



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative

2011 Volume IV: The Big Easy: Literary New Orleans and Intangible Heritage

'Imaginal' Performances in Memory

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The Introduction - Little Boxes on the Hillside

This unit was originally inspired by YNI 2011 Seminar on New Orleans and the iconic 60s folk-song *Little Boxes* with focuses on two site-specific locales— Westmoor High School, and its adjoining neighborhood(s), and New Orleans— that serve to anchor the themes and goals of this unit into actual places and that assist, paradoxically, to free us, my students and myself, from the repressiveness of myopia in our own thoughts and immediate environment. It is the effort to make the strange familiar and the familiar strange, and in doing so, to help all involved to better perceive the greater world and its issues that affect all of our lives, and then to do something about it.

Most of my students have never been to New Orleans, certainly fewer pre-Katrina, and most New Orleanians have never been to Westmoor, yet I believe that both places have the potential to illuminate life and show that regardless of our individual histories and cultures and stories we are more familiar to each other than strange. I believe that it is impossible to comprehend other persons, much less other places, without Imagination, and I believe that our individual and collective Imaginations suffer from Educational mal-nutrition, our Educational systems being fragmented and nearly, if not already, broken, despite the efforts of very creative people who are fighting impossible odds to keep inspiring children to dream. Thus, as I provide content for the study of Westmoor and New Orleans, I do the same with Imagination. Many of the concepts and terms (see Concepts/Terms below) that were taught in "The Big Easy" seminar, no pun intended, are parallel to concepts of the Imagination, especially in connection to the likewise ancient symbol of the Tree of Life. With Imagination, I also teach responsibility. It is imperative, I believe, that we, as teachers and students, become responsive stewards of our classrooms and communities and, ultimately, of our world. Thus, I include in this unit the "passion, vision and inspiration of world renowned scientist and environmentalist, Dr. David Suzuki, as he speaks about the human animal and our place in the universe." ¹ His teachings, as presented in the one-hour video *Suzuki Speaks*, are a "powerful, thought-provoking and timely catalyst for change." ²

It is my intention to show the universal need for all humans to be more aware and pro-active in creating actual change in how we view and live with our Earth, especially in light of the on-going natural and man-made catastrophes that seem to be plaguing our world, i.e., Hurricane Katrina and the B.P. oil-spill in the Gulf, and the inevitable earthquakes in California and worldwide. The San Andreas Fault crosses Daly City and moves out from land into the Pacific Ocean just south of Westmoor High School. It is imperative that we are prepared

as thoroughly possible, not just for a big shake but for all the figurative internal shakes or troubles within each of us, especially in our Youth for whom we are here to help nurture into adulthood via Education.

Though this unit is particular to Westmoor High School, and its communities, and New Orleans, I believe that both the neighborhoods surrounding any school and any major City in the world can be substituted and studied with similar, yet unique results. Also, I developed this unit for my 12th grade Film as Literature classes. That said, the documentaries, films and literature, et al, used here might be surrogated with others that are more relevant to any other school and City. Novels, and even other discipline subject-matter materials, may be swapped with the films that I have included.

And Context - Little Boxes All the Same

Dr. David Suzuki, a Canadian scientist and environmental activist, explains in his film *Suzuki Speaks* what, in context here, serves as an objective for this unit:

Throughout human history our songs, our prayers, our rituals celebrated the fact that we are deeply embedded in the natural world and dependent on it. We constantly reaffirmed that we had a responsibility to act the right way in order to keep nature as generous and abundant as it had always been. That was the human understanding. Because in nature everything is interconnected, anything you do has consequences, and therefore we have responsibilities. But today we live in a world in which that sense has been shattered. ³

Dr. Suzuki speaks to more than just our interconnectedness within nature, he addresses the need for us as beings to realize our interconnectedness with one another. If we fail to realize it, the results, as they already have been, will be catastrophic, even more than they have been in the past. We must embrace all of nature, all animals and places and peoples that inhabit the land and sea. We cannot afford to continue living as though apart from one another, failing to understanding that our differences, as well as our sameness, are what allow for interconnectedness in the first place. The way to accomplish this, I believe, is through a true interaction with our own and each other's Imaginations. William Blake's teachings evoke the power of imagination and suggest that renewal is possible, if not inevitable:

The Nature of Visionary Fancy or Imagination, is very little known, & the Eternal nature & permanence of its ever Existent Images is considered as less permanent than the things of Vegetative and Generative Nature; yet the Oak dies as well as the Lettuce, but its Eternal Image & Individuality never dies but returns by its seed; just so the Imaginative Image returns by the seed of Contemplative Thought. ⁴

For survivors of Hurricane Katrina and the man-made disaster from the failed levees, and for our student survivors of personal tragedies, Imagination is the vital force that allows them to re-imagine their selves, their homes and their City, and to become, once again, interconnected to all life in the bayou, and surrounding sea and land, and in their interior landscapes. Blake's statement also speaks to every individual who seeks to grow through "Contemplative Thought" regardless whether or not they have been directly affected by a disaster.

Although people throughout America were affected by Hurricane Katrina and the Gulf oil spill, few of my

students, if any, were directly, but they likely will experience, first or second-hand, some other disaster during their life. Certainly, being in California, my students will experience an earthquake but, worse, we adversely affect our environments by allowing toxins and poisons into them. That is why it is imperative that to have any real, meaningful education we are to begin in the home or home community, seeking solutions to the problems that exist there. So, here, I shift focus to a very specific place with iconic structures that, according to the popular song "Little Boxes," suggest conformity and therefore limited life and connection to it, and furthermore a full lack of interconnectedness with the greater world and the Earth. It also implies the very same of the actual people who inhabit those houses. In the words of Joseph Roach, leader of the Seminar, *The Big Easy*, and author of *Cities of the Dead*, "The heart of the matter [is] in those little boxes, which seem to deny "culture," but which in fact are an emphatic performance of it." ⁵ I intend to teach my students that beyond the "emphatic performance" of the structures, the more important heart of the matter is within them, the very people living in those little boxes. The boxes, or rather houses, along with the fog that is endemic to the region, seem to hide the varied peoples and cultures within. And though it is evident that Malvina Reynolds, who wrote and performed 'Little Boxes,' was inspired by specific homes, it is understood that she was not being literal or exclusive in her message deriding suburban conformity. Still, her message touches upon a legitimate concern. The song itself resonates with me, its lilting melody and salient notes get me to singing along: "And the children go to school... And then to the university, where they are put in boxes and they come out all the same." ⁶

I am in the choir, so to sing, when it comes to speaking out against institutions that, intentionally or not, effect conformities and confine life. Yet, ironically, though I sing in accord with Reynolds, I do so with the slightest trepidation since, as a teacher, I am most often in my classroom at Westmoor High School that is in the neighborhood of Westlake, the very neighborhood known to have been the inspiration for Malvina Reynolds' song. Still, I see, in varying degrees, the very children of the very parents of the very "boxes made of ticky-tacky," knowing that *they* are not the same and not "the same," except in the universal sense that they *are* children who do go to school.

The Heart of the (Subject) Matter - And They're All Made Out of Ticky Tacky

Through the simultaneous examination of the familiar (Westmoor High School) and the exploration of the strange (New Orleans) with the aid of the imagination (The Tree of Life), I have the hope of creating awareness of our universal responsibilities as responsive stewards (The Elements), by using Documentary, Film and Literature as windows and snapshots of another 'world' to help us all perceive better the actual world in hopes of becoming, as Mahatma Gandhi encouraged, "the change [we] wish to see." ⁷ Because it is immanently much easier and more practical to travel to other worlds via books and movies and documentaries, especially with large numbers of students who are expected to travel, we will examine New Orleans and its people in this manner. I include, and repeat in a cyclical manner within each of the four primary sections, the following four 'elements' of teaching, each with a nod to the classical elements that comprise all things: content objectives (Earth), teaching strategies (Fire), classroom activities (Air) and resources for teachers and students (Water). The purpose in structuring the unit this way is to show, first, each part of the organic whole of the unit and, second, the interconnectedness of each component, suggesting that it is possible to start with any one of them while working thematically through all of them. I do not include the primary films that I will teach in these four sections but rather discuss them last in The Interconnected section where I weave a brief 'Imaginal'

Performance in Memory.

I want to make it clear that I am not a proponent of putting things, especially people, into boxes but rather it is my intention to create a unit that opens boxes with the hope that the contents, whatever they may be, will organically and naturally grow, provided that they are nurtured and inspired and allowed to do so, becoming more connected and interconnected to the greater Circle(s) of Life! Though there are specific objectives for the four sections below, there is one comprehensive objective for the whole unit, the actualization of the individual selves into literate, conscientious active adults that is to be practiced and brought to fruition in three places and purposes: in the classroom for building community, in the home for perpetuating culture, and in the individuals for practicing interconnectedness with the world entire. Ambitious, but this is to be achieved in increments and with constant nurturing and patience, knowing that the results are not indicated with test-scores but rather through active participation in community during the school year and on into adulthood. There is a second, tentative, objective for this unit that is tethered to the adage from the film, *Field of Dreams*, "If you build it, they will come." ⁸ I have a vision of creating a Westmoor H. S. Festival, perhaps to coincide with Mardi Gras, where current students and alumni showcase their short films and writings and artwork, and projects from other departments and disciplines, in order to generate funds for local charities and non-profits that benefit San Francisco Peninsula Area communities and schools, beginning with our very own.

The Familiar Ones - Westmoor High School and Westlake, Home of the 'Little Boxes'

Westlake neighborhood in Daly City, California, is home to the iconic little boxes that served as inspiration for Malvina Reynolds' song. They were developed and built, starting in the late 1940s, by Henry Doelger and his associates, a cadre of designers and craftsmen, who diligently aimed to transform the open land southwest of San Francisco into, as art-director and designer, Rob Keil, states in his book *Little Boxes*, an "almost utopian vision of middle-class affluence, order, and pleasantness. Although they failed to create the 'perfect' suburb, it might be said that they came surprisingly close to succeeding." ⁹ But Westlake is not the same now as it was then. It has seen its own collective memory transformed through a different sort of surrogation. Although many of its original residents are still living in Westlake, Rob Keil notes that "ironically, whites are a minority in Westlake today. Fortunately, progress has been made and Westlake is home to every major racial and ethnic group. Since the 1970s, the influx of a large number of Asian residents in particular helped made Westlake one of the most diverse communities in the country." ¹⁰

Westmoor High School adjoins Westlake at the top of a high hill with views looking west across the Westlake homes to the Pacific Ocean and north across San Francisco's Sunset and Richmond Districts to the Golden Gate Bridge, at least when the fog is not blanketing everything. Although Westmoor, designed by architect Mario Ciampi, was once a remarkable structure that was featured in the May 25, 1959 issue of *Life* magazine, ¹¹ it has since been remodeled and most of the glass, interior walls have been replaced with non-transparent materials. Due to modernization and adherence to fire codes and cost restrictions, several of the remarkable features of Westmoor have been lost. Despite this, Westmoor High School is still a remarkable school owing to its student population, faculty and staff, and administration, et al.

Familiar Earth - Content Objectives

Room 210 that I currently teach in is centrally located within the school and is a place of great tangible and intangible, if not natural, heritage. It is the nucleus for this unit, being that it too is a 'little box' and the central meeting place for the me and my students, visiting teachers and returning alumni. It is a room, as most classrooms are, very much alive with heritage and collective memory, and even surrogation. I have inherited

this room, in a sense, from my friend and former colleague, Keith Burrows, who likewise inherited it from our friend and former colleague, Dave Holden. As Keith has been, and still is, a mentor of teaching and film to me, so too has Holden been a mentor of teaching and film to both of us, and though he retired nearly ten years ago, he still continues to grace our classroom with his presence, still dropping off big boxes of books to be added to the ever growing libraries within several classrooms, and in that the forty plus years of his collected materials and teachings are preserved in this particular classroom under the title, The Dave Holden Library.

I expect my students to grow and to realize that Education is not a grade but a life choice. Thus, the specific objective for this section is that students learn to discover connections from what they learn in my class to all their other subjects, via daily writings and class discussions, while they actively examine their own lives in the classroom, at home, and in the communities with which they interact. My job is to model thematic connections between all the films, documentaries and literature, in all, everything I present to my students. Their job is to follow my lead and search for connections from what we watch and learn in class to any and all of their other classes.

The classroom is the first place where this objective must be met. If it does not happen here, it will not happen elsewhere. It is the hub for all else. In order for this to transpire, it is imperative that everyone, including me as the teacher, begin by realizing that each of us is both central and peripheral to any given perspective and that "we see things not as they are but as we are," and that each one of us is vital to this time and place. ¹² No film, no book, no poem, etc., will ever be more important than them, yet paradoxically it is because of the importance of these works, and their influence on societies, that we study them to learn more about ourselves and how we are, and have been and will be, figuratively shaped. As we begin to watch and study film and documentary, we will also begin to learn about ourselves, and each other, in the classroom by working in small and large groups, discussed below in *Familiar Fire*, and doing activities, see *Familiar Air*, that make us aware of how and why we perceive as we do. The first film to be taught in this unit, *Racing with the Moon*, illustrates with its opening scene part of the concept for examining their own lives. Henry, a young teenager recently enlisted for World War II, walks on the bend of a railroad track towards the camera and, after seeing two boys each run up to track and place a penny on the rail, steps to the opposite side of the rails from them to allow the oncoming train to pass between. Instead of watching the train smash the pennies, a metaphor of what WWII does to young soldiers, Henry, soon to be one of them, watches the older of the two boys through the openings of the passing cars as if looking at himself at that age, while the two boys likewise look at Henry as though seeing their future selves. Boys being boys, though, they soon run off into the woods to play, forgetting their glimpse of a future reality but only after they study the effects of the smashed pennies and stare into Henry's eyes as if looking for an explanation of the omen. Neither of these three offers any word of hope or salvation for the other but simply go about their business, the boys off into adolescence, Henry into adulthood. But we, the students and myself, will examine ourselves, who we are and hope to be, by examining whom we have been. This will kick off many explorations into the many 'little boxes' of the rooms in our homes and mutually in our memories.

Familiar Fire - Teaching Strategies

For this section on teaching strategies I focus on only one because it is the basis of how I run my classroom: I am one teacher, one villager, among 170 students, in groupings of 34, who daily wait to be raised, hoping to be seen and heard and believed and loved. I am one adult, alone, among too many adolescents. They are my keep. I do my best, and fortunately a best came to me when I climbed, as though a child again, into the tree of imagination to see what I could see. This is part of what I saw among infinite possibilities: I am a villager and a child, and my children are also villagers. They teach me and I teach them. We, in community, raise each

other: thirty-four student-teachers simultaneously teaching and raising one teacher-child (me) and each fellow student-teacher (each other) while I, their teacher-student/child, simultaneously teach and raise them. This is the closest that I have come to the fulfillment of the African proverb, "It takes a village to raise a child."¹³

While appropriating the African proverb, I want to shift attention, especially that of my students, to the indigenous peoples of the San Francisco Peninsula, who are inadequately identified as either Costanoans or Ohlone, and who did exist here for possibly 5,000 years or more (although some scholars place their arrival some 3,000 years later), and who are described as having lived in tribelets, a word "coined by anthropologist, Alfred L. Kroeber, to refer to many groups of Native Americans in Central California. The word stems from the word tribe, and suffix -let. It has been in use since at least 1925.¹⁴ In the explanation of class management and function for the classes, below, I tweak the word tribelets into tribulers, for the people within the tribelets, i.e. villagers, in an effort to enact deep time within my own classroom, challenging the 'tribulers' in the classroom to discover what is known of the indigenous peoples who once lived on the land beneath the building while they begin to rediscover their own selves.

My solution to being one of six teachers for nearly one hundred and seventy students is highly idealistic but practical. I enlist the help of others, my students. As an English Film as Literature teacher, it is also a matter of survival for me, and for them. This is how I attempt, with their help and our collective imaginations, to make it work: When the tribulers enter the classroom, they are 'born' into a family of three, an arbitrary group that they each are responsible for collaboratively raising, assisting each other in being successful in class work and with projects, all through the quarter or semester or year. From their assigned families, they go out seeking community. Literally, they each join three separate large communities of 11-12 tribulers, including their selves. The three larger communities then comprise the whole tribelet, or classroom. With each family of three, I serve as a fourth member, planting and scattering figurative seed, nurturing and helping them (the students and their ideas and efforts) to bring their selves and assignments and dreams to fruition. Likewise, with each of the three large communities, I serve as an active tribuler, providing ideas and content, challenging growth in all areas of self, community and world, and directing each other tribuler to return to their families and mutually teach one another. As needed, and depending on daily lessons, the classes will fluctuate between being in small families or large communities, the process working as a sort of heart pumping Education throughout the student body of all my classes.

The amount of time to be spent in families or communities is to be somewhat democratically determined. I am the head of the tribelet as teacher, a member of each family *and* community, so I have obvious sway, but as I am also the subject-matter 'expert' and their teacher and mentor, it is my duty to provide management of meaningful, purposeful and relevant content, form and function for my classes, and the families and communities within. Here is an example of how this might look in class: after a class discussion of Malvina Reynolds' 'Little Boxes' and some research per each student into what those 'little boxes,' their homes, contain that has helped shape the students into who they are, the small groups, 'families,' will share and compare, helping each other create their own Our-Glasses, see *Familiar Air* below. Then moving into their large groups, 'communities,' students will share their Our-Glasses and watch a scene from a film or documentary, likely *A Man Named Pearl*, and discuss how 'seeing' through another person's 'lenses' affects their own perceptions, following up with writings both in their daily journals and in reports back to their own 'families' of what they learned in their 'communities.'

Familiar Air - Classroom Activities

Although I will incorporate more activities into my actual teachings, I include only two in this section: altering

a penny and creating Our-Glasses! The altering of a penny, one per student, takes place before students watch *Racing with the Moon*. The students are to permanently alter the actual shape of the penny so that it cannot be what it once was, and yet still be comprised of the same materials. This becomes a symbol for how they too will change throughout the course of the school year, and what adulthood will do to them. They also do some reflective and projected writing of who they were, are and hope to be. The pennies and the writings are collected and not to be returned until the end of the school year for evaluation of whether or not, and how and to what degrees, they changed and are continuing to change.

Our-Glasses is my original idea created for this unit. The name is suggestive of an hour-glass which is akin to the light cone, or Minkowski diagram, used for illustrating time and experience.¹⁵ Our-Glasses incorporates several concepts, the word/image-mosaic with the diagram and the adage, "we see things not as they are but as we are," as well the individual perception and dreams of each student. Even an *Ntama*, or talking drum, serves as a conceptual metaphor for what Our-Glasses can become. The objective for this particular activity is to bring about a fuller understanding of our selves and each other, and the films under study, all in light of Albert Einstein's wisdom:

"A human being is a part of a whole, called by us "universe", a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings as something separated from the rest... a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection from a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty."¹⁶

For a preliminary way to create these glasses, I attempt an explanation: Take two plastic cups and cut out the bottoms. Cut two equal sized pieces of paper into the appropriate shape and size to be fitted within each of the cups, flush to interior walls and trimmed so as not to overlap or extend beyond either rim of the top and bottom. Draw three parallel, horizontal lines on one side of each piece of paper, across their length, to create three equal sized 'zones'. One piece of paper will be 'Future' and the other 'Past'. The zones on both the 'Future' and 'Past' pieces of paper can be labeled or identified, bottom to top, as near present, future and distant future. In each of the zones, students can express in either words or images, or both, how they perceive those zones to be for their own lives. The 'Future' words/images are conjectures and the 'Past' words/images are reflections. The bottomless cups can be hinged together at the bottom for easy opening and closing, and for viewing the 'Past' and 'Future' from one cup's top through to the other, or separately when opened, one eye looking through the 'Past' and the other through the 'Future'. Additionally, opened Our-Glasses can be attached to frames for wearing as conventional glasses. The inserts can be recreated, ad infinitum, throughout a person's life to record the passing of time and personal perceptions. Also, they can be shared for viewing how another perceives their present world. Our-Glasses are both for enlightenment and fun, a way of generating meaningful discussions of perception and viewing or reading a particular scene or passage. It poses the question, why do I see things the way I do or why does another person see differently. The possibilities for additional related activities are limitless.

Familiar Water - Resources

The bibliographic lists in each section, which are far from comprehensive, are carefully chosen for their thematic relevance, but truly each item included contains elements that arguably justify their placement in any of the four sections. For a narrative of the nine primary films and their connections to the resources and how they will be taught, see *The Interconnected* section below. For additional materials not covered here, see

the Film as Literature Matrix (appendix).

Two songs for beginning the Familiar: *Little Boxes* is the iconic song by Malvina Reynolds, discussed above, about houses and communities and people lost to conformity. Of course, it also serves as the frame for this unit and as the catalyst for having students' research their own homes for evidence of both their own conformity and resistance. This song will be played in class repeatedly throughout the teaching of the whole unit, and many of its lyrics are embedded in the headings of sections within this unit. *My Hometown* is an iconic Bruce Springsteen song about the life of one man and his hometown through the changing times. It serves as an introduction to students beginning to assess their own hometowns, whether Daly City or Westlake, or another town in another country. If it is the latter, then this also potentially creates discussion and writings for comparisons between the two.

Little Boxes, The Architecture of a Classic Midcentury Suburb is Rob Keil's homage to Henry Doelger and the architecture of Westlake homes and its schools. Its title derives its name from Malvina Reynold's song. Rob Keil's book provides historical and familial context to the 'little boxes' denigrated in the song. The book also includes excerpts from the May 25, 1959 LIFE article about Westlake's schools, illuminating Westmoor High School and its remarkable architecture from the 1950s.

Here are several short stories that I use for teaching close reading and for becoming more self aware: *No One's A Mystery*, written by Elizabeth Tallent, implies that everybody reveals their true nature through their words and actions. The story centers on a nameless narrator who recalls her eighteenth birthday and the gift she receives from her older and married boyfriend, Jack, who represents reality in contrast with her adolescent, romantic notions. After narrowly escaping detection from Jack's wife who drives her Cadillac past them as they head the opposite direction down the freeway, they debate whose imagined entries into her five-year diary, the gift, are most true. This short story prompts a close examination of students' own behavior and from where it is learned. *The Flowers*, written by Alice Walker, is a stunning story of the loss of innocence and beauty, both in the self and in history. A young girl, whose name Myop suggests the myopic nature of adolescence, ventures further than her usual, circular walk around the farm, and without her mother. As she explores, she picks flowers until she steps into the skeletal remains of a tall man whose blue denim overalls are still discernible. Myop suddenly begins to realize the gravity of history as she surveys the scene, seeing the displaced skull and broken rope with its other half still swinging from the branch above her head. Myop lays down the flowers she had gathered in her closed fist, its knuckles suggesting a noose for the flowers, and the summer was over. Be sure to challenge students to perceive the numerous circles within circles in the story, especially the circle of hatred that surrounded the flower that was hanged from the tree. *The Test*, written by Angelica Gibbs, is a story of learning to see the hidden rules that racism writes. Marian is an educated twenty-seven year old woman who attempts to earn her drivers' license but fails the test before she even begins, not because she cannot drive, which she can do, but because she has broken the impossible rules of racism and stereotype by being herself. This story serves to contextualize racism in history and to make students aware of its tenacity.

The Strange Ones - New Orleans and New Orleanians and the Mardi Gras Indians

New Orleans is a city indelibly imprinted in the minds of Americans, not just those who have had the fortune to live in or tour its locales, but all who witnessed its flooding and destruction in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. It is a collective memory that most of us share, having spent countless hours absorbing the scenes of misery and horror that the television and newspapers proffered and, perhaps, having witnessed firsthand a survivor or two seeking refuge in other cities. Even more so, we began to hear hundreds of stories of people's

experiences, out of the wake of neglect caused by our slow-to-respond governments, in books and documentaries and songs and poems.

Strange Earth - Content Objectives

I am one witness, a second-hand one at that, to the affects of Katrina and the breaking of the levees that soon followed, flooding vital neighborhoods and killing too many people. My students will recall also watching television and Internet news-videos, and perhaps having met a survivor first hand or having had their own interactions with the city of New Orleans pre- or post-Katrina, or even during it; however, within a few years, there will be fewer students who can recall having witnessed it in any sense. They will have been too young to remember or not yet have been born. Yet, we cannot afford to allow this collective memory to dissipate. We must become responsible for our selves, our homes, our communities, our country, working together to reduce our own destructive behavior or carelessness towards our selves and nature.

The point in studying documentaries and texts about New Orleans, its peoples and histories and events, is to create perspective for my students as they explore their own homes and neighborhoods and communities. Familiarity with the strange unsettles it, making it familiar, and as a result makes what was at first familiar become newly strange. Thus, by juxtaposing clips of people from the documentaries and stories of New Orleans with the nine films that frame this unit (see *The Interconnected* and *The Film as Literature Matrix*), and with findings from their very own homes and places of origin, students will begin to recognize universalities that are within us all while noting and respecting differences.

A specific group of people that we will look at more in depth are the Mardi Gras Indians who are actually African-American men and their families, their name serving as homage to the native-American peoples who, in times past, provided refuge from slavery and racism. The Mardi Gras Indians, similar to their white counterparts who formed "krewes" for parading through New Orleans for Mardi Gras, parade in undisclosed routes through inner-city neighborhoods of New Orleans during the celebrations, showcasing their elaborate and original hand-stitched costumes of extraordinary beauty and complexity that each took thousands of hours and dollars to create. Originally formed in reaction to racism and segregation from celebrations, and historically a means for retribution towards fellow African-Americans, today's various Mardi Gras Indian groups have united, since 1987, under the New Orleans Mardi Gras Indian Council that serves to protect the tangible and intangible history of Mardi Gras Indians and their highly regarded costumes. Larry Bannock, President of the New Orleans Mardi Gras Indian Council, provides contextual commentary, "Mardi Gras Indians are secretive because only certain people participated in masking - people with questionable character. In the old day, the Indians were violent; Indians would meet on Mardi Gras, it was a day to settle scores." ¹⁷

The objective, then, is for my students and me to become knowledgeable of who we all are and our interconnectedness by means of juxtaposition with the people of New Orleans, particularly the Mardi Gras Indians, via documentary and online research. We also will better understand paradoxes and the necessity for individuality and even conformity, and the value and sacredness of culture and the effects of appropriation.

Strange Fire - Teaching Strategies

As the class progresses through the list of films and documentaries, and learn filmic terms and elements of storytelling (too vast to be included here), we will give particular attention to the way in which Spike Lee and other directors create a sense of reality through their works. We will study composition and editing, and audio and visuals, but more importantly subject matter and themes. Our studies will coincide with study of the films and how they evoke a sense of reality through the senses of sight and sound.

Strange Air – Classroom Activities

In addition to juxtaposing scenes from Spike Lee's documentary, and others', of New Orleans' post-Katrina, *When the Levees Broke*, we will practice creating our own short documentaries of people from our own homes, inspired by those we watch in film and documentary. Students will use available resources for recording and editing, revealing informative scenes of someone who has been a formative figure in their life. Themes for these very short documentaries can range from the personal to the historical, and the styles can be serious to the irreverent, as long as they help delineate some aspect or characteristic of the student's own self. The students in small groups, 'families', will assist one another in the creation of their documentaries, and time in class will be provided for some work and the showing of final projects.

A second activity for the students is to recreate the "six degrees of separation" experiments of Stanley Milgram, in the 1960s, and Duncan Watts and his colleagues Peter Dodds and Roby Muhamad, in 2002. ¹⁸ In short, these experiments proved that on average any one individual is only six degrees away from any other individual in the world. For our experiment, we will add autobiographical information about ourselves, especially in regards to our cultures and homes, and provide room for each subsequent participant to add their own biographical information. We will then ask the targeted recipients, to be determined, but who will be residents of New Orleans, to then attempt to return all the autobiographical documents, via a new route of separation, back to the originator of the chain letter. The principle rule for this activity is, in addition to honesty, that each participant only send the letter to someone they actually know with the intention of having the letter 'personally' delivered via a network of friends. If this experiment works, it will be repeated with additional intentions of creating positive social networks that bring about meaningful change in how we interact with each other and our world.

Strange Water – Resources

Three documentaries, shown in part or whole, that are the primary resources for studying the Strange: *When the Levees Broke* and *If God is Willing and da Creek Don't Rise* are Spike Lee's intensive, revealing and thorough documents of Hurricane Katrina and the Gulf Oil spill, as well as the political mayhem that ensued. It includes numerous survivors who tell their harrowing tales and provide perspective of the disasters. *Faubourg Treme: The Untold Story of Black New Orleans* is a document of a specific neighborhood and history of people and music and life in New Orleans. It recounts in detail the richness of life that struggled for survival long before the onslaught of Katrina and the breaking of the levees, and then how it is afterwards affected.

Literary texts and articles, excerpted or in whole, that detail histories of New Orleans: *Mumbo Jumbo* is Ishmael Reed's novel of Jes Grew, an epidemic of music, joy, laughter and love that spreads across the United States from New Orleans, and the efforts of people to either continue its spread or destroy it. We will look only at the opening pages that reveal the nature of Jes Grew. *Silences* is an original lecture transcript by Joseph Roach, seminar leader, who recounts the harrowing story of his son's fight for survival in a New Orleans' hospital during Hurricane Katrina. *Zeitoun*, written by Dave Eggers, is the retelling of Abdulrahman Zeitoun's experiences while riding out Katrina but more importantly while enduring the extreme racial profiling he was subjected to in the days following. We will examine his treatment during his detention in the New Orleans bus station. We will read *Cutting Loose*, also by Joseph Roach, and an excerpt from *Coming Through Slaughter*, written by Michael Ondaatje, that recreates the experience of Bill Bolden dying while playing music in the streets of New Orleans. Roach's article is a scholarly look at the second line, which is "a tradition in the African American community of parading and of following along and participating in a parade, either being a part of it or being alongside and watching it go by, or hosting the parade as it comes through the neighborhood." ¹⁹ We

will also read the interview transcript of Joseph Roach with Ned Sublette from which the previous definition was extracted. *New Orleans, Mon Amour* is a series of writings by Andrei Codrescu who recounts numerous anecdotal and fact-filled expositions of New Orleans and all there is to love and hate about it. Josh Neufeld's stark comic-novel recounts various peoples' experiences in New Orleans during and after Hurricane Katrina. Another comic-novel that we will examine is Allison Bechdel's *Fun Home*, which recounts her childhood with her father and his apparent suicide. Though it is not set in New Orleans, it helps make the strange familiar. *Yours*, written by Mary Robison, is a beautiful love story about a couple who carve pumpkins together on the last night of her life. She suffers from cancer, and is several decades younger than him, while he suffers the loss of her and through the ignorance of family members who perceive him an old fool. *Amusements* is Sherman Alexie's short story, from *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven*, which reveals the destructive nature of internalized oppression within a Native American man and his friends at a nearly all-white carnival. Many poems are to be taught with the films and literary texts but it is the poems of Brenda Marie Osbey, in her work *All Saints, New and Selected Poems*, which are key to our study of New Orleans: 'Faubourg', Faubourg Study No. 3: The Seven Sisters of New Orleans' and 'The Evening News.'

The Imaginal One - Imagination and the Tree of Life

Roger Cook's metaphorical statement, found in his informative and beautiful book, *The Tree of Life, Image for the Cosmos*, posits the value of imagination:

"Like the Tree, imagination is a source of endless regeneration. It is both old and young, and has its autumns and its springs: for if the senses become too heavy and attached to traditional forms, imagination deserts them. It discards old meanings, shatters fixed dogmas, and revives eternal truths, for ever re-clothing them in the light of the new." ²⁰

In allowing imagination to vivify our selves, our students, our classrooms, our schools, our communities, ad infinitum, we provide water for the thirsty. In an environment that nurtures memory, seeds of life spring forth. Lao Tzu voiced, "To see things in the seed, that is genius." ²¹

Imaginal Earth - Content Objectives

Cook provides explanation of the writings of Henry Corbin, who approximated Islamic mystics' visionary experiences and who wrote that "these philosophers recognized a real plane of experience... [which] they conceived as an intermediary realm existing between, and interpenetrating with, the realms of intellect and sense perception." ²² Corbin reasoned that 'imaginary,' which suggests 'unreal,' is inadequate for describing the breadth and depth of Imagination. 'Imaginal' is the term he provided. It evokes life, which is why I include it as part of this unit's title. "Imagination," in this schema, "is the central faculty, that of the soul, acting as a vital bridge between senses and intellect, mind and body, spirit and matter." ²³ I do not purport to know the full meaning of all this, but I am open to it, and it serves as the primary objective for this part in that I want all my students to nurture their own imaginations as though it is the central faculty working within them. This objective is not to be assessed but rather to be realized.

Imaginal Fire - Teaching Strategies

In fostering imagination, I do not mean for teachers to just allow for whimsical flights of imagination in their students, but rather to reunify the act of imagining with the act of reasoning and sensing/perceiving. Cook makes it quite clear that "For [William Blake], imagination was neither vague, unreal nor 'merely subjective':

on the contrary, it described a precise order of reality, pertaining to a definite mode of being with a coherent structure of its own." ²⁴ I want students to actively engage their imagination with every activity we do in class, whether watching a film, reading a text, having a discussion or writing down notes/thoughts. Without an active and ongoing practice of imagining, the classroom environment is figuratively dead, which reminds me of what Maude, in *Harold and Maude*, says, pointing to a daisy, "You see, Harold, I feel that much of the world's sorrow comes from people who are this, yet," sweeping her hand out to a seemingly endless field of white, military tombstones, "allow themselves to be treated as that." ²⁵

Imaginal Air – Classroom Activities

I proffer that we take journeys of possibilities through deep time into 'imaginal' performances of memory, connecting us all back to our roots, 'the tree of life,' an ancient, profound and ubiquitous symbol that, in my mind, echoes what we all can metaphorically, and perhaps actually, be when allowed to imagine, no matter that we may feel at times like coffered seeds thirsty for water. Memory is key. In *Pleasantville*, Mary Sue, who with her brother Bud is magically pulled into the old black-and-white television show, tries to explain to Bud how the pages of the once blank library book began to magically fill in. She recalls what she remembers reading. Her memory works for her. Though this is a function of literacy, it is not what makes memory key. Mary Sue is depicted as a non-academic student, but she clearly has the ability to literally read a book, and to recall, but recalling is superficial. Memory, as I mean it here, is the life of the students' personal memories of their life experiences, which when applied actually bring life to the seemingly lifeless words in a book. While decoding and recalling are part of literacy, it is memory, both personal and collective memory, its schema working on the personal and academic level, that makes literature meaningful and worth engaging in. Thus, for developing memory of distant peoples in distant places, such as New Orleanians in New Orleans, as readable in a documentary, students first have to remember their own lives and family histories in order to remember the lives of others. Juxtaposition and observance of perspective are tools for this type of activity. My students and I will practice remembering people and situations, our small 'families' and real families, through performances of narrative, written and oral, where we weave details of a person we have interviewed into a surrogation of their life. We perform them. What we begin to see or perceive in one person, and two, and three, and so on, will illuminate what we begin to see in everyone, and everything. The strange is made familiar and the familiar made strange.

Imaginal Water – Resources

All the resources described above and below work within this section because all things are only understood with the help of imagination. Everything is a source, and resource, of life when the imagination is applied. I include here, then, only four additional resources: excerpts from John Kennedy Toole's extraordinary and hilarious novel, *A Confederacy of Dunces*, Brett Lott's sorrowful and haunting short story *Night*, Langston Hughes' life affirming short story *Thank You, Ma'am*, and Geoffrey Forsyth's strange story *Mud*. These texts are rich with detail of human life, even where those details are left out and for the reader to perceive, as with the short stories. *Night* is about a father's aching obsession over the loss of his child of whom few details are given. In *Thank You, Ma'am*, though we see the characters in action, many of the details of their lives are left to assumptions that, ironically, are the target of this story. In *Mud*, members of the protagonist's family return from their graves covered in mud, distracting him from his nightmare of stress in trying to prepare to meet his 'boss,' for whom he is to gather the details of his 'presentation' that are coffered in his briefcase. The novel, on the other end, rich in detail, is a wonderful tool for having students see other people. The primary excerpt from *A Confederacy of Dunces* is from Chapter three, part III, where Miss Trixie, an elderly woman who suffers from dementia, is first introduced, and where we see her boss, the meek and lamb-like Mr. Gonzalez, become

worked up over her idiosyncrasies. Then, coming to apply for a job, in walks the infamous Ignatius J. Reilly.

The Responsive One - Becoming Stewards of Our Selves, Our Communities, Our Earth

I believe Viktor Frankl's wisdom speaks to the need quite beautifully:

"Freedom, however, is not the last word. Freedom is only part of the story and half of the truth. Freedom is but the negative aspect of the whole phenomenon whose positive aspect is responsibility. In fact, freedom is in danger of degenerating into mere arbitrariness unless it is lived in terms of responsibility. That is why I recommend that the Statue of Liberty on the East Coast be supplemented by a Statue of Responsibility on the West Coast." ²⁶

Imagination runs the same route as Freedom if without responsibility. Perhaps my students and I will create a Statue of Responsibility, or be surrogates for one.

Responsive Earth - Content Objectives

Dr. David Suzuki shares his concern for what is happening to all of us throughout the world as a result of our giving up of sacred places and traditions for superficial things: "I think that we suffer from the loss of place. We no longer belong anywhere. We are no longer a part of a larger community that our biofilia, our need to affiliate with other species, dictates that we've got to be, we need to be..." ²⁷ But this is practically impossible, today, for most of us, especially those of us living in impacted cities and suburbs. Where, now, do we go to be back in community with all of life? If there is no actual place, if we are destroying our lands, i.e., the bayous of Louisiana, is it possible and worthwhile, at least, to try and follow Samuel Taylor Coleridge's edict, "What a plant is by an act not its own and unconsciously, that thou must make thyself to become" ²⁸ How will we continue to thrive beyond our means, beyond our limitations if we do not radically begin to imagine ourselves in communities where we are, once again, one with nature? Is it possible that Westmoor High School, its students and faculty and communities, Westlake among them, become a catalyst through Education for actual interconnectedness and make a greater contribution to history than just "that it [Westlake] created the opportunity for thousands of San Franciscans who'd grown up in lower-middle class neighborhoods to own their own homes?" ²⁹ I believe so. Thus, my objective is primarily for me as a teacher: create and model a means by which students can actively engage their imaginations through education to enrich their lives and to make their world a better place. As Michael Jackson sings, "if you want to make the world a better place, take a look at yourself and then make that change." ³⁰ Otherwise, to paraphrase him further, when we close our hearts we close our minds, and I do not want to see that happen.

Responsive Fire - Teaching Strategies

First, students will have to look into themselves and see why they are in whatever predicaments in which they perceive themselves to be. Then, instead of allowing themselves to be victims, they will have to imagine how to change their situations. Through examination of characters in films and literature, and in documentary, we see how others change or fail to do so. Then we reassess ourselves, again and again, making the necessary changes as we discover the needs to. This process is then turned out of the self and into the neighborhoods and environments, and we look locally to see what changes need to be made in our communities to make our world safer and healthier, not just for ourselves but for all animals and creatures. We then keep repeating the process, discovering how to correct mistakes we make and maturing from within.

Responsive Air - Classroom Activities

If we are to be responsible stewards of ourselves, communities and the greater world, we have to develop our imaginations but we also have to mature and become confident of our purposes however uncertain we may be as to how to implement them. Still, we can no longer sit passively and narcissistically while our collective past behaviors have caused, directly or indirectly, destruction or harm to ourselves, other animals and plants, and the earth's ecological systems. I will challenge my students as did my friend and former colleague, Dave Holden, who used to challenge his students: "Provided with _____ (insert a tool or tools) and _____ (insert materials), a human being can make a world." I will add my own touch to his rich heritage of teaching by altering it only slightly, adding "the inspired human being" and the possibility of making the world a better place. We will start with issues derived from any of the films and documentaries we have seen, so far, discussing what tools and materials are needed to create a solution or new world that serves, beneficially, all who are affected by the issue. We will take into account how animals, plants and ecosystems are affected by the issues and our proffered solutions. Next, we move our focus to our own homes and communities. Our first task, then, is to research home or local issues that affect the entire environment immediate to the heart of the issue. Afterwards, we brainstorm, using our imaginations and studies of past efforts and their successes and failures, what tools and materials are needed to create a best solution that benefits all beings and environments affected by the issue. Starting small, we set out to create those solutions, learning from our failures, and staying aware of unintended negative consequences. The primary objective for this activity is awareness and change of attitude and effort, hopefully affecting our families and friends and neighbors in positive and enlightening ways.

Responsive Water - Resources

Shel Silverstein's classic children's book, *The Giving Tree*, begins with "Once there was a tree," and ends with an image of an old man sitting slumped on a stump.³¹ It is the story of a boy who becomes an old man, seeming to never have matured but only aged, and failing to realize that life can only be sustained if the giving is mutual. I believe that in giving, all boys and girls can mature while remaining youthful and lively, and that in doing so, they become responsible in giving back to our Earth. *Suzuki Speaks*, the documentary of Dr. Suzuki's teachings, is a great presentation and argument of our complete and mutual interconnectedness. A complementary short story to his teachings, though not explicitly, is Jenny Hollowell's *A History of Everything, Including You* that likewise shows our interconnectedness, although it focuses on one family's tragedy set within the context of the history of the entire universe. Regardless that this short story uses particular characters with particular histories, their plight is universal. Terrance Malick's new film, *The Tree of Life*, is a near approximation to this story. Two poems that enhance the themes these literary texts, and *Suzuki Speaks*, contain are 'The World is a Beautiful Place' by Lawrence Ferlinghetti and 'Nothing Gold Can Stay' by Robert Frost. They both reveal, inherently, that all beauty is fragile and worth nurturing however brief it may be. Our Earth is certainly a beautiful place that we must learn to protect and live in harmony with.

Concepts/Terms - A Green One and a Pink One and a Blue One and a Yellow One

It is important at this point, before entering into The Interconnected section, below, to establish and explain relevant concepts and terms that are to be taught in tandem with this unit. They are defined in context of the seminar discussions with Joe Roach and participating Fellows, and for this unit. However, many of the terms are also denoted in most dictionaries.

Heritage is inheritance of many things: land, culture, ideas, beliefs and tradition, to name a few. Of heritage there are three kinds: *natural*, *tangible* and *intangible*. The natural, of course, refers to nature and the land and plants. For the site-specific locales in this unit, Westmoor and New Orleans, it evokes the natural habitats

that they are located within and vice versa. To fully know a place, one has to be as familiar with the plants and landscape particular to that place. As for tangible and intangible, the denotations for them are primary, here. Heritage includes that which can and cannot be touched. For the former, the material belongings within the classroom that are inherited from previous teachers and students suffice an illustration: artwork, movie posters, desks, books and lesson plans are but a few. For the latter, emotions, ideas and beliefs touch upon what cannot be seen that is often inherited.

Monumental landmarks, Behavioral Vortices, Nodes and Borders are common terms that identify places of interest and action of and by people in regards to Cities or places of interest. A *monumental landmark* for New Orleans is the Superdome. Within it, one can easily spot *behavioral vortices*, places that swirl with human activity: food courts, walkways and bathrooms, for example. Behavioral vortices also connote internal, emotional activities to which a person regularly returns in their mind and memory. *Nodes* are intersections such as with walkways that cross in a park or on a campus. Where hallways in schools meet are often not only nodes but behavioral vortices. *Borders*, in context of school, are classrooms or particular areas such as a gymnasium that may border a swimming pool facility. Generally speaking, they are boundaries, visible and not, that people accept as delineations of one place next to another.

A *Desire Map* is an internal geography of one's hopes, wishes and dreams, and perceptions of one's layout of those desires. One can actually search for and purchase manifested versions on-line and map out what they currently, and will presently, desire. Personal landmarks, vortexes, nodes and borders can be added conceptually to the idea of Desire Map and to an actual physical rendition. The *grid* simply refers to the layout of city streets and the city itself, imaginary or real, upon a map. One can place one's hopes, wishes and dreams onto a grid in creating one's Desire Map.

Gestalt refers to the perception of something having more than just the sum of its parts. *Urban and suburban gestalts*, then, are the awareness that an urb (pardon the play) or suburb is more than just its streets and shops and businesses and people, but also all the collective cultures and traditions and habits and dreams, and the thriving entity the whole urb or suburb becomes. Obviously, an urban or suburban gestalt is not actually perceptible but rather a discussion of it fosters the imaginations and stretches minds to conceive of its possibilities. In doing so, we become more aware of other people and their possible perceptions of the world. When we do this we also take into account *constituencies* of the place, urb, suburb or city entire, but the constituents are more than just the living. They also include, especially in a city like New Orleans, the dead and the yet-to-be-born. Daly City, home to Westmoor and Westlake, also has its rich histories of peoples past and yet to come. And its neighboring small town, Colma, happens to be home to the majority of cemeteries in the Northern Peninsula many of which were relocated from San Francisco. As the popular bumper stickers claim, "It's great to be alive in Colma!" Several scenes in *Harold and Maude* were filmed within its cemeteries.

Condensational artifacts and events are things or happenings that also have their own gestalt because of the all that has fermented and been distilled and concentrated into them. The key here is in the act of condensation where facts and truths and emotions and memories begin to make a new composite image of the artifact or event. Hurricane Katrina and Malvina Reynolds' song, "Little Boxes," both serve to exemplify the idea. In some cases, condensational artifacts and events work as a synecdoche where the part, such as Katrina, can represent the whole, the entire disaster that affected New Orleans, including the levees breaking and the ninth ward, and other areas, flooding, etc.

Collective memory is simply the memories that a group of people share and pass forward, in *perpetuation*,

from one generation to the next. Collective memories, though, are indiscriminately affected by, what Joe Roach calls in his book *Cities of the Dead*, the process of *surrogation*, where culture reproduces and re-creates itself:

In the life of a community, the process of surrogation does not begin or end but continues as actual or perceived vacancies occur in the network of relations that constitutes the social fabric. Into the cavities created by loss through death or other forms of departure... survivors attempt to fit satisfactory alternates. Because collective memory works selectively, imaginatively, and often perversely, surrogation rarely if ever succeeds. The process requires many trials and at least as many errors. The fit cannot be exact. ³²

This is not the full discussion of surrogation but it suffices here, except it is important to add that "in the likely event that one or more... calamities occurs, selective memory requires public enactments of forgetting, either to blur the obvious discontinuities, misalliances, and ruptures or, more desperately, to exaggerate them in order to mystify a previous Golden Age, now lapsed." ³³*Deep time* is the connection of history to the present through the collective memory that is passed on by each generation. Some cultures actively exist in deep time where ancient memories are as real today as they were when first formed. Jill Lane, in her article "Hemispheric America in Deep Time" about artists who create or perform art in conjunction with and deference to deep time, expresses a definition of deep time, in part, by suggesting, "to think through deep time is to be alive to the heterogeneous character of time: alive to the fact that while for you 'five hundred years ago' may be beyond the pale of memory, for another it is a raw reality in whose snare we still live, alive to the fact that for many time ebbs and flows to a pace quite other than a Swiss clock." ³⁴

For a summative definition of *performance* I, again, refer to Roach's book where he writes that performance "stands in for an elusive entity that it is not but that it must vainly aspire both to embody and to replace." ³⁵ Performance includes, among many things, theater, dance and oral history.

None of the above terms/concepts and examples is limited by the brief explanations provided. They are easily adaptable across borders from the classroom to the home to the city, and the imagination and back. In other words, a node is not just where two streets or lines cross but also where personal beliefs may intersect. An Urban or Suburban Gestalt could likewise be the complete internal make-up of a person, including the intangible heritage that informs them of who they are.

The Interconnected - All Sections in Tandem Plus Nine Films/Documentaries

All the resources for each of the sections above are thematically related and inter-connectable. None of them only fit into one category. Rather, each one fits into all four thematic categories in that each one embeds archetypal symbols and universal experiences that are identifiable and that stir the imagination, which is a unifying and generative force. Likewise, the eight films and one documentary that are the primary sources for this unit, and that all the above resources connect with, are rich examples of the power of imagination. Through light and sound they recreate worlds of yesterday that illuminate the minds engaged with them. All the films and resources become the impetus for students to nurture their own imaginations in order to create meaningful and affective writings, performances, projects and films, working towards inspiring others to change their world. Here, finally, is a very brief example of a written 'imaginal' performance in memory that weaves together much of the above ideas, films and terms: In *Racing with the Moon*, we are introduced to two young men who romanticize war and the notions of freedom and killing enemies, the 'strange' people of another world and culture that are in conflict with the culture and world of the two young men. Two symbols in

the film, the moon and the train, representing time and industry, respectively, among other things, also suggest the repetition of history and that nothing is permanent. Each of these men leaves their home, their little box, at the risk of returning in even smaller boxes. *A Soldier's Story*, *Everything is Illuminated*, *A Love Song for Bobby Long* and *Harold and Maude* each also include symbols that play upon boxes, whether jail cells, actual boxes that contain mementos of the dead, symbolic houses that represent bodies, or cars that represent personal coffins. There are symbolic boxes throughout. The majority of the setting in *Pleasantville* is within the television, the idiot-box. History and change are also ubiquitous in these films. In the films involving war, collective memory is evidenced in the African American soldier's, in *A Soldier's Story*, and in the condensational artifacts left by the dead, in *Everything is Illuminated*. Intangible heritage is also perpetuated through memory and memento in all the films as a majority of the characters, throughout, come to terms with their familial and cultural histories. *A Man Named Pearl* documents the struggles of one particular man, Pearl Fryer, who picks up a tool, a tree-trimmer, and finds materials, trees and bushes, teaching himself the art of topiary, creating a new and beautiful world out his own lawn. What is remarkable about Pearl is his gift for beauty and wisdom, and his compassion for people, especially children. What Pearl shows is that anyone who is open to using their imagination can overcome impossible odds. Pearl Fryer is an African American elderly man who changed not only the landscape of the southern town with his art but also the desire maps of people who come from all over to see his trees. *In the Heat of the Night* incorporates all the above themes and symbols of time and boxes and change, etc., complimentary to *A Man Named Pearl*, both showing people, real and imaginary, who face their detractors and obstacles directly, overcoming their own fears to improve the world for others. This unit ends with a new film, *The Tree of Life* by Terrence Malick, that overtly weaves the imaginal with both the strangeness of life and death, and the familiarity of struggle and tragedy, while intimating that the modern man has lost connection with the Earth, distancing himself behind glass in tall buildings. Death is the great reminder that truly nothing gold can stay, but we should not let it keep us from attempting to make our worlds, and the world, better through reconnecting ourselves with it holistically and heuristically.

Appendix

The Film as Literature Matrix for 'Imaginal' Performances in Memory

The Primary Films/Documentaries are at the centers of each of the nine large boxes. Short stories, additional documentaries, poems and resources on New Orleans are located in the corners of each large box, in clockwise order, respectively. For Daily Journal Writing prompts search thematically for quotes and poems. They become the thread weaving all materials together.

<i>"No One's A Mystery"</i> - Elizabeth Tallent DJP: #4	<i>Daily Journal Prompt: #1</i> 1: Racing with the Moon	<i>When the Levees Broke - Spike Lee</i> DJP: #2	<i>"The Flowers"</i> - Alice Walker DJP: #5	2: A Soldier's Story	<i>When the Levees Broke - Spike Lee</i> DJP: #6	<i>"Night"</i> - Brett Lott DJP: #12	3: Everything is Illuminated	<i>When the Levees Broke - Spike Lee</i> DJP: #10
<i>Little Boxes</i> - M. Reynolds; <i>My Hometown</i> - B. Springsteen DJP: #3		<i>Nothing Gold Can Stay</i> - Robert Frost DJP: #14	Excerpt from <i>Mumbo Jumbo</i> - Ishmael Reed DJP: #7	Facing It - Yusuf Komunyakaa DJP: #19	<i>"Silences"</i> - J. Roach; excerpt <i>Zeitoun</i> - D. Eggers, pp 215-235 DJP: #11	<i>"History"</i> - Thomas McGrath DJP: #23		
<i>"Hud"</i> - Geoffrey Fossyth DJP: #16	4: A Love Song for Bobby Long	<i>When the Levees Broke - Spike Lee</i> DJP: #14	<i>"Yours"</i> - Mary Robison DJP: #20	5: Harold and Maude	<i>When the Levees Broke - Spike Lee</i> DJP: #18	<i>"Thank You, Man"</i> - Langston Hughes DJP: #24	6: A Man Named Pearl	Suzuki Speaks - T. Papa; Connections - J. Burke DJP: #22
Excerpts from <i>The Movieposter</i> - W. Percy, pp 42, 57, 67, 79-80, 84-86 DJP: #15		<i>'Not Waving But Drowning'</i> - Stevie Smith DJP: #27	Excerpt <i>A Confederacy of Dunces</i> - J. K. Toole, ch. 3, pp 63-66; ch. 1, pp 1-13 DJP: #31	<i>Spring</i> - Edna St. Vincent Millay DJP: #31	<i>"Cutting Loose..."</i> - J. Roach; "Coming Through Slaughter" - M. Ondsatje DJP: #23	<i>'A Black Man Talks of Reaping'</i> - Arna Bontemps DJP: #35		
<i>"The Test"</i> - Angelica Gibbs DJP: #28	7: In the Heat of the Night	<i>Faubourg Tremé: The Untold Story...</i> - Dawn Logsdon DJP: #26	<i>"Amusements"</i> - Sherman Alexie DJP: #32	8: Pleasantville	<i>If God is Willing and Da Creek Don't Rise</i> - Spike Lee DJP: #30	<i>"A History of Everything, Including You"</i> - J. Hollowell DJP: #36	9: The Tree of Life	<i>If God is Willing and Da Creek Don't Rise</i> - S. Lee DJP: #34
Readings: N.O., <i>Mon Amour</i> - A. Codrescu pp 35, 71, 75, 79, 97... DJP: #27		<i>Reflective</i> - A. R. Ammons DJP: #35	<i>Faubourg & Faubourg Study No. 3: The Seven Sisters...</i> - B. Oshey DJP: #31	<i>The World is a Beautiful Place</i> - Lawrence Ferlinghetti DJP: #31	<i>New Orleans - J. Neufeld pp 20-21; Fun Home - A. Bechdel</i> DJP: #35	<i>I Am</i> - John Clare DJP: #35		

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