

**Latin American Literature: Revelation and Revolution**  
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**Overview**

I have been fascinated with Latin American literature since I first came across Garcia Marquez, which is why I was so please to see the Pittsburgh Teacher Institute offering a class in its history, culture as well as literature. Also, the fact that the Pittsburgh curriculum incorporated so little from that part of the world made it a natural for study and inclusion. The focus on revolution for my paper, however, came later.

In an article by Carlos Fuentes, he quotes Louis Bunuel with whom he had just seen the Alan Resnais film, La Guerre est Fini (The War is Over) about the Holocaust, as saying in anger that one must put a face to evil and disaster if people are to remember. Hence the great appeal of Anne Frank who gives us an individual to connect with. I had known of the disappearances in Argentina for many years, but never had faces to put with the horrific events. When the flyer came to my Pittsburgh Teacher Institute class, advertising the visit of Las Madres de la Plaza de Mayo, I knew I had to attend. I sat on the hard, black chair before the panel, in a stark, windowless room at the University of Pittsburgh, in awe of the two gray-haired women wearing white scarves--the Mothers of the Disappeared.

I am so moved by the stories I hear that morning at the University, which despite poor translation from Spanish, carry the continuing anguish of two mothers whose sons were taken nearly twenty-five years ago. A third woman sits with the other two, her dark hair uncovered. She at seventeen was arrested because her brother was suspected of political activity. For a month she was held in the police station surrounded by the constant screams of the tortured. What happened to her, she didn't say. When she was released, she learned that her nineteen-year-old brother was murdered, though his body was never returned.

Juan Peron, overthrown in 1955, was followed by a sequence of military and civil governments, intent on keeping labor down; Peronists were out of power and without voice. It was in 1976 that a military junta took power and for the next seven years killed those who had ever known someone even suspected of so-called left wing activities. This included the young activists, some with guns, many armed only with idealism and a concept of activism, who organized unions, and taught the poor to read. Their actions were sufficient to prompt the government to "clean up Argentina's democracy" a stock phrase, the reality of which was death and repression. Whether they were tortured to death, dropped from helicopters into the sea or machine-gunned, in this '*dirty war*', numbers of up to 30,000 are thought to have been seized, tortured and most likely murdered. These were the disappeared.

Nora Irma Morales de Cortinas spoke in Spanish: "We are the Mothers of the Disappeared in Argentina. My son was twenty-four, married with a two year old child. He was about to graduate in economics and he was an active member of the Peronist Political Party. They took him away. We never knew anything about him from then until now." It has been twenty-five years almost to the day, since Senora Morales de Cortinas appeared with thirteen other mothers in the Plaza--4/15/1977. Every Thursday since then, at 3:30, the Mothers meet and march. Last month 100,000 joined them.

"There is no way we can forget or forgive or reconcile with those beasts," said the Senora. Pregnant women were kept alive until their deliveries, with the babies then placed with wealthy, connected Argentines. The birth mothers were murdered. Grandmothers of the Disappeared now seek their grandchildren. Some five to six hundred such children are thought to have been 'absorbed' into Argentinean life. The Official Story, best foreign film of 1985, details such a child and the grandmother seeking her. It will be one of our lunchtime films.

Students need to know this long history of political instability and to read of Las Madres. One segment of the Latin American curriculum will deal with nonfiction writing, among which will be writings of and about these courageous women and their interminable, frustrating search for loved ones and for justice. Primarily Internet sources will be used to share information with students. Some sites even list the individual junta members known to have participated in the torture and atrocities. (<http://www.yendor.com/vanished/junta.htm>) Others discuss the Vatican's role in keeping secret lists of the disappeared and refusing to make them public (<http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/42a/o44.html>)

Rewind the history of Argentina and the music of Evita swells in the background, as the Perons take their places of importance in the past, though the author most noted from this country commented loudly on his disdain for them.

Jorge Luis Borges was a bit of a recluse, closing himself into the Buenos Aires apartment he shared for much of his life, with his intellectual mother. He was a librarian, and then came home to write. This position he lost when Juan Peron took exception to his comments and named him inspector of poultry and rabbits in the public markets. When Peron was overthrown in 1955, Borges was appointed director of the National Library and then professor of English at the University of Buenos Aires. He went blind almost thirty years before his death in 1986, a sadly ironic fate for a man who said, "To me, reading has been a way of living...I can't think of myself in a bookless world."

## **Rationale**

I teach in one of the largest high schools in Pittsburgh, with nearly 1300 students. Schenley is a magnet school for International Studies, Technology and Spartan Classics, the latter a specially designed section for students needing a more structured environment in which to succeed. We also have advanced courses, termed the Center for Advanced Studies (CAS), and are the only Pittsburgh school offering International Baccalaureate classes. My own teaching is usually in the International Studies magnet, where students take four years of at least one language. I feel with these generally scholar level students that our curriculum of world literature is the correct focus, but one in need of upgrading and extending. Currently, I teach 10<sup>th</sup> grade I.S. with African, Indian and Chinese works. As a school, we work with literature from many areas of the world, but only touch on Latin America. For this reason, such a unit as the one proposed for this course is particularly fitting.

Schenley's English department, at each grade level, offers a core curriculum of several novels. Usually, one novel comprises a student's taste of a country. While the books are good and certainly provide fine literary studies, I always have wished to be able to actually design a more rounded unit, delving into various types of literature, which could present a fuller picture of a culture. For example, Kamala Markandaya's [Nectar in a Sieve](#), which I teach in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade, while a fine study in rural Indian family life just as industrialization is beginning to change life, by itself is still a limited view of India and what is actually found in that part of the world. Also, as is most of our literature, the book is realistic in nature and crafted on the rising action, climax, falling action, resolution, type of structure, generally Western in origin. We do little with any kind of experimental construction, or with the surreal or the fantastic. It's a bit like teaching an art class and only showing realistic art, and never introducing other movements.

Given the above, with Schenley High School's International Magnet, there certainly wouldn't need to be any other rationale for a new unit on Latin American literature than that it fills an existing curriculum deficiency. For me, however, there are other avenues that have led me to the broad-based focus of this curriculum unit. There was a time when I believed that a work of literature had to exist on its own, without reference to an author's past or the times in which it was written, other than those explanations necessary to understand

internal references. I still find merit in studying a work closely, examining skilled construction, carefully wrought characters, the beauty and aptness of the language, ideas presented. However, I have come to feel strongly that works of art, while not didactic per se, exist in and of the world and are most rewarding when studied as part of the times and places from which they arose. Even beyond that grounding, those times and places stretch into today's world. Perhaps it is an extension of Emma Lazarus's "No man is an island. No man stands alone." concept. My students are provincial in nature and often egocentric, true products of the "me" generation. Yet they can come to the place where they see parallels between a man trying to hold his world together in Nigeria, as Okonkwo tries in Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart, and an individual in our own rust belt who sees the mills he has worked in all his life closing. Change is the issue. Poverty is the issue. Injustice is most certainly the issue.

Literature needs to be made real for students before they can accept a work as their own. They need to see connections to their own lives even while they are taught to hear the beauty of a line and the pleasure of rolling it around in their own mouths. One clear connection to their lives is the sense that they don't want to be misused-- to be taken advantage of by the moneyed elements of society, to be judged on the basis of anything other than Dr. King's "content of character", to be harmed by either criminals or excessive police power. Beyond even that connection, students have a right to know what has happened and is happening elsewhere. I see my mission as a teacher to help students see the world around them, to see that art and literature are pieces of that world that belong to them; that art and literature can help make sense of our world and bring beauty and hope even while it is painting despair.

To this end, reading of the courage of ordinary people faced with repressive societies, of the Argentinean Mothers of the Disappeared, of the Chilean women working in the small craft collectives to both earn money and to deal with grief, can be tied to the treatment of African American citizens in the South and to early deaths of friends and family--some by disease, some from bullets. That what has gone on in El Salvador or Nicaragua or Chile or Argentina is beyond what they know of police brutality here and can, to some extent be laid on the doorstep of this country's support of any regime appearing to be 'anti-Communist, is knowledge bringing with it a new perspective. The concept of magic within ordinary reality is also just a step removed from folk tales such as *Anansi the Spider*, or *Pinocchio* or any of the host of stories with three wishes. The fact that it is here taken into the adult world is no further away than a nightmare or a lottery ticket.

Readings: Argentina

The writing of Jorge Luis Borges has become of international importance. Imagine a writer who could elicit a student response such as the following one from Mark, of Providence, RI, on the web site called Writer Heroes. (<http://www.myhero.com>)

"My hero is Jorge Luis Borges...His work is the most amazing collection of falsifications and magnifications that I have ever seen. He makes you believe what is preposterous and question what is most sacrosanct. I love him for the new realms and ideas that he has opened for me."

The short stories of Jorge Luis Borges chosen for this unit reflect the search for meaning inherent in the previous quote. His is writing which constantly takes us outward into other dimensions, other places. "The Intruder" is a brief story set in the provinces, as rough as so many of his other stories are erudite. Two brothers

fight over a woman and the woman loses. The last lines: "They embraced, almost crying. Now another tie bound them: the woman miserably sacrificed and the obligation of forgetting her." Machismo as an attitude is painfully ridiculed. "The Alph" focuses on a favorite Borges theme, that of a search for the infinite, where boundaries of time and space are eliminated. "The Garden of Forking Paths" also uses one of his favorite symbols, (along with mirrors which endlessly reflect), the labyrinth, where all ways are possible. Here the spy works his way through the maze to a murderous solution.

A second Argentinean fiction writer to be used, is Julio Cortazar, whose bizarre piece "Blow Up", was turned into a feature length film. Here, the lines of reality and fiction again blur, as a photo takes on its own life and a photographer enters the world of the past to save a young boy. "End of the Game" will also be presented, a story in which a young girl, partially crippled, becomes for a moment as beautiful as the frozen statue she represents, until the reality of a possible suitor intrudes on the game.

The poet to represent Argentina will be Roberto Juarroz who, interestingly enough, was also a librarian. While he has won acclaim at home, he has also been "punished by various regimes because he has 'detested politics and believes it to be--whatever its color--the greatest adversary of poetry'" (McClatchy, p. 519) All his poems are without titles, but cumulatively numbered. They are spare writings without narrative or description, "experience distilled to a crystalline drop of paradox". (McClatchy, p.519)

Readings: Colombia

But for the emotional impact of *Las Madres de la Plaza de Mayo*, I would have begun the literary discussion with Gabriel Garcia Marquez, primarily because One Hundred Years of Solitude was the first piece of Latin American fiction I had ever read. To say I was enchanted with it is an understatement. I was as struck by the language there as I have been for many more years by the works of Faulkner. While there are dreams in Faulkner, and a vivid level of subconscious life, even some stretches of the imagination, I don't believe there is the concept of incorporated fantasy, or 'magic realism', as this literary element is commonly called, as there is so often with Garcia Marquez.

The reality of Macondo, Garcia Marquez's imaginary town where so many of his writings are set, where the unreal is so truly present as to be real itself—no, more than that--- it's beyond reality. "Todo es Macondo," is the stock phrase in Latin America whenever anything is beyond belief. Here life and time snake around on each other. The same people keep being born. Here the fantastic is commonplace. I find it often present in our world as well. One has only to live with a child, to know that the pig's tail on the infant at the beginning and end of One Hundred Years of Solitude, is no more absurd than the impossibly original antics of the young. Witness my three-year-old granddaughter having decided that the only way she will use her potty, is naked and wearing flippers. A Garcia Marquez reality is different than a Sinclair Lewis reality showing rat whiskers in the hot dogs; it is rather a reality that folds and unfolds on itself, carrying us to a circle where the book being read in the book, is the one which we are reading.

I like the explanation of Jorge Ali Triana, director of two Garcia Marquez productions: "Latin American reality is tremendously crazy...Our history is one of violence and even dementia, of crazies who came to split up a continent. Ours is a Mestizo culture combining people from Africa, from the Arab countries---the closest thing I've seen to it is New York, which is crazy, too---New York is the biggest Macondo in the Americas. I've never seen so much 'magic realism' in my life!" (

If I taught seniors, I would use this whole book, but since I have primarily sophomores, I have decided that we will use a small segment of the book, but will read a novella, Chronicle of a Death Foretold (1981), as well as "A Very Old Man With Enormous Wings" and "The Handsomest Drowned Man in the World". I am going to use also News of a Kidnapping, appropriate since it not only reflects a past crime, but also mirrors the recent kidnapping of the brother of the head of the Organization of American States, Cesar Gaviria.

([www.levity.com/corduroy/marquez.htm](http://www.levity.com/corduroy/marquez.htm)) A Reuters' news release discusses the 4/2/2001 kidnapping by a

group calling itself "Dignity for Colombia", innocuous enough sounding, except this was its second kidnapping, before which they claimed the murder of a three-time presidential candidate. They demanded that Garcia Marquez become president and check the financial record of President Samper, (1994-1999) who would then theoretically have been replaced, as there had been charges "that his 1994 election campaign was partly financed by drug traffickers." It is an amazing turn for Garcia Marquez, who once remarked, "I have a great many reservations about what came in Latin America to be called 'committed literature' or the novel of social protest. This is mainly because I think its limited view of the world and life does not help achieve anything in political terms. Far from accelerating any process of raising consciousness, it actually slows it down." What a real moment of terrible fantasy for him, to be living the story he told with the most unbelievable twists of time and plot. Did his novel slow social consciousness one wonders, or did it speed up a force of evil or neither?

Colombia, according to Alberto Villamizar, in charge of dealing with Colombia's kidnappings, says in the same Reuters' article, has "the highest rate of kidnappings in the world with a total of 1000 cases a year...Leftist guerrillas are responsible for about half and common criminals the rest...extreme poverty and a certain culture of easy money [that] has taken hold of our country" provide a breeding ground for uncontrolled violence and crime. In the 1980's an extradition treaty was signed with the United States, aimed at the drug lords. In 1993, ten eminent Colombians were kidnapped as bargaining chips against extradition. Two were shot and eight were released, little by little, as the Medellin cartel began to crack. Ultimately Pablo Escobar, kingpin of the cartel, was arrested. Garcia Marquez describes this as "the biblical holocaust that has been consuming Columbia for more than twenty years." The journey into the mind of Escobar will allow students the opportunity to practice Peter Elbow's 'believing exercise', to be discussed in the 'strategies' section. While News of a Kidnapping is not a piece with the magic realism of much of his other writing, Garcia Marquez does capture a world so bizarre as to be its own Macondo. (Todo es Macondo!) Colombia, after all, has for the last half of the twentieth century "been in a state of near permanent war," according to Arturo Alope, a leading analyst, beginning with the assassination of Jorge Gaitan in 1948. Gaitan was a political populist, pulling in many of the poor and politically excluded. His death began urban riots which left forty thousand dead in Bogata alone. Two hundred thousand died during the next decade in the same struggle. (Winn, p.472)

Even after the "formation of this National Front in 1957, the peasant war and social banditry went on for another decade." (Winn, p. 473) Arturo Alape and many others maintain that "the fighting has never ended." A rigged election in 1970 caused the formation of another guerrilla movement--M-19, named after the April 19<sup>th</sup> of the election. There were other guerrilla movements: the FARC, a peasant movement; the ELN, a proCuban group; and EPL, a Maoist movement.

By 1980, large areas of Colombia were "zones where the national government's writ did not reach and guerrillas 'taxed' local landowners and foreign oil and banana companies." (Winn, p. 474) Many guerrillas who laid down arms and cooperated with the government, were attacked and their leaders assassinated by rightist death squads in what was term (as in Argentina), the 'dirty war'. Then by the 1990's, the private armies of the drug lords had entered the mix. With their money drug lords bought up the land. By 1990 "cocaine revenues were estimated at 3.5 billion." This money had become a necessary layer in the Colombian economy. Cheap derivatives of crack had created two hundred and fifty thousand addicts in Colombia, particularly among the poor. No jobs, no police, no education in the slums led to '*sicarios*', or 'killer kids'. "Drug traffickers came and told them, if you go and kill somebody I'll give you 200, 300, even a million pesos", according to Elizabeth Lievano, a local judge. "Between 1980 and 1991, the murder rate in Medellin (Colombia's second largest city), soared from 730-7,081, more than three times as many as in New York City, which had four times as many people. (Winn, p. 478) Assassinations of political leaders, judges, and journalists, were commonplace.

Escobar did finally surrender, though he did escape and die in 1992.

Colombia's president, then Cesar Gaviria, elected in 1992, weakened the Medellin cartel only to see its Cali rivals grow. His successor, Ernesto Samper, was accused of taking support from the Cali cartel. The guerrillas,

particularly FARC and ELN "armed with kidnapping ransoms and drug protection money... were reacting to an unresponsive state and active rightist death squads." (Winn, p. 484) There were still places in Colombia where traditional police and judicial services didn't exist. In 1998 the new president, Andres Pastrana, attempted negotiation with the guerrillas. "However, a resurgence of death squad violence...., military and congressional opposition... kidnappings by the ELN, (left out of the negotiations), cut a shadow over Pastravo's initiative." (Winn, p. 485) The drug traffic of Colombia had gone beyond its border, into Venezuela and Equador. "Gaviria stressed that he could end narcoterrorism, 'a purely Colombian phenomenon', but not drug trafficking, which was a 'global problem'." (Winn, p. 485)

The complexity of life in Colombia, the political hodgepodge, the prevalence of ubiquitous, if unexpected violence, all left a people desiring peace, but expecting anything. Todo es Macondo.

Chronicle of a Death Foretold, also by Garcia Marquez, reflects some of the previous history, with a taste of the machismo thrown into this murder mystery and, by comedic skill, scathingly indicted. The entire town, it seems, knows what is soon to happen and does nothing to stop it. Santiago Nasar is doomed from the moment a bride's innocence is questioned and his name invoked.

Two of Garcia Marquez's complete short stories will be used and the first seven pages of Innocent Eréndira and Her Heartless Grandmother (either a novella or a very long, short story), along with a section from One Hundred Years of Solitude. The full beauty of magical realism is found in "A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings", which finds an angel fallen to earth during a violent coastal rainstorm. Accepted as a normal, if somewhat out of the ordinary occurrence, the angel is penned in the chicken coop and finally becomes the source of money to raise Pelago and Elisenda, the couple who found him, out of poverty. They charge the daily crowds for the privilege of seeing and tormenting him. What is real and what is fantasy overlap here until the 'real' situation becomes more fantastic than the fallen angel himself. Human nature does not come off well here, as the level of exploitation escalates. "The Handsomest Drowned Man in the World", also carries the elements of the fantastic, as a town claims a drowned man and are "fascinated by his huge size and his beauty." He changes them in ways no living man could have done.

#### Readings: Chile

Chile, echoing the discussions of Argentina and Colombia, had sixteen years of torment and torture under Augusto Pinochet from 1973-1986, that brought together another group of women seeking solace for losses and information about their disappeared. Marjorie Agosin, Chilean writer and poet currently teaching at Wellesley College, published a book in 1987, that will be used with the other nonfiction works, Scraps of Life. She says, "By now, it is a well-known fact that the military coup that occurred in Chile on Sept 11, 1973, fell heaviest on the poorest....As a result, the people in distress streamed to the churches in search of help, most especially for help in finding out what had happened to family members who had been arrested and taken away by the military....The practice of arresting people and having them disappear into the prison system for forever, by killing them and disposing of their bodies in some secret way, still persists in Chile today."(p.41) With Pinochet recently having been considered for the trial of those many crimes, an idea rejected because of his ill health, the revolution in Chile stays in the press and in our minds.

Salvador Allende, who died in the coup of 1973, was generally thought to have been assassinated. That he was brought down as a result heavy United States intervention during that period under Richard Nixon, is well documented. According to Encarta '98, "The US discouraged new private investment... blocked funds from the International Monetary Fund and Interamerican Development Bank [earmarked for Chile]. The United States C.I.A. secretly sent at least ten million dollars to Chilean groups that opposed Allende." (Encarta, Allende Gossens, Salvador) Allende ran as representative of a coalition of socialist, communist and other parties. Peter Winn's book, Americas, concurs with this view of a covert war mounted by Nixon to overthrow Allende. "The revelation of this under cover operation and its bloody outcome shocked the United States public and confirmed Latin American suspicions."(p. 453)

To quote Marjorie Agosin again, "After the military coup... Chile was a severed country, a prison where people considered 'bad', who were often the young or poor, students, intellectuals, artists and writers, were imprisoned, tortured, and murdered, --labeled 'disappeared' -- by those who had seized the country. A state of terror was imposed on the entire population. Everybody in Chile was afraid during the first days of the coup. Nobody knew what was going to happen, and even the credulous women who had given their jewels to help the cause of the Fatherland -- to help the opposition forces that initiated the coup -- were also afraid when bullets started zinging through their peaceful homes in the elegant quarters of the city." (Agosin, p. vii)

Along with Scraps of Life, the nonfiction section will also include an essay written by the great Mexican author, Carlos Fuentes, titled "Carlos Fuentes on a 'Victim of Pinochet'". He wrote this compelling piece March 14, 1999, "now that the House of Lords is returning to judge the fate of the brutal Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet. Some 4000 deaths, disappearances, tortures and arbitrary imprisonment's are attributed to him. At least half of all Chileans know the name of a victim close to them."

Isabel Allende, niece of Salvador, left Chile after his murder, along with many other artists. We will use her novel, Love and Shadows, which takes us to a Latin American country, purposely unnamed (the book was written from exile, before Pinochet's fall from power), in the grips of a military dictatorship. There is a love story here and a grisly discovery of a mass grave, in this beautifully written version of art imitating life. Students may also be interested in the account of her trip into Brazil's Amazon jungle in response to a dream and her inability to write for three years. "The jungle is never silent; you hear birds, the screeching of animals, stealthy footfalls. It smells of moss, of moistness, and sometimes you catch the waft of a sweet odor like rotted fruit." They may also choose to read on their own her newest book, Paula, an autobiographical family memoir about the death of her daughter: "Sacramental light and unfathomable darkness. I am everything that exists, I am in every leaf of the forest, in every drop of dew, in every particle of ash carried by the stream, I am Paula and I am also Isabel, I am nothing and all other things in this life and other lives, immortal. Goodspeed Paula woman. Welcome, Paula Spirit. (Allende, p. 330)

Maria Luisa Bombal's work will also represent Chile. She died in 1980 after a tempestuous life which included wounding her anti-Communist lover and being as a consequence, banished from Chile. (though she returned in 1970) She writes a great deal about women, so often fettered with the constraints of a paternalistic society, and the fantasies and unfulfilled desires of primarily middle and upper class women. Her novella, The Shrouded Woman, is a unique, tiny-chaptered story from the point of view of a woman who finds herself newly dead. All the characters of her life, family, friends, lovers, all stand by her deathbed and bring their pieces of her life with them. Never has death been so active and finally, so peaceful. Night itself has a beautifully different sound to one with all the time that death affords. The perspective and the construction are unusual, but never morbid, as time becomes a toy, until past, present and future meld.

Chile has a wealth of poets we will use, including Agosin's Women of Smoke. Enrique Lihn, 1929-1988, remained in Chile, but wrote eloquently and rather eerily of the cost to society and to human beings of the junta of Pinochet. Gabriela Mistral, a Nobel Prize winner, will be represented along with her more famous counterpart, who also won a Nobel Prize, Pablo Neruda. Neruda's poems encompass a range from sensual and lyric love poems to the political. He was a highly political person, an ardent Marxist, in the diplomatic corps, and a Chilean senator. There is a large vision in his work, a broad and caring stroke addressing both the beauty around us and the need for changing the social order. From "The Heights of Macchu Picchu":

Poor hand, poor foot, and poor, dear life ...  
The days of unraveled light  
In you, familiar rain  
Falling on feast-day banderillas,  
Did they grant, petal by petal, their dark nourishment  
To such an empty mouth?

[To all the centuries of dead Latin American laborers:]  
Let me have back the slave you buried here!  
Wrench from these lands the stale bread  
Of the poor, prove me the tatters  
On the serf, point out his window...  
...I come to speak for your dead mouths.

Readings: Central America

Nicaragua felt the push of the United States to shape its policy beginning back in 1855 when an adventurer from Tennessee named William Walker, created himself as president of the country. From then through the twentieth century, the United States intervened at will, to shape the politics of Nicaragua to its liking, right through to the backing of Somoza's dictatorship. Winn in Americas, quotes Franklin D. Roosevelt's response to the query as to "how he could support that son of a bitch," as being "Somoza may be a son of a bitch, but he's our son of a bitch." (p. 517) The Iran/Contra scandal that put the skids on United States backing of the Contras, (opposition to the Sandinistas) and temporarily took Oliver North out of his position, and clarified for the world the extent of our covert activities in Central America.

El Salvador is the second smallest land mass in Central America, with the second largest population; two percent of the population held sixty percent of the land. The military ruled here, with the elite, which resulted in a civil war that was a true class war, one waged in extremely brutal fashion. Demonstrators against the ruling military/elite, who took to the streets in 1979, were massacred. The security forces and death squads eliminated the opposition by the thousands.

As Pablo Neruda wrote in his poem, "In Salvador, Death"

In Salvador, death still patrols.  
The blood of dead peasants  
has not dried, time does dry it,  
rain does not erase it from the roads.  
Fifteen hundred were machine-gunned.  
Martinez was the assassin's name.  
Since then a bloody flavor soaks  
the land, the bread and wine in Salvador.

In 1992, the United Nations bartered a peace that has resulted in tenuous democracies.

Honduras, poorest of the populations became, for that reason, the easiest, most accommodating host for the United States C.I.A. Only Costa Rica, well educated and economically stable, stayed relatively independent. Oscar Arias, president, kept his own peace and helped broker one in Nicaragua, for which he won a Nobel Peace Prize in 1987. "Let Central America decide the future of Central America," was the keystone of his acceptance speech. We will read the words of Roberto Sosa, Honduran poet.

Guatemala is a country where violence has created between half a million and a million refugees, out of a total population of only nine million, from 1978 to 1985. La Violencia saw the massacres of villages (El Mozote, population 800, was totally wiped out); families burned alive in their homes. Roots of the violence stretched back to the Spanish conquest, from which the blatant disregard for Mayan life carries over into modern times. If one looks back over a shorter distance, to 1944, there was a brief revolution challenging control of Indian lands and jobs by *ladino* (white/mestizo) controls. Savage repression followed, and with it the veil of silence that fear creates. Those who survived, found barbed wire fenced villages and machine gun armed 'guards'. The Mayan culture was being systematically destroyed, in much the same way as the United States attempted to 'Americanize' her indigenous people.

Out of this milieu stepped Rigoberto Menchu, a Quiche Indian woman who "never had the opportunity to do more than cut cotton on the large plantations"; whose father was burned to death; whose mother, a midwife and healer, was raped and tortured; her brother also killed. Menchu only decided to learn to speak Spanish at seventeen, but has worked tirelessly for human rights and the rights of Indigenous peoples. Since civilian rule returned in 1985, she and others, have worked on a broad-based pan-Mayan identity, uniting the speakers of some twenty-three separate languages. At thirty-three she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. She writes with eloquence, and her words, I, Rigoberto, will be included with the non-fiction component of this unit. In the dedication of Poetry Like Bread, the anthology much of the writing used will come from, she succinctly gives a purpose to the writing that taps hard on memory:

So we are able to perceive the courage and suffering of those  
who are, in the final analysis,  
the silenced majority  
that some day  
will decide  
which small piece of the sky  
belongs to them.

Central Americans, as we have seen, lived under the yoke of economic and political repression for far too much of their lives. Their literature reflects those times and the revolutions which consumed the years and so many lives. Claribel Alegria, Salvadorian poet, states that "Political commitment...is seldom a calculated intellectual strategy. It seems to me more like a contagious disease -- and if you happen to live in a plague area, the chances are excellent that you will come down with it." Most of the writers we will be sharing in class have been infected.

Carolyn Forché, herself a wonderful American poet who writes often, of the struggles in Latin America, states that her friend, Alegria (in whose book, Flowers from the Volcano, she writes the preface) "is a poet who has called herself a cemetery, willing to provide herself as a resting place for those whose bodies have never been recovered, the friends whose flesh has been mutilated beyond recognition...Responding to those who would state that politics has no place in poetry...she would add her voice to Neruda's: *we do not wish to please them.*"

From El Salvador, we will also read the poetry of Roque Dalton, murdered at forty by a faction of his own ERP (People's Revolutionary Army). It was from his poem that the anthology we'll draw from so often takes its name.

I believe the world is beautiful

And that poetry, like bread, is for everyone.

We will also use the novel of Salvadorian, Manlio Argueta, One Day of Life, which as it says, traces a single day in the life of a peasant family. It gives us the horrors of war, but also the hope of an individual who sees her actions as having meaning. Argueta, like Alegria, spent much of his life in exile. He in Costa Rica. She in Mexico, Chile and Uruguay, having even studied at seventeen in a girls' finishing school near New Orleans, followed by years at George Washington University.

Nicaraguan reading will encompass one hard-edged short story, "The Centerfielder", by Sergio Ramirez, which takes a man's imprisonment and uses his past to defeat him. Poets will include Ruben Dario, who reflects the involvement of the United States:

The United States is good and powerful.  
Whenever it trembles, a profound shudder

runs down the enormous backbone of the Andes.  
If it shouts, the sound is like the roar of a lion.

Ernesto Cardenal, captured and liberated, was an activist priest who served as Minister of Culture, from 1979 to 1988; Leonel Rugana died at the age of twenty fighting Somoza's National Guard; Daisy Zamora who also fought with the Sandinistas and served as Vice Minister of Culture with Ernesto Cardenal; Geocanda Belli, currently living in Los Angeles, whose poetry collection, Line of Fire, won the Casa de las Americas Prize.

Guatemalan poets to be shared include Otto Rene Castillo, who began to write poetry at the time of his first exile. He was often imprisoned, tortured and exiled again over the next ten years. Castillo was executed in 1967 at thirty-one, after being captured with his guerrilla group. Victor Montejo is the third Guatemalan. He is Mayan, though he lives in the United States and teaches anthropology at Bucknell University.

#### Readings: Puerto Rico

Puerto Rico, with its love-hate relationship with the United States, with its perpetual to-be-a-state-or-to-not-be-a-state argument has yielded one of my favorite authors, Rosario Ferre. She lends insight into the dilemma of the Puerto Rican immigrant, having lived half her life in the United States and half on the island. Ferre says, in her preface to the second printing of Sweet Diamond Dust in 1996, "Approximately three million Puerto Ricans live on the island today and two and a half in the United States. We spend a great part of our lives traveling to and from the continent...Even Puerto Rican taxidriviers in Chicago and New York who can't go back often dream of buying their own little *finquita* in the mountains one day with their savings...drink milk straight from the cow's udders." She speaks of "the dream" that Puerto Rico was a place of riches, an unequalled beauty where everyone lived in pastoral peace. "This mythical place--that country we always dream about never existed except for a privileged few, the landed aristocracy of the 19<sup>th</sup> century," adding the little mentioned fact "that the greater part of the island lived in hell." She discusses the growth of San Juan as a port city, as both an economic salvation, while at the same time the cause of the drug problem, with "Puerto Rico...the third most important entry for drugs in the United States."

Ferre's stories make very clear the position of men and women in Latin cultures. Her story, "Mercedes Benz 220SL", clarifies a woman's subservience to the macho male image, equated with the car and speed. Ralph holds the money and Ellie has sacrificed herself to it and to him for designer clothes and the sequestered comfort of the tank-like Mercedes and the elegant house. Ralph, speeding down a rainy highway in the early hours of Sunday morning, strikes a young man, plasters him across the hood and then is too arrogant to get out, to dirty himself with the "monkeys they like to smell each other's sweat, rub each other like bedbugs." Says Ralph of an earlier man he nearly hits, who leaps aside and falls on his face in the ditch, "I'll pick you up next time, you long-tailed monkey, next time you drop out of the trees." The racial reference is clear. The second man, whom he does hit, is his son. In this bit of dramatic irony, the only son of the couple, who left the house and the ways of the father whose "business made him want to vomit", was on route to visit his mother as he promised. The unnamed son lives in quiet harmony and near poverty with a girl, his love, and together "before six o'clock they would both do their zen meditation together." The parents never learn who was killed.

Not only does this story incorporate elements of gender roles, it also gives us the callous privilege of wealth over everything and of the bigotry from, as Jean Franco puts it in the Introduction to *Sweet Diamond Dust*, "The heritage of slavery in Ferre's native Puerto Rico." "Mercedes Benz 220SL' also demonstrates an author's ability to utilize two first person narrative voices alternated with a third person representing the life of the son and his partner. The husband and wife are twined in long non-sentences of unpunctuated dialogue and the internal dialogue of Ellie. All of these provide a challenge to read.

Also from Ferre is an essay titled, "How I Wrote 'When Women Love Men'", which discusses her use of her own anger over injustice and how she channels it through various forms of irony, into literature. Because of explicit sexual language, the story itself, "When Women Love Men", couldn't be used in a highschool class,

but the essay works. It tells how she came to write this story of the prostitute and the wife, in part based on a real woman from her youth, who lived and ran a whorehouse in Ponce, where Ferre grew up. Isabella Negra became a paragon of virtue, living a life of piety, becoming "one of the town's most munificent patrons of the church, donating endless quantities of money" which "the bishop accepted...without demur." When she dies, she was refused burial in the Catholic cemetery "because she had once been a whore".

The dichotomy of women in Latin America is clarified again in Franco's introduction, "Patrimony in Puerto Rico has divided women into the 'decent' upper-class women whose role is to become mothers and ornamental hostesses...and an army of marginalized women--the mistresses and prostitutes, the servants and nurses. Patriarchal society tries to keep these women separate by caging decent women within the home." Many of Ferre's stories carry this theme.

"Marina and the Lion" depicts her town of Ponce as unwholesome, one disfigured by the industrialization of a huge cement plant. With its dusty street lights and its "phlegm-white sky, wrapped forever in flowing gauze vapors which swirled constantly above the townspeople's heads...the cement dust entwined all the flowers so that the fruits never ripened under the mantle; they dried up and withered in the tree branches...a world where everyone smile the same sad smile and where all types of powders had been forbidden." Nature has become a poison here.

#### Readings: Mexico

Finally, at least for the purposes of this unit, there is Mexico, closest neighbor to the United States, but feeling often the poor second cousin, whether by treaty, by border guard or by barrio in Los Angeles. Still, Mexico has Carlos Fuentes, who embodies the politically aware and involved writer, the ambassador, the caretaker of natural resources, the one who speaks out on injustice, anywhere.

Fuentes is the spirit of all those Latin American writers who believe, with Neruda, with Alegria and a host of others, that politics and good writing make the best of bedfellows. Take for example, his writing on Chiapas (Commandante Marcos, by the way, indicates Fuentes is his favorite writer.) "In actual practice...we have treated the Indians with more cruelty, perhaps, than Cortez. In Chiapas, in particular, there was a tradition of self-government among the several Indian peoples that endured up until the last 20 or 30 years. A succession of rapacious governors allied to equally rapacious land owners and cattle barons has since destroyed the autonomy of the Indian people, taking their land and driving them to desperation and poverty." He has been a member of Mexico's Commission for Human Rights. He experiments with literary styles. He writes on Mexico's financial crisis. He has written Aura, which is the novella the class will use, a tale of suspense and witchcraft focusing on human freedom, on time and its possible capture. Felip Montero, a young historian, takes the job of editing the papers of an elderly widow's long-dead husband. What he discovers about the widow Consuelo and her beautiful niece, Aura, are the shocks. Students should love it.

We will also taste of the remarkably funny and recipe filled, Like Water for Chocolate, perhaps enticing someone to try them, as each chapter opens with a recipe. Tita's magic cooking causes fantastic results in the family.

#### Objectives

First, I want students to grow more easy about approaching writings which at first glance appear to them "stupid", where plots have a mixture of reality and fantasy, where even possible happenings don't fit into their frame of reference as plausible. What better way to develop critical thinking skills than to have to try to dig beneath surface elements for what an author might be trying to get across. Two objectives are present here. One is to develop an ability to tolerate the difficult, the different, the fantastic, the obscure, without becoming frustrated and quitting. How many adults never learned such a skill? Secondly, beyond tolerance, students will be expected to hunt for meaning beyond that immediate or surface obfuscation. I want them to consider this

intellectual search as they would a game, where "Could it be..." or "Maybe the author..." become ready conjecture for students, with the full awareness that always they must be ready to point up where and what in the reading led them to their ideas.

This would place a student squarely in the path of being proved wrong, generally because the facts he considered when backing up a thesis, were wrong. He should, however, receive reinforcement that his attempt was valued. Again, how many adults never try for fear of failing. Learning becomes an act of courage, for we fear little, I think, so much as being wrong or failing. In like manner, a teacher must take the same objective as her own, and must relearn to take risks with the students and to present material where all the answers aren't in place, and some genuine questions remain. This is the antithesis of the college lecturing, to which I think, most high school teachers look as models. Despite all our work in past Pittsburgh Teacher Centers, too many of us still believe that we are the pitchers of wisdom who must fill the many empty vessels of ignorance which appear before us each day in the classroom. In other words we must know it all or feel humiliated. From such ideas come the treasured lessons repeated year after year and the terror of a shift in class length, or a move to a restructured time frame. This concept of 'perfect' teaching has been fostered by past curriculum units delivered top-down to teachers with the emphasis that "all teachers will teach these SEP units on grade level, in order, *en toto*"; it's also fostered by the current desire to synchronize every teacher on the same grade levels, to be teaching the same books at the same time, for the benefit of a transient population, who can then pop in and out of schools without disruption. These dictums, no matter how well-meaning, disregard a school's individual make-up and the variation of classrooms even during the same year. It also denies a teacher the value of learning and passing on new ideas, new books, and new questions.

Beyond the previous objectives of tolerance for the complex and the ability to risk attempts that may lead to dead-ends, if not failure; and beyond that concept of learning as a game and a solving of puzzles, is knowledge. The third objective would be for students to grow in their knowledge of literature and writing and then of the world, so that an article in the newspaper about a coup in Chile, or anywhere else in Latin America, would strike them differently for having read Isabel Allende. This *knowledge* objective would be basically seven fold. First would be the knowledge of the literature itself. Who are the major authors from each of the focus countries? What does each piece have to say about life in that place? How is the style of writing the same, or different from previous readings? What do we see in each of literary elements such as: metaphor, irony, satire, symbolism, fantasy, surrealism, narration, character development, and in what ways might these elements be uniquely used? Second would be the concept that one could hardly deal with the Americas without clarifying the role of revolution in those cultures, and gaining a sense of what had prompted such violence. Within these facts of revolution, students will also come to see the role of the church, both in supporting and suppressing change. Since the histories of Latin American countries are so filled with repressive military regimes and responses to them, students should come away from this unit with knowledge of and empathy for the people who suffered through such times. Students should, thirdly, have the opportunity to see around a work of literature, into not only the politics but into the popular culture and the arts, focusing on its literature, but getting a sense also of painting, music and film. The knowledge of what, in an area, makes up its minorities and majorities would be the fourth area of concern. What is the status of race relations in these countries? It would be only a small leap to make connections to situations of race and religion in our own country. Fifth, the plight of indigenous populations is everywhere a source of contention, or should be. Sixth is an awareness of class structure in the literature and in the histories. How separate have the rich and the poor been? Have the wealthy taken any responsibility for poverty, or been exploitive? Finally, students should also be aware of the differences in gender treatment and expectations, not only from a simple need to know, but because people emigrating the United States, bring those concepts with them. *Machismo* is a concept students will find in literature alongside some strong women. It is important for students to be reminded that women only got the vote in this country in 1928. The third broad-based objectives then, is the knowledge of events and places out of which this literature has grown, with the six focus areas being Argentina, Colombia, Chile, Central America, Puerto Rico and Mexico.

One last objective is to improve and enlarge on a student's writing. Students will be asked to write in a number of ways: to respond as they feel at a given moment; to write to specific questions regarding the above seven

focus areas; and to try modeling pieces of their own on some of those we read. For example, they might be asked to create a situation steeped in fantastic elements that come to seem as real as breakfast toast. It was a reading of *Metamorphosis*, and meeting Gregor as a cockroach that gave Garcia Marquez, he says, the license to write with his own brand of the fantastic. Who knows what a student might begin?

## Strategies

The problem would be to schedule the in-class time so that there is both order and movement to the day. The four elements for the in-class work, are short stories, non-fiction/histories, the immigrant experience and poetry. The day should incorporate (at least over the 15 days) Gardner's seven intelligence's: interpersonal, interpersonal, linguistic, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, musical and logical/mathematical.

It should also make use of a variety of activities: partnered readings (two sit side by side, facing opposite and moved so mouth and ear are on a line---for near silent reads and quiet discussion); fish-bowl discussions (an outer and an inner circle, which is smaller and is actually conducting the discussion with the outer circle notetaking and holding questions---can also be done with two or three in the center circle for a specific interview/discussion); debates (assigned teams---some practice time and then given before rest of class---students cast ballots for winning side); literary circles (based on the concept of the Great Books *real* questions--small group discussion with members assigned roles for the group); the lonely eye/ear (an individual work station, probably portable, for students to view art slides or portfolios of prints---also tape players and headsets available for listening to poetry or short stories); writer's workshop ( conferencing with teacher after writing class or home depending on schedule---assignments to model on the authors being read); Hall alone. We're so H-all alone. (as my room is small, I would use mats and headsets playing Latin music (all other CD's left in Lunch periods would be used for continuous showing of Latin American films.

## Class Activities

My organizational plan for the Latin American unit, is being designed around a block schedule of eighty minute periods meeting every day for one semester, since it seems very likely that soon Schenley will move to such a schedule. Fifteen days have been carved out of the semester, representing a year. If this were a traditional schedule, then 30 full class days would be used for the unit. As I envision five other units, 15 days in a semester would be the generally allotted time.

Each day would be divided into three to four sections, generally keeping the same format for two days before shifting. Students would be given a copy of the full syllabus, so they are aware from the unit's inception what would be expected of them and how the reading would be organized. Three of the books would be used as take-home, reading assignments: In the Time of the Butterfly by Julia Alvarez (a Dominican-American); One Day of Life by Manuel Argueta; and Chronicle of a Death Foretold by Gabriel Garcia Marquez. I am convinced that far too often we poke so long and talk so much that we kill any latent enthusiasm which a student might have for a book. Hence the pace of the reading here. I've found that I have increasingly been pushing my students to move through reading at more than the 12-15 pages a night they are used to. Certainly it depends on how many activities a teacher wants a student to experience with a work, as to what a proper assignment level might be. I merely want to point out that a great many students are capable of more reading than they think. That the increased amount of reading also works as a practice tool to raise a student's ability to read and to comprehend, is a given, in reading research, as practice in any area leads to increased proficiency. Because this amount of reading requires a rapport between teacher and student, and the awareness on the part of each individual that standards have been set at high levels, this would not be the first unit of the semester. I would probably put it fourth or fifth out of the six planned for the block-scheduled semester.

The Latin American unit is meant to be an immersion in a culture, not just an exposure to literature, so art and music will also be incorporated with the literature. While all countries in Latin America are unique, they still share many of the same histories of colonialism, and of a small, landed aristocracy holding vastly unequal shares of wealth and power, which led to a culture of revolution. One has only to look to the Chiapas region of Mexico, to see that the concept of peasant revolution is still alive. We will, in this unit, look at the histories of many of these nations, the revolutions which consumed them and the strongmen who helped precipitate armed struggle by their blatant disregard for individual liberties. For a teacher, much of the background information given in this paper, typed on handouts or on cards at a history center or 'learning station', would suffice. To find more in-depth details, there will be appropriate sources listed on the Bibliography pages.

Along with the three group-read books mentioned above, there will be four more novels from which students will choose one. The Shrouded Woman, a novella by Maria Louise Bombal; Aura, a novella by Carlos Fuentes; Like Water for Chocolate by Laura Esquivel; and Of Love and Shadows by Isabel Allende. This book would be shared with four other students in class, who will meet briefly during scheduled periods, and at least once outside of class, to prepare performances meant to tease the other students into a desire to read their book, by giving a feel for and a taste of it. They might act out a scene, present a series of tableaux or interview characters, to list a few possibilities. Certain performance parameters would be drawn, among them the use of direct language from the book whenever possible, and a ten minute limit for presenters. A log kept of the group's ideas and meetings would be turned in at the time of their presentations; a teacher could ask for periodic updates, as well.

News of a Kidnapping, the wonderful non-fiction book by Gabriel Garcia Marquez, documenting Colombian history in the late 1990's with its rise of the Medellin drug cartel and its leader Pablo Escobar, will be used as a passaround book. Two copies will be given out each day to two different students, who will return the next day having read twenty pages, and ready to give a joint *Daily News Update*, on the state of the kidnappings, plan of the kidnappers, etc. This could also be planned with each student taking ten pages. Each daily pair should be allowed to choose which format they prefer.

Short stories will be read in class, as a piece of the 80 minute block, utilizing a variety of activities, which will be detailed later in this section. Specifically, we will use: from Puerto Rico, "Sweet Diamond Dust", "The Youngest Doll", "Mercedes Benz 220SL", "Marina and the Lion" and an essay titled "How I wrote 'When Women Love Men'" by Rosario Ferre; from Chile, by Maria Louise Bombal, "The Tree"; from Argentina, by Jorge Luis Borges, "Garden of Forking Paths", "The Intruder", and "The Alph"; also, Argentinean Julio Cortazar's "Blow Up" and "End of the Game"; from Nicaragua, "the Centerfielder" by Sergio Ramirez; from Brazil, Clarice Lispector's "Love"; and from Colombia, Gabriel Garcia Marquez's "A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings", "The Handsomest Drowned Man in the World", an excerpt from One Hundred Years of Solitude, and the beginning of Innocent Erendira and Her Heartless Grandmother.

In addition, also for in-class work, we will use pieces of the history of each of these countries, some of which will come from one of the texts used in the current PTI course on Latin American Culture and Literature, Americas by Peter Winn. Other information will be from the internet and from newspapers. These will be coupled in further activities with the nonfiction pieces: Scraps of Life by Chilean author, Marjorie Agosin, which details the lives and activities of women in the *arpilleristas*, artistic working groups protesting terrorism and dictatorship, through their appliqué and embroidery pieces; writings by and about Las Madres de Plaza de Mayo, those gallant women already discussed; Carlos Fuentes essay, "Victims of Pinochet"; information primarily from the Internet which discusses the revolutionary movement in the Mexican section of Chapas; and the words and story of Guatemalan woman/activist/Nobel Peace Prize winner, Rigoberta Menchu.

An additional section of reading during class will be titled, The Immigrant Experience, and will feature focus on the Mexican-American, with Sandra Cisneros's House on Mango Street and Gary Soto's Living Up the Street, as very true pieces of fiction. Poetry will also use Cisneros, along with Jimmy Santiago Baca and Luis J. Rodriguez. We may make available Dominican-American, Julia Alvarez's, How the Garcia Girls Lost Their

Accents, even if she is off the theme, since it is such a funny and accessible view of the desire to both become Americanized and to retain the best of old worlds.

The final aspect of the in-class section of the Latin American unit, will be poetry. Poets to be read and responded to will be Julia de Burgos (Puerto Rican); Pablo Neruda, Enrique Lihn and Gabriela Mistral (Chilean); Claribel Alegria and Rogue Dalton (El Salvador); Ruben Dario, Leonel Rugama, Gioconda Belli, Ernesto Cardenal and Daisy Zamora (Nicaraguan; Octavio Paz and Veronica Volkow (Mexican); Roberto Juarroz (Argentinean); Otto Rene Castillo, Victor Montejo and Rigoberta Menchu (Guatemalan); and Roberto Sosa (Honduran).

#### A Few Days Scheduled

Day 1 Begin with film, overview of Latin America—1/2 hour; Introduce In Time of Butterfly, some on Dominican Republic—15 minutes; Introduce News of a Kidnapping, some on Colombia—2 students assigned for Newshour tomorrow—schedule handed out for remaining 14 Newshours--15 minutes; students move to chose independent readings for Performance Groups—only 5 per book—students meet—20 minutes.

Day 2 Discuss ...Butterfly—20 minutes; Newshour Report and Passalong News of a Kidnapping—20 minutes; Living the Revolution/Performance Groups—20 minutes—two activities, Revolution Group pair reads history/revolution materials while Performance Group discusses what was read in a literary circle and plans performance—then groups switch—another 20 minutes.

Day 3 Order is the same as day 2

Day 4 Vocabulary Corner/Nonfiction reading—names, places, vocabulary associated with the books students are reading—each person (of 1/2 the room) has been given 3 definitions—all must ask one another to find answers to questions—Rest of class has selected from nonfiction reading and has an assigned partner for pairedshare--20 minutes—and then switch—another 20 minutes; short stories read all alone or h-all alone, depending on where students want to work—only Latin CD's furnished (most students will have their own players)—30 minutes; back together for a few minutes sharing of short stories.

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#### Student Bibliography

Agosin, Marjorie. *Scraps of life: Chilean Arpilleras, Chilean Woman and the Pinochet Dictatorship*. Trenton: The Red Sea Press, 1987. ISBN 0-932415-29-6

Stories of individual women, often in their own words.

-----*Women of Smoke*. Pittsburgh: Latin American Literary Review Press, 1988. ISBN 0-935480-34-x  
Spanish/English Poetry of Agosin.

Alegria, Claribel. *Flowers From the Volcano*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1985. ISBN 0-8229-5344-7

Bilingual "poems of passionate witness and confrontation"--Carolyn Forche.

-----*Luisa in Realityland*. Willimantic, CT: Curbstone Press, 1988. ISBN 0-915306-69-7

An odd, multigenre book incorporating the political and public with a very personal voice. Not included in curriculum, but should be an extra for students.

Allende, Isabel. *Of Love and Shadows*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1987. ISBN 0-394-54962-7

An extraordinary story of families, focused on two who fall in love and of the evidence they find of official terrorism in Chile.

Alvarez, Julia. *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents*. New York: Plume, 1992. ISBN 0-452-26806-0

Funny and charming book on wanting to become Americanized and still keep the best of the 'old world'.

----- *In the Time of the Butterflies*. Chapel Hill: Algonquin Books, 1994. ISBN 1-56512-038-8.

Story of four sisters, with all four voices telling their stories of life and death under Trujillo. Based on the true story of the murder of Las Mariposas--"The Butterflies".

Argueta, Manlio. *One Day of Life*. New York: Vintage Books, 1991. ISBN 0-679-73243-8.

A typical day in a peasant family's life as they live, caught in the horror and corruption of El Salvador's civil war.

Baca, Jimmy Santiago. *Immigrants in Our Own Land & Selected Early Poems*. New York: New Directions Books, 1990. ISBN 0-8112-1145-2.

Poetry from this Mexican-American with a hard past and a sharp, tough voice.

Bombal, Maria Luisa. *The House of Mist - The Shrouded Woman*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995. ISBN 0-292-70830-0.

In *The Shrouded Woman*, a corpse reviews her life; a look at upper class women and lives missing purpose and effect.

----- *New Islands*. New York: Farrar-Straus-Giroux, 1982.

Book of short stories, containing "The Tree".

Borges, Jorge Luis. *Ficciones*. New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1962. ISBN 0-394-17244-2 Short stories, among them "The Garden of Forking Paths".

Cisneros, Sandra. *My Wicked Wicked Ways*. Berkeley: Third Woman Press, 1997. ISBN 0-943219-01-9.

Poetry of Cisneros, a Mexican-American, is often funny, always insightful as to the experience of assimilation.

----- *The House on Mango Street*. New York: Vintage Books, 1991. ISBN 0-679-73477-5 Tiny vignettes of growing up in Chicago, Mexican-American. Very funny; very sad.

Cortazar, Julio. *Blow-up and Other Stories*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1967.

ISBN 0-394-72881-5

Short stories including "Axolotl", "Blow-up", and "End of the Game".

Espada, Martin, ed. *Poetry Like Bread*. Willimantic, CT: Curbstone Press, 1994.

ISBN 1-880684-15-2

Anthology of political poets containing many of those suggested for the curriculum.

Esquivel, Laura. *Like Water for Chocolate*. New York: Doubleday. ISBN 0-385-42016-1

Magic and food, romance and family in turn-of-the-century Mexico. Each chapter begins with a recipe.

Ferre, Rosario. *The Youngest Doll*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991. ISBN 0-8032-6874-2

Contains all of the suggested stories for Ferre.

Fuentes, Carlos. *Aura*. New York: Noonday Press. 1997. Bilingual edition.

"A beautiful horror story, a horrifying story of beauty..." *Newsweek*.

Fuentes, Carlos and Ortega, Julio. *The Vintage Book of Latin American Stories*. New York: Vintage Books, 2000. ISBN 0-679-77551-x

Contains suggested stories of Borges, Lispector, Cortazar, Ramirez and Garcia Marquez. Used as a text in PTI class.

Garcia Marquez, Gabriel. *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1982. ISBN 0-345-31002-0.

----- *Innocent Erendira and other stories*. New York: Harper & Row, 1978.

ISBN 0-06-090701-0

----- *News of a Kidnapping*. New York: Penguin Books, 1996. ISBN 0-14-026944-4.

----- "A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings". *Literary Cavalcade*. Vol.42. Number 3, Nov/Dec 1989.

McClatchy, J.D., ed. *The Vintage Book of Contemporary World Poetry*. New York: Vintage Books, 1996. ISBN 0-679-74115-1

A tasting of poetry from virtually everywhere with a fine, though obviously not complete, section from Latin America and the Caribbean.

Meyer, Doris and Fernandez Olmos, Margarite, ed. *Contemporary Women Authors of Latin America*. Brooklyn: Brooklyn College Humanities Institute Series, 1983.

This could be an extra, but has a marvelous selection from suggested poets.

Neruda, Pablo. *100 Love Sonnets*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1992.

ISBN 0-292-76028-0

Pozas, Ricardo. *Juan the Chamula: An Ethnological Re-creation of the Life of a Mexican Indian*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1962. ISBN 0-520-01027-2. This was a PTI class text, using a first person account, which gives a vivid picture of the life of an indigenous group of Indians in the state of Chiapas in Mexico. It's not in the curriculum, but could be a wonderful (short) extra.

Soto, Gary. *Living Up the Street*. New York: Dell Publishing, 1985. ISBN 0-440-21170-0

A poet and professor, Soto writes vividly of a child's life in the Fresno barrio--human, warm, funny and poignant.

Zamora, Daisy. *Clean Slate: New and Selected Poems*. Willimantic, CT, 1993.

ISBN 1-880684-09-8

Fascinating glimpses into the life and mind of this Nicaraguan soldier, feminist, wife and mother.

### **Teacher Bibliography**

Donoso, Jose and Henkin, William A., ed. *The TriQuarterly Anthology of Contemporary Latin American Literature*. New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1969. Old, but rich collection of literature and commentary. Good background and interesting introduction by Octavio Paz. Location of Borges story, "The Intruder".

Franco, Jean. *A Literary History of Spain: Spanish American Literature*. London: Ernest Benn Limited. 1973. ISBN 06-4922383

Extensive background connecting literature and the history of Spain to Latin America. Scholarly discussion of evolution of literary forms, and of books and poetry.

----- *An Introduction to Spanish-American Literature*. Cambridge: University Press, 1969.

Excellent background on a conquered people, and the types of literature which evolved to the point of publication.

Miller, Yvette E. and Williams, Raymond Leslie. *Latin American Literary Review: The Boom in Retrospect; A Reconsideration*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1987.

Much here on Garcia Marquez, Mario Vargas Llosa, Carlos Fuentes. Interesting, but often too erudite for easy access.

Winn, Peter. *Americas: The Changing Face of Latin America and the Caribbean*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999. ISBN 0-520-22181-8

Wonderful text used in PTI class. Give history of Latin America from aspects of women's roles and rights, the church, race, economics, growth of revolution, etc.

### **Internet Sites**

## *Argentina*

A great deal of information can be reached about Las Madres de Las Plaza de Mayo and the disappeared by going to the Vanished Gallery: [vanished@yendor.com](mailto:vanished@yendor.com)

"The Mothers of Plaza De Mayo to the Pope". Online. Internet. 1999. Available

<http://oikos.org/mayo3.htm> 22 April 2001

Heartrending letter to the pope, condemning him and his calls for clemency for Pinochet.

"Argentina military junta members, top officers, and ministers". Online. Internet.

Available <http://www.yendor.com/vanished/junta.html> 22 April 2001

Individual junta members participating in torture—biographies and photos

Hartl, John. "'Official Story' is Argentina's story". 1985. Available <http://www.film.com/film-review/1985/10683/109/default-review.html>

22 April 2001 One of many reviews of this amazing film about the infants born of imprisoned/murdered mothers in Argentina.

"Desaparecidos bibliography & book store". Online. Internet. Available

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## **Appendix A: Standards**

The Core Curriculum Framework adopted by the Pittsburgh Board of Education is intended to push students to a point of meeting the National Education Standards proposed by the state as well as meeting the original National Standards as set forth by the Learning and Research Development Center. This curriculum unit will further many of those Communication Standards.

1. Students will use research and management skills as they study the authors and the countries involved here. Extensive use will be made of the Internet.
2. Various ways of gaining information from the text have been set forth in Strategies and Classroom Activity sections.
3. Students will write, both analytically as they assess what they have read, and creatively, in response to the new forms they meet and new topics they see broached. Essay, short story and poetry will all be practiced.
4. That there will be variety in students' purposes for meeting can also be seen from the discussions and debates planned, as well as the individual learning time.
5. Analysis, critical judgment, being able to separate grains of truth from the fields of propaganda, working to weigh evidence, all are at the core of tying pieces of history to primary documents and memoir as well as fiction and poetry.
6. Ample time will be given to the sharing of ideas and to (#8) the performing and presenting of writings, discoveries and projects.
7. I often read aloud to students and follow the reading with discussion on what they have heard. Listening is a skill which must be worked on.