This dissertation argues for the potential of an American politics built on identities, cultures, and faith. Works by two Caribbean authors, Alejo Carpentier (1904-1980) and Zora Neale Hurston (1891-1960), provide central connections throughout these considerations while demonstrating how disparate people consider themselves American without losing their differences. Chapter one examines faith as enunciated in Carpentier’s explanation of American Marvelous Realism and as practiced in Hurston’s novels. According to these works, credence in America comes not from governmental attempts at continental unity, which too often leads to domination, but instead arises out of cultural endeavors that transcend political boundaries. Music in the second chapter exemplifies American cultural practice by boldly going where politicians fear to tread, resonating throughout the continent with sounds that typify specific regions while remaining strongly connected to one another. A backbeat, for example, that reveals musical connections between swing and vallenato does not negate the individuality of, respectively, Kansas City or Baranquilla. The third chapter considers Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s employment of Area Studies competencies in studies of Comparative Literature. In this case, specific applications of biology and music history apply to cultural studies of the Americas. Recent studies in genetics that trace similarities in all humans also reveal America as a site of greatest biological differentiation. Following ideas
Alejo Carpentier y Valmont (December 26, 1904 – April 24, 1980) was a Cuban novelist, essayist, and musicologist who greatly influenced Latin American literature during its famous "boom" period. Born in Lausanne, Switzerland, Carpentier grew up in Havana, Cuba, and despite his European birthplace, he strongly self-identified as Cuban throughout his life. He traveled extensively, particularly in France, and to South America and Mexico, where he met prominent members of the Latin American cultural and In 2010, he defended his dissertation, "Not India: In Which Alejo Carpentier and Zora Neale Hurston Finally Discover America," at the University of Alberta in Canada. He has published articles and given talks in English and Spanish on Cultural Studies topics that include film, comics, Japanese Peruvian poetry, and connections between music and literature. More information about Marco Katz Montiel at Wikipedia:
"Las piedras del cielo" (h Zora Neale Hurston. A firsthand account of the weird mysteries and horrors of voodoo. Tell My Horse is an invaluable resource and fascinating guide. Every Tongue Got to Confess is an extensive volume of African American folklore that Zora Neale Hurston collected on her travels through the Gulf States in the late 1920s. The bittersweet and often hilarious tales -- which range from longer narratives about God, the Devil, white folk, and mistaken identity to witty one-liners -- reveal attitudes about faith, love, family, slavery, race, and community. Together, this collection of nearly 500 folktales weaves a vibrant tapestry that celebrates African American life in the rural South and represents a major part of Zora Neale Hurston's litera