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# The Symphony, Rhythm, and Identity in *The Kingdom of This World*

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ABSTRACT

Among other things, the Cuban author Alejo Carpentier is well known for his book, *Music in Cuba*, and for his symphonically structured work, *The Chase*. With that in mind, this essay takes the position that his earlier novel *The Kingdom of This World* is structured as a symphony. This study elaborates on why this novel is a symphony, both structurally and thematically, and how Carpentier chose the Vodou drums and chants to create rhythm. By doing this, the author creates a musical duality that mirrors his belief about Latin American identity. Identity for Carpentier means that we are forever between two worlds, such as those alluded to by the symphony (Europe) and first age rhythms (First Age cultures). The only "real" escape from this continuum is if we have the power to transform ourselves like Ti Noël at the end of the novel.

KEYWORDS: Symphony, identity, musical novel

RESUMEN

Entre otros motivos, el autor cubano Alejo Carpentier es conocido por su libro *La música en Cuba*, y por la estructura sinfónica de la obra *El acoso*. Con esto en mente, este ensayo argumenta que su novela anterior, *El reino de este mundo*, se estructura como una sinfonía. Este estudio explora de qué manera esta obra es una sinfonía, tanto temática como estructuralmente, y cómo es que Carpentier utiliza los cantos al son de los tambores del vudú para darle ritmo a la novela. Así, el autor crea una dualidad musical que refleja su concepción sobre la identidad latinoamericana. Para Carpentier la identidad latinoamericana significa que estamos por siempre entre dos mundos, como aquellos aludidos por la sinfonía europea y los ritmos de las culturas originarias. El único escape posible a este continuo se produce solo si tenemos la capacidad de transformarnos como lo hace Ti Nöel al final de la novela.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Sinfonía, identidad, novela musical

1 Nathan King received his PhD in Humanities- Studies in Literature from the University of Texas at Dallas in 2019. His dissertation, *A Dialogic Reading of Alejo Carpentier's The Kingdom of This World*, focused on the intersection of history, music, and identity in Carpentier's novel. He currently teaches at North Central Texas College.

The comparison between music and literature in Cuban author Alejo Carpentier's work is nothing new. His 1953 novel, *The Lost Steps*, has been studied for its relationship to identity with side notes dedicated to the musical references, but more importantly his 1956 novella, *The Chase*, has been studied solely as a musical novel as it coincides with Beethoven's *Eroica Symphony*.[2] These observations make full sense when we consider that he was a musicologist of note who wrote numerous essays, including "Of Folkloric Music," and a well-known book, *Music in Cuba*.[3] Although the essays and the book were written at different times of his career, they both shed light on the important role of music in Carpentier's fiction and yet, to my knowledge, they have never been read alongside his well-known 1949 novel, *The Kingdom of this World*. "Of Folkloric Music" examines how the ideas of folklore and nationalism work in concert to answer a question of personal and collective identity, "who am I?"[4] The Cuban author groups these concepts together because "the nationalist sonority" is a "necessary identifying element of the Latin American composer"(Carpentier, *Tientos* 31).[5] In his essay, Carpentier wants the Latin American composer to look at folkloric elements within their respective countries in order to find a way to integrate them into the great classical forms of the sonata, symphony, and concerto, while retaining their original characteristics. Out of this process comes a musical product that reflects a particular country's national identity. I believe that the Cuban author has similarly created a musical novel with his 1949 historically inspired work, *The Kingdom of This World*.[6]

2 Emil Volek and Helmy F. Giacoman both determined, in separate essays, that *The Chase* was a literary rendition of Beethoven's Eroica Symphony. For both essays, see Giacoman, Helmy. *Homenaje a Alejo Carpentier: variaciones interpretativas en torno a su obra.* Las Americas Publishing Company, 1970.

3 Essay title is my translation of "Del folklorismo musical" in *Tientos, Diferencias, y Otros Ensayos*.

4 Carpentier compares his musicological work to that of Heitor Villa-Lobos, the Brazilian composer famous for his nationalist efforts. Carpentier uses Villa-Lobos's essay, "El folklore soy yo [Folklore is me]" as an outlet to begin his larger discussion on nationalism and folklore. For the full essay, see Alejo Carpentier. *Tientos, Diferencias Y Otros Ensayos*. Plaza & Janes Literaria, 1987, pp. 29-39.

5 The phrases in quotation are my translation of the essay as it is at present an untranslated work.

6 For this paper, I have chosen to use the translation of *El Reino de Este Mundo*, which is known as the *The Kingdom of This World*. I have done this because the scope of this project is intended to reach beyond the Spanish-speaking Caribbean. Furthermore, I believe the translation accurately captures the majority of what I see in Carpentier's novel; however, when necessary, I use the original Spanish text to make my point clear. The novel will be referred to as *Kingdom* from this point onwards. For the full text translation, see Alejo Carpentier. *The Kingdom of This World*. Translated by Harriet De Onís, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006.

As it opens, the reader is first confronted with French colonial slavery, then with a slave rebellion, and thirdly, with what appears to be a moment of freedom for the slaves. However, freedom is short-lived, as a former slave Henri Christophe (who did, in fact, rule the northern part of Haiti from 1806-1820) enslaves his own people. After his death, freedom is again short-lived as the novel ends with the Haitian people enslaved by the Republican Surveyors [this section of the novel refers to the time of Jean Pierre Boyer, who was elected in 1819 but ruled all of Haiti from 1822-1843, and whose Rural Code favored mulatto "elites at the expense of others" (Weinstein and Segal 19)]. Since this retelling takes place in four parts, I contend that the novel is constructed as a four-part symphonic work, and that it is composed of variously depicted "first age" rhythmic elements such as drums and chants. On the surface this appears to be a synthesis of musical forms, but by constructing this work in such a manner, Carpentier conveys his own personal two-fold view of Latin American identity to readers, one that is derived from his life spent between countries and languages. As a result, the author believes that to live in the Americas is to always be European and American, and at the same time never fully belonging to either culture. In his view, there is no fusion of these opposing cultures. Since this conclusion contradicts the commonly held view of Alejo Carpentier's 1949 novel as one that notes the forward progress of civilization, there are several questions that come to mind: why did Carpentier structure this work as a symphony and not one of the other classical European forms like the opera? How is it symphonic? What are "first age" rhythmic elements? How does this particular musical formulation illustrate the Cuban author's own view of identity? Lastly, what are readers supposed to take away from this view of identity? To begin to answer these questions, I will first shed light on why I believe that Carpentier chose the symphony.

The most obvious reason as to why I think that Carpentier may have fashioned Kingdom after a symphony comes from his 1956 work, The Chase. This is a short novel that he claimed was written like the musical score of Beethoven's Eroica, and, in fact, Emil Volek and Helmy F. Giacoman have both analyzed this work and concluded that it follows the musical structures of a

sonata and a symphony. I take this is as proof for the Cuban author's capacity to construct a symphonically structured fictional work. Therefore, it is not that big of a critical leap to suggest that the author's previous novel, *The Lost Steps*, is also composed in the same manner. I am confident that this is the case, and Roland Bush has presented findings that affirm this claim.

This author calls *The Lost Steps* "a symphonic novel" because of "specific musical references, adaptations, and patterns" that create "analogies between the theme of artistic growth and identity and the evolutionary form of the novel as a whole" (130). For these reasons, it is a symphonic novel in structure; however, Bush does not stop his analysis there as he links the symphonic qualities of The Lost Steps to another musical form, the fugue, to which Carpentier alludes both in terms of the musical genre and as a figuration of flight or escape which is what this term means in Spanish (130).[7] He bases this conclusion about time on the second meaning of "fuga" because the narrator desires to escape from his present situation in New York to search for rare musical instruments in South America (131). Of concern to my argument is that he concludes that *The Lost Steps* is, in structure, a symphonic novel; this means that two of Carpentier's novels, *The Lost Steps* in 1953 and *The Chase* in 1956, have been associated with the symphony. For the purpose of this paper, I am working from the premise that since these two novels that appeared after *Kingdom* have been linked with the symphony, in some capacity, that Carpentier was fond of the symphonically structured novel, and that this fascination is first found in *Kingdom*. Therefore, I am solely interested in situating *Kingdom* within Carpentier's literary canon, and not in the "symbolic content of music" as Steven Paul Scher suggests about the relationship between music and literature (152). Neither is my aim to evaluate *Kingdom* in the context of musico-literary studies, like that of Calvin S. Brown's *Music and Literature: A Comparison of Arts* which focuses on the

7 Bush concludes that Carpentier "imitate[s] the art of the fugue" (130). In other words, Bush believes that *The Lost Steps* is not a fugue but an imitation. See Roland E. Bush. "The Art of the Fugue": Musical Presence in Alejo Carpentier's "Los Pasos Perdidos." Latin American Music Review / Revista De Música Latinoamericana, vol. 6, no. 2, 1985, pp. 129-151.

influence of music on literature and pays little attention to the structuring force of music in literature as my reading does. By doing this, I am going against the grain of contemporary thinking and carving out my own path in Carpentarian studies, one that I believe will lead to greater insight into how his fictional works are constructed. With that said, this returns me to the question: why did he select the symphony as a structural model for his novels?

Igor Stravinsky, one of Carpentier's favorite composers, presents a plausible answer as to why the Cuban writer chose the symphony and not the opera, another musically complex form. Stravinsky argues that, "of all the musical forms, the one considered the richest from the point of view of development is the symphony" (41).[8] Kingdom easily mirrors the richness typical of the symphony that Stravinsky praises, as there are multiple storylines (Ti Noël, Macandal, Pauline Bonaparte, et. al.) that form the history of Haiti, from the colonial to the Republican era. Additionally, Stravinsky offered further guidance as to the complexity of the symphonic form: "we usually designate by that name [symphony] a composition in several movements, of which one confers upon the whole work its symphonic quality-namely, the symphonic *allegro*, generally placed at the opening of the work and intended to justify its name by fulfilling the requirements of a certain musical dialectic" (41).[9] Stravinsky notes that "the sonata-allegro [...] determines the form" (41). I have no doubt that Carpentier applied these ideas in the construction of *Kingdom*. To help prove this point, I will turn to musicologist and composer Aaron Copland for an explanation of the specific musical terminology regarding the symphony.

Aaron Copland's *What to Listen for in Music* contains sections on the sonata and the symphony that provide the basis for understanding Carpentier's handling of these musical forms

8 Stravinsky makes these remarks in his chapter, "The Phenomenon of Music," where he notes the human ability to love and enjoy music. See Igor Stravinsky. The Poetics of Music: In the Form of Six Lessons. Harvard University Press, 1970.

9 Antonio Benítez Rojo posits that *Kingdom* is a rhapsod, but I believe that he meant the musical form of the rhapsody. See Antonio Benítez Rojo. "Alejo Carpentier: between Here and Over There." *Caribbean Studies*, vol. 27, no. 3-4, 1994, pp. 183-195.

in *Kingdom*.[10] Copland concurs with Stravinsky's belief that the sonata-allegro is the first-movement form of the symphony when he states that, "if you read notes, you can always mechanically find the end of the exposition in any of the classical sonatas or symphonies by looking for the double bars with repeat sign, indicating the formal repetition of the entire section" (150). Since both Stravinsky and Copland declared the first movement of a symphony a sonata, then it stands to reason that Carpentier, being a musicologist, would implement the sonata-allegro in the first movement of his symphonic novel about Haiti. The sonata-allegro follows the very basic formula of A-B-A, or "exposition-development-recapitulation" (Copland 148).[11] Copland breaks the exposition, the part where "the thematic material is exposed," into three parts, tonic-a, dominant-b, and dominant-c.[12] The development section reworks the themes "in new and unsuspected ways" that Copland designates as "foreign keys" and "in the recapitulation, it is heard again in its original setting," that is, in three parts (148). [13]

According to Copland, there are seven thematic changes that form the sonata-allegro (148). Part One of *Kingdom* contains eight chapters, and it seems that this does not meet Copland's criteria for the first-movement form of the symphony; however, chapter I, "The Wax Heads," serves as an introduction, or prelude, to the main characters insofar as in this chapter

10 For a complete history of the sonata, see:
William S. Newman. *The Sonata in the Classic Era*. University of North Carolina Press, 1963.
_____. *The Sonata in the Baroque Era*. W.W. Norton, 1972
_____. *The Sonata since Beethoven*. W.W. Norton, 1972.
For a complete guide to the history of the symphony, see Julian Horton. *The Cambridge Companion to the Symphony*. Cambridge University Press, 2014.

11 Charles Rosen gives a more complicated definition of the sonata: the exposition of the theme in tonic key, modulation of the theme in dominant key, repetition of the exposition, the development, the recapitulation, and an optional coda. For a full discussion of this explanation of the sonata, see Charles Rosen. *The Classical Style: Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven*. The Viking Press, 1971, pp. 30-42.

12 For a full description of basic tonality, see Copland p. 39-48

13 In addition to this brief sketch of the sonata-allegro, I would be remiss to forego an explication of two fundamentals of music: tonic and dominant. Tonic refers to what many people term as the home key. For example, the tonic note of the C major scale will be C, and "at least, in pre-twentieth century music, all melodies centered around the tonic" (Copland 42). Dominant refers "to the fifth degree" of a scale (42). For the C major scale, this is G. The Dominant is the second most important note next to the tonic. It is this type of relationship that I have used in my explanation of the thematic handling of the sonata-allegro in Kingdom.

makes brief allusions to the main themes of identity, music, and history. In order for this to work, I have taken Frederic Jameson's remark that a theme is "a kind of sentence" that works toward the unity of a composition, and, applied it to the characters of Ti Noël and Macandal as if they were musical themes.[14] In the first chapter, these characters are introduced alongside cursory references to both Western music (such as "symphonies of violins") and to African inspired music (for example, "those tales Macandal sing-songed" about "the great kingdoms of Popo, of Arada, of the Nagos, or the Fulah," 7-8). By the end of the novel's first chapter, the reader has the essentials of the major themes, although they have not been developed. This means that these themes will reach their full potential in the sonata-allegro of the next chapter, "The Amputation".

The exposition of the sonata-allegro begins in this chapter about the amputation of Macandal's arm. I consider Ti Noël to be a more important character in terms of the sonata-allegro because he opens the chapter, takes part in the action, and is involved in the aftermath of Macandal's accident. It is for these reasons that I consider Ti Noël to be, what Copland calls, the "dramatic" tonic-a theme of the exposition (148). Furthermore, I consider Ti Noël in the tonic position because he is the most important thematic character in the sonata allegro form of the novel, and I view Macandal in the dominant position since he is the second most important thematic character.

The following chapter, "What the Hand Found," continues with the exposition and develops the dominant-b, or "lyrical," theme of the character, Macandal. Carpentier describes Macandal's curiosity with fungi in lyrical language that expresses "the writer's emotions in an imaginative and beautiful way" ("Lyrical" 482), to show the environment in which fungus grows. The Cuban author writes about fungi: "there were those which smelled of wood rot, of medicine bottles, of cellars, of sickness, pushing through the ground in the shape of ears, ox-tongues, wrinkled excrescences, covered with exudations, opening their striped parasols in damp recesses, the homes of toads that slept or watched with open eyes" (18). The lyricism associated with Macandal continues as he listens

14 For the full essay, see Frederic Jameson. "Transcendence and Movie Music in Mahler." *The Ancients and The Postmoderns: On the Historicity of Forms*. Verso, 2017, pp. 58-120.

to Maman Loi talk of "extraordinary animals that had had human offspring" (19). Throughout the chapter, Macandal is the focus of an action told in lyrical terms and, for these reasons, he occupies the dominant-b, or "lyrical" theme. The exposition ends in the next chapter entitled "The Reckoning," where through Ti Noël's observations, Macandal begins a rebellion by poisoning the cattle; again, Macandal is the center of attention and for this reason, according to Copland's formulation of the exposition, I classify him as the dominant-c theme.

As the narrative develops with the chapter entitled "De Profundis," the plot shifts exactly like the sonata-allegro into the development stage. Regarding this development stage, Aaron Copland asserts that, "in no other form is there a special division reserved for the extension and development of musical material already introduced in a previous section" (151). Copland adds "that the development usually begins with a partial restatement of the first theme in order to remind the listener of the starting point," and the chapter, "De Profundis," includes two references that remind the reader of Ti Noël's thematic importance. The first is the mention of Cap Francais, which opened the story, where readers learned that Ti Noël was a slave. The second is the death of Madam Lenormand de Mézy, the wife of Ti Noël's master. In addition to this indirect restatement of the first theme, the composer "modulates through a series of far-off keys that serve to prepare a sense of homecoming when the original tonality is finally reached at the beginning of the recapitulation" (Copland 151-152).

I would argue that the plantation owners, other colonists, and their response to the forthcoming rebellion are like the foreign keys of the development because the key thematic characters, Ti Noël and Macandal, are not the focus of the material, albeit present in the action. In other words, the purpose of the chapter entitled "De Profundis" is that the minor characters of the novel keep alive in the readers' minds the thematic importance of Ti Noël and Macandal. This is achieved by indirectly referencing Ti Noël (as noted above), and by mentioning Macandal at the close of the chapter. Carpentier writes that, "Macandal, the one-armed, now a *houngan* of the Rada rite, invested with superhuman powers as the result of his possession by the major gods on several occasions, was the Lord of Poison" (30). These brief

references to Ti Noël and Macandal prepare the reader for their thematic return in the recapitulation stage which begins in the next chapter, entitled "The Metamorphoses."

The recapitulation originally served as "a repetition of the exposition" but later composers, especially of the romantic era, altered this pattern because "music became much more dramatic and psychological"; this meant that the complexity of the music called for a different ending, or a conclusion (Copland 152-153).[15] Beginning with "The Metamorphoses," Carpentier follows the later usage of the altered recapitulation and portrays a slightly different Ti Noël as the tonic-a theme; there is only one mention of this character, and the action builds to the moment when Macandal appears to the slaves in a variety of guises including "a green lizard" (35). The slaves knew that they "were nothing but disguises" as Macandal would eventually return, and these prophetic hopes reach their zenith when Ti Noël proclaims, "in that great hour [...] the blood of the whites would run into the brooks, and the Loas, drunk with joy would bury their faces in it and drink until their lungs were full" (36). This moment brings the chapter's preceding action into focus because it moves from the uncertainty of Macandal's return to the actual effects of that return. In other words, Carpentier builds the action of the chapter around the premise that Macandal's return is imminent, and readers are led to this conclusion with multiple references to his supposed animal presence. After this mounting anticipation, Ti Noël advances the idea of this character's return in a revelatory statement that is immediately followed by an allusion to Macandal's return. Since the action builds to Ti Noël's statement, I view him as the tonic-a theme. The result of this series of events is that readers are prepared for what is to come: the reappearance of Macandal as witnessed by Ti Noël.

The next chapter, "Human Guise," announces the return of Macandal, as seen through the eyes of Ti Noël with the sounding of the drums. Here, Carpentier continues the recapitulation portion of the sonata allegro by placing Ti Noël in the role of the tonic-b theme; I believe this character links together the sequence of events that lead to and follow Macandal's return. In this

15 For a full account of the historical development of the sonata in Romantic Era, see William S. Newman. *The Sonata Since Beethoven*. W.W. Norton, 1972.

chapter, readers are led to Macandal's return and subsequently to Ti Noël's observations that "something of [Macandal's] sojourns in mysterious places seemed to cling to him, something, of his successive attires of scales, bristles, fur" (41). Even though this chapter describes Macandal's return and the moments afterward, readers focus their attention on Ti Noël. I believe this because it chronicles how Ti Noël arrived at the celebration in Macandal's honor and subsequently what he thought after Macandal's reappearance; in other words, Ti Noël is in every part of this chapter's narrative action. Since readers concentrate their attention on this character, I consider him to fulfill the role of the tonic-b theme of the recapitulation.

The final chapter in Part One, "The Great Flight," completes the sonata-allegro cycle with the dominant-c theme as seen in Macandal's "death" by fire. After this chapter begins with a scene that describes the forthcoming public execution of Macandal without mentioning his name, the name "Macandal" appears seven times, and for further emphasis he is referred to twice as "the Mandigue"; this repetition heightens the reader's awareness of this character's looming death and in the end, he is executed. Since Macandal is the focus of the chapter, I view him as the dominant-c theme. With this, the recapitulation ends differently than the exposition where Macandal was alive but missing, and now the colonists consider him as dead, although the slaves believe he had "once more outwitted" the whites (46). Carpentier completes the sonata-allegro and, in fact, he utilizes that same form in Part Two and Part Three of the book, with Part Four being the exception as it has only four chapters. Even though the sonata allegro does not continue in Part four, I contend that the previously established thematic coherence of the novel and Kingdom's four-part structure make it akin to a four-part symphony. This ends my discussion of the novel's immediate symphonic structure and leads into my investigation of how Carpentier implemented rhythm in the novel.

*Kingdom* is filled with musical examples that refer to or represent the ancient nations of Africa, a notion that Carpentier makes clear with continued references to the "kingdoms of Popo, of Arad, of the Nagos, or of the Fulah" (7). My analysis deals with rhythms that represent or belong to societies that archaeologists have deemed as prehistorical. Prehistory is "that portion of

human history that extends to around 2.5 million years ago, the appearance of the first human (Oldowa) stone-tool technology and finishes with the creation of written documents and archives (or history)" (Fagan 8). I have chosen the terms "first age" to serve as a label for the ingrained musicality of Kingdom because it is filled with musical examples that refer to or stand for the ancient nations of Africa that thrived during the period mentioned above. More importantly, I view the terms "first age" as being in line with the way that these references are used in novel; by this I mean that the "kingdoms of Popo, of Arad, of the Nagos, or of the Fulah" are held to an elevated status, as in since they came first, chronologically, they are better and not to the contrary (7).[16]

Often, the language that Carpentier uses to describe these nations has a musical quality that does not subscribe to Western rhythmic structures that are typically part of a symphony. I see this as falling in line with musicologist Kurt Sachs' definition of "additive rhythm" (a particular type of rhythm) that observes that in the natural world "the regular recurrence on which [...] patterns rest is not a certain duration to be divided into equal parts, but rather a grouping (in poetry: foot) composed of longer and shorter elements (in poetry: syllables), such as 2+1, or 3+3+2 units, or any other arrangements of shorts and longs" (25). He concludes "that these aggregates of dissimilar elements cannot be called 'striding'" since "their physiological equivalent is rather the tension and relaxation that we experience in breathing in and out- a motion to and fro which is under normal conditions regular but hardly equal" (25). This definition aligns with famed composer and music critic Aaron Copland's explanation that "both meter and rhythm may be more obviously present at the same time" (31).[17] In other words, meter and rhythm are united as they are in nature. From these two musicological sources, I conclude that additive rhythm does

16 My line of thinking follows the contemporary world historian's definition of civilization as having the "common characteristics of [...] food surpluses, higher population densities, social stratification, systems of taxation, labor specialization, regular trade, and accumulated learning (or knowledge passed down from generation to generation). The list here is not all-inclusive by any means, but it indicates the complexity of the societies that scholars have labeled civilizations" (22). Contemporary world historians "leave aside any value judgements" and do not seek to label any society as better than any other (23). For the full-length definition, see Eugene Berger, et al. *World History: Culture, States, and Societies to 1500*. University of North Georgia Press, 2016, pp. 22-23.

17 In the chapter entitled "Rhythm," Leonard Bernstein comes to the same conclusion as Copland, when he states, "meter is only the groundwork of rhythm" (84).
See Leonard Bernstein. *The Infinite Variety of Music*. Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1968, pp. 83-109.

not follow a set, or artificial, pattern like most Western music does; it can be spontaneous like the chanting and drumming in Kingdom. Carpentier states a similar line of thinking in his 1943 essay, "The Origins of Music and Primitive Music," where he reveals his belief that "[the] chant originated in rhythm and coincided with the emergence of speech" (Chornik 17).[18] This shows that in the years preceding the publication of *Kingdom* that the Cuban author had been thinking about the overlapping nature of speech and music. Therefore, it is not a significant leap of thought to assume that the author implemented these views on music as he wrote *Kingdom*. For the purpose of my analysis, I follow Carpentier's thinking on the overlapping nature of rhythm and speech as well as Sach's definition of "additive rhythm" that observes that the natural world "under normal conditions [is] regular but hardly equal" (25). With this is mind, I proceed from the notion that any linguistic structure, whether it be a paragraph or a sentence, that follows an additive rhythm, and references to or those that represent "first age" cultures (as defined above) are then first age rhythms. Unlike the novel's sonata-allegro that begins in the second chapter of Part One, first age rhythms appear in the opening chapter, "The Wax Heads."

The first chapter begins with Ti Noël: "following his master, who was riding a lighter-limbed sorrel, he crossed the sailors' quarter with its shops smelling of brine, its sailcloth stiffened by the dampness, its hardtack that it took a fist-blow to break, coming out on the main street iridescent at that hour of the morning with the bright checked bandannas of the Negresses on their way home from the market" (3-4).[19] In this sentence, the commas act as musical rests, or caesuras, with the result being that each phrase is equivalent to a bar of music; for example, "following his master, who was riding a lighter-limbed sorrel," equates to two bars of music (3).

18 Chornik uses the manuscript as a point of comparison to contemporaneous musicological trends and how the essay compares with The Lost Steps.
See Katia Chornik. "Reading Music Backwards: Alejo Carpentier's Unpublished Text 'Los Orígenes de La Música Primitiva." International Journal of Cuban Studies, vol. 3, no. 1,
2011, pp. 10-31.

19 Since I see the scope of my research as having implications that reach beyond the Americas, I have opted to use the translation to make most of my musical points clear. However, when needed I will refer to the original text to emphasize a point. The original Spanish of this passage reads: "Siguiendo al amo, que jineteaba un alazán de patas más livianas, habiá atravesado el barrio de la gente marítima, con sus almacenes olientes a salmuera, sus lonas atiesadas por la humedad, sus galletas qua habría que romper con el puño, antes de desembarcar en la Calle Mayor, tornasolada, en esa hora mañanera, por los pañuelos a cuadros de colores vivos de las negras domésticas que volvían del mercado" (29).
See Alejo Carpentier. El reino de este mundo. Lectorum, 2013.

The words within each clause are comparable to the individual notes on the musical staff. For example, C, D, and E are the first three notes of the diatonic scale in C major and the three-word phrase "following his master" could be considered a literary equivalent (Copland 43; Kingdom 3). By using this formula, an additive pattern of notes (three + six+ eleven+ six+ nine + twenty-eight) emerges. This example is a first age rhythm because it follows an additive rhythm, and the added musical rest increases the sentence's irregularity.

In addition to individual musical notes, the alliterative verse is comparable to the varied accentual marks used by composers, such as Stravinsky and Mahler. According to Cooper and Grosvenor, "an accent, then, is a stimulus (in a series of stimuli) which is *marked for consciousness* in some way" so that "the difference between accented and unaccented beats lies in the fact that the accented beat is the focal point, the nucleus of the rhythm, around which the unaccented beats are grouped and in relation to which they are heard" (Cooper and Grosvenor 8). I believe that Carpentier creates accented beats through the use of the alliterative "s," "o," and "a" in the original Spanish, "siguiendo al amo, que jineteaba un alazán de patas más livianas, habiá atravesado el barrio de la gente marítima, con sus almacenes olientes a salmuera"; in the translation these sounds are alliterative "l" and "s" sounds, "following his master, who was riding a lighter-limbed sorrel, he crossed the sailors' quarter with its shops smelling of brine, its sailcloth stiffened by the dampness" (*El Reino* 29; *Kingdom* 3-4). The focal point of this passage is the alliterated words and phrases: "lighter-limbed sorrel," "sailors'," "shops" and "sailcloth stiffened"; in Spanish, these are "jineteaba un alazán de patas más livianas," "habiá atravesado el barrio de la gente marítima," and "sus almacenes olientes a salmuera" (*Kingdom* 3-4; *El Reino* 29).[20] These alliterated verses form accented beats that further draw the reader's attention to the rhythmic structure of this sentence.[21] This brief passage has an additive rhythm and accented verses, both of which make it a

20 The translated words "sailor" and "shops" are taken from the more apparent alliterative original, "habiá atravesado el barrio de la gente marítima." My point is that the translation still conveys the alliteration.

21 I have only considered words to be accented where they are readily apparent as in the previous example. While I realize that words have their own stress patterns, I have not considered other poetic devices such as iambic pentameter because the aim of this paper is to show how Carpentier integrated his knowledge of musical forms and rhythms into the construction of *Kingdom* and not to demonstrate his knowledge of poetic forms.
For more about poetic devices, I refer readers to Paul Fussell. *Poetic Meter and Poetic Form*. Random House, 1969.

first age rhythm. Besides the example found in this first sentence, there is another more obvious recurring rhythmic element, the chant, which Carpentier introduces later in the same opening chapter.

As defined by the dictionary, a chant, is "a short, simple melody, especially one characterized by single notes to which an indefinite number of syllables are intoned, used in singing psalms, canticles, etc., in church services", or "any monotonous song" ("Chant"). In *Kingdom*, there are two types of chanting: words and phrases that mean or represent chanting and direct chanting by the characters. Following immediately after the dialogue, the first type of chanting appears in Chapter One, "The Wax Heads." The character Ti Noël remembers "those tales Macandal sing-songed in the sugar mill while the oldest horse on the Lenormand de Mézy plantation turned the cylinders" (6-7). The word "sing-songed" may be a synonym for chanting, and, in fact, the original Spanish conjugates the verb "salmodiar," which means "to chant," into the past tense "salmodiaba" or chanted (El Reino 31). It should also be noted that the phrase "turned the cylinder" reinforces the idea of repetition inherent in a chant; the implication is that the cylinder continually repeats the same motion over time just as chanting reproduces the same words, over and over.

To enhance the feeling of chanting associated with "sing-songed" Carpentier recounts the greatness of the former African "kingdoms of Popo, of Arad, of the Nagos, or of the Fulah" and, more specifically, he details the historical figure, Kankan Muza, who was the "founder of the invincible empire of the Mandigues, whose horses went adorned with silver coins and embroidered housings, their neighs louder than the clang of iron, bearing thunder of two drumheads that hung from their necks" (7).[22] From this brief quote it can be seen that Carpentier

22 Kankan Musa, or Mansa Musa, was a real African Mandinkan king who ruled Mali in the early 14th century; Mali was established by Mandinka king in 1230 (183). He is known for making Timbuktu into a center of learning. Despite being a Muslim, Mansa Musa allowed the practice of "indigenous religions centered on ancestral and village gods or spirits" (183). Since he "led the largest army in West Africa, numbering perhaps 100,000 soldiers and 10,000 cavalry [...] he soon came to be known as the new Lion of Mali, or Musa the Magnificient" (183). By 1324, Mali "was not only the largest empire in Africa but the second largest in the world, after the Mongol Empire in Asia" (183). Carpentier's depiction of Kankan Muza pays homage to his historical significance. See Mounir Farah. *Lifelines in World History.* Sharpe Reference, 2012.
For a more detailed account of Mansa Musa, see Akbarali Thobhani. *Mansa Musa: The Golden King of Ancient Mali.* Kendall/Hunt Pub, 1998. For a history of Timbuktu, see Marq De Villiers and Sheila Hirtle. *Timbuktu: The Sahara's Fabled City of Gold.* Walker & Co, 2007.

wanted the reader to connect the previously mentioned chant with the African cultures, especially the Mandigue, and, at the same time, he further extends the musical connection via the drums that appear for the first time through the membrane cover of the drumhead.[23] For the remainder of the novel, chants and drums inhabit the text to the point that their appearance typically signals a forthcoming change in the narrative action.[24] Critic Pablo Montoya notes that, "it is understood that the drums are a preview here, a germ that plays an important role in future actions" (76).[25] After this passage, the novel returns to Ti Noël and his master, and not long after that "The Wax Heads" ends. This first chapter illustrates that the novel is a symphony comprised of "first age rhythms" because it contains the basic first age musical framework from which the rest of the novel builds upon. With this in mind, I will only give select examples from each major section of book from this point onward.

Towards the end of Part One, in the chapter entitled, "Human Guise," readers encounter a multitude of musical references that describe the slaves' actions. For example, one sentence alone contains several examples: "for more than two hours the drums had been booming under the light of the torches, the women's shoulders kept moving rhythmically in a gesture as though washing clothes, when a momentary tremor shook the voices of the singers" (41). To illustrate the importance of this sentence, and to ensure that I am not only relying on the translation to prove my point, I refer readers to the original: "hacía más de dos horas que los parches tronaban a la luz de las antorchas y que las mujeres repetían en compás de hombros su continuo gesto de lava-lava, cuando estremecimiento hizo temblar por un instante la voz de los cantadores" (Reino 46). Along with the musical image of the drums, Carpentier's verb choice—"had been booming" in the translation and "tronaban" in the original— can be linked to the primordial sounds of nature, or,

23 The dictionary defines a drumhead as "the membrane stretched upon a drum" (www.dictionary.com/browse/drumhead).

24 Anke Birkenmaier interprets the Vodou chants in this novel as necessary for understanding Carpentier's version of magical realism, the marvelous real. She argues that Carpentier's argument for magical realism in this novel (and in Haiti) comes from his understanding of the interconnectedness of Vodou, dancing, and music.
See Anke Birkenmaier. "Carpentier y El Bureau d'ethnologie Haitienne: Los Cantos Vodú de El Reino de Este Mundo." *Foro Hispánico*, vol. 25, 2004, pp. 17–33.

25 This is my translation of the original. For the full chapter, see Pablo Montoya. *La música en la obra de Alejo Carpentier*. La Carreta, 2013, pp. 75-90.

specifically to thunder which creates a booming sound.[26] In addition, the women's dance-like movement is described by the adjective "rhythmically," or as the original reads "repetían en compás" which can be more literally translated as they repeated in beat.[27] These words add to the musicality of the drums. Harold Courlander demonstrates that "dancing touches on virtually every aspect of life in Haiti" including "the supplication of the [Vodou] loa […] planting, harvesting […] and ordinary social gatherings"; the women dancing "rhythmically" while they washed clothes is an "ordinary social" gathering (131). Once these rhythmic depictions are clearly conveyed to the reader, Carpentier launches forth with the return of the rebellion leader: "Behind the Mother Drum rose the human figure of Macandal. The Mandigue Macandal. The man Macandal. The One-Armed. The Restored. The Transformed" (41).

In this passage, the link between first age music, Macandal, and the rest of the slaves becomes clear. Music, in this case the drums, is a part of Vodou celebrations. Musicologist Gage Averill notes that Vodou ceremonies like this one often contain three drums, the largest of which is the mother drum (Schecter 146). The preposition "behind" in the opening sentence tells readers that this "Mother Drum" is large enough to conceal a human, and in fact, by doing so Carpentier accurately depicts Vodou drumming because this drum is "held at an angle by a seated assistant"; in other words, the assistant is hidden from the audience's view by the drum (146). This mother drum is also used for "spirit invocation" and thus its placement here to invoke Macandal is accurate because the slaves wished for the return of their leader in body and spirit (Schecter 146). Not long after this reference to the drums, Carpentier returns to the image of women dancing: "The women passed before him, and

26 Tronaban is the indicative imperfect conjugation of the verb, tronar. The verb can mean to thunder or to boom. See Biblograf, S. A., and National Textbook Company. *Vox Compact Spanish and English Dictionary: English-Spanish/Spanish-English*. National Textbook Co., 1994, p. 259.

27 I have taken the word "compás" to mean "time" as it relates to music and "to keep/beat time." See Vox, p. 65.

passed again, their bodies swaying to the rhythm of the dance. But the air was so fraught with questions that suddenly, without previous agreement, all the voices joined in a *yenvaló* solemnly howled above the drumbeats" (41). Carpentier uses this scene to show the festive (and very rhythmically inspired) atmosphere that surrounds the return of the savior, Macandal, and then suddenly:

After the wait of four years the chant became the recital of boundless suffering:

*Yenvaló moin Papa!*

*Moin pas mangé q'm bambo*

*Yenvaló, Papap, yenvaló moin!*

*Ou vlai moin lavé chaudier,*

*Yenvaló mon?* (41)

The Cuban author explicitly indicates that this is a chant before placing it in italics so that it stands out from the rest of the text. In this passage, Yenvaló, a Haitian Vodou dance that means supplication is the key word, repeated multiple times.[28] According to Harold Courlander, "the Jenvalo, for example is danced with bent back, hands touching the knees […] with a constant interplay between the singers, dancers, and drummers" (129). Courlander adds that, "certain beats of the drum are signals for special movements and postures" and also, "the chorus and leader sing responsively, their parts overlapping in traditional African style" (130). Carpentier's choice of this dance, and his integration of it into a chant are important as it shows that he understood the interconnectivity of Vodou: music, dance, and the religious belief go hand in hand.

Through this chant the slaves seek to invoke the powers that Macandal embodies in an

28 According to Henry Frank, "the Yanvalou is a dance of supplication in honor of Agwe, the deity of the sea and Damballah, the snake god of fertility. In the execution of this dance the worshippers try to mime the undulating movements of a snake and the waves of the sea by moving gracefully, forward and back, their shoulders and the upper part of the body" (Sloat 111).
See Susanna Sloat. *Caribbean Dance from Abakuá to Zouk: How Movement Shapes Identity*. University Press of Florida, 2002.

effort to ease their own suffering and free themselves from bondage. Speaking to this idea, Alexis Marquez Rodríguez remarks that "Macandal represents the world of strange and mysterious powers […] that the slaves put to the service of their liberation" (47). The slaves then move into a chorus, which is another form of chanting, questioning how long they "will have to go on washing the vats?" and "oh, father, my father, how long the suffering" (42). Shortly after this chapter, "Human Guise," Part One comes to an end, and the physical figure of Macandal transforms into myth, but not without bringing forth the chants, drums, and rhythms of Vodou that will continue to surface throughout the novel. By the last chapter of Part Two, "Saint Calamity," the colonist's final attempts to quell this slave rebellion fail with the introduction of poisonous snakes and the slaves win their freedom. Thus, Part Two ends with a semblance of hope; however, this hope is short-lived as Part Three reveals a new Haiti, replete with a new master: Henri Christophe. In the waning moments of this ruler, Carpentier creates the most developed scene of first age music in the book.

Towards the end of Part Three in the chapter entitled "Ultima Ratio Regum" readers witness the ruin of Henri Christophe brought on by the drums. The King first calls attention to the drums, rather angrily, as he sees his musicians leaving, and he realizes that "the untuned drums were not playing the prescribed call, but a syncopated tone in three beats produced not by the drumsticks, but by hands against the leather" (136-137). In the next line, Christophe screams, "they are playing the *mandoucouman* ," which is a military song of retreat (137).[29] In the pages following this exclamation, mutiny ensues, and it is revealed that "Henri Christophe had always held himself aloof from the African mystique of the early leaders of the Haitian independence, endeavoring to give his court a thoroughly European air" (139-140). I believe believe that this proclamation highlights the arrogance and ignorance with which the character of Henri Christophe ruled, and how his pride in this fact lead to his death. I concur with Alexis

29 There are multiple sources that indicate this meaning:
See Lizabeth Paravisini-Gebert. *Literature of the Caribbean*. Greenwood Press, 2008, p. 37.
See Peter O. Stummer and Christopher Balme. *Fusion of Cultures*? Rodopi, 1996, p. 308.

Márquez Rodríguez, who notes that "Christophe's kingdom [...] was built thinking only of the white enemy," as he never thought of his own people as the enemy (51).[30] Carpentier emphasizes these facts as the chapter nears the end with a prolonged drumming scene:

> But at that moment the night grew dense with drums. Calling to one another, answering from mountain to mountain, rising from the beaches, issuing from caves, running beneath the trees, descending ravines and riverbends, the drums boomed, the *radas*, the *congos*, the drums of Bouckman, the drums of the Grand Alliances, all the drums of Voodoo. A vast encompassing percussion was advancing on Sans Souci, tightening the circle. A horizon of thunder closing in. A storm whose eye at the moment was the throne without heralds or mace-bearers. (141-142)

This passage suggests the connection between drums and nature and builds upon Henri Christophe's ignorance of the drums that people play in all corners of his land. The opening sentence with the adjective "dense" suggests what is to come by the end of the chapter because the sounds of drums eventually overtake Henri Christophe at Sans Souci; put differently, the sounds of the drums surround the King as though he were in the middle of a dense forest. The opening sentence also indicates that suddenly the drums could be heard whereas before they were absent. The second sentence contains six clauses that place the drums in locations that enlarge their sonority, which means that the sound of the drums is amplified, and the seventh clause, "the drums boomed," indicates that the varied drum placement worked. After this clause, there are five dependent clauses about specific types of drums that extend the metaphor from the generic drum to the specific type such "the drums of Bouckman" (142). The purpose of the five dependent clauses is to emphasize the importance of the drums in Henri Christophe's downfall, and this is achieved through the transference of the drum's sonorous power to nature. The Cuban author achieves this when he writes: "a vast encompassing percussion was advancing on Sans Souci, tightening the circle

30 This is my translation. See Alexis Márquez Rodríguez.*La obra narrativa* de Alejo Carpentier. Universidad de Central Venezuela, 1970, p. 51.

(141-142). In other words, Henri Christophe is surrounded by the sounds of drums. The nouns, "thunder," and "storm," can be seen of as nature's equivalent to the drums. Thunder rumbles through the air with varying degrees of sonority and frequency in a manner akin to how drums are played. In the next sentence, Carpentier extends this image into a full storm similar to a hurricane with a hollow center. For Henri Christophe, these drums are like the destructive force of a hurricane; they will rip his kingdom apart and turn against him.

As Henri Christophe prepares for his end, "the drums were now so close that they seemed to be throbbing there, behind the balustrades of the main entrance, at the foot of the great stone stairway" and as the building is engulfed by fire, Henri Christophe commits suicide with a "shot [that] was almost inaudible because of the proximity of the drums" (143-144). Carpentier concludes this extended metaphor with a singular percussive act, the pistol shot, amidst a flurry of other drums; this shot can be thought of as a lone drumbeat. Since Christophe's fatal shot stands out from the rest of the drums that populate the chapter, it acts as a musical accent brings the chapter to a close. The drums and drum-related sounds of this chapter, "Ultima Ratio Regum" are the greatest example of how first age rhythms shape the symphonic structure of the novel because they play a vital role in the events leading up to Christophe's suicide, and in fact the King knows that these drums mean that his reign is about to end. Rather than being overtaken by the people with drums, the King ends his life, and the drum-filled chapter ends. Part Three of *Kingdom* closes with Henri Christophe's entombment, and from here I will move to the final chapter of the book, "Agnus Dei," which portrays Ti Noël's lamentations about the island's history.

The final rhythmic example comes from the last chapter entitled, "Agnus Dei" in which Ti Noël attempts to join a flock of geese but is rejected. As he reflects upon his failure as a goose, an irregular rhythm appears in several sentences via the comma and semi-colon:

> It was then that the old man, resuming his human form, had a supremely lucid moment. He lived, for the space of a heartbeat, the finest moments of his life; he glimpsed once more the heroes who had revealed to him the power and fullness of his remote African forebears, making him believe in the possible germinations the future held. He felt countless centuries old. A cosmic weariness, as of a planet weighted with stones, fell upon his shoulders shrunk by so many blows, sweats, revolts. (178)

In the first sentence, the commas provide brief pauses between clauses for a rhythmic effect. In the second compound and complex sentence, the semi-colon acts as a much longer rest than the comma, both visually and musically.[31] Immediately following that is a brief sentence that acts as an accent with an alliterative "s' sound: "he felt countless centuries old"; this is a rendering of the original alliterative Spanish, "se sintió viejo de siglos incontables" (Kingdom 178; Reino 120). The first three sentences work together to create an irregular sense of rhythm because of the varying sentence length, visual rests, and alliteration; by this I mean that the first three sentences are not uniform in length and the last sentence of this passage continues this irregularity.

Within the last sentence, an irregular rhythm of a short beat, longer beat, and longest beat appears via the number of words used; the opening clause is three words, "a cosmic weariness," the following clause is seven words, "as of a planet weighted with stones," and the longest clause is eleven words long, "fell upon his shoulders shrunk by so many blows, sweats, revolts." To make clear that this point of irregularity is present in the text, and not just a product of the translation, I must point out that in the original Spanish, the opening clause is three words, "un cansancio cósmico," the following clause is five words, "de planeta de cargado de piedras," and the longest clause is eleven words long, "caía sobre sus hombros descarnados

31 For this paper, I have only analyzed the grammar that occurs before a period. A period is a complete pause as in the end of a song and as such I have not considered it.

por tanto golpe, sudores, y rebeldías" (Reino 120). If we take these numbers into account, then the result is the highly irregular additive rhythm of three-seven-eleven in the translation and three-five-eleven in the original. Since this is an additive rhythm, it is also a first age rhythm. After this example, the novel ends shortly thereafter. With the novel's end, where does that leave the reader's perception of music and identity?

The four-part symphonic structure of the novel ingeniously reminds readers of the European colonial presence in Haiti, and by extension, in the rest of Spanish America because a historical cycle is depicted in *Kingdom* where Haitian slaves are subjugated to different forms of slavery from the French to Henri Christophe to the Republican surveyors. By all accounts this novel is a symphony of first age rhythms with one exception: Carpentier truncates the repetitious nature of the symphony in the last part by not having a traditional recapitulation. According to Copland, the recapitulation "literally restates more or less" the thematic material from the exposition, or the opening sequence, of the symphony (149).

Had the novel included a true recapitulation, it would have seen Ti Noël's return to slavery *because* he was a slave in the beginning section (the exposition) of the novel, but this does not happen. From a musical perspective, like the Romantic composers, Carpentier chose a "new conclusion" to bring closure to the work rather than the traditional recapitulation's restatement of thematic material (Copland 152-153). The cycle of slavery is broken for Ti Noël by his disappearance in a storm, and then he seems to reappear—within the parameters of the Vodou tradition—as a vulture (*Kingdom* 180). In this new symphonic conclusion, the Cuban author seems to be offering readers the message that there is an escape from the perpetual slavery that is depicted in the novel (colonial slavery, Henri Christophe, and the Republican Surveyors) but only with the help of a major force of nature, such as the hurricane, and of Vodou; this is a false hope as Ti Noël is the only character to break the bonds of servitude while his fellow Haitians are still enslaved by the Republican Surveyors. With that, the novel comes to an end with very little change to the plight of the Haitian people.

I believe that Carpentier meant for his novel about Haiti to be taken as a metaphor for

the cycles of oppression and violence that have happened throughout the years in various countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. Thus, by ending the novel in such a fashion he suggests that Latin American identity is both European and non-European, and never fully either. This statement about *Kingdom* appears to follow Angel Rama's view of transculturation which states, "that the current culture of the Latin American community (which is itself [...] in constant evolution) is composed of idiosyncratic values that can be identified as having been active since the remote past" and at the same time "it is a force that acts with facility in situations arising from its own development as well as contributions coming from elsewhere" (19). In other words, Latin American cultures evolved over time and are more than an extension of European ideas with a few imported ideas from elsewhere. However, this idea of transculturation does not fit my reading because I believe that the twofold musicality of the novel (the symphony and first age rhythms) serves the purpose of bringing forth the author's vision of Latin American history and identity, one that is linked to Carpentier's own past.

From the outset of Alejo Carpentier's life, an opposition of space and culture is evident. He was born in Switzerland in 1904 to a French father and a Russian mother, but when he was less than a year old, his family moved to Cuba (Paravisini-Gebert 21). This first move signals the start of Carpentier's lifelong cycle of in-betweenness, one in which he repeatedly returns to Cuba, but never for too long. In 1912, he left Cuba for France to study "musical theory at the Lycée Jeanson de Sailly," but returned to the island in 1921 (21). Later that decade, in 1928, and as a consequence of his forty-day imprisonment for protesting Gerardo Machado's dictatorship, he fled to Paris, where he remained for eleven years (González Echevarría 34). Even during his sojourn in Paris, the author left for periods of time to "Berlin in 1932, to Madrid in 1933, 1934, and again in 1937 with the Cuban delegation to the Congress of Anti-Fascist Intellectuals, and to Havana in 1936 for a brief visit" (34). As can be seen from the early part of his life, although he viewed Cuba as his home, Carpentier always found a way to leave while remaining connected; in a way this is similar to the feeling of alienation that an outsider feels when they come to a new town for the first time. This point is underscored by the fact that Carpentier's French sounded like Spanish, a fact which

made him feel like an outsider in the place that was supposed to be his home.[32] By 1939, at the age of 35, he had already spent eleven years abroad, most of those in France; this means that when he did return to Cuba he was, for a time, an outsider.

In 1939, he returned to Havana, but not for long as he would take a trip to Haiti in 1943 that resulted in his writing *The Kingdom of This World* (97). In 1945, Carpentier moved to Caracas for a "job in Publicidad Ars, an advertising agency," and while in this country he took to two trips to the jungle that inspired him to write *The Lost Steps* (published in 1953) (97). After the Cuban Revolution of 1959, the author returned to the island from Venezuela and pledged his support for the new government led by Fidel Castro; in 1966 he assumed the official government position of Cuban Ambassador to France, and from that point onward France became his official residence until his death in 1980 (Paravisini-Gebert 23). This brief biographical sketch clearly shows that the author's life up to the writing of *Kingdom* and afterwards is filled with eternal returns—he was always a man in between places. I believe that Carpentier's perpetual returns are cast as the symphony and first age rhythms in *Kingdom*. What did Carpentier want us to conclude from this duality, and how does this relate to identity?

I believe that Carpentier meant for readers to recognize that the inescapable fate that the Haitian people of his novel endured (their continued return to forms of slavery) could be a reality for all Latin America unless a major change took place, as in revolution. He wanted the idea that we are forever between two worlds to be fixed in readers' brains, so that a resolution could occur. To achieve the needed effect on the public, he employed the symphony (Europe) and first age rhythms (First Age cultures). Although these forms musically work together, the ideas that they represent are in opposition, and, in turn, form a duality. In the novel, there is no resolution to this duality. There are only moments of hope for a potential resolution such as the one that comes from the non-traditional recapitulation of the symphony that I discussed above. This glimmer of hope is so brief that it is immediately overshadowed by the novel's primary message that our identity is

32 In his psycho-linguistic study, Gustavo Perez Firmat links this speech impediment to Carpentier's relationship with this father. See Gustavo P. Firmat. "Ese idioma: Alejo Carpentier's Tongue-Ties." *Symposium*, vol. 61, no. 3, 2007, pp. 183-198.

forever shaped by an inescapable destiny to always be bound to servitude. Therefore, the only way for a people to change their history is to have a successful revolution that does not revert to any form of slavery. Thinking of the novel in this fashion means that it was (and is) a cautionary tale for readers to beware of their history and avoid repeating it.

My reading of *The Kingdom of This World* forces readers to think of it as something more than a magical realist text. It is a musically structured work that manifests Carpentier's feelings of in-betweenness and, in doing so, it compels readers to question their understanding of history and consequently their own identity. This is revolutionary because it places this novel on the same critical footing as Carpentier's musically structured novella, *The Chase*, and it breaks new ground on how to view this author's take on identity. It is my hope that I will inspire future scholars to examine each of his works with a similar in-depth reading in the hope of discovering that each of this author's novels is founded on a mixture of history and music that portrays the notion of a split identity. Only time will tell if my work serves as a springboard for future advancements in Latin American, Cuban, Caribbean, or Carpentarian studies.

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