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The Settled and the Unsettled, Then and Now: Rites of Passage in Urban Life and Narrative

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Introduction and rationale

Our cities as they grew were often shaped by the practices of their young immigrants. They were balancing a romance with their new geography and allegiance to the cultural practices of their sites of origin. They came from other countries or across this one. Some of my students come from Mexico; a few were transplanted in grade school after Hurricane Katrina. Some might trace their families' arrival in Oklahoma to the Trail of Tears following the Indian Removal Act of 1830. African American families may have been drawn to Tulsa by the economy and jobs in America's affluent Black Wall Street, the Greenwood district, or the appeal of the all-black towns before statehood in 1907. But some of them have never left Oklahoma, and some not even Tulsa. What universal themes and stories do they share?

Our seminar readings centered around three cities with significant immigrant/migrant histories: early-mid-nineteenth century New York, Chicago as it received the Great Migration in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and 20th century Los Angeles. In our readings I found stories that could have come straight from my students' lives. They surely would be able to see just as clearly as I could their connections to these stories and studies. As relative outsiders in our city, marginalized by race or class, they share many challenges and practices with the youth in our readings, including poverty, ostracization, unwelcome policy, and unfamiliar cultural practices that go along with being outsiders. Our seminar "Immigration and Migration and the Making of the American City," led by Mary Lui, exposed me to a greater understanding of this aspect of American history and story, as well as a wealth of resources with which to study them.

So that our students may see themselves as part of the fabric of our history and not just observers of it, it is our job as teachers to lead them to several connections. First, we want them to link their lives with those of the people who preceded them, whether similar or apparently very different. They live and learn vicariously from the stories of the challenges of others. We also want them to see what forces shape history and its participants' stories. In our seminar, we looked at such influences as geography, gender, race, class, policy, and perception. Finally, we want them to understand how stories can stimulate social change and that their own stories can do the same. A unifying and grounding theme—rites of passage—one that should be appealing to my students as teenagers—will control and bridge the immigration and migration narratives to my students' own. Research shows that a community's rites of passage connect them to the greater world

around them, that theme reinforcing that same lesson they've hopefully learned in an academic setting. They, too, can be agents of social change through their rites of passage stories. Students now have the ability to share their stories through outreach projects and Internet and social media to reach peers and the larger community. The lessons they've learned through their struggles and reflection have real value.

This unit will be appropriate for middle school and high school classrooms in urban districts. The theme should be an interesting one, speaking directly to our students' personal experiences. The content is appropriate for most large cities with students from diverse backgrounds and with noticeable migrant or immigrant populations.

The school

Phoenix Rising is the last stop for most of our students academically. It is a therapeutic, not punitive, program with the intention of breaking the cycle of suspensions and absences that have come from litany of small and large offences that—rather than academic progress—have marked their school experience. We are responsible for meeting state and federal education mandates, but often our first priorities for our students are for them to learn how to be students and feel safe and successful again. We want to send them on as productive, engaged citizens who are on the better side of the social justice system. In such a situation, it could be easy to lower expectations. One of my greatest challenges is to introduce and maintain a level of rigor to which my students are generally not accustomed. With our small staff, classes are necessarily multi-grade. Our staff is about an equal balance of teachers and social workers. We do not give homework often, but smaller classes and special times available for one-on-one meetings help.

Ours is a Big Picture Learning school. The Big Picture network helps to organize their affiliated schools (many but not all for at-risk students) around a three-part strategy. The first of these is relationship-building. Students' learning is weakened in situations where students do not feel safe or comfortable; conversely, students' learning is enhanced in an environment where they do. The second is relevance; reluctant students are more

inclined to strive for academic success when they see its relevance to their lives, needs, and personal interests. The third is rigor, based on the idea that especially with at-risk students, rigor is more readily achieved after relevance and relationships are established. BP students are encouraged to get to know themselves as young adults and as learners so that they can be advocates for themselves and others. This unit asks them to do both, as they look inward to their own stories and outward, as voices to be shaped for society to hear. As a Big Picture school, our site has traditional core classes supplemented by a project-driven advisory block. The final written product of this unit is typical Big Picture assignment, but it will address standard objectives and include products relevant to all language arts classrooms.

The students

My students are amazing young people who have endured struggles that many cannot imagine. Inevitably, they are years behind their grade level, especially with math and reading. Their lives, at least temporarily, have been defined by situations beyond their control, especially those that come out of generational poverty, trauma, criminal behaviors, and substance abuse. Many have living situations that are non-traditional, to say the least, and are often inadequate or temporary. They are between 13 and 20 years old, often at least a year behind in credits. Most are fast-tracked into our small school because they are involved in the juvenile justice system. The others are not "in the system" but share those same characteristics that make this the best school for them. They too have not been successful in traditional high schools or other alternative schools. They experience the same issues of instability outside of school that affect their ability to prioritize academics.

Rites of Passage

The theme

In addition to our exploration of immigration/migration history and narrative, the other shaping force of this unit is thematic; we'll look at rites of passage of these youth, tracing them from some historical and literary documents of the past to a selection of current fiction and non-fiction accounts, including those of my students. Also called coming of age ceremonies or rituals of initiation among other things, I felt instinctively that the universal theme of rites of passage would be an interesting one to my students. From *The Hunger Games* and *The Lion King* to stories by Walter Dean Myers, it saturates their media, whether they realize it or not. More common rites of passage are attributed our social and cultural institutions, such as schools, churches, families and social organizations. Graduations, weddings, baptisms, and other religious rituals are relatively standard. Other rites are more specific to particular social and cultural contexts, including quinceaneras, gang rituals, and pow wows.

Many of these are evident and can be traced back to the experience of immigrants and outsiders in our country's previous two centuries. For example, in readings about the 19 th century immigrants in New York, a most obvious and recurring practice was fighting among urban youth. Fights appear again in the more modern accounts of Richard Wright and Piri Thomas and again in a contemporary news story about a black teenager in Bronx tenements. Fights have a complex role in my students' lives, as well. They are entertainment; every morning my students pass their phones around to share the new set of videos of fights among their acquaintances from the previous afternoon or night and, permitted, they would watch them over and over. Fights determine status in formal and informal social groups, from gangs to girls' cliques. They determine reputation and prowess; one's fighting style and win/loss record are requisite knowledge among peers and are a source of frequent discussion. The fights in this unit's readings, spanning time and geography, also held prominent social place, serving to establish social hierarchy, to reinforce norms and values, and even to provide amusement to youth in the streets with little else to do.

When we look at history, it is the adults we tend to listen to and give out focus to. We learn about a society by studying its children, as well. Their daily lives and rituals expose just as well the challenges of Five Points,

Bronzeville in Chicago, or the *barrio* in Spanish Harlem. With both parents working away from home, barely making enough to feed their families, and unable to guide their children as they navigate the streets, children likely are left alone to survive and necessarily create their own rites to establish hierarchy and acceptance. Like many of ours today, they create their own in an effort to assimilate into the new adult world and culture around them.

The dance halls of early 20 th century New York became the setting for rich coming-of-age experiences of immigrant young men and women, who couldn't get enough of dancing—but probably also the rich and newly liberated social life that went with it. [1] Initially held in family and home-culture environments and often with chaperones, eventually, the commercialized halls that had arisen in great demand allowed young women room for promiscuity and liberal interactions with young men. The dance culture exposed "the ways in which working-class youth culturally managed sexuality, intimacy, and respectability." [2] At the start, dances served to sustain culture of origin, but over time, they also were a way of breaking into a new American cultural scene.

The practice

The common scholarship on rites of passage is interesting as an aid to understanding a framework that propels a young person towards adulthood and its responsibilities in a relatively expedient manner, providing several benefits to the youth. Rituals and traditions, such as holiday meals, within a family provide structure and a safe sense of predictability and maybe welcome celebration. More singular rituals can do the same and go further; they are anticipated, prepared for, and often celebrated. To young people they can seem especially magical and significant. Girls may long for the romance of a wedding, for example. Fed by romantic movies, magazines, and images, this mysterious union is imbued with life-changing importance in their minds. Untold hours go into searching for dresses, flowers, and other trappings. There are preliminary rituals like showers and bachelorette parties, and perhaps a honeymoon will follow. While the life that follows is likely similar to what came before, traditionally (in our society, at least) this new stage of adulthood has come with prescribed gender roles, new kinds of physical intimacy, and societal expectations. The community participated, endorsed, and celebrated along with the bride, providing a comforting context for this transition into womanhood. The same ritual may have been executed differently in another place and time. In several slave narratives, women talked of jumping over a broom—an African wedding custom.

The wedding illustrates the three stages of the process, attributed to Arnold van Gennep, whose work is present on nearly every bibliography that I encountered on the subject. The first stage is separation, then liminality and reintegration. [3] In the separation stage, one is physically or symbolically separated from their childhood for the purpose of undertaking the ritual. In the reintegration phase, he/she is returned to society—again physically or figuratively—as an adult. This often involves some kind of celebration or blessing Delaney includes other stages but includes these standard three. [4] The liminality stage is central to the process. This is where the risk-taking, challenge, or out-of-the-ordinary event takes place that symbolically alters one and propels him/her into reintegration as an adult. Liminality may involve guided risk-taking and the stretching of physical or emotional limits, like the Native American ritual of the vision quest, when young men are sent alone into nature for several days without food to seek spiritual direction and manhood. Any event properly executed (and healthfully executed) can serve to send one closer to adulthood. A first date, first make-up, a first road trip without parents could serve. [5] It's a logical and effective process apparent in small and large events throughout our lives. As a teacher of at-risk youth, I'm most interested in the key events that shape my students into adults through adolescence. Such rituals could empower and reassure

them to face their challenges and responsibilities with equanimity and purpose.

The problem

And what happens in the absence of such provided rituals? Young people will inevitably seek out their own liminal experiences. Over and over it is suggested that our modern American culture is severely lacking in meaningful rites of passage with great cost to healthy personal development and community security. All of my students don't expect to have a high school graduation, a rite that our society takes for granted. Larson and Martin point out that "young people earned adult roles by observing, imitating, and interacting with adults around them." [6] A transition is incomplete without supportive adults as role models, without healthy, planned ritual, or with only regular exposure to unhealthy ones like adult-condoned drug use or fighting which still satisfy their needs for that mystical experience that they think adulthood holds. [7] Many sources, including the two I cite most here, discuss gang involvement and ritual as the only replacement for many young men (and I'd add women) without positive replacement. Problematically, these aberrations apply to many young people including my students. Additionally, teenagers lack the brain development to make sound decisions in all situations, especially those that are foreign or stimulating. Already deficient in this way, in efforts to be adults, they seek their own "firsts"—behaviors like smoking, sex, sometimes criminal acts away from adult wisdom and supervision. [8] These may not all seem like rites of passage to us, but in the absence of others, these are the rituals and practices through which they explore what are perceived to be adult behaviors and establish their roles in a more grown up society of peers. Students will have to explore this. The three stages are present, if reduced.

There are several things we—teachers, youth organizations, churches, communities—can do to address the problem. African American and other communities are rallying to provide structured and meaningful rituals to their youth in attempts to girder their growth and development in ways that benefit them and their communities. For example, in the 1960s, African American institutions began to organize Afrocentric rituals to supplement the lives of the young men in their communities who at statistically higher rates were doomed to live in prison and/or insecurity. One example is the MAAT Center program in Washington, D.C. It involves parents or close adults and has its own vocabulary and set of activities that are grounded in the teenaged boys' African roots; in fact, cultural competency is apparently essential to many such programs. [9] I stumbled upon another solution that is both intriguing and relevant to this unit: bibliotherapy as a replacement for actual ritual. Bibliotherapy is the use of literature to expose readers to situations like their own as a source of study or healing. From *Great Expectation* to *Catcher in the Rye,* each generation has its own selection of coming-of-age novels that bring to life a variety of experiences and values, tracing how they change as the protagonist moves towards adulthood. Its accessibility in high school curriculum is appealing. Well facilitated, a teacher may guide students through the three stages, encouraging discussion about the challenges, decision making, and outcomes of the protagonist. [10]

This is a theme that lends itself to exploration that is at the same time personal, cultural, and historical. A seemingly endless list of rites of passage is shaped for us by the context of the American immigration and migration experiences as well as contemporary culture. The act of immigrating or migrating is itself a rite of passage.

Essential questions

From personal writings to critical readings of works by others, all of our work will address a first set of essential questions. They will guide discussion as we read, but they are also intended to guide imaginations as

my students explore their own lives and settings for the rites of passage about which they will write. They may provide framework for introductions or conclusions. Finally, they have helped me to keep aligned what I've learned from my seminar and what I want my students to learn through the unit.

1. What and to whom do our rites of passage connect us?
2. Are these practices universal or local? Are they similar to those we'd find in the suburbs or rural communities?
3. What is the connection between where or when we live and our rituals?
4. Do our rituals change as our situations change? Do they change over time?
5. How am I changed by my rites of passage?
6. Are the rites of passage I'm thinking about healthy for me and my community?

Background Content: Immigration and Migration in an Urban Setting

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Our seminar readings led us through immigrant and migrant communities in three cities, progressing chronologically and geographically from young New York City to a burgeoning Los Angeles. In all contexts, the stresses of uprooting and transplanting to a new culture produced challenges shaped by economics, policy, and culture. Some were specific to gender, others to class or race.

In the Five Points district of mid-nineteenth century lower Manhattan, America's first tenements grew out of multi-family housing built inadequately and divided over and over to accommodate groups coming from the southern and rural New England states, Europe, and even China. There was already an African American presence in Five Points by 1863, the year of legal emancipation. Being in the North, however—before or after the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863—did not ensure liberty and security, whether one was legally freed from slavery or not. In the slave narrative of Harriet Jacobs, she illustrates the complexities of life for freed and escaped Blacks. Working class European immigrants lashed out at "things symbolic of black political, economic, and social power" during the Draft Riot of the same year, during which eleven African American men were brutally killed and the Colored Orphan Asylum was burned down. [11]

The trying experiences of all of these non-native New Yorkers were shaped by race, class, and gender. With nowhere else in the city to live, residents of Five Points experienced over-crowding, and much of life took place out in the streets. Lack of plumbing, infrastructure, and sanitation encouraged outbreaks of cholera and small pox and high mortality rates. Jobs available to immigrants were tedious with impossibly low wages—for children as well as adults. The documentation for this is abundant, but Jacob Riis's 1890 *How the Other Half Lives* brings the setting to life with his and others' photographs. Not until the Tenement House Act of 1867 had property owners been forced against their will and profits to make some inadequate improvements. [12] In the meantime, "tenants themselves, who had sunk, after a generation of unavailing protest, to the level of their surroundings. . .were at last content to remain there," Riis says with some sense of fatalism. [13] This is the 1893 setting for Stephen Crane's *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*.

We continued with the African American migrant experience in the First Great Migration of 1910-1930, specifically to Chicago. The Chicago *Defender*'s vast distribution in the South spread information about migration north even to the most obscure pockets of the southern states. [14] Labor agents, letter writers, returnees, and money that founds its way south were all convincing to those thinking of migrating. The

railroads were a source of jobs and also a conduit for information both directions. The *Defender* celebrated the opportunities for Blacks up north as "influential, moderately prosperous, and modern" while giving thorough coverage to the danger and oppression in the South. [15] Existing and new institutions like church congregations and migration clubs capitalizing on group travel rates moved people in accelerated numbers. [16] Once in Chicago, migrants met challenges from whites and from the Old Settlers, blacks settled in southern Chicago, near other blacks for proximity to resources and familiar institutions. [17] Segregation and integration were erratic; some laws were enforced, some were not, but by 1915 blacks were excluded from most white life and the greater economy. [18] The faced exclusion from unexpected places, too. By 1919 there was a shortage of housing for black Chicagoans, and earlier—the Old settlers—chagrined by the provincial ways of the newcomers moved even farther south to avoid them. The print media including the *Defender* and black organizations campaigned to instruct newcomers how to behave in public and at work. [19] The most unpleasant and low-paying jobs in the meat-packing and steel industries were the most accessible for men; women worked in factories and packing houses and as servants and hand laundresses. [20] In transit, upon arrival in the North, and throughout their settling years, African Americans of the First Great Migration in Chicago were challenged by their race and class, urban geography, and even prejudice by other Blacks. Richard Wright's *Black Boy*, tells of his slow migration to Chicago and his struggles there.

The third immigrant history I want my students to know more about as a source for our narrative readings is Mexican immigration, an area with which my students have contemporary connections. They should understand how federal and local policies and historical events have helped to determine legality and, beyond the obvious language differences, why life can be so hard for them. By 1910 Mexico and the United States already had a co-dependent labor relationship, facilitated and encouraged by the railroad system. But the relationship was also complex and changed according to labor needs and US immigration policy over through the century. [21] To the 1917 literacy test and head tax on migrants, the Immigration Act of 1924 added a Visa fee, causing some migrants to go underground and for some to remain on the American side of the border. They began to disperse north and west, creating the setting for the stories set in Chicago we'll read in class. We learned in seminar about the campaign in the 1920's to Americanize Mexican migrants in Los Angeles, a city of newcomers who were more homogeneous—white and largely from the Midwest. Housekeeping skills, English language acquisition, and dietary habits were all under siege. [22] Sanchez says of the ultimately unsuccessful American attempts that they "are an important window for looking at the assumptions made about both Mexican and American culture" and that "Mexican culture was seen as malleable, but required intense education in 'American values. . ." [23] Current restrictionist laws in states like California, Arizona, and Oklahoma suggest that in the eyes of many Americans, the status of Mexican Americans has not changed.

Established in the American psyche as labor class, possibly illegal, and needing to be Americanized, the long history of Mexican migration seems to ensure that their status in the States will continue to be slow to change. This is the context for our readings, one from late 20 th century Chicago—*The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros—and the other from undocumented teenagers today, a collection of stories by undocumented teenagers called *Things I'll Never Say: Stories of Growing up Undocumented in the United States*.

Puerto Rico was annexed after the 1898 Spanish American war, paving the way for eventual American citizenship with the Immigration Act of 1917. Puerto Ricans expected to benefit from the shared economy and modernism they would gain from their experience on the continent. In our cities they encountered the same challenges of job shortages, limited affordable housing, and discrimination as other immigrant groups we've studied. We find all of this in *Down These Mean Streets,* the 1930s story of Piri Thomas, a Puerto Rican boy

from Spanish Harlem.

Each of these migrant/immigrant groups have their own compelling stories, and rites of passage ones are abundant among them. Beginning with the trauma of uprooting to move to a new land, the young men and women in the narratives represented here encounter culture-confirming or life-changing acts and decisions. Each young man whose stories are represented here faces the time-honored and universal fistfight to earn entitlement to occupy his new space. In several narratives young men or women must make a crucial decision to deny their old cultures or embrace the new, sometimes even to betray their race or culture to fit in. In two stories, young men, facing challenges specific to their migration experience, make decisions they may not have otherwise—to steal or shoot—and then must face the internal or external consequences that will shape their adult selves.

Narratives for social change

When I say my students and their families could benefit from a little social change, I understate the issue. Like the migrants and immigrants we studied in this seminar, they are outsiders in their city because they are in the juvenile justice system, because they are recipients of public assistance, because they are minorities, because they are judged for their culture or sexual identity, because they have inadequate access to good public transportation and jobs, because they have been victims themselves. They can mix and match from the list. They must learn to speak up for themselves and their community and to listen to others when they speak up, as well. The inherent lesson that can't be ignored in this issue is the role these and other narratives have played in shaping public consciousness and eventually policy. In their exploration of narrative as a means of social change, Gergen and Gergen tell us something we already know: ". . . there is something particularly effective about listening to others' narratives that crosses boundaries of meaning, and brings people into a state of mutuality." They give several reasons. Universally, people appreciate story-telling as a mode of entertainment and teaching. We understand and expect the basic structure of beginning-middle-end. When the story-teller speaks from the role of witness, we tend to trust him or her and insert ourselves in the story. Once there, we internalize it more thoroughly. [24]

Jacob Riis and Charles Dickens drew attention to immigrants and the urban poor with their writing, both fiction and non-fiction. They drew tourists and their attention to the tenements. Riis is credited with influencing reform to make them more clean and livable. [25] Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* drew the public's attention and ire to the inhumane working conditions and unsanitary setting of the meatpacking industry in 1906 Chicago. The Meat Inspection Act and the Pure Food and Drug Act were results. [26] More close to my students are websites that share the stories of young people in whom they can see themselves and familiar social issues. We'll look at *Things I'll Never Say: Stories of Growing Up Undocumented in the United States,* an online interactive collection of stories by undocumented teens. Another is "On the Brink in Brownsville," a *New York Times Magazine* story about a teenager living today in Brownsville tenements in the Bronx. In addition to rites of passage stories, many of the selected texts for this unit are known for their lasting influence as agents of social change, especially *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* and *Black Boy*. The *Things I'll Never* Say website has the purpose of drawing unheard voices out into public conversation. In his Afterword to *Down these Mean Streets*, Thomas explains that he wants his stories to inspire peace and better lives for children, especially. "So let's make life fair," he says. "Let America set a beautiful new standard of caring, not only for our own children, but

for all the children of the world." [27]

The unit

Over a period of about fifteen days, my classes will explore migration and immigration narratives in their historical contexts, pursue the idea of narrative as an agent of social change, and seek and write about a significant rite of passage in their own lives. About two thirds of our days will be with text; the remaining third will be spent writing, revising, and editing their own. This will be the culminating project, but a variety of daily activities will help us get the most out of our reading and writing. The essential questions will be a regular part of our discussions and help us to follow thematic and historical threads among the readings.

Anticipatory lesson

Before we dive into the narratives or historical context, I will begin with an anticipatory lesson on story ownership. In an attempt to lead the students to the conclusion that they have a responsibility to tell their stories—and not just leave them up to others—we will watch two videos about Tulsa. Both were made by outsiders, one in the fifties, one this year. The United States Information Service made the 1950s video for international distribution during the early years of the Cold War. It features a white, middle class, upwardly mobile family who celebrate the freedoms and luxuries allowed by Tulsa and their country. The current one, *History of tha Streetz: Oklahoma T-town 2 the City,* features North Tulsa, where the majority of the population is African American and lives in poverty conditions. As in many cities, historical events like migrations and a race riots and a divisive highway contribute over time to the current conditions. Like the 1950s film, it was one of a series featuring similar communities across the country. It is a much grittier and more accurate story. Though made for different purposes and audiences, they both exist online for anyone's consumption. Which is more accurate in its representation of the community it highlights? In our seminar, participants often questioned, "Who's left out of the story? And where can we find theirs?" Along with viewing the two videos, we'll do an activity to analyze them for purpose, audience, and content. I want them to see the importance of telling their own stories.

The narratives—where theme and history meet

We'll spend the next two weeks studying the selection of narratives, working in the historical and geographical order they were presented above. The text selection includes excerpts from several full length texts—both fiction and non-fiction with an emphasis on primary resources from the periods of study. They will represent situations from the seminar's historical context and the present but are restricted to pieces that address the themes and/or illustrate how one's narratives can be agents of social change. The selection is a nod to Common Core Standards and the needed practice in making connections among and drawing conclusions from a variety of genres, especially non-fiction. I wanted all of the readings to do several other things, as well. First, they encourage students to find thematic, situational, and behavioral links among them. Second, they connect students to history. Third, they illustrate the importance of writing as agent of social change. Finally, these pieces meet four key criteria for selecting texts for at-risk or delinquent students, according to Diana Rogers-Adkinson and her colleagues. First, they should be culturally sensitive to and reflective of the students; second, the content should be meaningful to their environments and home lives; third, the content should be readily engaging; and fourth, texts should be inclusive and respectful, avoiding middle class success stories

and representing instead the "limits of resources of students and families within the curriculum, varying models of family systems." [28] Selections are intentionally shorter. Erratic attendance means that it needs to be easy for my students to pick up where we are when they return from absences.

Classroom selections

Following the sequence of the seminar, we'll begin in New York. In a lesson about memoir and the idea about writing as a method of inciting social change, we'll read chapters 29-31 of the slave narrative *Life of a Slave Girl Written by Herself*. The story of Harriet Jacobs's story is of passage north, and the sympathy we find with her is enhanced by the newspaper reward notice of 1852 for her capture. [29] Whose story do we trust? Where do our sympathies lie? Also from New York, Stephen Crane's 1893 *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* opens with a vicious fight scene involving all of the boys on the street. In the streets, unsupervised, two little boys are "fighting in the modes of four thousand years ago." [30] We will read chapters one and two. We may look at other scenes, as well. With Maggie and Jimmie's story, we see struggles and rituals that will persist through most of the other readings, and we'll trace those as we go.

The opening fight scene from *Maggie* makes an easy transition to Richard Wright's *Black Boy*. We'll look for the common denominators with our essential questions while we read five excerpts. Pages 10-18 in chapter 1 show us Richard's tricky relationship with his father and a scene where he fights to defend his right to the neighborhood. In chapter three, pages 98-101, Richard returns to live with his mother as she faces another bout of paralysis. In this scene he forges his ideas about pain and the meaning of life. In chapter 8, pages 174-178, he faces what should be a typical and healthy rite of passage, his graduation. It is marred by conflict and mistrust, another ritual gone awry. His migration to Chicago is a slow, halted one. In Memphis in chapter thirteen, pages 244-253, he unexpectedly discovers H.L. Mencken and literature. This is the rite of passage he has been waiting for. The last excerpt is from pages 298-299 in chapter sixteen. Wright gives in to the need to seek government assistance for food. "As I walked, I knew I had come to the end of something." We'll spend time discussing this book and *Maggie* as harbingers for social change and discuss the social issues in their lives they'd like to be able to change with their stories

Well-grounded now in the African American experience in the north during the Great Migration, we may also read the essay "Salvation" by Langston Hughes. Though not a migration narrative, it is a powerful story for our theme. Hughes is brought to a revival and made to endure the pressure of salvation until he gives in. This false rite of passage mars the rest of his spiritual life, he claims. The charismatic church service is one with which many of my students will be familiar. We will continue cataloging the varieties of rites of passage.

Piri Thomas 's *Down These Mean Streets* published in 1967 takes place mostly in 1930s Spanish Harlem. It is a time of economic downturn for the entire country. He is victim to the by now typical struggles of economy, race, and culture. He also faces a second-class citizenship conferred onto Puerto Ricans. Like Jimmie and Wright, he sees violence as the only way to establish himself as a survivor in his barrio. The quality of their lives and futures seemingly out of their control, Piri and his friends resort to the universal and time-honored practice of fighting and street violence in an effort to establish dominance in their community and to earn respect. Eventually, with an increasing drug habit and after the death of his mother, Piri shoots a police officer and must come to terms with all of his internal conflicts. We will read chapters four for the turf fight scene and chapters 24 and 25 for the shooting and incarceration pieces, both relevant to my students' lives. During these scenes we'll look at internal and internal conflicts of the protagonist and discuss how they might develop both in their own narratives.

Back in Chicago but with a Mexican immigrant family nearer our present time, we will read several chapters of *The House on Mango Street*, first published in 1984. Protagonist Esperanza experiences rites of passage first hand and as witness in her community. Her family faces challenges of culture and economy as have Wright and Thomas. In "The Family with Little Feet," Esperanza and two others tease adulthood when they receive some pairs of high heels to play with. They encounter men and experiences that rattle them, and decide to leave the shoes alone. We'll look at Cisneros' allusion to Cinderella and how that story is a rite of passage story, as well. "The First Job" has Esperanza in a similarly unpleasant situation. She learns several lessons from this important "first" in her life. In "Born Bad," Esperanza faces the death of an aunt and the complex emotions of gratitude and guilt that follow. She, like Wright, begins to discover the power of writing and language as a way to cope with life. Depending on the tenor of the class, I may or may not include "Red Clowns," a very short vignette in which Esperanza is probably raped at a carnival.

We'll follow these with narratives by undocumented teenagers whose stories cover their passage into the country and cultural assimilation. The two pieces from *Things I'll Never Say* are Catharine Eusebio's "Donut Holes" and Ingrid Hernandez's "Letter to Myself Before Leaving." In the first, Catharine is having an innocent evening with her girlfriends when they are approached by police. She is paralyzed with her knowledge and others' ignorance of illegal status. In the second, Ingrid very ritualistically says goodbye to her past and its place before she leaves for the United States.

Finally, we'll conclude the readings with a piece from a recent *New York Times Magazine*. In "On the Brink in Brownsville," the author spends time with an African American teenager as he navigates his neighborhood and its social struggles, complete with rites of passage, including fights, and conflicts straight from my students' lives. Shamir and his friends spend their days looking for something to punctuate their days, to move them forward, but usually settle on drinking, sex, or fights over territorial rivalries. He is exactly like Piri Thomas in his inability to "keep himself from testing danger in the projects." [31] But unlike earlier boys, who were fighting for turf or entitlement, Shamir's peers seem to be fighting over nothing, seemingly fulfilling the prophecy that young people without rituals will create their own. We'll have gone full circle, from New York tenements to New York tenements and will be able to revisit *Maggie* to seek what has changed over time and what has not, both in terms of rites of passage rituals for youth and tenement life for the unsettled.

Having discovered narratives from the Trail of Tears, I may add a selection at the end, on its own. They contain theme and content connections and are a rare primary source for this piece of local immigration history. These come from the WPA's Federal Writing Project in 1937. Two other works I read in preparation for the unit but chose not to include now are Anzia Yezierska's *Bread Givers* and Timothy Guilfoyle's *A Pickpocket's Tale*. The first is a novel about a Russian Jewish immigrant family in New York in the first few decades of the 20th century. In the second, Guilfoyle historically embellishes the real and colorful narrative of George Appo, abandoned street urchin turned adult criminal in the second half of the 19th century. Other possible novels for use in this unit include *A Good Scent from a Strange Mountain* by Robert Olen Butler; *Angela's Ashes* by Frank McCourt; *What is the What* by Dave Eggers; and *Rite of Passage*, which I somehow just discovered, by Richard Wright.

Writing

Over the course of their time at our school, each student will create a lengthy autobiography, or as much of one as their time with us allows. This is a standard project among Big Picture students. It is written over time and reflects language arts and life lessons. It is a deeply reflective and ever-evolving piece of written self-exploration. Creatively and well executed, it is meaningful to the students and a chance to reinforce myriad

language arts skills, from genre to paragraph structure. For purposes of practicality and opportunities for instruction, we will address it in chunks or chapters. The final written product for this unit will be a chapter for their autobiography. Its topic will be one of several rites of passage that they know has shaped who they are today.

Over the course of this unit early in the year and continuing thereafter, we will practice and employ all stages of the writing process, from brainstorming to final revisions and "publishing." My students might be challenged by the level of patience and trust this takes. The non-cognitive aspects may be as important as the cognitive ones. Finally, we'll target four or five key sentence structure and mechanical weaknesses, to be determined by the needs of the students in the classes. They will always work from a rubric. For students in their peer groups, they will always be simple and easy to fill out, with room for extra comments. They will meet at least three times in the process before a final edit.

In addition to the final project, they will do short narrative, reflective, and expository responses to some of the pieces we read to keep them writing and reviewing different modes.

Objectives

My objectives for this class are academic and a little social. The unit covers some basic language arts objectives, such as reading critically, making connections and inferences, and writing purposefully and with competence. In all of these areas my students tend to be grade levels behind. In this unit, more specifically, I want them to be making historical and personal connections to other time and place and to articulate those connections. I want them to be able to support their answers to our essential questions and to understand, seek, evaluate, and trace the use of a specific theme across a variety of readings. They should be able to understand the stages of a ritual of passage and to see them as an organizing structure for their own writing. In the same way, they should understand internal and external conflict and to be able to find both in their readings and to include both in their writings. Finally, I so want them to see that their voices and stories have merit and are worth being told well, either to their peers and teachers or to a greater world.

The trickier piece may the social aspect. I will be asking my students to do things they do not do well, for the most part. They will work collaboratively to evaluate and improve each other's writing. This is a powerful process when it works. We learn about our own writing by reading the work of others and by accepting their feedback. For peer writing groups to work, they must meet deadlines and have real buy in to the work. The challenge is increased by low literacy and writing skills, so their ability to be patient and respect each other's work is essential.

Activities

First Activity: Owning our stories

This first activity is a sort of anticipatory set. All of our students during their time with us are writing a lengthy

autobiography. I hope to be able to do this unit at the beginning of the year, in which case, this activity will set them off to think about the importance of telling their stories themselves. We'll look at two short videos. One is the 1950s *Tulsa, Oklahoma*, which was created by the United States Information Service. It was to be sent to other countries to sell an idealistic version of America, where citizens are mostly white, upper middle class, educated, employed, and overtly appreciative of the liberties afforded to them by their country. The other was created by a group who does similar videos around the country in other urban areas with high concentrations of African Americans—you get the idea from the title, *History of Tha Streetz, Oklahoma T-Town 2 the City*. They do advance research, interview citizens on the street, and include fairly representative visuals to convey what life is like in North Tulsa. This will be our introduction to the immigration/migration stories. The next two class meetings we will read the excerpt from *Life of a Slave Girl* and cover background historical content, then read the newspaper advertisement in which her master James Norcom offers a reward for her return. Jacobs and Norcom give very different pictures of the same woman and situation, though his is but brief.

The process

I'll show *History of Tha Streetz* first. My students are likely familiar with it, but may be surprised that I know it. Afterwards, with partners, they'll discuss and fill in a set of questions down one two-columned page. Each column—one for each video will contain the following questions:

1. To the best of your knowledge, who created and distributed this video?
2. Who is the intended audience, do you think?
3. What is the intended message?
4. What is the tone?
5. On a scale of one (least) to ten (most), what level of trust do you have for the authenticity or truthfulness of the message? WHY?
6. What other personal opinions or ideas do you have about the video?
7. Finally, what events in history did you learn about? How did those events influence the city as it is now?

Without much discussion, we'll follow with the *Tulsa, Oklahoma* video, and they'll fill out the other column. At this point we will discuss both, and I'll have them think about who is missing from both? And who is telling those stories? If they were making their own videos about their lives and community, what history or detail would they need to include to convey an accurate picture?

Second activity: Analysis of a scene

The first chapter of *Maggie: a Girl of the Streets*, is rich with local color and vernacular. It also contains in three pages quite a few words my students are not likely to know. In anticipation of the reading, they'll look up the following: urchins, infantile countenance, convulsed, barbaric trebles, ominous, sauntering, vainglorious, sullen, disentangle, and sublime. Each of these words adds detail the scene I don't want them to miss. With this excerpt we see a street scene, though while taking place 120 years ago, should be something more familiar to them than the previously read slave narrative. With this close reading, they will begin to catalog the struggles that they will encounter to some extent in all of the narratives. This particular activity, however, is to enhance comprehension of a challenging piece with strange vernacular and tricky vocabulary, as well as a sense of reader's gratification after doing so. The following class lesson will be about the rites of passage theme. We will revisit this scene from *Maggie* to look into our theme in reflection. This is an exercise we may repeat with other texts that are more challenging for them, or which have archaic or unfamiliar settings.

The process

After initially looking up and playing with the vocabulary list above, I will read these three pages out loud. I'm afraid that navigating the Irish brogue will halt my students' reading often enough to interfere with understanding. And sometimes they just like to be read to. I'm tempted to stop too frequently to explain, so I limit myself to breaks at half pages of more challenging texts to check in, but only for basic comprehension of plot. After we finish the chapter, I'll put them in groups of three to pick the text apart for more understanding. I'll give each group two sets of differently colored blank sticky notes. One color will be for details they gleam, the other will be for questions they still have. On the board, I'll write the words accent, location, wealth, characters, conflicts, time period. I'll ask them to spend about fifteen minutes looking for details they may have missed that might provide more meaning. The words on the board are to guide them.

When time is up, they'll place their notes in respective groups on the board or wall. We'll look at the details first to see what we can learn. We/I will answer any remaining questions from the other set. The last thing I'll want them to do is to reflect on the process we used in a short paragraph. This will be their ticket out of class and what I can begin the next class meeting with as a review.

Third activity: Internal and external conflict

Understanding conflict is a basic literature objective. Recognizing that internal and external conflict are likely both present gives readers one more framework with which to comprehend what they read. It also encourages connections with characters as they recognize a personal conflict or experience one vicariously for the first time. Students should also understand that the dynamic between the internal and external conflicts is what makes them want to read on (or not). Chapter four, entitled "Alien Turf," from *Down These Mean Streets* has Piri moving from Spanish Harlem to an Italian neighborhood, where he is an outsider; worse, he can't hide it at all. He's so dark-skinned that he is an immediate target. Internally, he misses his friends, he wants to look cool, he fears losing his eye, and he wants roller skates, in chronological order. Externally, he must defend himself against the neighborhood gang and later get to the hospital for medical attention. Resolution: he earns serious street cred and he gets his roller skates. When students keep in mind both sets of conflicts, Piri's story is much richer. The fact that he has to defend himself is made worse because he also has the void of leaving behind good friends and feeling like a part of the neighborhood. Keeping in mind that they'll soon be writing their own rite of passage narratives, we will come back to this lesson to remind them that their stories need to include both, as well, adding some dimension that their personal stories don't always have.

The process

I'll introduce the terms internal and external conflict and give examples in a brief teacher-led lesson. Some students will find this familiar; most will not, but it's easy stuff to understand, if not apply. We will read the chapter out loud. This is a good one for students to share in the reading. I'll provide them with a graphic organizer to help them document textual evidence for both types of conflict as they encounter it. We'll look it over before we read but leave it blank. After we finish, we'll look at the first two pages together, writing down sentences and phrases in either the Internal Conflict or External Conflict boxes. They will finish the rest on their own. We will follow this activity (which may take more than one period) with a discussion of our essential questions, listed above.

Activity four: Building a writers' community

My students are sensitive about their academic abilities, many of them not having been in school for some time. Even students with stronger skills, because they may not have been regularly present at school, don't know how to gauge what they know and tend to assume weakness rather than strength. The environment at

our school is welcoming and accommodating, and students feel safe. They tend befriend each other easily. This often breaks down in a more academic setting. I must recreate that trust in this context, as well. This lesson addresses some of the social skills necessary to make peer groups or writing groups work. It is also is a chance to brush up on their story-telling and revision skills.

The process

I'll begin by telling them that they're going to spend most of their class period with one other student and to be open to getting to know that student better, regardless of their current knowledge. I will also ask them to spend a few minutes thinking about a family member they love dearly, and then to think of a story regarding that person and himself/herself. My students struggle with this kind of request; I'll make suggestions if I need to—a trip, a joke, a conversation, a secret, for example. On the Promethean board I'll illuminate the first steps to the activity. First, check in with your partner. How are they doing? Be kind. Second, select one of you to go first. That person will tell their story that involves their loved relative. The other will take notes. Reverse roles and repeat. When you're finished, separate, and both of you will draft, in paragraph form this time, the story your partner told. Include details. Before they leave class, each will read the other's story about the relative and take a few minutes to document errors in the story or missing details they want to be included. They will conference, each sharing their thoughts about what he/she read. During the next class period they will review their feedback from the previous class. Then they will rewrite the story with adjustments. I want them in the end to share the partner's story with the class so that they feel real ownership of it. That partner will be a writing peer for the rest of the unit.

Common Core Standards

The Oklahoma legislature recently voted to abandon Common Core Standards, and no steps have been taken to replace them as of yet. Tulsa Public Schools will adopt the state mandated ones when we have them. In the meantime, teachers in my district and most others in the country are familiar with them, so I include them here.

Common Core English Language Arts Standards for Grades 9-10

Reading Standards for Informational Text

Key Ideas and Details: standard 1

Craft and Structure: standard 5

Range of Reading Level and Text Complexity: standard 10

Reading Standards for Literature

Key Ideas and Details: standards 1,3

Craft and Structure: standard 6

Range of Reading Level and Text Complexity: standard 10

Writing Standards

Text Types and Purposes: standard 3

Production and Distribution of Writing: standards 4,5

Range of Writing: standard 10

Language Standards

Conventions of Standard English: standards 1,2

Knowledge of Language: standard 3

Vocabulary Acquisition and Use: standards 4,5

Notes

1. Peiss, Kathy Lee. "Dance Madness." *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986, 91.

2. Ibid., 99.

3. Larson, Scott, and Lloyd Martin. "Risk Taking and Rites of Passage." *Reclaiming Children & Youth* 20, no. 4 (2012): 37-40. Websco Host (accessed July 9, 2014), 38.

4. Delaney, CH. ""Rites of Passage in Adolescence"." *Adolescence* 30, no. 120 (1995): 891. Ebsco Host (accessed July 10, 2014).

5. Larson and Martin, 38.

6. Ibid., 37.

7. Delaney, 891.

8. Ibid., 891.

9. Harvey, A. R., and J. B. Rauch. "A Comprehensive Afrocentric Rites of Passage Program for Black Male Adolescents." *Health & Social Work* 22, no. 1 (1997): 30-37. http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/hsw/22.1.30 (accessed July 12, 2014), 34.

10. Delaney, 891.

11. Harris, Leslie M. . "8-9." In *In the Shadow of Slavery: African Americans in New York City, 1626-1863*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003. 247-287, 280.

12. Riis, Jacob. *How the Other Half Lives: A Jacob Riis Classic*. U.S.A:

ReadaClassic.com, 2010, 16.

13. Ibid., 16.

14. Grossman, James R.. *Land of hope: Chicago, Black southerners, and the Great Migration*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989, 79.

15. Ibid., 75, 81.

16. Ibid., 96.

17. Ibid., 127.

18. Ibid., 128.

19. Ibid., 138-9, 45.

20. Ibid., 184.

21. Sanchez, George J.. *Becoming Mexican American: ethnicity, culture, and identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993, 40-41.

22. Ibid. 90-100.

23. Ibid. 106.

24. Gergen, Mary M., and Kenneth J. Gergen. "Narratives in action." *Narrative Inquiry* 16, no. 1 (2006): 112-121. http://web.a.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=0d248649-e364

4030-bc89-791a93b5e1dd%40sessionmgr4004&vid=11&hid=4206 (accessed

July 15, 2014). 117-18.

25. Allen, Frederick Lewis. "The Other Side of the Tracks." In *The Big change*. New York: Bantam Books, 1961, 54.

26. Morris, Edmund. "The Treason of the Senate." In *Theodore Rex*. New York: Random House, 2001, 437-8.

27. Piri, 336.

28. Rogers-Adkinson, Diana, Kristine Molloy, Shannon Stuart, Lynn Fletchr, and

Claudia Rinaldi. "Reading and Written Language Competency of Incarcerated

Youth." *Reading and Writing Quarterly* 24, no. 2 (2008): 197-218.

29. Edenton, N.C. . "Harriet Jacobs Documents: Advertisement for the capture of Harriet Jacobs." Harriet Jacobs Documents: Advertisement for the capture of Harriet Jacobs. http://www.yale.edu/glc/harriet/15.htm (accessed July 14, 2014).

30. Crane, Stephen . "Chapter 1." In *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets and Other Short Ficton*. New York: Bantam Dell, 200, 5.

31. Secret, Mosi. "On the Brink in Brownsville." *New York Times*, May 4, 2014, sec. Magazine. http://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/04/magazine/on-the-brink-in-brownsville.html (accessed May 14, 2014).

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Alford, Keith A.. "Cultural themes in rites of passage: Voices of young African American males." *Journal of African American Studies* 7, no. 1 (2003): 3-26. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s12111-003-1000-y (accessed July 10, 2014).

Alford looks at the problems among young African American males with low self-esteem and a lack of ethnic identity and the healthy rituals to buoy them. He Looks at unhealthy replacements and a specific prescription to address the problem.

Allen, Frederick Lewis. "The Other Side of the Tracks." In *The Big change*. New York: Bantam Books, 1961. 51-55.

A 1950s history of the changes in America culture and economy at the turn of the 20th century. It filled in a few historical gaps for me.

New York Daily Times (1851-1857), "Article 15 (no title)," November 26, 1852. http://search.proquest.com/docview/95806892?accountid=15172 (accessed July 11, 2014).

Primary source to go along with the wanted add looking for Harriet Jacobs, runaway slave. Who can tell our stories?

Cisneros, Sandra. *The House on Mango Street*. New York: Vintage Books, 1991.

Crane, Stephen . "Chapter 1." In *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets and Other Short Ficton*. New York: Bantam Dell, 2006. 3-6.

Delaney, CH. ""Rites of Passage in Adolescence"." *Adolescence* 30, no. 120 (1995): 891.

Ebsco Host (accessed July 10, 2014).

This article looks into rites of passage in several cultures, then more appositely to self and peer initiations as well as African American and Anglo American rites of passage programs. This piece introduced me to literature as initiation.

Edenton, N.C. . "Harriet Jacobs Documents: Advertisement for the capture of Harriet Jacobs." Harriet Jacobs Documents: Advertisement for the capture of Harriet Jacobs. http://www.yale.edu/glc/harriet/15.htm (accessed July 14, 2014).

Gergen, Mary M., and Kenneth J. Gergen. "Narratives in action." *Narrative Inquiry* 16, no. 1 (2006): 112-121. http://web.a.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=0d248649-e364

4030-bc89-791a93b5e1dd%40sessionmgr4004&vid=11&hid=4206 (accessed

July 15, 2014).

This explores the efficacy of narrative in conflict resolution, psychotherapy, and organizational change. Of greater importance to me is their exploration why narrative so effective as an agent of change. I include their clear explanation.

Gifoyle, Timothy. *A Pickpocket's Tale: the Underworld of Nineteenth Century New York*. Nook edition. Reprint, New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2007.

I read this quickly before the last draft of my unit. George Appo's life is rich with additional stories that might be of use in the unit. An interesting accompaniment to Jacob Riis's How the Other Half Lives.

Grossman, James R.. *Land of hope: Chicago, Black southerners, and the Great Migration*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989.

Harris, Leslie M. . "8-9." In *In the Shadow of Slavery: African Americans in New York City, 1626-1863*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003. 247-287.

These two chapters look at the issue of amalgamation and the consequences of being black in New York, mid 19th century.

Harvey, A. R., and J. B. Rauch. "A Comprehensive Afrocentric Rites of Passage Program for Black Male Adolescents." *Health & Social Work* 22, no. 1 (1997): 30-37. http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/hsw/22.1.30 (accessed July 12, 2014).

This article was one of many that reported on the trend of Afrocentric rite of passage programs, including the MAAT program, and how they work.

Hernandez, Ingrid , Fermin Mendoza, Mario Lio, Jirayut Latthi, and Catharine Eusebio. "Things I'll Never Say: Stories of Growing Up Undocumented in the United States." *Harvard Educational Review* 81, no. 3 (2011): 500-507. Ebsco Host (accessed July 9, 2014).

A collection of autobiographical narratives written by undocumented youth in America. Their stories, collected by an advocacy group, trace the collective challenges from their physical, emotional, and cultural journeys an provides a public voice for the silent. I use this print edition for classroom use for ease in the classroom, but the website www.thingsillnevers.com is worth exploring.

History of Tha Streetz, Oklahoma T-Town 2 the City. Film. Directed by unknown unknown. unknown: www.therealstreetz.com and M.E.R.K. Entertainmet, 2014.

I found this on Youtube as a counter to the 1950 documentary about Tulsa. This time the subject is economically and gang-challenged North Tulsa. It encourages the questioning about who tells our stories and their authenticity.

Jacobs, Harriet. "29, 30." In *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987. 148-158.

Larson, Scott, and Lloyd Martin. "Risk Taking and Rites of Passage." *Reclaiming Children & Youth* 20, no. 4 (2012): 37-40. Websco Host (accessed July 9, 2014).

This brief article looks at how today's youth often lack a healthy coming of age ritual, present in so many other cultures. In its void they may replace it with risk-taking behaviors. I was interested in this part; less so for my unit with their analysis of how to correct the problem and how it occurred.

Merten, Don E.. "Transitions and "Trouble"." *Anthropology Education Quarterly* 36, no. 2 (2005): 132-148. http://dx.doi.org/10.1525/aeq.2005.36.2.132 (accessed July 10, 2014).

This is interesting as it looks at the perils of an adolescence that is void of meaningful rites of passage, specifically among supposedly well-adjusted teenaged girls in a financially secure suburban community.

Montiero, Lorri . "Family Stories from the Trail of Tears." American Native Press Archives and Sequoya Research Center. http://www.ualr.edu/sequoyah/uploads/2011/11/Family%20Stories%20from%20the%20Trail%20of%20Tears.htm (accessed July 12, 2014).

To add a local dimension, I researched African American migrants from the

south to what was then Indian Territory. These very interesting personal

narratives, taken down as part of the WPA Federal Writers Project. I intend to use the stories of Mary Hill and Josephine Usray Lattimer.

Morris, Edmund. "The Treason of the Senate." In *Theodore Rex*. New York: Random House, 2001. 437-8.

This chapter includes explanation of how the timing of The Jungle helped to pass the Pure Food Bill.

Peiss, Kathy Lee. "Dance Madness." *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986. 88-114.

Pitti, Stephen. "Policies affecting Mexican immigration." Class lecture, Immigration and Migration and the Making of a Modern American City from Yale National Institute for Teachers, New Haven, CT, July 15, 2014.

Riis, Jacob. *How the Other Half Lives: A Jacob Riis Classic*. U.S.A: ReadaClassic.com, 2010.

Rogers-Adkinson, Diana, Kristine Molloy, Shannon Stuart, Lynn Fletchr, and Claudia Rinaldi. "Reading and Written Language Competency of Incarcerated Youth." *Reading and Writing Quarterly* 24, no. 2 (2008): 197-218. http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=a61990b2-f3db-4e22-8dcd-b345beb74c80%40sessionmgr12&vid=8&hid=7 (accessed July 11, 2012).

Based on their sound research on literacy as an antidote to incarceration, I have depended on their criteria for my classroom text selection for the last two years.

Sanchez, George J.. *Becoming Mexican American: ethnicity, culture, and identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Secret, Mosi. "On the Brink in Brownsville." *New York Times*, May 4, 2014, sec. Magazine.

Thomas, Piri. *Down These Mean Streets*. 1967. Reprint, New York: Random House, 1997.

Tulsa, Oklahoma. Film. Directed by Victor D. Solow. unknown: United States Information Service, Cities in America Series, 2011.

This is one of two films I'll use to set the frame for discussion to introduce the unit: Who's story is this? Who is missing and what does that mean? It presents an all-white city whose story is without social conflict.

Wright, Richard. In *Black boy: (American hunger): a Record of Childhood and Youth*. New York: Perennial Classics, 1998. 3-35.

Yezierska, Anzia. *Bread Givers*. New York: Persea Books , 2003.

This novel, first published in 1925, is the story of an impoverished Russian Jewish immigrant girl and her family. It has vivid illustrations of life on Hester Street, earl 20th century. A good read for variety of ages.

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