Hacettepe University Graduate School of Social Sciences

Department of American Culture and Literature

GILLES DELEUZE AND FÉLIX GUATTARI'S CONCEPT OF MINOR LITERATURE IN ARIEL DORFMAN'S *HEADING SOUTH LOOKING NORTH: A BILINGUAL JOURNEY*, JULIA ALVAREZ'S *SOMETHING TO DECLARE: ESSAYS* AND REINALDO ARENAS'S *BEFORE NIGHT FALLS*

İdil Didem KESKİNER

Master's Thesis

Ankara, 2022

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KABUL VE ONAY

İdil Didem KESKİNER tarafından hazırlanan "Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's Concept of Minor Literature in Ariel Dorfman's *Heading South Looking North: A Bilingual Journey*, Julia Alvarez's *Something to Declare: Essays* and Reinaldo Arenas's *Before Night Falls*" başlıklı bu çalışma, 1 Haziran 2022 tarihinde yapılan savunma sınavı sonucunda başarılı bulunarak jürimiz tarafından yüksek lisans tezi olarak kabul edilmiştir.

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Yukarıdaki imzaların adı geçen öğretim üyelerine ait olduğunu onaylarım.

Prof. Dr. Uğur ÖMÜRGÖNÜLŞEN

Enstitü Müdürü

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ÖZET

KESKİNER, İdil Didem. Ariel Dorfman'ın *Heading South Looking North: A Bilingual Journey*, Julia Alvarez'in *Something to Declare: Essays* ve Reinaldo Arenas'ın *Before Night Falls* Eserlerinde Gilles Deleuze ve Félix Guattari'nin Minör Edebiyat Kavramı, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Ankara, 2022.

Bu tez çalışması Ariel Dorfman'ın *Heading South Looking North: A Bilingual Journey* (1998), Julia Alvarez'in *Something to Declare: Essays* (1998) ve Reinaldo Arenas'ın *Before Night Falls* (1993) isimli öz yaşam öykülerini Gilles Deleuze ve Félix Guattari'nin "minör edebiyat" kavramı doğrultusunda inceler. Minör edebiyat, üç karakteristik özellikle tanımlanır: dilde yersizyurtsuzlaşma, politik olma ve kolektif değer taşıma. Bu tezde incelenecek olan yazarların özyaşam öyküleri memleketleri olan Küba, Dominik Cumhuriyeti ve Şili'de deneyimledikleri baskı, korku ve sürgünün bir ürünüdür. SSCB ve ABD'nin üstünlük yarışında Karayipler ve Latin Amerika'nın jeopolitik değerinin arttığı bu dönemde, yazarlar eserlerinde bir yandan Soğuk Savaş döneminin siyasal karmaşasını yansıtırken, bir yandan da ABD'ye sürgün edilmelerinden dolayı yaşadıkları kimlik bunalımını konu edinir.

Dorfman, Alvarez ve Arenas öz yaşam öykülerinde Soğuk Savaş dönemindeki deneyimlerini anlatarak dili eleştirel bir silah olarak kullanırlar. Ariel Dorfman'ın "yaşam, dil ve ölüm ile uğraşmak" olarak özetlediği, *Heading South Looking North* adlı eserinde, ideolojik bakış açısının zamanla değişiminden dolayı birden fazla kez ana dili İspanyolcadan İngilizceye geçiş yapar. Alvarez ise denemelerinde, ailesinin ABD'ye olan sürgününü "İngilizceye ayak basma" olarak tanımlar. Asimilasyon sürecinde kimlik bölünmüşlüğünü kaleminde bulduğu güç ile onarır. *Before Night Falls*'da ise Arenas kendisini sürgün eden rejimi protesto ederken ne ABD ne de Küba'da kabul gören eşcinsel kimliğini yazını ile özgürleştirir. Bununla birlikte, bu öz yaşam öyküleri Soğuk Savaş döneminde ülkelerine yönelik uygulanan dış politikayı eleştirel olarak ele alır. Eserlerdeki anlatıcı benler, kendileriyle aynı askeri diktatörlük altında acı çekmiş insanların sesi olur. Böylelikle, kişisel deneyimlerini ve korkularını yazıya döken Dorfman, Alvarez ve Arenas doğdukları ülkeler ve ABD arasında bir köprü olan kimlikleriyle yazarlıklarını kullanarak uzlaşırlar.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Sürgün, Soğuk Savaş, Ariel Dorfman, Julia Alvarez, Reinaldo Arenas, minör edebiyat, etnik edebiyat

ABSTRACT

KESKİNER, İdil Didem. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's Concept of Minor Literature in Ariel Dorfman's *Heading South Looking North: A Bilingual Journey*, Julia Alvarez's *Something to Declare: Essays* and Reinaldo Arenas's *Before Night Falls*, Master’s Thesis, Ankara, 2022.

This study aims to examine Ariel Dorfman’s *Heading South Looking North: A Bilingual Journey* (1998), Julia Alvarez’s *Something to Declare: Essays* (1998) and Reinaldo Arenas’s *Before Night Falls* (1993) within the framework of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari’s concept of minor literature. This concept is defined through three characteristics: deterritorialization of language, the political element, and the collective value. In their life narratives, the writers tell their experiences of oppression, fear and eventually forced exile from Cuba, Dominican Republic, and Chile, respectively. As their journeys of exile are shaped by the political turmoil during the Cold War and since the Caribbean and Latin America became the very regions that the Soviet Union and the United States used to establish superiority, their exile in North America causes an identity crisis.

Through their life writings, Dorfman, Alvarez, and Arenas narrate their experiences in the Cold War era by using language as a critical weapon. In *Heading South Looking North*, which he summarizes as “dealing with life, language and death,” Ariel Dorfman makes shifts from his native language, Spanish to English as his ideological perspective changes through time. In her collection of essays, Alvarez defines her family’s exile to the United States as “landing in English.” In the process of assimilation, she reunifies her identity with the power she finds in writing. In *Before Night Falls*, Arenas uses writing as a protest against the regime that sends him into exile and as an act of liberation both in the United States and Cuba, where he is restrained as a gay writer. All of these works contain criticism of U.S. foreign policies that were backed by the right-wing governments in their countries during the Cold War. Their narrating “I”s also become the voice of people who have suffered under the same military dictatorships. Hence, via their writings, Dorfman, Alvarez and Arenas come to terms with their identities.

Keywords: exile, Cold War, Ariel Dorfman, Julia Alvarez, Reinaldo Arenas, minor literature, ethnic literature

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INTRODUCTION

The works analyzed in this study, the life writings, *Heading South Looking North: A Bilingual Journey* (1998) by Ariel Dorfman, *Something to Declare: Essays* (1998) by Julia Alvarez, and *Before Night Falls* (1993) by Reinaldo Arenas reflect major changes in authors' lives as consequences of the Cold War. Displaced from Chile, the Dominican Republic, and Cuba, Ariel Dorfman, Julia Alvarez, and Reinaldo Arenas give an account of their exiles to the United States and how it has affected their writings. Obligated to maintain their lives in the host country, the narratives of these authors become representations of this necessity.

In *Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature* (1986), Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari argue that "if the writer is in the margins or completely outside his or her fragile community, this situation allows the writer all the more the possibility to express another possible community and to forge the means for another consciousness and another sensibility" (17). What Deleuze and Guattari describe as "a new expressivity, new flexibility, a new intensity" is a result of the exiles from the native country and these life narratives become part of the minor literature.

To start with, Dorfman, Alvarez and Arenas experience not only a territorial loss but also a linguistic loss. As these writers try to compensate for the separation from their motherlands, they intend to reconnect with their roots through language. Since their territorial consciousness is shaken because of exile, the only chance of their placement is through writing. Deleuze and Guattari refer to this displacement as the "deterritorialization of language" (Deleuze and Guattari 18). While the act of writing appears as a method of coping with the dislocation and disorientation in the host land, the writers try to reconcile with their exilic status. Edward Said further confirms this idea by saying that writers who attempt to live according to new cultural norms in the host country contain an "urgent need to reconstitute their broken lives" through writing (2000,183).

Narrating their personal experiences, Dorfman, Alvarez and Arenas also testify against the repressive governments of the Cold War from their subjective lenses. As they were politically active and critical of the Cold War, being under the surveillance and control of the repressive governments is a unifying thread among their works. Throughout their life narratives, they develop a political identity and become increasingly more aware of the political environment. Starting with the influence of their parents' opinions, the authors differentiate between the dominant and the subaltern[1]. By the time they are exiled to the United States, their identities are divided by the fight over political and hemispheric dominance. This political engagement constitutes another important aspect of Deleuze and Guattari's concept of minor literature.

Appointing themselves as the "subaltern," Dorfman, Alvarez and Arenas tell the story of how they have survived the dictators in their countries, Augusto Pinochet in Chile, Rafael Trujillo in the Dominican Republic, and Fidel Castro in Cuba. While conducting their personal experiences, not only do they narrate an individual uprising against the coercive rules, but they also include a voice of the cultural body in the Caribbean and Latin America. To accomplish this, the authors give "a voice to an entire class of people whose history [was] ignored" (Nance 1). Thus, they use a multivocal quality with an urge to reflect the truth through an individualistic narrative.

In *Heading South Looking North* (1998), Ariel Dorfman chronicles the intellectual youth of Chile before the 1973 Coup, the counterrevolutionary power they had, and Salvador Allende's fall followed by the United States-backed Augusto Pinochet's regime. Escaping from the Dominican Republic at a very young age, Julia Alvarez is haunted by the memories of the dictatorship, which she mentions not only in her collection of essays but also in many of her fictional works. However, instead of putting herself in the

[1] Coined by the historian Ranajit Guha, "subaltern" as a concept is used as "a name for the general attribute of subordination … whether it is expressed in terms of class, caste, age, gender, and office or in any other way" (Guha and Spivak "Preface" 35). In the discourse of interconnection between the countries in the Western Hemisphere, the term is used as an attribution for the Latin American and Caribbean countries' cultural, political, and economic submission to the power of the United States. Moreover, both politically and economically, in the Western Hemisphere, the concept of subalternity shows the lack of "the power of (self) representation" due to the overwhelming influence of the dominant country (Beverley "The Margin at the Center" 27).

spotlight, in her fiction, especially in *In the Time of Butterflies* (1994) and *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents* (1991), Alvarez exposes Rafael Trujillo's chauvinistic regime through the narrative of the famous Mirabal Sisters and her fictional characters. On the other hand, Reinaldo Arenas's life can be taken as a representative for a larger historical reality, which employed institutionalized homophobia and the harsh consequences of the post-Revolutionary hypermasculinity in Cuba. Due to these facts, their experiences become "representative[s] of a larger class" (Nance 2) and include multiple voices from their communities who were similarly disfavored in their homelands, and these authors have an urge to speak the truth after years of repression through their works. These works can be referred to as "project[s] of social justice" (Nance 19). Since these authors' consciousness move beyond one singular identity, they blend with others who are like them. Hence, their life narratives harbor collective experiences as well as individual ones.

The selected works in this study become representatives of Deleuze and Guattari's concept of minor literature. Since the comfort of social belonging is attainable for exilic authors neither in the mother country nor in their host country, they reach the authority of self-expression through writings. Deterritorialized from their native culture and language, these displaced authors who discovered the power of writing, try to consolidate their fragmented identities through their works.

THE UNITED STATES IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE: A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

U.S interference in the internal affairs of the countries has been based on the idea of preserving political stability and securing her mainland. Thus, gradually the isolationist policies gave way to interventionist policies. In his "Farewell Address," George Washington argued for a careful foreign policy:

> It is our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world, so far, I mean, as we are now at liberty to do it, for let me not be understood as capable of patronizing infidelity to existing engagements. I hold the maxim no less applicable to public than to private affairs that honesty is always the best policy. I repeat, therefore, let those engagements be observed in their genuine sense. But in my opinion it is unnecessary and would be unwise to extend them. (27)

Through peripheral protectionism, the United States intended to prevent any attack against herself, including the influences on the countries in the Western Hemisphere. Aiming to be "an all-powerful and repressive hegemon that wielded practically unchallengeable political, economic, military, and cultural power in the hemisphere," (Burnett et al. 3-4) the United States isolated herself to acquire a sense of a lone potency in the hemisphere and shaped her foreign policy accordingly. This process initiated the introduction of the Monroe Doctrine in 1823, which functioned as a warning against the recolonization of Latin American countries which gained their independence recently. The doctrine did not aim to protect the sovereignty of these countries and, as Larman C. Wilson suggests, it justified intervention to prevent foreign interventions and is considered to be a part of self-defense policy of the United States to "prevent European intervention; to promote economic and political stability; to maintain law and order; to protect the lives and property of its citizens-all concomitants of the presumed national security interests of the United States" (325). To sustain stability and order in the hemisphere, the Monroe Doctrine evolved into what Wilson further refers to as "a unilateral policy," (325) which expanded its application through various interpretations, series of corollaries and declarations.

The declaration of the Monroe Doctrine initiated a chain reaction of interventionist acts upon Latin American and Caribbean countries as each following president after James Monroe altered the Doctrine according to their interpretation. The introduction of Gunboat Diplomacy in 1853 displayed explicit aggressive behavior in the military (especially the naval power) of the United States to assert dominance over the Hemisphere. In 1904 the Roosevelt Corollary finalized political paternalism of the United States over the other countries in the Western Hemisphere and, through these major strategies, secured the periphery of the country. Accordingly, to prevent any conflicts or objections by the countries within the Hemisphere, the United States offered a chance for

economic development and prosperity through what President William H. Taft promoted as Dollar Diplomacy between 1909-1912. Through various kinds of investments in these countries, it was ensured that there would not be any backlashes against these interventions. Economic, political, and later cultural influence around the Western Hemisphere began over the population of Latin America and the Caribbean.

The United States government implemented a more optimistic and amicable environment over the Western Hemisphere but still carried Theodore Roosevelt's "big stick." This term which metaphorically defined the Roosevelt Corollary depended on a warning to the nations in the Western Hemisphere. It also affirmed the United States domination over Latin America and Caribbean countries. Moreover, the period that Roosevelt first used this phrase coincided with the increase in naval armament. During Theodore Roosevelt's presidency, "consisting of 14,000 sailors on 16 battleships and accompanying vessels," the Great White Fleet was sent to navigate around the world for fourteen months, starting from December 16, 1907, to February 22, 1909. It demonstrated the naval power of the United States and lustered Roosevelt's presidential term (theodorerooseveltcenter.org).

When Franklin D. Roosevelt introduced the Good Neighbor Policy in 1933, the relationship between the United States and Latin America and the Caribbean had evolved from unilateral to bilateral. The main goal of this policy was to form a beneficial relationship between the United States and Latin American nations as well as a defense policy which both sides would benefit from. William Appleman Williams puts forward in *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (2009) that Roosevelt's policy required cooperation and collaboration in an unquestioning manner since "its context was defined by the immediate and specific needs of American businessmen and by the long-range objective of a broad integration of the economy of the United States with that of Latin America" (163). Thus, it was a time when the resources of Latin American and the Caribbean were presented to the American economy and the policy served to remind that "good neighbors do not rock the boat" (Williams 170). The implementation of the Good Neighbor Policy enabled the United States to be more involved in the Latin American political and economic affairs and fulfilled the demand for natural resources to provide material wealth in the name of steady neighboring relations. In addition to an economic

alliance, the United States also required these countries to be on the same page with her politically and ideologically.

Thus, when the Cold War competition spread into the Third World between 1945-1989, an unstable climate emerged in the Western Hemisphere, which the United States felt the need to stabilize through setting its hegemonic dominance. The implementation of the Rio Pact in 1947 assured a mutual defense policy against communism within the Western Hemisphere. When the ideological warfare between the United States and the communist forces in the East increased in time, the institutionalized American dominance in the Western Hemisphere was about to be tested with ideological polarization.

As the Cuban Revolution in 1953 became a turning point in this period, rather than taking on a friendly approach to Latin America and Caribbean, the United States continued the advantages of the hemispheric dominance, and both escalated the amount of pressure on these countries and paved the way for the emergence of a primary threat to herself called "yankeephobia" in the Western Hemisphere. While the Soviet Union challenged the United States concerning economic and political justice, the United States was obligated to adopt a more friendly approach to Latin America and the Caribbean through offerings of foreign aid at first. However, when disappointed by the Cuban Revolution, she obtained a more hostile attitude against the countries in the Hemisphere. As Hal Brands affirms, "For the United States, this [polarization] meant showing that democracy and liberal capitalism could serve as a path to wealth and political stability. For Moscow, it meant proving that state-directed socialism could bring about economic equity and social justice" (21-22). Attempting to attract these countries to obtain loyalty against the alleged hostile aggression from the Soviet Union, the United States was determined to preserve stability in the Western Hemisphere. As a result, she went into a sharp conflict with the Soviets which assumed that Cuba was "the key that unlocked the door to the Third World" (Brands 29). Thus, the two hemispheric agendas of these superpowers collided in the Third World countries and increased the pressure on the United States to exert power on Latin America and the Caribbean.

After the armed forces led by the communist leader Fidel Castro overthrew the government of Fulgencio Batista in 1959, the new Cuban government was immediately perceived as a “permanent thorn in the side of American governments” (Loveman 286). As the major challenge in the Hemisphere, the political agenda was shaped according to the proximity of the communist forces. While the first secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union Nikita Khrushchev declared their support for “wars of liberation” around the world in 1961, the United States followed more pragmatic and eclectic methods. The United States considered the fact that the new Cuban government was a presider transmitting communist ideology to the Third World. Brian Loveman details the major political and economic strategies of the United States to change the turn of events in her favor by stating:

> The United States could support military dictatorships, masked by the legal fiction of periodic elections … or outright “salvationist” military juntas that promised to rescue their countries from the terrors of international Marxism, with little or no pretense of democratic legitimation. (292)

Intending to actualize all things necessary to prevent Communism from spreading in the Western Hemisphere, the interventionist policies that the United States would follow in her backyard contradicted with its primary aim to bring democratic methods to the same countries. Ironically, the promotion of being the bearer of seeds of democracy and justice contradicts with the main ideology behind the Cold War era's foreign policies. During this period, the presidents took action to do “whatever [is] necessary to keep a ‘second Cuba’ from coming to pass” (Brands 47). The United States implemented a similar version of the Marshall Plan for Latin American countries in 1961, which is known as Alliance for Progress. However, Alliance for Progress was not only considered a move of imperial influence on Latin American countries but also as a reason for class inequality and impoverishment in these countries. As Historian Robert L. Scheina argues in *Latin America’s Wars* (2003), “the United States initiated the Alliance for Progress, admittedly only a marginal success, but nonetheless an attack on the underlying cause for revolution—the political, economic, and social ills of Latin America” (422). Since the causes behind these calamities were the results of the agreements between dominant groups in the Third World countries and the United States businesspeople, it is safe to assume that there was animosity towards the North, i.e., the United States:

> The building tensions between East and West coincided with increased class unrest within Latin America influenced in part by the communications revolution. As these internal Latin American tensions evolved into open fighting, U.S. decisions concerning which were Communist controlled and which merely had Communist participation, as well as how near or far from its shores the event, significantly influenced the extent of American involvement. (Scheina 25)

Scheina relates the conflicts in Latin America and the Caribbean with three different reasons that are —"interclass war, extrahemispheric conflicts, and communist initiatives" (22). Accordingly, foreign strategies of the United States changed in order to reverse these conflicts into assets. The engagement with various activities towards "the destruction of . . . existing democracy[ies] in Latin America" resulted in the emergence of several repressive, right-wing governments (Scheina 478-9) to preserve stability and profit on behalf of the United States. Consequently, the fear of a domino-effect in the Hemisphere eventuated the backing of right-winged dictators in these countries. The historian Stephen G. Rabe explains the same practice saying "Dictators, like Trujillo, Fulgencio Batista of Cuba, and Marcos Pérez Jiménez of Venezuela, controlled thirteen of the twenty Latin American republics. The Eisenhower administration found no fault with these tyrants, judging them dependable Cold War allies" (56). Because the hemispheric interventionist policies affected Latin American countries severely, the peripheral protectionism of the United States affected these countries in various ways.

It is important to remember that the intensity of the hegemonic power of the United States varied from one country to another. This amendment in Cuba's new constitution was part of the 1901 Army Appropriations Bill. It stipulated the conditions of American troops' withdrawal from the land after the Spanish-American War in 1898. The amendment, disliked by many Cubans, also stipulated unilateral rights for the United States to intervene in the political affairs of Cuba. However, the Cold War ideology captured Cuba's attention before any prevention can take place.

Until 1958, Fulgencio Batista was supported by the United States government. However, as President Eisenhower was concerned about the leftist thoughts carving a place for themselves in Cuba, Castro's revolution in 1959 enabled the "nationalization of all private and public Cuban businesses, sweeping agrarian seizures, drive toward one-party rule"

(Marley 1040). This declaration exasperated the United States government to take action against any kind of geopolitical change taking place without permission. Hence, the United States executed a landing operation by Cuban exiles who opposed Fidel Castro's revolution, which came to be known as the Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961. Moreover, it became the well-known failure of precautions taken for any kind of leftist bend in the Western Hemisphere.

As the Red Scare heightened in the United States, The Dominican Republic was considered another powerful candidate to fall for communism after Cuba. As a result of the profound dependency on the United States over the years, the Dominican Republic was assumed to be the "primary target of the United States imperialism" (Hoffnung-Garskof 41). From a historical perspective, the United States government attempted several times to purchase Dominican soil in Haiti, and the relations between the United States and the Dominican Republic included military occupations and U.S. interference with internal politics and the economy. During the Cold War, the country became an open ground for any possible outside interference, including Cuban Marxist influence. The intervention in the Dominican Republic escalated by the proximity of the communist threat. Jerome Slater argues that the United States had two major targets for the Dominican Republic:

> 1) to set the precedent and create the machinery for collective inter-American action against dictatorships, which could later be used against the Castro regime; and
>
> 2) to induce a liberalization in the internal Dominican political structure in order to forestall a 'Castro-type revolution' (271).

In this regard, political scientist Abraham F. Lowenthal states that "the United States could not afford and would not permit the imposition in the Dominican Republic of a pro-Castro or pro-communist government" (50). In the case of Dominican Republic's political history, "the main concern has been to prevent the introduction into the Caribbean of any new foreign influence which might oppose the United States" (Lowenthal 44). As a consequence of these arguments, engagement with right-wing extremists as puppet governments was implemented in the Dominican Republic. Instead of providing national sovereignty and freedom of choice, the United States ironically created an inter-American community with conservative leaders. Allegedly supported by the United States, General

Rafael Leonidas Trujillo came to power in 1930 and established an oppressive dictatorship. Trujillo's regime was considered "a product of the classical era of the United States imperialism" (Hoffnung- Garskof 46) and spread terror until his assassination in May 1961.

As for Chile, when Salvador Allende won the presidential elections in 1970, the concern for a second Cuba in the Western Hemisphere escalated again. Unlike Cuba and the Dominican Republic, Chile was more damaging to the American credibility since the socialism behind Allende's ideology was openly accepted and supported. During Allende's presidency, even though the country was economically weak and had a huge amount of foreign debt, growth was sustained, and unemployment decreased. In May of 1965, Lyndon B. Johnson explained the Johnson Doctrine in a televised broadcast as, "the American nations cannot, must not, and will not permit the establishment of another Communist government in the Western Hemisphere" (Johnson 472). Since Chile provided sufficient reasons for following a leftist regime, even though there were no significantly close ties with the Soviet Union, the American government followed Johnson Doctrine, in which he declared that no domestic revolution within the Hemisphere would be tolerated.

For the United States, Allende was not a new subject or a threat, as previously the United States had attempted to block Salvador Allende before he took the chair. Scheina argues that Allende was already considered as an unresolved issue as he states "in Washington, D.C. Allende was an old nemesis of the United States. The Eisenhower administration in 1958 and the Kennedy administration in 1964 had covertly worked to prevent Allende's election as president" (468). Following the footsteps of the previous leaders, President Richard Nixon did not tolerate new Chilean President Salvador Allende, who was backed by Unidad Popular, a coalition that was formed by the majority of leftist parties and "he squeezed the economy by withholding most development assistance, opposing World Bank and IMF loans to Santiago, and discouraging American investors from doing business with Allende" (Qureshi 108).

Until the 1973 Coup, the American government backed various local companies and industries to go on strike and weaken the Chilean government even more. Similar to Cuba's nationalization of resources, the American government was intimidated by the idea of expropriation of copper mines in Chile. As Lubna Z. Qureshi confirms, "Allende knew that his only hope was a resolution of the controversy over the expropriation of the copper mines" (117). Additionally, the United States encouraged the Chilean truck industry to strike against the government to show economic worsening while implementing a credit blockade for Chile. Nevertheless, the non-decreasing support for Allende in Chilean congressional elections in the Fall of 1972 worried the American government even more. Not only the thought of a second Cuba but also the possibility of losing a market for American goods motivated the United States to take action. From Allende's perspective, this was "the economic conflict between his country and the United States-based multinational corporations as a struggle for sovereignty" (123). For this reason, his country's stance had a symbolic meaning for the Latin American and Hispanic Caribbean countries which were solely independent on paper. However, the military coup in 1973, led by the United States-backed military officer, Augusto Pinochet, provided stability and alliance that the United States wanted to have alongside with seventeen years of dictatorship regime, which caused the violation of human rights and caused disappearance and death of many of Chileans (Qureshi 134).

To sum up, the circumstances initiated in the Latin American and the Caribbean within the ideological war proved the fact that these countries were the extensions of the political polarization and hence became the victims of this political unrest. Undertaking the role of caretaker and game-changer role in the Cold War, Cuba acknowledged itself as the new authority which offered a new ideology and a new path against the dominant power in the Hemisphere. As Hal Brands states, "Cuban leaders viewed themselves as liberators, destined to help the exploited nations of Latin America break-free from imperial domination" (36). Prevented by the American government multiple times, Cuba could not reach a political agreement with Washington. Furthermore, the interventionist strategies of Washington caused a powerful backlash in Latin America. In the end, "the Soviet Union, Cuba, and the United States attempted to contain one another but wound up containing themselves" (Brands 64).

The countries that held power to conduct the political scheme of the Cold War did not receive their fair share from all the damage that was given to the rest of the Western Hemisphere. The revelation of this damage occurred thanks to the educated group of the 1960s in Latin America and the Caribbean. As witnesses to damage, exploitation, and torture, many recorded the horrific past of their nation to reach a reconciliation. As Jean Franco suggests “Literature and politics come together in the fantasy of a just society founded in a space cleaned of all prior failures, a fantasy, moreover, that could claim historical antecedents” (Franco 232). The Cold War literature included a confrontation with the post-colonial past and horrific memories of the coup d’états happening within the same period while the authors held hope for reconciliation.

EXILE AND DIASPORA

Attachment to a place is formed in one’s identity starting with birth. As the feeling grows, it is further shaped by social, cultural, and other rooted ideas of the society that one is born into. In his book *Nation and Narration* (1990), Homi Bhabha refers to this state of mind by using the Freudian term “Heimlich,” which refers to one’s territorial embracement. He explains “Heimlich” through a binary opposition as follows:

> the *Heimlich* pleasures of the hearth, the *unheimlich* terror of the space or race of the Other; the comfort of social belonging, the hidden injuries of class; the customs of taste, the powers of political affiliation; the sense of social order, the sensibility of sexuality; the blindness of bureaucracy, the strait insight of institutions; the quality of justice, the common sense of injustice; the language of the law and the parole of the people. (2)

Bhabha’s previous thoughts on the idea of home suggest a settled and accustomed connotation about land, and this idea is closely related to the concept of nationhood that urges people to get attached more to that certain soil. As an idea of transcendental territory in people’s minds, nation means “a system of cultural signification,” (1990, 1) which is also a constant reminder of their identity. In *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays* (2000), Edward Said finds the same correlation between the discourse of

homeliness and the idea of nationalism by stating that nationalism can be defined as “an assertion of belonging in and to a place, a people, a heritage” (182). In other words, this sense of belonging occurs in a certain location that helps one to obtain a territorial consciousness.

However, the bond between a person and the territorial heritage might break for many reasons including forced migration. It should be noted that even though there have been multiple definitions given about the types of migration, such as diaspora, exile, expatriate, refugee, and migrant, as Avtar Brah discusses in her book *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities* (1996), in the post-colonial period, which is assumed to be shaped around 1970s and 80s, the terminology regarding diaspora “overlaps and resonates with meanings of words such as migrant, immigrant, expatriate, refugee, guest worker or exile” and the main point of interest becomes to create “an interpretive frame referencing the economic, political and cultural dimensions of these contemporary forms of migrancy” (183). In his essay, Edward Said defines exile as “the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home” (2012, 180). As the idea of exile can be defined as relocation in an individual’s life under undesired conditions, this forced migration causes disorientation in the identity of the self and severs it from its literal roots.

Similar to Said, Homi Bhabha focuses on the aftermath of forced migration in *The Location of Culture* (1994) and explains it as “the moment of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion” in accordance with “a sense of disorientation” and “a disturbance of direction” that can result in a state of hybridity (1). Nevertheless, this condition facilitates an “interstitial passage between fixed identifications [for] the possibility of cultural hybridity” (4). Deducing the same conclusion about the interconnectedness of the exilic state and hybridity in one’s identity, Femke Stock points out the “focus on (material or symbolic) transnational ties, myths of migration and dreams of return,” which an exile perceives in the state of disarray and “the desires and the (im)possibilities of making oneself at home” (25). In this state of being, the person is not expected to be capable of merging his/her fragmented identity in one piece and composing

his/her presence as a whole. Since the exile "can never be sufficiently present anywhere" (Kaminsky 36), the sense of emptiness is transferred to a diasporic consciousness that attempts to overcome this perception by pouring them down into writing.

Through narrating one's exile, a possibility is given for reaching a reconciliation with the past as well as a settlement in the new world, which offers conformity along with alienation. Hence, as Caren Kaplan suggests, the exile's identity is oppressed with pain and grief, which turn the person into "a romantic figure that can be readily identified and positioned in an aestheticized world of creativity and loss" (143). As this romantic figure has to deal with an intolerable experience, language becomes a key actor to express emotions and the fragmented identity. Lea Ramsdell comments on this issue by focusing on Latino writers saying, "They cannot conceive of telling their life stories without putting the spotlight on their linguistic affiliations" (167). Ramsdell also affirms that the language appears as "a potential site for forging both private and public identities" (168) and "the linguistic autobiography as a genre appeals to those *displaced, exiled* or otherwise marked as 'other' because of their linguistic heritage" (168, emphasis personal). The process of changing from being monolingual to bilingual requires strength on the part of the exile to cope with the pain and loss. As these changes on occurring, the identity begins to evolve, and the linguistic alienation gives way to acceptance. The continual movements from one place to another in mind pave a way for habiting in the third space to overcome what Said refers to as "transcendental homelessness" (187). The possibility of a new expressivity known for the displaced individual shows the fact that it is possible to bend the boundaries of nations, languages, and ethnicities.

Adding up to association between the diasporic stand and bending of limitations in writing, Bhabha "equate[s] diaspora with a 'third space' of political identity: one that resists prevailing framings of identity and belonging in both host and homeland settings" (Knott and McLoughlin 92). For this reason, it is possible to claim that the third space provides a unique point of view over course of events since the individual who is forced to migrate from his/her country obtains "an intellectualization of an existential condition" (187). Within the act of forced migration, not only the exile obtains a broader perspective of social and political atmosphere, but also each individual experience reflects a collective

truth of the era. While the exile becomes a witness who has survived, the depictions of his/her surroundings evoke a testimonial voice in his/her narration.

DEFINING MINOR LITERATURE

In *Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature*, a thorough analysis of Franz Kafka led Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari to the question "How many people today live in a language that is not their own? Or no longer "or not yet, even know their own and know poorly the major language that they are forced to serve?" (9). Both Deleuze and Guattari believed that Kafka's works not only manifested an Oedipal syndrome that occurred in Kafka's personal life or philosophical thoughts but were also the characteristics of a unique form of literature that would be known as "minor literature." In the chapter of the work titled "An Exaggerated Oedipus," the authors argue that "the photo of the father, expanded beyond all bounds, will be projected onto the geographic, historical, and political map of the world in order to reach vast regions of it" (4). Deleuze and Guattari note that Kafka was a misunderstood author since the critics focused on the Oedipal syndrome as the major theme in his works. However, according to Deleuze and Guattari, Kafka's work differs from other literary works in regard to his use of language and the context. In "The Impossibility of Translating Franz Kafka," Cynthia Ozick describes the society Franz Kafka lived when he was in Prague and how much this environment affected Kafka himself. She states that,

> Vienna, Berlin, Munich—these pivotal seats of German culture might be far away, but Prague, Bohemia's major city, reflected them all. Here Kafka attended a German university, studied German jurisprudence, worked for a German insurance company, and published in German periodicals. German influence was dominant; in literature it was conspicuous. The Jews of Prague were, by language and preference, German-identified—a minority population within a minority population. (4)

Even though Ozick emphasizes that being able to adopt the German influence in the city did not have a negative impact on Kafka's life, in her article, she focuses on how he was also stigmatized because of his Jewishness. In the article, she explains,

> As a youngster, Kafka had a Czech tutor, but in his academically rigorous German elementary school thirty of the thirty-nine boys in his class were Jews. For Bohemian patriots, Prague's Jews bore a double stigma: they were Germans, resented as cultural and national intruders, and they were Jews. Though the Germans were as unfriendly to the German-speaking Jews as the Czechs were, militant Czech nationalism targeted both groups. (5)

Therefore, it is safe to assume that the writer was stuck in between as he did not quite feel belonging to both communities. To comment on this, Ozick shares Kafka's letter to Max Brod, another Czech German-speaking Jewish writer:

> In a letter to Brod, Kafka described Jews who wrote in German (he could hardly exclude himself) as trapped beasts: "Their hind legs were still stuck in parental Judaism while their forelegs found no purchase on new ground." They lived, he said, with three impossibilities— "the impossibility of not writing, the impossibility of writing German, the impossibility of writing differently. You could add," he concluded, "a fourth impossibility, the impossibility of writing." (7)

In the light of Kafka's comments, it should be noted that these metaphorical impossibilities described Kafka's unhomeliness and inability to place himself in a certain location. Ozick explains the situation as follows:

> When he spoke of the impossibility of writing German, he never meant that he was not a master of the language; his wish was to be consecrated to it, like a monk with his beads. His fear was that he was not entitled to German—not that the language did not belong to him but that he did not belong to it. German was both hospitable and inhospitable. He did not feel innocently—uncomplicatedly, unselfconsciously—German. Put it that Kafka wrote German with the passion of an ingenious yet stealthy translator, always aware of the space, however minute, between his fear, or call it his idea of himself, and the deep ease of at-homeness that is every language's consolation. (8)

By the same token, according to Deleuze and Guattari, "Prague German is a deterritorialized language, appropriate for strange and minor uses. (This can be compared in another context to what blacks in America today are able to do with the English language)" (17). The substance of Kafka's narrative, according to the critics, is related to his reclusiveness in the society as a German-speaking Jewish author. His narrative includes his estrangement towards the mainstream culture in Prague and the language. For these reasons, expressing himself in a major language like German, Kafka succeeded in creating a space for himself as a minority. As Dosse confirms, "Kafka had to literally express his alterity and foreignness using the dominant language," (243) and Kafka's

dislocated identity finds a transcendental territory through writing. As a result, the first characteristic Deleuze and Guattari propose for this type of literature was that "it doesn't come from a minor language; it is rather that which a minority constructs with a major language" (16). The use of the major language by a minority provides a non-severed connection both with the heritage of the ancestors and becomes a way of communication in the new territory.

Guattari and Deleuze further suggest that the context of the minor literature includes a political aspect that is inescapable as "its cramped space forces each individual intrigue to connect immediately to politics" (17). Hence, the second characteristic of minor literature stands as "the connection of the individual to a political immediacy" (18). Considering the interchangeability of the concepts of public and personal, in a similar way of thinking, Homi Bhabha supports the idea of "the personal is political" with the remark that "political survivors become the best historical witnesses" (*The Location of Culture* 8) since works of authors are the reflections of the society they have lived in and the experiences they have shared with a community.

Deleuze and Guattari explain the third and the last characteristic of minor literature by making another reference to the connectedness between the individual and the community, stating that "there are no possibilities for an individuated enunciation that would belong to this or that 'master' and that could be separated from a collective enunciation" (17). Within this characteristic, while a personal story is indicated throughout the work, there is also an undeniable voice of other individuals that are intermixed with the narration. A collective history is presented to the readers while a single story of an individual is told. As Deleuze and Guattari further suggest, literature here is a "collective machine of expression" (18). While the readers acknowledge how the storyline is affected by certain events, especially during a social or political phenomenon such as a coup d'état or diaspora, the work is filled with the voices of unknown characters. Françoise Dosse argues that this characteristic is in line with "a political theory of literature articulated around a conception of impersonal writing resulting from a collective arrangement" (243). While the narrative considered as a product solely focused on one individual, it may focus on a larger issue that concerns a

certain group of people as well. Derived from a need to manifest the otherness of the people who share a common trauma, minor literature corresponds to the need to "express the voice of an always-absent people, without, however, becoming their spokesperson" (Dosse 244).

Stuart Hall defines cultural identity as a "shared culture, a sort of collective 'one true self,' hiding inside the many other, more superficial or artificially imposed 'selves,' which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common" (223). Similarly, Deleuze and Guattari argue that a minor work is shaped by a collective consciousness. The identity of the minor writer reflects a collective value because of the ethnic and cultural memories in one's personal space. The preservation of this cultural heritage has great importance for the one displaced from his motherland as memories enable the self to reconstruct itself. Hall continues his argument by saying that the idea of otherness is also triggered by the new world consciousness. This state of otherness in the new world is explained as: "We belong to the marginal, the underdeveloped, the periphery, the 'Other'. We are at the outer edge, the 'rim', of the metropolitan world-always 'South' to someone else's 'El Norte' (Hall 227). Hall further indicates that within this ideological state, the clash between pre-exile and landing in a new world can be used to describe the emergence of a space where the displaced self's sufferings might abate.

Implying a location of constant change and processing, Hall propounds the idea of a Third World which he defines as "the space where the creolisations and assimilations and syncretisms were negotiated" (234). Hall associates this ongoing mechanism of change with diasporic movements and the clash between the hegemonic force and the subaltern in the Western Hemisphere. The diasporic identity functions as a mirror to reflect the cultural legacy of his or her motherland. Therefore, each migratory experience contains the testimony of the circumstances of the past that is considered to be a part of subaltern history. In the light of Hall's definition of cultural identity and Third World, Gugelberger and Kearney define Latin American and Caribbean narratives as "a cultural form of representation, which is forming not only on the margins of the colonial situation but also on the margins of the spoken and written word and as such challenges conventional literary forms for the representation of subaltern peoples" (10). Referred as testimonial

writing, it is derived from the word "testimonio" in Spanish, meaning to witness more likely in a religious sense but, as John Beverley argues, this form of narration is also recognized as "an emergency narrative" or "*a narracion de urgencia*" to talk about "an urgency to communicate, a problem of repression, poverty, subalternity, imprisonment, struggle for survival" ("The Margin at the Center" 14). Hence, while it carries a certain degree of literariness, it is separated from fictional work since its main purpose is telling facts. Although a testimonial narrative focuses on a single story of life, inside it does not disregard the fact that the experience is not personal but collective.

Contributing to the ideas of John Beverley, Georg Gugelberger and Michael Kearney define *testimonio* as a kind of literature "produced by subaltern people on the periphery or the margin of the colonial situation" (4) and emphasize that this form of literariness is unique for people of Latin America since "peoples who were taken as objects are now insisting on being subjects, the distinction between them being that whereas the former is spoken about, the latter speak for themselves" (7). Written by authors whose society has been under the surveillance and control of hegemonic power, testimonial narratives signify an attempt to claim that power back to the subaltern group. As Gugelberger and Kearney emphasize, the self in *testimonio* "cannot be defined in individual terms but only as a collective self-engaged in a common struggle" (9). Although there is only one speaker who has survived, the legacy of others is carried within the flow of the narration.

Being an individualistic form of writing, *testimonio* inhabits a commemoration of the colonial culture and history that belong to the people marginalized within the New World. Therefore, testimonial narrative constitutes a part of minor literature. By revealing the truth behind the hegemonic oppression and the repressive military dictatorships in their motherland, it speaks the truth of other tongues and contains an individualistic need to display one's trauma. Additionally, collaborative acts within the self and the community are included in a definition of personal identity. While the narrator is addressing a political or cultural reality in a literary sense, "the opportunity to remember and document instances of oppression, as well as . . .an evidential tool in the counter-hegemonic struggle" (G. Williams 94) are provided. Therefore, testimonial writing can be considered

as an act of speaking back against the dominant forces while the narrator becomes the representative of the people who have no opportunity to do it themselves.

Yudice comments on this issue saying, “Truth is summoned in the cause of denouncing a present situation of exploitation and oppression or in exorcising and setting aright official history” (17) and considers testimonial works as a “tactic by means of which people engage in the process of self-constitution and survival” (19). Therefore, this form of writing is an attempt by an author who is a witness refusing to remain silent by creating “an exemplary narrative of martyrdom and self-sacrifice, of heroic self-divestment that will serve to inform a future generation of their historical patrimony of revolution, thereby guaranteeing continuity in the counter-hegemonic struggle” (G. Williams 84). Since there is a connection between the abandoned and the migrated land, it can be concluded that the narrative is a signifier of this in-betweenness. On the one hand, it is not possible to renounce the past, but on the other there are recently introduced ideas, cultural representations, and formations to be accepted and adopted. Williams emphasizes this relationship between the motherland and the host within the identity of the narrating “I” as if there is,

> a relationship of ‘mourning’ between the peripheral (postcolonial Latin America) and the metropolitan (the hegemonic West), in which the loss implicit in the death of an original, pre-colonial form of selfhood is both fought against and necessarily commemorated, absorbed into the cultural body of the postcolonial periphery in such a way that metropolitan modernity becomes both an impossible project in Latin America, and yet equally impossible to abandon. (80)

Williams argues that identity of post-colonial Latin America is shaped by the impact of the Hegemonic West and the same implication is valid for testimonial writing. This narrative form represents both sides as well as the circumstances through these years of postcolonialism, both as “a means of healing the wounds of colonization, of (re)membering loss, and incorporating it into future socio-political, counterhegemonic protest (95). Challenging the idea of simultaneous subordination by a dominant foreign power and falsifications of history, the exiled writers demonstrate their protest through their writings and contribute to the collective history. To summarize, what Deleuze and Guattari suggest as the third characteristic of the minor literature correlates with testimonial writing as well.

The authors of the works to be analyzed in this thesis lived in the same historical era and were close witnesses to the oppressive rule of dictators. Although they experienced exile to the United States at different stages of their lives, Dorfman, Alvarez, and Arenas shared the same fate of losing their homes and their political and social freedom. However, what differentiated them from the rest of the exiles during the Cold War era was the fact that they also lost connection with the language of their motherland that they remained bonded. They were deterritorialized from the language in which they found refuge. Narratives of these authors reflect a communal scar from the tyrannical rule brought by a hegemonic state. Hence, their narratives become case studies for Deleuze and Guattari's minor literature.

All of these works in this thesis are works of life writing. In *Reading Autobiography: A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives* (2001), Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson define the term life writing or life narrative as a form of writing in which “subjects write about their own lives predominantly, even if they write about themselves in the second or third person, or as a member of a community. And they write simultaneously from externalized and internal points of view, taking themselves as both subject and object, or thematizing that distinction” (*Reading Autobiography* 5). In regard to being both subject and object in the narrative, authors of life writing make a pact with the readers. According to the “autobiographical pact,” coined by Philippe Lejeune, “the protagonist does not have a name in the narrative, but the author has declared explicitly in an initial pact that he is identical to the narrator and thus the protagonist, since the narrative is autodiegetic” (17). The idea derives from the need of trust between the author and the reader.

Lejeune further states that “What defines autobiography for the one who is reading is above all a contract of identity that is sealed by the proper name. And this is true also for the one who is writing the text” (19). Thus, trust between the two sides certifies how truth is represented in the narrative. Referred as the “autobiographical truth,” Smith and Watson state that the text cannot be fully denied or confirmed. Hence, the narrative is self-referential since the author and the protagonist are the same. Smith and Watson conclude that “autobiographical writing cannot be read solely as either factual truth or

simple fact. As an intersubjective mode, it resides outside a logical or juridical model of truth and falsehood, as models of the paradoxical status of self-reference" (*Reading Autobiography* 17). Taken together, self referentiality of life narratives results from the unreliability of memory. Due to being an interpretation of the past the author lived and experienced, the narrated memory is elusory, and the truth is possibly distorted. For that account a pact between the author and the reader is necessary.

Smith and Watson further argue that construction of identity is based on our memory. They state that the identity depends on how the author interprets him/herself and for this reason, identities are also "constructed. They are in language. They are discursive. They are not essential—born, inherited, or natural— though much in social organization leads us to regard identity as given and fixed" (*Reading Autobiography* 39). Hence, Smith and Watson detect multiple "I" s in the narrative; the "real" or historical "I," the narrating "I," the narrated "I" and lastly the ideological "I." While the historical "I" is unknown to the reader and this existence of the "I" can be verified, and his/her voice is accessible to the reader. The narrating "I" refers to the self who feels an obligation to tell the story about itself, i.e., the narrated "I."

Smith and Watson argue that the narrated "I" can be seen as a reflection of the disrupted memory of the narrating "I" since it is "constitute[d] through recollection for the reader" (*Reading Autobiography* 73). More importantly, as the narrating "I" is composed of multiple subject positions and not unified in a singular state, it reflects this to the narrated "I". Concerning the complication of the distinction between these two "I" s, Smith and Watson indicate that, "while [they] use a single "I" as a pronoun to refer to the autobiographical speaker in the text, not only the narrated "I" of earlier times but also the narrating "I" in the temporal present is multiple, fragmented, and heterogenous" (*Reading Autobiography* 74-75). In correlation with the distinguishability of the narrating "I" and the narrated "I," it is also important to highlight that the "I" s in the works that are analyzed in this study are also highly constructed by a narrated "I" that "becomes his or her agent of narration" (*Reading Autobiography* 75). Lastly, Smith and Watson mention the fact that the "I" cannot be a free agent and not be thought indifferent to its surroundings and state that the "I" also needs to be placed in a historical location or a

system. In relation to this, Louis Althusser argues that one is interpellated to certain subject positions and without these subject positions, the self does not exist. Michel Lee refers to Althusser's idea of ideological interpellation as

> There is no inherent meaning in the individual. There are no individuals: only subjects, who come into being when they are hailed or interpellated by ideology. Instead, the subject exists only as he or she is recognized in a specific way that has a social structure as its referent. The subject is thus preceded by social forces, or "always-already interpellated." (2)

Smith and Watson state that Althusser's ideological interpellation "illuminates the importance of cultural notion of "I"- ness." which composes the ideological "I" (*Reading Autobiography* 76). The critics note that "because every autobiographical narrator is historically and culturally situated, each is a product of his or her particular time and place. A narrator, then, needs to be situated in the historical notion of personhood and the meaning of lives at the same time of writing" (*Reading Autobiography* 76-77). Hence, it is safe to argue that the individuality and the ideological state apparatuses are internalized in the identity. To summarize, the personal cannot be thought separately from its surroundings whereas the ideological "I" s "are possible positions for autobiographical narrators to occupy, contest, revise, and mobilize against one another at specific historical moments" (*Reading Autobiography* 78). Similarly, the authors of the works in this study demonstrate an always changing, transitioning identities due to their exile and the political environment of the era they have lived in.

Another key point is that due to reflecting various political and cultural changes they inherit in the narrative, the works by Dorfman, Alvarez and Arenas show similar characteristics of different subgenres of life writing. Ariel Dorfman's *Heading South Looking North: A Bilingual Journey* (1998) mirrors the impact of Cold War in the United States, shows how individuals with a different political stand are perceived as "rotten apples" and vividly criticizes the foreign policies of the American government as the author grows up. He also includes the results of the action taken for Salvador Allende's presidency in Chile and the coup d'état afterwards in 1973. As Dorfman's narrative focuses on these interconnected experiences, his life narrative can be considered as a "memoir" which "situate[s] the subject in a social environment, as either as observer or participant" (*Reading Autobiography* 274). Due to the shift from "I" to "we" in

Dorfman’s testimonio during the narration of the Chilean coup, it can be stated that the private and the public are intermixed in his narrative. Smith and Watson define the narrative of *testimonio* as a form in which “the narrator intends to communicate the situation of a group’s oppression, struggle, or imprisonment, to claim some agency in the act of narrating, and to call on readers to respond actively in judging the crisis” (*Reading Autobiography* 282). Dorfman’s narrative does not call for an active seek of justice for a community or a group of people who are oppressed and rather functions as a personal reckoning with his fragmented self, but it also inherits the characteristics of *testimonio* tradition. Since the “primary concern is sincerity of intention, not the text’s literariness” in *testimonio* (“Margin at the Center” 94), Dorfman’s narrative fulfills its aim to tell the truth about the Chilean coup. In the light of these similarities, the first chapter of this thesis focuses on Chilean American novelist Ariel Dorfman's *Heading South Looking North: A Bilingual Journey* under the scope of Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of minor literature. His life narrative contains the three characteristics of minor literature: deterritorialization from the language, politicization of the text, and collective enunciation. On account of going through several exiles in his life, Dorfman's identity is divided between American and Latin American cultures as well as English and Spanish. In the narrative, this duality leads to the emergence of a fragmented identity. The text portrays how he makes peace with his duality while narrating his life in a language he cannot fully belonging to. In addition, his life writing represents how much he is affected by the political turmoil of the Cold War, and how it is inevitably a political narrative. By giving voice to those who have lost their lives in the Chilean coup, it also reflects the collective memory of the Chilean community.

Similarly, Julia Alvarez’s *Something to Declare: Essays* (1998) is in accord with its narrative form of personal essay. Alvarez narrates her becoming as an author through a chronological collection of essays and this form of narrative allows the author to deal with her past as pieces of memories which eventually leads to the acceptance of a hybrid identity. As a result, her personal essays become “a site for self-creation through giving [her] perspective on the thoughts of others” (*Reading Autobiography* 276). Furthermore, in addition to her development as an author, a great deal of personal essays in the collection cope with the issue of assimilation to a dominant culture and alienation from

the home community. Focused on personal and social formation as a woman in the host culture, Alvarez's narrative can also be related to bildungsroman that eventually leads to "an awakening to gender-based limitations" (*Reading Autobiography* 263). Lastly, Alvarez forms an alliance with the women in her life and women that are silenced under the Trujillo regime, including the Mirabal Sisters, and makes a declaration against the regime. Thus, her narrative can be found partially testimonial as well. Without disregarding the genre characteristics of the work, the second chapter will be analyzing the notion of minor literature in Dominican American writer Julia Alvarez's *Something to Declare: Essays*. Arriving in the United States as a Latina adolescent, Alvarez finds refuge in English and considers it a way to assimilate like Dorfman. She uses English to place her identity and deterritorializes it. Furthermore, her essays deal with the post-memory of the Trujillo dictatorship and give an elaborative representation of her political standing. Lastly, by approaching the era of the Trujillo regime by using her own family, her text gives voice to the other Dominicans.

Reinaldo Arenas's *Before Night Falls* (1992) distinguishes itself from Dorfman and Alvarez's narratives due to the following two reasons; as an author who is exiled from his mother country, unlike Dorfman and Alvarez, Arenas refuses to be part of the host culture and to adapt. Hence, he does not find refuge in English. Rather, this study suggests that Arenas is deterritorialized from another major language, Spanish. Due to his exclusion from the Cuban community both as a gay individual and as a writer whose works are not considered worthy by the Cuban political authorities, the language he uses when he is exiled in the United States differs from the Spanish language in Cuba and it allows him to liberate himself from the oppression of Castro's government. For this reason, his work functions as a way of self-healing and becomes an example of what Suzette Henke proposes scriptotherapy that includes the process of "writing out and writing through traumatic experience in the mode of therapeutic reenactment" (xii). In the same way, Arenas narrates his time in El Morro prison and explains vividly how gays are treated in Cuba after the revolution. Due to these two aspects, his text also obtains similar characteristics of prison and trauma narratives whereas he regains his literary freedom through the reflection of the prison memories in the text. Secondly, Arenas stands as the only author in this study to include his illness and his suicide note. Through

narration of his disease, his narrative can also be examined under the perspective of autopathography, "personal narratives about illness or disability that contest cultural discourses stigmatizing the writer as abnormal, aberrant, or in some sense pathological" (*Reading Autobiography* 261) and autothanatography a form in which the author "confront[s] illness and death by performing a life at a limit of its own, or another's, undoing." (*Reading Autobiography* 261). However, it should be noted that Arenas channels his anger towards Castro and the Cuban revolution through his suicide note and distances his narrative from the focus of his death. His death rather serves as a way of liberation and his suicide note signifies how reconciliation is not attainable for Reinaldo Arenas. Lastly, it is a clear fact that Arenas becomes voice to the gay community of the Cuban revolution who have suffered the consequences of exile with the Mariel Exodus in 1980. From this perspective, his narrative correlates with *testimonio* as well. To sum up, the third chapter discusses the Cuban writer Reinaldo Arenas's *Before Night Falls* through the concept of minor literature by taking these subgenres of life narratives in consideration. The chapter will examine Arenas, whose writings were banned in Castro's Cuba and who was alienated from the Cuban literature world, and his territorial loss in his mother tongue, Spanish. Following the antagonism between him and Castro, Arenas's political identity will be examined as a part of minor literature. Lastly, by narrating his personal story of the Mariel Exodus in 1980 and the social persecution against the artistic and gay communities in Cuba, Arenas represents a collective history of the expatriates of Cuba. By analyzing *Heading South Looking North: A Bilingual Journey*, *Something to Declare: Essays,* and *Before Night Falls* of the three authors whose identities have been shaped through a historical and linguistic bond between the Americas, this thesis will try to demonstrate that their life narratives are exemplary works of minor literature.

CHAPTER I

ARIEL DORFMAN'S *HEADING SOUTH, LOOKING NORTH: A BILINGUAL JOURNEY* (1998)

> The writer is the creative force that speaks of and to society and whose work forms the basis for the hopeful potential of literature. Such a stance may reveal the drawback to envisioning the writer in the 20th and 21st centuries as a storyteller.
>
> Sophia McClennen,
> *Ariel Dorfman: An Aesthetics of Hope*

In Deleuze and Guattari's notion of minor literature, the writer functions as a collective doer and a subject who cannot separate his identity from his surroundings. Therefore, the author relates his/her narrative with the story of people and the political environment. This marginalized personality achieves a distinct consciousness through which the text obtains a distinct form as well:

> What each author says individually already constitutes a common action, and what he or she says or does is necessarily political, even if others aren't in agreement. The political domain has contaminated every statement (énoncé). But above all else, because collective or national consciousness is "often inactive in external life and always in the process of break-down," literature finds itself positively charged with the role and function of collective, and even revolutionary, enunciation. (Deleuze and Guattari 17)

Ariel Dorfman's *Heading South, Looking North: A Bilingual Journey* (1998) deals with the author's lust for carving himself a space in the world and dissolving his diasporic identity in the shadow of the Cold War era. His life writing includes his necessary returns and departures from one country to another, while the exilic self equates with in-betweenness. Dorfman represents the one "that resists prevailing framings of identity and belonging in both host and homeland settings" (Knott and McLoughlin 92) until he reaches a reconciliation with the hybridity. Coming from a family whose history has numerous exiles due to persecution, death, and political struggle, Ariel Dorfman

inevitably experiences a process involving self-doubt when he tries to build up an identity for himself. In the case of Ariel Dorfman, he puts down his autobiographical "I" in the United States in the 1990s and details his life of exile and bi-cultural living in his narrative. Even though he briefly mentions in the narrative that he was protested by the conservatives in the 1980s after his exile, the existence of this "I" stays hidden in the text. Smith and Watson define this "I" as historical "I" and explain that it is the "I" whose life is "far more diverse and dispersed than the story that is being told of it" (*Reading Autobiography* 72). On the other hand, as Dorfman's narrative converges to testimonio narrative, the narrating "I" in *Heading South Looking North* suggests a "persona of the historical person who wants to tell, or is coerced into telling, a story about the self" (*Reading Autobiography* 72). It is important to emphasize that Dorfman's political stand allows the narrating "I" to present the recollection of these memories in the narrated "I", as he has experienced multiple exiles experienced within the same political unrest of the Western Hemisphere. His life narrative centers on how he is positioned politically and culturally. While he describes how his identity is shaped through the notion of exile, duality between the United States and Chile, English and Spanish, the self is presented as heterogeneous, and these notions become the key components of his ideological "I" reflected in the text.

In addition to his family history, Dorfman's active involvement in politics leads him to write this political trauma narrative. Starting from his infanthood, Dorfman was put to several tests for his loyalty between his ethnical roots and his self-made Americanness as the Cold War escalates. In this regard, Dorfman narrates three exiles: from Argentina to the United States in 1945, from the United States to Chile in 1954, and in 1973 from Chile to the United States. As a result of these exiles, he finds himself caught in the middle of two countries that mainly contribute to the development of his identity. As the author dodges death more than once in his life, the connection between the changing linguistic and political sympathy over English and Spanish, the United States, and Latin America is displayed within this thematical approach. Moreover, as the burden of the survivor's guilt is upon Dorfman's shoulders, the text carries a collective role to tell the "truth" about the Chilean people and the fall of democratically elected Salvador Allende.

As Dorfman divides his narrative into two different parts as “North and South” and then “South and North,” he explains how he is affected by these two countries. The chapter titles also foreshadow how language is connected to his survival. In every two chapters, the title includes the discovery of life and language while in odd chapters the title changes into the discovery of death. Dorfman’s encounters with death after one exile over the other result in the loss of the mother language since Dorfman's first exile occurs when he is only two and a half years old. He loses the language he is born into and as having neither territorial awareness nor patriotic sentiments, he replaces the mother tongue with the host language that nurtures him.

While the text focuses on Dorfman's dilemma about Latin America and the United States where his family was exiled to, to recollect his divided identity, he rejects this duality and decides to belong to both. Dorfman finds a narrative space since the comfort of social belonging is reachable for exilic authors neither in the mother country nor in their host country. The author chooses a narrative space where the opposite parts of his identity are reconciled. Still, he does not fully lose his foreignness in the American culture due to his connection to the Chilean community, and he is deterritorialized from the English language. Ariel Dorfman strategically constructs his life writing by putting together the pieces of his family history and childhood memories that function as a key to the choice of home and his political stance between the Americas. At the same time, his consciousness allows him to spot the cultural and economic imperialism of the United States over Chile, including American involvement in the Chilean coup in 1973. Therefore, the text inevitably becomes political. Dorfman's linguistic duality, the evolution of his political standing, and the testimonial tone of his narrative correlate with Deleuze and Guattari's minor literature resulting in making the narrative “potentially a site for thinking beyond the confines of the nation” (Kalra et.al 36).

1.1. DETERRITORIALIZATION OF LANGUAGE

In his narrative, Dorfman uses his linguistic ability as a form of place that he can refer to as home. Initially, his affiliation with the Spanish language starts through a metaphorical bond constructed by his parents after their exile to Argentina, and Spanish obtains an

essential role in Dorfman's identity. Starting with the moment of his birth, Dorfman explains how his existence is rooted in the Spanish language that his maternal and paternal ancestors adapted when they first arrived in Argentina. While Dorfman gives hints about his ancestors, the readers acknowledge that both sides had to leave Eastern Europe for different reasons, but they shared the same fear of persecution because of being Jewish. His maternal relatives, including his mother Fanny Zelicovich Vaisman, were forced to leave their land behind by scare of Nazis: "It was that experience, it seems, that had led the family, after aeons of persecution, to finally emigrate. Australia was considered, and the United States, but Argentina was selected" (*Heading South* 15). Dorfman convinces himself that the family carries a heritage of exile from generation to generation. As the author's narrative revolves around the issues of life, death, and language, he also mentions how his mother experienced the same situation years ago and how she also thinks of Spanish as a way to save herself. Following a fatalistic approach, he also mentions that his mother's choice of the Spanish language over Yiddish is the initial step for his being as he says:

> A world that would demand of my mother, as it demands of all immigrant children, that she abandon the language of her ancestors if she wanted to pass through that door those children would soon be trying to slam shut. I believe this story has abided in the family memory so many years because it is foundational: the prophetic story of how my mother would leave home and assimilate, escaping from that ghost language of the past into the Spanish-echoing streets. (17)

His paternal side which Dorfman defines as "assimilated, cosmopolitan, definitely European" (18) chooses to migrate to Argentina under the shadow of the Civil War in Ukraine. His father's abandonment of Odessa in 1911 is a foreshadowing of Dorfman's exile from the United States to Chile in 1954 as mentioned in the book:

> My father remembers a stowaway: the Red Army soldiers coming on board and the young man's fearful eyes when he was discovered, the stubble on his face, the look of someone who knew he would die—and then they hauled him away, dragged him back to that glorious Odessa of my father's youth, that Odessa now of danger and death. (20-21)

Dorfman's father Adolfo carries the survival's guilt after he and his mother, Raissa escapes Odessa at the end of 1911, and as it is mentioned as "the civil war, the famine, the plague, decimated Odessa and so many other cities in the country: most of Raissa's

family, left behind, died" (20-21). When they leave their native land for Argentina, the legacy of Bolshevism haunts Adolfo after the death of his cousin, Ilyusha. Therefore, it is safe to assume that from a fatalistic perspective, Ariel Dorfman's life is shaped through his family's legacy of exile and political ideology. In the text, Dorfman emphasizes this relationship as:

> My father's participation had not gone beyond carrying a mysterious black bag that Ilyusha always wanted near him, a bag that contained nothing more dangerous, it seems, than poems and pamphlets, but it was the first social activism of my father's life and he was never to forget it. Ilyusha's memory was to haunt him through the turbulent twenties and into the thirties as Argentina itself began to head for what seemed a revolution of its own. (21)

Both parents become acquainted with the process of assimilation and its hardships, and they are more tolerant than other parents towards Dorfman's struggle of adapting himself to a certain place. More importantly, the choice to speak Spanish creates the perception that Spanish was a part of his identity and his being as he tells in his narrative:

> By then, fortunately for me, they both spoke Spanish. I can almost hear him now convincing her to marry him in the one language they both shared, I try to eavesdrop so many years later on the mirror of their lovemaking, listening to how they conceived me, how their language coupled me out of nothingness, made me out of the nakedness of night, la desnudez de la noche. (*Heading South* 18)

Dorfman emphasizes how he is almost kneaded with the language by his parents, and how he cannot separate his being from Spanish language. Regarding the authors with multiple linguistic affiliations, Ramsdell argues that language consists of "the very essence of their selves" (167) and therefore it is inevitable for Dorfman to construct a metaphorical origin for the self. Dorfman elaborates on this idea by mentioning his fall in the surgery room and his mother's cry for help in Spanish, which eventually saved him. He defines the first encounter with Spanish in a metaphorical way that convinces him and the readers about how strong the linguistic connection is from the very beginning:

> My mother had been dosed with a snap of gas to ease her pain as she labored, and when her newborn baby had been placed on a nearby table to be cleaned, she thought in her daze that it was slanted and the boy was about to roll off, and that was when she cried out. "Doctor," she called, and my uncomprehending ears must have absorbed the meaningless sound. "Doctor, se cae el niño, se cae el niño," she told the doctor that I was falling, the boy was about to fall. She was wrong about my body and right about my mind, my life, my soul. I was falling, like every child who was ever born, I was

> falling into solitude and nothingness, headlong and headfirst, and my mother, by her very words, by the mere act of formulating her fear in a human language, inadvertently stopped my descent by introducing me to Spanish, by sending Spanish out to catch me, cradle me, pull me back from the abyss. (12)

Thus, he romanticizes Spanish as affectionate, homely, and private and adopts it as a symbol of his identity:

> But Spanish was there at the beginning of my body or perhaps where my body ended and the world began, coaxing that body into life as only a lover can, convincing me slowly, sound by sound, that life was worth living, that together we could tame the fiends of the outer bounds and bend them to our will. (12)

Through the maternal metaphors given to the Spanish language from a child's perspective, Dorfman implies this motherly component of Spanish not only in this occasion but also in the exile: "Languages do not only expand through conquest: they also grow by offering a safe haven to those who come to them in danger, those who are falling from some place far less safe than a mother's womb" (*Heading South* 13). This idea proves that when Dorfman is left in a hospital in New York and only exposed to English by the medical staff, English creates a new refuge for him while the Spanish language fails to do so.

He perceives English as the language of his fatherland, the language he needs to use during his "second birth, the moment when I had mothered and fathered myself" (43). For this measure, language is considered as "the medium which shapes and transforms his existence and which causes him pain and joy in equal measure" (Doloughan 148). However, until he understands the balance between the two sides, he reflects the battle of the two languages as if they try to occupy more of Dorfman. In the narrative, the deterritorialization of the Spanish language is given through a matter of survival at an early age, "To save his life, that boy was interned in a hospital, isolated in a ward where nobody spoke a word of Spanish. For three weeks, he saw his parents only on visiting days and then only from behind a glass partition" (*Heading South* 28). Since he is deprived of "the familiar sounds of Spanish" (Ramsdell 168), his abandonment of the maternal language gives place to a necessity of survival in the new cultural environment as he chooses the host language as "the language of his new patria" (171). Referring to this incident, Dorfman says:

> I realize this in Spanish, and I look up and the only adults I see are nurses and doctors. They speak to me in a language I don't know. A language that I will later learn is called English. In what language do I respond? In what language can I respond? (*Heading South* 28)

Here, it is evident that Dorfman goes through almost a month of helplessness since he cannot contact his parents, or he can only be heard by his parents and only in Spanish:

> There is a large glass wall, it is a cold bare white hospital ward, my parents have told me that every time they came to see me, tears streamed down my face, that I tried to touch them, I watch myself watching my parents so near and so far away behind the glass, mouthing words in Spanish I can't hear. (*Heading South* 28)

This traumatic event Dorfman experiences at the hospital revealed in the narrative triggers his urge to take action after he recovers from pneumonia. However, blaming Spanish for not taking care of him in a world where Dorfman is new and alienated, he refuses to speak Spanish until he comes to a political and social understanding of the Cold War dynamics in 1954, when his family has to leave the United States. In *Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature,* Deleuze and Guattari explain the process of deterritorialization in one's language as they define the notion of minor literature. According to the critics, deterritorialization occurs when the self feels segregated or alienated from a major language as in Dorfman experiences in the hospital corridors. Dorfman stays disengaged with his native tongue and cannot reach the words in which his parents try to comfort him and show him affection, his hospitalization at such a young age represents the milestone of his deterritorialization.

From that time on, Dorfman blends in the American culture as a matter of survival: "From that moment onward I stubbornly, steadfastly, adamantly refused to speak a word in the tongue I had been born into. I did not speak another word of Spanish for ten years" (*Heading South* 29). When the conflict between Spanish and English occurs, he decides to leave his vocal tracts to the one which helps him survive. Sophia McClennen comments on this issue in her book by saying that the hospital incident initiates "a linguistic tension between Spanish and English" and his deliberate choice of English over Spanish affirms an endeavor against losing the control of his life and his attempt to take it back through making the selection of how he expresses himself (*Ariel Dorfman, An Aesthetics of Hope* 304). As McClennen further states, Dorfman's "monolingualism [is] a way to exercise

control over his identity" (300-301). Hence, rather than taking their migration as a necessary act and a situation to adopt, he extends and personalizes it by refusing to speak any language but English. As distinct from a desire to preserve his native culture and language, he completely refuses to be in contact with them, and he radically tries to develop an identity as an American child. Therefore, it is safe to conclude that he let his identity be invaded by the alien culture due to the traumatic circumstances in his past. In *Heading South*, the writer implies the willfulness of this act of punishment against the Spanish language and his parents in accordance with the fact that he initiates the process of using the host language to define himself from scratch:

> One of them, the child inside who speaks Spanish, will not respond, because I left him to die in the dark, atrophied the language with which he might have transmitted these memories to me; and the other child, the one who speaks English, he was present of course, but he was swept that moment from the fierce abscess of his mind, preferring to pretend that his start with me was painless and splendid and immaculate, that when he caught me as I felt I had no previous language. (43-44)

Dorfman learns to speak English as a survival tactic and meanwhile he falls for the offer of a new identity made by the American Dream. The way he defines the American Dream is identical to the way a child listens to bed-time stories from his parents: "The friendly story the United States told me about myself could not have been more suited to the needs of a child who wanted to remake himself, free himself from who he had been" (*Heading South* 49). As Vidal argues, "Dorfman has no identity, except the Americanness he forged for himself in the cult of American pop culture and in resentment against his parents" (13). Hence, he accepts melting into the foreign civilization he has recently met and ties himself to it since his maternal culture has deserted him:

> America told me I could be innocent again. America, which had just won the Second World War and was out to save and possess the whole planet, promised me that, in return for my total loyalty, it would never abandon me. I had nowhere else to go and no one else to turn to. Bereft of a past and a language that told me who I was, what else was I to do? I became an American." (*Heading South* 50)

As Dorfman associates the new language with being alive and well, his identification of the self as American progressively increases. Since Spanish triggers the memories that made him vulnerable, he adapts himself to American culture to repress these memories.

As a response to his parents after his stay at foster care, he emphasizes that he is already lured by the American culture:

> By the time my Spanish-speaking parents were finally able to do battle for the Latino soul of their son, they discovered that they had lost me to the charisma of America, that what had begun in that hospital as a childish linguistic tantrum had, in the foster home, hardened into something more culturally permanent and drastic: the question of language had become ensnared in the question of nationality, and therefore of identity. (*Heading South* 47)

Finally, Dorfman completes the transition from Spanish to English as he surrenders to the American culture stating that "I melted, I tried to melt, I wanted to melt and dissolve, bewitched, dazzled, and bewildered into the gigantic melting pot of America" (*Heading South* 78). As he creates two, constantly battling selves inside him, he tries to unleash the Americanness he tries to adapt to. To this end, he differentiates his personality as public and private, one belonging to English and the other to Spanish. Consequently, when his father knocks on the bathroom's door to get him out, he insists on hearing English words.

He defines this incident saying that: "My first memory: how I built a space of my own where Spanish cannot enter, where I can keep myself separate from its threat, forever apart, unyielding" (*Heading South* 61). His refusal of Spanish is because he sustains a sense of self-protection that he has experienced before. He explains the motivation behind his choice in these words, "This is how I create, day by day, my identity. This is how I deny, day by day, the brother who is in my mind and understands Spanish, how I deny him the chance to resurrect" (*Heading South* 61). Hence, it could be suggested that Dorfman lets Cain (English) to murder Abel (Spanish) for a decade in his life until Abel crawls back to Dorfman's life when the family is sent to an exile in Chile in 1954. Until then, he linguistically creates himself a world where he is not remembered as "the Chiquita Banana kid" (*Heading South* 78):

> I found myself alone again, this time without my mother or father, this time with no one between me and death, alone with the child and the language that child spoke, did I lash out at that Spanish language to deflect the impossibility of lashing out at my Spanish-speaking parents? Did I subscribe to a pact with my English self? Was that the price he had demanded for coming to the rescue that day I had found myself wordless in a roomful of alien adult voices with the power of life and death over me? The price that had to be paid for his protection: to sew up the abortive mouth of my Spanish self, to starve the little shit, brick by brick, like Fortunato being buried alive in "The Cask of

> Amontillado," brick by brick walling off my mother tongue from all contact with the world? To make love while he died? (*Heading South* 45)

Yet, as an immigrant child, Dorfman cannot escape from the questions directed to all who are in a similar situation. Even though he tries to make his English perfect to adjust himself to the United States and have a sense of belonging, the Spanish self follows him through his name which also receives its share in all journeys Dorfman undertakes. Doloughan confirms that Dorfman's narrative is bilingual and bicultural since the narrating "I" is depicted through "the eyes of a young boy whose initial rejection of Spanish and adoption of English is troubled only by his growing recognition of his family's difference as Jews and Communist sympathizers in McCarthyite America" (147). The reason is that Dorfman's family lives in an era that is targeting them as scapegoat and despite his desire for a sense of normalcy and affection from the country, he fails to adjust to the New World. As his name holds the power of revealing his bonds with his Latino side, he cannot escape from insults and harsh comments directed by his peers. Dorfman insists on hiding the true origin of his name during the Cold War:

> I hated being called Vladimiro but hated Vlady even more. The kids at school deformed my name without mercy: Bloody, Floody, Flatty—and especially the terminal insult, Laddie and Lady, names for dogs. Kids are cruel. But adults, who are not inevitably cruel—at least not to children—would also make me feel thoroughly self-conscious about who I was. Where did you get that name? What does it mean? My parents, absurdly, had told me to allege I was named after the pianist Vladimir Horowitz. And I obeyed. What was I supposed to proclaim in red-baiting America? (*Heading South* 79)

Carrying the traces of cultural and political heritage of his family, his exile dislocates Dorfman's sense of belonging to a place once again. As it has been stated before, his first name "Vladimir" has prevented him from connecting with the United States and prevented his "complete immersion into the United States culture" (McClennen 259). When they need to leave the United States due to McCarthyism that threatens his father, Dorfman adds up to his linguistic abilities in order to deal with another trauma of dislocation. Ramsdell explains that throughout these migratory occasions, Dorfman gains "a heightened awareness of language as power due to his exile status" which gradually leads him to become a storyteller of the Chilean community during the 1973 military coup (170).

As Dorfman creates "a ritual of belonging, another way of combating loneliness, perfecting accent and grammar and vocabulary as evidence," he finds a solution to remind himself that he has passed being an immigrant in the United States (*Heading South* 82). When he is interrupted by the relocation to the South, he changes his name from Vladimir to Edward to increase his sense of belonging to the American culture and to get rid of the one item that is a reminder of his origins:

> here was my chance to throw Vlady into the sea, drown the sonofabitch, and baptize myself with my true and princely title. I did not inform my parents of my intentions when we boarded the French ship De Grasse in June 1951. First I carefully spread my new English name among the other children on that ship, then engaged their parents, the crew members, the waiters, the stewards, until everybody was calling me Eddie. (80)

Dorfman begins to channel his linguistic abilities into writing. Especially when he meets with German writer Thomas Mann on the ship, he immediately takes him as a role-model while he opens a new door to express himself. As he states, "I suddenly knew what I wanted in life: to be him, be Thomas Mann. I wanted that power to reach all humanity" (*Heading South* 86). Associating himself with Mann gives him the idea that he might direct his uprootedness into a sort of power for self-expression. As a result, he rejects leaning toward plastic arts and chooses to focus on his linguistic abilities to endorse his American identity. In the text, he affirms this decision as "having discovered on that sea voyage that it was literature, not painting, that could shield my identity constructed in English" (*Heading South* 83). Starting with his own name, the author gradually discovers the power of narrative which can go beyond territorial boundaries. His unhappiness about the family's exile to Chile pulls him closer to using words to change facts and create new ones. Dorfman admits the fact that once he obtains the power of literature, he can reach out to his beloved United States by ignoring this exile:

> I took a pivotal step toward answering the question of how to keep alive the language I had adopted as my own if I was to leave the United States. In that diary, for the first time, I created an imaginary space and self outside the body and, perhaps as fundamentally, beyond geography, a dialogue with language which could be deepened regardless of where that body happened to be, what contingent geography surrounded me. (84-85)

Dorfman shapes his identity as an "all-American kid" (*Heading South* 74) by calling himself Edward, a name from Mark Twain's *The Prince and the Pauper* (1881), adapting

more of the American culture and showing resistance against the change of location. In the text, the author implies the fact that his name is the ultimate signifier of his unacceptability by the American culture and a reminder of his unbelonging to the North: "What did my name mean? It means that I can't conform, that I can't make believe I'm from here, that's what it means" (*Heading South* 79). Commenting on the name changes, McClennen points out "Dorfman was extremely invested from a young age in his ability to shape his identity through naming" (259). Hence, the naming action suggests that language is a territory for recreating and expressing the self. Writing in English at this point provides him with a chance to distance himself from the painful experiences in the presence of the dominant Spanish and paves the way for creativity at an early age when he struggles through settling down an identity as he explains: "With the same deranged determination with which I had succeeded in coercing my parents into speaking English back to me, I now carefully planned the demise of Vlady and the crowning of Edward" (*Heading South* 89). Hence, when he has to continue his studies there, he despises the idea of speaking Spanish and chooses to go to a very strict English prep-school to preserve his identity.

Until Dorfman becomes aware of the political unrest of the Cold War and comprehends why the people in South America, especially in Chile, have been revolting against the system that is driving them into poverty and corruption, Dorfman stays distant and disconnected. The time Dorfman decides to be called Ariel coincides with his university education in Chile since then he becomes socially and politically conscious. In this case, since the connotation of Ariel meets on common ground with both his American and Latino background, it is safe to state that reconciliation with his traumatic experiences begins through this choice. While his middle name Ariel refers to the character that his mother loved from Shakespeare's *The Tempest,* it is also used by the writer José Enrique Rodo to refer to the youth of Latin America as a symbol of opposition and anger towards the United States' interventionist policies. As McClennen suggests, he "used 'Eddie' to merge with the 'American dream' as exemplified in Mark Twain's *The Prince and the Pauper*, [and] he later used 'Ariel' to merge with the Latin American dream of Rodo's *Ariel"* (436). As an individual who has deliberately distanced himself from his native culture, Dorfman can peak into the Chilean life and its people, until it becomes

inevitable for him to keep his thoughts hidden. When hit by a simple question about his origin, Dorfman is urged to decide on which side he is going to stand since it also calls his old traumatic loss back again: "I should have answered: I don't have a country, I don't have a community, I don't have a cause . . . I should have answered: I'm alone on this planet and I don't know where I belong" (*Heading South* 153). In this context, Femke Stock points out, "moving between contrasting settings may be liberating for some at sometimes; for others, at other times it may mean a disturbing in-betweenness of belonging nowhere" (26). This question troubles Dorfman while he tries to settle down in a single part of his identity. Stock also adds,

> The moving between a multiplicity of home spaces, the experience of ambivalently belonging both here and there, can open up new spaces to reflect on and critique essentialist discourses of nation, ethnicity, or origin, and to creatively construct new homes and identities that are deemed hybrid, syncretic or fluid. (26)

Therefore, when Dorfman encounters Chilean politics as a child who was fond of the United States while growing up, his fondness towards the United States fades. This experience creates a kind of inner chaos that forces him to choose a side temporarily. Although he has sworn not to speak Spanish and resisted binding with his Latino identity, he doubts about his ties to the North as his knowledge grows throughout his university education. When he goes to Berkeley in 1968 through a fellowship, he considers the Hippie Movement and the general atmosphere of California as artificial and satirical as he feels resentment towards the American youth:

> I began to feel smugly superior to them, I ensconced myself in the knowledge of the remote suffering and sorrow I had witnessed and of which they had not even the faintest notion. I wanted to go up to them and shake the illusion from their eyes, force them to awaken from their dream and look at the real world, I wanted to whisper in their ears that the way to finish with oppression was not to drop out of the system but to overthrow it. Standing there, I felt redeemed and pure and intact, strengthened in the knowledge of who I was. I had left this country as a Northern Edward and was returning as a resolutely Southern Ariel. (*Heading South* 209)

Since Dorfman has lost the chance of being one of them due to his family's exile, he realizes that he has eluded himself from the American Dream. Thus, when he witnesses the movement closely, he confirms that the country guarded him in his childhood now has turned into "the bully of the world" (*Heading South* 212). Consequently, once again

he experiences a lingual dilemma and ties himself to his Latino identity by using the "language as the concrete means through which to register his disenchantment with the United States culture" (Ramsdell 173) once he witnesses the conspicuous consumption and theatrical illusion of the rebellious American movements. Accordingly, he swears off English until he crosses paths with it at the Argentinian Embassy in 1973. Although he banishes English after he first votes for Salvador Allende and becomes a part of the Chilean struggle, during his refuge in the Argentinian Embassy in Chile, his quotes from *Twelfth Night* come to his rescue and help him to make a phone call to his wife. Afterwards, Dorfman believes that it is not possible to deport any of the two languages from his life because eventually they are rooted in his identity. Therefore, he says:

> Through it all, my hostess never intrudes, never asks for anything, never suggests that she wants anything from me except a chance to use her English, to reminisce about our America. That's all: the chance for two expatriates to exchange memories. That's how it happened. That's how English started to flirt again with my mind. I could feel the ferocious tide of exile pulling at me, I could already feel the power of this repudiated language, and if its power here is so colossal, what temptations will it offer me when I venture into that outer world? (269)

Even though Dorfman has experienced multiple numbers of exiles, being the last one in Argentinian Embassy, he comes to an understanding that both languages, cultures, and countries have their fair share in his identity. Hence, connecting his life and death to his double-edged identity reconciles when he accepts that his in-betweenness is a part of his existence. As he admits,

> I begin to concede that history may be forcing me, against my will, to become bilingual, it is in that embassy that I first explore the possibility of living in two languages, using each one for a different community. It is there that I set out on the road to this hybrid mongrel of language who writes this so many years later. It will not happen immediately: I will cling to my Spanish during my first years of wandering . . . but my other language, my despised English self, will never be far away, always waiting for me with the same tenacity as Spanish did during its years of exclusion. (269-270)

Dorfman accepts the fact that he "was a hybrid, part Yankee, part Chilean, a pinch of Jew- a mestizo in search of a center" (*Heading South* 220) and directs his writing firstly in English, without disregarding his ties to the Latin American culture:

> But could it bring together my confused dual life? Could my writing in English make sense of this journey of identity into Latin America that was,

> of course, being carried out, primarily, in Spanish? Incredibly, my delusionary answer back then was that yes, it could. (195-196)

Dorfman's urge to distance himself from his mother tongue is essential in associating his life writing with the notion of minor literature. His exile status does not only cover his territorial loss but also a linguistic one since he lapses into one over the other. Hence, his work functions "to embrace his bilingualism after years of trying to deny it" (Ramsdell 170), but more importantly, writing his story with the story of Chilean people in English enables him to reach wholeness. Meanwhile, he uses the two languages for resistance, resentment, to channel his anger and frustration, but finally, he gathers them into one point that helps him to feel homely in between.

As Hernán Vidal points out, Dorfman's literary talent is developed throughout this process and "contrary to his parents who see language shifting as a source of grief, Dorfman's dalliance between English and Spanish provides him with a sense of enormous empowerment and adventure" (13). The linguistic duality Dorfman experiences throughout his life creates "a third space, located as it is at the meeting point of his Spanish and English selves" (Doloughan 151) and within this space, Dorfman bends the territorial boundaries to acquire a full identity as a writer. Similarly, in his interview with Sophia McClennen in 2004, the author defines the motives of his narrative which also consisted of the duality he experienced as:

> That is a book about Latin America fundamentally from the perspective of a testimonio latinoamericano because it is trying to figure out a path and a pain that has been hidden. And yet, its manner of expression owes more to the confessional style of North Americans, given that I reveal intimate details about myself, which you would rarely find in Latin American memoirs. The book is a hybrid, and something similar is happening to all my works. (67)

Due to the psychological trauma of carrying a history of exiles, Dorfman attaches himself to both languages that save him multiple times in matters of life and death. As McClennen notes, his narrative is a reminder of the fact that "it is the story of a man who loves to write, whose writing caused his exile and saved his life" ("The Diasporic Subject" 172) and his ability to create a borderless space where his exilic self can fit in through language.

1.2. POLITICAL IMMEDIACY

Sylvia Molloy refers to the concept of entirety in personal narratives. Molloy explains how Spanish American self-writings correlate with multiple purposes of the author. Since they are "distinctly hybrid texts, and usually appear to be endowed with a multiplicity of purpose: they strive not only to analyze (and eventually discover) the self but to promote, for whatever reasons, an image of that self" (2-3). When the family history and his father's connection with communism are taken into consideration, Dorfman's life story is interconnected with the significant political events between the 1950s and 1970s. His writings about his exile cover the political unrest during the Cold War, including the Red Scare and the exploitation of post-colonial Latin America and he becomes "a self-appointed witness" (Molloy 9) of the Chilean community. When his involvement with politics increases, Dorfman shows how he begins to be a part of a community by using the first-person plural tone as "ours" or "us" while narrating these events. To begin with, his father's exile from Argentina due to an "insulting" letter to the new military government foreshadows that Dorfman's identity will be intervened by the geopolitical tension which finalizes Dorfman's political stand against the Pinochet government. Dorfman, aware of his father's ideological thinking, says: "My anti-imperialist father fled in December of 1943, to the United States, the most powerful capitalist country in the world" (*Heading South* 24) and points out the destructiveness of this act for his father even though it is for the survival of the family. He underlines the repetitions of the family history:

> History does repeat itself, first as tragedy and then as farce: almost half a century later, ultra-conservative anti-Semitic right-wingers in the United States would suggest that I do the same thing, following me around with signs screeching VLADIMIRO ZELICOVICH (sic) GO HOME TO RUSSIA whenever I gave a lecture about Chile at a university, waving copies of a twenty-minute speech Jesse Helms had delivered against me on the Senate floor, brimming with information provided to him by the Chilean Secret Police. But those people in America in the 1980s couldn't do anything to me. The men who threatened my father in Argentina in 1943 were somewhat more powerful. (24)

Given the fact that the author's life circles around the crucial historical events and the turmoil of the Cold War paranoia, McClennen points out that the author sees his life

revolving around “uncanny repetition to many of the region’s most significant historical events” (242). As a twist of fate, when Dorfman's father moves to the United States, the country that hunts communists during the same period, Ariel Dorfman considers the country as the one that "fathered" him (*Heading South* 252). Although Dorfman justifies his desertion of Spanish and his Latino identity due to a necessity for survival in the North, his awareness of the paranoia of the 1950s progressively increases. In order to fully acknowledge the impact of the Cold War culture in Dorfman’s life, the politicization of the American culture must be mentioned.

In *Cold War Narratives American Culture in the 1950s* (2012), Andrea Carosso explains how the “witch hunt” in the United States begins through the foundation of HUAC, the House Un-American Activities Committee, which intended to grant security inside the national borders, “It was the beginning of the Red Scare, a campaign of fear and suspicion of communist infiltration in the country that soon turned into vicious witch-hunts that significantly curbed civil liberties in the United States for more than a decade.” (17) When Truman’s administration launched the Truman Doctrine in 1947, it became one of the milestones in American foreign policy and it clearly stated the fact that the new foreign policy was based on Anti-Sovietism. Carosso asserts that Truman “addressed the gulf that at that point divided East and West, giving shape to two irreconcilable, “alternative ways of life” (17). In addition to the Truman Doctrine, with the launch of the Marshall Plan in the same year, the United States tried to guarantee American control over Europe to contain communism. Meanwhile, the HUAC ensured the same purpose on the home front. Following the HUAC, McCarran Internal Security Act was passed by Congress in 1950 over the suspicion of posing a risk to First Amendment rights of freedom of speech. In order to tighten the circle around communism, the McCarran Act “raised the stakes of the Cold War inside the U.S., by creating an atmosphere of internal suspicion and fear which would shape the first half of the decade” (19). Hence, it is safe to suggest that a society of fear and terror was built. In *The Culture of the Cold War* (1991), Stephen J. Whitfield asserts how the fear leads to major changes in society in order to prevent the spread of communism in the United States:

> With the source of the evil so elusive and so immune to risk-free retaliation, American culture was politicized. The values and perceptions, the forms of expression, the symbolic patterns, the beliefs and myths that enabled

> Americans to make sense of reality—these constituents of culture were contaminated by an unseemly political interest in their roots and consequences. The struggle against domestic Communism encouraged an interpenetration of the two enterprises of politics and culture, resulting in a philistine inspection of artistic works not for their content but for the politique des auteurs. Censors endorsed the boycott of films that they had not seen; vigilantes favored the removal from library shelves of books that they had not read. (10)

Due to the fact that public and private realms are invaded by the politics of this era, the narrative implies that Dorfman feels obligated to choose one side over the other. However, the responsibility of protecting the country against communism is not only Dorfman's as Whitfield argues "citizens were expected to enlist in the Cold War. Neutrality was suspect, and so was a lack of enthusiasm for defining American society as beleaguered" (10). As a result, while Dorfman attends a primary school in the United States, he demonstrates his anger towards his father by threatening to report him to his teacher for being a communist. He says, "The Cold War was going to submit me, before I was eight years old, to a loyalty test" (*Heading South* 69) He is not aware of the magnitude of what he might be capable of, yet, due to his powerlessness in the hospital years ago, he attempts to claim power over his parents. Nevertheless, this situation paves the way for another dilemma, his family. Not until the Rosenbergs enter his life does the author realize that his family can be divided because of their political opinions. Dorfman implies this insecurity he feels, "I didn't know that the curtain was coming down in the very middle of my life, splitting it as if I were a country occupied by two warring armies, that my father would be classified as a man who belonged on the other side of that curtain" (*Heading South* 65). Associating himself with Americanness more than his Latino self, Dorfman does not comprehend the threat that is waiting for his family until he is exposed to the fact that his family's political thoughts threaten their safety in the United States. Realizing this fact in class, he refers to the following memory:

> How could I ignore the red menace if my teacher had used the innocent word, apple, A is for apple, to lecture us on the danger and decay hidden everywhere. "There are people," she said, "bad Americans," she said, "who are like rotten apples." Later, out in the playground, some kid had come up to me and asked the riddle/joke of the day, of the times: What is worse, he asked, than finding a worm in your apple? I blurted out the answer: Half a worm. What I did not tell him or anybody else was that I had a rotten apple at home, that I was the son of that rotten apple, that inside me was a worm I had swallowed, half a worm inside me as if I were the apple. For me, the Red

> Menace was not something out there, foggy and vague. The two worlds I had successfully kept apart, that of my family and that of my foster country, had finally collided. In that public school I was forced to come to terms with the confusion in my soul: my father was the enemy of the flag I pledged allegiance to every morning, the flag and words that had pledged to protect me in return. (68-69)

Dorfman remembers that the "rotten apples" are not given a chance to stay unless they are willing to melt with the rest. Meanwhile, as McClennen argues "he was forced to recognize the magnitude of U.S power and the threat that it posed to people like his father" (*Aesthetics of Hope* 374-375). Subsequently, while he adopts the popular culture commodities that appeal to him as a little child, he begins to carry the ghosts of the Rosenbergs, alarming him about the possibility of sharing the same fate with them:

> There were not just four Dorfmans at the table every evening: all through the early fifties, the ghosts of that other family sat with us, the four Rosenbergs, the mother and the father and their two boys, eight of us having dinner in the evening for three years, since the moment Ethel and Julius Rosenberg were arrested in 1950 until the night of their execution three years later, they were always there as a reminder of what could happen to us. (72)

With this in mind, Dorfman's eager position to seize the cultural elements of the United States changes since his family is stigmatized through the communist baiting led by Joseph R. McCarthy whom Dorfman defined as "the nemesis who would hound my family out of the United States" (74). Furthermore, Dorfman associates his own family with the Rosenbergs case which "become the metaphor of a nation in the throes of the Red Scare" (Carosso 30). Dorfman points out the association between the Rosenbergs and his own family as "I can remember saying to myself: If they kill Ethel and Julius, then they can kill my mom and dad as well. It was an early lesson on how terror works" (72). While the Rosenbergs are convicted in 1951 and executed in the electric chair two years after, Dorfman internalizes the danger and considers that Red Scare is also aimed at his family. Given these points, the Rosenbergs' "conviction raised the stakes of America's anti-communist crusade, since it brought into the United States not only the (at least alleged) evidence of communist infiltration in the country, but also the fear of being suspected of communism" (Carosso 31). In conclusion, as a young child left alone by his parents, Dorfman has embraced his American identity, however, his fear for his family has accelerated after witnessing the Rosenbergs case which results in a feeling of

orphanhood. Said emphasizes the feeling of "orphanhood" which is also true for Dorfman at the time the family is sent to Chile:

> No matter how well they may do, exiles are always eccentrics who feel their difference (even as they frequently exploit it) as a kind of orphanhood. Anyone who is really homeless regards the habit of seeing estrangement in everything modern as an affectation, a display of modish attitudes. Clutching difference like a weapon to be used with stiffened will, the exile jealously insists on his or her right to refuse to belong. (*Reflections on Exile* 187)

The second exile from the United States to Chile frustrates and disappoints Dorfman when he fails to obtain an all-American identity. As a result of this, Dorfman remembers the sense of unbelonging to any territory. Vilanova points out that this diasporic experience is inherited in the exile's identity saying that the "desire to recuperate the lost place of origin has historically fueled a troubled relationship with the receiving society. Displacement is an experience essential to the definition; the immigrant is never at home in the new country" (128). As a result, when the family moves to Chile, he craves for small packages coming from the United States every month, to satisfy his hunger for the American culture and also distances himself from integration. He continues "lead[ing] a double life, keeping secret his literary writings in English, the American records, books, magazines and candies he receives" (Vidal 13) until he gains the consciousness of deprivation and poverty that have been brought to the South by his adopted land.

Supportively, Vilanova argues that "the new homeland is never the place of belonging, the foundation of cultural practices. Identity derives from a particular shared cultural memory; originary rootlessness is substituted by unquestionable quotidian practices, languages, and foods that are valued as constituent of powerful affective relations" (McKee and Szurmuk 123-4). Even though Dorfman fulfills his longing for the American culture through Bernie, who is a "crew-cut American boy" (120-121), when he realizes Bernie's intention to take advantage of the country just like his father, who is a high executive in American owned copper mines in Chile, Dorfman's sympathy towards Chile increases:

> Was it only Bernie's covetousness, his racism, his relish at conning the local population, his disparagement of this country that, after all, had given my family refuge and provided us with a delightful existence in the midst of such natural beauty, was it only that which made me feel sick? Or can I detect,

> faintly stirring in the boy I used to be, the hint of a new allegiance to Chile, a tinge of pride in being Latin American, the first time I felt that I was on the other side of the divide, us against them? If so, what had created the distance, what was really coming between Bernie and me, between the United States and me, was the impoverishment of Chile. (*Heading South* 121-122)

Dorfman's experiences in Chile display that he is a young boy who gets packages full of American brands while the Chilean community gets poor. Hence, as Vilanova suggests, when Dorfman starts emphasizing the poverty of Chile, he gets closer to occupying a place in the territorial consciousness. The second incident that elucidates his distance from the Chilean society when he encounters a young boy who makes a living by singing boleros. To prevent the impoverishment of the country by the United States, he tries to compensate it by taking care of a child by providing him with food every day. In the narrative, this issue is narrated as follows:

> My mother warned me that within a few days the supply would be gone and I would be back exactly where I was now: they would still be as poor as ever and I would be as fed and clothed and housed as ever, the line dividing us would not have disappeared. Someday perhaps, I would be able to do something about that line and that poverty, just as my father had tried, but now was not the time and this was not the way. (125)

Dorfman admits that the country that he is defending is the one that is "responsible for the misery of Latin America" (*Heading South* 120) and as he counts his drifting from one country to another because of the larger interests of the United States, his narrative converts into a political criticism. Likewise, the United States' intervention to Guatemala after the decision of the expropriation of the land which belonged to the United Fruit Company foretells how such occasions in the backyard of the North are not tolerated by the United States. In his narrative, he points out this issue as "I could go on and on with hundreds of examples, but none was to impress me more than one single incident that brought home to me, a few years after we moved to Santiago, the crude reality of how an empire works" (120). Therefore, he sympathizes with the Latin American community. While he seeks inner and outer unity, the political upheaval of the Cold War haunts him. He connects his personal narrative of resistance against American imperialism with the revival of the South American from the foreign pressures by telling:

> my desire for a sanctuary on this planet, coincided with a unique moment in the history of the continent where I had been born, when hope was reawakening that hundreds of years of humiliation were over, a time when Latin America was breaking from its past and struggling to rid itself of the

> foreign influences that had dominated its destiny for so long. (*Heading South* 161)

Along the same line, Dorfman realizes the magnitude of Northern imperialism when he witnesses how the "two nuclear giants were playing out in the Third World" (*Heading South*, 231). While he acknowledges the dangerous side of the consumerist culture and how he has to elude his ancestral consciousness of being a Latino during the exile in Chile, he de-categorizes himself as a gringo [2]. When he attended the University of Chile he increased his involvement in political activism, which coincides with the period when the split between the two parts of his self reaches a climax: "By the time of the 1964 campaign, I had begun to demonize the land which I had called my home for so long, I was already blaming it for every evil that befell my newly adopted country and continent" (*Heading South* 171-172).

On that account, when Dorfman throws a rock at the police force during a student strike, he eludes himself from being an American and changes sides. As Doloughan affirms, Dorfman's literariness is "mediated by the narratives historical, political and social circulating around him and in relation to which he tries to locate and position himself" (148) and for this reason, when he publishes *How to Read Donald Duck* (1971) with Armand Mattelart, he transforms his thoughts about the revolutionary movements in Chile into a narrative that aims to criticize and deconstruct the American Dream. He uses the cartoon character that had an important place in his childhood in the United States, but now the character evolves into a tool for vengeance against his motherland by offering "a close reading of hundreds of Disney comics from a Third World perspective" (*Heading South* 250). Dorfman emphasizes that the character was one of the primary influences on him to adjust himself to the American culture by referring to him as "an old friend of mine, whom I may have met in the hospital in Manhattan" (250).

Dorfman deconstructs his American identity in order to join the forces of Salvador Allende and to free Chile when he states, "Disney had tried to eat me up as a child in New York, now I was eating him up as an adult in Chile, sending him his duck well roasted

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[2] This term refers to a foreigner, especially from the United States perceived from the perspective of Spanish or Portuguese-speaking countries in Latin America.

and his mice chopped up for good measure" (254). Having realized the liberating power of literature, Dorfman constructs a narrative from "the 'fascistization' of the mass media, universities and kindergartens, public life, and . . . the comings and goings of everyday life" (Dorfman and Vale 72) and by using a popular character as Donald Duck, he disentangles the mind-washing impact of its cultural offerings that surrender Chilean community to American influences. He defines his relationship with the United States as if it has hidden the hegemonic hunger behind Dorfman's back, so he is "looking for a divorce, trying to settle accounts with an old lover" (*Heading South* 253). This issue gives Dorfman the role of an emancipator for the Chilean society to pay his debt to his ancestral roots through the power of writing.

Dorfman continues to state his political stand toward Latin American politics, which he refers to as "a declaration of another sort of independence" (*Heading South* 251). After his involvement in Chilean politics increases through his university education and playing an active role as the president of the Independent Allendista Students of the Universidad de Chile, his sense of belonging grows stronger, and he carves out a place for himself in the Chilean community when he assigns himself as the spokesperson:

> It cannot be an accident that the first book written about U.S. cultural imperialism should have been created by a man who had himself been seduced by that country as a child, who had spent his adolescence yearning for that land and dancing to its sweet melodies, who had struggled as a young adult to make sense of the American part of his life and the English in which it was embedded. Or that I should have sought a foreigner as a partner in this venture, someone who, like me, had been so fascinated by Chile as to end up making it his home. Both of us from abroad, trying to inoculate our adopted land against the perils of what we had once adored. (251)

Having positioned himself within the side of Latin American politics, Dorfman's consciousness develops while he becomes the part of the history. Starting from throwing a rock to the police to writing a commentary book about the imperial powers over Chile, his identity reminds a hereditary reflection. Similar to his father who was exiled from Argentina because of a letter, Dorfman's actions foreshadow the fact that he will be exiled because of his political stand. In *Cultural Identity and Diaspora*, Hall emphasizes the formation of cultural identity which also supports the collective voice:

> There are at least two different ways of thinking about 'cultural identity'. The first position defines 'cultural identity 'in terms of one, shared culture, a sort of collective 'one true self', hiding inside the many other, more superficial, or artificially imposed 'selves', which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common. Within the terms of this definition, our cultural identities reflect the common historical experiences and shared cultural codes which provide us, as 'one people', with stable, unchanging, and continuous frames of reference and meaning, beneath the shifting divisions and vicissitudes of our actual history. (223)

Notably, Dorfman's short period of stay in Berkeley with a scholarship in 1968 adds up to severe his connections with the American culture since he has the chance to compare and observe the youth that he could have been part of if he had stayed. The entire experience aggravates oppositions against the cultural and economic enslavement of Latin America whereas the artificiality of the anti-war movement in the United States disturbs him. He criticizes how the revolutionary thoughts of the Hippies actually emerged under the control and comfort of the shadow of the American flag. He considers the anti-war demonstrations in the United States as childish since their protests seem as a dissidence whereas the Chilean youth fights for their country's independence from the foreign influences.

In *Heading South*, he asserts, "I watched them with admiration and sorrow. This was not a revolution. It might have enough strength and integrity to help end the war that the faraway Vietnamese were winning, but it was centuries away, I thought, from taking power" (225). In addition, he probes into a much more complex and unresolved issue of Latin America when he questions the availability of American exceptionalism and opportunity of reaching success and economic growth since both are promised but never accomplished for the communities of the South. When a Hippie girl asks for money, Dorfman immediately maps a hierarchical state of beggary in his mind:

> I didn't answer right away. Oh, I understood her words, what they meant—the famous Depression era phrase, "Brother, can you spare a dime?" echoed inside me. What I found dumbfounding was that she should actually be asking us for money, that these flaxen-haired, healthy, saintly gringos, these blue-eyed beauties, should be acting like paupers. In the racist Latin America I was from, light-colored eyes and blond hair and white skin were a passport to privilege, a stamp of upper-class origin, and it was unheard-of that anybody born to such fortune should end up begging on the streets. (*Heading South* 208)

Dorfman compares the girl with the little boy who sings boleros and begs for money in Chile and how the color of their skin can change the dynamic in the perception of superiority. Thus, he thinks the girl's asking for help is superficial. In the text, he says:

> Not like these hippies, whose poverty was so artificial and self-imposed that they could escape it with the snap of a finger. Whereas that Chilean beggar boy, like practically every indigent person I ever saw in my country or in any part of Latin America, was trapped in his race as well as his class. (208)

Through enunciation of this single example, Dorfman points out the factitiousness of the system which condemns many Latin Americans to poverty. Accordingly, Dorfman hints how the situation in the Latin America is ignored and kept hidden in the American society when he mentions that the Johnson Doctrine and the Alliance for Progress only curtained the reality and benefited only the upper class:

> The carrot had been devoured by the Latin American rich and what was revealed glaringly with the invasion of Santo Domingo was the crude reality of the Big Stick that was now, as it had been for the last hundred years, America's principal way of dealing with the turbulent South, mercilessly applied not only to the Caribbean that the U.S. had always treated as its own private lake but also to those who, in faraway Chile, protested that treatment. (186)

When Dorfman witnesses what his beloved the United States has become and to take revenge from the country that has caused the sufferings of many people in the South, he decides to sever all his ties with English language:

> My stay in Berkeley was to lash me even more tightly to the Chile I had chosen as my own, was to force me eventually to realize that in order to really go back I needed to rid myself of that last link, the English language, which still tied me to the United States. (210)

With this in mind, Dorfman mentions the fact that the powers who pushed his father into exile from the United States now function to distance Dorfman from his Chile where he looks at differently since now, he has found his own family there:

> Many years before, as an aide to Senator Joseph McCarthy, Nixon had been instrumental in my family's flight from the United States. Now he would cause me to lose the country we had escaped to; he would cause me to lose my country for a second time." (*Heading South* 235)

Dorfman follows his father's leads and allows his son, Rodrigo to be exposed to the hymns of the Unidad Popular, the socialist party led by Salvador Allende, through the fury of the Revolution. It should be emphasized that Dorfman's son agrees to sing the

hymns inside his head and to conceal a part of himself in the same manner as he is split in between his communist family and capitalist America. Still, Dorfman enthusiastically but also timidly allows his son to proceed with the same principles. In the text, he mentions how his wife tries to stop Rodrigo to sing one of the hymns:

> "Venceremos, venceremos, la miseria sabremos vencer." We shall overcome, we shall find a way of ending misery. She had told him to stop, never to sing that song again, and he had refused: Esas canciones me gustan, I like those songs. She then crouched down next to him, and taking him firmly by the shoulders, she forced up his chin so he had to look her in the eye and she proceeded to tell our six-year-old son that if he ever sang that song or any of the other songs we used to sing in the streets, the soldiers would come and shoot his daddy. Did he understand? Rodrigo had not responded for a few seconds. Angélica waited. Then he had said: "But if I sing them in my head, nobody will know." . . . This was how the resistance would grow, this was the way the past would endure: the words and deeds we had fed to the world yesterday would not, could not, easily be eradicated from this earth. (146)

By permitting his son to commemorate the counterhegemonic resistance, Dorfman leads the way to transmit it to the collective history, even though this act may put them in danger. Gareth Williams defines this part as a process of testimony. He suggests that it is a "narrative of martyrdom and self-sacrifice, of heroic self-divestment . . . will serve to inform future generations of their historical patrimony of revolution, thereby guaranteeing continuity in the counterhegemonic struggle" (84). By narrating the Chilean Revolution, Dorfman becomes the storyteller of the Chilean community. His life narrative "constitutes an attempt to come to terms both with his personal history and with that of the social and political world into which he was born, a world characterized by wars, revolutions and migrations" (Doloughan 148).

1.3. COLLECTIVE ENUNCIATION

In *Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari: Intersecting Lives* (2010), Dosse states: "minor literature is not the result of an individual subject of utterance but tries to express the voice of an always absent people without, however, becoming their spokesperson. It is a literature that uses collective arrangements of utterances" (244). Similarly, in the chapters

which start with the title of "A Chapter Dealing with the Discovery of Death," Dorfman includes historically significant moments for the Chilean people while narrating his personal odyssey. Starting from standing side by side with his comrades while they work for Allende's campaign until his exile, the author transmits the strikes, the blockades by Washington, and the curfews. Therefore, his narrative carries a collective value as well as a testimonial value.

In the text, Dorfman uses the first-person plural pronoun "we" and includes himself into the Chilean history as his purpose in writing becomes "the desire motivating these accounts is not to leave a personal record, but instead to document the reality of a whole people, the history of those who before were not allowed to voice their story nor their history" (Gugelberger and Kearney 8-9). For instance, when he comments on the foreign blockades against Allende, he emphasizes his loyalty to the nation as "Chile was my land, it belonged to me, I thought, more than to those drivers willing to sell it off to the highest bidder" (*Heading South* 34). As he gives details about how the foreign powers are determined to overthrow Salvador Allende to ensure stability in the Western Hemisphere, he resents the country that he used to admire, "Chile had become a country where we, who defended the legitimate government elected by the people, had to hide our training, while these men, who were being paid by a foreign power to overthrow that government, had no need to hide their financing" (*Heading South* 33-34).

While he is "fused with Chile and its cause and its people through the revolution that would, we thought, liberate the country," (*Heading South* 39) Dorfman provides cinematic approach to the point, in which he depicts Allende's fall as a primary observer: "I listened to Allende's últimas palabras from the Presidential Palace, his farewell speech in which he told his people that he would not resign, that he would die defending democracy, die so others might live" (*Heading South* 36). When the country is occupied by the soldiers, his desire to raise his voice for the Chilean community increases. However, until he is given a chance to write freely, he carries the guilt:

> when the country is being ravaged, when the President is dead, when Abel looks at his watch and we both notice there are three hours left till curfew, three hours till the sun sets on Santiago de Chile and then the soldiers own the uncontested city, policing it with their jeeps and their dogs and their

> machine guns, the rest of the people listening, trapped inside their houses, listening to the faraway shots, listening to the patrols getting nearer and nearer, listening for the sound of brakes and men in boots and shouted orders, listening to the sound passing by and not stopping, not this time, not this time, somewhere in this city a man like me listens to his neighbor being raided, listens to the cries, listens to his own heartbeat of relief, the horrible joy of knowing that it is somebody else being taken away, how to make him empathize with my tragedy if he is the one who is going to stay and I am the one who is going away, if he is right that I want to remain because—among ten thousand other reasons—I can't stand the idea of being shut out of this country and excluded from witnessing and transmitting its story through my words, that I cannot miss this chance to become totally, definitively, forever Chilean by writing myself into the country and the country into myself? (148)

Dorfman frankly says "I should not be here to tell this story. It's that simple: there is a day in my past, a day many years ago in Santiago de Chile, when I should have died and did not" (*Heading South* 3). He considers his survival as coincidental, and he relates it to fate until he is informed about the people who appoint him to be the one to stay alive and tell the story. Since his name on the emergency list is removed on purpose, his gratitude towards this act is covered by remorse as if he paid for his life with someone else's. In *Heading South*, he demonstrates the weight of this mental burden and the responsibility he carries as "I will have had to accept a future in which I am alive and far too many others will have been killed in my place" (4). Traumatized by the death of his friend who he calls to change shifts on the day of the coup, Dorfman reenacts a moment of execution in his dreams:

> In the years to come, he will be there, in a vision. Each time I imagine my death, I will invariably picture myself in a chair, hands tied behind my back. I am blindfolded—and yet, in that picture, I am also, impossibly, watching myself, and a man in uniform approaches and he has something, a stick, a pair of electrodes, a long needle, something blurred and piercing in his right hand. In that vision which still assaults me unexpectedly at anytime, anywhere, the body about to be hurt beyond repair is the body of Claudio Gimeno. He is naked in that chair. That is his body, but it is my face he wears. My face, because I had been assigned that turno, that stint, I was the one who should have been at La Moneda standing guard the night of September 10, I was the one who should have received the news that the Navy has just disembarked in Valparaiso, it should have been my hand that puts the receiver down and then with a heavy heart dialed the President and informed him that the coup has begun. (7-8)

In addition to this, when Dorfman takes refuge in the Argentinian Embassy after the coup, a similar sacrifice is made by the one who is trying to get into the Embassy. It is important

to emphasize that while his name is removed, he is not aware of the situation. However, on this occasion, he witnesses the helplessness of that person, and for this reason he feels the responsibility for taking advantage of the other's failure by taking his belongings, i.e., the blanket for himself. Hence, the memory of the blanket that is given by an anonymous comrade leaves a trace in his consciousness. Similarly, the narrative itself stands as a tool to pay his debts to the person who is one of the victims of the Pinochet regime. Dorfman places him into his words when he says:

> And now, more than twenty years later, I tell the story of the blanket that someone I never saw sent me as if from heaven. I tell his story even if I will never know what became of him. I tell his story because it is the only way I can thank him for keeping me warm, the only way I can mourn him and keep him alive, send him this blanket of words that cannot save him from whatever happened, what already happened to him and to me so long ago. (204)

Just as the blanket keeps Dorfman safe and warm, the book is attributed to the owner of the blanket as a tribute. The blanket symbolizes the solidarity among the Chilean people who protect each other invisibly. Even though the identity is unknown, Dorfman's author self comes into prominence to reunite with the Latin American people. Thus, the commemoration of those who accompany him in writing suggests that the author "carves for himself the archetypal role of community storyteller-keeper and narrator of the collective memory" (Vidal 16). As he begins to embrace his ties to Latin America, his guilt over the dead increases, and his narrative obtains other voices with multiple memories. As his "privileged position of being able to give voice to a period of Chile's history" is given to him (Doloughan 150), Dorfman attributes more meaning to his survival which he recognizes as less arbitrary and ambiguous:

> "Why? I asked him. Why had he done it? He paused, he turned inward as if consulting some person he had once been, he thought a bit and then said, in the same offhand way in which he probably had crossed my name off the list: "Well, somebody had to live to tell the story." (38-39)

Dorfman is reassured for reaching the conclusion that his narrative is not only confessional but also it is constructed to transmit a national tragedy for the Chilean people who witness their democratically elected president overthrown by the military. He justifies the decision of his friend, Fernando Flores, who crosses his name from the list as:

> Maybe he already knew that the tasks of defeat are not the tasks of victory. Maybe he knew that some of us would die, some of us would be jailed, some of us would turn traitor; and if that was going to happen, a witness would be needed who could escape the conflagration and tell the world the story. He thought I was that person, and at the last moment he had used his power over life and death to correct what he considered had been his error in offering me the job, what he considered my error in accepting it. It is a comforting idea, that I was spared because I was to be the storyteller. (39)

Therefore, Dorfman's personal narrative partially belongs to the Chilean legacy since it consists of "the promise of a common story for himself and the 'crowd,' a home in one language and one culture" (Wagner 158). In his narrative, he also sustains his connections with the political stand he defends, especially when he has a close relationship with Allende's daughter, Isabel. When he mentions her suicide, Dorfman states that the story of how the Allendes' lives end will always be a reminder for him to "carry her and her father and all the other dead of Chile like an orphan till the day I die" (*Heading South* 59). Through fulfilling his duty, he gives voices to whose voices have been taken by the military coup and he ties himself to the Chilean history while "joining the cultural chorus" as the storyteller. (McClennen, "The Diasporic Subject" 184). For this measure, he responds to the repressiveness through his words. Furthermore, as Doloughan points out, Dorfman acquires a unique subject position in the society from which he is disconnected until his adulthood:

> Dorfman senses that he is ultimately in the privileged position of being able to give voice to a period of Chile's history *from the perspective of an insider* insofar as he participated in its political and cultural life at a moment of change and transformation; at the same time however, as an adopted homeland and one which he was forced to abandon, he is also able to view Chile *from the outside* and to represent it at a distance, both temporal and geographic." (150-151)

The interconnectedness between his life and the story of the Americas acting as a catalyst and this inseparability of his migratory experiences from certain political events in history renders Dorfman a storyteller of the North and the South. When his existential marginalization from both countries is taken into consideration, narrating the collective history helps him to ease the trauma of deterritorialization. Roniger and Green note "especially for writers rooted in the language of communities that were silenced by repression and underwent processes of cultural transformation in which the exiles played only a tangential part while abroad" (4). More importantly, heading towards the final

"refuge" with both of the languages hints the idea that he reaches the understanding that both fragments of the self are accepted as his narrative symbolizes "an affirmation of the individual subject, even of individual growth and transformation, but in connection with a group or class situation marked by marginalization, oppression, and struggle" (Beverley "The Margin at the Center" 23). In *Heading South*, the writer implies this idea when he mentions how the family have been through many exiles and that now his own nuclear family reflects this fact as a mirror:

> As the plane rose up from Buenos Aires, I fought the weary certainty that history was repeating itself endlessly, that perhaps I was meant for exile. For the second time in my life I was being forced to leave the city of my birth, except that this time I was the one who was fleeing death and by my side was a son who was losing his country because of me, this time it was my wife who, like my mother, was following her husband into exile. Maybe this was the fate of my family, maybe this was a curse I couldn't escape. Twice I had made the attempt to settle down, twice I had adopted a country and a culture and a language, and both times I had found myself fleeing, I had found myself homeless in spite of all my efforts, and now it was all going to begin again, all over again. (275)

Thus, while the book is based on resolving the issue of coming to terms with the past that betrayed him, it is also "a 'step' in the constitution of his bilingual identity" (Wagner 12). At the end, the narrative exemplifies how Dorfman leaves the dream of returning to Chile and the thought of having a certain place where one truly belongs. It is stressed that the antagonism between the two cultures that the author stimulated unravels since they blend in Dorfman's persona. His exilic status is placed into a metaphorical territory where the cultural and linguistic differences convene without borders. In his essay "Footnotes to a Double Life," Dorfman talks about how his life writing embodies the negotiation of the hostile forces in his identity in order to survive:

> What matters is that by the time I had decided to write the memoir, these two sides of my brain, these two tongues lodged in the cavity called my cabeza— also known as a head— had declared a truce, had decided to stop waging war because I needed them both to survive exile . . . I needed them because of the dictatorship in Chile: how to deny the possibility of transmitting twice over to an increasingly deaf and indifferent world the story of my ravaged land— which would, presumably, lead to my being able to convince twice as many people. And that armistice led me to believe that I could now tackle the story of my life, I could at least give it an ending that did not conclude in strife and dividing walls. (Lesser 181)

Dorfman realizes that the contrasting parts of his self, Spanish and English, Chilean and American are needed to recover from the traumatic events of his past, including his exile from Chile after the coup. While "declaring a truce" between them, his story also embraces the story of the Chilean community. To conclude, while his work becomes a representative of all people who struggled under the Pinochet's dictatorship, it also stands for all people who were thrown out of their country and left without a home. Hence, although his story takes place during the Cold War era, Dorfman's life writing represents a universal issue about the diaspora. While he embraces his bilingual, hybrid identity, he reconciles with his past that consisted of painful, traumatic circumstances, unjust political arrangements for preserving the hemispheric agenda and a shared history. For these reasons, *Heading South, Looking North: A Bilingual Journey* by Ariel Dorfman is a powerful narrative that binds two sides that were opposed to each other through a created space in literature where Dorfman fulfills a lingual area for the displaced and alienated, a counterrevolutionary subjectivity while portraying a mutual pain as he finishes by saying: "One circle in my life is ending and another circle is about to begin and the answer is not clear, . . . as I head North again and the South begins to recede into memory, I do not know then as I do not know now if that circle will ever close" (*Heading South* 278). As he admits his journey between the North and the South is never-ending, he eludes himself from any territorial boundary and creates a literary space to pour his memories to reconcile and outlive.

Julia Alvarez's collection of essays titled *Something to Declare*, the impact of the American culture, this time into the Dominican Republic is seen through the linguistic dominance of English in Alvarez's voice. Similar to Dorfman, Alvarez prefers to write her memories in English through which she created her authorial self and united her divided identity. It is important to emphasize that, Alvarez fights against the discrimination of women in Dominican society and chooses the American culture and English to liberate herself from the conventional norms. Since this liberation is enabled through carving out a narrative space, she performs a reconciliation with the Dominican part of her identity, which she rejected in the first stages of her life. Separated from the Dominican culture and Spanish due to her family's exile, Alvarez's deterritorialization finalizes through her political criticism of Rafael Trujillo's regime and her narration of

the Mirabal Sisters who are assassinated under the dictatorship. Like Dorfman, who criticizes the repression from the United States in the Western Hemisphere and the Pinochet regime, Alvarez focuses on the social changes through the American influence in her work of minor literature as she experiences an American childhood in her native land.

CHAPTER 2

JULIA ALVAREZ'S *SOMETHING TO DECLARE* (1998)

> The rupture a woman experiences is not a rending from an always-nourishing home, but a mitosis, a split not from but within the self, into two distinct beings —the self and the double— that can enable transcendence.
>
> Amy Kaminsky,
> *Reading the Body Politic*

In *Essays Critical and Clinical* (1997) Deleuze states that the notion of minor literature allows writers to eliminate the frontier of identity through narrative. Having considered minor writing as a form that extends to a political enunciation, he argues that the minor writing allows authors to cross the borders of identity by carrying multiple voices in the text. In other words:

> Whenever minor writers enter a process of becoming, they engage collective lines of continuous various within a regime of signs, and in so doing invent the voice of a minor people. It's the becoming of the writer. Kafka for central Europe, Melville for America- both present literature as the collective enunciation of a minor people, or of all minor peoples, who only find their expression in and through the writer. (15)

Similarly, in "Deterritorializations: The Rewriting of Home and Exile in Western Feminist Discourse," Caren Kaplan argues that minor literature is a form that allows displaced writers to deconstruct the conventional definition of "identity":

> The value of this conception lies in the paradoxical movement between minor and major - a refusal to admit either position as final or static. The issue is positionality. In modern autobiographical discourses, for example, the self that is constructed is often construed to be evolving in a linear fashion from a stable place of origin towards a substantial present. In postmodern autobiographical writing such a singular, linear construction of the self is often untenable or, at the very least, in tension with competing issues. (189)

Even though Julia Alvarez has not personally involved in any political activities during the Trujillo regime in the Dominican Republic, her literary voice implies that the exile and the pain of the Dominican community haunts her in the United States. After Alvarez

is born, her family returns to the Dominican Republic due to her mother's illness. She connects her roots to both countries by stepping into them from an early stage of her life. However, because of the Dominican Republic's political turmoil then, the constant feeling of fear and surveillance by the dictator Rafael Trujillo's secret police (SIM, Military Intelligence Service) that follows her father who is working on overthrowing Trujillo through underground activities, the family has to exile themselves to the United States four months before the time when the Mirabal Sisters, who are the founders of the underground movement, are brutally murdered by Trujillo's regime.

Consisting of twenty-four essays, *Something to Declare* (1998) is divided into two parts "Customs" and "Declarations" and it symbolizes the author's dividedness between her Latina and American identity. Alvarez starts by talking about her childhood and focuses on the issues in her family and her native Dominican culture. The first part of her text includes her efforts of obtaining a new linguistic ability to Americanize herself as well as gaining self-sufficiency while she comes to an understanding that in this new culture, both her mother tongue and her roots are considered subaltern or inferior.

In *Reflections on Exile*, Said refers to the fact that being an exile is "fundamentally a discontinuous state of being. Exiles are cut off from their roots, their land, their past. They generally do not have armies or states, although they are often in search of them" (183). Similar to this, Alvarez stays as an outcast in the new country until she comes to terms with her exilic self through using the power of writing in her life. In chapters "My English," "La Gringuita," and "I Want to Be Miss América," she explains that her womanhood is affected by the clash between the Dominican culture and the host culture. Witnessing a huge difference between the two societies in this manner, Alvarez questions the conventional gender norms and the perception of women in both countries. Having migrated from a country with a repressive leader, she revolts against the patriarchal superiority imposed in the Dominican Republic by raising her voice. While the first part ends with the chapter titled "Family Matters," it is safe to assume that "Customs" is a metaphorical path she takes on the journey of being a Dominican-American writer. In the second part of the text, "Declarations," the readers witness Alvarez's reconciliation with the idea of hybridity. In the chapters titled "Of Maids and Other Muses," "So Much

Depends," and "Doña Aída, with Your Permission," the process of having both cultures in her personality is completed. For these chapters, it can be stated that cultural and political aspects synthesize as Julia Alvarez decides to take a journey back to her native land. Consequently, during her trips to the Dominican Republic, she finds out about her muses that helped her to use the power of storytelling.

Having found out how the Trujillo regime worked its way through leaking from the structure of the family ties, Alvarez unearths how the Dominican community had been silenced by the power of a patriarch. In the chapter "Chasing the Butterflies," Alvarez's text evolves into a testimonial narrative in which she uses the story of the Mirabal Sisters as a tool to reconnect with the past and to give a voice against the Trujillo regime. Lastly, the part ends with a chapter titled "Writing Matters," in which the two fragmented pieces of the self intermingle, Alvarez finds her voice and becomes the voice of the silenced in the Dominican Republic during Trujillo's regime.

Throughout her narrative, her narrated "I" is presented a process of becoming and Alvarez step by step goes through this process of being a hybrid, Dominican-American writer. As a result of this, her narrating "I" emerges as a the "remembering agent" who aims to coming to terms with the duality in Alvarez's self. In addition, by attempting to tell the story of the Mirabal Sisters, Alvarez's identity opposes to the woman image under Trujillo's regime and reflects her ideological "I" by owning a political stand against the dictatorship.

As the concept of minor literature stresses "the inseparability of the personal and the political as well as the unavoidably collective dimension of any individual effort by members of a marginalized group" (Bogue 105), her life writing through essays stands as an example. Since Alvarez's memories center upon the gender issues, this chapter is divided into three sections that analyze her work as a *Küntslerroman*,[3] exemplifying all fragments of the self through age and experiences as Julia Alvarez manages to connect her two roots in one body and becomes a Dominican-American writer.

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[3] This term can be classified as a subgenre of bildungsroman. It is a narrative form that deals with "the youth and development of an individual who becomes—or is on the threshold of becoming—a painter, musician, or poet" (https://www.britannica.com/art/Kunstlerroman).

2.1. DETERRITORIALIZATION OF LANGUAGE

Due to the previous acquaintance with the host country, Julia Alvarez's childhood memories begin with a great amount of influence by the United States culture and her writing depicts the Americanization of the Dominican community. In Karina A. Bautista's words, the collection depicts "the process of social fragmentation that Dominican society experienced from the 1950s, the last period of Rafael Leonidas Trujillo's dictatorship, to the end of the nineties" (Bautista 131). When Alvarez starts her essay "Grandfather's Blessing," she not only affirms the influence of the host country on her own, but she also foreshadows the fact that the same country has "created the circumstance that made them have to seek refuge in the first place" (Bautista 132). Within the same essay, Alvarez displays the initiation process of the American influence as well as the pressure of traditional gender rules when she is asked about her future occupation. In both ways, when she decides to become a bullfighter, she is disapproved because of her gender whereas her decision to become a cowboy, "an Americanization of [her] bullfighting dream," is also converted to a cowgirl (*Something to Declare* 5). Nevertheless, raised by a mother who also obtains American education, Alvarez and her sisters also attend the Carol Morgan School in the Dominican Republic, which causes cultural disorientation throughout their childhood and proves Alvarez's affiliation with the American Dream.

In another essay titled "An American Childhood in the Dominican Republic," Alvarez mentions how they had to memorize the American national anthem even though their broken English does not allow them to understand it "We sang a song addressing Osaycanyousee, but since I didn't understand English very well and was merely parroting my classmates, I didn't know exactly what we were asking him for. I assumed that, as in a hymn, there was a request attached to the song" (77). The American education given to the Alvarez sisters can be explained as a preparation for the foreshadowed exile as well as the ongoing American influence promoted by the regime. Lucía M. Suárez clarifies this issue as "her 'American childhood' is shaped by historical dependency on the United

States. In particular, fear that the Dominican Republic would become another Cuba led to a strong U.S. presence on the island" (122). Shaped by the Cold War politics, when exile occurs, the issue of social acceptance becomes her primary concern. The anxiety of adjusting to a new culture reveals itself as being tied to standards of beauty and the ability to speak the language. Aware of these standards, Alvarez gives an account of the situation based on these gender-specific dreams in the chapter "Our Papers" as a version of the American promise to be well-accepted in the society. She says "Meanwhile, we girls better practice our English! We would get so tall and pale and pretty in the United States, and smart! Maybe we would marry Americans and have little blue-eyed babies that didn't know how to speak Spanish!" (*Something to Declare* 18). The superiority of the host nation that is already present since the childhood spent in the Dominican Republic intensifies when the family lands in the United States. In Schultermandl's words, "this interference between Dominican culture and a more attractive American culture and the distortion of Alvarez's sense of belonging reaches its full dimensions when the family finally immigrates to the United States" (5). The acknowledgment of English as a superior language does not change even though she identifies her mother tongue as kind, cheerful and homely. To this viewpoint, her first encounter with the English language gives the first hints of the repression by the Trujillo regime. Alvarez states in the chapter "My English":

> besides all these versions of Spanish, every once in a while another strange tongue emerged from my papi's mouth or my mami's lips. What I first recognized was not a language, but a tone of voice, serious, urgent, something important and top secret being said, some uncle in trouble, someone divorcing, someone dead. (*Something to Declare* 22)

Since the parents use English in order to talk about the possible dangers, the language manages to pass these feelings into the hearer. Alvarez inherits the idea that "From the beginning, English was the sound of worry and secrets, the sound of being left out" (22). Incapability to understand the new language inflicted worry in her about what could have happened that she fails to understand, and for this reason, it connotes negativity. Foreshadowing the exile and upcoming alienation in the new culture, in "An American Childhood in the Dominican Republic," Alvarez comments on the issue by declaring that "obsession with American things was no longer merely enchantment with the United States, but a strategy for survival" (80).

On the one hand, the family's exile to the United States indicates a loss of a linguistic territory that Alvarez was gaining in the Spanish language as in the chapter "First Muse." She indicates this by saying "Overnight, we lost everything: a homeland, an extended family, a culture, and yes, as I've already said, the language I felt at home in" (139). On the other hand, English holds the status of the language of power while Alvarez's characterization of English in the Western Hemisphere is "an imperialistic imperative," (Schultermandl 4) as it stands in between the sense of unbelonging and a necessity of survival. In addition to a binding need to use English, Alvarez also hints the need for being appreciated as a young Latina adolescent and the need for being included in the host land. However, when the truth behind the discrimination and realization of how Spanish and the Latinidad are perceived as subaltern, she undergoes an identity crisis since her dream to become an American teenager profile is deferred. Especially at school, any misusage in English returns as offensive feedback from her peers or teachers and she realizes how the two parts that she tries to unite are not considered to fit each other by the society:

> I would bow my head, humiliated by the smiles and snickers of the American children around me. I grew insecure about Spanish. My native tongue was not quite as good as English, as if words like columpio were illegal immigrants trying to cross a border into another language. But Teacher's discerning grammar-and-vocabulary-patrol ears could tell and send them back. (*Something to Declare* 24)

Coming to understand the state of being an immigrant, Alvarez refuses to acknowledge the fact that they are not wanted and continues to live in a false image through the promotion of self-made by the host country. In Fatima Mujcinovic's words, "America allows her to live in one time frame and create an ideal, yet false, self-image" (177). However, her trauma of identity formation worsens at the time she is also forced to see how Latinos are perceived. In the chapter "First Muse," Alvarez talks about an incident in which she is forced to recognize the power of silence until she authorizes English:

> One thing I did understand: boys at school chased me across the playground, pelting me with stones, yelling, "Spic! Spic! Go back to where you came from!"
>
> "No speak eengleesh," I lied, taking the easy way out, instead of being brave and speaking up like Scheherazade.

> But my silence was also a strategy. Inside my head a rich conversation had started, inspired by the world of books. (139)

Furthermore, Alvarez modifies their ancestral region in order to complete her admission to the new society as she says:

> Our teachers and classmates at the local Catholic schools referred to us as "Porto Ricans" or "Spanish." No one knew where the Dominican Republic was on the map. "South of Florida," I explained, "in the same general vicinity as Bermuda and Jamaica." I could just as well have said west of Puerto Rico or east of Cuba or right next to Haiti, but I wanted us to sound like a vacation spot, not a Third World country, a place they would look down on. (*Something to Declare* 38-39)

Thus, until the time when Alvarez succeeds in expressing herself confidently in the English language, she does not show any distinct awareness that could enable her to fight against discrimination. Yet, she emulates to be a part of "an American society in which she does not feel accepted, a place in which she experiences the effects of a marginal condition" (Bautista 146). Before coming to an understanding of the gap within the society that does not allow her to blend, she persists on assigning herself the qualities of a young American girl. In other words, "only after experiencing American culture in the United States can [she] become aware of their foreignness" (Schultermandl 6). Knowing that the Dominican culture expects a submissive female profile as "girls were to have no aspirations beyond being good wives and mothers" (*Something to Declare* 42), Alvarez compares the discourse of gender through the idealization of beauty. When the primary proposal of the American culture is an opportunity to create oneself from scratch, she does not consider the idealized American female image that does not coincide with the image of the woman in her native culture. She mentions this incident saying:

> Mami didn't even notice our haired legs; she was too busy disapproving of the other changes. Our clothes, for one. "You're going to wear *that* in public!" She'd gawk, as if to say, what will the Americans think of us?
>
> "This *is* what the Americans wear," we would argue back.
>
> But the dresses we had picked out made us look cheap, she said, like bad, fast girls ─gringas without vergüenza, without shame. (40)

While watching the Miss America contest every year becomes a family tradition, the sisters do not only hope for becoming one, but they also associate Miss America with the ultimate degree of being an American woman. Alvarez also discovers that being an

American provides more opportunities than being a Dominican. Therefore, she wants to benefit from assets of this particularity that the contestants have:

> As for the prettiest Miss America, we sisters kept our choices secret until the very end. The range was limited — pretty white women who all really wanted to be wives and mothers. But even the small and inane set of options these girls represented seemed boundless compared with what we were used to. We were being groomed to go from being dutiful daughters to being dutiful wives with hymens intact. No stops along the way that might endanger the latter; no careers, no colleges, no shared apartments with girlfriends, no boyfriends, no social lives. But the young women onscreen, who were being held up as models in this new country, were in college, or at least headed there. They wanted to do this; they were going to do that with their lives. (*Something to Declare* 42)

Alvarez heads towards gaining the same admittance that is sustained through being blended into the American culture. Here, she is convinced that the way to reach success is to be an American and discarding her ancestral roots of the Dominican Republic. To summarize with Suarez's words:

> Alvarez does not focus merely on the dynamics of being or not being American; she analyzes the dynamics of what advantages being American could hold. She notes that all of the women in the pageant were in college or going to college, unlike in the Dominican tradition, where women were expected to be good wives and mothers, and education was not a given. The author wants "access." (Suarez 125)

This recognition pushes Alvarez to suppress her trauma of exile and leads her to focus on the advantages of being an American, which she hopes to obtain through reaching a good level of linguistic proficiency. In other words, by exposing herself to the language as much as possible, "she enters a different signifying frame, which allows her to reinvent herself through the distance from the originary sign" (Mujcinovic 177) and distances herself from her native culture. When she revisits the Dominican Republic for vacation, she uses English to have the linguistic leverage of not addressing respectfully to her elders. Since English does not contain the formal "usted" as in Spanish, Alvarez can use this linguistic difference as a passage of illusionary adulthood as well as a show of success in adapting to a new culture "By the time my sisters and I came home for vacations, we were rolling our eyes in exasperation at our old-world Mami and Papi, using expressions like *far out*, and *what a riot!* and *outta sight*, and *believe you me* as if we had been born to them" (*Something to Declare* 63). Nevertheless, the illusion of access to proficiency in both languages at this age encourages her to be braver concerning culture and gender.

The text indicates Alvarez's thoughts on Spanish as a language she inherits, and she can speak it anytime she wants when she returns to the Dominican Republic:

> Our growing distance from Spanish was a way in which we were setting ourselves free from that old world where, as girls, we didn't have much say about what we could do with our lives. In English, we didn't have to use the formal *usted* that immediately put us in our place with our elders. We were responsible for ourselves and that made us feel grown-up. (63)

Not until Alvarez has her first boyfriend, she becomes conscious of the distance between her and her native language. When Alvarez stays with her paternal relatives, she meets Dilita, a friend that she shares the same hybrid background. In the chapter "La Gringuita," Alvarez describes her as:

> Like me, Dilita was a hybrid. Her parents had moved to Puerto Rico when she was three, and she had lived for some time with a relative in New York. But her revolutionary zeal had taken the turn of glamour girl than my New-England-hippy variety. In fact, Dilita looked just like the other Dominican girls. She had a teased hairdo; I let my long hair hang loose in a style I can only describe as "blowing in the wind." Dilita wore makeup; I did a little lipstick and maybe eyeliner if she would put it on for me. She wore outfits; I had peasant blouses, T-shirts, and blue jeans. (*Something to Declare* 66)

As the comparison between Dilita and Alvarez suggests, her new friend is positioned as an almost ideal-like figure in Alvarez's life, the "gringuita" she has never been, a foreigner to the land and its culture. In the text Alvarez mentions how Dilita is capable of controlling her destiny unlike her, who is drifted from one place to another. Alvarez adds to this contrast saying: "She was the first 'hyphenated' person I had ever met whom I considered successful, not tortured as a hybrid the way my sisters and I were" (66). While Dilita is considered to be a fully Americanized girl, Alvarez summarizes her own adjustment process as a failure. On the one hand, she follows Dilita's steps when she meets her first boyfriend, Mangú, who is a Dominican boy. On the other, when Mangú and Dilita's boyfriend Manuel nickname them as "las gringuitas," Alvarez immediately opposes it as she does not want to be labelled as the foreigner in her native country. Going back and forth in this identity crisis, Alvarez comes to an understanding of how she actually wants to be a part of both cultures as her boyfriend pays a compliment on the way she dances merengue, the national dance of the Dominican Republic. In the narrative, Alvarez portrays this incident as:

> But though he teased me with that nickname, Mangú made it clear that he would find a real gringa unappealing. "You're Dominican," he declared. The litmus test was dancing merengue, our national, fast-moving, lots-of-hip-action dance. As we moved across the dance floor, Mangú would whisper the lyrics in my ear, complimenting my natural rhythm that showed, so he said, that my body knew where it came from. I was pleased with the praise. The truth is I wanted it both ways: I wanted to be good at the best things in each culture. Maybe I was picking up from Dilita how to be a successful hybrid. (68)

However, Alvarez's perfectioned hybrid image is disfigured when she recognizes the shallowness of the conversations with Mangú. This incident also remarks her loss of territorial consciousness that she does not fully belong to any of the cultures, "It was a measure of the growing distance between ourselves and our native culture — a distance we all felt we could easily retrace with just a little practice. It wasn't until I failed at first love, in Spanish, that I realized how unbridgeable that gap had become" (64). In this moment of enlightenment, Alvarez accepts the victory of the American culture, now that she has obtained the language of the other, she has given up the foundations of her primary self. Unlike Ariel Dorfman, who has decided on which language to speak from time to time in accordance with his developing identity, Alvarez only focuses on English, which she considers as superior to the other. Hence, until her loss of connection with her community, she does not find out about the loss that was repressed. In the same chapter, she points out:

> The truth was I couldn't even imagine myself as someone other than the person I had become in English, a woman who writes books in the language of Emily Dickinson and Walt Whitman, and also of the rude shopper in the grocery store and of the boys throwing stones in the schoolyard, their language, which is now my language. (72)

Furthermore, it is a disappointment when Alvarez is not able to communicate with her first boyfriend as the loss of connection from her roots becomes more visible to her:

> I myself never had a Spanish Customs only boyfriend again. Maybe the opportunity never presented itself, or maybe it was that as English became my dominant tongue, too many parts of me were left out in Spanish for me to be able to be intimate with a potential life partner in only that language. (70-71)

It can be stated that even though the return is physically possible, it is "not necessarily psychologically attainable" (Mujcinovic 223). In view of the consequences of Alvarez's exilic journey, Kaminsky discusses the sentimental value of language for an exiled person

as "the means by which the connection with a fragmented culture can be maintained" (42). When Julia Alvarez attempts to have an intimate relationship with someone from her original roots and she is not able to pour that intimacy into words, she is overcome by the emotions of "inability to find a stable and complete meaning [that] provokes a crisis of self, a fragmented subjectivity place in a continuous state of lack" (Mujcinovic 168). In Alvarez's case, as this return is temporary, she continues to choose English over Spanish even though her trauma is uncovered through this event. Due to the fear of political persecution, this choice forms itself a something that "requires multiple alliances and the ability to shift ideological and cultural positions, sometimes quickly, as an impulse of survival" (Bautista 132). The impact of this migratory change reflects the dependency on Spanish as she calls "By rubbing the lamp of language, I could make the genie appear: the sights, sounds, smells, the people and places of the homeland I had lost" (*Something to Declare* 140) to satisfy her longing for her homeland.

Afterwards, during her identity-negotiation Alvarez prefers attaining self-sufficiency as she has to sustain her life in the United States through the power of writing. Under the reality that "language was power" (*Something to Declare* 140), she decides to create her identity through it, "In this new culture, my sisters and I had to find new ways to be, new ways to see, and─with the change in language─new ways to speak. It was this opportunity to create ourselves from scratch that led me to become a writer" (156). The author manages to cope with the trauma of diasporic experience by satisfying her "need to recover a distant self or cultural location through memory, nostalgia, and the power of the pen" (Mayock 223). Similarly, in "Resisting Autobiography: Out-Law Genres and Transnational Feminist Subjects," Caren Kaplan argues that life writing "becomes a 'place,' a safe location to keep crucial, culturally specific memories" (131) which in this case allows Alvarez to connect herself to the past of the Dominican culture. Martinez suggests that "in choosing to express her Latinidad by way of the English language, Alvarez deterritorializes—which is to say destabilizes—the English language" (4). As a result, when she encounters Dominican writer Aída Cartagena Portalatín in a meeting and is told not to write in English and go back to her original country and language, Alvarez recognizes the fact that she cannot be a writer with only one part of herself and says:

> But, you're right, Dona Aída, I'm also not una norteamericana. I am not a mainstream American writer with my roots in a small town in Illinois or Kentucky or even Nuevo México. I don't hear the same rhythms in English as a native speaker of English. Sometimes I hear Spanish in English (and of course, vice versa). That's why I describe myself as a Dominican American writer. That's not just a term. I'm mapping a country that's not on the map, and that's why I'm trying to put it down on paper. (173)

Alvarez's life writing interconnects the power of the Dominican culture with the individualism she has in the United States. Alvarez focuses on the challenges of gender discourse in Trujillo's regime not only to connect herself to the culture but also to justify her persona which crosses "beyond cultural borders and is principally located in the Third Space, a sort of "in-between space" located between existing referential systems and antagonisms" (Wolf 135). "Alvarez utilizes a major language as a medium by which to speak of the minor, or marginal, Dominican American experience—a perspective that has historically been largely defined by the Spanish language and Dominican culture," and becomes a minor writer to which Deleuze and Guattari refer (Martinez 4).

2.2. POLITICAL IMMEDIACY

In "Ten of My Writing Commandments," Alvarez says that "I think that storytelling is a moral force. So yes, I am a political writer" (36). In her narrative, Alvarez emphasizes how storytelling plays a significant role in her life while becoming a writer. Her childhood memories in the collection proves the fact that her interest in writing has helped to overcome the disconnectedness from her homeland due to a thirty-year old dictatorship that put her family's life in danger. As Sidonie Smith states "The very impetus for contemporary autobiographical manifestos, however, lies in the recognition of a vexed relationship between what too easily becomes the binary opposition of the political and the personal" (*Women Autobiography Theory* 436). Apart from using language as a tool for re-creating her identity, Alvarez examines Dominican history to see how it is used to create a communal identity by the Trujillo regime. For this reason, Alvarez's political immediacy can be examined through her dissection of the differences between the

Hispanic and the American gender norms. In this case, the more her political acquaintance increases, the more she detests Trujillo's regime which uses the binary oppositions of gender. Since the story of her exile resulted from the political polarization of the Cold War and hemispheric defense policies of the United States, her exilic state is exemplary of how the element of fear works in duality. Accordingly, her life writing is "set against the background of the long and troubled history of American military intervention in the island's politics as well as the totalitarian paternalism with which Trujillo ruled his people" (Rosario-Sievert 77). In her narrative, Alvarez touches upon the Trujillo regime's principle which is based on glorifying paternalistic persona over the Dominican community by saying:

> At this point I would always ask her why she and my father had returned to live in the country if they knew the dictatorship was so bad. And that's when my mother would tell me how, under pressure from his friends up north, Trujillo pretended to be liberalizing his regime. How he invited all exiles back to form political parties. How he announced that he would not be running in the next elections. My father had returned only to discover that the liberalization was a hoax staged so that the regime could keep the goodwill and dollars of the United States. (105-6)

The narrative includes how loyalty in a traditional family can be used as a political weapon by the regime and Trujillo as a character in cautionary and moral narratives to prevent misbehavior:

> Whenever we misbehaved, she would use his example as proof that character shows from the very beginning. One such story showed the seeds of Trujillo's megalomania. As a child, Trujillo had insisted his mother sew coke bottle tops or chapitas to his shirt front so that he could have a chest of medals. Later, the underground's code name for him would be Chapita because of his attachment to his hundreds of medals. When my sisters and I cared too much about our appearance, my mother would tell us how Trujillo's vanity knew no bounds. (105)

More significantly, Trujillo stands as a powerful male figure and his images are displayed on walls of the houses by using governmental power to establish a patriarchal rule. Through assigning himself as the ultimate authority and decision-maker figure in the Dominican society, Trujillo assures his domination. In the narrative, Alvarez implies his status among the families saying: "Images of the dictator hung in every house next to the crucifix and la Virgencita with the declaration beneath: In this house Trujillo is Chief" (104). Apart from this, the narrative includes how Trujillo's sexual deviation is associated

with his leadership as a method of empowerment. Knowing that Trujillo prefers women with high social status, Alvarez exemplifies how Trujillo threatens and objectifies women by saying, "Especially, I imagine my mother's life. Respectable families such as hers kept their daughters out of the public eye, for Trujillo was known to have an appetite for pretty girls, and once his eye was caught, there was no refusing him" (*Something to Declare* 103).Finding out the notorious parades in which women have to march and turn their heads when they are passing Trujillo, Alvarez expresses how he controls women while he steps on the masculinity of other men and humiliates them to polish his power:

> To my father and other men in the country, the most humiliating of these tributes was the occasional parade in which women were made to march and turn their heads and acknowledge the great man as they passed the review stand. If you did not march, your cédula would not be stamped, and without a stamped identification card, you could do nothing; in particular, you could not obtain your passport to leave the country under the pretext of wanting to study heart surgery. This was the second escape—this time with his whole family — that my father was planning. (*Something to Declare* 106)

In the memory of Alvarez's mother, a Trujillo figure adorned with a number of medals matches the cautionary tales that her mother used to tell the Alvarez sisters to demonstrate his megalomania. The revelation of his black skin also implies that his chauvinistic figure is only an act of glorification on the surface and adds up to the figure he intends to create:

> For there, no more than ten steps away, he stands, a short, plump man sweating profusely in his heavy dress uniform. The medals on his chest flash brightly in the hot sun so that he looks as if he has caught on fire. She can see the rivulets of sweat under his Napoleonic hat, making his pancake makeup run down his face, revealing the dark skin beneath. I invent this scene because I want my mother to see what she cannot yet imagine: El Jefe coming undone. (107)

As Alvarez introduces how the gender normative behavior opens doors for women in the Dominican Republic, the illusionary world for women in her mother country becomes obvious as she reaches a certain age of maturity. In the narrative, Alvarez mentions how her godmother uses her beauty to obtain the freedom of travel under Trujillo's rule:

> My godmother, who was described as one of the most beautiful widows in the country, got permission to go on a trip because she was clever. At a state function, she told El Jefe that she knew he was gentleman, and a gentleman would not refuse a lady a favor. She wanted so much to travel. The next morning a black limousine from the National Palace rolled up to her door to deliver her papers, along with some flowers. (13)

Trujillo does not only acquire the status of being the leader of the country but also through glorifying female beauty, he limits any sort of liberation of women by not letting them participate in politics or social activism. By the falsified depiction of women almost as feeble-minded, objectified beings, he maintains a romantic paternalism over the Dominican women. In Alvarez's words "It seemed then that we were not living in a dictatorship but in a fairyland of sand and sun and girlish mothers who shared in our fun" (15). Through these episodes of memory, Julia Alvarez's political identity begins to be formed according to her self-positioning as an independent woman who opposes what Trujillo's Dominican Republic stipulates. Similar to Ariel Dorfman, Alvarez gives voice to those who are silenced by the oppressive regime. By doing this through her life writing, she creates a counterargument against Trujillo, and as Smith states, "writing the self shatters the cultural hall of mirrors and breaks the silence imposed by male speech" (*Women Autobiography Theory* 76). Alvarez also discovers the fact that the United States' involvement in the Dominican policies and its support of Trujillo, and her admiring perspective for the host country collapses:

> We were not told that every night our house had been surrounded by black Volkswagens; that the SIM had been on the verge of arresting my father; that we had, in fact, escaped to the United States. But this great country that had offered my parents a refuge had also created the circumstances that made them have to seek refuge in the first place. It was this same United States that had helped put our dictator in place during their occupation of the country from 1916 to 1924. (108)

Therefore, Alvarez's collection of essays become "[a] political statement with which the narrator ridicule[s] the dogma of American democracy" (Schultermandl 5). From this point on, she begins to understand how inconsistent the actions of her host country are, and her essays serve as a political satire. At the same time her family's exile illustrates many others who are forced to migrate to the United States or to suffer under the regime. The narrating "I" represents a multivocality as a "mark of a desire not to be silenced or defeated, to impose oneself on an institution of power and privilege from the position of the excluded, the marginal, the subaltern" (Klaren 572) and takes control in the political stand. Hence, the readers acknowledge "the fallacy of the 'land of freedom'" the protection offered in exile is shattered in the same way as was the protection of home" (Mujcinovic 172). Similarly, William Safran argues that "members of diaspora communities are by turns mistreated by the host country as 'strangers within the gates' or

welcomed or exploited for the sake of the domestic and diplomatic interests of the host country" (92). The dynamic of how Trujillo's authority functioned as a "policeman of the Western Hemisphere" and even though assurances of the host country seem appealing for those like Alvarez during her childhood, an invisible wall of animosity exists. Giving this circumstance, Alvarez begins to describe the dynamics between the United States and the Dominican Republic in her life step-by-step and points out the duality that starts from her primary school education.

> My education was a colonialist one: not imposed from the outside but from within my own family. I was to learn the culture, tongue, manners of the powerful country to our north that had set our dictator in place and kept him there for thirty-one years. Maybe my parents did know what they were doing. (*Something to Declare* 135)

However, differentiating itself from its northern ally, Rafael Trujillo's patriarchal exercise of power enabled him to display himself as a phallic apparatus and a father figure to all in the Republic. His known interest in young women and his desire to sustain this authority on his community are productions of a traditional masculine behavior. In "The Dictator's Seduction: Gender and State Spectacle during the Trujillo Regime," Lauren Derby states that:

> "Trujillo drew upon a traditional genre of masculinity in which himself-aggrandizement was based on the sheer number of women he could lay claim to-women who highlighted his prowess as lover, father, husband, as well as defender of his female liaisons and extended family." (1113)

This conventional idea of paternalism brought into his repressive regime stands as a part of the storytelling tradition in the Dominican Republic. The representation of Trujillo as the strongest masculine symbol in the Dominican Republic requires any female characters only to become "a foil for the dictator's multiple masculine identities" (Derby 1113). On account of this potent imagery of Trujillo, Alvarez chooses to resist through the same tool that has been used by the rule. Seeking a getaway from the constant anxiety and fear, Alvarez chooses to read *The Thousand and One Nights*, the story of a girl whose sufferings evoke her own life. Her selection of Scheherazade grants Alvarez to become the protagonist of her own story as well as a power enough to tell the story of others. It is important to state that Scheherazade stands as a more individualist, independent female figure. She chooses her over other characters which are a lot more traditional, fairy tale characters that are considered more appropriate for what the regime asks women to

become. The author prefers to call Scheherazade "her first muse" and is impressed by her story which is a method of enchantment against the Sultan, helping her to survive. In a very similar journey, Alvarez too finds her muses in order to attain inner peace and integrity in her identity. Thus, the opening lines of the chapter go as:

> Once upon a time, I lived in another country and in another language under a cruel dictatorship, which my father was plotting to overthrow. But what I remember is not the cruel dictator, not the disappearances, not my parents' nervous voices behind closed doors, but the storybook that helped me get through the long, dull school days that were my understanding of what dictatorships made children do. (133)

Throughout that storybook, Alvarez adopts the habit of narration which later makes her understand that words might be dangerous without even realizing. In her childhood, she uses this habit to hide her small mistakes that might get her parents angry. While telling a story to escape from punishments, she makes up the story of a man walking around the house which makes the family worried since the underground activities against the dictatorship are still ongoing. Apart from the small benefits, the story of Scheherazade eases her spirit that senses the danger and her struggle to live amazes the author. Comparatively, Alvarez was born in a country and was living in a system that silences its opponents and she associates herself with the strong female figure. Later on, as a writer, she acquires a narrative voice that she uses for those who are silenced during the disappearances, tortures, imprisonments, and surveillance by Trujillo's officers. This association generates the questioning of conventional gender norms and goes on until Alvarez becomes a hybrid writer:

> *I AM SCHEHERAZADE*, she would always begin. *I am a girl stuck in a kingdom that doesn't think females are very important.*
>
> Why, that's just like me, I'd pipe up. It's always the boy cousins who are asked what they want to do with their lives. Girls are told we are going to be wives and mothers. If we're asked at all, it's usually how many children we want and whom we might want to marry. (135)

The opportunity for self-discovery is given to the author and Alvarez claims her right to become a writer, a storyteller herself. However, the feeling of alienation and disassociation from her native culture also keeps her from moving forward. Without reaching a certain degree of reconciliation, Alvarez cannot escape the dichotomy between staying connected with her community's traditional way of living and the courtesy of writing which has helped her through various traumatic events. Aware of her in-

betweenness she declares “By opening my mouth, I had disobeyed. By opening my mouth on paper, I had done even worse. I had broadcast my disobedience” (123). She questions the political narrative in the view of gender norms and since she does not adhere to follow them, writing her truth not only separates her from the traditional society in the Dominican Republic but also allows alternating a narrative under Trujillo’s rule. In other words, “Truth is summoned in the cause of denouncing a present situation of exploitation and oppression or in exorcising and setting aright official history” (Yudice 17).

In the text, she points out the limitations of obtaining a voice of her own as “A woman did not have a public voice. She did not have a public life, except through her husband, her brothers, her sons, and her endless stream of male cousins” (122). Her disobedience against Trujillo’s rule escalates when she starts to talk about other muses and her rejection to be silenced. On this basis, Friedman argues, “a woman’s narrative can be translated as a forbidden story that exists within and threatens to disrupt the social order” (144). In Alvarez's narrative, her individual story is encompassed by other voices from her homeland, including Mirabal Sisters. The interconnectedness of Mirabal Sisters’ story with her family’s leads her to narrate their story in order to produce a secondary storyline for those who lived under the dictatorship of Trujillo. In the chapter titled “Chasing the Butterflies,” the author tackles with the issue of putting the story of the Mirabal Sisters on paper while she reminds herself that the story followed her family through the United States:

> When my father read of the murder of the Mirabal sisters, he must have felt a shocking jolt at what he had so narrowly missed. Patria, Minerva, and María Teresa were members of the same underground he had bailed out of in order to save his life. Here, just four months after we had escaped, they were murdered on a lonely mountain road. (*Something to Declare* 198)

Considering their exile to the United States a selfish act through which the family has adapted to the individualistic nature of the host land, it can be argued that the author suffers from a survivor’s guilt even though the decisions were not in her hands. Alvarez is haunted by the story of the Mirabal Sisters because eventually the act of these sisters helped many people, including her family, to get out of the country. In order to pay tribute to them, Alvarez says “I believed that only by making them real, alive, could I make them mean anything to rest of us” (203). Her parents obligated Alvarez and her sister to be

silent about the dictatorship, and both the uncontrollable nature of the government and Alvarez's guilt of this promise are depicted in the text as:

> And so, long after we had left, my parents were still living in the dictatorship inside their own heads. Even on American soil, they were afraid of awful consequences if they spoke out or disagreed with authorities. The First Amendment right to free speech meant nothing to them. Silence about anything "political" was the rule in our house. (108)

In an interview given to Heather Rosario-Sievert in 1997, the author expresses her sense of guilt by saying:

> I explain that the Mirabal sisters have always haunted me because they started the underground. My father was also a member of the underground, but we escaped. Four months later, the sisters were murdered on a country road. It's as if our escape, our story in America started when theirs ended. (Sievert and Alvarez 6)

Knowing the fact that there was a similar case that happened when Trujillo's government reached up to one of those who was exiled to the United States and murdered, it can be argued that, similar to the Rosenbergs case in Dorfman's life, Alvarez and her parents carry the legacy of persecution by the dictator's hands: "Five years earlier, in 1955, Galíndez, an exile anti-Trujillo teaching at Columbia University, had disappeared from a New York subway. The same thing could happen to us" (109). However, when the writer decides to keep the promise to those who are silenced, she is not only judged as an exile but also as a woman since she crosses a line. She puts herself in a unique position like Dorfman as an outsider who is also an insider. In the narrative, it is stated that:

> To our many questions about what was going on, my mother always had the ready answer, "En boca cerrada no entran moscas." No flies fly into a closed mouth. Later, I found out that this very saying had been scratched on the lintel of the entrance of the SIM's torture center at La Cuarenta. Given this mandate of silence, I was a real thorn in my mother's side. (109)

Related to this, Alvarez not only breaks the promise of silence for her family but also speaks for her community. Martinez also states that:

> Minor literature repositions the minority writer and the marginalized experience that he or she represents away from the peripheries of society and toward the hegemonic space of the major language through which the minor writer chooses to speak. Hence, the execution of a minor literature is an empowering experience, such that the minor writer is now not only "heard" but also "understood" by the majority. (5)

Alvarez's commitment to write about the Mirabal Sisters imply the fact that the connection between the self and the family, the exilic self and the homeland are still consistently alive, and they are resourceful for the author to come clean with the past in addition to finding her voice as a storyteller. As a narrator of life writing "by focusing on polyvocal experience . . . Alvarez offers a collective alternative to the historical record" (Vázquez 144). Hence, in Vázquez's words, there is a "self- conscious blending of genres" (135) whereas the process of political resistance is transmitted to her readers.

2.3 COLLECTIVE ENUNCIATON

As the repressed memories of the past begin to haunt the author who is only able to relieve the pain through writing, the connection between the homeland's silenced past and her own becomes more pronounced in time. While Alvarez tries to re-connect with her homeland since the family continues to be part of her life, she cannot escape the past of their exilic experience that allegedly triggered the death of the Mirabal Sisters as well as many others in the underground. The interconnectedness between the personal and the collective in this case is reflected through Alvarez's *Something to Declare*. Buss comments on this crossing between the self and the community in life narratives of women as:

> These women's reasons for writing inevitably involve telling a story in which their identities are inextricably tied up in their relationships: they write as survivors who come to us to tell us of significant others who did not survive, but who allowed them to survive. They write to tell us of being mothers of daughters and daughters of mothers, and the complexity and importance of that primal relationship in our contemporary times. They write to tell us that even having an "I" that can write is the result of the thousand acts of the others who made them. (25)

Knowing that Alvarez inherits the painful experiences of the Dominican community, she obligates herself to be a part of it. Susan A. Crane refers to this recurrence in cumulative memorization as "a sense of the continual presence of the past" (1373), which also triggers Alvarez's authorial development and her coming to terms with her hybrid self. Alvarez's narrative belongs to the personal and the politically collective memory that "exist in discrete times and places" (Crane 1376). Consequently, her family that "maintain[s] a living relation to collective memory" passes on this atrocious heritage to

their descendants as a tradition (1376). The anchored memorabilia of the Dominican past allows Alvarez to reconcile with the duality. Marta C. Santangelo characterizes Alvarez's narrative as a way of "'nostalgia', a 'looking back' to the country and the culture of origin that have been 'lost' by the political circumstances forcing emigration" (507) as Alvarez reaches out to the nostalgic past with several journeys back to the Dominican Republic. Similarly, Vivian N. Halloran points out that these returns are used as a method of rewarding oneself to "remember her roots, and better understand the routes she has carved out for herself through time and experience" (77). While keeping the family's importance in this framework, Alvarez understands that there will always be a tightly coupled tie between her and the family and she will also be reminded of the past through that connection. When she talks about her parents saying, "All their lives my parents, along with a nation of Dominicans had learned the habits of repression" (*Something to Declare* 108), she is aware of the regime's reminiscences, not just consisted in the cautionary tales, but as a token of the fact that she does not differ from those who suffered. In "The Construction of the Self in U.S. Latina Autobiographies" Torres explains that "Latina autobiographers do not create a monolithic self, but rather present the construction of the self as a member of multiple oppressed groups, whose political identity can never be divorced from her conditions. The subject created is at once individual and collective" (278). Knowing the trauma inherited by her parents, she uses her narration to display how the boundaries of memory from that past are lost, and ultimately to make her write a eulogy for those who reserve a significant place in their minds.

The reason Alvarez has named the first part of her collection as "Customs" and the second part as "Declarations" can be explained by the fact that she has developed her writing through the traditions she has inherited through her personal experiences. To summarize, she concludes "Customs" with the chapter titled "Family Matters" to discuss how her fate is constituted by her family's decisions and the linkage that strengthen her narrativity. In contrast, "Declarations" concludes with an essay titled "Writing Matters" which signifies how Alvarez has ended her self-discovery as a Dominican American writer, belonging to both parts.

Throughout the narrative, Alvarez positions her family as an important aspect of her life, but her exilic nature challenges the fact that a self-sufficient approach must be taken into consideration since from the beginning, the actual point of their migration to the United States is to survive. So, when she questions "how could we stay in la familia *and* also survive as individuals in our new country" (*Something to Declare* 121), she reveals the problematic impact of the duality that appears in one body that has to contain both. She continues saying: "the basic unit of self-understanding is primarily the family" (*Something to Declare* 125) as she defines her relationship with her homeland. In order to sustain peace in her fragmented identity, she uses the method of storytelling which she claims to be a form of fact.

It can be stated that Trujillo regime also used this method in order to create a fake consciousness against the foreign countries, through "decree[ing] the country officially a white nation" (*Something to Declare* 124) in order to hide Trujillo's personal shame of being a Haitian descendant as well as fictionalizing the form of the regime "acted out by Dominicans that we had a democratic form of government" (124). To unearth the repressive regime in the Dominican Republic, Julia Alvarez focuses on how she comes up with narrating the Mirabal Sisters from the survived sister's point of view. Her life writing depends on the idea of connecting her intimate, traumatic memories with her testimony against the brutality of the regime. Thus, her testimony can be observed as a process of "unburial, an unearthing of the truth which translates into an invasion of the space occupied by official history" (Sternbach 94). Another key point to emphasize is that, since as a Dominican woman Alvarez does not fit herself into the normative gender roles when she both detests being silenced by the patriarchal authority and being a childless woman, she forms another kind of productivity and gives a metaphorical birth to a counterrevolutionary memorization of Trujillo's dictatorship. Her "act of remembering is really an act of birthing and re-birthing" of the testimonial literature (Sternbach 98). She rejects "Trujillo's mandate of one official story" using her idiosyncratic narrative voice (Cantiello 88). As Jacqueline Stefanko comments:

> she connects her family's politics and their forced escape from the Dominican Republic to the four invented Mirabal Sisters, their political activities, and their subsequent deaths for months after their escape. Then, her returns to the Dominican Republic become entwined with stories about the courage of Las Mariposas. (54)

For that matter, Alvarez uses the story of the Mirabal Sisters as a way of justification to reunite herself with her homeland by focusing on the female figures determined to overthrow Trujillo. The writing process of her fictional book *In the Time of the Butterflies* implies that she legitimizes her share in the collective trauma in the Dominican Republic as one part of her that still belongs to a self-centered society. Criniti comments on this by saying:

> Alvarez's linking her story to the North American myth of the self-made woman: the rugged individualist striking out on her own, away from home and family, in order to be true to herself and make a positive contribution in the national landscape that ultimately benefits the home and family she had to sacrifice in the first place. (53)

Hence, the reason Alvarez chooses a story that is unique to the Dominican Republic as well as for the women around the world can be explained through her need to re-connect with the past to move on in the present. Since she is not able to determine a homeland for herself without choosing one side over the other, she designates the story as "a place of resistance [that] situates Alvarez between the historic past of the Dominican community and the current events that shape their society" (Bautista 143). Through reaching the past with the collection of items like diaries, books and the most importantly the surviving sister, she associates herself with the society that she has left behind. In other words, she shares the story of the Mirabal Sisters and "performs an act of identity-formation which is simultaneously personal and collective" (Yudice 15).

Alvarez's narrative both in *Something to Declare* and *In the Time of the Butterflies* imply her alternative to the collective consciousness since "her experiences are constituted in terms of surviving the regime," and she occupies a place similar to the survived sister Déde, while her writing "becomes integral to the narrative of Dominican history" (Vázquez 147). In order to reclaim the history that she was also part of, the writer intends to recreate the story of the famous sisters alongside her own. As Vázquez affirms "By renarrativizing the traumatic history of the Trujillo period and its legacies, Alvarez triangulates a national subject that attempts to resolve the contradictions of diasporic identity" (136). Collecting a number of female figures as Titi, Tia Rosa, Tia Amelia, Ada, and nurses from her father's office, she realizes that the true muses in life can be found through traces of real-life events. Prior to reaching to this conclusion, she blames her

single-sided angle as an assimilated exile. She explains her guilt about leaving her motherland behind as, "I overcompensated for my feelings of literary and linguistic insecurity by making myself learn and master everything I could about the tradition. There is a saying in the old country that the traitor always wears the best patriot uniform" (*Something to Declare* 148). Her abandonment of the Dominican Republic unsettles her but not being faithful to her author instincts also creates a sense of deception that shows her insecurity about following solely the traditional methods of writing. Hence, the author says:

> there were other voices in my head, other instincts. Along the way, I met other muses whom I made the mistake of ignoring because I had never seen their faces between the covers of books. They did not seem important enough, American enough, literary enough. In silencing them, I was silencing myself. I found my voice only when I let them sing inside my work, when I sat down and finally listened to them. (*Something to Declare* 148).

Therefore, Alvarez crosses the border between the two countries by paying attention to the voices of women silenced and threatened by the Trujillo regime, including the Mirabal Sisters' and "carries out . . . [her] ideological convictions about social justice and feminism" (Halloran 83). Especially through giving voice to the famous sisters who are representatives of resistance, she pays her debt to them by removing them from the submissive location. As Kelli L. Johnson argues, Alvarez enlarges the space given to the women's narrative in the Dominican literary canon inasmuch as she protests the idea of subordination "by providing them literary space in the novel that focuses on their whole lives . . . political activities outside the domestic space of the home" (83). At the end of the book, she mentions why she has chosen the story of those women for whom she has felt guilty for a long time by stating that:

> I wanted to understand the living, breathing women who had faced all the difficult challenges and choices of those terrible years. I believed that only by making them real, alive, could I make them mean anything to the rest of us. And so I began to chase the butterflies. (203)

It can be argued that "the question of 'who am I' is always motivated and determined by the need to achieve placement within . . . the landscape of the new homeland and the need to negotiate . . . to the myth old homeland" (Schultermandl 6) and the process of becoming is shared by both parties. Hence, Alvarez makes "the text a site for personal and collective struggle" (Bautista 143) and finalizes her book by saying that "writing

allows us inside those others and knits us together as a human species" (300) which proves that she openly blends her personal memory with the collective to display a transformative understanding that she reaches while giving voice to a historical silence. Throughout her diasporic movement from the Dominican Republic to the United States, due to her age and her gender, the intensity of her assimilation progress become more problematic than of any other individual. In addition to the fact that her need for expression in writing is disrupted through landing in a foreign language, she is stuck in between the new cultural aspects and the old traditions, between English and Spanish, but more importantly, as she tries to divide herself for the two, her identity dissolves. When the author makes the decision to unite both, "the linguistic blend gives rise not to silence, but instead to a rush of words" (Mayock 227). Hence, her work stands for a meeting point for both cultures to diverge in one identity.

In the book, Alvarez explains how agonizing this stage is by stating that "what hurts is the discovery of the measure of our silence. How deep it runs. How many of us are indeed caught, unreconciled between two languages, two political poles, and suffer the insecurities of that straddling" (168). She overcomes the inner conflict which is the result of her insecurity about her hybrid nature when she meets with other Latino/a writers on the bookshelves. As the title of the chapter "So Much Depends" suggests, she comes to know William Carlos Williams, Piri Thomas, Sandra Cisneros, Ana Castillo, and she comes to terms with the duality that occupies her existence. Having escaped from political persecution, she uses a common symbolization of freedom by saying "I am a bird of a different feather altogether, a tropical parrot, say, who has flown in from her jungle to this northern forest of pine and fir trees" (117). Using this implication of nature which sent her from the motherland to an alien one, she implies that her mobility is one of the main reasons that puts her into a unique status among other hybrid writers. Since neither return nor total acceptance by the new society can be facilitated, the author is obliged to become an interlocutor. Although the author physically locates in one of them, she stays at the crossroads where she needs to fight for her individuality. In Rojas's words, this spatiality can be explained as the state of being "where one never belongs totally to one place, yet where one is able to feel an integral part of many places" (qtd.in Stefanko 67). Alvarez reflects this hybrid consciousness that has streamed around since her exile

with the rest of the family although she could not accept it. However, in *Something to Declare*, the readers can appreciate her evolution as a writer and as an individual who directs her cross-cultural experience into writing herself. This becomes, as she admits, "a duality that I hope in the writing transcends itself and becomes a new consciousness" (173). Especially felt clear in the chapter "Doña Aída, with Your Permission" in which she is harshly asked to return to her roots by a Dominican writer. However, not given a chance for self-placement in either location, the author defines herself through her writing which stands in between. Her avoidance of designating a location finalizes when she accepts that she becomes one, solid person while narrating: "It really is . . . in my island genes to be Pan-American, a gringa-dominicana, a synthesizing consciousness" (175). As Mayock asserts, the writers within this duality are both survivors and inventors of a narrative through

> a combination on that helps them move with more ease between present and past, English and Spanish, desire and reality, and narration and action. The treasure of nostalgia and memory combines with the pleasure of word play in two languages to create a narration that reinforces the flow of biculturalism. (229)

The inadequacy of the exilic body of the writer situates this hybrid consciousness over a transnational state in which the inner conflict ends. Consequently, the narrative of the author can be described as a meeting point where her hybridity is restored. Stefanko regards her writing as a method of survival at the crossroads and as an example of

> a polyphonic novel, in which Alvarez creates a new way of telling that crosses the boundaries between genres, between individual and community, between national identifications, and between continuity and disruption, giving definition to her writing as diasporic articulation. (56)

Alvarez's identity is placed nowhere in the United States and the Dominican Republic but rather everywhere that connects both, which is embodied in her authorial identity. Constructed through early remembrances of the diasporic experience with the family, the narrative space can be explained further as follows:

> Alvarez's work encounters spaces that are neither aquí nor allá (here nor there), blending geography, memory, and personal history. The geography she discursively navigates goes beyond the island's borders, grounding her conception of national belonging in diaspora." (Vázquez 138)

In "Rewriting American Democracy," it is similarly mentioned in regard to ethnic authors that "the difficulty in establishing a sense of home between their old and new home

countries often forces immigrant American writers to create a sense of home in their writing itself" (6-7). To conclude, Alvarez's sense of unhomeliness comes to an end when she initiates a writing process developed from the beginning of her childhood, as the story shows in the first chapter of the collection titled "Grandfather's Blessing." Alvarez explains in the book that "what finally bridged these two worlds for me was writing" (167) and her essay collection stands as a virtual display of this reconciliation. In the narrative, she transmits how she comes to an understanding that the binary opposition of the two cultures composed her selfhood and her solution to transverse them through writing: "So much of who I was seemed to have no place in this world and culture — and so I started to have a secret life, which no doubt contributed to my becoming a writer" (165). Finally, she assigns her exilic essence who is able to erase the disunity with a new entity that is neither Dominican nor American, but a synthesis. Her narration of selfhood in *Something to Declare: Essays* exemplifies Deleuze and Guattari's minor literature by revolving around collective trauma and exposure of political deceptions of both regimes that urged her to express herself as a minority.

CHAPTER 3

REINALDO ARENAS'S *BEFORE NIGHT FALLS* (1993)

If someone is a true writer—not an opportunist who wants to be in favor with the government of the day—that person is always going to be for freedom. Because the simple truth is that without freedom, the writer cannot exist.
Reinaldo Arenas

In *Locations of Culture*, Homi Bhabha argues that in order to reconcile with the fragmented identity "the indirections of art offer us the image of our psychic survival" (18). By the same token, while examining the layers of Reinaldo Arenas's identity, Epps defines one of the significant aspects of Arenas's writing as being "repeatedly lost, sequestered, and destroyed; much of it, towards the end of his life, is to be rewritten from memory, hurriedly brought into print, and posthumously published" (48). Indeed, throughout his life in Revolutionary Cuba, Reinaldo Arenas is stigmatized as one of the counter-revolutionary authors who are considered as a threat to the Cuban government. For this reason, he is not only excluded from the Cuban intellectual circle but has been also imprisoned, mentally tortured as a writer, and physically suffered as a gay man.

After his exile to the United States with the Mariel Exodus in 1980, Arenas is engaged in the act of writing again. In consequence, his exilic status results in him becoming a minor writer. McKinzie suggests that "truly to have a minor literature, the people creating those texts must continue to feel strongly at odds with their surroundings" (11). Rowe and Whitfield argue that what Arenas experiences is a significantly severe exile in which he has not only been excluded from the new country he goes to but also from his community, "internal exile, in the sense of isolation, alienation, deprivation of means of production and communication, exclusion from public life, happens both to intellectuals and to whole communities. It can be no less dire than external exile" (233). As Castro's Cuba deprives him of territorial belonging and feeling of homeliness, the author returns to the agency of writing, which he intended to use as a weapon against Castro and to place his expatriate self. Thus, deterritorialized from his mother tongue, Arenas "uses the language of the

majority, the national language, or the one spoken by the greatest number of people . . . to subvert from within the culture created, supported, and recorded by that [major] language. With this subversive power, [as] the minor writer also surreptitiously assumes control over that [major] language by imprinting it with minor forms and ideas" (McKinzie 2). In this regard, the narrative stands for a testimony against institutionalized homophobia and the purification process in Cuban society under Castro's government. It sheds light on the process that led to Fidel Castro's major changes in society and the consequences of these brutal changes as the Mariel Exodus.

Arenas is neither admitted to being a part of Cuban history nor as one of the key literary artists in his hometown. Marginalized both due to his sexual preferences and his statements, Arenas has never been appreciated by his beloved Cuba. Hence, his life writing is a tribute to the gay community that was regarded as deviant, causing disturbance against peace in Cuban society, while it is also an attempt to come to terms with his past. Titles of the chapters represent various significant moments of his life. He talks about his childhood starting from the chapter "The Stones" until the chapter "Holguín," which revolves around his separation from his mother and never knowing his father. Apart from that, the years he spends in rural Cuba can be referred to as a stage of absolute freedom with a great emphasis on sexuality. In the text, he explains that "Those years, between the ages of seven and ten, were a time of great eroticism, of a sexual voracity that, as I said, was all-embracing" (19). Further in the text, until the end of the chapter "The Library," Arenas becomes more conscious of the political turmoil in Cuba as he witnesses how Castro takes power. For instance, when he gets accepted to a polytechnic institute, he becomes more aware of the communist indoctrination of the Cuban youth. He mentions this at the end of the chapter "Hymns,"

> Finally I graduated as an agricultural accountant. But before my graduation something happened that filled me with great sorrow and reminded me of my grandfather's words. He used to say that communism was the end of civilization, that it was a monstrosity. His happiest day was when Stalin died. "At last that bastard is dead," he said with joy. (57)

The last part of his life writing includes how his creative voice appears after Arenas wins a storytelling competition. Being selected to work in the National Library helps his

literary voice to thrive. As he gets more mature, he channels his creativity into protesting Castro's government,

> I used the Library to the utmost. María Teresa, in her wisdom, required only five hours of work. My working day started at one, but I would come in at eight and, taking advantage of the empty halls, write. There I wrote *Celestino antes del alba* [*Celestino Before Dawn*, published in the United States as *Singing from the Well*]. I read a great many of the books on the shelves in that huge library. (74)

As Arenas realizes the great chance of expressivity through writing, he reveals how the government stigmatizes him and his author friends by sending them to labor camps for being gay and writing against the communist ideology. Until his exile in 1980, he suffers from the witch hunt against gays and writers, which wounds his identity and causes him to attempt suicide multiple times, including one in prison. On the other hand, his work conveys very little about his exilic years in the United States, but it focuses on his struggle with AIDS, which represents another phase in his life that keeps him from integrating into a new society and culture. While he senses the proximity of death again without his choice, Arenas chooses death willingly by committing suicide and succeeds in his fourth attempt. It is important to emphasize that his suicide attempts suggest his determinacy to control his will and body.

In his narrative, Arenas counteracts against Castro's regime by forming a narrated "I" that revolves around the anguish that is caused by the repressiveness of the government. Apart from his imprisonment because of an alleged accusation, he describes how he goes through physical and psychological torment caused by Castro until his death. For this reason, his narrated "I" is intermixed with his ideological "I" throughout *Before Night Falls*. By making his life narrative solely a political manifesto against Castro regime, Arenas's work suggests the fact that his self is based on de-construction of the repressive regime of Cuba and through this narrative the author attempts to testify against it.

Arenas's narrative reflects the idea of exclusion from his mother tongue through a banishment by the state that prohibited him from speaking. Deleuze and Guattari argue that the first language stands as "a 'major' language [which] is affected by a strong deterritorialization factor and is subjected to a series of displacements" (xvi). For this

reason, the difference between his writing in Spanish in the United States and in revolutionary Cuba display his attempt to obtain linguistic freedom. Deleuze and Guattari further argue that “language compensates for its deterritorialization by a reterritorialization in sense” (20). Arenas never had a chance to publish his work but through smuggling abroad since he is stigmatized as an ideological diversionist and a pervert as a gay man. So, it is safe to state that his writing represents an affirmation of his author self against the government which haunted him all his life.

The narrative also gives detailed information about how hypermasculinity of the state oppressed the Cuban community and how homoerotic activities are seen as a distortion of the idealized Cuban society. The new state’s enforcements are depended on manual labor and the conformity of heterosexual and “healthy” bond of Cuban families while functioning almost like a national purification process. Same-sex relationships or any opposing views are banned or silenced. As one of the targeted figures in Cuba, Arenas outpours this repression in his work to claim his authorship and become the voice of those who are persecuted, imprisoned, and exiled. Therefore, like Ariel Dorfman and Julia Alvarez, he tries to make peace with the past and the trauma he has experienced in Cuba as a writer.

Reinaldo Arenas’s *Before Night Falls* stands as an illustrative example of minor literature as being one of the “autobiographical narratives of how a subaltern subject ‘comes to power’ (*Subalternity and Representation* 29) and being “resonant with ideas of forced emigration, displacement, social and political marginalization of an individual” (Knott and McLoughlin 19). In this chapter, *Before Night Falls* will be examined in three parts: his writing as an act of liberation, his antagonism towards the revolution, and polyvocality in his exile narrative.

3.1. DETERRITORIALIZATION OF LANGUAGE

Despite the fact that his literary development started after his family’s move to Holguín, a more urban area in Cuba, Arenas’s early childhood in a small village covers a huge part in his work. Enduring extreme poverty and loneliness during this time, as an infant,

Arenas opens his eyes to the harshness of traditional gender norms with his father's abandonment of him and his mother shortly after his birth. Apart from the beginning part, *Before Night Falls* starts with the chapter titled "The Stones," revealing his only memory about his father with whom he meets alongside a river. Growing up in a house with his extended family, Arenas only sees his grandfather and uncle as male figures, and his grandmother is the authority figure of the family. Hence, he is exposed to a matriarchal community which defends his mother's honor and announces his father as a scapegoat. Arenas mentions the tension between his maternal side and his father as follows:

> My grandmother and everyone else at home always tried to instill in me a great hatred toward my father because he had deceived (that was the word) my mother. I remember they taught me a song about a son who kills his father to avenge his abandoned mother. I would sing that song to the whole family, who listened enraptured. The song, which was very popular in those days, relates the sufferings of a woman whose lover seduced her and vanished after getting her pregnant. The song ended as follows:
>
> The boy grew up and became a man,
>
> and to the wars he went to fight.
>
> In vengeance he killed his father:
>
> The sons who love will do what's right. (2)

Unable to interact with his father as the main masculine figure, Arenas is directed to an Oedipal stage in which he has to protect his mother's pride. He explains how he feels the absence of a father figure in his life when his relatives visited them saying, "The married aunts would also come and stay for long periods of time. They came with their children, who were older than I was, and I would envy them because they knew their fathers, and this gave them a self-assured and confident manner that I never had" (4). Deprived of the same assurance and confidence, he chooses to connect with the soil since the connotation of knowing one's roots by knowing the father does not occur in his situation. As a result, the feeling of rootlessness carves on his identity.

Nevertheless, this unhomeliness allows him to capture an unlimited amount of self-expressivity and opportunities to experience senses openly. Arenas suggests, "I always thought that my family, including my mother, saw me as a weird creature, useless, confused, or crazy; a being outside the framework of their lives. They were probably

right" (17). As a child who does not meet the expectations of normalcy, he intends to enjoy his surroundings in a Whitmanesque manner, enjoying the moments of "absolute poverty but also absolute freedom; out in the open, surrounded by trees, animals, apparitions, and people who were indifferent toward me" (5). At this point, it can be argued that the author takes the first step towards acknowledging one's inseparability from nature and follows the idea of being true to one's nature. The early period of his childhood can be defined as a marker point which is "anchored to a literalized love of the land" (Lima 245) since it revolves around appreciation of beauty and creativity.

The idea of the rural Cuban landscape becomes the solitary refuge and inspiration for Arenas throughout his infanthood; "But regarding the magical, the mysterious, which is so essential for the development of creativity, my childhood was the most literary time of my life" (23). The family moves to Holguín to attain more chance to earn money when Arenas is at the end of his late adolescence and the first examples of his writings begin to emerge as reflections of the new inspirations. The idea of narrating one's life enters his mind when he cannot escape from the domestic turmoil and changing atmosphere in the country. Going to the cinema becomes the initiator of this along with his homoerotic tendencies and he explains that:

> Perhaps influenced by those movies (mostly from the United States and Mexico) or God knows why, I started to write novels. Whenever I wasn't going to the movies, I went home and, to the sound of my grandparents' snoring, began writing. Sometimes dawn would come, and from the typewriter that my cousin Renan had sold me for seventeen dollars, I would go straight to the guava paste factory and continue thinking about my novels while making those wooden boxes. (33-34)

As Arenas is separated from nature that he sees as a resource of inspiration and creativity, the external influence of the movies and his attempts of writing can be acknowledged as steps towards finding an artistic voice and unveiling what was left from the rural childhood memories. This transition from bodily expressions to written ones is "to document in order to liberate himself and his art from increasing state repression" (Nicholson 245). Still, bearing the innocence of his rural infancy, his following act of joining the rebels to provide more for his family evolves into a serious antagonism between him and the communist forces as the same regime that would feed and nurture him put him under the communist indoctrination. Until the time when Arenas officially

displays his tendency for writing, as a person who is obligated to maintain his life in poverty, like many others, he does not challenge the new government. Following a pragmatic administrative method, Castro's government gives a scholarship to Arenas to study in a polytechnic institute to become an agricultural accountant. Considering that educating the community is a part of communist indoctrination, those who are indoctrinated are compelled not to object. In his narrative, Arenas states this obligatory silence as "I could not imagine that the Revolution which was giving me a free education could be sinister. I firmly believed there would be elections and Fidel Castro would be elected in a democratic way" (56). This propagandism connotated a moral purgation, and through education, it demanded a reconceptualization of sexuality and art. Since the appreciation of art and sexuality does not diverge from the new idea of Cuban society, it shadows Arenas's life and distances him from declaring his views; "Those who were anti-communists, like myself, would repeat the manuals on Marxism by heart. Early on we had to learn to hide our desires and to swallow the urge to protest" (50). Nonetheless, his participation in the storytelling competition by the National Library in 1963 officially initiated his interaction with the Cuban intellectual community and flourished his writing process.

Within this period, Arenas writes his first novel *Celestino antes del Alba* (1965), and he is given an award from UNEAC[4] (National Union of Writers and Artists). However, after this novel, he is denied any appreciation since his works are regarded as unscrupulous. While his recognition as a writer started at that time, when he submitted *El Mundo Alucinante, (1969)* he is deprived of the first prize since the winner had a book glorifying the Revolution and Fidel Castro. Considering the expectations of the new government, Arenas's writings do not praise but offend Castro's ideology. Apart from standing out, "each new publication was an embarrassment," even though for the author this is freedom of expression that he used to perform (Mullins 154). As the autonomy of using his mother language is a disturbing act for others, his identity is restricted as it is also against his nature.

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[4] The National Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba (Unión Nacional de Escritores y Artistas de Cuba, UNEAC) is a social, cultural and professional organization of writers, musicians, actors, painters, sculptors, and artist of different genres. It was founded on August 22, 1961, by the Cuban poet, Nicolas Guillen. Initially their objective was uniting the intellectuals within the young Cuban Revolution to maintain a genuine Cuban culture.

For Arenas, producing a piece of work that he does not appreciate is the same as nonsatisfaction in a sexual sense. He intermingles his homoerotic fragments into his writing, but Castro's authority dispossesses this right from him. Similarly, Mollis argues that Arenas "reinforces the inextricable connection between free sexuality and free expression" (154). This juncture between two vital discourses for the author leads to the idea of a repugnant regime.

When the hostility against the group he belonged to is taken into consideration, it can be argued that his ability to use the mother tongue as a marker in his narrative space is interrupted. Still, Perez states that "the confrontation with Spanish is no less political that being a struggle against the language of empire" (95). Similar to Dorfman and Alvarez, Arenas's subjectivity is fragmented with the mother tongue and his roots whereas his alienated status in society prevents him from owning the language. As Borossa indicates "language is implicated in the creation of subjectivity, at the price of loss. The mother tongue is the language that paradoxically always escapes you, that you can never, truly call your own" (397). There is a mutual antagonization between the government and Arenas that dislocates him both from the act of writing and the country. In that case, the language used by the author and the language imposed by the Cuban government differ from each other. Hence, when exiled to the United States, use of Spanish by Arenas represents a major language used by a minority, an exiled Cuban author in New York, and he is deterritorialized from the language. Throughout this process, by telling the story of his repression by the Cuban government, Arenas's narrative also functions as what Suzette Henke refers as "scriptotherapy" to signify the process of speaking or writing about trauma in order to find words to give voice to previously repressed memories" (Smith and Watson 29). In other words, "verbally labeling and describing a trauma through writing allows an individual to cognitively process the event and gain a sense of control" (Riordan 263) and in this case Arenas's life narrative becomes a space for reterritorialization. In this regard, Deleuze and Guattari state that "anything can serve as a reterritorialization, in other words, 'stand for' the lost territory; one can reterritorialize on a being, an object, a book, an apparatus or system" (*A Thousand Plateaus* 508). At the end, due to being culturally and linguistically dislocated, Arenas concludes that the

artistic voice can never be silenced as he finds a refuge in the text itself. He reflects these thoughts through the following sentences:

> A sense of beauty is always dangerous and antagonistic to any dictatorship because it implies a realm extending beyond the limits that a dictatorship can impose on human beings. Beauty is a territory that escapes the control of the political police. Being independent and outside of their domain, beauty is so irritating to dictators that they attempt to destroy it whichever way they can. Under a dictatorship, beauty is always a dissident force, because a dictatorship is itself unaesthetic, grotesque; to a dictator and his agents, the attempt to create beauty is an escapist or reactionary act. (87)

Written in the United States, the narrative can be figured as an uprising against Castro's regime whereas Arenas defines the literary figures of Cuba as "a lost generation, destroyed by the communist regime" (*Before Night Falls* 88). Not recognized as a skilled writer until after his exile, Arenas had to *Farewell to the Sea* (1987) after it is taken away by the police. His recreation of the memories and thoughts can be summarized as an act of affirmation, a self-confirmation that he needed to have as an author. The possibility of being destroyed by the regime is always implied as in the case of Heberto Padilla and Arenas reserved this scapegoating act in chapter "The Padillo Case" (136). Naming these strategies as theatrical, it is common to stigmatize writers, force them to publicly apologize and name all the "counterrevolutionary" friends. As a person who is constantly tailed by the state police, Arenas uses his existence as evidence against the brutality and surveillance by Castro. In her article, Vickroy asserts that he insists on rewriting his versions of Cuba "in order to act and feel a greater sense of wholeness, to overcome helplessness and fear, to resist oppression, and to reveal truths" (111). Consequently, he insists on "writing to assert himself and his view of the world" (Vickroy 114). His writing functions as a political tool to affirm his existence as well as a form of defiance. By the same token, Yudice argues that in a testimonial writing like Arenas's, the author "performs on act of identity-formation which is simultaneously personal and collective" (15). Not being allowed to touch his book, *El palacio de las Blanquisimas Mofetas* (1977), is a proof of the fact that his works are embodiment of the identity and therefore a target to be eliminated. During the time when Arenas is interrogated after spending months in El Morro, his works are used against him by the state to doubt his existence as a writer. Arenas portrayed this memory in *Before Night Falls* as follows:

> Lieutenant Víctor visited me sporadically; through him I found out—and he was in a rage about this—that my novel *The Palace of the White Skunks* had

> been published in France and in Germany; he showed me one copy but did not allow me to touch it. It was my book, and I could not even touch it. (214-215)

Regarding this memory, Lazamo Lima comments on Arenas's reaction by saying approvingly that "scripta manent, ergo sum . . . if his writing endures, therefore he is" (235). The connection between the work and the artist here suggests the desire to obtain a place even though the body is persecuted and captured. In consequence, when he was thrown into El Morro, he refuses to have sexual intercourse as an imprisoned individual after having tasted sexual and spiritual fulfillment at the beaches of free Cuba. Similarly, Kaebnick indicates the dependency of sexuality in Arenas's works when he says, "homosexual sex is inseparable from the energy which produces his writing" (110). Arenas reveals the divergence between the times when the flow of productivity continued simultaneously with an active intimacy with a stranger and the times when he is jailed.

> I refused to make love with any prisoner, even though some, in spite of hunger and mistreatment, were quite desirable. There was no beauty in the act, it would have been a degradation. The beauty of a sexual relationship lies in the spontaneity of the conquest and in its secrecy. In jail everything is obvious and miserable; jail itself makes a prisoner feel like an animal, and any form of sex is humiliating (179).

Shortly before his exile to the United States, Arenas compares the two countries in the manner of expressivity that one could have. Although he is disappointed about the promised land and suffered from another degree of dislocation and disorientation in the American gay subculture, he says:

> None of this surprised me: I already knew that the capitalist system was also sordid and money-hungry. In one of my first statements after leaving Cuba I had declared that "the difference between the communist and capitalist systems is that, although both give you a kick in the ass, in the communist system you have to applaud, while in the capitalist system you can scream. And I came here to scream. (288)

This declaration can be explained as the writer's desire to obtain the freedom of speech that is promised to each subject in the United States. However, throughout his exilic status, Arenas could include himself neither in the gay subculture nor the Cuban community in Miami. Regarding the gay culture in the United States, he is alienated because of AIDS, and the Cuban community is seen by him as blended with the consumerist ideology and stood as a reminder of the old land he lost. In parallel with

Arenas's disassociation with the American culture, Hall argues that the displaced's identity is "a process of articulation, a suturing, an over-determination not a subsumption. There is always 'too much' or 'too little' an over-determination or a lack, but never a proper fit, a totality" (Gay and Hall 3). Therefore, it can be argued that Arenas fails to adapt himself to the neither country. His disappointment with the land is reflected as follows:

> I realized immediately that Miami was not for me. The first thing my uncle told me when I arrived was: "Buy yourself a jacket and a tie, have your hair cut short, and walk properly, tall, firm. Also, have some business cards printed giving your name and saying that you are a writer." (292)

Since Arenas feels that part of his identity is labeled and commodified according to the new cultural patterns, he is rather disgusted by the situation. Consequently, his diasporic status gets worse, and he cannot stand in another country in an undesired position. He is bothered by the dystopic replica of Cuba in Miami because of the commodification of his native land:

> I did not want to stay too long in that place, which was like a caricature of Cuba, the worst of Cuba: the eternal gossip, the chicanery, the envy. I also hated the flatness of the scenery, which could not compare with the beauty of an island; it was like the ghost of our Island, a barren and pestiferous peninsula, trying to become, for a million exiles, the dream of a tropical island: aerial, bathed by the ocean waters and the tropical breeze. In Miami the obsession with making things work and being practical, with making lots of money, sometimes out of the fear of starving, has replaced a sense of life and, above all, of pleasure, adventure, and irreverence. (292)

To be able to overcome this feeling of unhomeliness in the United States and expulsion from his motherland, like Dorfman and Alvarez, Arenas finds refuge in his writings. On the one hand, writing about Cuba stands as a collection of reminiscences. On the other, it refers to an abstract location to place the exilic self. On this subject, Wolf maintains that through the creation of this space through narrative "meaning is produced beyond cultural borders and [it] is … a sort of 'in-between space' located between existing referential systems and antagonisms" (135). Lehmann advocates that failure to find a territorial asylum leads to "discovering the power of his own storytelling to overcome his solitude and connect him with his family history and with a community including all those whose experiences resonate with resemblance to his own" (116). Throughout his late adolescence to his adulthood, he has been a wanderer between different locations followed by a fear of persecution.

Thus, as he compares communist and capitalist forces pertaining to produce literary works, he is "wrestling for the space" and a linguistic domination above the repressive force in Cuba and consumerist culture that he was exiled to (Lehmann 106). While the self stands in the period of isolation, he is not able to accomplish a sense of belonging and therefore remains in between. He thinks as "in exile one is nothing but a ghost, the shadow of someone who never achieves full reality. I ceased to exist when I went into exile" (293). Arenas eludes himself from the idea of corporeity and he attempts to be heard through his "'screaming' in his writing" (Olivares 29). The unacceptance of his bodily presence in both countries gives the reason to create a territorial space that enables him to affirm his identity as a gay writer.

In *Becoming Reinaldo Arenas: Family, Sexuality, and the Cuban Revolution* (2013), Jorge Olivares explains the author's inability to fit in the society as, "Unable to find solace or understanding, and attributing roadblock that he encountered in his personal and professional life to the machinations, jealousies, and pettiness of other, *Arenas found revenge in the power of the word, alienating friends and foes alike"* (32 emphasis personal). Writing to obtain acceptance over restrictiveness, Arenas re-writes the scene in the chapter "The River," which can be defined as "Whitmanesque" regarding his watch over almost thirty men, bathing in the river naked. While this memory is attributed as the initial moment that he realizes his same-sex desire, his re-visitation of the scene multiple times in his other novels *Singing from the Well* and *Farewell to the Sea* differ. Unlike in the mentioned works, the scene is depicted in a celebratory way and the change from the alienated state of characters in his fiction to an openly queer expressivity suggests "the energy of literary freedom seeps into his descriptions of the scene" (Salonga 24). The writer owns this freedom due to his exilic status in the United States even though he still experiences a psychological trauma.

Nevertheless, Arenas reveals his anticipation towards being acknowledged as a prominent persona in Cuba "If I had been living in the free world, this would have served me well; it would have enabled me to continue my work, and I would have become a respectable writer or something like that" (118). Brad Epps argues that his exile is another fragment

in the self that provided him the artistic voice he has while writing *Before Night Falls* stating, "Arenas's psychosymbolic implication in Castro does not mean that he would not have existed as an artist without the Cuban leader, but rather that he would not have existed as the artist we know" (268). Regarding the antagonism between the two symbols of the Cuban Revolution, it can be assumed that Castro becomes "the phantasmatic co-author of Arenas's writing" (Epps 246), the invisible force that Arenas constantly vilifies throughout the narrative and attacks. Still, the repressive force of the state in Cuba alters Arenas's narrativity when it forces him to exile. The text becomes the symbol of gaining back the voice as an artist without censorship or in Barros's words it becomes a "strategy of self-affirmation and authority over the historical account" of Cuba (42). On top of that, he obtains the right to self-representation with his "self-authorizing testimonial subjectivity (Barros 43) since his singular narrative also inherits the voices of those who are silenced.

Similarly, in "Memoir as a Testimony to Oppression and Defiance: A Study of Reinaldo Arenas's *Before Night Falls,"* the author's subjectivity about securing a place in his account is referred as "a symbol of his emancipation, a solace for refuge by giving a picture of his public image and personal life" (Ghosh 410). Furthermore, Sandro R. Barros argues that "oscillating between memory and present, Arenas's autobiography discloses the self under the perennial stigma of difference, a lasting form of otherness that is a metaphysical act of evoking one's presence through writing" (Barros "The Self*"*11). Therefore, his life writing evolves into a space where he asserts himself to the world without any form of restrictions.

To summarize, his narrative hints the pre-revolutionary Cuba, indoctrination of communism through free education and scholarships, imprisonment, and social restriction laws against the marginalized Cuban community. In Jorge Olivares' words, Reinaldo Arenas's identity as an author "was a product of the Cuban Revolution" (24). For this reason, *Before Night Falls* acquires a political value while the author's, intimate memories become the product of testimonial literature. It should be noted that even though he was in exile, the hostility and resentment that can be detected in the text are towards Fidel Castro and the Revolution, but the author still holds on to the feeling of

loss which is filled through writing. Olivares states the fact that the absence of a father figure in Arenas's life stands as a void in identity but "Arenas redirects his filial love toward his fatherland" (106). Significantly, "Fidel Castro comes between Arenas and his fatherland" (106) and separates the bond that was considered sacred for the author. The second part of this chapter examines the bilateral antagonism between Arenas and Castro with regarding social governance of the Cuban community through transforming sexual norms and rhetoric of manhood.

3.2. POLITICAL IMMEDIACY

Before Arenas questions the traditional understanding of sexuality and masculinity, living in absolute freedom and mindfulness of nature, he enjoys his sensuality starting from a very young age. Since the writer was the second male in the house that he shares with fourteen women from his family, he does not get the concept of masculinity as a fragmented agency of strength or force, but he rather stays within the traditional gender norms. At the beginning of the narrative, he says: "In the country, I think, it is a rare man who has not had sexual relations with another man. Physical desire overpowers whatever feelings of machismo our fathers take upon themselves to instill in us" (19). In this regard, the awareness of social boundaries of sexuality and gender evolves while the author acknowledges that weakness is the opposite of the highly masculine state and is defined as an act of softness in Cuba where these barriers are internalized. He defines this preconception with the symbolization of masculinity and femininity as "in the country women rode mares and men rode stallions" (21). Because this idea is embedded in the society, the revolutionary change preserves this for vilification of the capitalist society in the North.

Similarly, Arenas associates the discourse of gender and the ideological movements behind the two societies that are antagonized. During the time when Batista regime is about to end, Arenas is left by his mother who goes to North in order to earn money. However, the connotation between the ideas of abandonment and the conventional gender norms in Cuba can be observed in his life writing, since his mother is expected to be

married and not be ashamed of having a baby. She is also ashamed to show affection publicly to Arenas and the same situation causes her to leave to work as a babysitter. Arenas defines his desolation by his mother by cohering the ideas behind migrating to the North as if the capitalist society is to blame:

> I can imagine my mother in some run-down apartment in Miami in the fifties, taking care of crying babies who were possibly more unbearable than I was. I imagine her trying to comfort them in her arms, trying to give them the love and affection she so seldom had time to give me, or perhaps was ashamed to show. (32)

Hence, the very first impressions of the North are attached to the feelings of abandonment and sorrow in the author's life, and his writing evolves into being critical of both regimes due to their reflection on his memories. His disapproval of both governments is based on the fact that neither of them are solid, nor does Arenas intend to display this irony occurred in the Cold War by saying "The New York Times openly supported Fidel Castro from the beginning, and in general, the United States was where Castro and most of his agents could conspire openly" (40). Emphasizing the strategical foreign policy of the United States, Arenas accuses the United States of ignoring Castro. However, since the United States is held by its own distress about preserving a non-communist Western Hemisphere, this fact is ignored. Therefore, it can be argued that the traumatic past of persecution in Cuba is caused by the Cold War tension. He also points out the foreshadowing of the upcoming oppression from the Revolution through the following words "even before Fidel Castro rose to power, the executions of people who were against his movement or who conspired against him had already begun. He called them traitors. That was, and still is, the word" (44). Since he is a first-degree witness of brutality, his narrative justifies why people, including him, are easily deceived by the new dictatorship. Arenas argues how Castro's rise to power shows resemblance to the other leaders of Latin America when he says, "Yes, we have always been victims of the dictator of the moment, which may be not only part of our Cuban tradition but also part of our Latin American tradition, the Hispanic heritage we have had to suffer" (89-90). The invisibility of the danger from the new Revolution is also related to what was offered for a new chance of renewal and progress in Cuba.

When Arenas's involvement with the rebels is taken into consideration, it can be seen that the problem of poverty plays an important role of in the Cuban community regarding their conception of Fidel Castro and other revolutionaries in 1960s. In the text, he also justifies his own action to accept the scholarship that is given to change his economic status as "In those days I was part of the Revolution; I had nothing to lose, and it seemed then that I had much to gain. I could study, get away from my home in Holguín, start a new life" (47). As the revolution is personified in Castro by Reinaldo Arenas, gradually in the narrative, he talks about Castro's strategical actions towards the public in order to prevent any sort of discontent. Similar to the people of Dominican Republic during the reign of Rafael Trujillo, the Cuban community is exposed to theatrical intimidation performances in public. Correlated with the time when Arenas enters the literary world, before the regime surveils him, he uses the autobiographical space to portray his setting in the Revolutionary Cuba. The commonality of public executions and the lack of justice became part of the normalcy within the guerilla activity whereas Arenas points out to them as part of the social change:

> In those first days, many people were murdered without any kind of trial. Later, the so-called Revolutionary Tribunals were set up and people were quickly executed; an informer's accusation before a provisional judge of the new regime was enough. The trials were a kind of theatrical entertainment where people would enjoy watching how some poor devil was condemned to be shot, whose worst crime may have been that he had slapped someone who now was taking advantage of the circumstances in order to get even. The innocent died with the guilty. Many more were dying now than during the war that never was. (46)

More significantly, Castro government mystifies the Revolution not only through determining the fate of young people who are given scholarships but also through objectification of the new government with the landscape. Arenas gives the accounts of the time when he studies to be an agricultural accountant, visiting and climbing the Sierra Maestra where Castro and other revolutionaries wage the guerilla war. He tells how this expedition to the mountain is a must for graduation and a loyalty oath to the state. In *Before Night Falls*, Arenas depicts this communist indoctrination given through education as:

> After a few months we were told that we were not simply students but the vanguard of the Revolution and, therefore, communist youths and soldiers of the army. During the last hikes we could no longer sing what we wanted, but instead had to sing the "Internationale" and other communist hymns. (49)

Furthermore, subjectivity is labeled as counterrevolutionary and implied deviancy from the cause of the Revolution. As Said argues in *Reflections on Exile*, "all nationalisms have their founding fathers, their basic, quasi-religious texts, their rhetoric of belonging, their historical and geographical landmarks, their official enemies and heroes" (182). Ideological resourcefulness is not tolerated, he suggests that "any book that could be deemed to be 'ideological diversionism' disappeared immediately" (75). As a result, it can be argued that at the beginning of the social change in Cuba, there was a foreshadowing of oppression against Arenas's identity.

As it has been stated earlier, the Revolution intended to preserve the traditional gender norms, but while glorifying the authority of the leader, it also idealized his masculine state. Hamilton argues that the new man in Cuba is a symbol of "the dedicated revolutionary militant, of the late 1960s who, like Che Guevara, Fidel Castro, and other revolutionary leaders, define(s) . . . manhood through an expulsion of the feared homosexual other" (122). Since the new government aimed at purifying the nation from foreign influence, it directed the society on manual labor by emphasizing the relation between productivity and progress. The association of strength with masculinity played a significant role in shaping the society. Therefore, the hypermasculinization of Cuban men was nourished by the idea of communism. In one of his many speeches, Castro designates the new Cuban saying,

> We would never come to believe that a homosexual could embody the conditions and requirements of conduct that would enable us to consider him a true Revolutionary, a true Communist militant. A deviation of nature clashes with the concept we have of what a militant Communist must be. (Peña 129)

Openly targeting same-sex relationships and any other sort of "immoral"' acts in society, total devotion to the Revolution is required in order to cleanse the nation. The idea of manhood was directly connected to the state authority, required to be in control, active, and autonomous. In Suzanne Kaebnick's words "The macho is presumed to be sexual, his main relation being with women, but other outlets sufficing under limited conditions; he is presumed to be the pursuer, not the pursued; and he is presumed to be the model of strength and independence" (102). As suggested in Arenas's memories, being on both the giving and receiving end of a homoerotic relationship becomes a taboo for the society

during the Revolution while the life narrative reveals the fact that same-sex relationships were also common among Castro's man. In addition to Kaebnick, Arenas states in the book,

> . . . when the persecutions started and concentration camps were opened, when the sexual act became taboo while the "new man" was being proclaimed and masculinity exalted. Many of the young men who marched in Revolutionary Square applauding Fidel Castro, and many of the soldiers who marched, rifle in hand and with martial expressions, came to our rooms after the parades to cuddle up naked, and show their real selves (105).

The prohibition caused the revelation of homoeroticism when hypermasculinity deconstructed itself because of the extreme restrictiveness and solidity expected from Cuban men. As a result, "state labeling and control strategies themselves made homosexuality more visible" (Kaebnick 130). Since Arenas's literary productivity was in parallel with his sexual identity, Castro's authority connotated a "regime of institutionalized masculinity" (Barros "Life writing with Vengeance" 50).

To clarify why the new man and homophobia are two ideas supporting each other in the Revolution, it should be argued that when Castro started following Stalinist views on sexuality, capitalism and homoeroticism are considered as malfunctions of the Revolutionary society. Both are considered as vindications of corruption, while gay people are designated as an embodiment of the Cuban society falling into capitalist discourse. In Epps words, "homosexuals, long denigrated as less than men, are instead seen as the victims of capitalism, as the detritus of bourgeois decadence" (238). Therefore, capitalists in Cuba are not only depicted as colonialists to take advantage of the nation's natural resources and manpower but also "behind the alienation of the workers…the homosexualization, the perversion of the youth" (Epps 239). The gay man is considered passive, bodily invaded in a similar way to the conquest of the territorial independency of Cuba by foreign forces. Stigmatizing them as a form of alien infestation in the society, the state targets those who are "receptive" and "passive" during sexual intercourses since "the man who does not act 'properly' phallic and who, in one way or another, shows it, that is the subject whose sexuality is, or has been, most 'problematic' for the revolution" (Epps 235). A similar view is followed by Said as he differentiates between the concept of nationalism and exile by saying that "nationalisms are about groups, but in a very acute sense exile is a solitude experienced outside the groups"

(*Reflections on Exile* 183). Hence, stigma on gay people and ideologically deviant authors is justified as a way to protect the unity in Cuban society. Arenas also reveals the fact behind the labor camps in sugar plantations for those who were dangerous to the society while associating their situation with African Americans in the United States:

> The sugar harvest was approaching, and those vital, long-haired young men who still dared to walk around the city were all dragged to the sugar plantations, just like the Indians and black slaves in the past. It was the end of an era, underground and defiant, but still full of creativity, eroticism, intelligence, and beauty. (128).

Arenas's experience in forced labor camps as obliged by the UNEAC along with the other writers who have to work in the least desired jobs in the plantations, such as being gravediggers and agricultural laborers, is the part of a policy of cleansing in the society. UMAP camps, known as "Military Units to Aid Production" serves as a cover with an objective to "'educate', 'shape,' and 'save' them to prevent them from becoming 'parasites' or 'counterrevolutionaries'" (Olivares 111). In his life writing, Arenas summarizes his position at the UMAP camps where he is sent to work in harvest and to write a book praising the Revolution:

> To get up at four in the morning and, with a machete and water bottle, to be taken by cart to the fields to work all day under a blistering sun, among the sharp leaves of the sugarcane, which cause the skin to itch unbearably. To be sent to one of those places was like entering the last circle of hell. Completely covered from head to foot, with long sleeves, gloves, and a hat (the only way to be in those infernal places), I came to understand why the Indians had preferred suicide to working there as slaves; I understood why so many black men had killed themselves by suffocation. Now I was the Indian, I was the black slave, and I was not alone. (129)

Other necessary legal actions are taken in order to prevent the so-called social aberrancy in Cuban community, a program of "social prophylaxis," in which "homosexuality was defined as a social pathology" (Olivares 11) is proposed in 1971. The program follows the consolidation of normative gender discourse; homosexuality takes place at the bottom the sexual hierarchy. In *Queer Theory*, Jagose argues that "'Gay' was mobilized as a specifically political counter to that binarized and hierarchized sexual categorization which classifies homosexuality as a deviation from a privileged and naturalized homosexuality" (72). Along with this discrimination, the masculinization of the state was heightened throughout the communist doctrine's establishment in the society. This suggests that communists are perceived as "'men of iron will' . . . excluded from the

everyday cycle of ordinary human passion and weakness" due to the fact that Stalin is looked up to as a self- made man whose name connotes an entity made of steel and the absolute symbolization of masculinity (Epps 262). On the other hand, Arenas signified "sands" in Spanish, which can be associated with the idea of flow whereas Castro and his Revolution signifies an opposite derivation of solidity. As a result of this reminiscence, Arenas and Castro antagonize each other in different ways. As Epps affirms, "Arenas symbolically casts Castro as the chastiser of life . . . and thus implicitly as the champion of death. As in so much of his work, Arenas presents himself as Castro's steadfast opponent . . . despite the fact that his only arms are words" (263).

As Arenas's narrative suggests, the state authority slowly starts the persecution of "sexually deviants" because the Revolution intends to eradicate homoeroticism as a form of imperial propaganda and demonstrates it as a hindrance to the recovery of Cuba. In "Gender Policing, Homosexuality and the New Patriarchy of the Cuban Revolution, 1965–70," Lillian Guerra demonstrates this progressive elimination of homosexuals from the public, starting with a ban on hiring gays in job in 1971 and another prevention of "immorality" through a law of 1974 "proscribing any 'public ostentation of homosexual identity as offensive to socialist morality under the rubric of 'peligrosidad social' ['social dangerousness']" (269). In order to elevate the value of social integrity and togetherness, the undesirable appearances in public, including long hair and tight clothes are prohibited. Susana Peña exemplifies the legal actions against homoeroticism:

> Article 359 of the Legal Code criminalized anyone who "(a) scandalously dedicates himself to practicing homosexual acts or makes public ostentation of this conduct or importunes others with the requirements of this nature." According to the 1979 Penal Code, public ostentation of homosexuality was punishable by sentences of three to nine months. (128)

There is a need to benefit from the Cuban youth since the country is evolving into another system. Cuban community is encouraged to focus on the use of manual labor in the role of patriotic behavior. This suggests that people are expected to be useful and not to be distracted. As substantiality of bodily strength is emphasized, Cuban intelligentsia is alienated from the rest like gay people since they are in "non-productive, self-absorbed conditions" (Guerra 272). Consequently, homophobia becomes an extension of post-Revolutionary machismo. While Guerra entitles this antagonism as "gender policing,"

people are compelled to live under the conditions of a single choice lifestyle. Ideological diversionism in the case of sexuality, opinions or judgements are not tolerated and needed to be cured through hard labor. As a result, Reinaldo Arenas gives an example of how he is targeted two other gay men who rob him and later on accuse him of sexual harassment:

> I was naive enough to think the boys had no proof against us, and if anything could be proven, it was that they had robbed us. But I had overlooked a Castroist article of law stating that in the case of a homosexual committing a sexual crime, anyone's accusation was enough grounds for prosecution. Not only were legal proceedings brought against us, but we were taken to the Guanabo jail. (155)

Subsequently, Arenas mentions how as an accused gay, he becomes invisible in front of the police as a human being with his friend Pepe Malas as he states, "All of a sudden, everything positive had disappeared from my file, and I was nothing but a homosexual counterrevolutionary who had dared to publish books abroad." (155). Despite their innocence, their arrest suggests that "homosexual activity in Cuba . . . is not determined by one's sexual identity but is rather inspired by one's expression of humanity in defiance of a state" (Mullins 155). Therefore, when he goes to jail, it is not only because of his sexual preferences but his way of self-expression and thoughts. Foreshadowing his hopelessness towards his future in Cuba, this incident suggests that Arenas's life narrative cannot be thought of as non-political. Arenas spares long chapters on how gay people are perceived in prison and declares the fact that there is a bureaucratic way of treating prisoners whereas the gay community is placed at the bottom:

> Gays were not treated like human beings; they were treated like beasts. They were the last ones to come out for meals, so we saw them walk by, and the most insignificant incident was an excuse to beat them mercilessly. The soldiers guarding us, who called themselves combatientes, were army recruits sent here as a sort of punishment; they found some release for their rage by taking it out on the homosexuals. Of course, nobody called them homosexuals; they were called fairies, faggots, queers, or at best, gays. The wards for fairies were really the last circle of hell. (180-181)

As a result, when Arenas first arrives in prison, he tries to commit suicide with hallucinogenic drugs in excessive dose but survives. Still, his hatred towards the Revolution heightens and he defines it as "the Devil, the enemy of everything beautiful" (194). He is released from prison in 1976 after signing a statement that is to display him

as another scapegoat in the Cuban intellectual world and as an example for the public. In *Before Night Falls*, the writer talks about this memory:

> They wanted me to make a confession stating that I was a counterrevolutionary, that I regretted the ideological weakness I had shown in my published writings, and that the Revolution had been extraordinarily fair with me. In other words, a confession that sounded like a conversion, and of course, a commitment that I would work for them and write optimistic books. They gave me a week to think it over. I did not want to recant anything, I did not think I had to recant anything; but after three months at State Security, I signed the confession. (204)

Due to the fact that Arenas tastes freedom only in his childhood, he internalizes the feeling of captivity in one's motherland and asserts his inability to see himself as a full human being after being exposed to dehumanizing treatments by the state. During his first visit back to the beaches where he spent most of his time going after sexual pleasures, Arenas displays that people are not allowed to go to the beaches as they used to since the main object of the state changed from a subjective way of living to a communal way of thinking. Disappointed again, he argues that "Bureaucracy had even reached the sea" (228). Before his exile, Arenas points out the crucial reforms in the inner structure of the society as the nature of Cuban people are disrupted.

Regarding his years in Cuba, Arenas says "I had lived my childhood and adolescence under Batista's dictatorship, and the rest of my life under the even harsher dictatorship of Fidel Castro" (276). This view suggests that his consciousness never recovers from the dictatorship of Castro, and he is haunted by fear even though he is exiled and lived in New York. Alienated from the community of his motherland, he has never been perceived as a significant person in Cuban literature. He feels resentment toward the fact that he "had never been allowed to be a real human being in the fullest sense of the world" (Arenas 276). The destruction of the individual voice is displayed in his life narrative when he reveals the memories of the sugar plantation, surveillance, and the prison given to the reader.

To sum up, Arenas's work testifies against the Revolution and obtains a political value as a first-hand witness narrative. *Before Night Falls* exposes the legal and social restrictions for the sake of state influenced lives even though they are not publicized in the

international area. Since there is no moment of amnesia towards the gay community, it is also not possible to reconcile for those who are labeled as traitors in the Cuban society. Arenas's narrative disengages itself from being solely a personal record but stands for a "document the reality of a whole people, the history of those who before were not allowed to voice their story nor their history" (Gugelberger and Kearney 8-9). Nevertheless, *Before Night Falls* shows its constitution of multiple layers of narration and how Arenas becomes the voices of others while his autobiographical space narrates a collective trauma.

3.3. COLLECTIVE ENUNCIATON

Reinaldo Arenas's anguish and misery in his motherland derive from his exclusion from society, and, in his narrative, he reproaches Cuba for this betrayal. Written when Arenas struggled with AIDS in New York, the narrative sets an example of the last moment of reckoning on his deathbed:

> I started dictating the story of my life into a tape recorder. I would speak for a while, take a rest, and then continue. I had already started my autobiography in Cuba, which I had titled *Before Night Falls*. Being a fugitive living in the woods at the time, I had to write before it got dark. Now darkness was approaching again, only more insidiously. It was the dark night of death. I really had to finish my memoirs before nightfall. I took it as a challenge. (xii)

The resistance against the darkness in life is about to be finalized but the narrative occupies a non-territorial space as an act of escaping from bodily expression. However, using the first-person plural in his story hints the fact that Arenas gives a place to those who were displaced and victimized by the Revolution. He states

> After having lived thirty-seven years in Cuba I am now in exile, waiting for an imminent death but still suffering all the sorrows of exile. Why this relentless cruelty against us? Why this cruelty against all of us who did not want to be part of the banal tradition and dull daily existence so characteristic of our Island? (89)

When the political value and commonality of Arenas's experiences are taken into consideration, the text stands up in the form of *testimonio*. With this in mind, Smith, and Watson note that *testimonio* is a narrative form that allows "affirmation of the individual self in a collective mode" (97). While Arenas's victimization is portrayed within the text,

he intends to give a historical truth to the readers apart from Castro's. Not only does the author try to fulfill his longing for the homeland, but he also becomes the catcher of the truth that has been hidden from the international agenda. Giving voice to the silenced other in the society, the text can be considered as a political tool against the Revolution. As Barros notes in "Life writing with a Vengeance," the text functions "as a type of evidence to be used against the system" (47) and "a combative tool in the author's struggle to contest the meaning of the truth" (48-9). By the same token, the narrative consists of three phases of alienation in the author's life; as a gay intellectual in Cuba, an exile in the United States and estranged from the gay community in the United States due to AIDS. Payne and Quesada imply that:

> Arenas's experience of primarily economic exclusion in childhood, social isolation during Castro's reign, and the stigma surrounding members of the Mariel boatlift and an anti-communist writer exiled by Castro . . . in addition to the limited economic opportunities in the United States contributed to his triple marginality. (49)

The course of exile is given in detail by the writer since it is part of a strategical move in Cuba's Cold War Agenda. The Mariel Exodus is an encouraged act "to avoid the danger of a popular uprising . . . a breach must be opened to allow a number of those non-conformists to leave, it was like curing sickness by bleeding" (*Before Night Falls* 278). More importantly, before he leaves for the United States, Arenas's words demonstrate the egocentric characteristic of the state authority: "They made me sign a document stating that I was leaving Cuba for purely personal reasons, because I was unworthy to live within the marvelous Cuban Revolution" (281). Henceforth, the Mariel Exodus performs the duty of scheme in the Cold War since this massive immigration causes a tension in the host land. Julio Capo Jr. argues that this act is perceived as the purge of gays from Cuba as well as a strategical action without causing a bigger domestic conflict in the country. The United States becomes critical of the Mariel Exodus due to sharing the same views with Cuba on queerness at the time:

> The expulsion of homosexuals from Cuba—and the public condemnation that homosexuals were enemies of the revolution and potential risks to the state—poses an interesting parallel to the pre-Stonewall United States. The purging of American homosexuals from the federal government in the 1950s, for example, over fears that they posed a risk to the state as morally weak characters vulnerable to Soviet influence and blackmail, demonstrates another context in which a state attempted to ferret out and regulate covert

> sexuality to advance its own political agenda and ideology—in this instance, Cold War anti-communism. (85)

However, through the Refugee Act of 1980 by the Carter administration, immigrants from Cuba are admitted to the country since the Act does not pursue any geographical and ideological restrictions except for stipulating a questioning of one's sexuality through a mental examination. Together with the ghettoization of the Cuban community in Miami, the Mariel migrants constitute the third major wave of migration since 1959 and they are much more significantly excluded in the society and even among their community. Peña states:

> Ironically, the echoes of the Cuban government's insults were heard among Miami's Cuban American population as it became evident that the Mariel migrants were blacker, poorer, and less educated than previous Cuban immigrants. Compared to previous Cuban immigrants, Mariel immigrants tended to be a much younger group. Seventy percent were men, whereas previous gender ratios were close to even; and a large percentage of those arriving were single males, whereas in the past families were the norm. (125)

Comparatively, the Mariel migrants have lesser relatives in the United States, which also causes a longer period of integration to the new culture. This exile enhanced Arenas's marginality and animosity towards Castro. In "Intellectual Exile: Expatriates and Marginals (1993)," Edward Said describes many exiled thinkers' state of mind during this process as a metaphysical sense of "restlessness, movement, constantly being unsettled, and unsettling others" (402). Since the given culture cannot fulfill the sense of belonging and a new territorial consciousness cannot be formed, the exile does not distance himself from dreaming a return. As Said affirms, every scene or situation in the new country necessarily draws on its counterpart in the old country" (407). Additionally, the artificial nature of the host land disturbed Reinaldo Arenas despite the fact that he expected to express himself without a political or social labeling. As Olivares points out,

> So attractive from a far, the United States quickly lost for Arenas its seductive charm. Having gone into exile in search of an uncertain future but at least a promising one, an expectant Arenas eventually realized that the auspicious romance for which he had hoped could only lead to disappointment. (26)

Regardless of obtaining the liberty of writing, the unacceptance of the mainstream American culture and already existing marginality of the self-outweighs his presumptions about his new surroundings and drags him into another degree of solitude and desperation. This hopelessness is depicted with the following sentences in the narrative:

> I knew I could not live in Miami. Now, needless to say, after ten years, I have realized that an exile has no place anywhere, because there is no place, because the place where we started to dream, where we discovered the natural world around us, read our first book, loved for the first time, is always the world of our dreams. (293)

The consequences of the Mariel Exodus intensify Arenas's self-expulsion from society along with being "a self-proclaimed loner [who] turned to where he always felt at home: the blank page" (Olivares 28). With a fantasy of return, his writing suggests that he tries to comfort himself by displaying what he witnesses within the narrative. Openly claiming that "I could not remain a silent witness to such horror" (Arenas 29), the text is also a witness narrative as it displays what happened during the Revolution.

It should be emphasized that throughout the book, the writer projects memories with gay government officials and military men as well as Fidel Castro's close friends like Alberto Guevara, whom Arenas refers as "royal gay" (78) and deconstructs their masculine state. The unmasking of the Revolution occurs through his authorship and his witness stand as a fellow Cuban. As Borros points out, "their double existence as moralists and gays constitutes that which the author constantly seeks to expose in his autobiography" (Barros "Life writing with a Vengeance" 49). Hence, his exile to the United States enables him to recover his artistic voice and the agency of writing is used as a survival strategy of the diasporic soul. Equally, Benigno Sánchez-Eppler indicates in *Queer Diasporas* (2000) that, "Arenas is just attesting, with all the urgency of his Cuban victimizations both behind him and before him, that being immersed in the act of writing down the self is to live an intensified simultaneity of the past retrieved and the present of retrieval" (157). The regaining of the artistic voice is a reterritorialization process due to his exilic identity in the host land.

It should also be noted that during the first years of his exile, Arenas intends to blend with the gay community in New York. "The textual construction of his exile is described with the transformation of his appearance" but as an individual who is at his late 30s when he arrives in the United States, he feels discontent about the way he looks even though until some point he "tries to make himself attractive to whatever or whoever comes before him" (Ortiz 25). Under those circumstances, his disappointment for not being able to

establish a bond between the gay community and his homoeroticism mounts with AIDS. This also suggests that as a person who dreams about a new chance to attain his voice back and who longs for Cuba, both evolve into a nightmare for the self. He writes:

> Occasionally I dreamed that although I had been in the United States, I was back in Cuba, I do not know why, perhaps because my plane was hijacked or because someone had deceived me by telling me I could return without any problem. I was in my hot room again, but now I could never leave; I was condemned to stay there forever. (311-312)

Arenas's arrival in the United States correlates with the time when AIDS came to be known in the United States in the summer of 1981 (Rimmerman 37). In addition to the increasing number of AIDS patients in the 1980s, the U.S. government stayed indifferent to the situation. Rimmerman states that "AIDS struck at a terrible political time, one that witnessed the rise of a new fiscal and social conservatism with the election of Ronald Reagan and a more conservative Congress in 1980" (38). Under Reagan's administration, conservative groups were able to feed the anti-gay propaganda due to the common diagnosis of AIDS in the gay community — the cumulative number of known deaths was 16,301 by the fifth anniversary of AIDS in the United States, in 1986 (Rimmerman 180). Moreover, given the fact that the gay community had also been targeted as a result of the Cold War, after the first cases of the disease, they were given another reason to blame for the degeneracy in the society. In *Epidemics and Society* (2019), Frank M. Snowden states that:

> A "lavender panic" targeting homosexuals paralleled the "Red scare." Indeed, McCarthy and Hoover regarded communists and homosexuals as intertwined threats to US security. In the cosmology of the American political right, homosexuals were akin to communists—both were secretive, untrustworthy, eager to make converts, and open to blackmail. (434)

Thus, when AIDS came to be outspoken in the American society, it fed the Red Scare and considered as a "wrath of God" upon the gay community. For this reason, under the leadership of Reagan, who did not publicly name the existence of AIDS in the American society until the Third International AIDS Conference in 1987 (Rimmerman 40), the government focused on ignoring the health-related side of the disease and rather focused on the ideological state of it. AIDS was considered as a "gay plague" although it was a clear fact that the gay community was not the only one that was affected from the disease. Snowden explains that:

> In 1982 the new disease was named gay-related immune deficiency (GRID), and it was derisively called the "gay plague." Both terms were clearly inaccurate in view of the epidemiological pattern of the disease in Africa, where it had become prevalent in the general population and was primarily transmitted heterosexually. But even in the United States, health authorities already knew that approximately half of those affected were not gay. Since the disease in North America affected hemophiliacs, heroin users, Haitian immigrants, and homosexuals, it gave rise to the alternative term of "the 4H disease." Then in 1984 the causative pathogen was renamed HIV, the human immunodeficiency virus. (433)

Reagan and his advisers ignored the facts about AIDS and rather thought it "presented serious political risks. As a presidential candidate, Reagan had promised to eliminate the role of the federal government in the already limited US welfare state, as well as to embrace social policies that promoted "family values" (Rimmerman 40). As a result of this, AIDS became known as a result of abnormality and perversion as it was alienated from the governmental agenda. Similarly, in her book, Sontag indicates how AIDS is perceived as an illness and a punishment for sexual deviation saying, "The sexual transmission of this illness, considered by most people as a calamity one brings on oneself, is judged more harshly than other means- especially since AIDS is understood as a disease not only sexual excess but of perversity" (85). Due to the connotations attributed to the disease, Rimmerman adds "At various points in the epidemic, conservatives called for quarantining and tattooing people living with AIDS" (39). Snowden summarizes the early days of AIDS crisis in the United States as follows:

> With HIV/AIDS understood by so many as a moral disease, it is not surprising that during the crucial early 1980s when AIDS gained a foothold in the United States, the Republican leadership under President Ronald Reagan was unenthusiastic about taking robust public health measures against the HIV emergency . . . A disease that, in Reagan's view, affected only marginal and despised groups could make little claim to his attention. Furthermore, the reasoning that "sinful behavior" caused the epidemic led logically to the conclusion that the proper remedy was behavioral rather than medical. The onus was perceived to be on the "sodomites" to end the disease by returning to righteous American values. The Reagan Administration held that a moral stand was more important—and more effective—than scientific public health, which would not attack the problem at its roots. (437)

In the narrative, Arenas uses a satiric tone to confirm the situation of marginalized gay community whereas implies that even though he is away from the repressive government of Cuba, he carries the same label:

> Moreover, all the rulers of the world, that reactionary class always in power, and the powerful within any system, must feel grateful to AIDS because a good part of the marginal population, whose only aspiration is to live and who therefore oppose all dogma and political hypocrisy, will be wiped out. (xvii)

In "Writing the Body: Self, Illness and Experience in AIDS/Gay Life Writing," Ghosh and Pati point out, "in the narratives of illness, the body becomes politicized through the representation of the private matters of life to the public. Actually, politicization occurs on the public boundary because it is where the sensitive matter of life becomes a growing concern for society" (28). Thus, AIDS also indicates another stage of dislocation as it refers to "an orchestrated political conspiracy against marginalized communities" demolishing Arenas's final hope for fitting in (Ortiz 54). More significantly, for Arenas not being able to control one's own body means losing his hope for the future and reveals the need to vindicate the self. Together, these indicate that the "body appears to define the subject and, particularly for AIDS memoirs by gay writers, for whom repression has always been a part of life, writing the body offers a way of asking for all that has been taken away from life, and most precisely affirming identity" (Ghosh and Pati 28). As Riley points out "a personal exile, the perception the AIDS patient has of himself as another, just as the spirit becomes an exile in the body and is simultaneously exiled from its own body" (491). As a person who sees no point in living in a world that suppresses him, the author attempts suicide three times in prison, and when he fails to escape from Cuba, his last attempt ends his life in the United States. In the text, the readers can acknowledge his justification of his choice saying, "If you cannot live the way you want, there is no point in living" (ix). Given the fact that there is no possible return to the homeland or fulfill the need of belonging in one's life, the writer explains, "the only escape for me was death" (ix). His suicide note is not only a farewell, but since death is a desertion from the sufferings, it also serves as "a literary act of self-repatriation" (Salonga 22). While eluding the self from the burden of the body and territorial belonging, "the novelist uses suicide as an inspired means of overcoming his exile and returning to his native Cuba in death" (Salonga 22). Through leaving a trace of himself with his life narrative, he embodies the history of Cuban gay community, the Mariel Exodus included.

Arenas's "Farewell" is both a discourse of relief because of paying his debt to those who are silenced by the state in Cuba and an urge to continue until Cuba is as free as him.

Arenas also points out the one person who is responsible of his separation from his homeland when he states:

> Persons near me are in no way responsible for my decision. There is only one person I hold accountable: Fidel Castro. The sufferings of exile, the pain of being banished from my country, the loneliness, and the diseases contracted in exile would probably never have happened if I had been able to enjoy freedom in my country. (317)

The accusation Arenas makes in his suicide note indicates that even though he regains his artistic voice, he does not fully make peace with his past. Consequently, he urges people to do their share to bring justice to Cuba after him: "I want to encourage the Cuban people out of the country as well as on the Island to continue fighting for freedom. I do not want to convey to you a message of defeat but of continued struggle and of hope" (317). Here, the author emphasizes the collective voice that he carries from the beginning of his life narrative and openly states in the suicide note. In Salonga's words, the note includes "a collective informal type of end-of-analysis . . . [that] address[es] the political figure responsible for its current social state: Fidel Castro" (32). As a result, his states in the note "Cuba will be free. I already am" (317) is a form of liberating oneself and foreshadows homecoming for Arenas. It is "an indicator of freeing oneself from bodily and spiritually oppression" (Barros "The Self as an Act of Message" 13) through the constitution of a textual space. The note consists of a brief statement regarding the writer's attempt of displaying the truth. Hence, "the politically articulated act of suicide opens the autobiographical genre to the possibility of contemplating writing as life and the writer as the text" (13) and the text becomes a meta-embodiment of its writer. As also noted by Beverley, Arenas's narrative "involves[s] an urgency to communicate, a problem of repression, poverty, subalternity, imprisonment, struggle for survival" which indicates it is also part of *testimonio* ("The Margin at the Center" 14).

To sum up, *Before Night Falls* stands as the life writing of the author whose fear of persecution re-enacted his authority of writing, as a method of taking control of one's life. Arenas's work suggests that he manages to reterritorialize himself through his literary voice and transmits the voices of others who are similarly tortured bodily and spiritually and imprisoned like him by creating a personal space in his narrative. Therefore, his life

narrative becomes an example of minor literature with regards to the recuperation of the self in language, political connotation, and testimonial characteristic in his singular voice.

CONCLUSION

Border-crossing is a juxtaposed notion in mainstream American society that occurs when linguistic and territorial boundaries become the junction point of identity-making for many immigrants in the United States. As this study has shown, for the exiled, it is difficult to place the body into a singular space. On the one hand, the person feels abandoned by the land that he/she is attached to since infancy. On the other, to avoid persecution, imprisonment, or death, the person has to challenge an unknown future. In the end, the individual embodies a sense of constant homelessness. All the writers analyzed in this study are affected by this compulsory departure from their homelands at their young age or adulthood after various traumatic events.

When Ariel Dorfman departs from Chile and the United States, Julia Alvarez from the Dominican Republic, and Reinaldo Arenas from Cuba, the loss of connection from the native land becomes destructive. Ariel Dorfman and Julia Alvarez depict their experiences of exile at a very early stage of their lives, whereas Reinaldo Arenas's exile occurs when he is an adult. Nevertheless, occurring by force, these experiences shatter the person's self, since neither a territorial familiarity nor a linguistic acquaintance is possible. According to Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, this state of deterritorialization is being "the operation of the line of the flight" (*A Thousand Plateaus* 508). In other words, deterritorialization can be explained as a state of not belonging to a certain territory, always being on the move. However, Deleuze and Guattari state that it is possible to be inside the linguistic borders of the mother tongue when the body is placed in another territory through the process of reterritorialization. The life narratives analyzed in this study reflect a considerable amount of struggle to start a new life after the persecution by political reasons. Their narratives include the fear of persecution, incarceration, displacement, death, and violence. Concerning their deterritorialization from language, their life narratives become a lifesaver throughout their exile, and therefore, their identities are reflected in their writings as an act of reterritorialization.

In Ariel Dorfman's *Heading South, Looking North: A Bilingual Journey*, the constant turmoil between Spanish and English can be detected easily since the author consciously

chooses one over the other in order to find a way to place his identity into a solid location which he might refer to as home. Born in Buenos Aires, having Jewish parents who were exiled to Argentine and left their mother tongues behind, it is concluded that Dorfman does not secure a sense of belonging neither in the United States nor in Chile. In order to cope with this situation, Dorfman chooses to publish his works in English, a language that he does not completely dominate. In this regard, as Deleuze and Guattari puts forward, Dorfman deals with "the [common] problem of immigrants, and especially of their children, the problem of minorities, the problem of a minor literature" (*Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature* 19) when he decides to place himself in the English language. While the turn of events drags Dorfman from one side over the other, until he faces the fear of death for his loved ones, he cannot reach the cathartic moment of decision in his life. When Dorfman reunites the heritage of both cultures and languages in his narrative, this writing space allows him to come to terms with his splendid identity. This act of "reterritorialization" assures Dorfman's exilic self to reconcile through narration.

In Julia Alvarez's *Something to Declare: Essays,* as a young adult who wishes to blend into the American culture, the author experiences the same fluctuation within her choice to maintain her ties with the ancestral Dominican roots or turn to the individualistic culture that allows her to express herself without being restricted by gender or the family. As an act of survival, like Dorfman, Alvarez chooses English over Spanish since she discovers that the former carries the ability of structuring superiority over the other. However, Alvarez continues to carry insecurity of using English as a way to express herself until she writes her life out to declare her hybridity. In consequence, she manages to reterritorialize herself in the text. Furthermore, while her experience with the battle between the two languages are portrayed in the text, she also sheds light on the imperialistic force of the United States over her motherland. Since the lives of these authors evolve around the matter of life and death, it is obvious that they focus on how they have managed to survive and what they have left behind. Hence, when the connection between the Alvarez family and the Mirabal Sisters is broken in Julia Alvarez's life, she carries the urge to restore her relationship with the Dominican Republic through giving a voice to Mirabal Sisters as well as all the women who were

silenced throughout the Trujillo's regime. When Alvarez decides to reconcile with her bilingual identity, she reterritorializes herself in her life narrative.

In *Before Night Falls,* Reinaldo Arenas's use of the mother tongue stands as fight back against the system that incarcerates him and many other gay people, writers, and other allegedly dangerous groups during Castro's regime. In terms of self-expression, it can be argued that Arenas is banned from Castro's Cuba and the language of the nation since he refuses to be a part of the revolution. He is defined as an expatriate in Cuba and as an author whose writings are not only being banned but also destroyed, he is unable to possess a linguistic freedom of express in Spanish. This deterritorialization process from Spanish, Arenas's mother tongue, differs from Dorfman and Alvarez's. Due to the fact that Dorfman and Alvarez are able to adjust themselves in a language that is different than their mother tongues, they do not feel comfortable in English. However, in Arenas's case, in addition to being exiled from his country, he is also denied the use of Spanish to affirm his gay identity. Only when he is exiled to the United States in 1980 through a massive expatriation of gay Cuban population, he becomes autonomous of the use of the language. Thus, it is suggested that Spanish becomes the language that he is deterritorialized whereas his life narrative ensures a place for him to reaffirm himself. Moreover, in his narrative, there is a metaphorical reunion with his beloved land through the courtesy of being able to express himself without the fear of persecution. Finally, at the end of his narrative he embraces his gay writer identity through the text, still, it should be noted that he does not fully make peace with his past. Hence, due to the fragmentary existence of these writers, it is indicated that alienation of the forced migration resolves when the author finds comfort through writing. These writings are specifically differentiated from other narratives since all segments of their identities are placed and accepted in a third space within their narratives. This experience of reterritorialization as defined by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari allows the reader to assign them as minor writers.

Throughout this reconciliation process, the texts do not distance themselves from a subjective perspective of political history. Due to the relatedness of their exile to the geopolitical importance of their motherland, the narratives discourse on the stages of

political unrest in Chile, Cuba, and the Dominican Republic until the moment of dislocation. In the concept of minor literature, Deleuze and Guattari suggest that the narrative also has a sociopolitical power to be agent for witnessing the events that occur around the protagonists. In the life writings of these Hispanic authors, the readers witness their journeys evolving around the Cold War policies and repressive governments that are encouraged by their current host country. Not only the texts are used as first-hand testimonies against the destructiveness of policies regarding the Western Hemisphere, but they also indicate the personal evolvement of political consciousness. Through the primary stages of childhood to adulthood, the writers are raised with the hints of foreign influence upon their motherlands.

In Ariel Dorfman's *Heading South Looking North: A Bilingual Journey*, the author manifests the correlation between the family history and the political persecution in various countries, including Odessa, Argentine, the United States and Chile. As the author grounds his narrative in three main exiles he experiences, he concludes that his family is targeted under the Red Scare and the destructive foreign policies of the United States upon the Western Hemisphere. While condemning the United States for being the responsible for the impoverishment of the Latin America and the Caribbean, he narrates the impact of the Red Scare on his family, and followingly, displays the United States as the imperialist power that brings the Chilean coup and repressive government of Augusto Pinochet in 1973, his life narrative cannot be thought separately from the politics.

Similarly, Julia Alvarez, being exposed to an Americanized education in the Dominican Republic, suffers from in-betweenness when her identity suits neither the host country when they are exiles, nor the Dominican Republic, as the way her family raises her provides a more superior and alien position in the society. Even though her Americanized dreams for the future have been suggested in the text, like Dorfman, Alvarez's identity is tied to both sides. Alvarez emphasizes how the Dominican Republic is taken over by the cultural hegemony of the North, and her identification of the self as Dominican American at the end of her narrative suggests that her roots are shaped by the political turmoil of the 1960s. When she comes to an understanding of how the interventionist strategies towards the Dominican Republic pushed her family to exile after the acknowledgment of

a possible death threat by the Trujillo government, Alvarez's narrative takes the value of a political statement or a counterrevolutionary writing against the repressive rule. When she decides to narrate the story of the Mirabal Sisters, it can be suggested that her political thoughts reach a point when the author cannot separate this political history from her own family history.

Within the same perspective, as Arenas's writings gradually controvert the Castro regime, his authorship becomes counterrevolutionary. The readers at this point can witness how Reinaldo Arenas is obliged to leave his beloved Cuba and how he is depicted as the embodiment of all the undesirable values that Castro himself detested in the same county. The sociopolitical change in the Revolutionary Cuba is given to the readers in Arenas's confession-like writing. From the beginning of his narrative, starting with memories of infanthood, the text illustrates the standardizing gender roles and how Arenas's mother as well as other family members have suffered from this. The author's alienation from the discourse of a nuclear family results in his attachment to the land where he feeds his imagination. When the bondage between the self and the land is destroyed, the writer's anger grows. Consequently, holding Castro responsible for his incarceration and exile, Arenas's narrative carries an invisible, secondary protagonist alongside the author, as Castro frames Arenas's fate through antagonistic policies and discourses.

Deleuze and Guattari argued that minor literature specifies a form of narrative that belongs to both an individual and a community. In correlation with the testimonial narrative in Latin America, Dorfman's, Alvarez's, and Arenas's writings indicate that they manage not only to express their thoughts and experiences before their exile but also obtain the role of the storyteller for their communities.

In Ariel Dorfman's case, his testimony is given against those with anti-immigrant activities in the United States, when he holds the fear of sharing a similar fate to the Ethel and Julius Rosenberg as well as how an individual acts upon the necessity of survival in a host country where indigenous features of another nation were welcomed with a hostile approach. More importantly, Dorfman's exile from Chilean dictatorship is an exemplification of those who could not survive and those who were silenced unlike Ariel

Dorfman. His literary voice is held accountable for transmitting the story of the ones who have suffered under the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet, while there is also an evaluation of the circumstances, both politically and socially, in Chile and in the Western Hemisphere.

By the same token, Julia Alvarez indicates the interdependency of her family history with the Mirabal Sisters' execution by the Trujillo regime while the gradual Americanization of the Dominican Republic became one of the major themes in her life writing. Unlike Ariel Dorfman and Reinaldo Arenas, Alvarez is not involved in political backlash against the Trujillo regime but still, she is exiled from the Dominican Republic after the whole family realizes that they are in serious danger. Alvarez family's exile can be considered a collective migratory event. Since this circumstance is reflected on Alvarez's identity as a Dominican-American young adult till her adulthood as a writer, it encourages her to reconnect with the social heritage of her motherland while narrating her own story.

Since minor literature obtains a collective value, as the last chapter of this study has indicated, in the narrative of Reinaldo Arenas, it is argued that he offers his readers a perspective of Cuba that was not given to the outsiders before. The antagonistic relationship between Arenas and Fidel Castro instills a different point of view to those who were persecuted or who sustained their lives under the dictatorship that neglected homoerotic tendencies in the society as well as aiming to wipe them out. In the case of Reinaldo Arenas, the readers obtain the information of how gays alongside with other political criminals are incarcerated, tortured, or persecuted in Castro's Cuba. Furthermore, Arenas also fills his readers' minds with the experience of the Mariel Boatlift and the post-exile situation for the exiled authors. Hence, his narrative represents a community of people that shared the same fate with him.

Ariel Dorfman's *Heading South, Looking North: A Bilingual Journey*, Julia Alvarez's Something *to Declare: Essays* and Reinaldo Arenas's *Before Night Falls* are indicative examples of the concept of minor literature as defined by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. These life writings give their readers a closer perspective of the Cold War inasmuch as the writers objectify the sense of belonging through their writings. Therefore,

they occupy a place in the literary canon as they shed light on one of the most perplexing eras that surrounded the Western Hemisphere. Through the exile to the North of their motherland, these individual narratives inherit the dichotomy between the individual and the collective along with the self in crisis and a moment of reconciliation through the act of writing itself.

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