Zora Neale Hurston - *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

Test: December 13-14

“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 same horizon, never out of sight, never landing until the Watcher turns his eyes away in resignation, his dreams mocked to death by Time.”

Pre-reading study and analysis:

* Biography of Zora Neale Hurston
* Two critical reviews of the novel, printed and annotated
* <http://chdr.cah.ucf.edu/hurstonarchive/?p=hurstons-life>

Annotations:

Use the following as instructions to annotations but by no means restrictions:

1. Annotate author’s style: dialect, diction, sentence patterns and structure, treatment of the characters and details, and figurative language, especially the natural and animalistic imagery. Annotate settings, characters, and events.
2. Trace the characterization of Janie Crawford. Evaluate the waves of power Janie experiences and loses. What do power and freedom look like to the characters (Janie included)?
3. Highlight words, which are unfamiliar even if they aren’t entirely unfamiliar. Re-write and define the terms at the top of each page.
4. Keep track of the chapters. Include a one-sentence summary at the end of each short chapter. You could imagine that the collection of these statements would well summarize and analyze the novel.
5. Identify passages of quotes, which are clearly intended to communicate a broad message or thematic significance.
6. Use post-it notes to mark pages, which contain changes or significant development in settings, characters, style, and tone. In the margins and on post-its, explicate the potential significance of these changes. Develop multiple interpretations. Extend your learning and take chances on developing perspectives and insights even if you believe they are “risky.”
7. Use post-its to mark pages with repetitions and motifs and potential or identified symbols in addition to rhetorical strategies and significant passages. What does Hurston have in mind for these? How do they affect you? What does Hurston intend for the reader to feel? What connections does she want the reader to make?
8. Ask questions. Write questions which come with a reasonable guarantee of an answer “down river,” but use post-its when you develop questions whose answers will lead to major thematic explanations or questions worthy of asking a small group or the entire class or questions which would lead to deep discussion.

Optional Assignment:

1. In your **composition** book open a series of pages, which act first as a receptacle for three main items:
2. Record the unfamiliar terms and definitions from the tops of your pages.
3. Summarize the chapters.
4. Look back at your post-its. They should mark the pages of the chapter where you have identified points for critical analysis. While a minimum should never exist, you should choose three to five post it for every thirteen chapters. Once you’ve identified these points, expound. Ask and attempt to answer deep questions about Hurston’s purpose and her intent. Your analysis should challenge your psychoanalysis of characters, broaden your understanding of symbols, illustrate the effects of Hurston’s style, sew the settings and places to thematic elements, map your insights even if the roads don’t have ends.
5. In the end, you’ll take steps in the process of preparing for your test, where the depth of your understanding of some thematic element of the novel will be supported by the number of textual evidences you are able to produce in defense of a thesis which will respond to what always shakes down to a character, a setting, an act, a symbol, or an event in the novel.