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| Carpentier (y Valmont), Alejo (1904-1980) |
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| Alejo Carpentier was a Cuban novelist and musicologist who formed important connections between European and Latin American modernist literature of the twentieth century. He was a founder of the avant-garde Afro-Cuban movement, incorporating African heritage into Cuban art, theatre, and music. Exiled in France from 1929-1939 for political dissent, he associated with Surrealists and was for a time heavily influenced by their work. |
| Alejo Carpentier was a Cuban novelist and musicologist who formed important connections between European and Latin American modernist literature of the twentieth century. He was a founder of the avant-garde Afro-Cuban movement, incorporating African heritage into Cuban art, theatre, and music. Exiled in France from 1929-1939 for political dissent, he associated with Surrealists and was for a time heavily influenced by their work. In France, he finished the novel he had started in a Cuban prison: *¡Ecue-Yamba-O!* [*Praised Be God!*] (1933). After returning to Cuba, a trip to Haiti inspired his novel, *El reino de este mundo* [*The Kingdom of this World*] (1948), an imaginative recreation of the Haitian revolution and its aftermath. In his prologue to this novel, he introduced the term *lo real maravilloso* *Americano,* or magical realism, as it was later known. He distinguished between the Surrealism of Europe and the magical realism of Latin America by insisting that a heightened description of Latin American reality could effectively produce the uncanny effects achieved by Surrealists with more artificial techniques.  Exiled again to Venezuela in 1945, he produced *Los pasos perditos* [*The Lost Steps*] (1953), which reveals the inadequacy of modernist conceptions of the primitive. He returned to Cuba in 1959 after Castro’s revolution, which he supported and made the subject of his final novel, *La consagración de la primavera* [*The Consecration of Spring*] (1979). In the historical epic novel *El siglo del las luces* [*Explosion in a Cathedral*] (1962), Carpentier demonstrates the influence of the European Enlightenment in the American world. His novel *El Arpa y la Sombra* [*The Harp and the Shadow]* (1979), is an imagined account of Christopher Columbus’s final confessions in the context of a proposal to canonize him in the nineteenth century. Emphasizing Columbus’s abduction of Native Americans and his thwarted plan to enslave them, it was influential in the late-twentieth-century movement to refocus the story of the conquest on the indigenous people Columbus disregarded and displaced. Carpentier’s celebration of the energetic, sumptuous Baroque style and critical elucidation of magical realism influenced the Latin American Boom generation of writers, including Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Carlos Fuentes. His combination of experimental European literary style with distinctively Latin American subjects and sensibility provided a useful critique and a new direction for modernist literature. List of Works Novels  ¡*Ecue-yamba-o*! (*Praised Be God!*) (1933)  *El reino de este mundo* (*The Kingdom of This World*) (1950)  *Los pasos perdidos* (*The Lost Steps*) (1953)  *El acoso* (*The Chase*) (1956)  *El siglo de las luces* (*Explosion in a Cathedral*) (1962)  *Concierto barroco* (*Concierto Barroco*) (1974)  *El recurso del método* (*Reasons of State*) (1974)  *El Harpa y la sombre* (*The Harp and the Shadow*) (1979)  *La consagración de la primavera* (*The Consecration of Spring*) (1979)  Short Story Collections  *Guerra del tiempo* (*War of Time*) (1958)  Non-Fiction Books *La musica en Cuba* (*The Music of Cuba*) (1946) |
| Further reading:  (Echevarría) Internet Resources (Fundación Alejo Carpentier Homepage) Potential Image Sources Photo of Alejo Carpentier (Carpentier\_79.jpeg) available <http://ulfandersen.photoshelter.com/image/I0000xlz49_R0iQI> Copyright Andersen/Solo  (Unfortunately, the image is copyrighted under Andersen/Solo, and requires an account access to download. Image cannot be saved to hard drive in any usable format) |