

Unit 2/ Slavery and Dispossession/The Promised Land/Getting to America

The Interesting Life Narrative of Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa the African

Other sources:

<http://biography.yourdictionary.com/olaudah-equiano> (Olaudah Equiano biography)

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part1/1p277.html> (The Middle Passage)

<http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/timelines/timelinetopics.cfm?topicid=1> (slavery)

<http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/topic.cfm?topicID=20> (slavery)

- Please, do some research on the origins and development of slavery in the United States. In that context, why do you think Olaudah Equiano's text is relevant? How useful do you think autobiographies are to history?
- What words would you use to describe Equiano's text? Search for words which are directly related to slavery. Please, write down some key words that summarize the text.
- Discuss on Equiano's portrayal of slavery. What types of slavery is he portraying? Did the Reading of the text changed your vision of slavery as a whole? And of Africa?
- How does Equiano describe his life in Africa? What did you learn about the Middle Passage in particular and slavery and the slave trade in general from the text?
- How important is the text from a historical point of view? How instructive do you find it? Why?

Harriet Jacobs, "Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl"

Other sources:

<http://docsouth.unc.edu/fpn/jacobs/jacobs.html> (text)

<http://public.wsu.edu/~campbelld/amlit/jacobs.htm> (biography)

- Using the same sources that you used to read and discuss Equiano's text, please, relate them. What are the main differences between the two texts? Do they approach slavery from the same perspective? Search for words which relate to slavery directly in the text.
- What words would you use to describe Jacobs' text as opposed to Equiano's?
- How does she describe her life? How does she regard herself, is she a slave? How does she portray slavery in general?
- How important is the text from a historical point of view? Describe the relevance of the preface and the introduction of the text from a historicopolitical point of view.

Lucy Tapahonso, "In 1864"

Other sources:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luci_Tapahonso (biography)

<http://www.history.com/topics/trail-of-tears> (The Trails of Tears)

- What is the general tone of the poem?
- How many stories can you find in the poem?
- How would you define the structure of the poem? Why do you think Tapahonso chose such structure?
- What features of native oral tradition can you find in the poem?
- Having read about the Trail of Tears, discuss the relevance of the poem in the denunciation of the removal of Indians. How effective do you think it is? Why?

Angel Island Poetry/ Japanese Internment Camps poetry

Other sources:

<http://www.poeticwaves.net/> (on Angel Island)

<http://japaneseinternmentmemories.wordpress.com/> (on the Japanese Camps)

- How relevant is the existence of this body of poetry from a historical point of view?
- What can you learn from the poems? How would you describe them?
- Can you find any connection between the two bodies of poems?

Anzaldúa, Gloria, *Borderlands/La Frontera. The New Mestiza*

Other sources:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gloria_E._Anzald%C3%BAa (biography)

<http://smithsonianeducation.org/migrations/bord/intro.html> (US-Mexico border)

- Please, relate the title of the text with the different extracts you just read.
- What kind of *frontera* is Anzaldúa describing? What are its implications?
- How relevant is gender, linguistic identity and space for the construction of an identity in her view?
- Describe her writing style, choice of languages, etc. Discuss its effects.

Tan, Amy, *The Joy Luck Club*

Other sources:

See Amy Tan's Official Webpage

- How can you describe the structure of the chapter?
- What are the main issues it deals with?
- How relevant are stories in the narration? Why?
- Describe the generational gap that is portrayed in the text.
- How is the process of assimilation of the daughters explained?