leaves. But that was eighteen years ago. Could have cherries too now for all I know." ...

Behind her, bending down, his body an arc of kindness, he held her back and learned that way her sorrow, the roots of it; its wide trunk and intricate branches. Raising his fingers to the hooks of her dress, he knew without seeing them or hearing any sigh that the tears were coming fast. And when the top of her dress was around her hips and he saw the sculptures her back had become, like the decorative work of an ironsmith too passionate for display, he could think but not say, "Aw, Lord, girl." And he would tolerate no peace until he had touched every ridge and lea of it with his mouth, none of which Sethe could feel because her back skin had been dead for years.

1. After reading the excerpt, examine the attached picture from the film version of the book and respond in the voice of Sethe as she might talk of her tree. Keep in mind that Sethe's tree is an outward and visible sign of her inward and spiritual suffering. Make sure the reader understands who the audience is.
2. Reread pages 10-11 of TEWWG, where the image of Janie's Pear Tree is introduced. How does this image define Janie's new sense of self? Describe how this tree image is an outward and visible sign of Janie's inward and spiritual growth.
3. Making connections to both texts, contrast the two very different tree images as metaphors for both Sethe and Janie.
4. Read the attached poem, "Where I'm From," by George Ella Lyon. Write a mirror version of the poem from Janie's perspective. The poem should be written from a specific time in the novel (Janie as a young woman; Janie married to Joe; Janie on trial; etc.)
5. Continue your investigation of "the tree as a metaphor of the self" by reading the attached excerpts from The House on Mango Street (Sandra Cisneros), The Bell Jar (Sylvia Plath), and Their Eyes Were Watching God (Zora Neal Hurston). Create your own metaphor using a tree as a symbol of yourself. Explain your metaphor in words, then create a graphic representation of your tree self, using details and experiences from your life to create your tree.

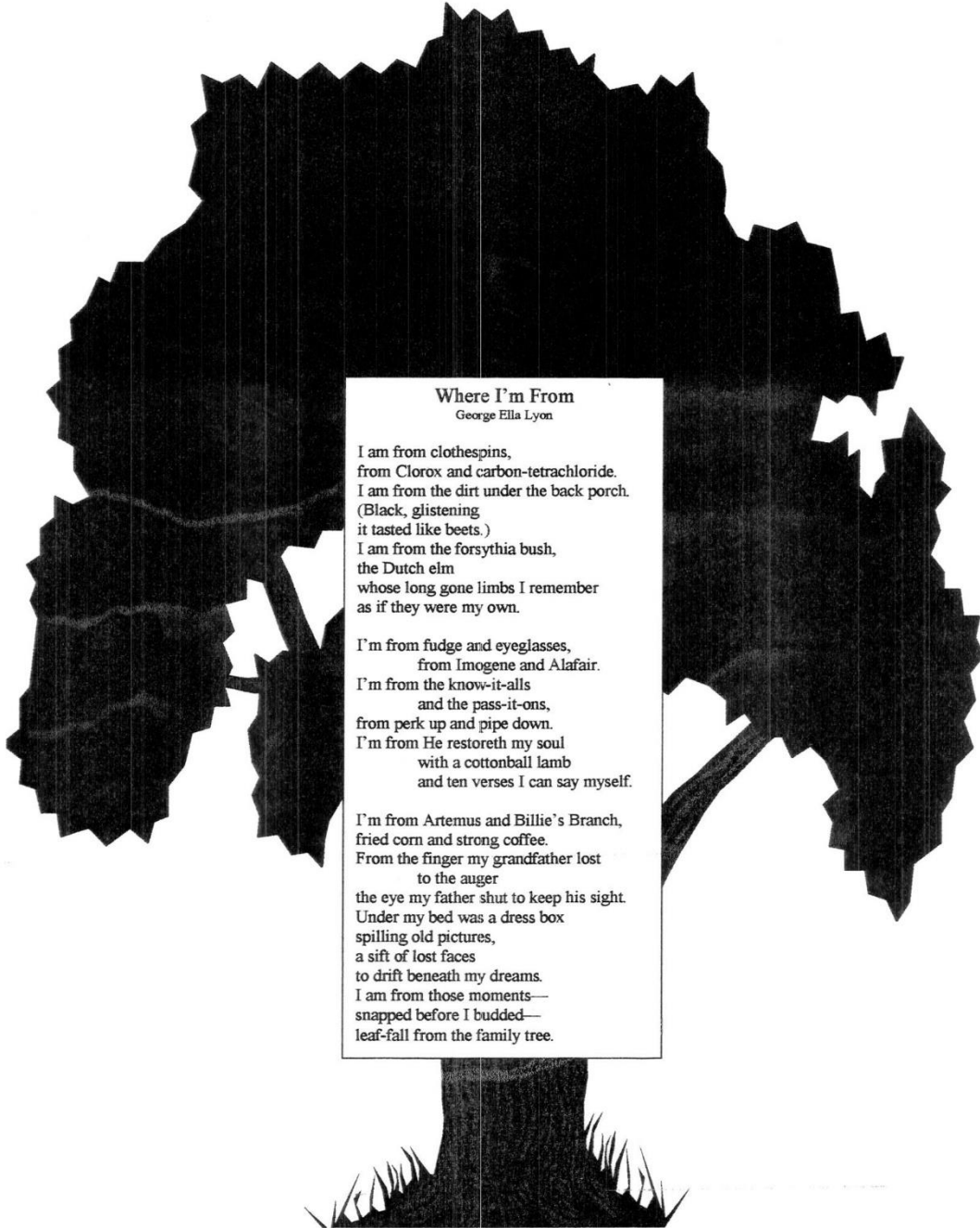
**After Reading Activities**

**Activity #3: THEMATIC INVESTIGATION (CONTINUED)**



## After Reading Activities

### Activity #3: THEMATIC INVESTIGATION (CONTINUED)



#### Where I'm From

George Ella Lyon

I am from clothespins,  
from Clorox and carbon-tetrachloride.  
I am from the dirt under the back porch.  
(Black, glistening  
it tasted like beets.)  
I am from the forsythia bush,  
the Dutch elm  
whose long gone limbs I remember  
as if they were my own.

I'm from fudge and eyeglasses,  
from Imogene and Alafair.  
I'm from the know-it-alls  
and the pass-it-ons,  
from perk up and pipe down.  
I'm from He restoreth my soul  
with a cottonball lamb  
and ten verses I can say myself.

I'm from Artemus and Billie's Branch,  
fried corn and strong coffee.  
From the finger my grandfather lost  
to the auger  
the eye my father shut to keep his sight.  
Under my bed was a dress box  
spilling old pictures,  
a sift of lost faces  
to drift beneath my dreams.  
I am from those moments—  
snapped before I budded—  
leaf-fall from the family tree.



## After Reading Activities

### Activity #3: THEMATIC INVESTIGATION (CONTINUED)

#### Four Skinny Trees (The House on Mango Street – Sandra Cisneros)

They are the only ones who understand me. I am the only one who understands them. Four skinny trees with skinny necks and pointy elbows like mine. Four who do not belong here but are here. Our raggedy excuses planted by the city. From our room we can hear them, but Nenny just sleeps and doesn't appreciate these things.

Their strength is secret. They send ferocious roots beneath the ground. They grow up and they grow down and grab the earth between their hairy toes and bite the sky with violent teeth and never quit their anger. This is how they keep.

Let one forget his reason for being, they'd all droop like tulips in a glass, each with their arms around the other. Keep, keep, keep, trees say when I sleep. They'd teach.

When I am too sad and too skinny to keep keeping, when I am a tiny thing against so many bricks, then it is I look at trees. When there is nothing left to look at on this street. Four who grew despite concrete. Four who reach and do not forget to reach. Four whose only reason is to be and be.

#### Excerpt from The Bell Jar (Sylvia Plath)

I saw my life branching out before me like the green fig tree in the story.

From the tip of every branch, like a fat purple fig, a wonderful future beckoned and winked. One fig was a husband and an happy home and children, and another fig was a famous poet and another fig was a brilliant professor, and another fig was Ee Gee, the amazing editor, and another fig was Europe and Africa and South America, and another fig was Constantin and Socrates and Attila and a pack of other lovers with queer names and offbeat professions, and another fig was an Olympic lady crew champion, and beyond and above these figs were many more figs I couldn't quite make out.

I saw myself sitting in the crotch of this fig tree, starving to death, just because I couldn't make up my mind which of the figs I would choose. I wanted each and every one of them, but choosing one meant losing all the rest, and, as I sat there, unable to decide, the figs began to wrinkle and go black, and, one by one, they plopped to the ground at my feet.

#### Their Eyes Were Watching God (Zora Neale Hurston)

Janie saw her life like a great tree in leaf with the things suffered, things enjoyed, things done and undone. Dawn and doom was in the branches.

.....

She was stretched on her back beneath the pear tree soaking in the alto chant of the visiting bees, the gold of the sun and the panting breath of the breeze when the inaudible voice of it all came to her ... Oh to be a pear tree – any tree in bloom With kissing bees singing of the beginning of the world. She had glossy leaves and bursting buds and she wanted to struggle with life but it seemed to elude her.

## After Reading Activities

### Activity #4: NOVEL CONNECTIONS

In Alice Walker's novel The Color Purple, the character of Celie undergoes a transformation of self that has been compared to the transformation that Janie goes through in Their Eyes Were Watching God. During this project, students will work through a variety of tasks that will help them to better understand the characters and allow them to create meaning of both texts.

1. Begin by reading the attached letter that Celie writes to God. Describe the speaker of this letter. In your opinion, why is the name of Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ left out of the letter? What does this indicate about the feeling the writer has for him?
2. Which characters in this letter, and in Their Eyes Were Watching God, seem similar? In what ways are Zora Neale Hurston's and Alice Walker's styles similar? Which literary devices do they use that are similar?
3. Complete a character analysis of Janie using the attached form to guide your thinking. What specific adjectives are used to describe her? What are the concerns of the characters? What quotes best represent her? What symbol (not used in the novel) would you use to describe her? Why?
4. Write a letter from Janie to God in a similar manner as Celie's letter was written. Use dialect, but stay true to your understanding of the character. Make sure to include details from the novel in your letter. Choose a specific time period within the novel: A) When Janie is with Logan. B) When Janie is with Jody. Or C) When Janie is with Tea Cake. Make clear which relationship you intend to focus on in your letter.
5. Complete a mirror poem for Janie using Stephen Spender's poem "What I Expected" to guide your thinking.

## After Reading Activities

### Activity #4: NOVEL CONNECTIONS (CONTINUED)

Dear God,

Nettie her with us. She run away from home. She say she hate to leave our stepma, but she had to git out, maybe fine help for the other little ones. The boys be alright, she say. They can stay out his way. When they git big they gon fight him.

Maybe kill, I say.

How is it with you and Mr. \_\_\_\_\_? she ast. But she got eyes. He still like her. In the evening he come out on the proch in his Sunday best. She be sitting there with me shelling peas or helping the children with they spelling. Helping me with spelling and everything else she think I need to know. No matter what happen, Nettie steady try to teach me what o on in the world. And she a good teacher too. It nearly kill me to think she might marry somebody like Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ or wind up in some white lady kitchen. All day she read, she study, she practice her handwriting, and try to git us to think. Most days I feel too tired to think. But Patient her middle name.

Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ children all bright but they mean. They say Celie, I want dis. Celie, I want dat Our Mama let us have it. He don't say nothing. They try to get his tention, he hide hind a puff of smoke.

Don't let them run over you, Nettie say. You got to let them know who got the upper hand.

They got it, I say.

But she keep on. You got to fight. You got to fight.

But I don't know how to fight. All I know how to do is stay alive.

That's a real pretty dress you go on, he say to Nellie.

She say, Thank you.

Them shoes look just right.

She say, Thank you.

Your skin. Your hair. Your teefs. Everyday it something else to make migration over.

First she smell a little. Then she frown. Then she don't look no special way at all. She just stick close to me. She tell me, Your skin. Your hair, Your teefs. He try to give her a compliment, she pass it on to me. After while I git to feeling pretty cute.

Soon he stop. He say one night in bed, Well, us done.

I tell Nettie the next morning. Stead of being mad, she glad to go. Say she hate to leave me is all. Us fall on each other neck when she say that.

I sure hate to leave you here with these rotten children, she say. Not to mention with Mr. \_\_\_\_\_. It's like seeing you buried, she say.

It's worse that that, I think. If I was buried, I wouldn't have to work. But I just say, Never mine, never mine, long as I can spell G-o-d I got somebody along.

But I only got one thing to give her, the name of Reverend Mr. \_\_\_\_\_. I tell her to ast for his wife. That maybe she would help. She the only woman I even seen with money.

I say, Write.

She say, What?

I say, Write.

She say, Nothing but death can keep me from it.

She never write.

*Walker, Alice. The Color Purple. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982.*

**After Reading Activities**

**Activity #4: NOVEL CONNECTIONS (CONTINUED)**

<p><b>Adjectives Used To Describe Janie</b></p>	<p><b>Concerns of the Character</b></p>
<p><b>Quotes That Best Represent Her</b></p>	<p><b>Symbol</b></p>

## After Reading Activities

### Activity #4: NOVEL CONNECTIONS (CONTINUED)

#### What I Expected

What I expected was  
Thunder, fighting,  
Long struggles with men  
And climbing.  
After continual straining  
I should grow strong;  
Then the rocks would shake  
And I rest long.

What I had not foreseen  
Was the gradual day  
Weakening the will  
Leaking the brightness away,  
The lack of good to touch,  
The fading of body and soul  
Smoke before wind,  
Corrupt, unsubstantial.

The wearing of Time  
And the watching of cripples pass  
With the limbs shaped like questions  
In their odd twist,  
The pulverous grief  
Melting the bones with pity,  
The sick falling from earth --  
These, I could not foresee.

Expecting always  
Some brightness to hold in trust  
Some final innocence  
Exempt from dust,  
That, hanging solid,  
Would dangle through all  
Like the created poem,  
Or the faceted crystal.

from *Collected Poems 1928-1985*  
Stephen Spender

<b>After Reading Activities</b>
<b>Activity #5: CHARACTER INVESTIGATIONS –GENDER ROLES</b>

The reader encounters a variety of male voices in the text, each one with his own unique perspective on the world – and each with his own kind of relationship with Janie. Read the excerpts containing elements of the voice of Logan, Joe, and Teacake. Use this information, and your own knowledge of the novel as a whole, to complete the investigation of male voices in Their Eyes Were Watching God. **You should select three questions to respond to from Questions 1-4; all students must answer Question 5. Each question should have an ACE response**

1. Using the excerpts, create a chart like the one below and focus on the traits of the unique voices of each of the central male characters. What connections between Hurston’s use of language and her development of characters and relationships can you find? Is love the most important asset in the life of each relationship?

LOGAN	JOE	TEACAKE

2. Explain the social divisions, or class structures, that exist within the novel with respect to gender roles and social levels. Use a variety of male characters (not just the central ones) to help prove your point.

3. At the beginning of the novel, Hurston writes: “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 out of sight, never landing, until the Watcher turns his eyes away in resignation, his dreams mocked to death by Time. That is the life of men.” How do the characters of Logan, Joe, and Teacake – and the choices that they make – allow the reader to make sense of this quote? How are these characters “mocked to death by Time?”

4. Hurston’s portrayal of the role of domestic violence and abuse throughout the relationships in the novel is disturbing to many readers. Why was it important for Hurston to include these details? What does it say about the nature of male/female relationships during the time of the writing of the novel? Why have our attitudes about domestic violence changed during the intervening years?

5. The characters in the novel lived in the imagination of Zora Neale Hurston over sixty years ago. What if the novel was updated to the modern era? What kind of people would Logan, Joe, and Teacake need to be? Use the attached chart to define some characteristics of the characters. Finally, cast the roles using public figures (not necessarily actors). Thoroughly explain your responses and your reasoning on a separate sheet.

## After Reading Activities

### Activity #5: CHARACTER INVESTIGATIONS –GENDER ROLES (CONTINUE)

Excerpts from the novel:

LOGAN

In the few days to live before she went to Logan Killicks and his often mentioned sixty acres, Janie asked inside of herself and out. She was back and forth to the pear tree continuously wondering and thinking. Finally out of Nanny's talk and her own conjectures she made a sort of comfort for herself. Yes, she would love Logan after they were married. She could see no way for it to come about, but Nanny and the old folks had said it, so it must be so. Husbands and wives always loved each other, and that was what marriage meant. It was just so. Janie felt glad of the thought, for then it wouldn't seem so destructive and mouldy. She wouldn't be lonely anymore.

Janie and Logan got married in Nanny's parlor...  
(20)

JOE

Joe Starks was the name, yeah Joe Starks from in and through Georgy. Been workin' for white folks all his life. Saved up some money-round three hundred dollars, yes indeed, right here in his pocket. Kept hearin' 'bout them buildin' a new state down heah in Floridy and sort of wanted to come. But he was makin' money where he was. But when he heard all about 'em makin' a town all outa colored folks, he knowed dat was de place he wanted to be. He had always wanted to be a big voice, but de white folks had all de sayso where he come from and everywhere else, exceptin' dis place dat colored folks was buildin' theirselves...It had always been his wish to be a big voice and he had to live nearly thirty years to find a chance. Where was Janie's papa and mama?

"Dey dead, Ah reckon. Ah wouldn't know 'bout 'em cause mah Grandma raised me. She dead too."

"She dead too! Well, who's lookin' after a lil girl-chile lak you?"

"Ah'm married."

"You married? You ain't hardly old enough to be weaned. Ah betcha you still craves sugar-tits, doncher?"

"Yeah, and Ah makes and sucks 'em when de notion strikes me. Drinks sweetin' water too."

"Ah loves dat mahself. Never specks to get too old to enjoy syrup sweeten' water when it's cool and nice."

"Us got plenty syrup in de barn. Ribbon-cane syrup. If you so desires –"

"Where yo' husband at, Mis' er-er."

"Mah name is Janie Mae Killicks..."

(27)

TEACAKE

At five-thirty a tall man came into the place. Janie was leaning on the counter making aimless pencil marks on a piece of wrapping paper. She knew she didn't know his name, but he looked familiar.

"Good evenin', Miss Starks," he said with a sly grin as if they had a good joke together. She was in favor of the story that was making him laugh before she even heard it.

"Good evenin'," she answered pleasantly. "You got all de advantage 'cause Ah don't know yo' name."

"People wouldn't know me lak dey would you."

"Ah guess standin' in uh store do make us person git tuh be known in de vicinity. Look lak Ah seen you somewhere."

## After Reading Activities

**Activity #5: CHARACTER INVESTIGATIONS –GENDER ROLES  
(CONTINUE)**

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTIC	LOGAN	JOE	TEACAKE
What is his occupation?			
Favorite music/style/group?			
What are his hobbies?			
Favorite saying or quote?			
Favorite book or magazine?			
Specific clothing brands?			
Where does he go on dates?			
Favorite place to vacation?			
What does he consider his greatest personal strength?			
What does he consider his greatest personal weakness?			
Did he go to college? Where? What was his major?			
Political affiliation?			



**After Reading Activities**

**Activity #5: CHARACTER INVESTIGATIONS –GENDER ROLES  
(CONTINUE)**

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTIC	LOGAN	JOE	TEACAKE
Where does he stand on: Abortion? Guns? Religion? Capital punishment?			
Does he have a nickname?			
With \$1000, he would...			
Personal role model or hero?			
Two things he can't live without?			
Girl of his dreams?			
What secret will he take to his grave?			
What public personality or actor would <i>he</i> cast to play himself?			
Who would you cast to play the same role?			