



The Culture of Conquest in the Modern World

Guide for Curriculum Unit 92.02.03
by Luis Recalde

This unit deals with matters concerning Columbus' finding of the continent presently called America, and with the European and African invasion and onslaught that followed, of the territories and peoples who populated the land. As we understand it, culture had a decisive role in the outcome of things, and through culture a new world was created and nurtured. This drama inaugurates the birth of the modern world in general, and of what is now known as Latin America in particular.

This curriculum unit is intended for students in the fifth through eighth grades, although it could be adapted to lower and higher grades at ease. Its presentation in the classroom is flexible; it could be done in four or five lessons as enrichment for social studies, for art, math, drama, etc., depending on the needs and desires of a particular class. Whichever way we present it, we are dealing with a multi-disciplinary approach, where geography, to take as an example, "speaks" with and about math, history, culture, etc.

The material itself deals with the initial stages of conquest in three major areas of action: the Caribbean, Mexico and Peru. We know that in studying the texts of the period, the Caribbean is the beginning and center stage of the action. This area is the initial cradle of the new culture for the entire continent. We elaborate on Columbus as an initiator of mythologies. Other conquistadores followed.

We hope that through this unit the student develops a critical sense of history and a deep understanding of culture. If we are fortunate, young inner-city students might venture to see the power of writing and culture in the modern world.

(Recommended for Social Studies, Math, Reading, and Writing, grades 3-5)

Key Words

Culture Latin America Mythology

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