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Proficiency-oriented approach to reading Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *La siesta del martes*

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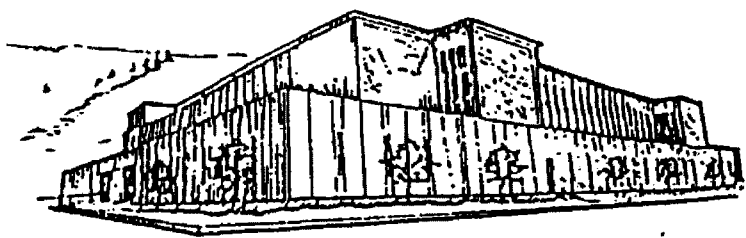
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A PROFICIENCY-ORIENTED APPROACH TO READING
GABRIEL GARCIA MARQUEZ'S "LA SIESTA DEL MARTES"

by

Maureen Agnes Flightner

B.S. Ed, Worcester State College, 1964

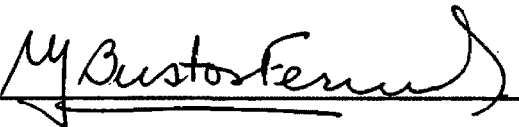
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1994

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A Proficiency-Oriented Approach to Reading Gabriel
García Márquez's "La siesta del martes"

INTRODUCTION

Many fourth year foreign language classes and teaching materials do not place sufficient emphasis on the development of student reading skills. This paper seeks to establish a procedure for improving student reading skills in the fourth year Spanish language class without compromising previously gained competencies in listening, speaking and writing.

Emphasis on the development of reading skills at the secondary level declined with the advent of the audio-lingual concept of language teaching in the 1950's. The eight basic tenets of the audio-lingual approach were:

1) Learning proceeds in this order: (a) hearing and understanding; (b) speaking; (c) usually much later--reading; (d) writing. The tendency was away from "book-centered" materials, and toward extensive audio-lingual practice designed to develop a new set of habits.

2) Instruction proceeded in the initial stages without reference to the printed word.

3) Teaching pronunciation required extensive hearing of the new sounds, preferably contrasted with similar sounds both in the foreign language and the language of the learner, followed by careful drill of their pronunciation.

4) Spoken language is initially presented and practiced in what are called pattern sentences or model sentences.

5) Pattern sentences may or may not be presented initially in dialogue form.

6) Pattern sentences are practiced to the point of "overlearning," i.e., until they become reflex-like habits.

7) The amount of vocabulary which must be acquired is severely restricted until a large number of structures have been mastered.

8) Translation back and forth between foreign language and the native language is avoided.¹

The audio-lingual habit theory tended to play down meaningfulness in favor of producing speech automatically. Few students reached the skill level of being able to read authentic texts such as newspapers, magazines, or literary texts.

Now, almost four decades later, many textbooks and advanced readers continue to provide only limited exercises which do little to engage fully the high school student with the text and enhance reading skills. The development of competent reading skills is necessary if the advanced student is to gain full access to the foreign culture which includes many forms of written materials as well as the opportunity to speak the language and interact socially. Also, minimal reading skills seriously impair the students' ability to continue the study of the language at the university level.

The basic hypothesis of this paper is that it is possible to develop exercises and activities which stimulate student interest

¹Birkmaier, Emma Marie, ed. Britannica Review of Foreign Language Education, Chicago, Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., 1968, pp. 191-192.

and enhance reading competency while maintaining competency in the active "productive" skills of speaking and writing. This holistic orientation toward integrating all skills in the teaching of a foreign language is the goal of the oral proficiency approach.²

OVERVIEW OF THEORY CONCERNING AN ORAL PROFICIENCY ORIENTED
APPROACH TO THE TEACHING OF READING

"The essential element of a language class is interaction. Without it, the most sophisticated techniques are not enough. If we examine successful ways of learning and teaching, we find, at the heart of that success, interaction: people interacting with people."³

The above quote is from the text Teaching Spanish which is very probably the basic primer for foreign language teachers of Spanish. The oral proficiency approach discussed in Teaching Spanish moves away from the audio-lingual method's carefully structured language drills and control of student responses and encourages the students to form their own utterances at an early stage. The goal is to maintain the emphasis on oral proficiency while integrating all of the active skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing into the daily classroom activities.

Teaching Spanish presents five possible objectives for a reading course: reading for information; reading of informal material;

² Omaggio, Alice C. Teaching Language in Context, Heinle and Heinle, Inc., Boston, 1986, pp. 175-220 provides a good overview of the theory and goals of the oral proficiency approach.

³ Rivers, Azevedo and Heflin, Teaching Spanish: A Practical Guide, Chicago, National Textbook Company, 1989, p. vi.

fluent, direct reading of all kinds; literary emphasis; and translation of texts. (p. 171) The fourth year high school Spanish curriculum addresses the first four of these objectives.

Teaching Spanish asserts that "The reader must learn to extract from the script three levels of meaning: lexical meaning, structural or grammatical meaning and socio-cultural meaning." (p. 179) I believe that the choice of literary texts for the fourth year Spanish classroom best enables the student to understand these three levels of meaning. Literary texts are accessible, written with careful attention to style and word choice, culturally significant and they do not become dated quickly.

Finally, Teaching Spanish presents six stages of reading development: introduction to reading; familiarization; acquiring reading techniques; practice; expansion and autonomy. (pp.190-215) The Spanish fourth year curriculum integrates stages two to five in its daily activities with the most accomplished and motivated students entering the sixth "autonomy" stage.

Grellet discusses four main ways that one can read a given text. These are (1) skimming, or quickly running one's eyes over the text to get the gist, (2) scanning, or quickly searching for some particular piece of information in the text, (3) extensive reading, and (4) intensive reading.⁴ In my experience, most teachers using advanced literary texts proceed directly to the last two ways without encouraging or developing student skills in

⁴Grellet, Françoise. Developing Reading Skills. Cambridge, U.K.:Cambridge University Press, 1981. Quoted in Omaggio, Alice C. Teaching Language in Context: Proficiency-Oriented Instruction. Boston, MA.:Heinle and Heinle Pub. Inc., 1986.

skimming and scanning.

In a very concise and extremely useful discussion of strategies for teaching reading of a second language, June Phillips (1984) establishes a range of practice activities that can be used in concert to integrate individual skills for higher levels of proficiency. She has developed a five-stage plan for reading instruction:

1) Preteaching and Preparation Stage. This important first step helps develop skills in anticipation and prediction. Students need to build expectancies and background knowledge for the materials they are about to read. Some of the activities suggested by Phillips which might be useful in preparing students about to confront a major literary text are:

- a. Brainstorming to generate ideas that have a high probability of occurrence in the text.
- b. Predicting or hypothesizing on the basis of the title or first line of a text what significance it might have or what might come next.

2) Skimming and Scanning Stages. As previously indicated by Grellet, these steps are distinct processes involving getting the gist (skimming) and locating specific information (scanning). Phillips believes that practice is needed in each skill for second-language students. Some of the practice activities mentioned by Phillips are:

- a. Identifying topic sentences and main ideas.
- b. Creating titles or headlines for passages.
- c. Making global judgments or reacting in some global fashion

to a reading passage.

Adopting a more inclusive stance, Swaffer (1983) proposes that teachers have students move directly from skimming to scanning with any reading task. Students first skim the passage to determine what general category fits the content of the passage (i.e., is it about a problem, people or organizations, events, or ideas?). Then students scan the text more carefully to locate a few of the main ideas concerning the global category.

3) Decoding and Intensive Reading Stage. Phillips maintains that this stage is most necessary when students are "learning to read" rather than "reading to learn." Student readers need to be taught how to guess the meaning of content words and phrases, how to determine the force of connectors, and how to determine the relationships among sentences or sentence elements. Generally, the goal should be fluency and rapid understanding rather than careful decoding, which is accomplished only at the cost of comprehension.

4) Comprehension Stage. In this step, comprehension checks of various sorts are made to determine if students have achieved their reading purpose(s). Reading comprehension exercises should be sufficiently differentiated that the reading skill is not confounded with other literacy skills.

5) Transferable and Integrating Stage. In this final stage, teachers develop exercises which are used to enhance reading skills and effective reading strategies. These include exercises to encourage contextual guessing, selective reading for main ideas and effective dictionary usage.

AN APPLICATION OF THE PROFICIENCY-ORIENTED APPROACH

This paper suggests ways to modify and complement Modern Spanish Prose, a reading text presently used in the Missoula County High Schools advanced Spanish classes (third- and fourth-years) so that reading skills can be improved while maintaining the emphasis on oral communication.⁵ This text was chosen initially because of the variety and quality of the literary pieces included; however, the text is difficult to use in a classroom stressing active skills. Each reading selection is preceded by a short discussion, in English, of the author and his work. English translations of new vocabulary and difficult phrases are provided at the foot of each page. The exercises at the end of the reading selection are poor in that they primarily stress grammar review and translation English-Spanish. Thus it is necessary to expand the exercises and activities associated with the literary selections so that classroom activities represent contemporary theory and maintain student interest.

The short story La siesta del martes was selected for the pilot test of my revised approach to the teaching of short stories and the enhancement of reading skills. In the past, my fourth year Spanish students have found it to be one of the most difficult selections to read and understand and the accompanying exercises to be of little help. My goal while working with this text is to develop strategies applicable to the

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The classroom reading text is Andrian, Gustave W. Modern Spanish Prose, 4th ed., D.C. Heath & Co., 1987.

teaching of other short stories.

Specific goals:

- 1) Maintain use of Spanish at all times by teacher and students.
- 2) Increase reading proficiency and prepare the students for intermediate level college classes which require more extensive and intensive reading of both literary and non-literary texts.
- 3) Increase knowledge of Hispanic culture.
- 4) Where possible, make each student responsible for developing and presenting material.
- 5) Maintain a dynamic interactive classroom environment.

My supplementary story-oriented activities will disregard the text's English introduction, the mechanical questions in the cuestionario and the grammar-oriented final exercises (with English instructions!), providing instead a new set of activities and materials. Specifically:

--Homework and classroom exercises will be integrated.

--An expanded introduction to the author and his work will be provided in Spanish to the students in a homework hand-out.

--The activity "Extensión del texto" will be added. This will be a short passage in Spanish concerning an aspect of Hispanic life suggested by the story.

--Students will be asked to identify principal sections of the story and to provide subtitles (instructions and responses in Spanish).

--A short series of questions in Spanish designed to encourage close reading of the text will be developed.

--Students will be asked to describe the principal characters and their roles in the story.

--"Para concluir": Students will be asked to work in groups, identify the principal themes and extend the ending of the story by summarizing what happens to the two protagonists after they leave the priest's home.

These exercises and activities are based on the following assumptions:

- 1) It is possible to enhance student reading competency, particularly at this level, without resorting to English at any time.
- 2) Even in advanced language classes, students often possess little background knowledge (schemata) concerning Hispanic societies which could help them decode the text.
- 3) After the first day's activities devoted to the pre-teaching/preparation stage, the skimming/scanning, decoding/extensive reading and comprehension stages (Grellet's stages 2-4) can form part of each day's activities in the fourth year class.

Each of these activities and exercises were developed, used and evaluated in an actual classroom situation: my fourth year Spanish class of sixteen students. This class is composed of eleven girls and five boys with four of the boys being extremely competent. Seven of the sixteen students have SAT scores of 1170, 1090, 830, 1130, 790, 1100 and 1090. Four students have not taken the ACT or

SAT test while the remaining students have ACT composite scores of 21, 28, 25, 18 and 27. Overall, then, the class scores somewhat higher than the Hellgate high school ACT composite average of 21.8.

With the exception of the student with the lowest ACT composite score (18), though, there does not seem to be a direct correlation between test scores and individual competency as factors such as tenacity and conscientiousness seem to be every bit as important as the skills and knowledge measured by these tests.

The sequence of activities is listed in Appendix A on page 16.

RESULTS

Day One was certainly the most important day in preparing and guiding the students to an efficient involvement with La siesta del martes. The student's oral report on Colombian geography went well but the other student's oral report on the socio-historical background of the story (Colombia since 1948) was less satisfactory as the subject itself was too broad. In the future, I will provide this student with a report outline and advice as to library resources to be consulted.

The oral questions concerning the author's life went very well as this is a classroom activity familiar to students at this level.

The exercise of guessing the meaning of the underlined vocabulary was moderately successful after considerable teacher guidance. Where necessary, I led the students to the correct meaning of these words by using a progressive series of clues beginning with a known word. In this instance, the sequences leading to the guessing of the correct meaning were:

fumar.....humo.....humareda
 hierro.....ferrocarril.....férrea
 edificio.....campamento

The students guessed the correct meaning of intempestivos and racimos from context. This "guided guessing" has always been a regular feature of my teaching of reading at all levels.

The skimming and scanning exercise was very successful; the students had little trouble answering the fairly general questions related to this first quick overview of the passage to be read.

Day Two was successful as more students participated in the classroom discussion of the reading assignment than in previous years. The student discussion of the sentence "Tenía la serenidad escrupulosa de la gente acostumbrada a la pobreza" (line 30) caused a spirited discussion as the students puzzled over the meaning of "escrupulosa" in this context. The section "Después, aunque te estés muriendo de sed no tomes agua en ninguna parte. Sobre todo, no vayas a llorar" (lines 63-64) resulted in several interesting interpretations.

With the exception of the skimming and scanning exercises, Days Three and Four were much like previous years when the class answered questions and discussed the story.

The "Actividades" section did enhance student involvement with the story and the goal of interactive learning. The students worked in groups of three to divide the story into sections and provide sub-titles (Activity Two). The task of inventing a different title for the entire story yielded some satisfactory new titles: "Amor sin condiciones," "El tren al cielo," "El dolor de

una mujer," and "Mala noche para ladrones." Some of these titles display a sense of humor and creativity which should be encouraged in high school students.

Activity Three, the identification of paraphrased sentences, was not difficult but did force the students back into the text. This exercise reinforced meaning for the weaker students and is definitely an activity which I will use when teaching prose selections in the future.

Activity Four, role playing, was successful as students at this level like to be inventive. Questions prepared for the mother included:

-- "Señora, ¿por qué le dio permiso a su hijo para robar a la gente?"

--"¿Cómo se sintió cuando supo que su hijo había sido matado?"

--"¿Por qué cree Vd. que su hijo se hizo ladrón?"

¿Era la culpa de Vd.?"

--" ¿Por qué no aceptó la sombrilla?"

--"Si pudiera hablar con Rebeca, ¿qué le diría?"

Student questions for Rebeca included:

--"¿Siente Vd. remordimiento por haber matado al muchacho?"

--"Si pudiera hablar con la madre, ¿qué le diría?"

--"¿Piensa seguir guardando un revólver en casa?"

--"¿Por qué no le dijo nada al desconocido antes de disparar?"

Some of the student questions for the priest were:

--"¿Cree Vd. que Dios perdonaría a Carlos Centeno?"

--"¿Por qué le preguntó a la madre si ella le enseñó buenos valores a Carlos?"

--"¿Por qué le pidió a la madre que le diera dinero para la iglesia?"

--"¿Cuál fue su impresión de la madre?"

The final group exercise which asked each group to extend the end of the story beyond the farewell to the priest was successful. Each group wrote a new ending for the story and then presented it to the class. Some emphasized forgiveness and tolerance on the part of the pueblo; others had the village acting more intolerantly and, in all cases, the two women were able to catch the train home.

CONCLUSION

This approach to facilitating student reading of La siesta del martes helped me become aware of the difference between understanding the text (a receptive skill) and discussing it or writing about it (productive skills). In order to facilitate understanding (reading) of a foreign language text, the teacher must provide guidance before, during and after the reading of the story selected. It is here that the theoretical and practical studies summarized in the beginning of this paper were most helpful, especially those suggested by Phillips (1984), for I followed her five progressive stages and accompanying procedures closely.

Her guidance helped me attain the goals set forth on page 8 of this paper, especially the goal of increasing reading proficiency (goal 2). The goal of maintaining the use of Spanish and of integrating oral, reading and written activities was attained. The homework questions helped students perform at a higher level of

oral language proficiency during the class. The biographical summary of the author was helpful and contributed to the students' understanding of the story's context.

Although my assessment of increased reading proficiency is admittedly subjective, it is based on several years of experience with this text. The skimming and scanning exercises were new to me and were very helpful and successful. These exercises facilitated the homework exercises and improved the level of language used by the students in class activities. Group activities were part of each day's routine and they improved both class dynamics and the students' willingness to remain involved with the text. The class size of 16 students facilitated group work which would be more difficult to monitor and to keep on task in a larger class.

The effort to improve the students' knowledge of Hispanic culture through the reading of a literary text remains an important goal even though it was only moderately successful here. This is particularly true when one is studying a language and a culture shared by many nations yet generally ignored by contemporary American society (newspapers, television news, high school geography and history courses, etc.). Hispanic short stories can be selected from authors representing many different Hispanic countries. With each story, the students will need careful guidance in the preparation of oral reports as part of the pre-reading stage. I also believe that it would be useful, where possible, to invite a citizen of the country to visit the class after the story and accompanying exercises have been completed. The stronger students at this level are able to understand native

speakers fairly well and can ask perceptive questions.

I believe that this approach can be applied effectively to the teaching of other short stories. High school foreign language teachers generally teach five classes at three levels each day and thus have little time to devote to the preparation of each class. This paper has caused me to develop a system which I can use without a large amount of preparation time as the class begins each new story. The pre-reading and skimming and scanning activities, the emphasis on focused group activities requiring constant interaction as recommended in Teaching Spanish, and the role playing improve class performance and interaction as more students are using the language at any moment than in the teacher-centered classroom.

As Phillips (1984) states, "Reading is a very complex activity and, in many ways, is more linguistically and intellectually challenging than other skills. Second language reading may be even more complex, for it requires information processing using language skills still in developmental stages and not firmly established in the learner's mind" (p. 295). Although the teaching of reading requires persistence, imagination, and an awareness of the need to proceed in carefully structured steps, it is possible to help students attain reading competency and develop the ability to proceed on their own.

APPENDIX A: SEQUENCE OF ACTIVITIES

Day One (Monday, May 16): Preteaching/Preparation Stage

Homework: Distributed and assigned Thursday, May 12.

a) Students are to read a handout in Spanish describing the highlights of the life and work of the author. (See Appendix B)

b) The handout will also present the story title and the first paragraph of the story. The students are to try to establish where this is taking place and what is likely to happen. Also, they are to attempt to understand underlined new vocabulary through contextual guessing strategies.

c) Two students are given the specific assignment of preparing short three-minute oral reports on Colombia. The first student is to use the classroom map to describe the principal geographical features, cities, products and population while the second student will give a brief overview of Colombian political history since 1948.

Classroom Activities, Day One (Preteaching and Preparation Stage)

--Each of the two students presents his/her short oral report on Colombia (the socio-historical background for the story). Time is allowed for student questions and discussion. If students have no or few questions, the teacher will ask a few questions or otherwise "flesh out" the report(s) as appropriate. (15 min.)

--Oral questions on homework summary concerning the author (10 min.)

--Students form groups of three to combine their ideas concerning the title of the story and their guesses concerning the underlined vocabulary in the story's first paragraph. (10 min)

--Class reunites to discuss group decisions (5 min.)

--Distribution of complete story, quick timed exercise on scanning first two pages, followed by teacher questions: How many characters are involved? What is their relationship? What mood are they in? How many people do they talk to? Where do you think they are going? (All in Spanish--10 min.)

Homework assignment for Day Two (Taken from board):

--Read pp. 146-148 (lines 1-74) and be prepared to answer the following questions:

--¿De qué clase social son las dos protagonistas? ¿Cómo lo sabes?

--¿Qué quiere decir "luto"? ¿Has estado de luto alguna vez?

--¿Cómo es el paisaje?

--¿Por qué son iguales los pueblos?

--¿Qué consejos le da la madre a la niña?

Classroom Activities, Day Two:

1) Discuss the reading assignment using homework questions as a guide (30 min.)

2) Timed reading: skimming/scanning of lines 75-148 (10 min.)

3) Quick questions in Spanish on section scanned. (10 min.)

Homework for Day Three:

1) Read lines 75-148.

2) Prepare answers to questions 4-7 of the cuestionario.

Class Activities, Day Three:

(Similar to Day Two--Students to answer homework questions, discuss lines 75-148 and skim/scan lines 144-200)

Homework for Day Four:

- 1) Read lines 148-247 (end of story).
- 2) Prepare answers to questions 8-17 of cuestionario.

Class activites, Day Four:

- 1) As in previous days, students present answers to homework questions and discuss assigned reading.
- 2) In-class discussion of section "Extensión del texto."

Extensión del texto: Necrológicas

En líneas 144-161 de "La siesta del martes," el cura escribe los datos biográficos sobre Carlos Centeno en el registro del cementerio. Frecuentemente, en los pueblos hispanos, es el cura quien mantiene esta lista así como la lista de los nacimientos, bautismos y fallecimientos en el pueblo.

Sin duda, el entierro de Carlos Centeno se celebró con poca ceremonia, quizás sin la misa y los oficios sencillos que generalmente acompañan la muerte de los pobres. Desde luego, entre las clases más acomodadas, los actos oficiales--el velorio, la misa, la conducción del cadáver al cementerio, el entierro--son más ceremoniosos y públicos. Muchas familias ponen anuncios, llamados esquelas, de la muerte de un familiar en el periódico local. He aquí un ejemplo:

†

Rogad a Dios en caridad por el alma de

Doña Carmen Cuevas
Pedregosa

Que falleció en el día de ayer, a los 96 años de
edad, habiendo recibido los Santos Sacramentos
y la bendición de Su Santidad

R. I. P.

Su director espiritual; su hermano político, Emilio Parrizas Ortega; sobrina, Emilia Parrizas Cuevas, y demás familia

PARTICIPAN a sus amistades tan sensible pérdida y les ruegan una oración por su alma y la asistencia a la conducción del cadáver, que tendrá lugar hoy, a las TRES CUARENTA Y CINCO de la tarde, desde su domicilio, calle Granados, núm. 7, hasta la iglesia parroquial de San Emilio, en donde, a las CUATRO, se oficiará la misa "corpore insepulto", por cuyos favores les quedarán agradecidos.

ACTIVIDADES**I. Comprensión: Escoge la respuesta o respuestas correctas:**

1. La madre le dice a la niña que
 - a. puede llorar si no hace ruido
 - b. no debe tomar agua en ninguna parte
 - c. debe bajar el vidrio porque hace mucho calor
 - d. van a visitar a sus abuelos

2. Al llegar al pueblo, las dos mujeres
 - a. entraron en la oficina del telégrafo
 - b. se quitaron los zapatos porque hacía mucho calor
 - c. fueron directamente a la casa cural
 - d. cogieron un taxi para ir al cementerio

3. El hijo muerto
 - a. había sido boxeador
 - b. había llevado una vida muy cómoda
 - c. fue matado por una señora soltera
 - d. era muy conocido en el pueblo donde murió

4. La madre
 - a. nunca perdió su serenidad
 - b. pidió las llaves del cementerio
 - c. tenía vergüenza de ser la madre del ladrón
 - d. se vestía bien y era bastante gorda

5. La gente del pueblo
 - a. no supieron quienes eran las dos mujeres
 - b. pasaron la siesta jugando a las cartas
 - c. pasearon por las plazas
 - d. querían ver a la familia del ladrón

6. Las dos mujeres no podían volver más tarde porque
- tenían que hacer compras en otro pueblo
 - querían echar una siesta a las tres
 - el tren de regreso partió a las tres y media
 - nadie podía entrar en el cementerio después de la siesta

II.

1) Es posible dividir este cuento en secciones. Encuéntralas y añade subtítulos apropiados. Ejemplo: líneas 1-74="El viaje".

2) Escoge un nuevo título para este cuento de la lista de abajo y explica tus razones para escogerlo:

- Amor y dignidad
- Pueblo sin cara
- El hambre manda
- la caridad

3) Formen grupos de tres e inventen otro título para este cuento para presentar a la clase. Expliquen por qué lo escogieron.

4) (Con todos los títulos en la pizarra): Voten por el mejor título.

III. Repasa el cuento otra vez con tu grupo e indica donde se escribe lo siguiente en otras palabras:

(pp. 146-147)--...la muchacha dejó el asiento y colocó en su sitio las pocas cosas que tenían.

Las dos se vestían de ropa negra sin adornos.

El tren no alcanzó la velocidad de antes.

(pp. 148-149) --De ahora en adelante, si tienes mucha sed, no bebas agua de ningún modo.

Pasando siempre por la sombra de los árboles las dos entraron en el barrio sin molestar la siesta.

La señora las llevó hasta un banco de madera e indicó que se sentaran.

p. 153--Les sugirió que cubrieran la cabeza para no sufrir del sol.

El pueblo ya sabe quienes son.

IV Los personajes y sus papeles:

1. Describe los valores de la señora Centeno y como se los enseña a su hija.

2. ¿Cuáles son las normas de conducta del cura? ¿Hay un conflicto evidente entre lo que profesa y lo que practica?

3. Discute el papel del pueblo en el relato.

4. Con los datos del cuento (la descripción de la noche del robo, los comentarios de la madre y de la hermana), reconstruye la vida de Carlos Centeno y escribe una biografía del muchacho muerto.

5. ¿Cómo se hace evidente el espíritu de la madre, sobre todo en las últimas líneas del cuento?

V. Pequeño teatro: Preguntas a los personajes del cuento: Cuatro estudiantes hacen el papel de la madre, el cura, Carlos Centeno y la señora Rebeca. Los otros estudiantes de la clase les hacen preguntas preparadas en casa. Ejemplo: "Señora Rebeca, ¿por qué no se casó de nuevo?"

VI. "Para concluir:" (En grupos) Describan la experiencia de las dos protagonistas cuando salen de la casa del cura.

Appendix B--Preteaching/Preparation Stage

Gabriel García Márquez
(1928, Aracataca, Colombia)

García Márquez nació en Aracataca, pequeño pueblo colombiano de la costa del Caribe, y vivió allí, en casa de sus abuelos maternos, hasta la edad de ocho años.

En 1928, el año de su nacimiento, Aracataca era un pueblo que vivía de recuerdos de un pasado próspero cuando la United Fruit Company tenía largas extensiones de tierra dedicadas al cultivo del banano. Fue una prosperidad efímera pagada con la explotación económica y política de los trabajadores.

García Márquez hace uso de los recuerdos y anécdotas de esta zona natal como materia prima para novelas realistas como La hojarasca (1955) y el realismo mágico de Cien años de soledad (1967). Ganó el Premio Nobel de Literatura en 1982.

La vida de García Márquez se vio afectada por la violencia que estalló en su país con el asesinato del candidato liberal a la presidencia de la república, Jorge Eliecer Gaitán, en 1948. Los años de violencia que siguieron este asesinato han influido en casi todas sus obras y también en la conciencia social de todos sus compatriotas.

Durante muchos años García Márquez se ganó la vida como periodista en Barcelona, Ginebra, Roma, París y Nueva York. A partir de 1967, se dedica exclusivamente a la creación literaria.

"La siesta del martes" es el primer cuento de la colección Los funerales de la Mamá Grande (1962). Este relato describe la pobreza y la injusticia social dentro de un mundo indiferente. La dignidad y la fuerza moral de la madre contrastan con el cinismo y decadencia espiritual del mundo oficial.

La siesta del martes (primer párrafo)

El tren salió del trepidante corredor de rocas bermejas, penetró en las plantaciones de banano, simétricas e interminables, y el aire se hizo húmedo y no se volvió a sentir la brisa del mar. Una humareda sofocante entró por la ventanilla del vagón. En el estrecho camino paralelo a la vía férrea había carretas de bueyes cargadas de racimos verdes. Al otro lado del camino, en intempestivos espacios sin sembrar, había oficinas con ventiladores eléctricos, campamentos de ladrillos rojos y residencias con sillas y mesitas blancas en las terrazas, entre palmeras y rosales polvorientos. Eran las once de la mañana y aun no había comenzado el calor.

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