

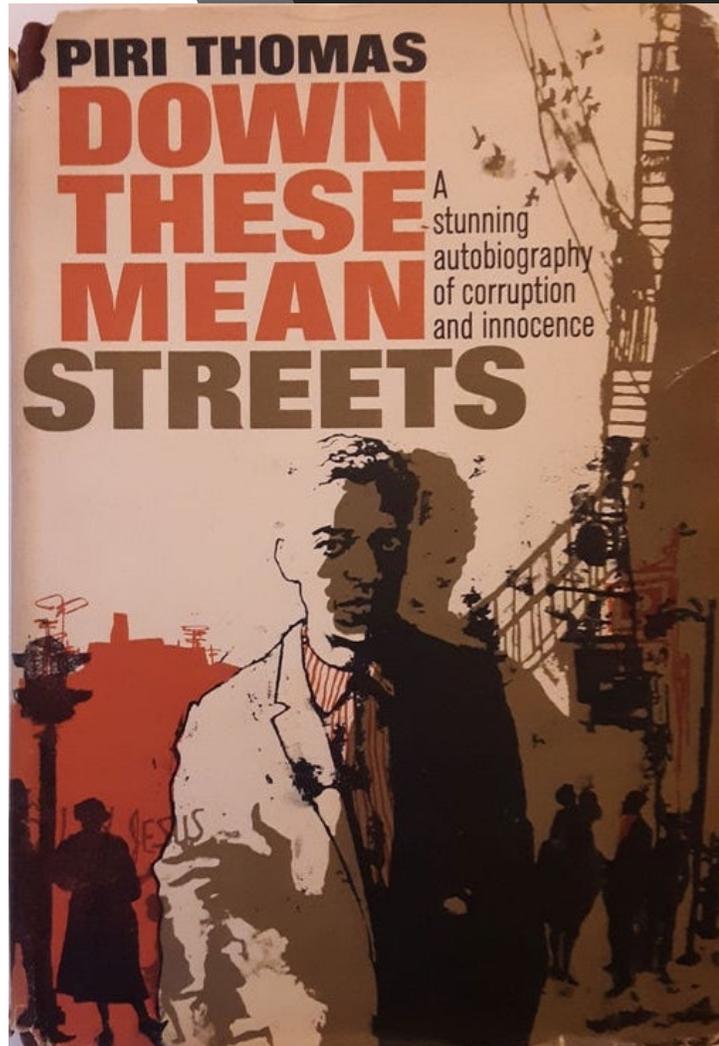


**SPAN322:  
“North of the Río Grande”  
US Latino/Chicano  
Literature**

*Down These Mean Streets Ib*  
February 13, 2020

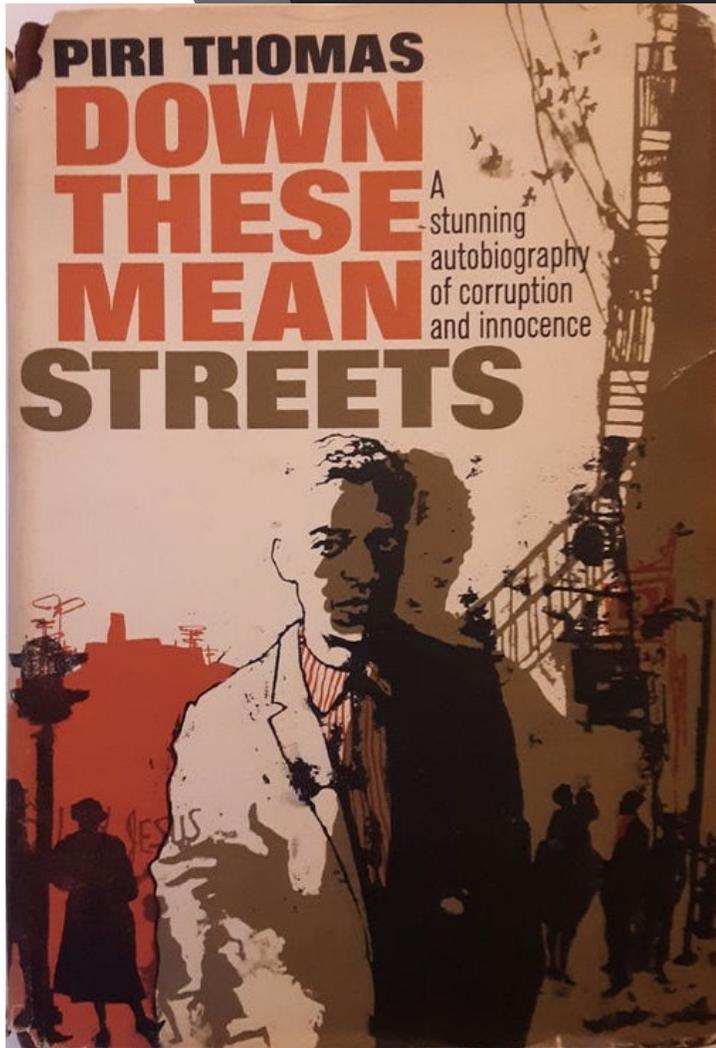
**DOWN THESE MEAN  
STREETS**

# *Down These Mean Streets*



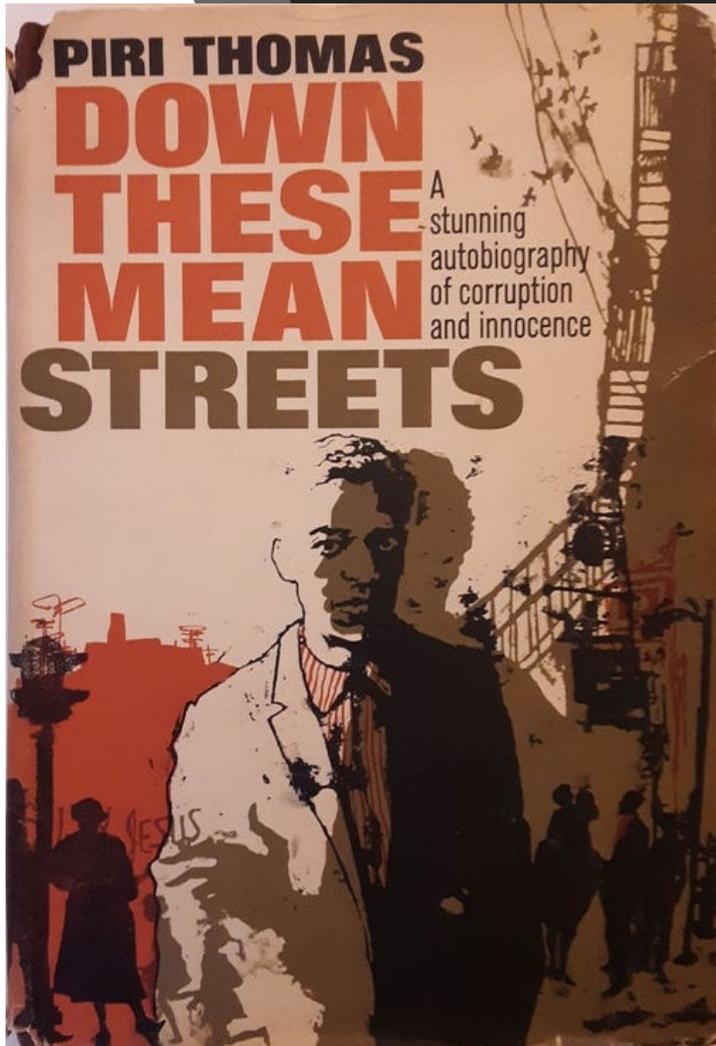
- By Piri Thomas (1928-2011), a key figure in the “Nuyorican” movements of 1960s and 1970s
- A memoir / autobiography, published 1967
- Deals, among other things, with Thomas’s racial ambiguity: perceived as black, he identifies as Latino
- “A classic portrait of ghetto life”

# *Down These Mean Streets*



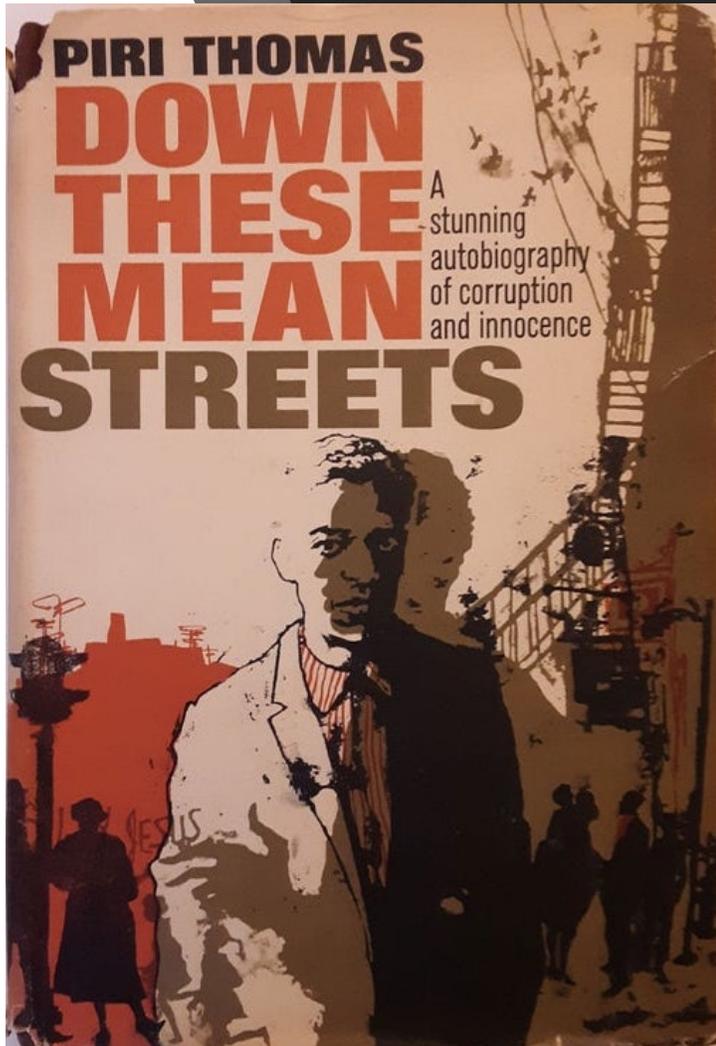
- What or who is the narrator? How does his sense of identity or belonging change?
- How does the urban setting affect the ways identity is produced and perceived?
- What is the relationship between different minorities? What conflicts or tensions does the book highlight?
- How does the law figure? What is Thomas's relationship to authority or the state?
- What is "heart"? How does affect play out in this book?

# *Down These Mean Streets*



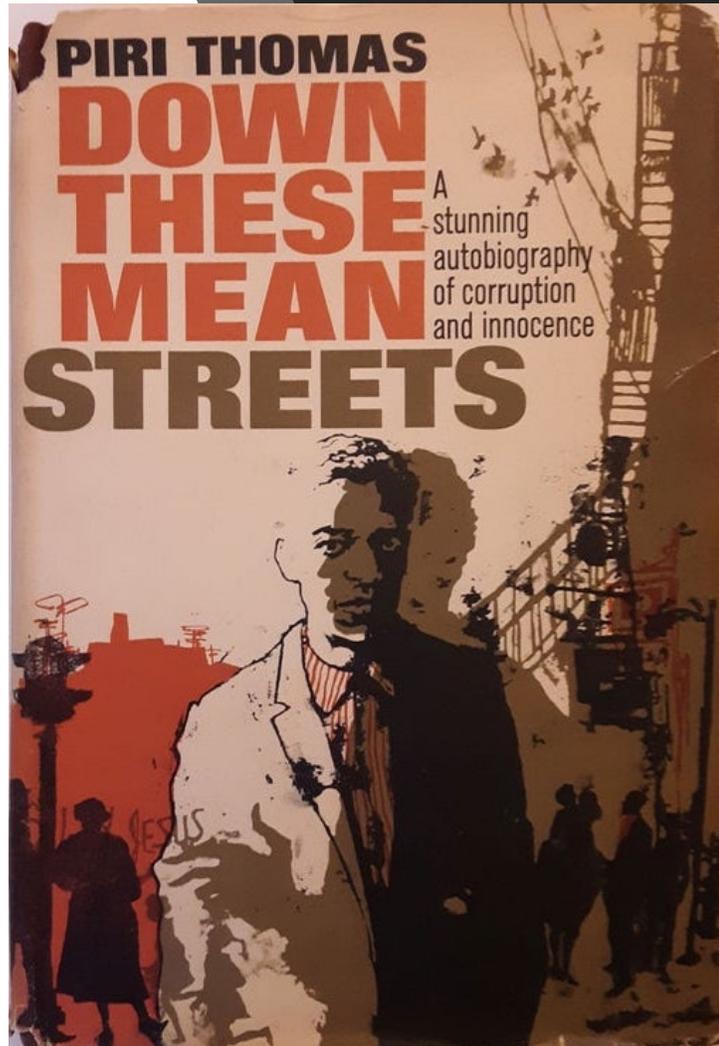
- Read the “Prologue” (ix-x).
- Identify key concepts, themes, and ideas?
- How do they play out in the rest of the book?
- Identity, the self, individualism
- The city, space, locality, modernity
- Hate, heart, affect, pride
- Ambition, hope, possibility, “copping”
- Language: slang, Spanish, exclamation, poetry

# *Down These Mean Streets*



- What kind of book is this? What expectations does it raise in the reader?
- Not a novel. Though it is a narrative.
- A memoir or autobiography.
- A coming-of-age story; *Bildungsroman*.
- But also the story of a community.
- Promises realism, grittiness, honesty.
- The *picaresque*: the world seen from below.
- An interest in language that's almost poetic.

# *Down These Mean Streets*



- What are the “kinks” in this book?

**MID-TERM**

# Course Concepts

- Identity
- Community
- Belonging
- Difference
- Fold
- Race
- Gender
- Language
- Canon
- Value
- Autobiography
- Memory
- History
- Time / temporality
- Childhood
- Trauma
- Fantasy
- Fiction
- Performance / appearance

# Course Concepts

- Representation
- The Law
- The State
- Crime
- Deviance
- Violence
- Territory
- Space / spatiality
- Affect
- Shame
- Pride
- The Particular
- The Universal
- The Singular
- Minor Literature

# Mid-Term Concepts

- Community
- Language
- The Law
- Memory
- Territory

# Mid-Term

- In the exam, you will have a choice of three of these concepts, and pick one of them to write an essay about two or more of the texts you have read.
- E.g.: “Analyze the meaning and significance of ‘Community’ in two or more of the texts we have read so far.”
- You may bring in notes (a “cheat sheet”), maximum one side of Letter size paper.

**WIKIPEDIA**

# Editing Wikipedia

- An encyclopedia article is very different from an argumentative essay, which is driven by a thesis.
- An encyclopedia article is a synthesis of “reliable sources.” You are compiling information that comes from elsewhere.
- What matters is “verifiability” (and not “truth”!)
- The “Five Pillars” include a “neutral point of view” (NPOV).



# Editing Wikipedia

- It is important to be able to evaluate sources. What makes a source “reliable” or trustworthy?
- What agenda might a particular source (or a particular author) have?
- How can we balance different points of view?
- Overall, what should be the balance between different elements of the article?



# Editing Wikipedia

- You need to be expanding your bibliography.
- Think about what kinds of sources you still need.
- You need to be *reading* these sources.
- This should be a *strategic reading*: “How will I use this in my article?”
- You need to start adding material from these sources to your article.



**NEXT STEPS**

# Over Spring Break

- Finish *Down These Mean Streets*.
- Write a blog post (c. 400 words) about your reading, and publish it Monday evening.
- Keep looking for bibliography on your Wikipedia articles, and *read it*.
- Start adding material from these reliable sources to your article.