

Early Twentieth-Century Fiction  
[e20fic21.blogs.rutgers.edu](http://e20fic21.blogs.rutgers.edu)

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Office hours: Monday 2 p.m., or by appointment

April 12, 2021. Hurston (3).

# syllabus rejiggerment

- ▶ second paper will be due May 9
  - ▶ late papers may lead to failing the course
  - ▶ don't fail the course
- ▶ no take-home final
- ▶ grade re-weighting TBA

## review

- ▶ two sides of tradition: wisdom and coercion
  - ▶ But Nanny belonged to that other kind that loved to deal in scraps.... She [Janie] had been set in the market-place to sell. (89–90)
- ▶ narratorial sympathy and distance
  - ▶ the anthropological narrator can be Janie's collaborator

## is speech all?

She found that she had a host of thoughts she had never expressed to him [Joe], and numerous emotions she had never let Jody know about. Things packed up and put away in parts of her heart where he could never find them. She was saving up feelings for some man she had never seen. She had an inside and an outside now and suddenly she knew how not to mix them. (72)

Janie starched and ironed her face and came set in the funeral behind her veil. It was like a wall of stone and steel. The funeral was going on outside. All things concerning death and burial were said and done. Finish. End. Nevermore. Darkness. Deep hole. Dissolution. Eternity. Weeping and wailing outside. Inside the expensive black folds were resurrection and life. (89; qtd. last week by [elj](#))

but....

At the newel post Janie whirled around and for the space of a thought she was lit up like a transfiguration. Her next thought brought her crashing down. He's just saying anything for the time being, feeling he's got me so I'll b'lieve him. The next thought buried her under tons of cold futility. He's trading on being younger than me. Getting ready to laugh at me for an old fool. But oh, what wouldn't I give to be twelve years younger so I could b'lieve him! (105)

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The thing made itself into pictures and hung around Janie's bedside all night long. Anyhow, she wasn't going back to Eatonville to be laughed at and pitied. She had ten dollars in her pocket and twelve hundred in the bank. But oh God, don't let Tea Cake be off somewhere hurt and Ah not know nothing about it. And God, please suh, don't let him love nobody else but me. (120)



\*

“Evenin’, Mis’ Starks. Could yuh lemme have uh pound uh knuckle pud-  
din’\* till Saturday?” (98)

\*A beating with the fist. (98n.)

## feminist questions: the plot

She knew now that marriage did not make love. Janie's first dream was dead, so she became a woman. (25; qtd. by S.J.)

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### Discussion

- ▶ What is this novel doing with the coming-of-age plot? be specific.

# Janie's unconventional Bildung

- ▶ remarriage
- ▶ no reproductivity
- ▶ class loop-the-loop
- ▶ non-integration is not a failure
- ▶ she shoots and doesn't miss

## sympathy again

No brutal beating at all. He just slapped her around a bit to show he was boss. (147)

“Ah beat her to show dem Turners who is boss.” (148)

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Discussion (write for 5 minutes, then talk)

How should we interpret the violence of Tea Cake towards Janie?  
What frames for judgment does the narration provide?

All gods who receive homage are cruel. All gods dispense suffering without reason. Otherwise they would not be worshipped. Through indiscriminate suffering men know fear and fear is the most divine emotion. It is the stones for altars and the beginning of wisdom. Half gods are worshipped in wine and flowers. Real gods require blood.

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Mrs. Turner, like all other believers had built an altar to the unattainable—Caucasian characteristics for all. (145)

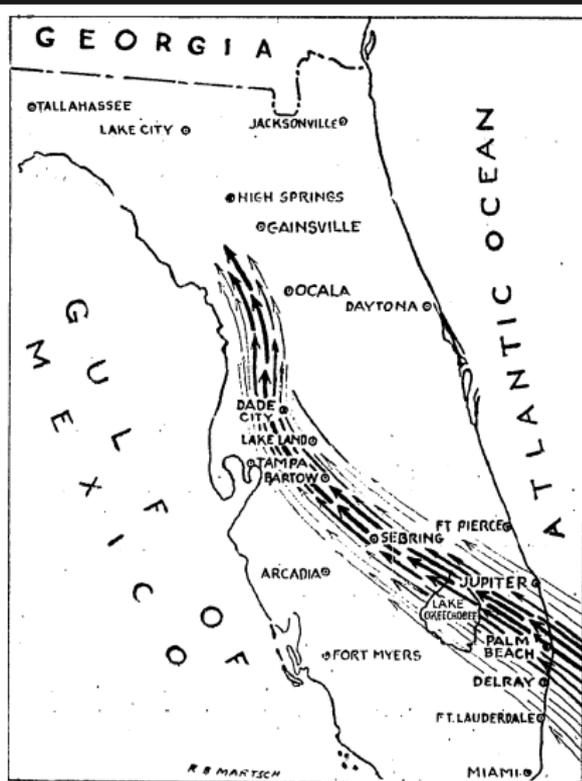
[Janie:] “We’s e uh mingled people and all of us got black kinfolks as well as yaller knfolks. How come you so against black?” (141)

no easy answers

no easy answers

It was the meanest moment of eternity. A minute before she was just a scared human being fighting for its life. Now she was her sacrificing self with Tea Cake's head in her lap. (184; qtd. by [happychat](#))

What if Eatonville could see her now in her blue denim overalls and heavy shoes? The crowd of people around her and a dice game on her floor!... The men held big arguments here like they used to do on the store porch. Only here, she could listen and laugh and even talk some herself if she wanted to. She got so she could tell big stories herself from listening to the rest. (134; qtd. by NY).



Path of the Hurricane in Its Sweep Across Florida.

## FLOOD MENACE IN FLORIDA

Rising Waters Add to the Storm Damage Above Miami District.

### 24 DROWN IN OKEECHOBEE

Nearly Every Building in West Palm Beach Damaged—Improved Hospitals Overflow.

### HURRICANE VEERS NORTH

Warnings of Its Approach Are Issued in Alabama, Georgia and South Carolina.

With the hurricane sweeping north-westward through Florida last night, leaving a trail of wreckage and deaths along the eastern coast, Tampa escaped damage by a veering of the storm to the north.

Known dead in Florida, from 1,500 to 3,000, with no possibility of an accurate check ever being made. In Porto Rico, 210 reported dead. In St. Croix, Virgin Islands, six reported dead.

Homeless: In Florida, 15,000; in Porto Rico, 400,000.

Injured: In Florida, 185; in Porto Rico, 2,771.

Ill: In Florida, 191; in Porto Rico, 20,000.

In the seven counties in Florida where the storm caused great damage, 17,500 persons have registered with the Red Cross as desiring assistance in some form to rehabilitate themselves.

The number of persons under Red Cross care in these seven counties follows: Palm Beach 12,822, Martin 800, Okeechobee 110, Dade 375, Broward 1,125. Total, 15,232.

"Red Cross Sums Up Hurricane Results," *New York Times*, September 30, 1928.

# BIG HURRICANE TOLL LAID TO DROWNINGS

Miami Mayor, Here, Says Wind  
Alone Killed Less Than 12%  
of 1,500 Florida Victims.

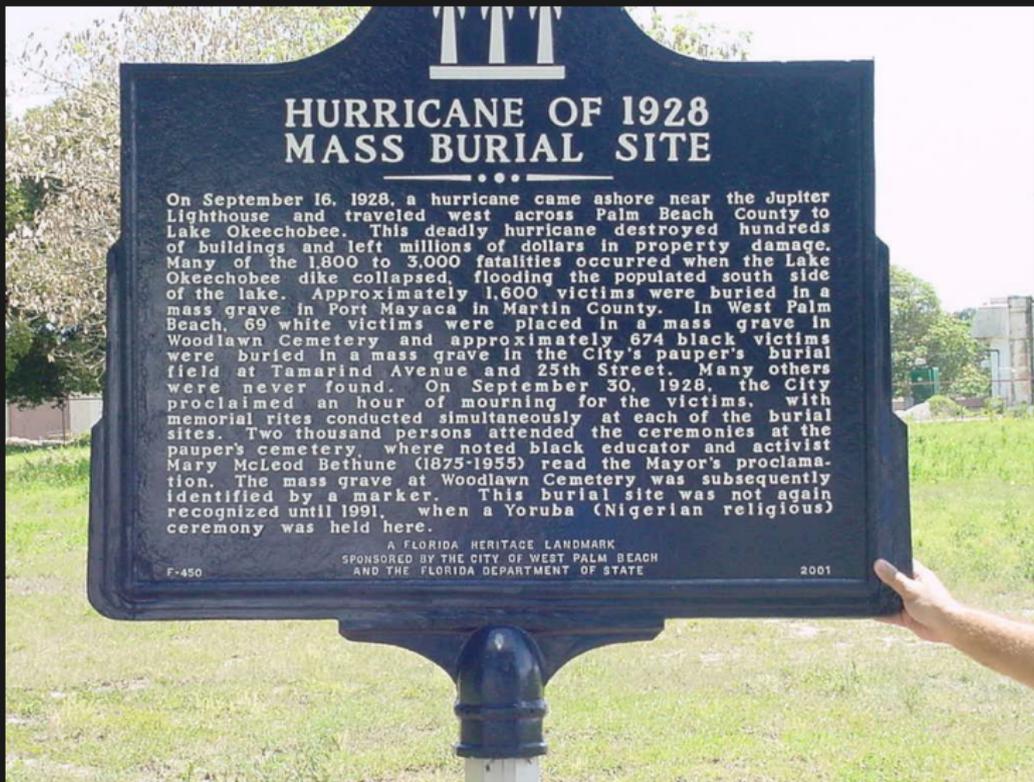
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## LAKE OKEECHOBEE BLAMED

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Government Will Be Asked to Build  
\$5,000,000 Canal to Control  
Waters of "Death Trap."

Of the toll of 1,500 deaths in the recent Florida hurricane, less than a dozen were actually killed by the storm itself, and the others were drowned by the overflowing of Lake Okeechobee, according to Everest G. Sewell, Mayor of Miami, who is stopping at the Waldorf, where he arrived yesterday. The Mayor characterized the lake as a "death trap," and said that had proper precautions been taken, the loss of life from the storm would have been negligible.



## HURRICANE OF 1928 MASS BURIAL SITE

On September 16, 1928, a hurricane came ashore near the Jupiter Lighthouse and traveled west across Palm Beach County to Lake Okeechobee. This deadly hurricane destroyed hundreds of buildings and left millions of dollars in property damage. Many of the 1,800 to 3,000 fatalities occurred when the Lake Okeechobee dike collapsed, flooding the populated south side of the lake. Approximately 1,600 victims were buried in a mass grave in Port Mayaca in Martin County. In West Palm Beach, 69 white victims were placed in a mass grave in Woodlawn Cemetery and approximately 674 black victims were buried in a mass grave in the City's pauper's burial field at Tamarind Avenue and 25th Street. Many others were never found. On September 30, 1928, the City proclaimed an hour of mourning for the victims, with memorial rites conducted simultaneously at each of the burial sites. Two thousand persons attended the ceremonies at the pauper's cemetery, where noted black educator and activist Mary McLeod Bethune (1875-1955) read the Mayor's proclamation. The mass grave at Woodlawn Cemetery was subsequently identified by a marker. This burial site was not again recognized until 1991, when a Yoruba (Nigerian religious) ceremony was held here.

A FLORIDA HERITAGE LANDMARK  
SPONSORED BY THE CITY OF WEST PALM BEACH  
AND THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF STATE

F-450

2001

Historical marker (2001) of 1928 mass grave, West Palm Beach. National Weather Service Memorial Web Page for the 1928 Okeechobee Hurricane.  
<https://www.weather.gov/mfl/okeechobee>



SCENES AT PALM BEACH

GLS' BATHS  
NEAR ALBA HOTEL  
FLAGLER DRIVE AT PENNSYLVANIA  
HOTEL.

ROYAL POINCIANA GROUNDS  
AUSTRALIAN PINE WALK  
ROYAL PALM WAY

<https://www.weather.gov/mfl/okeechobee>



TRUCKS CARRYING COFFINS TO  
THE EVERGLADES

EVERGLADES IN VICINITY OF BELLE  
GLADE UNDER WATER

PLACE IN BELLE GLADE WHERE A LARGE  
NUMBER OF BODIES WERE FOUND

<https://www.weather.gov/mfl/okeechobee>

Ten feet higher and as far as they could see the muttering wall advanced before the braced-up waters like a road-crusher on a cosmic scale. The monstropolous beast had left his bed. The two hundred miles an hour wind had loosed his chains. (161)

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Sometime that night the winds came back. Everything in the world had a strong rattle, sharp and short like Stew Beef vibrating the drum head near the edge with his fingers. By morning Gabriel was playing the deep tones in the center of the drum....

It woke up old Okechobee and the monster began to roll in his bed. Began to roll and complain like a peevish world on a grumble. The folks in the quarters and the people in the big houses further around the shore heard the big lake and wondered. The people felt uncomfortable but safe because there were the seawalls to chain the senseless monster in his bed. The folks let the people do the thinking. (158)

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## another social vision (cont.)

White people had preempted that point of elevation and there was no more room. They could climb up one of its high sides and down the other, that was all. Miles further on, still no rest. (164)

next

- ▶ Hurston, continued.
- ▶ Walker, “In Search of ZNH” (Sakai)