

ABSTRACT

The Sacred and the Profane in Alejo Carpentier's La consagración de la primavera

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Alejo Carpentier has always been concerned with a confrontation of two cultures which is linked to his dual perception of time and reality.

This study identifies this link in his last major novel La consagración de la primavera and attempts to form a theory which defines the dual aspect of this reality as the "Absolute" and the "Historical" respectively. It also seeks to show how Carpentier's ideas on this dualism evolve as the oeuvre progresses and his eventual understanding that they are not antithetical but complementary.

The quest for the Absolute is also a dominant feature of Carpentier's fiction. It is overpowering in La consagración de la primavera. To follow it from novel to novel is to trace Carpentier's own development as a novelist. It seems to be a quest that he undertakes himself which reveals itself from time to time in his literature. In La consagración de la primavera this quest is linked to the journey back to the source. Both assume new dimensions as the writer explores them from the angle of revolution, particularly one revolution, the Cuban Revolution; a

new facet to his literature which will also be discussed in relation to the quest for the Absolute in the novel.

Many of Carpentier's old themes and preoccupations converge and seem to find solutions in La consagración de la primavera. This study will also attempt to show how these themes and life-long preoccupations as well as those that emerge for the first time weave themselves surreptitiously into the plot and how Carpentier succeeds in fusing them to emerge with an epic novel that he has dreamed of writing.