

Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative 2007 Volume I: Adapting Literature

# **Spanish Cultures Through Film and Literature**

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## Rationale

Studying a foreign language does not only consist of knowing the grammar or the vocabulary. Although one of the ultimate goals for my students is to be capable of communication in the target language, I consider cultural understanding to be crucial. Students should not only be able to speak the language but they should also acquire a deep understanding of the history, literature, art, music and so on, of the Spanish speaking countries. By doing so, they will also start thinking about global consciousness and the importance of embracing global understanding.

Film is an ideal tool to use in the classroom in order to explore culture in context and to do so in a meaningful way. Through film I will be able to address a two-fold goal: explore at various levels, the different cultural aspects portrayed in the movies (and therefore improve students' critical thinking skills) and develop students' proficiency in two of the four language skills, listening and speaking. I am also hoping my students will learn to "read movies." They are used to watching popular blockbusters that do not necessarily make them think. At the end of this curriculum unit students will be able to discern the difference between a shot and a scene, a flashback and a flashforward, voice-over and voice-off, mise-en-scène and editing, etc.

In addition, this unit will help me to implement the five-goal areas the National Standards of Foreign Language Learning called the *Five C's of Foreign Language Education:* communication, cultures, connections (among disciplines), comparisons (between cultures) and communities. My students will understand and interpret spoken and written language; they will demonstrate an understanding of the traditions, products (texts and films) and perspectives of the Spanish cultures; they will reinforce and expand their knowledge of other areas of study (literature and film studies) through Spanish, and finally, they will be able to compare the textual sources and their adaptations to film.

The unit is to be used in my Spanish I courses at Hill Regional Career High School. Career is a magnet school in New Haven, for students interested in health sciences, business, and technology. Even though the unit is to be taught to students with what the American Council of the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) calls the "novice level" (1), it could be used on upper level courses with proper modifications. Students at this level demonstrate some accuracy in oral and written presentations when reproducing memorized words, phrases and sentences in the target language; formulate oral and written presentations using a limited range of simple phrases and expressions based on very familiar topics; show inaccuracies and/or interference from the native

language when attempting to communicate information which goes beyond the memorized or pre-fabricated.

Due to the basic level my students have, I will try to use Spanish as much as I can, but it will be necessary to operate and read some of the works in either bilingual editions and/or English. As for the movies, all or most of them will be viewed in Spanish with English subtitles. I consider it crucial for my students to listen to Spanish as much as possible.

The present unit is the result of a film seminar on adaptation led by Professor Dudley Andrew. Choosing the literary pieces has not been easy since there are many major masterworks in the history of the Spanish and Latin American literatures. I have chosen three different pieces: the first one will be Prosper Mérimé's novella *Carmen*, the second one will be Federico García Lorca's play *Bodas de Sangre (Blood Wedding)* and *El amor en los tiempos del cólera (Love in the Time of Cholera),* one of Gabriel García Márquez' magnum opuses will be our last text. What makes these three works so special is that the three of them are exceptional works of art. These provide good literature that helps me keeping the high standards I try to maintain for my students. By using this material, the many cultural elements present in these works are transferable to any other culture in time and meaning.

*Carmen*, as well as *Bodas de Sangre* and *El amor en los tiempos del cólera*, could easily have become lowbrow products because the melodramatic nature of the stories. Instead, all three literary works have been transformed into high-quality versions in other media.

I have chosen these three prominent works of art because they represent real value as well as a wide range of social, cultural and historical contexts; because they are all deeply related to the traditional culture of Spain and Colombia, and because I was able to find material that would be appropriate to my students' level. I expect my students will learn from these literary masterpieces and they will remember some of it.

I will teach the unit throughout the year. Starting in December, we will use *Carmen* first. The novella takes place in Andalusia and there are certain elements that I will like my students to become familiar with while reading the text in English: I will also encourage them to pay attention to the structure of the novella, as well as to identify cultural elements that they recognize as unfamiliar. I want to start with this literary piece because it introduces some of the elements that we will explore in depth when we get to Lorca's *Bodas de Sangre.* 

The students will become familiar with some of the Andalusian traditions and cultural manifestations, as well as some of the not always true stereotypes. In order to do so, I want my students to reflect on what these stereotypes are and how they can be broken. Along with the themes and meanings of the novella, I will introduce the notion of adapting literary products into different media. We will compare different film versions. I will then introduce a couple of artistic forms students will not know too much about: opera and flamenco. The story of *Carmen* is universally recognized due to Bizet's opera. We will mainly work with Carlos Saura's version, which is based on both the opera and the novella and which incorporates flamenco.

Working with *Carmen* will give me the opportunity to develop a mini workshop on flamenco. We will learn basic rhythms, the different "*acompañamientos*" (*cante, baile* and *guitarra*), and some of the most important "*palos*." (2)

The second adaptation will be *Bodas de Sangre*, one of Lorca's masterpieces and a work that fits perfectly with my purposes for the unit. First of all, we will be able to connect it with what we had learned before about stereotypes, and about certain Andalusian traditions and cultural aspects. I also chose this brilliant literary

piece because it will allow me to introduce Federico García Lorca and his work to my students. This part of the unit will be taught in the last couple of weeks of March, when students feel a little bit more comfortable with the language and they will have reached a higher level of understanding when reading an"authentic" (3) literary work. We will be using a bilingual copy of the drama.

Because of the large Latino population in New Haven, and because of the relevance of many authors in almost every country, I would be foolish not to include a Hispanic American work in a unit about adapting literary Spanish works. Since García Márquez is one of the world's greatest writers, I have the urge to teach *El amor en los tiempos del cólera* to my students. As the unit will be taught in a lower level course, I will be using a bilingual version of the text (or both the Spanish version and a good translation). This third and final part of the unit will be presented in early May, when students will be able to work more independently and have a better understanding of the relationship between film and literature.

## **Carlos Saura**

An additional aim I seek to reach with the unit is to expose my students to highly regarded artistic expressions. With this in mind, I would like to spend a lot of energy on Carlos Saura, who is one of the best contemporary Spanish filmmakers. The fact that he has adapted two of the three literary works I am taking up, gives me the chance to see how a powerful filmmaker deals with powerful literature. Furthermore, it helps show my students that films do not just reduce culture to entertainment, but contribute to it in a different medium.

Carlos Saura directed two of the films we are going to work with in depth: *Bodas de Sangre* (1980) and *Carmen* (1983). Both films, with the addition of *El Amor Brujo* (1986), are part of a trilogy of flamenco dance films in which Saura examines the Andalusian folk and the gypsy tradition. In these three works, Saura strives

toward a lucidity about the familiar cultural artifacts that construct social and personal identity. For that reason the centerpiece of all three films is the figure of performance: dancers playing the part of fictional characters who are bound inextricably to fatalistic scenarios; individuals whose identity as dancers is itself the result of a willed submission to a cluster of artistic and social mythologies; finally the figure of a Spaniard as a performer of a cultural ethos to which his own identity appears irrevocably bound. (D'Lugo 1991, 193)

Another essential feature common to the three films is the idea of performance: the figure of these dancers and singers as performers of cultural products to which their identity seems to be bound.

Carlos Saura is one of the most internationally acclaimed Spanish filmmakers and one of the most prolific (almost 40 features in his near 50 years). Carlos Saura's films reflect the changes in Spanish society: from Franco's censorship to democracy with an equal and constant focus on personal and historical memories and artistic roots of Spanish cultural heritage.

Although he studied engineering, he soon became a professional photographer. As such, in his early years as a filmmaker, he was more interested in documentary films and photography than in narrative cinema. His first works were very critical toward *Franquismo* (Francoist society) and the Civil War. During the last five years of Franco's dictatorship, Saura's films became more aggressive and confrontational in their criticism of Franco's society and government. In films like *El jardín de las delicias* (1970), *Ana y los lobos* (1972) and *La prima Angélica* (1973), he used symbolic characters and other strategies to try to avoid censorship.

After Franco's death in 1975, in the period of *la Transición* (the Transition) when the censorship was not a threat anymore and the country went back to be a democracy, Saura began making more personal and intimate films such as *Elisa vida mía* (1977). In the 80's he began to work with the producer Emiliano Piedra and with Antonio Gades and his dance company. The flamenco dance trilogy I have referred to previously is a result of this collaboration. As Marvin D'Lugo states, "although these films also sought to underscore the structures of social containment that shape Spanish identity, they are ultimately viewed outside of Spain simply as expressions of Spanish art cinema." (D'Lugo 1997, 200)

Saura wanted to explore one of the most popular and probably universal expressions of "Spanishness" to the eyes of the rest of the world: el flamenco. It seems essentially Spanish, and yet it is associated with gypsies and so, especially to the eyes of foreign artists, with what is Spain's "other" or its "outside." Providing a natural cultural tension, it easily instigates dramas. (4) While Saura's attitude toward his sources changes from film to film, what remains present in all of them is the specter of the falsifications to which the notion of Spain and Spanishness has been presented by foreigners and occasionally by some Spaniards.

In the 90s Saura made some other films related to flamenco themes such as *Sevillanas* (1992) and *Flamenco* (1994) *Salomé* (2002) *or Iberia* (2005) as well as other kinds of films: *El Sur* (1991), *Taxi* (1996) *Pajarico* (1997), *Tango* (1998), *Goya en Burdeos* (1999), *Buñuel y la mesa del rey Salomón* (2001), etc.

## Carmen

Although the story of Carmen is well known universally due to the opera Georges Bizet premiered in March 1875, it was his fellow citizen Prosper Mérimée who had previously immortalized the story in a novella with the same title.

Concha Calleja in her book *Carmen: Deseo y muerte*, presents three different sources that encompass the story of Carmen. She mentions "tres Carmenes distintas—dependiendo de quien las narre—pero que lindan en una misma mujer: libre, que no libertina; luchadora, que no salvaje; esposa que no esclava; apasionada que no lasciva... Tres espíritus nobles para las tres Carmenes, porque las tres son la misma." (5)

The author, in order to present them and then compare them, writes about the three "Carmenes" as if they were contemporaries and friends. These three sources are: the real Carmen, who lived in Seville between 1810 and 1824, the year in which José Lizarrabengoa supposedly killed her; and the two fiction characters—the one Eugenia de Montijo talked about to her friend Prosper Mérimée, and the Carmen he created in his novella.

Although there are some similarities, many are the differences among these "three Carmenes." The most important one would beon the way Mérimée presents Gypsy society and particularly the way he depicts women. The author portrays promiscuous women when chastity and honor have been and still are of great value in Romani society.

#### Mérimée's Carmen

Mérimée was a writer and a historian who used specific Spanish history and culture to create the exotic background of *Carmen*. In the novella, he drew on false violent associations of the Basques through Don José and, wove into his story the flavor of Gypsy life he had observed on his travels, mixing real and romantic legend elements that contributed to construct a popular mythology of Romani life that does not fully agree with reality. In fact, *Carmen* was one of many works from the French Romanticism period that helped to construct a popular mythology of Gypsy life and history—together with novels by Victor Hugo, and Alexandre Dumas, paintings by Gustave Doré, and Charles Baudelaire's poems. (6)

When the novella was first published in a French periodical called "La Revue des Deux Mondes" in 1845, it was divided into three parts. A fourth one was added when the book was published a year later. This last part does not have anything to do with the rest of the story since it is a "scholar looking" non-scientific set of remarks on the Romani (Gypsy) people. This part is particularly interesting to me because I can teach students about stereotypes, how to recognize and question them in order to break them.

Mérimée tells the story as if it had happened to him on a trip to Spain in 1830. In Part I, Mérimée is searching for the site of a battle in Andalusia, when he meets and befriends an ex-soldier called José. At an inn they both stay at, Mérimée learns that his new friend is José Navarro, a dangerous robber the authorities are looking for. As Mérimée's guide leaves to inform on him, the narrator warns Don José, who escapes in time.

Part II: Later on, in Córdoba, Mérimée meets a beautiful gypsy who insists on telling him his fortune and who seems to be fascinated by his watch. He goes to her home so she can tell his fortune. A man who happens to be Don José interrupts them and, although Carmen makes threatening gestures to him, he escorts Mérimée out. The Frenchman finds his watch missing, but does not go back to get it. Months later, Mérimée learns from a friend that the bandit who supposedly robbed his watch, José Navarro, is to be garroted. Mérimée visits him and is about to hear the story of his life.

In Part III, Don José narrates his story. His real name is José Lizarrabengoa, he is a hidalgo from Elizondo, Navarre. As the result of afight, he had to flee, entering a cavalry regiment in Almansa, a town in La Mancha. He then moved to Seville as a sergeant in order to supervise the Tobacco Factory, where he met Carmen. A few hours later he had to arrest her for cutting another worker in the face in a fight. She convinced him to let her go and, as a result, he was demoted and spent a month in prison.

After his release he encountered her again, allowing her fellow smugglers passing his post and finally, after killing his lieutenant moved by jealousy, he had to join Carmen's outlaw band. When José found out Carmen was a married woman, he provoked a fight withher husband, killing him.

Carmen lost interest on Jose as she became attracted to a picador called Lucas. When she confessed to José she would never give in to him, he stabbed her to death and turned himself in. José ends this story claiming the Roma are to blame for the way they raised Carmen.

Part IV, as mentioned before, attempts to be a compendium on the Roma customs, history and language, lacking accuracy and/or reality.

The story of Carmen has been versioned in film more than fifty times. I have chosen six different adaptations of the original in order to offer my students an ample vision of the myth and to help them discern that this same old myth transcends cultures and time.

Some of the versions worth mentioning I will not work with are: *Carmen* (United States, Charles Chaplin, 1915), *Carmen* directed by Ernst Lubitsch in Germany in 1918, *Loves of Carmen* (United States, Raoul Walsh, 1927), another *Loves of Carmen* directed and produced by Charles Vidor in the United States in 1948, and *PrénomCarmen* (France, Jean-Luc Godard, 1983)

#### Carmen (Spain, Carlos Saura, 1983)

*Carmen* is the second part of the trilogy of flamenco films made in collaboration between Carlos Saura, Emiliano Piedra (producer) and Antonio Gades, one of the great flamenco figures and choreographers of all times. This film was created specifically for the screen, unlike *Bodas de Sangre*, which resulted from the filming of the rehearsal of a ballet version Gades had prepared in advance.

The structure of the film is extremely interesting since Antonio frequently confuses real-life situations with those in Bizet's plot. In *Carmen*, Gades is planning a flamenco version of Mérimée's novella. While searching for the right *bailaora* (flamenco female dancer) to play the lead role, he meets Carmen (Laura del Sol). Even though Carmen is less talented than Cristina Hoyos (the lead dancer), he recruits her and falls in love with her. The movie then starts combining real-life and part of Bizet's version of the tale. The audience, from this point on, is not able to discern if the dance numbers the company rehearses are part of the ballet, Antonio's real experiences with Carmen or simply are a product of his imagination. His failure to separate his life and consciousness from the Bizet's opera is one of the main themes of the film.

Carlos Saura masterfully adds intellectual enigma to the dance sequences by presenting conflicting planes of reality and fiction (theater), alternating these with sets of incredible dance sequences. As D'Lugo states, "one of the most striking dimesions of the film, and what sets it apart from most other dance films, is the stunning collaboration between Saura's filming strategies and the powerful dance performance by Gades and Cristina Hoyos" (D'Lugo 1997, 41)

All of this is visually and aesthetically beautiful and the story within the documentary gives the movie a twist that will give the students reasons to think about narrative and structure. We will view the whole movie, since I want students to familiarize themselves with flamenco. We will have a small workshop on flamenco. The movie will be segmented so we can carefully discuss what is happening (the copy I own does not have subtitles) and what reactions the students have.

## Carmen Jones (United States, Otto Preminger, 1954)

**Carmen Jones** is a 1943 version of the Broadway musical. This movie is an adaptation of Georges Bizet's opera by Oscar Hammerstein II (book) and Harry Kleiner (screenplay). They placed Dorothy Dandridge and Harry Belafonte in the lead roles. The action changed significantly: for instance, instead of an Andalusian tobacco setting, the backdrop is World War II America. Only the main character keeps her original name.

Carmen here is a parachutemaker who makes moveson Joe, a soldier who is in love with another woman called Cindy Lou. Carmen seduces Joe.He leaves everything to be with Carmen, until he gets into a fatal argument with his sergeant. Forced to desert his regiment, he runs away with Carmen, who loses interest in him and abandons him shortly after. Her new object of desire is the boxer Husky Miller. Joe kills Carmen when, at a boxing match, she rejects him. Asfor the music, Hammerstein translated Bizet's compositions, originally in French, into English for the Broadway production as well as for the film version of it.

Fragments of the movie will be compared to some fragments of the Opera in order to help students

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understand how adaptations work. It would also be of a great interest to have students compare fragments of *Carmen Jones* and fragments of the editing of *Karmen Geï*.

All the cast members in *Carmen Jones* are African-American, and students in my classes will appreciate this fact. I can explore the idea of myths transcending ethnic and cultural boundaries, as well as the idea of universality. I will have them identify those characteristics they consider intrinsic to African-Americans. They will finally compare them to the ones Mérimée considers to be the characteristics of the Roma people.

## Carmen (Spain-United Kingdom-Italy, Vicente Aranda, 2003)

This is a movie I was hoping to use in its entirety. Unfortunately, there are too many scenes with either nudity or sex. I will only show some brief fragments since I really think students will enjoy the photography. The movie was filmed in Seville in some of the real historical places, a fact that will help my students think about the importance of setting and mise-en-scène in a movie. This version is very close to Mérimée's literary piece.

## Carmen (France-Italy, Francesco Rosi, 1984)

This Francesco Rosi's version of *Carmen*, based on Bizet's adaptation, is one of the best opera films ever made. This excellent film mixes many unique elements such as actual bullfighting footage in the opening scene, extraordinary photography, real Andalusian locations (Seville, Ronda and Carmona), Antonio Gades' choreography as well as music with singers like Plácido Domingo, and featuring Julia Migenes and Ruggero Raimondi as lead actors. It received the 1984 César (national French film award) for sound. Since the movie was filmed in French, we will only view certain scenes to briefly introduce opera to students in order compare the film with another musical later on: *Carmen Jones*.

## Carmen (United States, Cecil B. DeMille, 1915)

This silent movie premiered in October 1915 in Boston's Symphony Hall. It is interesting since Geraldine Farrar, the leading soprano of the Metropolitan at that time, plays the role of Carmen. She portrays a very sensual Carmen for the time. This version is based on Bizet's pattern which uses the bullfighter rather than the picador as a key character.

This movie is not too long, only 75 minutes and, although I will not use more than a couple of fragments, my students will grasp an idea of silent films. They will also notice and reflect on the advances of film. Since George Bizet's opera music is the sound track of the movie, they will start getting familiar with the sounds. I will have them work in groups to identify characters and their roles. By the time we see the movie we will have already worked with Merimée's text. So students will be able to recognize details and characters. Since it is a silent film, I can have them write the dialogue to fill out certain scenes.

## Karmen Geï (Senegal-France-Canada, Joseph Gaï Ramaka, 2001)

*Karmen Geï* is the first African Carmen. The movie takes the story to Dakar, Senegal. Like all the others, the film is about the conflict between freedom and law, with a major difference: since *Karmen Geï* is an African film, the idea of freedom has to have a political dimension. We will not be able to view the entire film because of sexual content. I will only show scenes that illustrate an African style expressing the tensions in this universal story.

#### Carmen (Opera by Georges Bizet, 1975)

Doing adaptations of Carmen, I could not avoid taking a brief moment to work with the opera, since the story is well known universally due to this particular version. The purpose of including opera in the unit is merely to introduce this artform to my students. Due to the extension of the unit, I do not intend to spend too long with this version. Some other teachers might want to explore this further.

## **Bodas de Sangre**

#### Federico García Lorca

Federico García Lorca was born in Fuente Vaqueros, Granada on June 5, 1898; he was the son of a liberal landowner and a teacher. In 1908 he moved to Granada, where he attended high school and studied music. In 1915 he started his studies in philosophy and law in the University of Granada, but he would soon abandon his legal studies for music, literature, art, and theatre. He met and befriended one of the most important musicians of the 20th century, Manuel de Falla.

In 1918 he published a prose book inspired on a trip through Castile titled *Impresiones y paisajes*. The following year, he transferred to Madrid. He lived in la "*Residencia de Estudiantes*," a cultural center for college students that was founded in 1910. One of the main goals of the "*Residencia de Estudiantes*" was to deepen university studies by creating an intellectual environment for students. The aim was to favor constant dialogue between science and arts as well as to act as a center for international vanguard movements. Lorca became there associated with a group of artists and intellectuals who later on would be known as *Generación del 27*, including Salvador Dalí, Luis Buñuel, and Rafael Alberti.

Lorca's first theatrical production, *El maleficio de la mariposa (The Butterfly's Evil Spell*), opened in 1920, having to close a day later since it was a failure. He published his first collection of poems in 1921. The following years he got his degree in law and continued drawing and writing. In 1928 his *Romancero Gitano (The Gypsy Ballads)* made him famous. He suffered an emotional crisis that led him to move to New York in 1929, where he attended Columbia University. During the years he spent there, he came into contact with amateur theater groups and professional repertory companies. The profound impact New York had on him is reflected in the poetry collection titled *Poeta en Nueva York* (published posthumously). This collection was to be one of the main works of European surrealism.

Back in Spain, with the Republic having been proclaimed in April 1931, art and culture spread rapidly throughout the country. Artists and intellectuals became quite involved in this process. Lorca founded and directed "*La Barraca*" ("The Shack"), a university student theater company that was funded by the Ministry of Education to introduce modern and radical interpretations of classic Spanish dramas to all sorts of audiences in rural and remote areas of the country. From this moment on, Lorca felt deeply involved in the diffusion of culture among the poor. The years to follow he spent most of his time in theater. The first of his tragedies, *Bodas de Sangre* (1933) was based on a newspaper account of a bride who ran off with a lover on her wedding night. Some other tragedies worth mentioning would be *Yerma* (1934) and *La casa de Bernarda Alba* (*The House of Bernarda Alba*, 1936). As for the farces, Lorca worked up several: *La zapatera prodigiosa* (*The Prodigious Cobbler's Wife*, 1930) and El *amor de Don Perlimplín con Belisa en su jardín* (*The Love of Don Perlimplín with Belisa in Her Garden*, 1933).

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On July 18, 1936 Franco led a military uprising against the Republican government that would eventually result in the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939). Unfortunately, Federico García Lorca was murdered in Viznar, Granada in the early morning of August 19, 1936. His works were outlawed and burned, and his name forbidden. His plays and poems were not revived until the 1940s, and some of his works remained banned until as late as 1971. Lorca is considered the greatest Spanish poet and dramatist of the 20th Century.

The Tragedy: Federico García Lorca's Bodas de Sangre

*Bodas de Sangre* (1932) is the first part of the author's "Rural Trilogy," *Yerma* (1934) and *La Casa de Bernarda Alba* (1936) being the other two. The main common themes in these three are love, pride, passion and violent death.

Lorca's text reflects his effort to transform what would have been a folkloric melodrama into an authentic folk tragedy. The core of the tragedy lies in the treatment of the codes of honor and revenge which define social action in terms of primitive instincts, something vital to the Spanish cultural tradition. The code of honor was the main theme in hundreds of dramas during the Spanish *Siglo de Oro* (*Spanish Golden Age*), a period of flourishing in arts and literature in Spain.

The tragedy is divided in three acts and seven scenes. I consider it important to give a brief description of the synopsis since it is necessary to know the story very well in order to recognize what is happening in Saura's movie.

In Act 1, scene one, the Bridegroom asks his mother for a knife (the symbol for death) and we learn that two men in her family—her husband and a son— had died stabbed in a fight with men of the Félix family. She mentions they will ask for the Bride's hand on Sunday. A neighbor stops by talking about how people say that the Bride's former love is Leonardo—a Félix—now married to her cousin.

In the following scene, Leonardo's wife and Mother-in-Law sing a lullaby about a dying horse (the horse symbolizes passion). Leonardo's Wife, pregnant again, tells him of her cousin's wedding. Leonardo reacts strangely and then leaves.

In Act 1, scene 3, the Mother and the Bridegroom arrive at the Bride's home. The Father is really pleased with the match. The wedding is planned for the Bride's twenty-second birthday. The Bride seems to be serious and not too happy. Leonardo arrives riding a horse, only the Bride's servant notices.

Act 2, scene 1: The wedding day. Leonardo is the first guest to arrive. He accuses the Bride of pushing him to marry someone else, of rejecting him because he was poor. He insists that the Bride's feelings and his are too deep to fade. He tells the Servant not to be worried since he will not speak to the Bride again.

Act 2, scene 2: after the wedding everyone returns from the church for the party. The Bridegroom insists on dancing with the Bride, but she says she needs to rest in her room for a while. Leonardo's Wife announces that her husband and the Bride have left together on his horse. The Bridegroom goes off to chase them while his Mother urges him: "The hour of blood has come again."

Act 3, scene 1: The forest at night. Three woodcutters are convinced the couple will be found and they will die. The Moon (the moon symbolizes fecundity, life and death), hungry for blood shines intensely for Death, personalized as an old crone, who leads the Bridegroom. The Bride and Leonardo appear. Death returns to speak, while offstage the Bridegroom and Leonardo kill each other in a knife fight.

Act 3, scene 2: The bodies are carried out from the forest. The Wife will live in seclusion with her children. The Bride, though she is still a virgin, has lost her innocence. She begs her husband's Mother to give her a cruel death, but she refuses. The Bride will live, mourning as women do.

## Bodas de Sangre (Spain, Carlos Saura, 1981)

*Bodas de Sangre* is the first part of a series of flamenco dance films. It is a very simple and clear adaptation of Garcia Lorca's drama. The film avoids any kind of convention. The author does so by presenting the film as an artistic process through rehearsals of Lorca's tragedy by Gades and his ballet company. Saura presents an interplay between film, ballet, literature, and flamenco music through the formal rhythm created with detailed close-ups of the dancers' bodies and observational wide-angles of the action, which unfolds on a bare stage in order to avoid theatricality.

Saura was afraid to make too local a movie in which people could only see stereotypes of Andalusia. He emphasized performance as such by purifying the dance elements to their essential form through the repetition, the preparation, the warming up, an uninterrupted dress rehearsal and the bare studio walls. He also gave the film a quotidian touch by showing the dancers preparing backstage: getting dressed and putting make up on as Gades describes his beginnings as a dancer.

The film is divided in two main sections: first, the arrival of Gades's dance company members at the hall where the rehearsal is going to take place, and second, the ballet itself with no interruptions or fancy settings. The first section was initially going to be a filler since the ballet was not long enough to be commercialized as a film. Far from being a filler, this first part is key as it brings into focus the transformation the dancers go through.

## El Amor en los Tiempos del Cólera

## Gabriel García Márquez

Gabriel García Márquez was born on March 6, 1928 in Aracataca, a Colombian banana town in the Caribbean. He was raised by his maternal grandparents, who were a great influence on him. Since his parents had economic and social difficulties, Gabo (García Márquez) lived with them until he was 8 years old, when the colonel passed away and his grandma had sight problems. He went to live with his parents in Sucre, where his father was working as a pharmacist. Soon after he was sent to a boarding school in Barranquilla.

In 1940, he was awarded a scholarship in the Liceo Nacional, a high school for gifted students run by Jesuits. In 1946 he started his university education as a law student in the Universidad Nacional, in Bogotá. Since he had no interest in law at all, he began to abandon his academic life and eventually, himself. It was Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* that made him comprehend literature did not have to follow a fixed narrative and plot. As a result of this revelation, he started reading avidly and writing his first stories, which were praised and published in 1946 in "El Espectador," a Liberal newspaper of Bogotá.

Some political events in 1948-the assassination of Gaitán, the closure of the Universidad Nacional or, el

"*Bogotazo*"— made Gabo transfer to the Universidad de Cartagena where he was still studying law. He got a daily column in a local newspaper, something he enjoyed much more. In 1950 he decided to abandon his law studies and moved to Barranquilla to write. There he became part of a literary clique, el "grupo de Barranquilla." Under their influence he began to read the classics and the work of Hemingway, Woolf, Joyce and Faulkner. Sophocles and William Faulkner greatly influenced his writings in the late forties and early fifties. From Faulkner, he learned to write about things close to his reality. The novella titled *La Hojarasca* (*Leaf Storm*, 1955) was the result of this.

After some difficulties, he moved back to Bogotá in 1954, where he got a job writing stories and film reviews for a newspaper, "El Espectador." While working on a story, he involved the Pinilla government. Worried that the dictator might persecute García Márquez directly, his editors sent him on assignment to Italy. He then wandered around Europe as a correspondent, studied film in Rome, traveled through Geneva, Poland and Hungary to settle in Paris. It was there where he found out that the Pinilla government had shut down his paper. Without a job and money, he wrote the drafts for *El coronel no tiene quien le escriba (No One Writes to the Colonel)*, and part of *Este pueblo de mierda* (what would later on be *La mala hora—In Evil Hour)*. Soon after he traveled to London, he moved to Venezuela, the destination of most Colombian refugees. In 1957 he toured with an old friend through Europe's communist countries, writing articles for various Latin American publications. In 1958 he risked a visit to Colombia to marry his girlfriend. Both of them slipped back to Caracas. Soon after the paper he was working for, took a different political direction, something that made García Márquez resign. The couple ended in Havana, and García Márquez worked covering the revolution.

In 1959 the family moved to New York and then to Mexico City not too long after, where he worked on screenplays and wrote subtitles for films. He finally could publish some of his works: *El coronel no tiene quien le escriba* (1961), *Los funerals de Mamá Grande* (*Big Mama's Funeral*, 1962), and sent *Este pueblo de mierda* to the Colombian Esso literary contest changing its title to *La mala hora* (*In Evil Hour*). The novel won the contest and was published in Madrid in 1962. The publisher changed the language, the Latin American slang, etc, so Gabo repudiated it. The book was finally published as Gabo had written it in 1966.

In January 1965, he began writing his masterpiece, *Cien años de soledad* (*A Hundred Years of Solitude*, 1967). The novel was translated into over a dozen languages and won many international prizes. Other works to follow were *La increíble y triste historia de la cándida Eréndira y de su abuela desalmada* (*Innocent Eréndira and Other Stories*, 1972), *Cuando era feliz e indocumentado* (*When I Was Happy and Uninformed*, 1975) a collection of his journalistic work from the fifties. Aware of his power as a writer, he began to pursue his interests in political activism, getting involved in different causes.

He was awarded the Nobel Prize of literature in 1982. The lecture of acceptance of the prize, "The Solitude of Latin America" was a tribute to Latin America.

Other major novels and novellas are: *El otoño del patriarca* (Autumn of the Patriarch, 1975), Crónica de una muerte anunciada (Chronicle of a Death Foretold, 1982), *El amor en los tiempos del cólera* (Love in the Time of Cholera, 1984), *El general en su laberinto* (The General in his Labyrinth, 1991),Doce cuentos peregrinos, (Strange Pilgrims, 1992), Del amor y otros demonios (Love and Other Demons, 1994), Noticia de un secuestro (News of a Kidnapping, 1997), Vivir para contarla (2002) and Memoria de mis putas tristes (Memories of my Melancholy Whores, 2004).

I cannot write about film and literature without mentioning the important role these two disciplines have played in García Márquez' life. Cinema is one of his passions, and he has always been close to it. He worked as a film critic for a while, translated and wrote subtitles and wrote screenplays. In the early 1960s, Gabo lived in Mexico where he tried to make a living as a screenwriter. During this time he got acquainted with the director Arturo Ripstein, among others.

Although he wrote (or co-wrote) screenplays such as *Juego peligroso* (Mexico, Luis Alcoriza and Arturo Ripstein, 1967), *Tiempo de morir* (*A Time to Die,* Mexico, Jorge Alí Triana, 1985), *Fábula de la bella palomera* (*Fable of the Beautiful Pigeon Fancier*)

(Spain, Ruy Guerra, 1988) and *Edipo alcalde* (Colombia, Jorge Alí Triana, 1996), he had to admit that film was not the best medium to transmit what he had to say. He recognized that film could be much more limited than novels. This is one of the reasons he would never allow anyone to adapt *Cien años de soledad*, because he wished readers to continue imagining the characters.

The Films based on his literary works are: *María de mi corazón (María my Dearest*, Mexico, Jaime Humberto Hermosillo, 1979), *Eréndira* (Mexico, Ruy Guerra, 1983), *Cronaca di una morte annunciata (Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, Italy-France, Francesco Rosi, 1987), *Un señor muy viejo con unas alas enormes (A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings*, Cuba, Fernando Birri, 1988), *Mujer que llegaba a las seis* (Mexico, Arturo Flores and Rogelio Jaramillo, 1991), *El coronel no tiene quien le escriba (No One Writes to the Colonel*, Mexico, Arturo Ripstein, 1999) and finally, the object of our interest, *Love in the Time of Cholera* (USA, Mike Newell, 2007).

## The Novel (1985)

*El amor en los tiempos del cólera* was the first novel by Gabriel García Márquez to be published after he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature, in 1982. The story takes place in a Caribbean coastal city, unnamed but said to be a blend of Cartagena and Barranquilla, between about 1880 and 1930. The three main characters form a love triangle —something we already saw in *Carmen* and *Bodas de Sangre*.

Florentino Ariza, a young apprentice telegrapher, meets Fermina Daza and falls in love with her instantly. Without having seen each other or talked for a long time, they engage in a secret affair by letters and telegrams even after Fermina's father sends her away on a journey, in order to help her forget Florentino. When she returns, she rejects him, marrying Dr. Juvenal Urbino instead. Although this would be a terrible reversal for anyone, Florentino swears he will love her forever and decides to wait for her as long as he has to, until she is free again. This turns to be 51 years, 9 moths and 4 days when Dr. Juvenal dies absurdly.

After the funeral and when everyone has already left, Florentino declares his love again, announcing he has waited for more than a half a century to repeat his vow of love and eternal fidelity. Furious and shocked, Fermina asks him to leave the house. This confrontation takes place at the end of the first chapter. García Márquez then goes back 50 years to follow the lives of the three characters: through the years of Urbino and Fermina's marriage, the rise of Florentino at the River Company, the turn of the century, the fighting of the cholera, etc. The last chapter takes up where the first one left off, and Florentino decides to court Fermina again, doing whatever it takes, until she loves him in return.

The novel is a universal story of love's ability to transcend time, while presenting a great portrait of Colombian history in the late nineteenth-early twentieth centuries. In *El amor en los tiempos del cólera*, cultural history is secondary to the theme of love, its mystery and the effect it has on individuals. Márquez develops a deep study on the nature of love with its different forms and implications: as an obsession, as a force of nature or even as an agent of sexuality.

The quality of the novel, the historical and cultural elements and the universal treatment of love transcend the

melodramatic elements of this courtship, pointing out once again the importance of choosing solid, strong literary woks when dealing with adaptations.

## About the Film. . .

After years of turning down Hollywood's offers to buy the rights to adapt *El amor en los tiempos del cólera,* García Marquez agreed at last to sell them. Currently in production, this will be the first English-language screen adaptation of a work by García Márquez. Other novels and stories like *El coronel no tiene quien le escriba* (Mexico-France-Spain, Arturo Ripstein, 1999) or *Crónica de una muerte anunciada* (Colombia-France-Italy, Francesco Rosi, 1987) have been adapted by Latin American or Italian filmmakers, but Hollywood had never been allowed to do so.

The movie is to be released in mid November of this year, 2007. This final part of the unit will not be taught until May, so we will have enough time to fully work with parts of the novel in order to view the film. The fact that the film will only be coming out during the school year will give me the opportunity to create some mystery and develop activities exploring how students would adapt the novel. We can watch the attention given to it and read some criticism of the adaptation before seeing it and making up our own minds. This makes the question of adaptation come alive.

## **Strategies**

As stated previously, the goal I want to achieve with the present curriculum unit is to provide my students with the tools to recognize some of the cultural aspects depicted in the films that we will be working with. But above all that, my main aspiration is to be able to interest my students in looking at films with a different perspective, with a critical and analytical eye.

The unit is unmistakably ambitious since I am opening more than a couple of fronts at the same time: the literary world by working with three different genres (novella, drama and novel); the film world by timidly opening the door of film analysis (something Professor Andrew has done for me, for which I am extremely grateful); the music world by trying to understand opera; and finally, the dance world. Film participates and extends cultural expressions.

## "Reading and thinking" Literature

Throughout the unit I will provide my students with various activities to emphasize the importance of structure and style when dealing with literature and/or film. Since we are to work with three different literary genres, students will be given tasks that will help them to acknowledge the main characteristics of each. I am also interested in developing critical thinking strategies that will assist students to make connections, logical deductions, and inferences while reading.

## "Films, films, films"

#### Viewing Cues

Since I want my students to learn to analyze films, I will start many of the lessons introducing one or two

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"Viewing Cue(s)" contained in Timothy Corrigan's *The Film Experience* (7), since "they are designed to encourage critical viewing habits and offer cues for film analysis." I will sample these with scenes of the movies we are working with throughout the unit, using other films when necessary. This will take a good 10 to 15 minutes every day we work on this strategy, but I consider learning to look at a movie important. In addition, students will be practicing their listening comprehension.

As they enter the room, students will get a piece of paper with a brief description of the "*Cue*." Next, we will discuss it as a group to make sure everyone understands, and then we will view the example previously selected by me.

## Segmentation

Viewing all the movies completely is not necessary. We will be using fragments of most the films except, hopefully, *Love in the Times of Cholera* and Saura's *Bodas de Sangre.* This latter film is not too long and the students will not be too distracted with the dialogue, since the only sound in the second part of the movie is the music.

By the time we watch the film, students will be familiar with Garcia Lorca's text and the original story, so it will be of great interest to see my students' reactions to the adaptation, as well as to see how they would segment the movie. Students will be given specific instructions on how to take notes and how to proceed with this task so it is well structured and meaningful for everyone.

#### Still Images

Along with the segmentation, I would like my students to learn how to take still images—using a computer of the fragments of films we will be viewing. While doing so, they will have to decide and explain why a specific image has been chosen. Students will be asked to analyze their chosen images in detail, using film vocabulary they have learned.

## Writing Dialogue

Students will create dialogue for scenes I will select in advance. After watching the scene(s) chosen for the first time, students will be asked to describe what they have seen. What is the setting, time of the action, who are characters and how would they describe them, etc. We will then view the scene a second time in order to verify students have not missed any important detail.

We will then brainstorm. Each student or group will write subtitles. Students/groups will present the dialogue to the rest of the class and everyone will vote for the best one based on the grammar, etc, according to a rubric provided for this purpose.

## "The Unit's Soundtrack"

As an educator I try to expand my students' views by bringing different disciplines into the Spanish classroom. Focusing on other cultures is an aim I try not to forget about, but it is necessary to increase students' background knowledge as much as possible. By introducing them to opera and flamenco, two musical genres they are not necessarily used to, I am hoping to activate some kind of interest in the arts as develop their skills and understanding within and across disciplines.

#### Opera

Opera is not going to be a main center of interest within the unit. I am going to introduce it to my students in order to serve to get students interested, to have them understand it and to let them explore what it feels like, to value the artform as an adaptation product.

#### Flamenco

As mentioned before, the flamenco component is key in the unit. Students will be able to recognize or at least understand flamenco as a genre that involves strong musical and cultural traditions. We are going to work with the three forms of flamenco, the *toque* (playing of the guitar), the *cante* (singing) and the *baile* (dancing) by listening to some of the main figures and viewing some short performances or fragments from movies, as Sauras' *Carmen, Bodas de Sangre, Flamenco* or *Iberia* and others.

## **Sample Lesson Plans**

#### Lesson One: Flamenco

(This lesson plan is to be developed in an 82-minute class. However, it can be changed according to teachers' needs)

Goal

To introduce my students to flamenco

#### Learning Objectives

As a result of this lesson students will be able to:

- 1. Recognize the importance of culture as part of the identity of countries and develop understanding of other countries and cultures.
- 2. Read and gather information of a text written in Spanish in order to select the main ideas.
- 3. Practice their reading comprehension skills.
- 4. Broaden vocabulary.
- 5. Express relevant information in their own words.

#### Materials

Power Point presentation on flamenco, LCD projector, computer with Internet access, speakers, flamenco music, questionnaire on the presentation, graphic organizer, handout with basic flamenco vocabulary.

#### Initiation

The teacher will be playing flamenco music (Paco de Lucía, Camarón de la Isla, Estrella Morente, Niña Pastori, Jose Mercé) during "*passing time*" so the students will hear the music as they enter the classroom and get ready to work.

"Toss the bull" strategy: I usually start all of my classes passing around a foam bull toy

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while asking questions about grammar, or anything. It is a great strategy because you assess students daily and it helps to start the class on a good tone, since they love it! In this case, students will be asked what they know about flamenco.

## Procedure

- 1. There will be a student writing the answers of students on the board.
- 2. The teacher will give the students a graphic organizer in which they will be taking notes during the Power Point presentation.
- 3. The teacher will present the Power Point to students while asking them to read the information out loud. Students and teacher will discuss every slide to make sure they understand, and to find out reactions students might have.
- 4. Students will have 5 minutes to check their graphic organizers then, they will pair up and comment their responses.
- 5. The teacher will ask the students to brainstorm what they have learned by reading some of the notes they have taken in their graphic organizers. The teacher will collect the students' work.

## Closure

To wrap up the lesson, students and teacher will watch a short video (it is one minute long) of María José Franco (*bailaora*) in the Jerez Flamenco Festival 2007. (8)

## Assessment / homework

Students will be given a couple of days to complete the following homework assignment: they will pretend they are journalists and that they will have to interview Sara Baras, one of the best *bailaoras* (female flamenco dancers). Students will write at least 15 questions with their answers (the assignment could be in English if they do not feel confident enough to write in Spanish). They will be using the list of flamenco links the teacher provided them during the lesson.

## Lesson Two: Literature

(This lesson plan is to be developed in an 82-minute class.)

Goal

To present the figure of Federico García Lorca to the students.

## Learning Objectives

As a result of this lesson students will be able to:

- 1. Practice their listening comprehension.
- 2. Build on their oral reading skills.
- 3. Read and gather information of a text written in Spanish.
- 4. Broaden vocabulary.
- 5. Understand adaptation as a standard practice in the arts.
- 6. Learn to value poetry.

7. Compare a primary source (a poem, in this case) and its adaptation (a song).

## Special Needs

Students and teacher have had read the poem "Romance Sonámbulo" and have discussed the main themes and symbols in a previous class.

## Materials

Handout on Federico García Lorca, Lorca's poem "Romance Sonámbulo" (9) and its musical version "Verde que te quiero verde" by flamenco singer Manzanita and the flamenco band Ketama (10), computer with Internet access, speakers.

## Initiation

Teacher will "pass the bull" asking students different questions about the poem and some of the vocabulary on it.

## Procedure

- 1. A student will read the poem out loud once again.
- 2. The teacher will hand out a copy with basic information on Federico García Lorca. The teacher will call on some students to read fragments out loud.
- 3. The teacher will give students 15 minutes to answer the questions about Lorca on the handout, and then they will correct the answer orally.
- 4. Students and teacher will then listen to the song "Verde que te quiero verde" which is a flamenco version of the poem. A second listening will be necessary for students who will now have a copy of the song in front of them.

## Closure

Students will write 5 lines comparing the original poem with its flamenco version. The teacher will collect this exercise, as well as the questions on Lorca.

## Lesson Three: Film Analysis

(This lesson plan is to be developed in an 82-minute class as well.)

## Goal

To get students' interest on viewing films analytically, in order to develop their critical thinking skills.

## Learning Objectives

As a result of this lesson the students will be able to:

- 1. Become familiar with the vocabulary of film studies and the techniques of cinema.
- 2. Develop their listening skills.
- 3. Recognize some Spanish cultural aspects we have been working with.
- 4. Connect and compare Lorca's drama *Bodas de Sangre* and its film adaptation.

#### Materials

Carlos Saura's *Bodas de Sangre*, LCD projector, computer, speakers, printed chapter summaries of Corrigan and White's *The Film Experience* that students already have (11), DVD Capture—computer program to take still images from movies.

#### Initiation

"Pass the bull" activity asking students to explain or describe film terms (shot, scene, frame, etc.)

#### Procedure

- 1. The teacher will divide the class in 4 groups, each group will be assigned one of the following film analysis divisions: mise-en-scène, cinematography, editing and sound.
- Students will be asked to get into their groups to discuss how they are going to work in order to cover their tasks while viewing the movie. They should have the copy of the chapter summaries and glossaries in front of them.
- 3. Before viewing the movie, the teacher will explain the students that they might want to take still images of the film that might illustrate their analysis. Each group will be able to take 10 still images. Students will respectfully just tell the teacher to take an image by saying "foto" out loud.
- 4. Students and teacher will watch the second part of Saura's *Bodas de Sangre*,— this is, avoiding the documentary with the interview to Antonio Gades, or the dancers practice. This second part is about a half long. For this lesson, I only want to focus on the story. The first part of the movie will be explored in a follow up lesson.
- 5. After the screening, students will get into their groups to put together their ideas and notes.

#### Closure

To wrap up the lesson, 7 minutes before the bell rings, students and teacher will discuss students' reactions to the film.

(A follow up lesson will be necessary.)

## **Endnotes**

(1) ACTFL Performance Guidelines for K-12 Learners

http://www.actfl.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3327

- (2) Guide to Palos. Special Feature
- http://www.flamenco-world.com/magazine/about/palos/paginas/indice.htm
- (3) Authentic materials would be material "created by native speakers for native
- speakers." 2005 Connecticut World Language Curriculum Framework. October 2005.

(4) Dudley Andrew, lecture in Yale National Initiative Seminar "Adapting Literature",

New Haven, July 8, 2007.

(5) Concha Calleja, *Carmen: Deseo y muerte*. Ediciones del Laberinto. (Madrid:2003)13.

"They are three different Carmenes, depending on who the narrator is-, but they all comprise the same woman: free but not a libertine; a fighter, but not wild; a wife, but not a slave; passionate, but not lascivious. . .Three nobel spirits for the three Carmenes, because the three of them are the same woman." (6) Court Theater: Carmen Playnotes http://www.courttheatre.org/home/plays/9697/carmen/PNcarmen.shtml (7) Timothy Corrigan, and Patricia White, The Film Experience: An Introduction. Bedford/St. Martin's. (8) María José Franco. Festival de Jerez 2007. http://www.flamenco-world.com/video/videos\_baile.htm (9) Teachers will find the original poem, written in 1924, and two different translations into English in: http://www.brindin.com/pslorro3.htm (10) Teachers will find this site very helpful since they have the original poem and the version one by Manzanita and Ketama. Teachers will also be able to listen to the song. http://courseweb.stthomas.edu/raraschio/verde.html (11) Web site for the Film Experience. http://bedfordstmartins.com/filmexperience

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-Calleja, Concha. *Carmen: deseo y muerte*. Madrid: Ediciones del Laberinto, 2003. Exhaustive historical approach to the real Carmen and to the myth through its adaptations.

-Corrigan, Timothy and White, Patricia. The Film Experience: An Introduction. Bedford/St. Martin's. Comprehensive text on film concepts and techniques.

-D'Lugo, Marvin. *Guide to the Cinema of Spain.* Westport (Connecticut): Greenwood Press, 1997. Guide to Spanish film documents in the film industry's interpretation of the isolating effects of the cultural traditionalism of the early twentieth century. Discusses, historically and critically, films, directors, and actors.

-D'Lugo, Marvin. *The Films of Carlos Saura: The Practice of Seeing.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991. Marvin D'Lugo looks at the social and artistic forces behind Carlos Saura's highly personal cinema.

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-García Márquez, Gabriel. El amor en los tiempos del cólera. Barcelona: Editorial Bruguera, 1985.

-García Márquez, Gabriel. Love in the Time of Cholera. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1988.

## **Web Resources**

-Federico Garcia Lorca: Study Guide by David Richard Jones and Susan Jones. July 5, 2007. http://www.repertorio.org/education/pdfs/lorca.pdf

-Flamenco World: la web del flamenco. July 20, 2007. http://www.flamenco-world.com/

-Página oficial de Carlos Saura. July 16, 2007.

http://www.clubcultura.com/clubcine/clubcineastas/saura/index.htm

-Yale Film Studies: Film Analysis Website. June 10, 2007. http://classes.yale.edu/ film-analysis

-Flamenco. Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia. May 9, 2007.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flamenco

## Filmography

-Bodas de Sangre (Blood Wedding) (Spain, Carlos Saura, 1981)

-Carmen (France-Italy, Francesco Rosi, 1984)

-Carmen (Spain, Carlos Saura, 1983)

-Carmen (Spain, Vicente Aranda, 2003)

-Carmen (United States, Cecil B. De Mille, 1915)

-Carmen Jones (United States, Otto Preminger, 1954)

-Flamenco (Spain, Carlos Saura, 1994)

-Love in the Time of Cholera (United States, Mike Newell, 2007). This movie will be released November 16, 2007.

-Iberia (Spain-France, Carlos Saura, 2005)

-Karmen Geï (Senegal-France-Canada, Joseph Gaï Ramaka, 2001)

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