

Negrismo
A Theme for Improving Self-Image in the Spanish Classroom
For Black History Week

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The 1990's have seen the development and implementation of multicultural curricula in schools all over the country. This has been a harbinger of not only the discussion of origins and backgrounds of the various ethnic groups within a school building and district, but also to the inclusion of multidisciplinary subjects to facilitate the teaching of history, geography as well as ethnicity and its implications in the school. At times, this has actually spearheaded the discussion of race relations at large. In the Pittsburgh Public schools, African American studies have been introduced, mainly dealing with history, and some local literature. An introduction of an African Latino studies in literature and performing arts would highly complement existing curricula in the district as well as nationally. The fact is that colonization, oppression, and dehumanization of Africans and Caribbean Africans (which is ever central to the themes in Négritude) parallel the enslavement and dehumanization of Caribbean and Latino Africans, whose expressions -- in anger or joy, in despair or hope, for recognition or to defy -- also feature in Negrismo.

The introduction of a Latino African literature would respond to academic, literary, racial, and ethnic issues in the school district. The school district has just over 41,000 students, of which 52% are African Americans, some of Latino and Caribbean descent. One important goal of the district's has been to create a learning environment in which all students, notwithstanding their ethnic background, will not only get along with each other, but also appreciate each other's background and ethnic origin. Very much in this line is the district's drive to reduce racism in the system. That the black population in the Pittsburgh Public Schools is over 51% in a city which comprises only 25% African-Americans is an indication of racism, however subtly that may be practiced. The fact is that most whites living within the school district send their children to prep, parochial and other private schools. In addition, the flight of young white families to the suburbs has left mostly older whites without families and less understanding of other cultures. It has, therefore, become very important for the school district to cultivate good race relations within school grounds, especially since mostly other minority groups are moving in and enrolling their children in the district schools.

Taylor Allderdice High School is right at the heart of the city, but is located in what is referred to as a "good neighborhood." Squirrel Hill is predominantly Jewish in population. Though less than 10% of the defined school neighborhood population is black, the school population is approximately 25% African-American, 40% Jewish and 35% other ethnic groups.

Since most of the black students attending Allderdice do not live in the neighborhood, they have concerns and feelings about self-rejection, not only in the community at large, but also in the school building. They do not

have a sense of belonging because they are mostly "bussed" to school, from black neighborhoods. On a few occasions, disagreements between students from various neighborhoods have spilled over in the school building. There is, therefore, a need to address the issues relating to black students' feelings of isolation, and rejection by whites in the building and by the neighborhood inhabitants.

To its credit, the Pittsburgh Public Schools district is academically very respectable, with many magnet schools at various levels. At the high school level, AP courses are offered in almost all subjects, including French language and literature and Spanish language and literature. Achievement rates in these tests have been very high. So have been the success rates in the PSAT and the SAT, leading to a usually high number of national merit scholars and university acceptances.

In spite of the advanced Spanish courses offered to prepare students for The AP test and the International Baccalaureate, there is no curriculum in place to specifically expose not only African American students but all the students to Negrismo. This error of omission has had a very negative consequence on African American students, who see the normal daily Spanish curriculum as an exclusively white language and culture which is being imposed upon them at school in spite of obvious or perceived social discriminatory situations which put them at a disadvantage and make them feel alienated in the classroom. An implementation of such a curriculum would give African Americans models for positive references and self-projection. The degree of exposition to ideas and the intensity of thematic analysis are certainly instrumental in orienting student participants toward specific outcomes, minimizing the feeling of alienation.

Goal of Curriculum

The aim of this curriculum unit is, therefore, to expose Taylor Allderdice Students and other students in the school district to Latin America literature and culture, especially from a perspective which suggests to the students that blacks in Latin America have been active participants in making and shaping the cultural and literary aspects of the continent.

In this process, the most basic and primary goal is for the student to experience reading in a foreign language, viz, Spanish. Beyond that is the intent to immerse the student in a Latino literary and cultural experience with black and African ideas, expressions, philosophy, religion, culture, legends, etc. Reading is an essential part of the curriculum so that students can associate their learning with the writings of Latino Africans or blacks. Reading is intended to take place both at school and at home. Through these readings, and discussions, students will attain a high level of language learning and acquisition. To make reading a less tedious task than most students already think it to be, and also make it more practical for the students, mostly extracts will be read for class work, especially in cases where long and complicated stories are involved.

Another goal of the curriculum is to improve students' grammatical skills and increase vocabulary, especially within the literary and performing arts contexts. Vocabulary lists and grammatical structure handouts will be available for students before each reading actually takes place. Class discussion and explication of text will then take place.

The last goal is actually very fundamental and important, since it centers around the main reason why this curriculum is being written and being implemented during Black History Month. The main purpose is to convey, through the comprehension of Black Latino writers, artists, or through cultural writings or legends with positive view of Blacks, the exaltation of the individual, the black individual, the former slave or colonized African, unto a higher position. This position is socially, philosophically, politically and otherwise as good as, or better than, that of Whites who once oppressed, enslaved, and thought negatively of, blacks. I, therefore, hope that this curriculum will be a motivating and encouraging factor in influencing more African American students into taking Spanish lessons, looking at it from a different and positive perspective, and gaining some self-esteem from experiencing the black aspect of the Latino culture.

Rationale and Background for this Curriculum

Background

Peter Winn has written a very good chapter in his book *Americas*, sub-titled "It's a Question of Color." It is a succinct observation and analysis of race relations, social, economic and political opportunities in the Americas since the arrival of the Spaniards, colonization, slavery, emancipation and independence. It is very interesting to note that while time and circumstances have erased legal and state-mandated racially oppressive and discriminatory policies, human nature, culture, norms and values continue to define a person's worth based on the color of his or her skin. From this chapter, it is obvious that race has mostly served as a parameter for negative consequences and rewards for mostly Blacks and some times Mulattos. Even in Brazil where half the population is black, the highest elected position held so far and only by one woman, is the equivalent of a US senator.

Whether in the Dominican Republic (where most people would like to be brown or light-skinned) in Haiti (where history's past oppression of blacks aroused the allegiance to be black) or in Brazil (where ruling whites praise the stability of a multi-racial nation in which Blacks are mostly powerless and poor) it's all a question of color. It is certainly arguable that if everyone were born black, white, red or mulatto, there would never have been a Négritude or Negrismo. Nor would there have been a Harlem Renaissance movement influenced by Negritude. Indeed racial equality and respect and equal opportunity for those with dark skin seem to have been as elusive as the "invisible" freedom from slavery in the Brazilian song quoted by Winn: "One Hundred Years of Freedom: Reality or Illusion?"

It is safe to say that from the late eighteenth hundreds through the first half of the nineteenth hundreds, literary writing by blacks could mainly be classified under Négritude or Negrismo, because they expressed similar concepts, sentiments, ideas and feelings: freedom, emancipation, suffering, oppression, self-worth, self-identity, pride in one's heritage, and preservation of one's culture.

The American society right after emancipation not only fostered racism, but also promoted white-written novels and stories with negative portraits of Blacks. It was, in fact, in response to these negative portraits and the feeling of discrimination and marginalization that Langston Hughes declared, "I, too, sing America." The writings of Hughes, McKay, and others; the Civil Rights Movement up to Dr. King's assassination; the Supreme Court Cases on the education of blacks, and other social and political activities are indicators of oppression and negative treatment of American blacks who had to claim their rights and self-esteem, and whose literary response is mostly Négritude or Negrismo in nature.

As a founding father of Négritude, the Martinican W.E.B. Dubois published his *The Souls of Black Folk* in 1914. Considered to be the Bible of the militant school of protest against the stereotyped pictures of the Negro child, the Negro clown and the bad evil Negro in American Literature, Dubois' work was instrumental in the initiation of the Harlem Renaissance in America as well as defining the path for European African, African, Caribbean and Latino writers.

Following the path already cleared by African students who were attending the university in France and who expressed their opinion about the negative treatment of Blacks by Whites in *L'Étudiant noir*, some prominent people including the Martinican writer Aimé Césaire, Sénégalaise statesman and poet Léopold Sédar Senghor, Guyanese poet Léon Dumas and others met in Paris in 1934 and launched the Négritude .

The interesting thing is that, without calling itself Negritude or Negrismo, a Latino counterpart of Négritude had actually started long before the official inauguration of the Parisian movement. According to Fernando de la Vega (p. 87) Negritud or Negrismo already existed in principle in the Americas : the United States, The Dominican Republic, Cuba, Argentina, Colombia, Venezuela, Haiti, Puerto Rico, Brazil, all countries from

which writers, and artists originated to form what is usually referred to as an Afro-Cubanist movement bearing various names, with African aspects or blackness being the central issue.

Though the Afro-Cuban movement was more literary and art-centered, it seems to have actually been propelled by political and military activities involving Latin America and Europe. Agitation for independence from Spain resulted in the Cuban War for independence in which Blacks fought side by side with Whites. After Spain was driven out, Cuba was occupied by the United States to stabilize the region, but Cubans saw this as yet another colonization stage and a nationalistic movement developed into the Afro-Cubanist movement—a strong indication of both nations' resentment of foreign occupation. Within this context, however, was the black citizen's seething with anger about the social, economic and political depravity fostered by racial inequality. Blacks' sacrifice and experience in the war to liberate their country now became a source of strength and encouragement for them in their strife for equality.

The literary and artistic movement that assumed various but similar names such as *poes'a negra*, *poes'a afroantillana*, *poes'a afrocubano*, *poes'a afropuertorriqueña*, *poes'a negrista*, and *poes'a mulata* became a major player in the expression and struggle for racial identity and equality. Like in the Harlem Renaissance, which eulogized the soul of black folks, and presumably launched the Francophone Négritude movement, this Latin and Caribbean African movement had similar goals. The slight difference seems to be the fact that, though mostly blacks, the composition of those in the latter group also had white artists. The main theme, as in the French Négritude, "blackness", previously portrayed as mainly evil, primitive, ungodly, savage, etc., (mainly by white writers) was now portrayed as godly, just, civilized, strong, beautiful, natural (by mostly black authors and a few white supporters). Negrismo—like Négritude—expressed all these ideas and suggested or expressed the equality or superiority of the black race (which had been oppressed and enslaved) to the white (the oppressor).

My intent is not to present a historical account of Negrismo, but simply to review the few literary (and performing arts) selections which have aspects of Negrismo, and which I hope will provide the instructor and the student with the fundamental aspects and characteristics of Negrismo. Though not an exhaustive list, this review also establishes the extent to which Negrismo was a whole regional (Latino-Caribbean) movement, expressing the importance and wholesomeness of blackness and Africanness. In addition, it discloses that, Negrismo, like Négritude, was more than just a literary trend: it was a political, social, intellectual, and even economic trend that was embraced and encouraged by some, but despised and thwarted by others in the same societies that had enslaved Blacks and tried to prevent their progress in whatever form.

Limitations and Delimitation's

As a "liberation movement", Negrismo was a rather inclusive force. To many experts, it was a political, cultural, literary, and even economic force that was intended to lift Blacks out of their here-to-fore negative experiences with the white world. Like the Francophone Négritude, it revealed the positive aspects of African, Afro-Latino, Afro-Caribbean and African-American cultures which were already branded as negative by Whites. In this curriculum, Afro-Hispanic (or Afro-Latino) Negrismo is defined as a sense of black renewal, a concept of historical reconstruction. In Kubayanda's view, it is linked to the fervent vitality that characterized the period of Reconstruction in North America, roughly from 1863 to 1930. This included the movement toward Africa led by Marcus Garvey and the black intellectual revolution spearheaded by Du Bois, the black cultural Golden Age expressed in the Harlem Renaissance, the pan-African movement started by Henry Sylvester-Williams and Du Bois.

This curriculum includes a few writers from selected Latin American and Caribbean countries, whose ideas are in line with Negrismo as defined above. Though this will be centered mainly around literary work, mention may be made about cultural issues that are characteristic of Negrismo.

Selections To Be Included in the Curriculum

Negrismo seems to have had a footing in every country that had black slaves, though today, critics posit various arguments as to which of those activities can be taken as real Negrismo, and which can be classified only as writings that were done by blacks and mulattos—with themes not relating to blackness and consequences or deductions. That being the case, I have chosen to incorporate a sample of writers from different countries. There are no special reasons for the countries and writers I have chosen, except for the fact that there is available work by those authors, which fit the negrista ideology and can be appreciated not only by the instructor, but especially by the students for whom the curriculum is being prepared.

Argentina

In Marvin A. Lewis' *Afro-Argentine Discourse*, the observation is that African-based theories associated with ethnicity, negritude, creolization, and syncretism did not materialize. He notes, instead, that Afro-Argentine writers "did engage in a critical dialogue with the society that seemed determined to reject them" (p. 7). Citing Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, however, Lewis states that Afro-Argentines suffered a double bind of being slaves legally until 1853 and second-class citizens until the present and that the basic themes in their writing include "the celebration of the struggle toward independence in community and individual, the dominating influence of a foreign culture, the recurrent pattern of exile...", which to me are relevant topics in the discussion of Négritude or Negrismo. Under Argentina, I will include Casildo Thompson's poem *Song of Africa*, in Estrada's 1979 version.

George Andrews observes that Thompson showed sensitivity toward racial themes and that his *Song of Africa* is an evocation of the cruelties of the slave trade, which employs a striking reversal of traditional porteño racial stereotypes. In this poem, the white man is the savage, "a slaving wild beast" who destroys black families and lives in his relentless greed for profits. Portraying black people as pariahs, "Thompson sounded the trumpet of black pride" (p. 175). In spite of Lewis' initial observation about Afro-Argentine writers, he seems to agree with any critic who suggests that this was Negrismo. This is the case when, just before he quotes Julio Finn, he personally observes that the attitudes of black writers in the nineteenth-century Argentina approximate the ideology of what today would be known as Afrocentrism, or at least Négritude, an attitude characteristic of postcolonial discourse. He then goes on to quote Julio Finns who observes that Négritude was a give-no-quarter war with colonialism and racism. That it is the only artistic movement in modern times whose expressed creed is to redeem the spiritual and cultural values of a people (pp.51-52). What else could be said to counter the statement of critics that Afro-Argentine writers—or at least some of them—were not negrista writers? Why wouldn't there be black sentiments expressed in a country whose black population is considered an "endangered specie? It's said that Buenos Aires once had more Blacks than any other race. Over the years, however, legal and official policies as well as natural epidemics and endemics have reduced this metropolitan as well as the national population of Blacks to near distinction.

Brazil

A Lusophone country, Brazil also falls in the Hispanic and Latino group, and therefore fits in our Latino Negrismo curriculum. As Winn has pointed out, Brazil's population is almost half black, even though political, social and other leaders hardly comprise black faces. The best reason that Africans of my age and younger know Brazil for is soccer, and because of such charismatic players like Pele who later on went to become the Brazilian Minister of Sports, an appointed post which came only after Brazil felt very uncomfortable seeing how Pele was treated everywhere else like a king, but simply a soccer player in his own home. Winn points out that in spite of the half and half race composition of Brazilian population, blacks hardly have important political, Judo-Christian religious or other social positions. In addition blacks are mostly associated with the culture of poverty in a land of plenty. He observes that the highest elected office a black person has held is the equivalent of a US Senator, and only one woman so far has had that honor. No wonder, therefore, that there is a lot of Brazilian literature that can be classified as negrista, by the merit of their discussion of black enslavement and oppression by whites; black role in the liberation of the land; black struggle for freedom and civil treatment, and the presentation of black legends in Brazilian history, society and other aspects of life.

James Kennedy's *Relatos Latinoamericanos: La herencia africana* provides four readings, all about great black leaders or the comparatively positive aspects of the African society as juxtaposed with that of the European. "La historia de Chico Rey" talks about the fact that Blacks forced into slavery in the New world tried not only escape as a means to freedom, but actually organized themselves in liberated territories and fought wars against Whites – sometimes allied with, and sometimes against, Indians. Chico Rey is said to be a leader who actually set up a kingdom and fought against white enslavement of Blacks. Similarly, in *Zumbí, héroe Negro del Brasil colonial*, "Zumbí de Palmares es sin duda el gran héroe de los negros brasileños...una de las mayores tentativas de autogobierno de la raza negra fuera de Africa" (P. 21). On the other hand, the picture of a little black angel-like boy who could recover any lost possession is projected in the Uruguayan and Brazilian legend titled, "El Negrillo del Pasteo". The last selection which I believe falls under Negrismo is "Bombar y Tambor: Bailes Tradicionales Afrolatinos". That the African influence in this cultural aspect of Latin American is the center of this piece – because that is what is positive — can only be looked upon as negrista. Within the Spanish classroom it will not only show that there is writing to argue for the positive aspects of African and black culture in the Hispanic setting, but it will also serve as means to encourage black feelings of inclusion in the school setting and reduce the feeling of alienation as exhibited by some African American students.

Colombia

According to Lewis in his *Treading the Ebony Path*, Afro-Colombian writers' works show that oppression is the result of societal structures that have been in place for centuries in Colombia, supported by the tripartite repressive force of the Church, the oligarchy, and the military (p. 86). As in other Latino countries the social, economic and political status of Blacks make them neglected and discriminated against during stability, but repressed and persecuted in times of turmoil. This has been the case for blacks in Colombia, in peace, and continuing into the fratricidal killings begun in 1948.

Manuel Zapata Olivella

According to Lewis, Olivella is one of Colombia's leading men of letters, assessing the different strata of Colombian society, but dwelling mostly on the underdogs, which in most cases are blacks. Gifted, with an unusually diverse background, Olivella was born in Lorica Córdoba, on 17 March 1920. In addition to being a successful writer, Olivella is also a doctor, folklorist, professor, and an anthropologist.

His publications include seven novels: *The Drenched Earth*, and *In Chima a Saint Is Born* both deal with the rural campesino; *10th Street* is about urban street people; *Chambacú, a Black Ghetto* is about dispossessed city blacks; *Behind the Mask* is a psychological integration of both the rural and the urban experiences, while *Changó, the Great SOB* is an epic that embraces black people throughout the Americas.

All of Olivella's novels have something to offer in the study of the literature of race, oppression and liberation. According to Lewis, Olivella has written from the Afro-Colombian perspective while realizing that he has a dual responsibility—to his craft and society. Though all his works provide something for the curriculum, *Changó, el gran putas* I have chosen to include. This is a story of enslavement, one in which a strong mythical leader organizes for a victorious war of rebellion against the oppressors. It is a story with a setting which includes all the Americas and even Civil Rights activists like Malcolm X. In essence, this is Negrismo. It's not simply the basic aspect of this ideology which preaches the beauty of blackness, but the demonstration of black intelligence, leadership, yearning for freedom, power and the ability to win against the oppressor. Though this is a war and violent work, it is demonstrative of the type of work that is more likely to suggest to students that there was a real oppression of their race all over America before, and that the Civil rights Movement as well as other activities—violent and non-violent, true and fictitious, etc., all helped to create a society in which we mostly have subtle racism and discrimination. This should be a suggestion and a directive to students that they can now be an equal part of this society through a different means of liberation war: improvement of social, economic and political status through education

Cuba

The background section has shown that Cuba was pivotal in the development of writers of Afro-Latino and Caribbean descent. Cuba not only provided space for artists and writers to meet and share ideas and ideologies pertinent to Negrismo, but was also the source of many of those intellectuals. I have chosen two authors mainly because the information on them is available: Alejo Carpentier and Nicolás Guillén .

Alejo Carpentier (all information from Llyod King's *Alejo Carpentier*)

Alejo Carpentier can be called a real international person. Born to a French and Russian couple in Havana in 1904, he attended primary school in Cuba but secondary school in Paris. He tried to follow his father's foot steps as an architect, but gave up studies before he could graduate. By age twelve, Carpentier was already trying his skills at writing, and later on in life earned his living through journalism (p.7).

While active in organizations dealing with the arts, literature and politics, he was thrown in jail as a Communist agitator, and had to leave Cuba for France in 1928, after his release. Between 1925 and 1930, he developed interest in the African contribution to Cuban culture and this provided him the stimulus to develop his talents in writing. While in prison in 1927, he wrote his first novel *Ecué Yambá O*, translated as *Ecué* be praised, an aspect of his immersion into African ideology. Between 1933 and 1959, he lived in Paris, Caracas and later returned to Havana in 1959 after Castro's triumph in the revolutionary war, an occasion which initiated the recognition of his citizenship and writing as Cuban (P. 8).

Ecué yambá O is considered one of Carpentier's Black Liberation novels, one in which a secret African society has its legitimate place in the economic, social and political structure of the nation, just like the European Christian Churches whose priests and Missionaries see African practices as evil and sinful. Who is to say that African religion and secret society are less godly, than that created by whites? *El reino de este mundo* was written after Carpentier's visit to Haiti. The theme is the struggle for independence, and relates to the folk traditions of voodoo—which was very much abused and vilified by white propagandists. In this work, Carpentier did not empathize with Haitian nationalist intellectuals who behaved like whites, condemning cultural and social practices of African origin. In both works, the juxtaposition of African and European cultural practices and the superimposition of the African over the European couldn't be any more negrista in nature (p. 10).

Écué Yambá Ó and *El reino de este mundo* will be included in the curriculum.

Nicolás Guillén

According to Edward Mullen's *Afro-Cuban Literature: Critical Junctures*, Nicolás Guillén wa born in the colonial city of Camagüey, in July 1902. Guillén began to work very early in life as a type-setter, to help the family after his father was victim to a political assassination. (p. 116)

After completing secondary school in only two years, he went to Havana to study law, but was forced to withdraw in 1920 because of economic constraints. But he went back the following year and managed to

complete a year of formal study at law school. It was also at this time that he became actively interested in writing through association with literary circles at the capital.

In 1921, he went back to the Camagüey, where he and his brother founded the black literary journal *Lis*. From 1922 to 1926, he also worked as the editor of a local newspaper.

Working for a special newspaper the *Diario de la Marina*, devoted to aspects of black life, he launched his literary career in the special Sunday supplement, with the publication on April 20, 1930, of *Son motives*, (*Son Motifs*), a collection of eight poems describing the lives of Blacks in Cuba's urban slums. The poems were based on "son" a popular Afro-Cuban dance that symbolized ethnic-racial make-up of the island. His *Sóngoro cosongo* in 1931, a collection of fifteen poems, represented a step in maturity, which captured the violence, hardship, poverty and cynicism of ghetto life in Cuba. Expanding his vision to include all the marginalized peoples of the Caribbean, he universalized his concern for the common man in *West Indies* in 1934. This collection contained a long list of evils that plagued the Caribbean, all blamed on United States' capitalistic imperialism and hegemony. (pp.116-117)

Working as a journalist and member of the Communist party, Guillén had the opportunity to travel and attend international conferences, leading to his meeting of Langston Hughes and other literary and political social activist at the Second International Writers Congress for the Defense of Culture, in Spain in 1937. (p. 117).

Besides poems, he also wrote hundreds of essays dealing with the poor social conditions of Blacks and the racial problems in Cuba. An anthology of these essays was published in 1975 under the title *Prosa de Prisa*. In 1953, he was awarded the Stalin Prize in Moscow. After serving in various diplomatic and cultural missions after the 1954 revolution, he became president of the Union of Cuban Writers and artists. (p. 118)

This curriculum will deal with three of Guillén's poems: "El Apellido" from *Eligía*; "Caña" from *Consongo*, and "Son número 6" from *Son*.

In addition to the two major Cuban writers chosen, I also intend to select some passages from Miguel Barnet's *Biography of a Runaway Slave*. This story has many aspects of Negrismo. The escaped slave not only talks about the cruelty and inhumane conditions which he has had to flee from (as a black slave oppressed, overworked and in many ways treated worse than a prisoner) but he also mentions how his forest living is peaceful, natural and in accordance with spirituality and happiness; he mentions the religions of the Congos and other African tribes, to contradict all that he thinks is negative in the whiter man's was type of religion; above all, he portrays the bravery and ingenuity of black soldiers during the war of independence from the Spanish as well as the Revolutionary war. Though it might not be easy for most students to read this book in Spanish, the English version may be used. In fact, since only abstracts will be used, it may not be an insurmountable task to read some pages in Spanish.

The Harlem Renaissance Connection

Just like the Francophone Négritude, Negrismo connected with The Harlem Renaissance Movement for the sake of cultural, political, economic and spiritual liberation. Of importance, especially, was the relationship between Langston Hughes and Guillén. Mullen cites Robert Christian's "Langston Hughes: Six Letters to Nicolás Guillén" in *Black Scholar*, to show that friendship between Hughes and Guillén was not an isolated phenomenon because significant cultural and political exchanges had been going on between Afro-Americans and Afro-Cubans since the 19th century. That recognizing it as an anti-slavery struggle, black Americans had supported the Cuban War of Independence in various ways (p. 119).

Ecuador

Adalberto Ortiz

Born in Esmeraldas, Ecuador, in 1914, he is the author of many poems and short stories that deal with race and culture. His *Juyungo* was written in 1942 and won the first prize for novels at the concurso Nacional. Susan Hill and Jonathan Tittler the translators, observe on the cover of the book that it is "the tale of a proud and passionate Black's thirst for justice.... Selvatic cadences punctuate the Ascensión Lastre's movement from racism to class awareness." His two other novels *El Espejo y la ventana*, and *La envoltura de un sueño* are not as racial as they are social statements. However, his *Tierra, son y tambor: cantares negros y mulatos* are very much negritude in nature, since the poems exalt and magnify Africa, her culture and Blacks.

Juyungo is a novel in which the main character goes through all the negative experiences that make him hate whites—even to the point that when he has the first opportunity to have a white woman he perceives it as means to punish her hateful and oppressive race. He eventually becomes dignified in not only forgiving and accepting the white race, but also in controlling his black "brothers" from taking advantage of Indians whom they get drunk together with their wives and then raped the women and young women. It is this type of dignified passage that defines the black character as a foil of his white counterpart in Negrismo. In fact, one of the most dramatic chains of events which dignifies *Juyungo* is that which leads to the seven day imprisonment of Lastre for obstructing the police from killing Don Valerio Durga, the same white man who had just tried to kill him for being with a white woman, and the same rapist of a mulatto girl and murderer of her entire family to conceal his crime. This is Negrismo—black writing depicting the rising of the black character above blame, usually in settings that show the evil and oppressive nature of whites in powerful and other advantageous positions in that society.

Tierra, son y tambor is negrista mostly in the sense that it describes Africa and Blacks. It is not a typical negrista writing in that it simply tries to describe the land and people and also animals that live there, including those that hurt, like the boa constrictor, etc. He does not offer the juicy descriptions which real Negrismo writers provide; nor does he suggest that we move to Africa, as some of those writings do. But the innocence of this land cannot be missed in his descriptions, which suggestive of his good feelings for his people and his motherland.

Given the length and level of difficulty of the text, I have chosen only some chapters from *Juyungo*: "Juyungo", "No se mueren los verdaderos hombres en el colchón", "Kilómetro 18" and "El Negro que no volvió nada". From Ortiz's *Tambor*, these poems will be discussed: "*Breve historia nuestra*", "*contribución*", "*Antojo*" and "*Sinfonía*" all from "Cantares negros"

Puerto Rico

Puerto Rico is certainly a melting pot as far as races are concerned; may be we can actually call Puerto Rico a melted pot, since the population has a high percentage of people with mixed white, black, Indian, races, besides the pure Blacks and Whites. It is not a situation where people of these different races merely live and work together. Of course, Puerto Rico also has its history of enslavement and oppression by the Spaniards; within this context is the existence of literary work by both Blacks and mixed race citizens that can be classified as negrista – for the author's expressions about freedom, blackness, Africa, etc.

Beginning with Robert Muckley and Adela Martinez-Santiago's *Leyendas de Puerto Rico*, "Carabalí" is the legend of the Black who fought against forced labor on Blacks. As Indians in Puerto Rico became more and more resistant to slave work for the Spaniards, Blacks were brought to Puerto Rico, as they were to the other parts of the Americas. For the third time, Carabalí had escaped from his oppressive masters from the San Blas Hacienda, and this time preferred to die than to come back alive to slavery. He took his machete with him, slept near a cave into which he went as dawn came, and set up a defense with leaf branches. His masters came with dogs and guns. The first dog to set foot in the cave was killed with machete blows, so the masters let loose their guns; luckily, he was not visible, and the rest of the job was left to the dogs, some of which received machete blows and died. As he was fighting the dogs, the ground gave way and he fell into an abyss. The dogs continued to bark at the abyss in frustration, the masters decided that Caribalí was dead, and

took the dogs and went home. Luckily for the hunted, he had a very soft landing in mud, and discovered an unknown way in and out of the abyss. From this base, he recruited and trained "an army" that fought against the slave masters.

Puerto Rico also has the legendary **poet Luis Palés Matos**, some of whose poems are exemplary Negrismo. Writing an introduction to Matos' *Poesia completa y prosa selecta*, Margo Arce de Vazquez notes that there was a dispute between important Caribbean poets, including Matos, Llorens Torres, Guillén and Ballagas, as to how to portray the Negro in the Caribbean poetry. Independent of whatever solution was suggested by this regional masters, Matos was of the opinion that it was absolutely important to recognize and praise the work and contribution of the Negro in the life and culture of Puerto Rico and to take it as a positive constitutive element of the people and nation of Puerto Rico. "Fue de los primeros en nuestro hemisferio en reconocer la dignidad personal del Negro, su identidad como hombre y creador de cultura, en exaltar la hermosura de la mulata y hacer la caricatura del Negro que rechaza su propia identidad" (p. XIII). This observation is of central importance in our decision to include Matos as a Negrismo or negrista poet. In his poetry, the Negro is exalted, dignified, identified as a person whose culture is as important as those of the White oppressors.

Collections of poems relevant to Blacks and Africa include *Danzarina Africana* (1917); *Poesia afro-antillana* (1921-1953); *Pueblo de Negros* (1925); *Esta noche he pasado* (1921); *Africa* (1925) whose title was later changed to *Pueblo Negro*; he continued to publish Negro poems until 1937, when he published the famous *Tuntún de Pasa y grifería*.

From these collections, selections of specific poems which best fit Negrismo, but which will also lend easy reading to students will be chosen and included in lesson plans. Of course, teachers who use this curriculum unit have the right to structure their lesson plans the way they see fit, according to the type of students they have, the type and length of periods structured into the school day.

Born March 20, 1898, in Guayama, Puerto Rico, Luis Palés Matos was the second son of Vicente Palés and Ames, a poet and school teacher, and Consuelo Matos Vicil, also a poet. The family was poor. They later on moved to San Juan, where his dad taught in the public school. Even in the capital, they still had to do various odd jobs to eke out a living, because they were not white! At age 8, he went to school, and was an avid learner in every aspect from every source he came in contact with. According to Vazquez, he went to school, but as he said in an interview, he had many teachers, "the rooster in his house; the next door girl; the city barber; the horse suited with little lights crossing the street; Sunday services and buildings, and the square clock, with slow and lazy hours" (p. 340). In 1908, approximately 10 years after his birth, he started to write poetry. He completed elementary school in 1912. Started secondary school in 1913, the same year his dad died on stage (of heart attack) when he started to read to read his poem which ended in "Dawn shall weep on my grave...!" In 1914 he quit school to find a job. In 1918 he married Natividad, who died the following year of tuberculosis after they had a son Edgardo. From here, he basically became a writer.

Venezuela:

In his Ethnicity and identity in Contemporary Afro-Venezuelan Literature, Lewis observes that there is serious examination of questions of origins, presence, and future in regard to blacks in Venezuela. That questions of genealogy, identity and existential anguish have been addressed from multiple perspectives, whether by well-meaning mulattoes like Manuel Rodríguez Cárdenas and Ramón Sánchez, or black writers such as Juan Pablo Sojo. Like in some Latino writers, Venezuelan writers tried to avoid the race issue, de-africanizing and moving toward a miscegenation in theme and language. This probably came back to haunt especially black writers whose ancestors experienced slave labor in the past, but they too continued to experience the effects of race in the society they lived in. The three authors I have chosen to include in the curriculum are Juan Pablo Sojo, Ramón Díaz Sánchez and Antonio Acosta Márquez.

Juan Pablo Sojo and Nochebuena negra

Sojo's *Nochebuena negra* is a typical representation of what Lewis calls "cultural syncretism and slave culture", both of which conditions are strong characteristics of Negrismo. *Nochebuena negra* or *Black St. John's Eve* is a plantation story with at least three very important plots— triangular inter-racial relations in which death occurs, preventing the possible extinction of the black race; a plantation setting in which Blacks are treated unfairly, and the real Black St. John's Eve, which is anything but Christian. While the first plot has to have a metaphysical or magical explanation, the other two are basic situations in which white-black relations and cultures pit one against the other. The treatment of Blacks as slaves on the plantation gives the White race the superiority over Blacks who in turn resent the setting and yearn for a reversal of the situation. The celebration of the Black St. John's Eve, on the other hand is a total mockery of the Christian religion that has cooperated with the military and political autocracy to oppress Blacks. The festivity is characterized wild dancing, drunkenness and sexual activities. This may be a difficult book for lower classes, but extracts depicting specific situations defined can be read by higher classes.

Manuel Rodríguez Cárdenas and Tambor

Noting that Drum (*Tambor*) is still a controversial book in Venezuela because of the position it occupies in Venezuelan cultural history, Lewis observes that it predates *Nochebuena negra*, "and is key text in analyzing the development of literary negritud...."

Divided into five sections, *Tambor* has twenty-seven poems. The first section, "Socotara", contains "Ham's Manifesto", which according to Lewis, takes as its point of departure the so-called biblical condemnation of Ham and his people due to disobedience to God, as related in Genesis. As the darker elements of the human race, he continues, the Hamites are condemned to perpetual suffering and discrimination, and this poem lends a sympathetic ear to the plight of these people, and encourages blacks to overcome and assert themselves. In Lewis' words, "the message of 'Ham's Manifesto' is that because blacks have been shackled with stereotypes based upon myths, they have had to combat false assumptions and resist being condemned to the lower echelon of the society" (pp 53 & 55). This is a fundamental negrista reasoning and argument. "Ham's Manifesto' from *Tambor* is the chosen text to be included from Cárdenas' work.

Antonio Acosta Márquez and *Yo pienso aquí donde... Estoy*

Lewis notes that in Márquez's work, there is no doubt as to the intent of one of the most recent poetic affirmations of *negritud* in Venezuela. He cites Anibal Naza who observes that these poems are charged with the feelings of love, rebellion, honesty, clarity and hatred of the white oppressors (pp. 70 and 71). In all, many critics see Márquez's "Yo pienso..." as a collection of human popular poems which express serious social concerns, and the plight of blacks throughout the Barlovento region of the country provides the basis for a culturalist assessment of the idea of an African past, the culture's linguistic and thematic survivals, its folk beliefs, its criticism of injustice, and its development of Afrocentric worldview. "Yo pienso..." is certainly a negrista collection of poems and will be part of the curriculum unit. The poems are not extremely difficult to read, so extracts will be read in Spanish in intermediate and higher level classes.

Curriculum Unit as Part of Lesson Plans

Understandably, there is enough content material revealed in the background and rationale section to make daily lesson plans for a full school year in the high school. Especially since literature is only a part or an aspect of the material content of the Spanish class lesson, special planning has to be done by individual teachers in their respective buildings. Teachers with higher level Spanish classes which include a lot of literary reading into their lesson plans will find it easier to incorporate, but again, that will depend on prior defined district or building guide lines or built-in flexibility. For very low level classes, may better serve as a cultural and history element of the Spanish curriculum than the language aspect. In this case, all readings, except for some easy-to-

understand poetry will be done in English. Poetry chosen for these low classes should also be easy to recite and memorize, since such actions usually give students a lot of pride.

My Curriculum Design

This curriculum unit is designed for use during the four-week period, celebrating Black history Month. At Taylor Allderdice High School, Black History month is well-observed, students are informed about it and encouraged to take part in the related activities organized by the school. Accordingly, teachers can voluntarily do something in their own classes to reflect their thought and appreciation for this occasion.

Time limit is a major factor in deciding what the curriculum material will consist of and how the unit classes will be run. By time limit, I am referring to both the fact that this is a one-month curriculum unit within a daily time frame of 41 minutes per class period.

All language classes at Taylor Allderdice meet five days a week, forty-one minutes a day. Though a forty-one minute period is not very long, the five-day a week meeting provides for continuity. It also offers the opportunity to cover more grounds than if fewer classes per week were held. But with only forty-one minutes per class period, the readings will mostly consist of extracts taken out of poetry or novels.

This will be a 15-day lesson plan curriculum, since a main Spanish curriculum already exists at Taylor Allderdice High School and the rest of the high schools in the districts. With the amount of material exposed, however, any teacher at any level, including middle schools, can modify the curriculum design to any number of days of the school year. With all the countries covered and the authors mentioned, the lesson plans could actually cover the whole school year.

Strategy and Method of Learning and Appreciation of Lessons on Negrismo

Teaching and learning process will include lectures, in and out of class readings and daily analysis packet for students. Lectures from teacher will involve explanation of history, vocabulary and readings as well as cultural issues which students may find difficult to understand.

Before each new lesson, students will be provided with a vocabulary sheet containing the Spanish words considered to be new as well as the African words found in the reading. These words on the list will be explained by teacher and students will be asked to go over them a few times before they do their assigned reading, so that they can have an idea as to what is going on without having to look up words in the dictionary or elsewhere. This will facilitate the reading and provide for more reading time.

In addition, students will be provided with a "theme list". This list contains all the possible themes that Negrismo or negrista writings can have. Of course students will not be expected to find all these themes in each of the readings. But they will be encouraged to learn the list of themes by heart so that when reading, they can immediately identify Negrismo. I have compiled an inclusive Negrismo themes list, putting together ideas from African Latino Negrismo critics as well as from the Francophone African Négritude and African American experts on the issue:

- Journey to self-enlightenment
- Beauty in Blackness and Blacks
- Pride in self
- Togetherness and Collectivism

- Nationalism
- Liberation and Freedom
- Naturalness and being at ease with nature
- Communication with the past and ancestors
- Respect for those who are older
- Free style in writing
- Acceptance, and exaltation of Africa and Africanness
- Rejection of artificiality and what is white
- Love for all
- Hope

After each reading, in or out of class, students will be expected to complete a packet dealing with the contextual, thematic and the self –analysis sections.

The contextual section of the packet will check for the student’s understanding of the story. The basic questions will include:

- Name the main character(s)
- What is (are) the character’s aspirations/thoughts/desires?
- Has he/she achieved his/her aims in the story?
- What is the contents of the story/poem (what happens)
- Where does the situation occur?
- What is the plot?
- Do you like the ending? Why?

In the thematic section of the packet, students will be requested to state all the Negrismo themes they have found in the reading, using their list to make sure their listing is exhaustive. This will probably be easier to do if students pick out major actions or specific situations and assign a theme to them from the list.

In the third section, the self-analysis part, students will be asked questions relating to theme, author, situation and self:

- Is the author black or white?

- Is author same as main character or are they two different individuals?
- What is the problem?
- Does main character resolve the problem justly?
- Does author resolve problem appropriately
- How do you feel about the author?
- How do you feel about the characters?
- Does the blackness aspect (author and characters) make you think differently about Spanish, or vice versa?

Lesson plans

Sequence of lesson Plans

The Basic lay-out in the sequence of lesson plans is to have an overall introduction and then study the Negrismo authors and their individual works country after country as in the background section. In fact, Negrismo may not be understood without the explanation of Africa, The Slave Trade and Slavery in the Americas.

Pre-Colonial Africa and the Slave Trade

(Days One and Two)

Before the colonization and partition of Africa, and the ensuing arbitrary carving of countries where none existed before in the continent, Africa was a land of independent kingdoms and empires. Some kingdoms were quite small, having a population of only a few hundred people while others had millions of people. A language, same cultural and traditional practices as well as a definite physical area were usually the criteria for determining an ethnic group headed by a king or a chief. Empires were usually larger. Sometimes they were made of a mosaic of peoples from different ethnic groups, speaking different languages and dialects, and bound together by war treaties and marriage vows between members of the ruling families, etc.

Ancient Africa boasted of hundreds of kingdoms, chiefdoms and empires, most of which have never been mentioned in any textbook. I happen to come from a Cameroonian kingdom of which I have not yet found the name in any textbook. Regularly mentioned ancient African kingdoms and empires include Moroe in Nubia, Axum in Ethiopia, Ghana, Mali, Songhai (songhay), Asante, Ife, Benin, Buganda, Bakongo, Zulu, Bornu, etc.

Each of these empires, kingdoms and chiefdoms had a highly sophisticated political, military, social and cultural structure. Archeologists and historians have pieced information together, proving that very high level of civilizations existed in some of these states before they were destroyed.

Trade posts existed along the coast of Africa and European merchants brought various goods, which they exchanged for gold, diamonds, ivory, hardwood and other items. This trade in material goods later shifted, though not completely, to one involving humans. Africans were sold to Europeans who took them to the Americas and sold them as slaves to work on plantations, individual farmlands and in homes. Sugar cane plantations in the Caribbean and haciendas in Latin America absorbed millions while cotton, tobacco and other farmlands in America used millions of others.

The slave trade became more profitable than that of gold and diamonds. This made some powerful kingdoms and empires concentrate on warring and capturing people to sell as slaves. More sophisticated weapons brought in by Europeans encouraged states as well as individuals to become slave hunters. In fact, when laws were passed by European countries to stop slavery and the slave trade, the enforcement was problematic not only in Europe, but also in Africa, where some kings claimed they would be destitute if they stopped the trade.

Human cost of slavery and slave trade was enormous. Not counting casualties during raids and wars to capture people and sell into slavery, an estimated number of 15 million Africans died in transit to their destinations as slaves or while working as slaves. This rivals the Jewish tragedy of the Holocaust. Of course slaves that lived experienced some of the most heinous inhumane treatment on earth, as they were traded as commodity; families were separated at any time; women were raped by their masters; most slaves worked more than more than twelve-hour day schedules; most lived in ramshackles hardly protected from harsh weather conditions.

Sample Lesson Plan

Goals:

This lesson is to introduce the students to Ancient Africa, the slave trade and its effects. It discloses Africa's high degree of civilization in which all Africans including the children of former slaves ought to take pride. Lastly, even with its horrors, slavery and its long-term effect were an impetus to scholarly thoughts of Blacks.

Student Objectives:

At the end of this lesson, each student will be able to:

- Draw the map of Africa and correctly locate given ancient kingdoms and empires
- Trace the triangular trade route between America, Europe and Africa
- State the merchandise or goods leaving one continent to the other
- Provide basic information on the social, political, military, and cultural structure of ancient African kingdoms and empires
- State the evils and benefits of the slave trade
- State the social, economic and political status of slaves

Procedure

This is a teacher-driven lecture lesson. I will use maps, overhead projector and transparencies, and striking pictures that appear in texts on slavery and the slave trade. The basic resources from which I will obtain most information are Leon Clark's *Through African Eyes*; Basil Davidson's *African History*; Phyllis Martin and Patrick O'Meara's *Africa*; Rex Collin's *A Modern Atlas of African History*, and Robert Smith's *Warfare and Diplomacy in Pre-Colonial West Africa*. Students will be expected to take notes during the lecture.

Hands-on activities for students will include showing major kingdoms and empires on a blank map of Africa; showing major trading posts on the African coast, including a major slave post; showing the triangular trade route between America, Europe and Africa, specifying the "goods" involved.

The Causes and Characteristics of Negrismo

(Day 3 and 4)

This section will also be a teacher-driven lecture, explaining first of all the experience of blacks who were freed from slavery, but fared no better than under slavery in white societies that enslaved them before. The main aim is to establish that in spite of Emancipation, the political, economic and social conditions of blacks in the Americas left a lot to be desired. In the USA blacks were discriminated against, and segregated legally from whites in all aspects of life, and were victims of rampant and baseless lynchings by whites. "Whites Only" signs constantly announced segregation and discriminatory practices that made blacks look and feel inferior to whites in principle.

In the other countries of the Americas, the slave culture existed long after emancipation, and survival became the important goal of Blacks. In Brazil, with a population almost half black, citizens were still wondering in poems and songs, one hundred years after, when that emancipation would be "real". In Cuba, emancipated blacks fought in the Revolutionary and Independent wars, but like counterparts in America who fought the Revolutionary, the Civil, the two World Wars and the Vietnam War, recognition was not forthcoming. Though blacks in Cuba have fared better in education and social status than in the other countries of the Americas, I still have to hear of a black politician being (appointed) member of the Central Committee of the Ruling Communist Party.

The sugar cane plantations were a graveyard for blacks in many ways. The sole purpose of having slaves was so that hard labor could be done and done in time to profit the master. As such, the life of a slave was of no importance to the master, and that was still the case after "freedom." For many years, they worked to death without pay as slaves on the plantations. After Emancipation, they worked for very little pay, out of which they were very often cheated. Some times a worker would go without pay for months just because the name was "not on the roll" on the pay day; there were unexplained charges to accounts for which deductions were made; and most rampant was the extortionary rates charged for basic food items and health products at the white-owned stores on the plantations. The movie *Sugar Cane Alley*, though based in a French-run plantation, exposes some of those hardships experienced by the emancipated laborers. *Biography of a Runaway Slave*, Yuyungo, and many other works also highlight these miserable conditions. *Biography of a Runaway Slave* is critiqued as "a rich portrait of a human being's struggle for dignity during slavery and after emancipation," by Columbia University's Director of African-American Studies, Manning Marable. And those struggles are evident on every single page of the book, in spite of its sometimes light-hearted presentation of situations. They were constantly cheated, p.25; slaves and emancipated "paid" Blacks had to survive on tilling gardens after normal work days at the plantation, p. 26; "The work was exhausting," p. 63, and "The sugar mills were tiresome," p. 79.

In addition to these overtly discriminatory practices, the rejection and suppression of the cultural, intellectual and other heritage values of people who had been forcibly removed from their environment was also evident. To the French, the British, the Spanish and the Portuguese who went to Africa for slaves and eventually to colonize the continent, the culture and religious practices were backward and evil. Consequently, those who were taken to the Americas and worked under these same masters were also deprived of the practice of their cultural heritage.

A very important thing that also decided the contents and tone of Negrismo was the disregard of the positive in everything African or black, by white writers. Culture, politics and institutional set-ups were evil and primitive; so were philosophical thought processes, religion and education. In writing, Conrad's *The Dark Continent* represented Africa and everything black even across the continent. For this reason, white authors portrayed blacks in the Americas as evil, dumb, lazy good-for-nothing—although America was built on the backs of blacks. Because of this effect and the fact that earlier black writers were coerced by social and political conditions to accommodate the negative views of white writers about blacks—or in the best

situations, to pretend that the society had nothing black, negativism or at best nothing characterizes black literary achievement. In some countries like Argentina, Brazil and Venezuela, miscegenation became the theme to observe not only when talking of race, but also when talking about writing. In Argentina and Venezuela, especially, where official policies have tended to do away with everything that mentions race (in public record and documents) in spite of the fact that they know that Blacks are disadvantaged in every aspect of life, black writers have debated whether to pretend that they are writing about faceless, raceless characters or to tell the story as it ought to be. In these countries, for many years, white literary institutions as well as political actions have tended to not only ignore these authors but also to systematically destroy their career.

It was, and has been, about those conditions that negrista authors picked up their pens to write. While some never actually lived the live they portray in their work, some did; while some situations are fictional based on ideas gathered from specific real situations, some are very true; while some characters are fictional, some are real in their own stories, albeit they might not remember everything that happened. Everything put in perspective, the conditions were not happy and therefore the tone of the writers were and have not been either. Some negrista writers have simply tried to point to the good and noble aspects of blacks; some have written to defy and contradict white writers about their views on Blacks; some have written to tell heroic deeds about blacks, and others have written to tell the natural and godly ways that Africa and Africans had before the destruction of the social strata by white colonialists, etc.

Sample Lesson plan

Goal of Lesson:

This lesson provides the students with certain specifics that made it possible or necessary for negrista writing to develop, instead of just literature written by blacks and about blacks. Through slavery, emancipation and various wars, the social, political, economic and cultural conditions of blacks—including the opportunity to write and be read-- were simply inhumane, restrictive and punitive. As a result, the tone of writing by blacks and about blacks on these conditions and related issues are, not surprisingly, different from, and at times against, those of whites writers.

Objectives:

At the end of this lesson, students will be able to

- ☐ Describe the living and working conditions of slaves
- ☐ Describe the living and working conditions of emancipated blacks
- ☐ State the political, social and economic limitations of slaves and emancipated blacks
- ☐ State some of the restrictions and limitations on development of black literary thought and writing
- ☐ Describe characteristics—including possible moods and tones of Negrismo

Materials:

The video *Sugar Cane Alley*

Extracts from *Biography of Runaway Slave* (pages that deal with hardships)

Extracts from Ramón Díaz Sánchez's *Cumboto* (dealing with miscegenation)

Extracts from Antonio Acosta Márquez's *Yo pienso aquí..* (about being/not being black)

Extracts from "Question of Color" in Winn's *Americas*

Teacher-created question sheet on the conditions of blacks and moods and tones of Negrismo and negrista writers

Procedure

First of all, let me reiterate that this curriculum unit can be modified by any teacher depending on the level of Spanish being taught in the given class. A teacher of Spanish 1 and 2 will probably find that it is not easy to have students read Sánchez and Márquez in Spanish. As such, if the English version is available it should be used. The day before the teacher had passed out all extracts and the question sheet and assigned students to read two: extracts from *Biography of Runaway Slave*, and *Yo pienso aquí...* On this third day of the implementation of the curriculum, the teacher will start out by questioning students regarding their feelings after the reading of the abstracts at home. Then the teacher will tell students to then watch a film which shows some of the conditions mentioned, *Sugar Cane Alley*.

Students will then be asked to fill out as much of their question sheet as possible, basing their answers on the readings and the film. They will also be asked to read the rest of the distributed extracts for the following day.

On day four, teacher will give students a lecture inclusive of all the ideas in the extracts as well as the film. Since this is the foundation level introducing the student to the situations and causes of Negrismo, It is important that the thematic concepts and ideologies be well-understood.

After the lecture, students will be assigned to fill out the packet evaluating their understanding of the lesson, and the readings. As indicated in the methodology section, this consists of three sections, each of which evaluates different aspects of the student's appreciation of the process.

Next Day's Assignments:

Student will be asked to read extracts of Thompson's Song of Africa, at home. This is a bilingual extract as found in Lewis' Discourse, but students will also be encouraged to use the dictionary, in case they still do not understand the translation or have doubts.

Student will be asked to take notes to substantiate negrista elements in the reading; to pick out as many adjectives as they come across describing Africa, Africans, and Whites

The Pittsburgh School District's Learning Standards

Starting from day five, the Pittsburgh School District's standards for learning foreign language will be incorporated into planning the lessons. From this point on, students are expected to do a lot more reading in Spanish and thereby, be in the process of acquiring language skills. The District's standards require students to acquire some foreign language skills each year and to arrive at a proficiency level by the time the student is at the level 3 class at the high school. Beginning language students are expected to master some situational vocabulary which they can regurgitate. These are rated as *novice low* in their communication skills. In their second year of language learning, the students are expected to begin to make some sense of the language and

begin to create in the present tense, and are classified as *novice medium*. By the third year of taking the same foreign language, a student is supposed to be proficient, or have survival level skills in that language. Depending on the foreign language class level, therefore, the district's standards have to be applied variably. For me personally, I have taught levels as high as five for the gifted. This is normally referred to as *advanced*. But this year, I have only a level one class, which means that if I were to implement this unit in my class, I would be expecting a *novice low* level language acquisition skill. The important thing is that each teacher has to implement this curriculum with expectations of language acquisition skills that are prescribed by the class level.

Argentina (Day 5)

Casildo Thompson and Song of (to) Africa

Since I have not been able to obtain an original Thompson poetry book, I am relying mainly on abstracts provided by Lewis in his *Afro-Argentine Discourse*. These extracts are representative of the concepts and characteristics of Negritud or Negrismo. As Lewis notes, (p. 52) Thompson's *Song to Africa* is an overt condemnation of colonialism and racism. *Song to Africa* is Thompson's attempt to portray the reality of victimized Afro-Argentines who are estranged and powerless, (p. 62) but it's also aimed at liberating the Afro-Argentines through metaphorical escape, and entails redeeming the cultural and spiritual values of black people, (p. 52).

Firs published in 1877, *Song to Africa* starts out with the description of a mythic, paradisiacal Africa that has been destroyed by the colonizing Europeans. Africa is described in most positive words, making it a safe haven for a maligned ethnic group. Then the slaver or hangman comes in and commits all acts of savagery, as Africans are hunted down and captured into slavery. In Argentina, the atrocities committed in Africa resumes, as the destruction of black institutions continue. In spite of all pain and sufferings, blacks forgive and forget.

Sample Lesson plan

Goals of Lesson

The goals of this lesson are to provide a situation for easy reading and acquisition of vocabulary, and also introduce students to one of the most straight forward and fundamental negrista readings.

Objectives

At the end of the lesson, students will be able to

- Show where Argentina is in relation to Africa and the USA
- State ten descriptive Spanish adjectives relevant to Thompson's positive image of Africa;
- Provide an equal number of adjectives relating to the black man's happy and easy-going nature before the arrival of the "blanco inhumano," as Thompson starts the description of whites.
- Provide as many adjectives describing the inhuman white and his negative actions against blacks.
- State at least five characteristics of Negrismo.

Materials

Bilingual Extracts of Thompson's "Song of Africa," from Lewis' *Discourse*

English-Spanish dictionary

Ready student evaluation packet of literary appreciation

World map or a globe

Procedure

Having already read the entire extract at home, students will first be asked to show that they have done their homework by showing their notes, and a list of descriptive adjectives. They will then be walked through chosen sections by teacher, to highlight negrista characteristics in the poem. After a questioning period, students will then individually fill out their evaluation packet.

Assignment

Students will be expected to completely fill out the literary appreciation packet, and make sure they have completed their vocabulary list.

To be ready for the next day's class, students will be asked to read hand-outs consisting of xeroxed copies of the stories of Zumbi and Chico Rey, both from Kennedy's *Relatos Latinoamericanos: la herencia africana*.

Brazil(Days 6 and 7)

The background section on Brazil has highlighted the race situation in Brazil. It is not surprising that there are many legends magnifying blacks in Brazil, given the fact that oppression and non-appreciation, and neglect has characterized the treatment of blacks in Brazil. Our lesson plans for the Brazilian section will be based on legends in James Kennedy's *Relatos Latinoamericanos: la herencia africana*.

Day 6: "Zumbi" and "Chico Rey"

Sample Lesson plan

Goals of Lesson

The lesson is intended to teach students about the bravery of and ingenuity of Africans in captivity. In both legends, we are presented with situations where enslaved leaders became free through different means, and protected and took care of their people in different ways. Chico Rey slaved in the mines to buy freedom for himself, then his family and then the whole enslaved black race in Villa Rica. Then all the freed slaves worked hard and bought the mines that made Villa Rica a rich and shiny city. But Chico Rey did not stop here. According to the story, he his family and the people of Villa Rica continued to work hard and carried out many other liberation activities, through their sweat. On the other hand, Zumbi is reputed for being a young leader who established a "quilombo" or a free state of about twenty squared kilometers where he ruled over escaped slaves and raised armies to defend themselves against incursions and raids by the masters from whom they freed themselves –mostly through escapes. The two leaders Zumbi and Chico Rey are examples of strength, desire for freedom, unity and a sense of community. Though Brazil was a Portuguese colony and Portuguese is the language, our stories are both written in Spanish, and therefore, is in our target language.

Objectives

At the end of the lesson, students will be able to

- Locate Brazil on the map and say something about its proximity to Africa
- State the two different ways the two characters got their reputation
- List the aspects that make these stories *negrista*
- Show a list of at least ten useful vocabulary words chosen from each story
- Complete the literary appreciation evaluation packet on *Negrismo*

Materials

A world map or globe

Xeroxed copies of the two stories for each student

Literary appreciation packet

Procedure

Teacher will briefly go over stories with students, asking questions first to establish the plot and contents of each story. Then teacher will ask individual students to name scenes or situations that are characteristic of *Negrismo*, either by the action(s) of the writer or the characters in the story. Individual students will also be asked to state from their list the vocabulary words they have selected, as being descriptive of *Negrismo*.

Assignment

Students will be asked to complete their literary appreciation packet.

In addition, students will be expected to get ready for the next day's class by reading the xeroxed copies of "El Negrillo del Pasteo" and "Bomba y tambor: bailes tradicionales afrolatinos." These are also from Kennedy's *Relatos*....

Day 7: "El Negrillo del pasteo" and "Bomba y tambor..."

These two stories are very different from the others in the way they bring out the aspects of *Negrismo*. Unlike resistance, bravery, and other actions that actively engage racist societies into questioning themselves about their practices, we have two subtle ways in which *Negrismo* has probably affected these societies.

In the first case, if a single child is blessed with the gift of finding whatever anyone in the country lost—and that only child happens to be a black child—then that symbolically raises the black race closer to God, and makes white racist and oppressors think hard about their attitudes towards blacks. Apparently the story of the little black child is intended to convey this fact.

The second reading is actually a cultural reading intended to educate everyone on the origins of most songs and dances of Brazil. "En los países donde hubo muchos esclavos se impuso una variedad de ritmos africanos que, con el transcurso del tiempo, se fueron entretejiendo con el arte musical europeo, dando origen a bailes nacionales..." (p. 53).

It is certainly ironic that Brazil which is noted for not being politically and economically progressive for blacks can boast of national dances of

African origin and also have as a symbol of holiness—which is the reason why the black boy could find anything anywhere—El Negrillo del pasteo.

Sample Lesson plan

Goals:

This lesson will give the students a different perspective in looking at the aspects of Negrismo, a variance from the poet's or novelist's approach. All the same, it aims at getting the students more acquainted with what writings constitute Negrismo. In addition, as these stories are written in high school level Spanish, there is no better way of language acquisition (except by immersion) than by reading stories like these two.

Objectives:

At the end of the lesson, students will be able to

- State negrista characteristics present in both writings
- State some of the countries of the Americas which have national dances of African origin
- Name some Latino songs of African origin
- Name and locate the Brazilian city in which the monument of El Negrillo stands
- Make a list of vocabulary relating to Latino songs and dances of African origin
- List the characteristics of humility, and suffering as demonstrated in El Negrillo

Materials:

A map

Copies of El Negrillo and Bomba y tambor

Some Latino recordings (compact disks, cassettes or CD Rom)

Literary appreciation packet

Procedure:

After a short contextual discussion, teacher may direct students to answer specific questions about content and then to the regular packet and supplement. Any Brazilian music with an Afro rhythm origin should be played.

Assignment:

Students will be asked to complete filling out their literary appreciation packet and also to complete their vocabulary list.

In addition students will be asked to read some extract from Manuel Zapata Olivella's *Changó, el gran putas*.

Colombia (Day 8)

Manuel Zapata Olivella 's *Changó, el gran putas*

This is one text that only selective teachers can incorporate into their regular classroom curriculum. While it may be fascinating and spiritually touching to some one who can read the language and understand it well, it becomes a little bit cumbersome to most levels, except those who are preparing for AP literature. I would suggest finding English version for most classes, just for students to know what this Colombian author wrote about, and what he thought.

Divided into five sections—"Los Orígenes," "El Muntu America," "la Rebelión de los Vodun," "Las Sangres Encontradas," and "Los Ancestros Combatientes," it relates the story of Africans uprooted from a safe haven to Colombia, where they have a physical and psychical confrontation, which ends in the liberation of an entire ethnic group. Beyond this basic explanation, the work becomes too complicated for high school students.

Sample Lesson plan

Goals:

If for nothing else, considering the difficulty of the novel, the goal here is to make students understand that Colombians have black authors on Negrismo. If an English version is found and copies of chosen sections are made and given out to the class, then, the objectives and procedure of the plan can also be finalized. In that case, teacher can actually go over individual sections with students and appreciate the contents.

Objectives:

After the lesson, students will be able to:

1. Answer contextual questions on black race and origin according to Olivella
2. Describe some of the difficulties blacks have experienced as an uprooted race
3. State some of the suggested means to liberation
4. Do the literary appreciation packet on Negrismo

Procedure:

Teacher will walk students through each section of text, whether it is the English or Spanish version. There is need to explain many situations and insinuations which students are not conversant with. Since it is a historical and situational approach, it will be useful for teacher to use map all throughout the lesson. After completion of lectures and explanations, Students can then be directed to complete relevant contextual questions.

Materials:

1. World map or globe
2. Copies of various sections of text (English or Spanish)
3. Relevant vocabulary list
4. Literary appreciation packet

Assignments

Students will be asked to read Alejo Carpentier's *Ecué Yambá* and *El reino de este mundo*. Given the level of difficulty of the reading, I suggest teacher prepared extracts or even English versions if available. In addition, background notes or abstracts on Cuba should be given to students to read.

Days 9, 10 and 11: Cuba

Alejo Carpentier (Day 9)

The simplest way to look at Carpentier's *Ecué Yambá* is to make it a case of religion and culture. When Europeans came to Africa, they banned all African religious rites as being evil and sinful. Africans were stopped from worshipping the way they had been used to. In the Americas, of course, they were under the more watchful eyes of their masters, which is the reason why blacks would occasionally have secret meetings to carry out religious rituals. Being part of this religious society was tantamount to blasphemy or committing other sins against the Christian Institution and God. One trait of Negrismo is not so much a desire to defy God—for Africans are a very god-fearing people—as to question who has the authority to tell other people which god to serve and worship. In his asserting, "Ecué Yambá"—"Let Ecué be praised!" he is asserting his right and that of all Africans to worship the god they choose to worship. In his "El reino de este mundo", he delineates the path of enslavement and suffering, through the struggle for freedom including any form of approach, such as war. These are aspects of Negrismo that should be taken into account by teacher making lesson plans.

Sample Lesson plan

Goals

Whether in Africa or the Americas, blacks experienced oppression in various ways, including the denial of the right to worship their own god. *Ecué Yambá* not only introduces the students to this situation, but also shows how blacks living in Cuba managed to secretly or openly defiantly worshipped their gods the way they liked. On the other hand, *el reino de este mundo* relates the philosophical thoughts, steps and procedure in self liberation. It is certainly expected that each reading will give students an opportunity to improve their proficiency.

Objectives:

After the lesson, students will be able to:

1. Locate Cuba on the map
2. State why sugar cane and tobacco are the main economic base of the island

3. Answer contextual questions on both of Carpentier's works
4. appreciate Carpentier's mainly philosophical and metaphysical negrista ideas

Procedure:

Teacher will start lesson by making students know how close Cuba is to the Florida Keys, and why it has been such a perceived or fabricated threat to the United States. In addition, teacher should explain how the marsh lands and fertile plains made the island a choice agricultural plantation for sugar cane and tobacco, thereby leading to the importation of thousands of slaves who worked there and later on fought in the liberation wars. Teacher will also make students know that, while blacks were denied the right to worship the way they wanted during slavery and after the emancipation (which of course they did secretly—mainly worshipping Yoruba gods) the Revolution and Communism, ironically gave them the freedom to do what they had been prevented from doing for decades. Teacher will then discuss both of Carpentier's works within this framework.

Materials:

1. World map or globe
2. Extracts or teacher-prepared background notes on Cuba
3. Extracts of both *Écué Yambá* and *El reinode este mundo*
4. Vocabulary sheet
5. Contextual questions and Negrismo packet

Assignments:

Student will be requested to read read these three poems in preparation for next day's lesson on Guillén: "El Apellido" from *Eligía*; "Caña" from *Consongo*, and "Son número 6" from *Son*.

Nicolás Guillén (Day 10)

Guillén is considered a towering pillar in Latin American literature, especially that dealing with Blacks. Our background study shows that he was the author of several works of importance to all races, and especially to the cause of Blacks in Latin America. The three poems which I have chosen, "El Apellido", "Caña" and "Son #6" are briefly explained in the "procedure" section.

Sample Lesson Plan:

Goals:

The goals of this plan include the introduction of the students to Guillén's sentiments about being black (in a white-ruled world), making students aware of the vicious conditions in which blacks worked in sugar cane

fields, and exposing them to Guillén's feelings and beliefs on Africa, Africanness, and the feeling of being in a strange land.

Objectives:

After the lesson, students will be able to:

1. Recite a few short verses (songs) dealing with hard labor, admiration of Africa and blackness
2. State what these verses mean in English
3. Select relevant adjectives that characterize those poems or songs as *negrista*
4. Explain how those songs relate to blackness, Africanness, and to suffering
5. Show or explain how Guillén used these songs as a means to call attention to the plight of blacks who lived before him and at his time.
6. Show evidence of newly acquired vocabulary towards the Pittsburgh Board of Education proficiency standards

Materials:

Extracts of "El Apellido" from *Elegías*; "Caña" from *Consóngo*, and "Son Número 6" from *Son*. Questionnaire specifically made to help students remember what the poems are about, and the regular *Negrismo* packet prepared for each lesson.

A vocabulary list prepared by teacher to facilitate student reading of the poems.

Procedure:

Already handed out the previous day for reading, these poetry extracts will be discussed today. From his *Elegías*, "EL Apellido" tries to shame the white masters by asking them what his last name is, since his fore-parents were forcefully taken away from Africa many years ago and the family name had gotten lost in slavery. From his *Consóngo*, "Caña" talks about how the white man and the black man on the sugar cane farm, together with the soil under the farm, causes so much blood spilling. This is a very terse way of telling about the horrible working conditions of blacks on the sugar cane farms (with a vicious white master always ready with the whip), a situation which is well documented by the film *Sugar Cane Alley* in the French territories. From his *Son*, "Son Número 6" claims the author's as well as any black person's African origin. It declares him a Yoruba, a Congolese, a Mandinga, a Karabali, etc., who wants his laments to reach out and touch the whole of Cuba.

These are rather short and easy-to-understand selections, so students in level three Spanish should come to class ready to talk if they do their homework and read the handouts. During class, the teacher will first direct

the discussion to establish the contents, and the motifs. Then students will be directed to answer all the questions relevant to those specific poems, after which they will then fill out the packet dealing with all the negrismo aspects.

Assignments:

Assignments due on day 11 will include the reading of extracts from *Biography of Runaway Slave*. Depending on the class level, either the English or the Spanish version will be used. These extracts must include pages which spell out the hardships that slaves and emancipated blacks experienced on plantations; sections that talk about the runaway slave's preferences including a free and quiet life, African aspects, and his hatred of the overt maltreatment and cheating of blacks out of their meager wages.

Day 11 (Miguel Barnett and *Biography of Runaway Slave*)

Barnett's *Biography of Runaway Slave* is, in most respect, a biography since the character in the book was actually interviewed and he is giving a first person account of his real experiences even if he does not remember everything. While the whole book is very important in the study of slavery, emancipation and personal opinions of the slaves, the lesson plan here should emphasize mainly aspects considered as negrismo or negrista.

Sample Lesson plan

Goals:

This lesson not only introduces the students to the unacceptable socio-economic and political conditions of blacks in Cuba as related by a runaway slave who continues to "run away" even as he discovers that he is "emancipated", but also makes students aware of the very personal feelings and preferences of this person who has first hand stories to tell.

Objectives

Upon completion of the lesson, the students will be able to:

1. State the socio-economic conditions of slaves in Cuba before and after Emancipation
2. State the personal preferences and feelings of slaves and blacks as narrated by the runaway slave
3. For lower level Spanish classes where the extracts read are in English, to show an appreciation of the few Spanish (or Cuban-Spanish) terms used by the runaway.
4. For higher level classes who might have read in Spanish, to show an appreciation of their newly-acquired vocabulary by writing a summary with those new words.
5. Improve language proficiency through reading the story and using new vocabulary

Procedure:

Teacher will go over material assigned for reading the previous day. At the beginning teacher may simply ask individuals to give the plots and activities involved in each section of the extracts handed out the previous day. Specific questions can then be asked about the character, the conditions, his feelings in relation to his race and his origin, etc.

After a complete discussion, teacher will then direct students to, first, answer the questions on the contents of the story, including a section for writing in newly acquired pure Spanish or Cuban Spanish. Then students will fill out the regular questionnaire intended to educate them on Negrismo.

Materials:

The only materials needed here include the copies of the extracts (handed out the previous day, the prepared questionnaire on context and the main questionnaire packet on negrismo.

Assignments:

Students will be handed basic, but comprehensive material introducing them to Ecuador. In addition, they will also receive extracts from Adalberto's *Juyungo*. Given the length of the novel and its level of difficulty, I would suggest a teacher's personal concise abstract, though at moment I have not prepared one yet. Copies of selected poems from *Tierra, son y tambor* to be given out will include "Breve historia nuestra", "Contribución", "Antojo", and "Sinfonía Barbara".

Day 12 (Adalberto Ortiz, his novel *Juyungo*, and selected poems from his *Tierra, son y tambor*).

Sample Lesson Plan

Goals:

The most obvious goal is to show students that blacks live in Ecuador and that some of the most respected Negrismo writers are from Ecuador. The Ecuadorian perspective, however, portrays two approaches to Negrismo. In *Juyungo*, the main character Ascensión Lastre goes through a period of oppression and rejection in a white society which makes him harbor hatred for that society and inadvertently the individuals in his life. But he emerges nobly at the end by not only defeating some of the evils in that setting, but accepting his fate and forgiving his physical and moral oppressors. The four poems chosen will introduce students to what Ortiz sees as being the contribution of Africa and blacks to the cultural, economic and spiritual development of Ecuador, if not America as a whole.

Objectives:

At the completion of the lesson, students will be able to:

1. Locate Ecuador on the map
2. Say who is the main character in *Juyungo*
3. State the working conditions for blacks in the book
4. Describe the relationship between blacks and whites in *Juyungo*
5. Show how the main character evolves

6. State some of the contributions Africa and blacks have made to the development of the Americas, according to the selected poems
7. Describe some African settings that imply peace, innocence, prosperity, godliness, etc., according to the selected poems
8. acquire vocabulary and language skills through reading and discussion
9. Complete the packet on Negrismo

Procedure:

Teacher will hand out abstracts of *Juyungo*, (abridged and simplified versions or teacher prepared versions of these chapters only: "Juyungo": chapter 16; "No se mueren los verdaderos hombres en el colchón": chapter 17; "Kilómetro 18": chapter 18, and "El Negro que no volvió nada", accompanied by vocabulary list the day before the lesson. Copies of the four selected poems will also be given to students with corresponding vocabulary lists. Students will be asked to read these abstracts to prepare for the class.

I suggest that the classroom process be mostly teacher-directed since the reading level in *Juyungo* may be a little too high, and the poetry has quite a lot of words which are either Africanized or written in very low language form used by uneducated people—the type of language which American students learning Spanish are not familiar with. After carrying out thorough explanations, teacher can then lead students through the questions specifically pertaining to the contents of these readings. Students can complete the packet on Negrismo by themselves afterwards.

Materials Needed:

1. World map or a globe
2. Precise teacher summary of the four chosen chapters from *Juyungo*, and the four poems previously stated in the assignments above.
3. Vocabulary lists covering all the readings
4. Context questions prepared for these readings
5. Negrismo question packet.

Assignment:

Students will be requested to complete their regular Negrismo packet based on what they have learned from the readings and class lesson on Ortiz and Ecuador. To prepare for the next day's lesson, students will be assigned to read, first, any short and simple passage which makes students understand the history and present day "self-governing commonwealth" status of Puerto Rico in relation to the USA. Winn's p. 579 does that very briefly, and the teacher may need to provide more information. In addition, students will be assigned to read "Carabalí" from *Leyendas de Puerto Rico*.

Day 13 (Puerto Rico and the legend of "Carabalí")

Sample lesson plan

Goals:

The first goal of this lesson is to introduce the students to the special status of Puerto Rico, as well as the special racial make-up of the land. The fact that blacks and other colored citizens outnumber whites in Puerto Rico is interesting, and probably related to the fact that many Africans were used in the island as slaves. But an important goal of this lesson is to show students that these blacks were not willing to work as slaves, just as they have hated being discriminated against in other ways since the Spanish colonization of the island, slavery, and the commonwealth status under the USA. The legend of Carabalí demonstrates this resistance.

Objectives:

After the lesson, students will be able to:

1. Provide basic information about Puerto Rico, its location, status, and people
2. Tell the about the legend of Carabalí
3. Say why Carabalí can be called a freedom fighter under slavery as well as any oppressive society.
4. Do the grammar and vocabulary exercises in the text to improve proficiency level

Procedure:

Students will be given handouts, the first dealing with the history and status of Puerto Rico. P. 579 of Winn provides enough information, but it may be worthwhile for the teacher who thinks otherwise to make an original handout sheet on Puerto Rico. Also the Xeroxed copy of the legend of Carabalí and the accompanying vocabulary as well as the language activities will be given to students the previous day to read before class. In class, teacher will start lesson by discussing Puerto Rico. Many American college students do not understand or have never really paid attention to the fact that Puerto Rico is like one of the states except it does not vote for congress people and the president of the USA; nor do they understand that people in Puerto Rico are US citizens and do not bear the same label as Mexicans when coming to mainland USA. This discussion may be even more interesting with high school students. After the teacher has clarified all students misconceptions he can then go on to discuss slavery and the legend of Carabalí. Teacher should make sure to emphasize not only Carabalí's bravery, but also his will and determination. It's not only the style and contents of a piece of work which determines Negrismo, but the characteristics of a character. In this case, Carabalí is an example of self-determination and pride which minority students within the district can model after.

Context questions on Puerto Rico and Carabalí should be done in class while students do the Negrismo packet at home.

Materials needed:

1. World map or globe
2. Xeroxed copy of "Carabalí"
3. Background page o Puerto Rico

Assignments:

Students will be assigned copies of these selected poems of Luis Palés Matos: "Danzarina africana", from the *Otros Poemas* collection; "Danza negra" "Numen", and "Pueblo Negro" from the *Tun Tun de pasa y Grifería* collection; "Esta noche he pasado" from the *Palacio en sombras* collection, and the prose "Pueblo de negros" .

Day 14 (Matos and selected poems and prose)

Sample Lesson Plan

Goals:

In Carabalí, students dealt with a character, mostly portrayed as legendary. But reading the poems and prose of Matos offers a different perspective, one in with the sentiments of a writer who witnessed specific situations are presented. These poems deal with the conditions of blacks in Puerto Rico and also the way the poet glorifies, magnifies and respects Africa and Africans as well as the way of suffering blacks in the New World. This is a way of introducing students to a situation through sympathetic poet's eye, a poet who not only observed these conditions, but lived in them and succeeded. In his right and passage as a poet in a discriminatory society, he is a model for students who feel alienated in a foreign language class.

Objectives:

After the lesson, students will be able to:

1. Describe the conditions of blacks in Puerto Rico according to Matos
2. Say why he could have been such a good observer of the lives of blacks
3. Show how he is in tune with pristine Africa and its people
4. Put the ideas and contents of Matos' poems in the Negrismo perspective
5. Improve language proficiency through vocabulary acquisition.

Procedure:

The day before, students will be given copies of the selected poems mentioned above, accompanied by a vocabulary list prepared by teacher. Students should read these selections before coming to class. It should be noted that the selections above are cassified under collections as found in *Luis Palés Matos: Poesía Completa y Prosa Selecta* by Margot Arce de Vazquez.

Teacher will start the lesson by given a very brief history of the life of Matos, highlighting his experiences as a black, his education, how he started writing and working rather early in life. Then each selected poem will be read together by teacher and students. Teacher will explain sections which are not clear or are difficult to understand, with discussions following. Relevant vocabulary will be emphasized as discussion is carried on. Upon completion of lesson, students will complete contextual questions dealing with the author and the selected poems. Students will be asked to complete the Negrismo packect at home.

Materials:

Copies of selected poems including "Danza negra", "Danzarina africana", "Pueblo Negro", "Esta noche he pasado", and the prose "Pueblo de negros". Though some other works are mentioned in the narrative, time

frame does not make it possible to include all of them. In addition, even the complete Palés Matos as arranged by Vazquez does not have all the poems mentioned.

Assignment:

First, students will complete the packet on Negrismo. In addition they will be expected to read a teacher prepared page or background notes on Venezuela, as well as abstracts from Juan Pablo Sojo's *Nochebuena negra*.

Day 15 (Juan Pablo Sojo and *Nochebuena negra*)

Sample Lesson Plan

Goals:

The first goal is to make the students aware of the presence of blacks in Venezuela, and the fact that there are numerous black writers there. The second goal is to convey the fact that, as in all the other Latin American countries that have been examined, black writing was and is mostly negrista in nature; that is, at least the important writings that have been selected.

Objectives:

After the lesson, students will be able to:

1. Locate Venezuela on the map of south America or the world
2. State the significance of "Nochebuena" to hispanics who are devoted Catholics
3. State the contextual activities in *Nochebuena negra*
4. Compare these activities with those of the devoted Catholic observation
5. State why intentionally the author created this aberration.

Procedure:

Though many more than one author has been mentioned in the narrative, Sojo's *Nochebuena negra* is probably the one story that will get the most reaction from teen-agers and even older students. This alone will be discussed. Teacher will start by talking to class about the Venezuelan situation, wherein race inequality has, by state law, been made a non-issue under the pretext that ignoring race differences will solve the problem of race inequality and racism. Then teacher will quickly inform students of the other mentioned black authors whose work reveal race relation problems.

In treating *Nochebuena negra*, it is important to go through all the situations –plantation and slave labor, poor race relations, and then the supposedly "irreverent", drunken, sex-oriented, black party held on this Holy St.

John's Night. Teacher should press students to at least take with them useful vocabulary words, including the title of the story itself.

Materials:

World map or globe

Background notes on Venezuela

Copies of extracts of Sojo's *Nochebuena negra*

Assignment

Students will be asked to complete contextual question sheet on Venezuela and also complete the Negrismo packet.

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Branet, Miguel. Biography of Runaway Slave. Tr. By Nick Hill. Willimantic, CT.: Curbstone Press, 1944.

This is a good resource book from which students can learn about the conditions of slaves and freed blacks right after Emancipation. It's an easy reading in English and also uses many Cuban Spanish as well as African slangs. If available, abstracts from a Spanish version should be used in conjunction with this.

Carpentier, Alejo. Ecué Yambá ó. Madrid, no publisher, 1933.

Concerning religion and culture, this was Carpentier's way of saying that only blacks had cultural and heritage that ought to be passed on to progeny instead of destroying it like white colonialists and slave-masters did. The choice of the manner in which to worship and which god to worship especially becomes pivotal in the plot.

_____. El Reino de Este Mundo. Santiago de Chile, 1967.

This is a political novel dealing with the struggle for independence for Haiti, and symbolizes every everyone's struggle for independence and autonomy. This especially relates to blacks all over the world

Kennedy, James H. Relatos Latinoamericanos: La Herencia africana. Lincolnwood, Illinois: NTC, 1992.

This is an easy reader for students who are in level three Spanish classes or above. It is a collection of stories, legends and true situations about blacks in various countries in Latin America.

"Las Poesías del Joven Thompson" in Estrada, Marcos. La Argentine de Origen Africano Buenos Aires: Eudeba, 1979.

In his book on the other Argentina, Marcos Estrada emphasizes black achievement. Thompson's poetry, especially those written in his youth are in this book

Matos, Luis Palés. Poesía completa y Prosa selecta. Ed. Margot Arce de Vazquez. Caracas, Venezuela: Biblioteca Ayacucho, 1974?

This is a complete collection of the poetry of Matos. It also includes some selected prose.

Muckley, Robert and Adela Martinez-Santiago. Leyendas de Puerto Rico. Lincolnwood, Illinois: NTC, 1999.

This is a collection of legends from Puerto Rico. The legend of Caribalí, selected from this text, is demonstrative of bravery, resistance against enslavement and determination to be free.

Olivella, Manuel Zapata. Changó el gran putas. Bogota: Editorial Oveja Negra, 1983.

Olivella's Changó is mainly about independence to choose without someone else—especially one from the outside—imposing on you.

Ortiz, Adalberto. Juyungo: Historia de un Negro, una isla y otros. Buenos Aires: Americalee, 1943.

An English version translated by Susan Hill and Jonathan Tittler, Washington: Three Continents Press, 1991, is also available. Depending on the strength of a class, the teacher may choose to use the Spanish or English version. This novel is a portrait of slave conditions, poor race relations, and the main characters' quest for justice.

_____. Tierra, Son y Tambor: Cantares negros y mulattos. Mexico: Ediciones La Cigara, 1945.

This is a collection of Ortiz's poems mainly on blacks, mulattos and Africa. The poems are not difficult, and can be understood by most level three students armed with a dictionary or vocabulary list provided by teacher.

Sojo, Juan Pablo. Nochebuena Negra. Caracas, Venezuela: Editorial Elite, 1943.

Nochebuena negra –black St. John's Eve, is mainly about the differences in everything between blacks and whites in this setting. This includes the enslavement of blacks by whites who stand by and expect blacks to do all the hard labor on the plantations; the religious observation of this night by whites, as opposed to the rowdy, festive atmosphere created by blacks.

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