



La Generación del 27

Curriculum Unit 09.02.03

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Un recuerdo de viaje

Queda en nuestras memorias.

Nos fuimos a Sevilla.

¿Quiénes? Unos amigos.

Por contactos casuales,

Un buen azar que resultó destino:

Relaciones felices

Entre quienes, aun mozos

Se descubrieron gustos, preferencias

En su raíz comunes

¡Poesía!

Jorge Guillén (1)

Looking for new ways to teach my students to value and respect global consciousness and cultural diversity is an aspiration as well as a challenge I face constantly as an educator. As a Spanish teacher, I search for new approaches to connect disciplines so students can learn about the Hispanic and Spanish cultures while learning grammar and other linguistic components of the language. Most of the high school students I teach are exposed to other cultures but choose not to take advantage of such an invaluable experience. This is partly because they are afraid of the unfamiliar aspects of culture, and they are unaware of the privilege that has allowed them to grow up in such a diverse environment.

I try to do this through the study of identity, society and culture among many of the Spanish-speaking

countries. By applying the "5Cs"- Cultures, Connections (among disciplines), Comparisons (between cultures), Communication, and Communities- that the National Standards of Foreign Language Learning (2) promote, I aspire to put them into context throughout the unit.

The unit La Generación del 27 provides me the opportunity to introduce history, poetry, theater and art in my classroom in a meaningful way. Most of my students have not yet been exposed to foreign authors or to any kind of artistic movements, and they find it difficult to interpret what they read or see. In this unit, students will first learn about the Spanish "Generación del 27" (The Generation of 1927), a group of poets that emerged in the Spanish literary circles around 1927, in order to ultimately be able to read, analyze, interpret and understand poems written by authors such as Jorge Guillén, Rafael Alberti, Luis Cernuda, Federico García Lorca or Miguel Hernández; plays developed by Max Aub or Federico García Lorca; films by Luis Buñuel, caricatures by K-Hito (Ricardo García López), or art pieces created by Salvador Dalí, Oscar Domínguez or Maruja Mayo.

We will briefly explore the social and cultural context of Spain in the 20s to better understand the rise of a movement in which ideology and aesthetics reached out to other literary genres, such as prose or theater or even other non-literary circles such as cinema, art or music. The movement took shape towards the end of a period of constitutional monarchy in Spain, the dictatorship of General Miguel Primo de Rivera, the Second Spanish Republic (1931-1939) and the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939.)

As part of the historical background, we will also explore the importance of the Residencia de Estudiantes, a residence in Madrid that became the meeting point of all the artistic vanguard of Spain and Europe. Juan Ramón Jiménez, the teacher; Miguel Llorca who lived with the students. Azorín, Ramón Menéndez Pidal, Ortega y Gasset, Unamuno, Valle-Inclán and Eugenio D'Ors were regular lecturers and visitors to the Residencia; world famous musicians such as Andrés Segovia, Manuel de Falla, Maurice Ravel and Francis Poulenc attended the Residencia; lecturers such as the archeologist Howard Carter, the economist John Maynard Keynes, scientists like Marie Curie and Albert Einstein, poets like Paul Valéry, Paul Claudel, Louis Aragon or the architect Le Corbusier were there. Federico García Lorca became a resident student in 1916 when he arrived in Madrid to study law, Luis Buñuel in 1917 and Salvador Dalí arrived in 1921. (3)

Once the socio-cultural part of the unit is completed, we will move to the definition and controversy of the idea of a "Generation." Authors differ on the question of on what are the basis to consider a group of artists a movement per se or, specifically "a generation." We will not get into it in great detail, but it is important for students to see the difference in opinions and theories among scholars. Afterwards, I would like to introduce some of the main trends of thought towards poetry and art in order to present the poets Pedro Salinas, Jorge Guillén, Gerardo Diego, Dámaso Alonso, Federico García Lorca, Rafael Alberti, Vicente Aleixandre, Luis Cernuda, Emilio Prados and Manuel Altolaguirre, paying special attention to Federico García Lorca and Rafael Alberti since their poetry might be easier for students to understand.

The last part of the unit's rationale will briefly look into other non-poetic aspects of the Generación; we will explore the theater and Federico García Lorca's drama group (La Barraca), the prose of the Generación, film, flamenco and tauromaquia (bullfighting.)

The unit is to be taught at Hill Regional Career High School in New Haven. Career is a magnet school focused on providing students with the skills and education needed to pursue careers in the fields of business/technology and health/science. The student body is about 700 students. The population is 53% African American, 27% Hispanic, 17% White, 3% Asian. About 67% of the students receive reduced lunch. Students are required to complete more credits than mandated by the state in order to graduate. A high

percentage of Career graduates go on to study in two or four year colleges.

I will use this unit with my Spanish 4 students, who have an Intermediate level on the ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) Performance Guidelines for K-12. (4) Since they are able to use advanced grammatical structures, we will be working on their proficiency in all four-language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Students will hone their higher order thinking skills as they learn to express complex opinions and analyze poetry and other forms of expression (visual) such as paintings, drawings, comics and films- in Spanish.

Even though most of the class activities for this unit will be conducted in Spanish, English will be used when necessary. With proper modifications, the unit could also be taught in Spanish 3 or in Advanced Placement Spanish Literature classes.

The material will be covered over a period of about 10-12 sessions, each of which will be eighty minutes in length; these long periods will allow me to implement complex strategies and a variety of activities without many interruptions. As for the time, the unit will be taught towards the end of the third marking period, when students are more confident with their reading and writing skills.

La España de los 20

1900s Spain is still suffering for the loss of colonies such as Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines. These and other events, opened a major intellectual debate on the necessity to modernize basic Spanish structures and change some of the country's rooted ideological configuration and orders. This regeneration posed political, social and economic changes. In the political scene, it was necessary to overcome the cacique practices; socially, it was necessary to create a middle class in order to reach an effective democratization and, finally, in the economic dimension, it was necessary to revitalize and build a civil society that sought to improve education and nutrition.

A new intellectual tone aspired to restructure the political scene, but the question was whether there were politicians and organizations with the ability and leadership to reform the constitutional monarchy system from within, or if the growing social demands would find alternative compromise in areas such as republicanism or socialism. The political scene witnessed a sequence of unsuccessful reform projects until 1912. Two of the most significant attempts were conservative Antonio Maura's government (1907-1909) and liberal Canalejas' political project (1910-1911) -unfinished since he was assassinated-which opened the debate on major issues such as the church-state, capital-labor relations and the possible realignment of the State (that would come into force later on, in 1914.)

From 1912 on, the country entered a sequence of political instability and crisis that led to the Primo de Rivera dictatorship in 1923.

La dictadura (Primo de Rivera's Dictatorship)

In September 1923, General Primo de Rivera led a military coup d'état. ending the 1876 Constitution for seven years. This regime reconciled a considerable consensus around it in its early years. One of its main successes was the successful Spanish-French military intervention in the war in Morocco. The other main issue was the strong nationalistic economic policy that raised the state interventionism, a model of economic nationalism.

After 1926, the opposition to Primo de Rivera's dictatorship thrived: his vision of the country confronted that of

the Catalan and Basque nationalisms. The turning point came on the scene in 1929, when the Army refused to assist the regime. Primo de Rivera finally lost the king's support and resigned in January 1930.

King Alfonso XIII was held responsible for having allowed, or not having done anything to prevent, the 1923 coup. He was the Army's commander in chief and therefore responsible for the eyes of many, especially of the Republicans and most of the intellectuals, who insisted on the monarchy's inability to modernize Spain.

Berenguer and Aznar's governments' (February 1930-April 1931) efforts to re-establish the constitutional normality were pointless. Internal disagreements, monarchical decisions and the rise of republican ideals prevented it. As a result, the municipal elections of April 1931 somehow became a referendum on the form of government. The republican-socialist combination victory was massive in urban centers. As for King Alfonso XIII, lacking support and understanding the delicate situation he had put himself in, left the country on April 14, 1931 the same day the Second Republic was proclaimed.

Many intellectuals played an important role in this proclamation, helped creating the "Agrupación al Servicio de la República" and the "Junta para la Ampliación de Estudios e Investigaciones Científicas,"-to promote research and scientific education. These twobrought together the most relevant knowledgeable erudite of what has been called the "edad de plata" (silver age) of the Spanish culture, which brought together three "Generaciones" the 1898, 1914 and the 1927, with literary figures such as Miguel de Unamuno, Ramón del Valle-Inclán, Federico García Lorca or Rafael Alberti, the philosopher José Ortega y Gasset, the scientist and physicians Gregorio Marañón, Santiago Ramón Y Cajal or philologist and historian Manuel Menéndez Pidal.

La Segunda República (The Second Republic)

A couple of years ago, I introduced the Spanish Second Republic as part of a previous curriculum unit developed for the Yale National Initiative (5); this section will condense the main themes and ideas of the Segunda República, since it is relevant for the understanding of the socio-cultural background of the Generation.

Up to the proclamation of the Second Republic in 1931, Spain was an unevenly divided country, in which the power was held by a few landowners, the Church, and the military forces. In October, shortly after finishing the new Constitution, the electoral process led to a new liberal middle class government formed by a center-left coalition of political parties. Manuel Azaña, the new leader, had a very difficult situation to overcome since he had to confront the resistance of the privileged and powerful classes: the Church and the military forces. The new regime had promised reforms in education-controlled by the Catholic Church up to that moment-because the levels of illiteracy were as high as almost 40% of the population, and they wanted to develop a secular effective educational system. In less than a year, 10,000 new schools were opened. Art and culture spread rapidly throughout the country with the invaluable collaboration of intellectuals and artists.

La Barraca ("The Shack")- a student theater company founded and directed by Federico García Lorca.- was part of this "intellectual offensive." The company was funded by the Ministry of Education.

Both republicans and socialists in the government were determined to reduce the Church's power. In less than a month, this anticlericalism radicalized some lower social spheres and became violent. Another big issue was the autonomy granted to Catalonians in 1932. Historically and culturally Basques and Catalonians were quite distinct from the rest of the country and were very advanced. Military forces strongly supported the idea of state unity. Even the liberal groups were frustrated because the reforms were advancing too slowly which led to a revival of anarchism (especially in Andalucía and Catalonia) as a more violent opposition to the Republic.

All these reasons led to the unsuccessful attempt of General Sanjurjo's military coup on August 10, 1932.

Hunger, misery and some scandals made socialists abandon a discredited government. This deep crisis ended with 1933 elections. The CEDA (Confederación Española de Derechas Autónomas), a cluster of small right wing parties opposed to Azaña and the Republic, won the elections. When José María Gil Robles, the leader of this very conservative Catholic party took office, he paralyzed all the reforms approved by the previous government. This led to an unsuccessful general strike on October that became an armed rising in Asturias. Gil Robles sent the Legion and the Army of Africa to confront it, an operation that was coordinated by a young General Francisco Franco. About 2000 people were killed and thousands of republicans and socialists were imprisoned. Azaña was accused of encouraging these disturbances, but he had to be released shortly after since no evidence against him was found.

The next couple of years were marked by repression. This helped to forge a coalition of stronger left parties called The Popular Front. This new political group included the Socialist Party, the Communist Party, The Esquerra Party (left-wing party that called for the establishment of a Catalan autonomy) and the Republican Union Party. Their goal was to win in the 1936 elections. The Popular front advocated for a new agrarian reform, amnesty for political prisoners and autonomy for Catalonia. The Anarchists, on the other hand, refused to support the coalition but supported the campaign for the amnesty for the prisoners.

The outcome for the February election was a very tight success for the Popular Front. Immediately after, the new government transferred some of the most involved right-wing military leaders to posts away to isolate them: Francisco Franco was sent to the Canary Islands and Emilio Mola to Pamplona. These measures upset the conservatives and as a result, the CEDA activists joined the Falange Española, a fascist political party founded by José Antonio Primo de Rivera in 1933. He firmly believed Spain should have followed the prototype Benito Mussolini had established in Italy.

The polarized and radicalized situation prevented both sides from dialogue and a parliamentary compromise. Some unfortunate episodes like the occupation of private extensions of land in Extremadura or the closure of the Falange offices and incarceration of Primo de Rivera led to an extremely violent situation that was difficult to maintain. For a growing group of military officers, the only way to reestablish the order was a military coup. Mola was in Pamplona, Navarra, where Carlism was particularly strong. The Carlists were a right-wing political movement created in 1833. They opposed liberal secularism and were quite conservative. Mola would plan the coup from there, and Franco would be in charge of the uprising in Morocco where he would lead the legion and the Army of Africa. During the San Fermines, most of the generals met in Pamplona, some of them did not agree with the rebellion but Primo de Rivera fully supported it.

In the middle of all this chaos, on July 12th, a Republican Assault Guard officer was murdered by Falangists in Madrid. The following day some of Castillo's colleagues took revenge by murdering José Calvo Sotelo. This event resulted in the military uprising generals Mola, Franco and Sanjurjo were planning on July 18th, 1936. The uprising failed in most parts of Spain but Mola's forces were successful in the Canary Islands, Morocco, Seville and Aragon. It would eventually result in the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War since Spain was divided in two irreconcilable sides.

La Generación del 27

In the second half of the 19th century only a few representative poets- Rosalía de Castro and Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer- epitomized the poetry scene. Poetry slowly regained its strength along with its lyrical elements and the French influence that led to Modernism. This movement would later on allow figures such as Juan Ramón

Jimenez, Antonio Machado or Miguel de Unamuno, to lay the foundations for 20th century poetry. Around the 1920s the avant-garde movements helped expand the poetic atmosphere until a group of young artists, later known as La Generation del 1927, started experimenting and transformed the Spanish poetic tradition and meter.

The European vanguards (also known as "-ismos" in Spanish, since all of them end with the same suffix) opposed to the previous aesthetic movements and offered new concepts, originality and radical new ideas. All of them-Expressionism, Futurism, Cubism, Dadaism and Surrealism-had a limited duration, which is not particularly relevant since they all greatly influenced the Generación's young poets. Chronologically, all of these movements except Cubism and Futurism, became influential in Spain around 1918 right after the War. These movements tend to move toward an attitude of evasion, what Ortega y Gasset would call "dehumanization of art." According to him, some other characteristics of these movements were the quest for originality, hermeticism, antirealism and antiromanticism, predominance of the metaphor, inconsequential and oneiric writing.

The Generation emerged as an effect of the cultural, literary and historical situation in Spain, and also in the rest of Europe around the 1920s. It is also the case that many other circumstances play a role in the formation of this literary movement. There has always been controversy around the concept of generation as such, some scholars argue the existence of a truly aesthetic community. Petersen, in "Las generaciones literarias" (6) refers to contemporaneity, cultural homogeneity, intense personal relationships, having a common generational experience or assisting to a common event, leadership, ownership of a generational language and debilitation of the previous one as essential elements to shape a generation. Spanish literary critic and philologist Dámaso Alonso after states: "lo que quiero es simplemente afirmar que esos escritores no formaban un mero grupo, sino que en ellos se daban las condiciones mínimas de lo que entiendo por generación: cotaneidad, compañerismo, intercambio, reacción similar ante excitantes externos." (7)

The name of the group was debatable as well, some other options included "Generación de la dictadura", as a reference to Primo de Rivera's dictatorship, "Generación de la Revista de Occidente" alluding to the flagship of the Generation's magazines, "Nietos del 98", "Nietos de Góngora", "Generación de la amistad", since most of the authors lived in the Residencia de Estudiantes at some point, "Generación Guillén-Lorca," etc. None of these names except "Generación del 27" succeeded.

Some of the general key features of the Generation are: most of the authors were born around 1898 (chronological proximity); they all had close personal relationships, lived in the Residencia de Estudiantes and participated in literary gatherings in Cafés all over Madrid such as El Café Europeo, El Café Comercial, El Café de Chinitas, El Café de Pombo or La Cervecería de Correos-where Lorca met with other fellow poets and former Residence friends. They all experimented with the new imported vanguard movements (or "-isms") like the Latin American Ultraism and Creationism, Italian Futurism, French Cubism and Dadaism and British and American Imaginism; they all shared a special capacity for experimentation and longed to break with conventions and routine, the prime common goal for all the Generation poets; and finally, they constantly searched for purity -of themes and style. They all wanted to break with the existing art and literature or the "dehumanization of art." At first, they considered Juan Ramón Jiménez, José Ortega y Gasset and Ramón Gómez de la Serna as their masters.

The commemoration of the three hundredth anniversary of Gongora's death in 1927, was the crucial event that brought together the group. Alberti, García Lorca, Guillén, Alonso, Diego, Salinas, Aleixandre and Salinas participated in different celebrations in the Ateneo of Seville. These had a provocative label against the

sentimental or realistic conception of literature that had previously rejected Góngora's style -enlightenment or romantic poets. They wanted to elevate Góngora's name and his aesthetics, as a mark of identity and as a flag of dissent against previous and more traditional literature.

This period, also called the "Silver Age" of the Spanish literature-due to the quality of the authors and their work-is only comparable with the 16th and 17th centuries that produced authors such as Lope de Vega, Garcilaso de la Vega, Miguel de Cervantes, Francisco de Quevedo, Calderón de la Barca or Luis de Góngora. The evolution of the Generation "young poets" can be divided in three stages: the formative stage (1920-1927), the consolidation stage (1927-1936) and the "post-civil war" stage.

Formative stage (1920-1927)

These were the years in which the poets began to interact and began experimenting. Their work shows a clear influence from Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer, some vestiges of modernism, characteristics intrinsic to avant-garde movements, and the crucial mastery of Juan Ramón Jiménez. In general the poems tended to be short, were full of emotion and, they were also full of metaphors with a clear vanguard influences. Some of the works to highlight from this formation period are Lorca's *Romancero Gitano*, Rafael Alberti's *Marinero en tierra* and Luis Cernuda's *Perfil del aire*.

Consolidation stage (1927-1936)

This period shows how the poets began to search for a "rehumanization" of art (tendency to distance themselves from the purist postulates they defended before) and were not so worried about form. Feelings or emotions (love, frustration, anxiety about the pre-war civic and politic situation) would become the center of poetry. Prados, Cernuda, Alberti and García Lorca, all Second Republic supporters, began using poetry as a political weapon. Some of the most relevant publications of this stage include Cernuda's *Donde habite el olvido*, Guillén's *Cántico* (about the joy of living), Salinas' *La voz a tí debida* and Alberti's *Sobre los ángeles*.

"Post-war" stage (1939-on)

All the Generation members, except Gerardo Diego, supported the Republic when the war started in 1936. Other than Lorca, killed in 1935, and Guillén who was sent to prison and was able later on to leave and settle in the United States, all the authors had to decide between staying in Spain under Franco's dictatorial regime (Dámaso Alonso, Gerardo Diego and Vicente Aleixandre) or going into exile (Rafael Alberti, Luis Cernuda, Pedro Salinas.) Pain, sadness and longing for return were the most common themes. Books to be considered are Alberti's *Retorno de lo vivo lejano*, Jorge Guillén's *Clamor* and Cernuda's *Vivir sin estar Viviendo* and *Desolación de la Quimera*. As for the books written by those who remained in the country, *Hijos de la ira*, by Dámaso Alonso is the most significant.

Aesthetic Approaches

In addition to the influence of Juan Ramón Jiménez, already mentioned, the poets were also influenced by other chronologically close writers such as Gómez de la Serna, Unamuno, the Machado brothers and Rubén Darío. Other influences include Góngora (of course), Quevedo, Manrique, Garcilaso de la Vega, Lope de Vega and San Juan de la Cruz. Finally, we could track how the popular lyric, the romancero and the jarchas, impacted their writings.

The poets moved toward evasion but their view did not break with the past completely, they tried to hold on

to some of the great forms such as the jarchas, the romancero, etc. They valued written and popular tradition and as for the poetic meter, they used vanguard elements such as assonance, repetition of ideas or free verse and traditional forms interchangeably. Finally, their particular use of the metaphor: the imaginary term became real and looked for its symbolic counterpart.

The poetry of the generation, therefore, was the result of the merging of the already mentioned principles. It developed following specific patterns of six literary trends that define the production of the authors until 1936.

Poesía vanguardista: ultraísmo y creacionismo

The Spanish vanguard poetry emerges to prevail over symbolism and modernism. Poets like Gerardo Diego and Pedro Salinas are representative of this trend. Some of the main characteristics are the use of elements of the modern world, illogical combination of images, lack of punctuation, overvaluation of images-the poem becomes an accumulation of images without a real referent, repulse of the emotional to break with romanticism and search for a new real world through metaphors of new technical discoveries such film or the automobile.

Poesía Pura

The search for pure poetry or the essence of things is directly linked to the strong influence of Juan Ramón Jiménez. Poets such as Jorge Guillén, Pedro Salinas, Vicente Aleixandre, Luis Cernuda, Emilio Prados represent this trend. They looked for the essentiality of reality, transcendence, abstraction and elimination of the anecdote. They also sought for the exact word, clean and simple.

La poesía tradicional o neopopularismo

A group of poets-including Gerardo Diego, Federico García Lorca, Dámaso Alonso and Rafael Alberti-redeployed some of the traditional poetry patterns, those of the mediaeval "cancionero" or the Garcilaso de la Vega, Gil Vicente, Góngora, Lope de Vega and fray Luis de León ones, and transformed them with new sentiments and the goal to find a new dimension with a deep and transcendent feeling.

Some of the characteristics that define this style are simple themes, brief poems with a strong expressive condensation due to frequent ellipses, use of repetition, prevalence of use of the romance, gitanismo (or "Gypsiness," use of gypsy themes), use and mention of objects and locations, etc.

Surrealismo

The poets of the generation adopted only the theoretical part of the French surrealism and they then transformed it to introduce a set of poetic irrational and magic symbols to express desire, distress or bleakness. Through the surrealist image, they tried to reach a superior reality that would help to get rid of traditional conventionalisms. These authors experimented with the oneiric and transformed concrete objects into abstract. Finally, as a form of expression, they used very long poems in free verse.

Some of the poets of the Generation that experimented with surrealism in their writings are Vicente Aleixandre, Federico García Lorca, Rafael Alberti and Emilio Prados.

El neorromanticismo

It is contradictory to consider the Generation poets as models of pure, dehumanized and avant-garde poetry

and to recognize, at the same time, their debt to the romantics in certain themes. Some of them- Pedro Salinas, Federico García Lorca, Emilio Prados, Luis Cernuda and Manuel Atolaguirre - had Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer and therefore Juan Ramón Jiménez as their early paragon, especially when dealing with love, the neorromanticismo's main theme.

Other characteristics consist of the expression of loving intimacy, feelings of loneliness, love as a force to overcome reality, fusion of love and death and idealization of the loved one to the limit.

Poesía social

The arrival of the Second Republic in 1931 originated the emergence of a social compromise and a "rehumanization" of themes: a man is not an individual but a product of his social and political circumstances, poetry as a vehicle to mend social inequalities, use of direct language, simple vocabulary and syntax, etc. Rafael Alberti and Emilio Prados were the main figures of this trend that used poetry as a political weapon.

La Residencia de Estudiantes

The Residencia was founded in Madrid in 1910 by the "Junta para la Ampliación de Estudios e Investigaciones Científicas." It played an essential role in the development of the Generation since it became the first cultural center of the country until the beginning of the Civil War, in 1936. Through its various activities, conferences, exhibitions, talks, concerts, etc, it became the core for artistic and scientific work and exchange in Europe.

In 1915, it was moved to its permanent site, the Hill of Poplars. Its director, Alberto Jiménez Fraud, ran the Residencia as a meeting place open to creativity, intellectual and interdisciplinary dialogue. The Residencia and the Junta para Ampliación de Estudios were the product of the innovative ideas generated by the Institución Libre de Enseñanza, founded by Francisco Giner de los Ríos in 1876.

Its spirit was to prompt the formation of a cultural elite capable of guiding and regenerating the society by encouraging the constant dialogue between Science and the Arts as well as complementing university education with an exceptional intellectual and living environment.

Some of its residents were among the leading figures of the culture such as Federico García Lorca and José Bello Lasierra, Salvador Dalí, the film maker Luis Buñuel, and the Nobel Prize winner, scientist Severo Ochoa. The intensity of the experience of living together triggered all kinds of collaborations and experiments such as poetic or artistic games, word or image associations, etc, as well as cross-discipline attempts. The residence became the most important cultural breeding ground in the history of Spain.

Other writers and artists such as Miguel de Unamuno, Alfonso Reyes, Manuel de Falla, Juan Ramón Jiménez, José Ortega y Gasset, Pedro Salinas, Blas Cabrera, Eugenio d'Ors and Rafael Alberti were frequent visitors and lodged at the Residencia during their stay in Madrid.

Magazines

The magazines are key to the Generation since most of the poet's aesthetic thought brewed in them, apart from being the meeting center for the "joven literatura" ("young literature") writers. One could examine the course of the literary front following the progress of these publications. Such a task could easily constitute a whole unit by itself so I will merely mention some of the main titles without getting into detail.

Following Avant-garde techniques and authors we should mention publications such as *Cosmópolis*,

Cervantes, Grecia, Perseo, Reflector, Ultra, Tableros, Horizonte, Parábola, Ronsel, Vértice, Tobogán, Plural and Alfar. Parallel to these, Juan Ramón Jiménez' three publications *Índice*, *Sí* and *Ley*. As mentioned previously, *Revista de Occidente* needs special attention since it not only promulgated the main aesthetic and literary theories of the movement, but also welcomed and supported the "poetas del 27" under Ortega's supervision as its director. As for magazines of the "joven literatura" per se, it would be worth it to mention: *Carmen*, *Litoral*, *Verso y Prosa*, *Lola*, *Gallo*, *Mediodía*, *Manantial*, *Cruz y Raya*, etc.

Authors

The French director of the literary magazine *Intentions* included a selection of poetry and prose written by various 1920s authors of the new and aesthetically different "joven literatura" such as Dámaso Alonso, José Bergamín, Rogelio Buendía, Juan Chabás, Gerardo Diego, Antonio Espina, Federico García Lorca, Antonio Marichalar, Alonso Quesada, Adolfo Salazar, Pedro Salinas and Fernando Vela.

Many are the prominent names that contributed in different ways to the Generation, but the following are the ones critics and scholars always coincide on: Pedro Salinas, Jorge Guillén, Gerardo Diego, Dámaso Alonso, Federico García Lorca, Rafael Alberti, Vicente Aleixandre, Luis Cernuda, Emilio Prados and Manuel Atolaguirre.

As a consideration of time and student's capability we will only study García Lorca and Alberti in depth. Due to the apparent simplicity of themes and forms it will be easier for students to learn about these two authors and their poetry (and drama, in the case of Lorca.)

Federico García Lorca (1898-1936)

García Lorca was born in Fuente Vaqueros, Granada, in 1898. From an early age his interests were artistic: he studied music, learned how to play the piano and the guitar, and analyzed popular songs; he read a lot, especially romantic and classical literature. He also spent hours building toy theaters, making costumes and sets and devising mini-plays for himself and his family and friends.

At the age of eleven, Lorca's family moved to Granada, where he attended a Jesuit school. He then studied Law and Philosophy and Letters in the University of Granada. His vocation drove him to follow his true interests: writing poetry, playing the piano, drawing, and reading- nineteenth century Spanish Romantics, Latin American and Spanish modern writers, the French symbolists, Shakespeare, classic Greek and Spanish dramas, etc.

Lorca already shows an extraordinary sensibility and an exceptional talent in his first book, *Impresiones y Paisajes* (published in 1918.) This early poetry book -Lorca was 20 years old- is the result of a school trip through various regions of Spain during 1916-1917. He moved to Madrid in 1918, where he made the *Residencia de Estudiantes* his new home. There he joined a generation of artists that would revolutionize Spanish culture. He befriended Salvador Dalí, Luis Buñuel and many of the "Generation of '27" writers, as well as some other prominent artists and intellectuals. With the exception of summer vacations spent in Granada, García Lorca would stay in the *Residencia* until 1928, by which time he had become Spain's most highly respected younger poet.

Federico García Lorca combined in his lyric and dramatic production -of which a great part was written in verse- elements of the popular and the intellectual and artistic elite and traditions, the expressive and stylistic innovations of the avant-garde of the 20s with deeply rooted Andalusian topics; all of these with an ease, simplicity and harmony of a genius. He found a unique voice, in part through his numerous contacts with the

modern aesthetics during his long stay in the Residencia de Estudiantes and his trips to United States, Cuba, Argentina and Uruguay.

His early poems (1917-1920) display post-romantic and modernist structures and expressions, as well as an overly rhetorical language; but in *Libro de poemas* (1921) and in *Poesía inédita de juventud* (1994), Lorca suggests features that he would explore later on with great success; such as the search of metaphors, popular sources of inspiration, classical themes of existential struggle between Eros and Thanatos, a deeply religious and idealistic disillusionment and willingness to reach expressive perfection.

Lorca masterfully combined poetry and musical elements. This is palpable in works such as *Suites* (1920-1921) and *Poema del cante jondo* (published in 1931). *Canciones* (1927) illustrates the art of the traditional in combination with the innovative aesthetic of the time. *Romancero gitano* (1928) was Lorca's first great public success, the poems are all narrative, dramatic and lyrical at the same time; they follow the romance traditional form revealing the great myth of the gypsy Andalusia. In this work, Federico wrote more abstract, anti-folkloric and revolutionary poems.

His poems in prose and odes not only offer features of the classical tradition but also the latest avant-garde tendencies of the time. These poems fit in Lorca's second stage that is closer to Surrealism. This aesthetic approach took him to the extraordinary poems of *Poeta en Nueva York* (1929-1931), written during his stay at Columbia University. The book was published posthumously in 1940. It displays a disconcerting style, an elegiac tone of protest and displacement, containing overflowing long and irregular metaphors and verses.

Lorca's dramatic production had supplemented his lyrical work during the 20s but it would be much more numerous after his return from America, partly because the new cultural and political circumstances in the new Republic and a tendency to social compromise in the arts. The few pieces of poetry that he created between 1931 and 1936 returned to the theme of love and death. These poems are of an extraordinary quality. Poems such as "Llanto por Ignacio Sánchez Mejías" - a powerful elegiac poem dedicated to his friend and patron of the bull fighting,- "El Diván de Tamarit" and "Sonetos del amor oscuro" are remarkable for their lyric purity.

When Fernández de los Ríos, a family friend, was appointed Minister of Culture during the Second Republic, Lorca created and led "La Barraca," a university theater company. The company toured the four corners of the Spanish geography to disseminate the best classical theater.

Rafael Alberti (1902-1999)

Rafael Alberti was born in El Puerto de Santa María, Cádiz in 1902 where he studied in the San Luis Gonzaga Jesuit School. Many of his traumatic school experiences there were articulated in *La arboleda perdida* (1959) and in *Sobre los ángeles* (1929.)

In 1917 the family moved to Madrid, where he showed a great ability painting. By 1922 his paintings were exhibited in the Ateneo, a still famous cultural institution in the capital of Spain. One of Alberti's central themes in all his production is the missed roots. This would also be the center in his *Marinero en tierra* (1924.) This poetry collection was also a great success not only because it made him win the National Prize of Literature in 1925, but also because this work explored the same "corriente neopopularista," or neopopularist current, influenced by Andalusian folksongs, that Federico García Lorca was exploring. Two more poetry books, *La amante* (1926) and *El alba del alhelí* (1927) follow this neopopularista trend of folklore, theme of love and short verses.

Around 1924 he befriended García Lorca, Salinas, Guillén, Dalí, Buñuel, Aleixandre, Gerardo Diego, Dámaso Alonso and José Bergamín. He was immediately accepted in the circle that was to be later on "la generación del 27."

Cal y canto (1929) evidences Góngora's commemoration and influences, but his poetry would soon after move toward much more complex structures that would materialize in one of his best works: *Sobre los ángeles*, published in 1929. The next couple of years, Rafael traveled around Europe. Upon his return he changed his style and began using poetry as a political instrument and collaborated with revolutionary magazines such as *Octubre* and *Caballo verde para la poesía*.

In 1939, he fled to France and later on to Argentina. Publications such as *De un momento a otro* (poesía e historia) (1937) and *Poesía* (1938) still denote the poet's political involvement of those years. Other of his works include *Entre el clavel y la espada* (1941,) *Pleamar* (1944,) *A la pintura* (1948,) *Retornos de lo vivo lejano* (1952,) *Ora maritime* (1953,) *Baladas y canciones del Paraná* (1954.) The author went back to Spain in 1976.

Otros "géneros"

Initially I wanted to explore other genres in detail as the prose, the tauromaquia, the flamenco, art and film and their connection to the Generation. Unfortunately, this would make the unit too long in time and space and also too complex for students. They would need more time to comprehend all the details and layers the Generation offers. Therefore we will only focus on the dramatic production in depth. Hopefully, I will be able to extend this unit in the future.

The "cross-pollination" that the Generation's writers, intellectuals and artists engaged in is substantial and it makes this literary movement even more distinctive or remarkable. García Lorca is not only one of the greatest poets and playwrights of the 20th century, but also a great musician and a more than decent drawer who illustrated some of his own poems; Alberti was also an artist and a dramatist; Dámaso Alonso was at some point a member of the Royal History Academy; Luis Buñuel, an internationally well known filmmaker, wrote a collection of short stories during his Residencia years that were published later on; Dalí ventured into other fields such as jewel design and scenery construction, such as Lorca's 1927 *Mariana Pineda*. He was also interested in film, and was in fact the co-author of Luis Buñuel's surrealist masterwork *Un Chien Andalou*.

Teatro del 27 (drama)

When talking about Spanish theater in the 20th century, the first name to come to mind automatically is Federico García Lorca. His plays are characterized by their didacticism, moral and social action since he always felt deeply involved in the dissemination of culture among the poor. His ideas about theater were beautifully summarized in a special presentation he gave when he opened *Yerma*, just a couple of years before he was killed. He stated that theater "es uno de los más expresivos y útiles instrumentos para la edificación de un país, y el barómetro que marca su granceza o su descenso. Un teatro sensible y bien orientado en todas sus ramas, desde la tragedia al vodevil, puede cambiar en pocos años la sensibilidad del pueblo; y un teatro destrozado, donde las pezuñas sustituyen a las alas, puede achabacinar y adormecer a una nación entera." (8)

La Barraca ("The Shack") was a university student theater company founded and directed by Federico García Lorca, one of the best Spanish poets and playwrights of the 20th century, and probably of all times. Lorca also acted in the plays and managed to write some of his best known ones while touring with the group. One

example of his world-renowned work is "the Rural Trilogy": *Bodas de Sangre*, *Yerma* and *La Casa de Bernarda Alba*. *La Barraca* was funded by the Ministry of Education since it was created to introduce modern and radical interpretations of classic Spanish dramas to all sorts of audiences in rural and remote areas of the country.

Some literary critics like Ruiz Ramón or García Posada agree in dividing Lorca's drama production in four groups: "impossible comedies" (called so because of their difficulty to be represented on stage) written in the time frame of his *Poeta en Nueva York*, and even though they were in fact staged they were of a difficult structure and form, with prosed dialogues, etc. *El público* (1930) and *Así que pasen cinco años* (1931) would be good examples of this group.

A second group would include two different kinds of farces, the Guignol farces such as *Los títeres de Cachiporra* and *Tragicomedia de don Cristóbal y la señá Rosita* (1922) and the human farces like *El amor de don Perlimplín con Belisa en su jardín* (1928) and *La zapatera prodigiosa* (1926-1930.)

The tragedies include *Bodas de sangre* (1933) (9) and *Yerma* (1934) and, as for the dramas *El maleficio de la mariposa* (1920,) *Mariana Pineda* (1927,) *Doña Rosita la soltera* (1935) and *La casa de Bernarda Alba* (1936.)

Classroom Activities

Strategies

The unit will be taught once a week, starting in the third marking period (end of January, beginning of February.) By then, students will have acquired confidence in their oral and grammatical skills, and they will also be accustomed to the structure and pace of the class.

In order to help my students to understand the importance and implications of the Generación del 27, I will start the unit introducing different notions of history and literature through a variety of texts, graphic organizers, pictures and power points. We will first deal with the history since I consider understanding the time frame in which the Generación developed to be crucial in order to be able to grasp the complexity of the movement with all its different layers. We will briefly learn about the loss of the colonies, the Primo de Rivera's dictatorship and the situation before and during the Second Republic. After dealing with most of the unit's historical information, I will divide students in groups of four, giving all of them a set of resources to use. We will then go to the library so students can work in their groups gathering a set of questions (about 10 per group) and their answers that will ultimately be used as part of a game.

Right after, we will deal with the literary part of the unit: the concept of Generación and some of the group's main characteristics and trends. Once the students understand the basics of the movement, we will move into Federico García Lorca and Rafael Alberti, I chose these two authors because of the apparent simplicity of their poetry: students will be able to understand, interpret and analyze their poems easily. In order to lead them to that point, we will work with a couple of poems (mainly from Lorca's *Romancero gitano* and Alberti's *Marinero en Tierra*,) as a group. Later on, I will assign some poems to different groups of students (2 or 3 students per group) so they can explain, decode and present the poems in front of their peers. (I will encourage them to use technology and visual devices.) At the end of this section, we will go back to the library and work with other sets of questions, this time related to the authors, poems, plays and trends of the group of 1927.

In this literary section of the unit, we will also work on student's reading, listening and pronunciation skills by having them read some of the poems out -loud or working with some adaptations musicians have made of Lorca's poems such as Enrique Morente's Lorca (Virgin Records España, 1996,) Llanto por Ignacio Sánchez Mejías: Oratorio de Vicente Pradal (EMI, 1998,) Federico García Lorca: El diván del Tamarit also by Vicente Pradal (EMI, 2008) or Ana Belén's tribute Lorquiana: Canciones populares de Federico García Lorca. (BMG, 1998.)

Final project: Teacher for a day

I will assign a final project that I have used before. It consists of having students teach some of the material we have gone through during the unit but they have to do so using different strategies and activities; they will have to use their own imagination and resources, with my assistance and help, if needed. Students usually like this project and they generally develop creative, well-structured lessons, and it is a great way to assess if they have grasped the main concepts and ideas, as well as giving them the possibility and freedom to think out of the box!

Students will work in groups of three and will have the option to choose from a list of topics in order.

"Generation Trivial"

To close the unit, we will play our own version of Trivial Pursuit with all the questions and answers we have gathered through the unit in groups.

Sample Lesson Plans

Lesson One: Historia

Goal

Help students to understand other cultures to reinforce and expand their knowledge of other disciplines (standards 2.1 and 2.2)

Learning Objectives

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

1. Practice their reading comprehension skills.
2. Build on their oral reading skills.
3. Develop understanding of other countries and cultures.
4. Understand the importance of history as part of the identity of countries.
5. Read and gather information of a text written in Spanish in order to recognize the main ideas.
6. Learn new vocabulary in the target language.
7. Express relevant information in their own words.

Materials

Text and Power Point presentation on the main events of the years of the Second Republic in Spain, timeline graphic organizer, pictures and posters from that time, computer, speakers and LCD projector.

Initiation

Students will be asked what they know about Spanish 20th century history.

Procedure

1. The teacher will write the responses on the board so students can go on adding to their classmates' answers.
2. Students will read the reading comprehension handout on the Second Republic out loud, in turns.
3. Students will have a couple of minutes to underline the vocabulary they do not know.
4. The teacher will ask students questions about the text in order to find out if they have understood the main ideas.
5. Students will write in the graphic organizer what they consider to be the most important concepts or ideas of the reading.
6. Common exposure of the previous exercise-discussion.
7. The teacher will show the Power Point presentation on the Second Republic.

Closure

To wrap up the lesson the teacher will show a couple of pictures of the time to students, ask them to pick one and different students will be asked comment on it.

Assessment / homework

Students will be asked to write a 10-15 line paragraph in Spanish describing the picture they chose and how they think is related with what they have learned in the lesson.

Lesson Two: Poesía

Goal

Students understand and interpret written and spoken language on a variety of topics by reading,

understanding and interpreting poems (Standards 1.2, 2.2 and 3.1)

Learning Objectives

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

1. Practice their reading comprehension and listening comprehension skills.
2. Build on their oral reading skills.
3. Read, interpret and analyze poems.
4. Learn and recognize basic poetry/literary/stylistic terms.
5. Learn new vocabulary.
6. Make connections between disciplines.

Materials

Copies of the poem "Prendimiento de Antoñito el Camborio en el camino de Sevilla" by Federico García Lorca in Romancero Gitano, graphic organizer, computer with Internet access, speakers and LCD projector.

Initiation

Teacher will start the lesson asking volunteers brief questions about La Generación del 27 and García Lorca (e.g.: name one of Lorca's early books, name three Generation poets, etc)

Procedure

1. Teacher will play the You Tube reading of the poem "Prendimiento de Antoñito el Camborio en el camino de Sevilla" (10)
2. Teacher will ask students what they think the poem is about.
3. Teacher will then give a written copy of the poem and the graphic organizer with questions about the poem to students.
4. Teacher will reproduce the video again, asking students to silently read along.
5. Students will be asked to complete the graphic organizer (they will have to classify words in terms of function and also look for thematic groups: guardia civil/gypsies/nature/death.
6. Students will assist another student to reproduce and complete and correct the graphic organizer in the board.
7. Students and teacher will discuss all the semantic fields in the poem as well as some of the main poetic characteristics.
8. One (or two) student(s) will read the poem out loud.
9. The students will pair up in groups of two and will go over the poem in order to be

able to complete a questionnaire on the meaning of the poem

10. Different pairs of students will be ask to explain the meaning of the poem to the rest of the class.

Closure

A couple of groups will share their responses with the rest of the class

Assessment / homework

Students will choose a poem they like and analyze it for homework.

Lesson Three: Art

Goal

Students will reinforce and further their knowledge of other art through Spanish and demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the culture studied (Standard 3.1 and 2.1)

Learning Objectives

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

1. Practice their reading comprehension skills.
2. Observe and describe pieces of art.
3. Build on their writing skills.
4. Look for information in different electronic resources.
5. View, interpret and recognize pieces of art.
6. Express reactions toward a particular piece of art.
7. Make connections between literature and art in the Generation of 1927.

Materials

Numbered transparencies of some representative works, Salvador Dali's paintings and some of García Lorca and Alberti's drawings, written Spanish description of the paintings and drawings, computer, LCD projector,

Initiation

Students will write on an anonymous flashcard everything they remember about the previous mini-research on Salvador Dalí.

Procedure

1. The teacher will redistribute the cards to students so they can read out loud, to the rest of the class the content and explain (in the target language) to the rest of the students if they agree or disagree and the reasons why.
2. The teacher will give students a set of untitled and separated descriptions of different paintings and drawings by Dalí, Federico García Lorca and Rafael Alberti (students will be familiar with some of them because they would have been used/shown in previous Power Points)
3. Some students will read the descriptions out loud
4. Students and teacher will closely look at the numbered paintings/drawings.
5. Students will be given some time to pair the descriptions of paintings/drawings with their author and with the number of transparencies they have seen.
6. Students and teacher will correct the exercise and further comment on the art.
7. Students will chose one of the art pieces and will write a 10-15 line description of the painting/drawing stating what they think it represents, and why they chose it

Closure

To wrap up the lesson the teacher will pick up the essays

Assessment / homework

Students will try to find a poem (in English or Spanish) that they think would go with the painting/drawing they chose. They will have to explain their choice orally.

Notes

- (1) Guillén, Jorge. "Unos amigos" in *Y otros poemas*. 1973
- (2) National Standards for Foreign Language Education.
<http://www.actfl.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3392>.
- (3) Residencia de Estudiantes. <http://www.residencia.csic.es/en/info/history.htm>.
- (4) ACTFL Performance Guidelines: Samples of Performance Descriptions.
<http://www.actfl.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3329>
- (5) Cardalliaguet Gómez-Málaga, María. *The Spanish Civil War Through Film*, in *Stories around the World in Film*. Yale National Initiative, 2006.
- (6) Julius Petersen, "Las generaciones literarias" in Ermatinger's *Filosofía de la ciencia literaria*, 1946.
- (7) I have decided to leave the original quote in Spanish since the translation might not express the idea as well as the English translation: "I want to simply say that these writers were not merely a group but in them, there are the minimum conditions of what I understand a generation is: contemporaneity, fellowship, exchange, similar reactions to external stimuli"
Dámaso Alonso. "Una generación poética (1920-1936)" in *Obras completas*, vol. 4.
- (8) "The theatre is one of the most expressive and useful instruments for the edification of a country; it is also the barometer which marks its greatness or its descent. A theatre which is sensitive and well oriented in all its branches, from tragedy to vaudeville, can in a few years change the sensibility of the people; and a theatre which has been destroyed, in which cloven hooves take the place of wings, can put to sleep an entire nation."
José Luis Plaza Chillon. *Escenografía y artes plásticas: el teatro de Federico García Lorca y su puesta en escena 1920-1935*, 1998
- (9) See Cardalliaguet Gómez-Málaga, María. *Spanish Cultures through Film and Literature*. Yale National Initiative, 2007. For a detailed study of the play.
- (10) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fpjmr1F5Bgg>

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