

Influence of Hispanic Literature in the Cultural Movement of the 1960s in the U.S.

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INTRODUCTION TO TEACHERS

Students in high schools throughout the United States are being offered the opportunity to receive college credit by taking the Advanced Placement Exam at the end of their junior and senior years. Schools offer preparation courses in many areas, and more and more students are taking advantage of this opportunity. Teachers view these courses as a way of motivating the students to try even harder when they see an immediate use for the material learned.

In the foreign language area two courses are being offered to help students achieve their goals: The AP Language Course and the AP Literature Course. The AP Literature curriculum in Spanish, emphasizes the study of five authors: Miguel de Unamuno, Federico Garcia Lorca, Ana Maria Matute, Jorge Luis Borges, Gabriel Garcia Marquez as well as a study of poetry analysis which may include many poets selected by the individual teachers.

One concern that teachers of AP courses have is creating and maintaining the interest of the students throughout the year. This unit will create several activities through which students can not only identify with the literature and culture of the required authors, but also see how these authors have been studied by famous writers in the United States and as a result, how they influenced American literature as well as the lyrics of many songs popular in the U.S.

By finding a common ground, the students will become more interested in the course and will be more receptive to participate in oral discussions in class. This information will enhance their thinking skills when they are asked to use inferences and predictions after reading about topics that concern our daily lives as members of a society.

OBJECTIVES

It is my intention to incorporate this curriculum unit into the study of the five required authors of the AP program: Unamuno, Lorca, Borges, Matute and Garcia Marquez, giving a new dimension to the course when we compare the Spanish speaking writers mentioned in the unit to the poets of the American literature of the 1960s in the U.S. A new interest will be created when the students can identify with poets in their own language and culture, and see how they shared concerns that have made a difference in our society in the last three decades.

UNIT OVERVIEW

After World War II there was a spirit of elation in the United States. The enemies had been defeated, soldiers had come home, families were reunited, and there was prosperity at home, along with an easy access to goods, automobiles, electric appliances and U.S. leadership abroad. This sense of high expectations and hopes did not last very long and soon was shattered by demands for equality and civil rights, the fear of nuclear attacks in the Cold War, the experience of an unpopular war mixed with a rise in violence at home, and the assassination of President Kennedy and his brother and two black leaders. Soon the “Beats” of the 1950s shared in their writings their ideas of the U.S. as a society of hypocrisy, sexual repression, and conformity. They became famous in the 1960s not for their unique style, but because their philosophy attracted the young people who were also rebelling against excessive bureaucracy, contempt for human needs and indifference to human actions.

Writers such as Allen Ginsberg, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Jack Kerouac, Gregory Corso, Robert Creeley, Denise Levertov, Charles Olson, James Schuyler, Jack Spicer, and Gary Snyder among others, wrote about defying conventions, human needs, love, emotions, quest for religion, and the mixing of science and religion in an experimental spirituality such as Timothy Leary’s foundation of the League of Spiritual Discovery in 1965. They rebelled against seriousness in writing, trying to maintain the modernist ideas about form, but closing the gap between art and life, making art more relevant. They used the printed pages differently, arranging words in various shapes, often ignoring conventions of grammar and punctuation. It is in this era that we read about the influence of many Spanish and Spanish American writers on the new American poets of the 1960s.

Spain had experienced a somewhat similar movement towards the end of the nineteenth century. With the U.S. defeat of Spain, which then lost its last colonies of Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines, the year 1898 brought to Spain the end of any hopes to maintain any control abroad. The country began to experience a sense of psychological and moral defeat. This sentiment of national dissatisfaction was soon expressed by writers of the so called “Generation of 98.” They began a search for the soul of Spain; social and political aspects were questioned - talks of unconformity with politics - a desire to live and feel intellectually what they could not live and feel in real life. They experienced an artistic and a spiritual renaissance with expressions of personal sensibility and subjectivity, and with new forms and styles. Writers such as Miguel de Unamuno criticized the false traditions of Spain; he wanted to find more real and permanent values. He questioned his own existence, the ultimate truth, a possible balance between faith and reason to understand the existence of God. Unamuno believed that a faith that does not doubt is a dead faith. He wanted to awaken Spain. In his book entitled Fight Against This and That, he asserted his patriotic, intellectual and religious anguish and tried to diagnose the ills of Spain in a search for a better future.

I see the influence of Unamuno and other “Generation of 98” writers, such as Antonio Machado, Juan Ramon Jimenez, Valle Inclan, as well as other Hispanic writers before and after the 98 movement, including Federico Garcia Lorca, Pablo Neruda and Jose

Marti, on the literature of the 1960s in the United States.

There is another aspect of the decade of the 1960s that produced an Hispanic influence in literature and lyrics of a different background. The struggles of Cesar Chavez for better conditions for farmers and his founding of the United Farm Workers Union to demand social justice, inspired Joan Baez and many others to sing about these demands. This awareness of the rights of the Mexican-Americans in the U.S. initiated the Chicano movement and the creation of the Chicano literature that has spread very rapidly in the subsequent three decades, giving the Mexican-Americans a cultural identity in the U.S.

My curriculum unit will include:

1. Works from Miguel de Unamuno-Three Poems: “Reason and Faith”, “The Prayer of and Atheist,” and “The Failure of Life,” the poem “Kaddish” by Allen Ginsberg, “This Tokyo” by Gary Snyder, “Morning Light Song,” and “Still Poem 9” by Philip Lamantia.
2. Some of Lorca’s poetry as well as two of his stories “La Casa de Bernarda Alba” and “Yerma,” together with the poem “A Supermarket in California” by Allen Ginsberg in which he writes about Lorca, and Jack Spicer’s “Letter to Lorca.”
3. A selection representative of Pablo Neruda’s work as well as literary notes from Ken Morrill on Neruda, and Robert Bly’s interview with the author.
4. A selection of poems by Jose Marti, together with Pete Seeger’s motivation to use Marti’s poems in the making of the record “Guantanamera” along with the Sandpipers.
5. Background notes on Cesar Chavez, his life and the formation of the United Farm Worker’s Union, and the repercussions in the American Civil Rights Movement. His poem “Prayer of the Farm Workers Struggle” along with Joan Baez’s songs “Juan de la Cruz,” “All the Weary Mothers of the Earth (People Union #1),” “Gulf Winds,” and “I Pity the Poor Immigrant.”
6. Reading segments of the Epic Poem of the Mexican-American People: “I am Joaquin” by Rodolfo Gonzales published in 1967.

STRATEGIES

Since this unit can be used in Spanish levels 3, 4, and 5, there will be an ample selection of strategies, ranging from group work, pair contributions, and individual work. Students will read selections from all authors mentioned in this curriculum unit. They will do research to find other works of the same authors and try to find common ground between the two groups. They will do group research as well as oral presentations, followed by writing essays on guided as well as open topics. In their group work, they will do brainstorming to gather the necessary vocabulary they will need, they will do predictions and inferences. The use of Venn Diagrams will be another important group strategy as

well as charts on Who?, What?, How?, When?, and Where? to do their comparisons of authors and ideas. They will also do charts analyzing poetry, descriptive words, metaphores, similes, main ideas and images.

Some activities will be:

1. Reading poetry or stories
2. Holding class discussions
3. Sharing of opinions
4. Writing a poem using the style of some of the poets learned
5. Conducting independent research on one or more aspects discussed in class
6. Learning a poem by memory
7. Learning the song “Guantanamera” and one of Baez’s songs
8. Viewing films: “Niebla” by Unamuno, “Il Postino” and “The life of Garcia Lorca.”
9. Writing an essay on any of the topics discussed
10. Making an oral presentation using visuals on the poets and the authors discussed

The poems used in this unit will be included on a reference list of materials and how to find them. This unit will show evidence of the great impact of the literature of the sixties as well as the wealth of similar examples in the Spanish and Spanish-American literature which served as models to other writers in history.

Concerns About the Ultimate Truth and the True Meaning of Life.

Miguel de Unamuno

The title “Generation of 98” refers to the national catastrophe in Spain after its losing the Spanish-American War. The writers of the time blamed the loss on the self satisfied attitude of the previous generation who were unable to create positive changes in the government and social institutions. There was a need for questioning, for change, and a cry for help in seeing the real problems in Spain and the need to find a solution to these problems. They could not continue to be in denial any longer or else, they would run the risk of losing their long historical identity. They began to question religion, God, government, and even the perfection of nature in Spain, which had been described by poets in the nineteenth century. Unfortunately, the “Generation of 98” had many questions, but did not offer many solutions to improve the state of disarray in the country.

Miguel de Unamuno (1864-1936) from the Basque city of Bilbao was one of the most influential writers of this time. Influenced by Nietzsche, Ibsen and other European philosophers, he soon began to question the meaning of life, religion, and faith. We can sense his confusion and desperation in the essay “Del Sentimiento Tragico de la Vida” (“About the Tragic Feeling of Life”) as well as in the poems “El Fracaso de la Vida” (“Failure of Life”), “Razon y Fe” (“Reason and Faith”), “La Oracion del Ateo” (“Prayer of an Atheist”), “La Agonia del Cristianismo” (“The Agony of Christianity”) and “San

Manuel Bueno, Martir” (“Saint Manuel Bueno, Martir”).

A very prolific writer, Unamuno wrote in every literary genre: drama, novel, short story and poetry, but always maintained his questioning of the truth and meaning of life and challenged his own strong Catholic upbringing. It is from this inner struggle that his best works were created.

Antonio Machado

Antonio Machado (1875-1939), whose native city of Soria in the region of Castilla served him as an inspiration for many of his poems, questioned the sincerity of poets when they wrote about Spain. According to Machado: “Cinco años en la tierra de Soria, hoy para mi Sagrada, allí me case, allí perdi a mi esposa a quien adoraba, orientaron mis ojos y mi corazón hacia lo esencial Castellano” (“Five years in the land of Soria, today sacred to me, there I got married, there I lost my wife who I adored, oriented my eyes and my heart towards that which is the essence of Castille”). In his efforts to awaken people to see some of the geographical imperfections of Spain, he created his famous work “Campos de Castilla,” in which he writes about the poor land baked by the sun or frozen by the winter - a clear change from the writings of previous poets that had depicted Spain as a land of perfection.

Ramon del Valle Inclan

Ramon del Valle Inclan (1866-1936), a native of Galicia in Northwestern Spain, writes about the influences of superstitions and semi-pagan beliefs in the lives of poor peasants in the region, considering this desire to perpetuate tradition about the ills of Spain. Among his best works are “Flor de Santidad,” a legend that has its setting in his native Galicia, “Tirano Banderas,” a satire which describes a dictator in a Latin American country, and “El Ruedo Iberico,” a trilogy that serves to criticize the government during the years before the Spanish American War.

Lawrence Ferlinghetti (1919-)

Over half a century later we find some common concerns in the poetry of some writers in the United States. Lawrence Ferlinghetti wrote poems such as “Pictures of the Gone World” in which we see a reflection of the sentiment of the great writers of the “Generation of 98.” In this poem, Ferlinghetti writes :

Sarollas women in their picture hats
stretched upon his canvas beaches
 beguiled the Spanish
 Impressionists
 And were they fraudulent pictures
of the world.

He continues later in another stanza of the same poem:

I cannot help but think
that their “reality”
was always as real as
my memory of today.(Allen,128)

Here we see references of the lack of realistic perspective from which the Spanish suffered before the end of the Spanish American War, so strongly criticized by Unamuno, Valle Inclan, and Machado. In “A Coney Island of the Mind” Ferlinghetti writes:

In Goyas greatest scene we seem to see
the people of the world
exactly at the moment when
they first attained the title of
“Suffering humanity”

and in another stanza he continues:

They still are ranged along the roads
plagued by legionnaires
false windmills and demented roosters(Allen,130)

This is a reference to Don Quijote’s evasion of reality so vivid in the spirit of the Spanish for so long.

But Lawrence Ferlinghetti was just one of many writers in the United States in the late 1950s and 1960s. There was a surge in these years of poetry reflecting the sentiment of dissent.

Allen Ginsberg (1926-1997)

Allen Ginsberg, a political radical, rose to fame after the public readings of his famous poem “Howl.” In his poem he writes:

“I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness, starving hysterical naked, dragging themselves through the negro street at dawn...” (Allen,182)

Here we sense the same feeling of nonconformity that plagued the poets of the “Generation of 98.” In “Howl” we can see two messages: A plea for acceptance, accepting real problems in society and an encouragement to reject anything conventional of the past that will interfere with the growth of society.

There was in Ginsberg also the need to find a purpose in life, a search for the truth, and God. In his search, he embraces some of the Eastern religions which were becoming very popular among writers and musicians of the time. At the “Human Be-In” gathering

in Golden Gate Park, Ginsberg could be seen chanting his favorite Buddhist chants. In his poem “Kaddish,” dedicated to his mother Naomi, three years after her death, Ginsberg reflects on death, life, the unknown that lies beyond death, and a concern on the nature of human existence.

Gary Snyder (1930-)

Gary Snyder, another of the poets of the same generation, writes in his poem “This Tokyo” with the same passion characteristic of Unamuno about his concern with the Truth and the meaning of life:

Peace, war, religion,
Revolution will not help
The millions of us worthless
to each other of the word...

and in another stanza of the same poem:

Or highest Dantean Radiance’s of the God
Or endless Light or Life or Love. (Allen,310)

Philip Lamantia (1927-)

Philip Lamantia of the same school of thoughts writes in “Morning Light Song:”

For what’s a singer worth if he can’t talk to you
My God of Light (Allen,156)

and in “Still Poem 9” he questions the presence of God:

I long for the luminous darkness of God
I long for the superessential light of this darkness
Another darkness I long for the end of longing (Allen,157)

Poetry of dissent, cry for change in society, search for the truth, and a meaning of life. Worlds apart at different times and yet their works so similar in contents, ideas, and at the same time, unable to offer a solution to the problems that consumed their lives.

Concerns for Equality for all Sectors in Society

Federico Garcia Lorca

Born in the province of Granada, Spain, in 1898, Lorca lived a life surrounded by the rich Moorish influence of the area. He grew up among beautiful gardens, the Alhambra, gypsies, the famous flamenco or “cante jondo,” pianos, guitars. He developed a genuine

sensibility for the arts and the culture. It is this formation that gives Lorca the inspiration for his unique literary style so popular not only in Spain but all over the world.

Lorca's ability to improvise kept him in close contact with the people. His poems were meant to be read, to be shared with the people. The poetry had musical tone that captured the soul of the Andalusians. He was deeply touched by the lives of the gypsies, their struggle for equality, justice and acceptance. He idealized the gypsies.

El gitano evoca
países remotos,
(Torres altas y hombres
misteriosos) (Josephs,16)

The gypsy evokes
remote countries
(High towers and
mysterious men)

and also:

Por el olivar venían, bronce y sueño los gitanos (Josephs,223)
(By the olive tree they came, bronze and dream, the gypsies)

In 1928 he published his "Romancero Gitano" and soon after, he traveled to the United States, living in New York, where he was moved by the suffering of the poor in Harlem. His experience with the mistreatment of social groups, caused him to pour his sadness into the poems he wrote:

"Ay, Harlem, there is no anguish like that of ...your grand king, a prisoner in the uniform of a doorman, cooks, waiters and those whose tongues lick clean the wounds of millionaires seek the king in the streets...Ay, Harlem, threatened by a mob of headless suits! I hear your murmur."(Menarini,61)

After witnessing the Stock Market crash of 1929, he wrote "The Cruel Silence of Money" and "I denounce everyone who ignores the other half, the half that can't be redeemed..." (Menarini,123).

It is this cry for change in human conditions, and the concern about a materialistic population that oppresses and alienates certain sections of society that in the 1960s attracted writers such as Allen Ginsberg, Jack Spicer, and Kenneth Koch among others.

Allen Ginsberg

Allen Ginsberg writes in his poem "A Supermarket in California:"

"...What peaches and what penumbras! Whole families shopping at night!
Aisles full of husbands! Wives in the avocados, babies in the tomatoes! And you, Garcia
Lorca, what were you doing by the watermelons?...Will we stroll dreaming of the lost
America of love past blue..." (Allen, 181)

We hear the desperation of Ginsberg longing for the days in earlier America - Could Garcia Lorca's reference in the poem be a reference to Lorca's concerns in Harlem?

Kenneth Koch

Concerned with the future of American poets, Kenneth Koch wrote in his poem "Fresh Air:"

"...who are the great poets of our time, and what are their names?...
Is Eliot a great poet? No one knows. Hardy, Stevens, Williams (is Hardy of our
time?)
(is Lorca of our time?) Who is still of our time?" (Allen, 229)

Jack Spicer (1925-)

Also in the sixties, Jack Spicer writes "Letter to Lorca"

"...We have both tried to be independent of images (you from the start and I only
when I grew old...)...Even these letters. They co-respond with something (I don't know
what) that you have written (perhaps as unapparently as that lemon corresponds to this
pie of seaweed) and, in turn, some future poet will write something which co-responds to
them. that is how we dead men write to each other."

Love,

Jack (Allen, 413)

Jose Marti and Pete Seeger

Jose Marti, born in Havana, Cuba, in 1853, was a man of action who devoted his life to the cause of Cuban independence and also left a beautiful and vast literary legacy of poems, political essays and short stories in which we can find his passionate themes of the need for personal sacrifice, the positive strength of love, the need for unity in mankind and the struggle for freedom along with strong pleas for a stop to unequal treatment of races and classes in society. Exiled to Spain at a very young age, he graduated from the University of Saragossa, traveling then to Mexico, Guatemala, and the United States, where he lived in New York from 1881-1895. It is in New York that

he writes his famous “Versos Sencillos” (“Simple Verses”) in which he denounces government restraint on individual freedom, intolerance, materialism, despotic regimes, abridgments of human rights, and a lack of spirituality in modern society.

It is very easy to see why in 1963 Pete Seeger, the famous and prolific American song writer, will gather some of Martí’s “Versos Sencillos” (Martí, 113) to create a new version of the song “Guantanamera,” originally created by Jose Fernandez Diaz and now adapted by Seeger and Julian Orbon. This was one of only two songs of the many creations by Seeger for which he did not obtain a copyright because as he said: “It should be a song enjoyed by all,” and thus became the anthem of the culture of the sixties embracing the same concern in society.

Pablo Neruda

Internationally known as the “Poet of enslaved humanity,” Neruda has touched the lives of many people all over the world, inspiring many other poets not only with his unique surrealist style, but with his strong political concerns, strong emotions in his early love poems, and even in his Odes to the simplest objects in life.

Born in Parral, Chile, in 1904 under the name of Neftali Ricardo Reyes, he changed his name in his early career as a poet out of concern for his father’s strong disapproval of his dedication to writing poetry. His mother had died soon after his birth, and the only memory he had of her was her passion for poetry and some of her writings, which he was never able to read. His early poems, written as a very young child, were love poems his friend had asked him to write for his girlfriend. After completing school in his hometown, he decided to go to Santiago to study French literature. There he became part of a group of Bohemian poets who helped him shape his political ideas as well as his early style of poetry. In 1924 he published “Twenty Love Poems and a Song of Despair” in which he proved to be a natural poet with avant garde ideas and techniques. Soon after, he began a career as a diplomat that took him to Europe and Asia. This is a time of extreme loneliness for Neruda who, separated from his country, his culture, his language, and his friends, took refuge in alcohol and drugs. His poetry became a reflection of his personal experiences and he developed an interest in English literature. His life continued to be marked by strong political ideas, strong involvement with the Communist Party, denunciation of the United States, and the negative influence in the economy of the Latin American countries. In his poem “The United Fruit Co.” he wrote:

Among the blood thirsty flies
The Fruit Company unloads the ships
Filling up with coffee and with fruit
in its ships which ship away
like dishes, the treasure
of our submerged territories (Bly #7, 6)

Also “The Standard Oil Co” (Varona-Lacey, 361) is a strong criticism of the exploitation of the natural resources in South America by U.S. companies. He also lashes

out at the local dictators who sell their countries without any consideration for their people. It is his philosophical question about the present and the future of humanity that inspired poets such as Ferlinghetti, Robert Bly, Ken Morrill and Stew Albert. In Robert Bly's interview with Neruda, the poet exclaimed "discover things...to be in the sea, to be in the mountains and approach every living thing." In his poem, "Almost for Nothing," Stew Albert addresses Neruda as follows: "Comrade Pablo, it is hard to write poems when the metaphors are poisoned by dying planets of garbage and nations trade families for shopping malls." Albert embraces here Neruda's concern for the future of humanity.

Although the main themes of Neruda's works are love, war, and politics, in 1954 he wrote a book called Odes to Opposites, followed by Odes to Rain in 1959. He wrote in the series of Odes about the most common things in life such as "Ode to a Tomato", "Ode to a Lemon" and "Ode to Dirty Socks" demonstrating a desire for a more simplistic style of life advocated by the poets of American Literature of the 1960s.

Because of his association with the Left, Neruda did not receive the Nobel Prize that he so much deserved until 1971. His works have been translated into many languages all over the world, including Chinese, Russian and English. Robert Bly, a Harvard graduate, has done extensive translations and literary comments on the works of Neruda, contributing to the popularity of the poet in the United States.

Cesar Chavez and the Beginning of a New American Poetry

The focus of my study has been the relationship of Spanish and Spanish-American writers with the writers of the 1960s in the U.S., but there is a historical event that cannot be ignored, and that is the creation of a literature in the United States that has its origin in Cesar Chavez's struggle for civil rights for the farm workers of the U.S., most of whom were Mexican immigrants.

Since World War II, the majority of seasonal farm workers in the U.S. had been Mexican and Mexican-Americans. There had been many attempts to organize farm laborers, but it was not until Cesar Chavez created the United Farm Worker's Union in the 1960s, that the migrant workers began to receive better treatment. Until then, they had been beaten, jailed, and killed while speaking out for justice and demanding a stop to the exposure to many toxic pesticides, including DDT. The movement won fair pay and living conditions as well as medical and pension benefits for many farm workers and their families. In his poem "Prayer of the Farm Worker's Struggle" Chavez wrote:

Show me the suffering of the most miserable; So I will know my people's plight.
Free me to pray for others; For you are present in every person.

and later in the same poem:

Help us love even those who hate us; so we can change the world. (Chavez)

Joan Baez

Joan Chandos Baez was born in 1941 in New York to a Scottish mother and a Mexican father. Her Quaker religious beliefs inspired her to sing about peace and justice for the Mexican immigrants to whom she could closely relate. As a child she learned about racism when she was often taunted by children because of her Hispanic roots. She was caught in between two cultures:

“So there I was...

She continued in her autobiography:

With a Mexican name, skin and hair: The anglos couldn't accept me because of all three and the Mexicans couldn't accept me because I didn't speak Spanish.” (Baez)

She has contributed to the poetry and musical legacy of the Mexicans' (Chicanos') fight for equality in songs such as “Juan de la Cruz,” in which she wrote:

Silent and determined they set to embark
on a three day fast and a five mile march...

...And the sun shines down upon
the old man whose days are done
for a martyr has been taken
his old Juan de la Cruz

...The tears fell on Cesar read
the eulogy of the dead... (Baez)

Baez wrote another song with very powerful lyrics, “All the Weary Mothers of the Earth” (People's Union #1), which was dedicated to all the women who suffered the injustices done to the farmers in the United States. In the song “Gulf Winds” she sings about the memories of her father and his Mexican roots.

But one of the most emotional songs is “Plane Wreck at Los Gatos” (AKA “The Deportee”). In it, she sings about the daily struggles of the Mexican farm workers:

My father's own father, he waded that river,
They took all the money he made in his life
My brothers and sisters come working the fruit trees
And they rode the truck till they took down and died.

...Is this the best way we can grow our big orchards?
Is this the best way we can grow our good fruit?
To fall like dry leaves, to rot on my topsoil
And to be called no name, except deportee (Baez, Deportee)

I Am Joaquin/Yo soy Joaquin

Another literary work that emerged in 1967 with a very strong message about the demands for civil rights and social justice for the Chicanos in the U.S., was “I am Joaquin/Yo soy Joaquin,” a poem by Rodolfo Gonzales which he describes as an “Epic Poem of the Mexican People,” he recounts the struggles of a typical Chicano boy growing up in a society where he does not fit in:

I am Joaquin , lost in world of confusion
Caught up in the whirl of a
Gringo society
Confused by the rules
Scorned by attitudes
Surpressed by manipulation,
And destroyed by modern society. (Gonzales, 6)

The Chicano literature has grown at a fast pace in the last three decades. Many books are now being used in English classes as part of their curriculum, creating a better understanding among the diverse population existing in all classes in public schools in the U.S. It was a hard struggle for Cesar Chavez which has produced very positive results for the quality of life of a new generation of immigrants in the U.S.

ACTIVITIES

I. Read and discuss in class the following works by Miguel de Unamuno:

“Del Sentimiento Tragico de la Vida”

“San Manuel Bueno, Martir”

“Niebla”

and the poems:

“ Reason and Faith”

“The Prayer of an Atheist”

“The Failure of Life”

“The Agony of Christianity”

II. Read and discuss:

“Kaddish” by Allen Ginsberg

“This Tokyo” by Gary Snider

“Morning Light Song” and “Still Poem 9” by Philip Lamantia

III. Work in groups to find similarities in ideas as well as form in the works of these authors. This activity will be followed by an oral presentation.

IV. Write an essay of no less than 400 words on “The Search for Religion in Unamuno and the American Poets”

V. Watch the film “Niebla ”and follow with an oral discussion of the themes utilized by Unamuno to convey his message.

VI. Read selections from Antonio Machado and Valle Inclan, identify their concerns with the problems of Spain, paying attention to their styles, and applying the concepts of literary analysis learned previously.

VII. Read selections of Ferlinghetti’s poetry in which he makes references to Spanish Poets: “Picture of the Gone World” and “A Coney Island of the Mind”

VIII. Compare the ideas of the Spanish writers to the poems by Ferlinghetti and present their findings to the class. Consider the themes as well as the style.

IX. Write an essay using the theme of the ultimate truth and the true meaning of life, comparing the “Generation of 98” poets to the American poets of the 1960s or write a poem using the style and some of the themes of all the writers studied.

X. Read works by Lorca:

“La Casa de Bernarda Alba” and “Yerma” and selections from poems on the “Romancero Gitano” and “Poet in New York.” as well as “A Supermarket in California” by Allen Ginsberg, “Fresh Air” by Kenneth Koch, and Jack Spicer’s “Letter to Lorca”. Students will discuss in groups the influences and similarities in those poems and will present their findings to the class.

XI. Write an essay of at least 400 words on the sensorial images found in the works of Lorca, Ginsberg, Spicer, and Koch or write a poem using the style of one of the poets studied.

XII. Read “Versos Sencillos” written by Jose Marti. Discuss Marti’s concerns in his poetry and how they relate to the concerns of the American generation of the 1960s. Learn the song “Guantanamera” and encourage students to find different artists in the last three decades who have recorded the song. Discuss the relevance of the poems in today’s society.

XIII. Read and discuss in small groups selections of poems by Neruda, including poems from his four main currents: Love, war, politics, and odes to simple things. Discuss in their groups the relevance of those poems and how they have influenced the poetry of the 1960s in the United States. Memorize one of his poems and recite it to the class.

XIV. Show film “Il Postino”-Follow by a class discussion, finding the elements mentioned in the film about Neruda’s life and its influence in his poetry.

XV. Students will do research in groups on the Civil Right Movement of the 1960s in the U.S., focusing on the efforts of Cesar Chavez. They will present their findings to the class.

XVI. Learn selected songs by Joan Baez with themes about the immigrant farmers in the U.S.

XVII. Read excerpts of the poem “Yo Soy Joaquin” in groups. Students will write a short play depicting an immigrant family in the U.S. and its suffering, video tape it, and show it to other classes. Make a list of all the feelings of Joaquin growing up and what he could have done to help his situation . Discuss how different would his life be in the year 2000.

XVIII. Write a final essay on their impressions of the influences of the Spanish-speaking writers on the writings of American poets.

XIX. In pairs, prepare an imaginary interview between two of the authors studied, one from the Spanish speaking countries and one from the U.S. Present it to the class.

XX. Students will maintain a portfolio including several of their favorite works studied in class as well as other works that they have studied on their own. The teacher will conduct an individual oral conference with the student to discuss their findings and opinions.

CONCLUSION

After reading the selections from the authors mentioned in this unit, and upon completion of all the activities, I hope my students will have a better understanding of the concerns shared by writers of the turn of the century in Spain and the writers of the 1960s in the U.S., seeing how their writings affected the future of two different nations, worlds apart, but united by the universal concerns of humanity throughout history.

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LIST OF RESOURCES

Films

Bodas de Sangre..

Il Postino.

Life of Federico Garcia Lorca.

Niebla.

Yerma.

These films can be purchased or rented from:

Films for the Humanities and Sciences,

P.O. Box 2053.

Princeton, N.J. 08543-2053

(800)257-5126

Recordings

The lyrics for “Guantanamera” and the songs written and recorded by Joan Baez and Pete Seeger, can be found on www.lyricsconnection.com and also through: Sing Out Publications, P.O. Box 5253, Bethlehem, Pa. 18015-0253 or by calling 1-800-4-WE-SING.

You may check any local record store for Julio Iglesias’ “America” for a version of “Guantanamera” and recordings by Pete Seeger and Joan Baez.

Booksellers

Ediciones Universal,

P.O. Box 40353,

Shenandoah Station,

Miami, Fl. 33245-0353

(305) 642-3234

National Textbook Company,

4255 West Touhy Ave.,

Lincolnwood, Ill. 60646-1975

(708) 679-5500

Web Sites

Joan Baez: <http://baez.woz.org/jblyrics.html>

Robert Bly: <http://robertbly.com>

Cesar Chavez: <http://www./reuther.wayne.edu/before.html>

Pablo Neruda: <http://www.stewalbert.com> and stewa@aol.com
<http://www.uchile.cl/Neruda.html> (1999)