



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1989 Volume III: Family Ties in Latin American Fiction

Gabriel Garcia Marquez: A Latin American in Search of His Identity

Guide for Curriculum Unit 89.03.01
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“In my beginning is my end. . . . In my end is my beginning.” These lines from T.S. Eliot’s “Four Quartets” illustrate one of the major themes in Latin American fiction, a search for, and a definition of, self. This quest is an important leit motif in Gabriel Garcia Marquez’ novels and short stories. I have chosen five of Garcia Marquez’ short stories, “Death Constant Beyond Love,” “Tuesday Siesta,” “One of These Days,” “Balthazar’s Marvelous Afternoon,” and “Big Mama’s Funeral” to form this unit. The students for whom this unit is designed, are in a ninth grade Language Exploratory class. They spend twenty weeks learning conversational Spanish as well as learning about the Spanish-speaking world. For the section on Latin America, we will spend five weeks reading the stories mentioned above and doing the classroom activities mentioned in the unit. We will concentrate on the biographical information that Garcia Marquez includes in his fiction, as well as information about Latin American culture and history, and the author’s point of view concerning his culture.

As young teenagers, my students are searching for their identities. This unit helps to reinforce ideas expressed in their English and Social Studies classes on the topics of “Who am I?” and “Where have I come from?” and “Where am I going?” It also introduces another element into the students’ exploration: a way of understanding another culture.

(Recommended for Spanish I-V, World Literature, World History, Comparative Literature, and Bilingual classes, grades 9-12; and Exploratory Spanish, grades 9-11)

Key Words

Short Story Marquez Gabriel Garcis Spanish English Bilingualism Literature Latin America American Spanish

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