

A READING OF TWO OF GUILLEN'S POEMS

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Concerning the African literature of the Diaspora, we would like to present an analysis of two poems by Nicolás Guillén (Camagüey 1902 - La Habana 1989), "Balada de los dos abuelos" in *West Indies Ltd.*, 1934 and "El apellido-Elegia familiar" in *La paloma de vuelo popular*, 1958.

This work is divided into two phases, a first part consisting mainly in the formal-semantic analysis of the poems, i.e. by following the poet's particular distribution of the text, we proceed to the individuation of the whole poetical material such as the minimal formal significative structures (phonemes and lexemes) and syntagms.

The second part should provide the historical and cultural backgrounds necessary to contextualize Guillén's poetry.

With regard to this historical and cultural frame of interpretation we must not forget Guillén's existential identity which actually finds its source in folklore. The two poems we have chosen to analyze show how the author discovers his own ethnic roots through the historical oral records. In fact the oral tradition is seen as a collective dream, a collective song. A mulatto "song", fruit of the Spanish Renaissance, which not only recalls the secular itinerant pilgrimage of African slavery, the author's personal rejection of American imperialism but also the necessity of an awareness of Cuban diversity and thus of a new common and shared identity. In this ultimate process we recognize varied cultural traditions such as Spanish popular poetry, African music and some supernaturalistic movements, all of them united in a single cosmopolitan effort: the representation of the Cuban people and its roots.