



Historical Representations of American Democracy through Literature and Film

Curriculum Unit 08.04.06
by Shannon Ortiz

Unit Overview

This unit will focus on understanding various representations of democracy using different genres and authors. These will include excerpts from Thomas Paine's *The Rights of Man*, excerpts from Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*, John Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath*, Langston Hughes' "Let America be America Again", and John Ford's film "Grapes of Wrath". Students will use this range of texts to analyze and synthesize the original idea of American democracy and how it has changed over the course of American history.

In order to begin analyzing and interpreting democracy, students will identify what democracy is. As students begin to realize that the idea of democracy is more complicated than a mere definition, students will read different interpretations of what American democracy is and where and why it originated.

Then students will begin to evaluate how these original ideals of what democracy was changed over the course of American history. They will be expected to analyze the process of the change and its effects on the American people. I will ask students to include past and current events along with any experiences of their own. The main text of the unit will be *The Grapes of Wrath*. Students will analyze, evaluate and discuss the failures of democracy throughout the novel.

Student Body

This unit will be taught to juniors in Honors 11English and Advanced Placement English Language and Composition. Cooperative Arts and Humanities High School is a college preparatory magnet school. Before our students are allowed to enroll in an Honors course, our principal has several meetings with students and their parents to emphasize the commitment and discipline needed to take these courses. In order to enroll in an Honors course, students must have a B- average or higher previously in that academic field. Consequently, my unit will be taught to highly motivated students, who work well independently and cooperatively. Because of this, students will do most of the reading at home and are expected to come to class prepared to have

scholarly discussions about the reading. Students are encouraged to think outside the normal parameters when learning in order to become independent thinkers and learners. Currently, the school body consists of 450 students with a ratio of 7 to 1 girls to boys. Cooperative Arts and Humanities High School has one of the most diverse demographics in New Haven's district. Approximately 30 percent White students, 20 percent Hispanic, 45 percent African American, and 5 percent of students from other ethnicities. Classroom sizes are approximately 22 students.

Coop school is an arts magnet school and all students study traditional academics along with either theater, dance, creative writing, visual arts, strings or choir. Students choose one of these art disciplines and continue studying and practicing it for their entire high school career. Students are encouraged to work across academic and artistic lines and must complete an interdisciplinary project during their senior year in order to graduate. Because of this, students are expected to evaluate both written and visual texts in order to experience all types of literature. This includes introducing students to the social and historical climate during the time the literature was written in. Additionally, to promote artistic expression, students will create an artistic piece created based on Gardner's Multiple Intelligences for this unit. This will allow students to incorporate literature with their art discipline.

Rationale

During junior year in New Haven Public Schools, students are expected to focus on American Literature. This unit will allow me to adhere to the standards set forth by the curriculum.

Students often believe they know what democracy is, but are unclear on the various ways it can be represented. Often times they believe that democracy comes in the form of an election or president. With this unit, I want students to explore a number of ways of understanding democracy and how our society represents it through written and non-written texts. Here they will see democracy in the form of political theory as well as fiction, poetry, and film. Students will be able to identify what democracy meant when it was first introduced to American politics. Students will also look at essays and interpret authors purpose and rhetoric strategies used to present that purpose. Moreover, students will view an artist's cinematic interpretation of a novel and examine the differences and similarities. Students will also have an opportunity to examine how that initial ideology has changed over the course of our nation's history. They will then also analyze a poem that hopes the original ideals about American democracy can be realized.

Additionally, there is a school wide initiative to increase our scores on the Reading for Information section of the CAPT exam. The Reading for Information requires students to read non-fiction passages and answer multiple choice questions about the meaning and author's purpose of the passage. Our students often have difficulty interpreting non-fiction text. Although the CAPT is taken during student's sophomore year, this unit will allow students to continue practice interpreting and analyzing non-fiction texts and how it can connect to fiction.

I chose as my main text, *The Grapes of Wrath* specifically for a number of reasons. Because the New Haven district fosters primarily minority students, they are often over exposed to minority literature paying little attention to classics written about white society. When asked to discuss failures within current and past democracy, many students will discuss slavery, the civil rights movement or Hurricane Katrina. As a former

student of the New Haven district, I was never exposed to literature that wasn't directly related to world that I lived in. Not being exposed to "classical white male" literature will leave students, as it left me, at a disadvantage when they go to college. Many minority students do not have any prior knowledge of a group of white people that have suffered social injustices to the extent of tenant farmers and others who attempted to move West during the Great Depression. I believe that *The Grapes of Wrath* is a book that will reveal to them a harsh reality about democracy that they have might not have been exposed to. This will allow students to understand that social injustices are not solely an experience based on color.

Teaching Strategies

Throughout the unit I will implement different teaching strategies to ensure success is achieved for all students. This includes teacher lectures, student centered instruction, independent learning, cooperative learning, and modeling instruction. I will modify the instructional strategy based on the learning outcome expected by the end of the lesson. I will also differentiate my lessons as needed to ensure that all students comprehend the material on their level.

Standards

The following Connecticut Content Standards for Language Arts will be adhered throughout the unit.

Standard One:

- A. Students use appropriate strategies before, during and, after reading in order to construct meaning.
- B. Students interpret, analyze and evaluate text in order to extend understanding and appreciation.
- D. Students communicate with others to create interpretations of written, oral, and visual texts.

Standard Two:

- A. Students recognize how literary devices and conventions engage the reader.
- B. Students explore multiple responses to literature.
- D. Students recognize that readers and authors are influenced by individual, social, cultural and historical contexts.

Standard Three:

- A. Students use descriptive, narrative, expository, persuasive and poetic modes.
- B. Students prepare, publish, and/or present work appropriate to audience, purpose and task.

Standard Four:

- A. Students use knowledge of their language and culture to improve competency in English.
- B. Students speak and write using standard language structures and diction appropriate to audience and task.

Objectives

Throughout different parts of the unit I want students to be able to master the following objectives based on Bloom's Taxonomy.

Students will be able to:

1. Define and understand democracy.
2. Read and analyze various written and non written texts.
3. Compare and contrast natural rights vs. civil rights.
4. Identify earmarks of initial democracy in America.
5. Close read passage to interpret author's message.
6. Draw conclusions from various written texts.
7. Discuss readings in Socratic Seminar style setting.
8. Examine changes that occur in American democracy during the Great Depression.
9. Write an analytical essay on *The Grapes of Wrath*.
10. Judge possible direction of American democracy based on current democratic climate.
11. Create an artistic representation of democracy based on art their discipline.

Assessments

In order to ensure that students have mastered the objectives, I will use the following assessments throughout the unit.

Journal Writing

Students are expected to write in journals consistently throughout the year. These writings usually take place during class where students answer daily essential questions, writing prompts, and note taking. Students will also be expected to keep any significant passages discussed in class in their journals, annotate them and write a commentary on what the message conveyed. Students get credit for any informal writing they do in their journal. Journals are checked once a week. In order for the grading to not become overwhelming, I will ask students to place a sticky note at two journal entries they want me to grade.

Responses

Students will be responsible for handing in written responses based on what they have read throughout the course of the unit. In the responses, students should focus on literary and rhetorical devices used to convey author's message. This includes but is not limited to theme, motif, symbols, character, and setting. This will allow students to come up with ideas for their paper they will write at the end of the unit. It will also allow me to determine who is keeping up with the reading or not. Before class students will hand in responses and retrieve corrected ones. Students will write 350 word response three times a week.

Critical Analysis Paper

Student will write a five page critical analysis on *The Grapes of Wrath* choosing one of the major themes that deal with representations of democracy.

Artistic Project

This project will be based on Gardner's Multiple Intelligence. Because our school is an arts school, students are encouraged to engage in interdisciplinary projects. Students will be expected to create their artistic project based on their art discipline. I want the students' project to represent a moment in American democracy. Students will be expected to present their projects to the class at the end of the unit.

Excerpts from *Rights of Man*

The purpose of using excerpts from Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man* is to establish an understanding for the original ideology of early American politics. Here the students will examine what Paine considers the past politics of the "old world," where power is held by a few. I want students to recognize how European governments influenced America's necessity to create a new, better government.

Students will also be expected identify and compare man's natural rights vs. civil rights. Natural rights are rights men are born with. Civil rights grow out of natural rights as men become part of a given society. ¹ It is important for students to establish how the individual is subject to natural rights and how society creates a necessity for civil rights. This will be pertinent when students begin reading *The Grapes of Wrath*. In *The Grapes of Wrath*, the main focus of the novel is the Joad family. The Joads are evicted from their land and are forced to look for work. They decide as a family that they will travel to West to find work farming. ² This will be valuable when students begin to evaluate the social injustices that occur to the Joads and other tenant farmers in *The Grapes of Wrath*. Additionally, students will revisit Paine's *Rights of Man* when they compare his beliefs with those in Chapter 14 of *The Grapes of Wrath*, where Paine is actually mentioned.

Excerpts from *Democracy in America*

The purpose of using excerpts from Alexis de Tocqueville is to provide students insight from a perspective void of American idealism. Tocqueville discusses his observations of America from an objective perspective and is impressed by what he sees.

I will have students close read a section of *Democracy in America*, entitled "On the Idea of Rights in the United States". Now that students have become familiar with natural vs. civil rights from Paine's work, they will be able to evaluate America's potential to eliminate abuses of these rights. I will then ask students to discuss what Tocqueville is implying when he states, "There is nothing more prolific in marvels than the art of being free; but there is nothing harder than the apprenticeship of freedom". ³ Throughout the unit I will encourage students to consider these views in terms of their own experiences and understandings of current democracy. In doing so, students can see how understanding past political theory and be relevant in today's society. I encourage students to continue thinking representations of democracy outside of just their own community in order to broaden their understanding of others.

The Grapes of Wrath

In using John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* students can examine a fictional story of events that were a reality to many migrant families during the Dust Bowl migration. Before reading students will be expected to do independent research in order to become familiar with Dust Bowl migration. This will include what was the Dust Bowl migration, whom did it affect and how were they affected. Students will be expected to come to class prepared to share their findings with the class and take notes on any information that they didn't find in their own research that was shared in class. This gives students some background knowledge before they begin reading the novel.

As a pre-reading exercise I will show students photos from Walker Evans and James Agee's text, *Let us now praise famous men*. Students will be asked to choose two to three photos which they found the most compelling and write an initial reaction to them. Then in pairs I will have students share their choices and

reactions. For homework, I want students to find photos on the internet of the Dust Bowl migration. They will share their photos in class and explain their choices. I want students to be able to make a visual connection to actual tenant farmers and the poverty they faced before they begin reading. This will allow students to have a visual for the characters and setting in *The Grapes of Wrath* .

As students are reading, they are to consider and eventually answer the following essential questions when analyzing the text:

- How was democracy represented during the Dust Bowl migration?
- How does the role of the majority impact the ability to be an individual?
- How has America changed over the course of its short history?

In answering the first essential question, students will consider the way the tenant farmers were treated by the land owners. Students will be able to use different instances when the families were manipulated into harsh labor for low wages and were mistreated by a group of people not much different from themselves. I will model to students what this looks like in chapter 5. In this chapter, land owners come to the tenants to inform them that they are going to be replaced by tractors. There is little sympathy on the part of the land owner for the tenant. The land owners blame the banks and the helpless tenants are told they are to leave the land they have lived on for generations. I will ask students to point out other examples of abuses and injustices and how they contradict early democratic ideology America in Paine and Tocqueville's writings.

In answering the second essential question, students need to analyze the differences between natural rights vs. civil rights as well as the importance of the family structure in the novel. Students have become familiar with Thomas Paine's *The Rights of Man* , where natural rights vs. civil rights are examined. Students will be expected to re-examine Paine as they read *The Grapes of Wrath* in order to make a connection between both men's positions on democracy . Additionally, as the characters begin migrating, the family begins to fall apart. Some members of the Joad family decide to leave, even though it is considered a disregard for the family structure. This includes Tom Joad, who decides to leave the family to organize tenant farmers against land owner's injustices.

As students read the text, I will give them specific passages that they will be expected to close read and annotate in order to reveal Steinbeck's ideologies about American democracy. After students have annotated the passage, they will be expected to make an inference on what the passage means and write commentary on why the passage is significant to the overall meaning of the text. These include, but are not limited to, passages found in Chapters 14, 15, and 17.

The Grapes of Wrath (film version) directed by John Ford

After students have read the novel, they will watch John Ford's cinematic version of Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* . As students watch, they are to pay special attention to the changes made in film. This includes the ending, which is completely different from Steinbeck's ending in the novel. I will ask students: what was gained from the changes, what was lost? Students will have to compare the contrast the characters, setting

and themes of the film with that of the novel. Students will hand in a written response of the film. The following day there will be a Socratic Seminar, where students discuss the film amongst each other. Students will be graded on participation in the conversation.

“Let America be America Again” by Langston Hughes

The purpose of using this poem at the end of the unit is to allow students to evaluate the course American democracy may or may not take in the future. In this poem Hughes shows the different types of Americans, not just blacks, who have suffered. This poem will reinforce the idea that minorities are not the only victims of injustices and adversities in America. First, I will ask students to examine the title. I will ask students to pay attention to the “Again” in the title. Before they actual read the poem they should be able to infer that Hughes believes that present America differs from past America. Then I want students to consider Langston Hughes’ purpose of the list of various types of Americans. I will ask students if the people on the list have more similarities or differences. I want students to be able evaluate the kinds of people affected by America’s change and how many different groups there are. In their journals, students will write a response on what their ideal America would be.

Sample Lesson Plans

The following are sample lesson plans I will use to implement the unit.

Lesson 1: excerpts from *Democracy in America* by Tocqueville.

At the end of the lesson student will be able to:

- Interpret and analyze how America’s democratic system is viewed by a non-American.
- Develop an interpretation regarding the assumptions that Tocqueville makes about American society.

I want to use Tocqueville’s *Democracy in America* to show how American democracy and sentiment in viewed as an ideal system by non- Americans. Students will read the text and point out the assumptions that Tocqueville makes about American democracy. I want students to interpret these assumptions that the text makes and how this influences a reader’s perception of the ideal democratic society. By using this piece, students will be able to analyze how the initial interpretations of American government were considered a good model to use when creating equality for all.

I will start the lesson by writing on the board the opening sentence to Tocqueville’s piece, “Among the new

objects that attracted my attention during my stay in the United States, none struck my eye more vividly than the equality of conditions.”⁵ I will ask them to write down an initial reaction to this sentence. I also want the students to choose the most significant word in the sentence and tell why they chose that word. They will have about five minutes for this writing activity. I will ask students to share their reactions and their reasoning behind their significant word choice. I will ask the students to make predictions in their journals on who wrote this line and when. Once students are done I will share with them the author and time period when it was written. I will ask students whether they think that this belief in equality is still evident today?

I will then pass out previously selected sections of the text and begin the reading. Students are expected to point out the key characteristics Tocqueville identifies that create the American ideal sentiment for his readers. These include the importance of township, sovereignty of the people, and the importance of government on the local level. It is important that students interpret how Tocqueville’s observations would lead his readers to evaluate American democracy. Students should be able to identify how Tocqueville believes that true American democracy can be seen clearly when viewed and practiced on the local level. As a homework assignment, I will ask students to evaluate the importance of local level politics in their own community. This will allow students to see how a text written in the 19th century can be relevant in their own lives.

After students have identified, interpreted and analyzed Tocqueville’s purpose for creating this text, students will be able to do the same with Steinbeck. I want students to later connect Tocqueville’s ideals to that of Steinbeck’s in *The Grapes of Wrath*. In doing so, students will see why the landowners fear organized workers rallying for their rights. Later in the unit I will ask, was Tocqueville’s assumption about the importance of local rights correct? How do we see this in *The Grapes of Wrath*? As they read, they will look at how Steinbeck affirms or adjusts the sentiments that Tocqueville has developed. Students will be able to clarify how the assumptions are realized through an American author commenting on American democracy versus a French writer commenting on American democracy.

Lesson 2: from *The Grapes of Wrath* chapter 14

At the end of the lesson students will be able to:

- Make a connection between Thomas Paine’s *Rights of Man* to chapter 14 of *The Grapes of Wrath*.
- Identify the connections in Chapter 14 and how it reveals both authors’ perception of American democracy.

In chapter 14, the narrator describes the fear that the great owners felt as a result of their abuse and mistreatment of farm workers. The chapter discusses how Man’s need to satisfy a multitude of hungers could eventually lead to him joining forces with others like him. There is a clear distinction in this chapter of the “haves” and the “have nots”. This chapter also includes the names of different political figures and comments if owners could, “separate causes from results, if you could know the Paine, Marx, Jefferson, Lenin, were results, not causes, you might survive.”⁶ This chapter is an opportunity to revisit Thomas Paine’s *The Rights of Man* and analyze why Steinbeck includes him in this chapter.

Students will have already read Thomas Paine's work as a pre-reading activity to the novel. In reading Paine's *The Rights of Man*, students have identified and compared natural rights vs. civil rights. Students have considered why every man, including the common man, must have access to those rights. They have also analyzed Paine's perception of European governments and optimism that American will create a government that will represent the people and protect their natural and civil rights. ⁷

Steinbeck uses Paine in the chapter to help the reader bridge this connection. I want students to show how Paine and Steinbeck both look at the democratic perspective both from the "new American view" of democracy and its potentials as well as the actual people that are affected by the injustice that democracy can create, respectively. In connecting both pieces, students will be able to create a clear argument as to why Steinbeck uses Paine as a point of reference, and how he extends this view throughout *The Grapes of Wrath*.

First, I will provide the students with the following passage from *The Rights of Man* in order to make the connection between both authors:

"If those to whom power is delegated do well, they will be respected; if not, they will be despised; and with regard to those to whom no power is delegated, but who assume it, the rational world can know nothing of them." ⁸

In this passage I want students to consider Paine's interpretation of delegated power in regards to the relationship between land owner and migrant farmer in *The Grapes of Wrath*. Students will analyze what happens to those delegated power when they realize they are despised. I will ask how does this type of relations determine how those in power treat those without power?

"Man did not enter into society to become *worse* than he was before, not to have fewer rights than he had before, but to have those rights better secured" ⁹

In this passage, I want students to focus on the function of the camps and the farmers' attempts to organize themselves in committees and unions. Students should consider the pros to working in groups to avoid the abuses of those in power. I will ask students, what is the reaction by those in power?

"Natural rights are those which appertain to man in right of his existence. Of this kind are all the intellectual rights, or rights of the mind, and also all those rights of acting as in individual for his own comfort and happiness, which are not injurious to the natural rights of others. Civil rights are those which appertain to man in right of his being a member of society. Every civil right has for its foundation some

natural right pre-existing in the individual, but to the enjoyment of which his individual power is not, in all cases, sufficiently competent. Of this kind are all those which relate to security and protection.”¹⁰

After giving students these passages, I will ask them to consider Paine’s beliefs about man’s rights, which were written over a century before *The Grapes of Wrath* was written. I want students to be aware of the similarities in man’s need for the most essential rights. I will ask students: do these rights change over time? In both pieces men will create societies and organize in order to protect their natural rights. I want students to connect the need for civil rights to the tenant farmers’ intentions to organize and establish camps.

Lesson 3: from *The Grapes of Wrath*. Interpreting chapter 15

At the end of the lesson students will be able to:

- Define purpose of chapter 15
- Identify how this chapter conveys Steinbeck’s overall meaning of the text.
- Compare and contrast the novel’s version of the chapter with the film’s version.

In chapter 15, the narrator shows an interaction that occurs at a diner. Here the narrator begins by establishing that diners like this could be found anywhere on Route 66. Then he describes the different kinds of people that work and frequent the diner; including the waitress, truckers, and people who seemingly are well off. An important interaction happens where a poor family comes in looking to buy bread. Mae, the waitress, reluctantly sells the family the bread at a cheap price. However, Mae eventually softens up and reduces the prices of candy, as well, so the father could buy his son a piece. Although this generosity goes unnoticed by the family, the truck drivers notice. They then pass on this generosity to Mae by leaving her a large tip.¹¹ This chapter serves to prove humanity still exists among Americans, despite the lack of humanity seen throughout the majority of the text.

After the students have completed reading the *Grapes of Wrath*, I will revisit chapter 15. I will explain that this chapter works as a paradigm and ask why they believe Steinbeck includes this chapter in the book. I want the students to consider this implies hope that still exists in the American people. I will ask students to consider why the narrator describes this diner and these characters originally as ambiguous and then creates

specific people.

Then I will show the film version of this scene. I will ask the students to define the differences between the film version and the novel. I will then ask students why they believe the director changes the unidentified family to the Joads? What are the advantages or disadvantages of changing them? Why does the director include such a small part of the novel in the film?

This will be a good segue for the Langston Hughes' poem "Let America Be America Again." Although the "have nots" appear to remain the "have nots" by the end of the text, this chapter offers the reader a glimmer of hope that all is not lost in humanity. The last scene of the novel ends with this same idea of humanity when Rose of Sharon agrees to breastfeed a man who is dying of starvation. ¹²

Lesson 4 : Chapter 17

At the end of the lesson students will be able to:

- Identify and analyze the social mores evident in camps.
- Connect chapter 17 to Tocqueville *Democracy in America*.

In chapter 17 the narrator describes how migrants settled at a camp for the night and became one family protecting and providing for each other. This included unwritten rules that were evident in the camp to protect the people from harm. Among these rules were a family's right to refuse or accept help. Despite the fact that these rules were established, each morning the tents came down and families continued their journeys West.

¹³

After students have completed reading the novel we will revisit chapter 17. In this lesson students will identify the different laws that were created on migrant camps. I want students to consider why laws were created and what does this say about their abilities to create laws that protect their own rights and interests. I will then have the students revisit the following passages from page 57 of Tocqueville's "On the Township System in America":

"But if the township has existed since there have been men, the freedom of a township is a rare and fragile thing. A people can always establish great political assemblies; for it habitually finds within it a certain number of men in whom, up to a certain point, enlightenment replaces experience in affairs. The township is composed of coarser elements that often resist the action of the legislator." ¹⁴

"Township freedom therefore eludes, so to speak, the effort of man. Thus it rarely happens that it is created; it is in a way born of itself. It develops almost secretly in the bosom of a half-barbaric society. It is the continuous action of laws and mores, of circumstances and above all time that comes to consolidate it. Of all the nations of the continent of Europe, one can say that not a single one knows it." ¹⁵

After the students close read these passages, I will ask how these relate to Steinbeck’s message in chapter 17. I will remind students one of the successes Tocqueville saw in American society was the freedom of townships. I would ask why does Tocqueville call township “a rare and fragile thing”. What does it mean when “enlightenment replaces experience in affairs” I will ask students to consider what happens in chapter 24. Here, the land owners try to sabotage the camp because of the power that was beginning to grow among the migrant workers. If they allege that a riot occurred the camp would be broken up. The committee hears about the sheriffs’ plans and work together to come up with solutions to stop them. ¹⁶

After students have connected Tocqueville and Steinbeck I will show the clip of the movie when the sheriffs plot to break up the dance. I want the students to see a visual of the migrant families working together to create a working community and what happens when those with power find out about their own growing power. I will ask them to compare both versions of the scenes and comment on the similarities and differences.

Notes

1. Thomas Paine, Rights of Man (Oxford Press, 1995), 169.
2. John Steinbeck, The Grapes of Wrath (Penguin Group 2002),
3. Alex de Tocqueville, Democracy in America (University of Chicago Press, 2000), 229.
4. John Steinbeck, The Grapes of Wrath (Penguin Group 2002), 31-39
5. Alex de Tocqueville, Democracy in America (University of Chicago Press, 2000), 3.
6. John Steinbeck, The Grapes of Wrath (Penguin Group 2002), 343.
7. Thomas Paine, Rights of Man (Oxford Press, 1995), 166-169.
8. Thomas Paine, Rights of Man (Oxford Press, 1995), 169.
9. Thomas Paine, Rights of Man (Oxford Press, 1995), 169
10. Thomas Paine, Rights of Man (Oxford Press, 1995), 169
11. John Steinbeck, The Grapes of Wrath (Penguin Group 2002), 161-162
12. John Steinbeck, The Grapes of Wrath (Penguin Group 2002), 455
13. John Steinbeck, The Grapes of Wrath (Penguin Group 2002), 193-196
14. Alex de Tocqueville, Democracy in America (University of Chicago Press, 2000), 56
15. Alex de Tocqueville, Democracy in America (University of Chicago Press, 2000), 56
16. John Steinbeck, The Grapes of Wrath (Penguin Group 2002), 341-345

Bibliography

The Grapes of Wrath. DVD. Directed by John Ford. Twentieth Century Fox Films. 1940. A cinematic version of Steinbeck novel, *The Grapes of Wrath*, this movie trails the lives of the Joad's as they travel West to find work. Although there are some differences from Steinbeck's version, the film does show the struggles Steinbeck portrayed in his novel.

Hughes, Langston. "Let America be America Again". Poets.org. <http://www.poets.org/viewmedia.php/prmMID/15609>

In this poem, Hughes sets out to describe the adversities and negatives that have come out of America. Yet, the poem gives hopes to the possibilities of what American could be based on the ideals set out in America's beginnings.

Paine, Thomas. *The Rights of Man*. (1995): 169-293. In this essay, Paine refutes the old world European politics and describes America's intentions of creating a democracy. This essay describes the importance of a man's individual rights and the necessity of civil rights to ensure freedom from tyranny.

Tocqueville, de Alexis. *Democracy in America*. (2000): 3-166. When Tocqueville visited the United States, his initial intention was to just study the American penitentiary system. However, he became intrigued by American democracy and wrote a book on its promising future.

Steinbeck, John. *The Grapes of Wrath*. (2002). This novel follows the lives of the Joad family as they are evicted from their land worked and decide to move West. Throughout their journey they and other migrant workers are subjected to the hardships of poverty and social injustices of those better off than they are. However, the Joad's continue through their struggles with hopes that eventually their conditions will improve.

Walker, Evans, James Agee. *Let us now praise famous men*. (2000). This book is divided into photos of Alabama sharecroppers along with stories three families during the 1930's. The photos are at the beginning of the text and help have a visual of the families. The stories of the family give insight into the struggle these farmers lived through.

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