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Alberti and the New Chronicle of America: A Study of *13 bandas y 48 estrellas*

"Every meeting," Rafael Alberti tells us, "implies a journey" and "every journey ... carries within it a story."[1] Thus, his book of 1935 *13 bandas y 48 estrellas (13 Stripes and 48 Stars)* is the story, the chronicle, of the long journey that Alberti undertook in 1935 through several countries in the Americas, from the United States to South America. The initial purpose of his trip, to inform of the situation of the Asturian miners, became a personal adventure, an encounter of "a travelling poet, friend of justice,"[2] with America, with its lands and its peoples, with its literature and with the kinds of discourse that had been written about this continent throughout the course of history. In this chronicle the journey acts as the structural element of the book: the main thread linking the different poems that comprise the book is the itinerary of the speaker, whose different destinations mark the structure and the rhythm of the work.

The visitor´s external vision implies a distance between the observing subject and the otherness of what is observed, and thus, as is the case in the chronicles of the "discovery" and conquest, the representation of the Other and the relationship of the chronicler with that Other acquire special importance in this book. Through its treatment of that otherness Alberti´s book can be situated between the Spanish chronicle and Spanish American anti-imperialist traditions, both of them being intertextually present in the book. For this reason the work is to be understood as engaging in a direct and dynamic dialogue with the discourse that both traditions had generated about the Americas, and the journey through these countries is also a journey through Hispanic literature and ideology.

As a new American chronicle the book implies a displacement of the colonialist relationship characteristic of the discourse of the chroni-

[1] "Todo encuentro supone ya un viaje ... [t]odo viaje ... lleva dentro un relato." Rafael Alberti, "Encuentro en la Nueva España con Bernal Díaz del Castillo," *Prosas encontradas (1924-1942)* Ed. Robert Marrast (Madrid: Ayuso, 1970) 130. All translations of Alberti´s texts are by Keith Ellis.

[2] "poeta viajero, amigo de justicias." *Ibid.* 141.

cles that understood the difference of the Other to be inferiority, and therefore, a justification for any kind of treatment that the "discoverer" wished to impose. The speaker of these poems, by contrast, seeks to understand difference and thus reduce the distance that separates him from the Other.

The book begins by emphasizing this attempt at closeness, revealed in the speaker´s insistence on his ability to perceive more than the eyes can see, to "see" what is hidden by the morning mist that hovers over the arrival of his boat at the New York port in the poem "New York":

> Alguien se despertaba pensando que la niebla
> ponía un especial cuidado en ocultar el crimen[3]
>
> Someone awoke thinking that the fog
> was being especially careful to hide the crime.

The speaker identifies himself with that "someone" and expresses repeatedly his ability to uncover the hidden crime with the anaphoric repetition "Y era yo entre la niebla quien oía, quien veía mucho más y todo esto" (46) 'And I was the one in the fog who was hearing, who was seeing much more and all this', and the crime he is uncovering is the exploitation of Latin America, which underlies the wealth and power of Wall Street, presented as the epitome of U.S. capitalism. Thus, in its metaphoric dimension the fog may be identified with the official discourse of the United States about itself and Latin America, a discourse that is intended to hide and distort its actions on the continent. The knowledge of the crime is not expressed in terms of visual perception, but rather of a combination of perceptions that include smell and hearing. Thus, the metaphor that expresses the persistence of imperialism is "el enloquecedor vaho de petróleo," (45) 'the maddening whiff of petroleum' that engulfs everything "en un abrasador contagio de petróleo, / en una inabarcable marea de petróleo," (45) 'in a scorching contagion of petroleum, / in an uncontainable tide of petroleum' and is complemented by the sounds of exploitation ("un crujido de huesos sin reposo," (44) 'a ceaseless groaning of bones', "la voz de la propuesta de robos calculados," (44) 'the voice of the proposal for planned robberies'. On the other hand, the resistance to imperialism is perceived through a different sound, the voices "de agónicas naciones que me gritan / con mi mismo lenguaje entre la niebla," (46) (´of nations in agony that cry out to me / in my own language amid the fog´), voices that allow for the possibility to invert the situation, a possibility expressed through the inversion of the previous metaphor: the oppressive "enloquecedor vaho de petróleo," (45) 'maddening whiff of petroleum' will become "...

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[3]Rafael Alberti, *13 bandas y 48 estrellas* (1935; Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1985) 43.

una justa / libertadora llama de petróleo," (47) '... a just / liberating flame of petroleum'.

This ability to see synaesthetically expressed in the first poem, this confluence of perceptions that helps the speaker to "see" what the eyes alone cannot perceive, makes it clear that the book´s vision of the Americas is not the result of a casual contact with the continent, but rather it is a result of a combination of the poet´s experience during his journey and his previous knowledge. This knowledge comes not from the nebulous and deceptive official discourse of the U.S. government, but from the voices that cry out to him, the anti-imperialist voices of the Latin American writers who reveal to him the human, social, economic and cultural American reality.

Thus the homage to those voices in the book, that is dedicated "A Juan Marinello y a todos los escritores antiimperialistas de América" (39) 'To Juan Marinello and to all the anti-imperialists writers in the Americas' and contains in the poem "Casi son" 'Almost *son*' a clear homage to Nicolás Guillén. To this gallery of Latin American names is added a U.S. writer, Langston Hughes, who denounced another manifestation of U.S. imperialism, the social relations with its domestic Other (the epigraph of the poem "Yo también canto a América" 'I too sing America' is a line from the Prelude to *The Weary Blues*, "I, too, sing America").

It is difficult, therefore, to agree with the opinion that "in the course of *13 bandas y 48 estrellas* we witness a discovery of America," as Aurora de Albornoz has suggested.[4] The speaker does not "discover" America; his journey does not present him with an unknown Other that would prompt him to improvise a representation, as the chronicles of the "discovery" and conquest had done. We have here a speaker who already knows and recognizes as valid the representations that the Other has made of themselves, in contrast to the ancient Spanish chroniclers who limited themselves to silencing the Other and speaking in their name. The book in this way associates itself with the American anti-imperialist tradition, although it substitutes with a song of solidarity the collective song of, for example, José Martí, Rubén Darío, Nicolás Guillén and, later, Pablo Neruda, in which the individual voices are made more powerful by the fact that they become spokespersons for "nuestra" (´our`) América. The speaker, in his song of solidarity, joins his voice to that "we," as is shown in the poem "El Salvador" in which, by alternating between third-person plural and first-person plural, the speaker offers his participation in the song and in the struggle, transforming the initial "they" into a "we" of powerful resonance:

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[4]Aurora de Albornoz, "Estudio preliminar," *13 bandas y 48 estrellas*, de Rafael Alberti (1935; Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1985) 11. (My translation).

Presidente: amarillo te verán, te veremos.
Doce mil, quince mil hombres desenterrados,
de pie los esqueletos, rígidos, fusilados,
te colgarán la vida. Mejor: te colgaremos.

Quién es el salvador de El Salvador sabremos.
Sabrán. Y por los pueblos y por los despoblados,
que tú volviste rojos ríos desamarrados,
rojas banderas altas sembrarán, sembraremos. (79)[5]

President: you will seem yellow to them, to us.
Twelve thousand, fifteen thousand disinterred men,
their skeletons standing, rigid, shot,
will hang life out of you. Rather: we will hang you.

We shall know who is the saviour of El Salvador.
They will know. And along towns and deserted places,
that you turn into red swollen rivers,
they will, we will, plant soaring red flags.

Solidarity discourse in its highest form of expression results from the incorporation of some key elements of anti-imperialist literature as for example in the idea of Latin American unity. In "Yo también canto a América" the poem is sung to all the American peoples, who are all united in a liberating project:

Que desde el golfo mexicano suene
de árbol a mar, de mar a hombres y fieras,
como oriente de negros y mulatos,
de mestizos, de indios y criollos.

Suene este canto, no como el vencido
letargo de las quenas moribundas,
sino como una voz que estalle uniendo
dispersa conciencia de las olas.

Tu venidera órbita asegures
con la expulsión total de tu presente.
Aire libre, mar libre, tierra libre.
Yo también canto América futura. (114)

That from the Mexican gulf it should sound
from tree to sea, from sea to men and animals,

[5]Neruda later uses the same device in his poetic homage to Alberti in the *Canto general* *General Song* to express his own solidarity with the exiled poet: "Y a ti sí que te deben, y es una patria: espera. / Volverás, volveremos..." (´And you, certainly, are owed something, which is a homeland: wait. / You will return, we will return...`) Pablo Neruda, "A Rafael Alberti (Puerto de Santa María, España)," *Canto general* (1950; Barcelona: Seix Barral, 1982)371. (Translation by Keith Ellis.)

orienting blacks and mulattoes,
mestizos, indians and creoles.

Let this song sound, not like the conquered
lethargic ones of the moribund flutes,
but like the voice that explodes uniting
the dispersed consciousness of the waves.

You assure your future orbit
with the total expulsion of your present.
Open air, open sea, open land.
I too sing the future America.

The defence of Latin American unity, in which the voices of José Martí, Rubén Darío and so many others resound, is also manifested in the organization of the book. The journey as a structural element in this book gives it an organic unity that emphasizes the unity of the Spanish-speaking continent and the necessary confluence of its destiny in its struggle against the economic and cultural dominance of the U.S. In the face of that basic unity, nevertheless, there is a recognition of the local differences; they are expressed by the thematic, formal, and metrical diversity of the different parts of the whole, that are made to adapt to the specific nature of the different areas (a diversity that displays splendidly Alberti's exceptional formal versatility).

The treatment in the book of these American discourses about America carries with it a re-evaluation of another type of representation, of an external kind, which comes mainly from Spanish colonialist discourse. In "Cuba dentro de un piano (1900)" 'Cuba within a piano (1900)' the speaker, while recalling his family in the context of Cadiz at the end of the nineteenth century, also alludes to the national sorrow over the loss of the last of the colonies, a loss that had aggravated the crisis in a country that for centuries had thought of itself as an empire:

Mi tío Antonio volvía con aire de insurrecto.
La Cabaña y el Príncipe sonaban por los patios de El Puerto.

(Ya no brilla la Perla azul del mar de las Antillas,
Ya se apagó, se nos ha muerto).

Me encontré con la bella Trinidad...

Cuba se había perdido y ahora era de verdad.
Era verdad,
no era mentira,
un cañonero huido llegó cantándolo en guajira.

La Habana ya se perdió.
Tuvo la culpa el dinero...

Calló,
Cayó el cañonero. (63-64)

My uncle returned with an air of insurrection about him.
La Cabaña and el Príncipe were heard along the patios of El Puerto.
(The blue Pearl of the sea of the Antilles no longer sparkles.
Its light has gone out, it has died on us).

I found the beautiful Trinidad...

Cuba had been lost and now it was truly so.
It was true,
it wasn't a lie.
A fleeing gunboat came singing of it in peasant style.

Havana is already lost.
Money was to blame...

The gunboat was silent.
It sank.

The superficial knowledge of Cuba and its reality (an example of colonial ignorance and indifference) is expressed by reducing Cuba to nothing more than its popular music, certain fragments of which are inserted in the poem. The speaker shows in the final lines the need to rise above colonial lament and superficial quaint knowledge in order to be able to see the true impact of 1898, that meant for Cuba the beginning of imperial domination:

Pero después, pero ¡ah!, después
fue cuando al Sí
lo hicieron YES. (64)

But afterwards, but, oh!, afterwards
came the time when they turned *Sí*
into YES.

In their interpretation of this poem critics have traditionally placed more emphasis on the autobiographic element of nostalgia, the expression of memories of stories and songs Alberti heard in his childhood.[6]

[6]For example, Antonio Jiménez Millán states: "Lo que sobresale en este poema no es tanto el alegato contra el imperialismo expresado al final de forma irónica..., sino el componente biográfico, centrado en el recurso de las narraciones que escuchaba el poeta, en su niñez y adolescencia, acerca de la guerra de Cuba." 'What stands out in this poem isn't so much a case against imperialism, expressed at the end in ironic form... but the autobiographical component, centred on the recollection of the narrations that the poet heard, in his childhood and adolescence, about the Cuban war.' *La poesía de Rafael Alberti (1930-1939)* (Jerez de la Frontera: Diputación Provincial de Cádiz, 1984) 143. (My translation.)

But they have failed to emphasize the function of these elements within the whole poem, in which the speaker moves from gathering the collective voice of lament to being the individual voice of historical reevaluation that corrects the collective perception and distances himself from it by his superior understanding of the Other. This displacement is expressed through the different treatment of music in the two parts of the poem. In the first part the inclusion of lines of popular songs in a collage format, that is not really integrated in the rest of the poem but instead acts as a counterpart, reflects the abyss that separates both groups of humans:

> Cuando mi madre llevaba un sorbete de fresa por sombrero
> y el humo de los barcos aún era humo de habanero.
>
> *Mulata vueltabajera...*
>
> Cádiz se adormecía entre fandangos y habaneras
> y un lorito quería hacer de tenor.
>
> *. . . dime dónde está la flor*
> *que el hombre tanto venera.* (63)

> When my mother wore a strawberry sherbet as a hat
> and the smoke from the ships was still Havana smoke.
>
> *Mulatta turned upside down...*
>
> Cadiz used to go to sleep among fandangos and habaneras
> and a parrot on the piano wanted to be a tenor.
>
> *... tell me where is the flower*
> *that a man so worships.*

In the second part the interest of the speaker to reduce the abyss is shown not only in that reference to the change from Spanish colonialism to U.S. imperialism, but also in the integration of popular music into the lines of the poem, which takes on a *son* rhythm that resembles some of Guillén´s verses:

> Pero después, pero, ¡ah!, después
> fue cuando al Sí
> lo hicieron YES. (63)

"Cuba dentro de un piano (1900)" introduces another element that pervades the whole book: the interpretation of the exotic and the picturesque as a colonial manifestation by which idealized representations distort and trivialize the reality of the Other. In "20 minutos en la Martinique (Port de France)" '20 minutes in Martinique (Port de France)' the poet emphasizes this inadequacy of exoticism as a means of

representing the Other, by using as a basis the contrast between his memories of rum in his recollections of Cadiz and in his American experience:

> Calor de ron pasado por suaves maderas,
> esperando las bajas bodegas de los barcos
> junto a los cobertizos sucios de la aduana.
> Volvéis de pronto a mí, ahora en el trópico,
> gaditano perfume de barriles,
> alboreando toneles por los embarcaderos tendidos a los pies de las pescaderías
> saliendo de la noche. (107)

> The heat of rum passed through gentle woods,
> waiting for the cellars of the boats
> next to the dirty customs sheds.
> You return suddenly to me, now in the Tropics,
> the perfume of barrels from Cadiz,
> kegs that appear on the piers stretched out at the feet of the fish markets
> coming out of the night.

That memory contrasts with the observation of rum in its real social context, which breaks with the idealization of the past ("Pero no eres el mismo, / calor triste de ron que subes mareando las palmeras," (107) 'But you aren't the same / sad heat of rum that rises dizzying the palm trees') for now rum is understood in relation to the circumstances of exploitation of those who work to produce it. This precludes any distorting idealization:

> Calor duro de ron,
> sudor de negro,
> clamor sordo de negro,
> llanto oculto de negro,
> alba negra de negro despertando. (108)

> Hard heat of rum,
> sweat of the black man,
> deaf shout of the black man,
> hidden weeping of the black man,
> black dawn of the awakening black man.

The exploitation is expressed through the "sudor de negro" 'sweat of the black man,' which pervades a "clamor" 'shout' and a "llanto" 'weeping' that are respectively "sordo" 'deaf' and "oculto" 'hidden,' that is to say, kept unknown by the effect of idealization, but which once heard help to awaken an awareness of exploitation and injustice: "alba negra de negro despertando" 'black dawn of the awakening black man.'

In "Islas y puertos del Caribe" 'Islands and ports of the Caribbean' the idyllic visions of yesterday are also contrasted with a present reali-

ty of misery and exploitation; but in this case a more complex network of allusions enriches the texture of the poem. In the first part, the speaker wonders about the local population in terms that bring to mind the representations written about them in the chronicles. The colonial discourse of chroniclers constructed the colonized peoples as being so inferior, that they were even considered to be on the margins of what is human. This was as much an expression of their difficulty in dealing with human otherness as an attempt to justify their intervention (conquest, assimilation and, in the final instance, at times, destruction):

> ¿Son hombres de rodillas sobre el mar,
> perros, terribles monos sentados sobre el mar,
> movidos por dos hojas de madera,
> gritando, aullando, limándose los dientes
> contra el filo movible de las olas que se mella en las quillas ...? (103)

> Are they men kneeling upon the sea,
> dogs, terrible monkeys sitting on the sea,
> moved by two wooden leaves,
> shouting, moaning, filing their teeth
> with the movable file of the waves that damages itself on the keels ...?

The speaker, by way of contrast, emphasizes the living conditions caused by exploitation in order to inquire into the desolation he is witnessing:

> o es el hambre desnuda, el hambre negra,
> la ruina nadando, la despoblada esclavitud hundiéndose,
> marineando, desnucándose desde las cuerdas flojas de los puentes
> contra el aguaje sucio que rodea los límites anclados de los barcos
> que pasan? (103)

> or is it naked hunger, black hunger,
> swimming ruin, depopulated slavery sinking,
> taking to the sea, breaking its neck from the weak cords of the bridges
> against the dirty current that surrounds the anchored limits of the
> passing boats?

The question "¿Qué es? / ¿Qué es esto?" (103) 'What is it? / What is this?' functions as a link to the second part of the poem in which the observed reality is contrasted with images and dreams of the past:

> ¿El hallazgo quizá del mundo imaginado desde los aburridos pupitres
> del colegio
> de las islas misteriosas con gargantas de imán,
> voces perdidas, costas cambiables desorientando a los marinos,
> países imposibles situados en mares fijos,

sin color y sin aves de las lluvias,
regidos por estrellas y soles petrificados? (103-104)

The discovery perhaps of the imagined world from the boring desks of primary school
of mysterious islands with magnetised throats,
lost voices, changeable coasts disorienting sailors,
impossible countries situated in fixed seas,
colourless and without birds of the rain,
guided by stars and petrified suns?

The poem's construction on the basis of questions intensifies the contrast between those childhood dreams and what is being perceived by the speaker, whose discomfort is summed up in the final question "¿Es que al fin era esto la invitación al viaje?" (104) 'Was this really the invitation to the journey?'. And so the central question of the poem ("¿Qué es? / ¿Qué es esto?" (103) 'What is it? / What is this?') is not a question about the perceived reality, but rather about the repeated and unsatisfactory representation of that reality, based on the idealization of exoticism and on the adverse effect of colonialist discourse. Both of these factors derive from the observation of difference and they share the same capacity to distance the Other and distort his reality.

Alberti thus underlines the need to abandon this kind of idealized vision, which is the product, in many cases, of European ethnocentric fantasy. Such visions are especially harmful, as is shown in the poems "México: El indio" 'Mexico: The Indian' and "Casi son" 'Almost *son*' when they are used to define Latin America and the diverse human elements that comprise it, still in terms of the colonial relationship between Spaniards and indigenous people.

In the two poems that make up "México: El indio," exoticism is considered with regard to indigenous participation in the historical process of Mexico. In the first poem the indigenous population is identified with the natural elements, thus emphasizing their ties to the land. This opens the way to the reference to Spanish colonialism and U.S. imperialism, that have come to sever the connection of the indigenous people to the land and, by extension, of all the inhabitants of colonized Iberoamerica (as is expressed also in "New York" and "Yo también canto América"):

Todavía más fino, más fino, más fino,
casi desvaneciéndose de pura transparencia,
de pura delgadez como el aire del Valle.

Es como el aire.
De pronto, suena a hojas,
suena a seco silencio, a terrible protesta de árboles,
de ramas que prevén los aguaceros.

Es como los aguaceros.

Se apaga como ojo de lagarto que sueña,
garra dulce de tigre que se volviera hoja,
lumbre débil de fósforo al abrirse la puerta.

Es como lumbre.

Lava antigua volcánica rodando,
color de hoyo con ramas que se queman,
tierra impasible al temblor de la tierra.

Es como tierra. (73-74)

He is still finer, finer, finer,
almost disappearing from pure transparency,
from pure thinness, like the air of the Valley.

He is like air.

Suddenly, he sounds like leaves,
he sounds like dry silence, like a terrible protest of trees,
of branches that foresee heavy showers.

He is like heavy showers.

He fades away like the eye of a dreamy lizard,
sweet claw of a tiger becoming a leaf,
weak light of a match when a door opens.

He is like light.

Ancient volcanic lava on the roll,
color of a hole with burning branches,
impassible land when the earth quakes.

He is like earth.

The second poem calls on the indigenous people to fight against those foreign representations that relegate them to the picturesque and the exotic, as a result of their idealization, which negates them as a relevant historical element. The speaker urges them to do this by reestablishing their connection to the land as well as to their past:

Contra el gringo que compra en tu retrato
tu parada belleza ya en escombros,
prepara tu fusil. No te resignes
a ser postal de un álbum sin objeto.
. . .
Eres México antiguo, horror de cumbres
que se asombran abatidas por pirámides,
trueno oscuro de selvas observadas
por cien mil ojos lentos de serpientes. (75-76)

> Prepare your gun against the gringo
> who buys in your portrait your halted beauty
> that is now in ruins. Don´t resign yourself
> to being a postcard in a purposeless album.
> . . .
> You are ancient México, horror of peaks
> that are surprised and subdued by pyramids,
> dark thunder of forests observed
> by a hundred thousand slow serpent eyes.

That connection will allow the indigenous people to make a valuable contribution to Mexican identity through miscegenation, the interrelation of indigenous and Spanish elements that requires overcoming their previous colonial relationship:

> Contra los gachupines que alambican
> residuos coloniales por sus venas,
> prepara tu fusil. Tú eres el indio
> poblador de la sangre del criollo.
>
> Si él y tú sois ya México, ninguno,
> ninguno duerma, trabaje, llore y se despierte
> sin saber que una mano lo estrangula,
> dividiendo su tierra en dos mitades. (76)
>
> Prepare your gun against the Spanish settlers
> who distil colonial residues in their veins.
> You are the Indian, you people
> the blood of the Creole.
>
> If he and you are already Mexico, let neither
> of you sleep, work, weep and awaken
> without knowing that a hand is strangling you
> dividing your land in two halves.

In turn, in the poem "Casi son" the rejection of the ethnocentric fantasy is shown in the context of *negrista* poetry, a frame of reference established by the contrast between a homage to Nicolás Guillén in the poem and an epigraph taken from Lope de Vega. The poem takes the form and rhythm of the "mulatto" poems of Guillén and also follows his formulation of Cuban cultural identity as the fusion of Hispanic and African elements, with an exhortation to react in a united fashion against the situation deriving from U.S. predominance:

> Negro, da la mano al blanco,
> dala ya,
> dásela ya.

Blanco, da la mano al negro,
dala ya,
dásela ya.
Y al yanki que viene y va,
negro, dale ya,
blanco, dale ya
negro y blanco, dadle ya.

Mano a mano,
contra el norteamericano.

Negro, mano a mano,
blanco, mano a mano,
negro y blanco, mano a mano,
mano a mano,
mano a mano. (68-69)

Black man, give your hand to the white man,
give it now,
give it to him now.
White man, give your hand to the black man,
give it now,
give it to him now.
To the Yankee who comes and goes,
black man, attack him,
white man, attack him,
black man and white man, attack him.

Hands together,
against the U.S. man.
Black man, hands together,
white man, hands together,
black man and white man, hands together,
hands together,
hands together.

The epigraph from Lope de Vega, "... negro tienen muerto" '... they have killed a black man,' underscores the importance of the homage to Guillén, who went beyond the *negrista* tradition by giving his poetry a new political dimension of profound exploration of the black contribution to national life, and by moving away from the picturesque which, from the origins of the *negrista* tradition in the Spanish Golden Age had been an integral part of this tradition.

As we have seen in *13 bandas y 48 estrellas* Alberti distances himself considerably from the attitude of Spain to America that was prevalent at the time when he wrote this book of poetry. An example of this attitude is the rhetoric with which reactionary Spanish thinking invoked,

well into the 1930s, the continuation of the colonial influence of Spain in America through the concept of *hispanidad*, that had been advanced by Ramiro de Maeztu. He proposed that Spain exercise spiritual direction over the Spanish American countries. And, as is well known, that attitude would be institutionalized in the regime that emerged from the civil war.

Alberti's rejection of this concept is linked to an act of solidarity with those Latin American writers and thinkers who had dedicated themselves to developing their own formulation of the reality of the Americas, far from the influence of Spanish colonialism and U.S. imperialism. This act of solidarity would be reciprocated soon afterwards during the Spanish Civil War when several great poets of the Americas, Pablo Neruda, César Vallejo, Nicolás Guillén and Langston Hughes among them, travelled to Spain to devote themselves to defending the same idea of Spain that Alberti had defended and that was consistent with his vision of the Americas. Guillén, for example, in his *España: Poema en cuatro angustias y una esperanza* (1937) '*Spain: Poem in Four Anguishes and One Hope*' included his self-definition as a "esclavo ayer de matorrales blancos dueños de látigos, / hoy esclavo de rojos yanquis azucareros y voraces,"[7] 'a slave yesterday of white overseers and their coleric whips, / today a slave of red, sugary, and voracious yankees,'. And in basing his own vision of Spain on his links with the working and exploited class of that country and not with Cortés nor with Pizarro, his book beautifully reciprocates Alberti's *13 bandas y 48 estrellas*.

Ibiza, Spain

[7]Nicolás Guillén, "La voz esperanzada" *Obra poética* (La Habana: Editorial Letras Cubanas, 1985) 189. (Translation by Keith Ellis.)