

## **Martí, Monologue, and the Metaphorical Dawn in Raúl de Cárdenas's *Un hombre al amanecer***

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Raúl de Cárdenas's *Un hombre al amanecer* traces and reflects upon the life of Cuban writer and patriot José Martí by making him the only character and speaking voice in the play. The work stages the final day of Martí's life but presents his entire life through flashbacks. However, even though Martí is the only character in the play, three dramatic strategies function to depict his life from multiple perspectives and, at the same time, to shift the thematic focus of the play from Martí and his life to an evaluation of what it means to be Cuban at the end of the twentieth century.

The playwright scripts *Un hombre al amanecer* to shed light on the life of one of the most interesting figures in Latin America and to inform the United States public about a character little known to them.<sup>1</sup> While this play does, indeed, teach about José Martí's life, the three strategies – the juxtaposition of past and present, the interweaving of four types of monologue, and the incorporation of Martí's own writings into the play – suggest that this dramatic text is not about Martí, but rather, about a writer's relationship with his nation.<sup>2</sup>

This article will examine the structure and content of *Un hombre al amanecer* to show how Cárdenas fuses multiple perspectives on the life and writings of José Martí to postulate a troubled relationship with his Cuban nation: a relationship that was as real for the nineteenth-century Cuban patriot as it is for the twentieth-century writer of the "new" Martí text. We will see how nation is defined through the various "voices" of the monologue and the excerpts from Martí's literary texts, postulating that, as Martí speaks through Cárdenas's text, but for himself, to himself, and by himself, so too does Cárdenas speak with multiple voices about his nation. Moreover, the way in

which Cárdenas blends the past and “present” of Martí’s life fuses a troubled Cuban past of a more recent time, that of Castro’s Revolution, with a patriot/writer’s present attempt to come to terms with his place in and reaction to the nation he left.

Cuban patriot, martyr, and writer José Martí (1853-95) began writing shortly after the outbreak of the first Cuban war against Spain by editing and creating clandestine newspapers and pamphlets. One of his first published works, a dramatic poem entitled *Abdala*, which includes a protagonist who sacrifices his life to defend his homeland against oppressors, not only becomes autobiographical as Martí’s life unfolds, but because of it, his other texts and his revolutionary actions, he is detained, persecuted and later exiled by the Spanish authorities in Cuba (Schulman 20).

Like Martí, Cárdenas’s exile from Cuba in 1961 deeply impacted him. He writes, “Mi salida de Cuba, después del estreno de mi obra en un acto *La Palangana* en 1961, vino a paralizar mi producción dramática por más de 10 años” (González-Pérez 141). Nonetheless, Cárdenas is author of many plays including *La muerte de Rosendo* (1986), *Al ayer no se le dice adiós* (1986), *Las Carbonell de la Calle Obispo* (1986-7), *Aquí no se baila el danzón*, *Dile a Fragancia que yo la quiero*, *El Barbero de Mantilla* (1987), *Las sombras no se olvidan* (1989), *Recuerdos de familia* (1988), *Sucedió en La Habana* (1987) and *Los hijos de Ochún* (1994).

Cárdenas is not the first Cuban playwright to dramatize the life and works of a nineteenth-century Cuban writer in an effort to revise and unveil history, nor is he the first to draw parallels between the selected writer’s and his own condition as expatriated citizen and writer. In an illuminating article in *Ollantay Theater Magazine*, Beatriz Rizk shows how both Abelardo Estorino (*La dolorosa historia del amor secreto de don José Jacinto Milanés*, 1974) and Abilio Estévez (*La verdadera culpa de Juan Clemente Zenea*, 1986) blend textual fragments from a century ago with the “author’s present moment in the late twentieth century” to “underscore the continuing relevance of the discussions surrounding the word-concepts ‘fatherland,’ ‘liberty,’ ‘insularity,’ and ‘exile’ . . .” (123-4).<sup>3</sup> Cárdenas’s play follows a similar structure by including a variety of intertexts from one selected author, however. Monologue, the blending of past and present, intertextuality and the prioritizing of theatre over the other intertexts (suggested both by the primary role of Martí’s play *Abdala* among the intertexts and the primacy of metatheatrical devices) control the point of view in the play and shift the thematic emphasis.

*Un hombre al amanecer* charts the biographical course of Martí's life – his years in Spain, Mexico, Guatemala, New York, and Cuba – and dramatizes his relationships with his Cuban friends, his parents, his female lovers, his children and Generals Máximo Gómez and Antonio Maceo, with whom Martí had met several times in an effort to free Cuba from Spain. Cárdenas succeeds in depicting the broad scope of Martí's life and in evoking great movement on stage through Martí's memories, even though the play all takes place in one 24 hour period in one location. The protagonist never moves out of the space nor does any other character enter it.

Cárdenas accomplishes this through the intricate way in which he weaves the many "different voices" of monologue. According to Heidrun Adler, paradoxically, "el monólogo es la convención teatral más antigua y, a la vez, la más moderna" (125). Different from dialogue, the monologue structure "está totalmente determinado por la dialéctica entre la presencia visible y la imaginaria. . . La dramatis persona está sola, allí sobre el escenario, y se dirige a una realidad hipostasiada convertida en interlocutor a la que está entregada venga lo que viniera." Because there is no dialogue partner, "el medio social se actualiza en un todo." When a dialogue partner is present, the social context is based on each one of the specific interactions between characters, but "sólo el monólogo es capaz de transformar lo general, o sea, la totalidad del medio social en que se mueve la persona dramática, en interlocutor válido" (Adler 126).

In Latin America where, according to Adler, three out of ten plays published during the past 20 years are monologues, the technique becomes a framework which promotes communication, not alienation. Adler outlines four types of monologues in Latin American theatre: dialogue with one or more offstage characters who are invisible to spectators but whose voices can be heard; dialogue with the audience who is assigned a concrete role; dialogue with imaginary voices, hallucinations or personified objects; and interior monologue, a form of auto-analysis with an imaginary other (127-134). As we shall see, Cárdenas incorporates all of Adler's monologue strategies into his play, although Adler's final three points are prioritized since on only a few occasions is there a voice, a tape recording, music or an expression uttered from offstage. The use of monologue expands the point of view and shifts the focus from the presumed subject of the play (Martí) to his images of and relationship to his nation. As the protagonist "dialogues" with each different partner (with the audience, with imaginary, but real, historical people, or with himself, through his reflections, his memories, his

writings during the play, and the Martí intertexts included by Cárdenas), Cuba and his relationship to it changes.

Cárdenas weaves the four types of monologue in such a way that at moments the protagonist is talking to himself, and then he will turn to the audience and say something or turn toward an imaginary character to carry on a conversation with him/her. Martí, however, is the only speaking character, though at one point in the text, a voice is heard from offstage, calling his name and accusing him of the crime for which he will be executed (50). The different types of monologues create motion within the text; they move the text through Martí's life historically, they direct the audience through the places of Martí's travels and exile, and they focus attention to an imaginary entrance on the part of each invisible interlocutor. This feigned movement allows an entire lifetime to be represented in one single day and also creates the sense that this text is not about this one day or this one life, but rather about an entire nation and its relationship to its citizens, in and from any space. In this way, the monologue transports character and spectators through space and time and, as a result, transforms discourse and the message behind it.

The protagonist speaks the opening lines of the play with his back to the audience. In that initial monologue, he expresses an overwhelming inner agitation that cannot be calmed, even by the beauty and tranquility of Cuba and he reveals his turmoil even while he is in his beloved homeland.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, as he turns to the audience, his attitude changes and suggests that Cuba, and only sweet Cuba, can calm him. To the audience he reveals that even though he is about to be killed for his revolutionary ideals:

Ya no hay tristezas amarrándome las entrañas. Solamente la dulzura de mi Cuba, la diosa de mis ansias y mis sueños. Existo ahora empapado por la lluvia de sus nubes. Me acarician las hojas de sus árboles, me hacen cosquillas las espinas que encuentro en la manigua, saboreo en mis manos el agua turbia de sus ríos. Los años transcurridos en el más doloroso de los exilios ya se borran de mi mente. (8)

The contradiction between what he expresses to himself and what he reveals to the audience suggests his ambivalence and tremendous inner turmoil with regard to his nation. He so wants to love Cuba and to be calmed by his homeland, but in his soul he feels deeply disturbed about his nation.

The change in attitude when he speaks to the audience highlights the self-analytical stance of the earlier passage. Adler notes that when a

monologue is between a protagonist and an imaginary other and when it takes on a self-analytical tone, “el monólogo sirve para elaborar recuerdos y así encontrar la propia verdad” (132). This type of monologue uses personal memories as well as free associations and allusions to the political, social, or historical context to provide a background through which the protagonist can present him/herself (Adler 132). In this way, the monologue can express the subject position of the protagonist and, in this case, it highlights Martí’s ambivalence vis-à-vis his nation.

Beyond the revelation of his inner struggle to come to terms with Cuba and his relationship to it, often, when Martí talks to himself he nostalgically elaborates memories of “his Cuba.” With every return to his island and every memory of it, Martí describes the fragrance, beauty, and mythical essence of the Cuba he loves.<sup>5</sup> In *Un hombre al amanecer*, Martí’s passion for his nation is as pronounced as his constant discovery of it. Everywhere he goes, both within and outside the island, he is surprised by the newness of the nation that unfolds before him. On a trip with his father to the provinces he says:

Por primera vez, mi tierra se abría como una flor, la Cuba desconocida que en las calles de La Habana solamente podía imaginar. Los campos verdes, infinitos. Las palmeras de altos penachos. Los pequeños caseríos llenos de gente humilde y bondadosa. El jilguero de la mañana, y el sinsonte, que en los meses de verano, atacaba con frenesí la fruta madura.  
(13)

Martí’s words expose two conflicting relationships; he deeply loves a rapturous, exotic and mythical Cuba, yet he is tormented both by his estrangement from the island and by the political events occurring within “his” Cuba.

Adler argues that a conversation with imaginary characters is the most common form of monologue (130); this is also recurrent in Cárdenas’s text. As in Adler’s analysis of Beatriz Mosquera’s *Violeta Parra y sus voces*, in *Un hombre al amanecer*, “el monólogo no está acompañado de ninguna acción. Es autocrítica, justificación y explicación a posteriori, una reflexión en voz alta que desemboca en el reconocimiento de la necesidad de ganar su propia argumentación para poder superar los sentimientos de culpa programados socialmente. . .” (130). Similarly, beyond the “dialogues” with himself and with the audience, Martí’s conversations with imaginary others

allow him to work through those conflicting relationships and the difficult events that mar his ties with the Cuban nation.

Among the imaginary characters with whom Martí dialogues in the text, his father takes on an important role as critic of his son's writings and revolutionary activities. He converses with his mother as well, and the two parents, though never seen, become the antitheses of each other. While his father is critical of every aspect of his son's life, José sees his mother as supportive, sweet, tender and understanding of him and his ways. These two conflicting perspectives toward the protagonist and his role with regard to the nation parallel Martí's own conflicting views on nation and his relationship to it.

Martí also has conversations with his friend, Fermín, and through these the reader/spectator experiences the roots of their intimate relationship, which, interestingly enough, begins in Cuba but has strong connections with the United States. In fact, Martí's very first conversation with his friend centers on the United States as the two friends discuss the classic book *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. By referencing that North American classic, Martí is able to present his ideas on the injustice of slavery and the need to defend freedom and to expand upon the North American problem by relating it to Cuba. Beyond presenting a socio-political stance, however, the protagonist links Cuba and the United States on a more personal level as well. At one point he reminds Fermín about their plans to go to the park to watch the North American boats and then he turns to the audience to tell them that, "Así se fue cimentando una amistad que duraría toda una vida" (16). Is he only referring to his friendship with Fermín or could the protagonist/author be alluding to his friendship with North America: a "personal" friendship that will, indeed, be cemented and last a lifetime (through his exile there) because of the situation in "his" Cuba?

As we have seen, even though *Un hombre al amanecer* is a monologue, the protagonist "talks" to different types of characters and presents distinct information to each of them. He also reacts to noises and a call from offstage. In most of the play, however, the protagonist is talking to the audience. In those sequences he reveals his thoughts about nation and gives details about individual events in his life and the people who impacted him most by presenting and reenacting scenes from his life. When Martí talks to the audience, he expects them to listen to him and to understand both his life and his inner feelings. As mentioned above, when Martí turns to the audience in the opening scene, his attitude about Cuba seems to change. The

apparent contradiction between what Martí expresses to himself (that his soul is in turmoil and not even Cuba can console him) and what he tells to the audience (that his return to Cuba erases all those years of pain) is notable as it reveals a man who continues to struggle with his relationship to his nation. In this way, Cárdenas juxtaposes two types of monologue to present a more complete and complex image of his protagonist and as a means of controlling that image and the audience's view of it. In her analysis of monologue in other Latin American plays, Heidrun Adler confirms that a protagonist "gana por medio del monólogo el control sobre el tiempo y el espacio, es decir, el poder de manipular la verdad y las mentiras, el sueño y la realidad" (129).

Martí uses the audience to present his side of the story and it is clear that he expects the audience to agree with him, even when others do not. For example, when Martí tries to convince a schoolmate to join his revolutionary cause and take arms against Spain, he turns to the audience to tell them that the classmate "se alejaba furioso, derrotado en su propia ira, sin querer comprender el sentido de mis palabras" (15). This revelation indicates that the audience is presumably complicit with Martí's cause, otherwise, the protagonist would have needed to defend himself as a result of his friend's abrupt departure or he might not have exposed that information to the audience. Martí's statement to the audience assumes that the audience understood the meaning of his words and that the classmate is the odd man out.

Besides manipulating the audience's view of José Martí and presenting him as a sympathetic character, Cárdenas's text blends the past and the present in some of the monologues, provoking the audience to question the time frame and context to which the play refers. As the protagonist reminisces, the verbs often vacillate between past and present tenses, suggesting that both nineteenth-century protagonist and contemporary author/audience share similar feelings about Cuba. At the beginning of Act Two, the protagonist must once again leave his homeland and he expresses his sadness to the audience by stating, "La Habana me **recibió** en todo su triste esplendor. En esta tierra que aún no *es* mía sólo **encontré** visible cansancio" (42).<sup>6</sup> The alternation between past and present tense verbs might indicate a slippage between the point of view of the protagonist and that of the playwright. As Boris Uspensky argues, verbs in different tenses within one discourse may reveal a change in temporal position and authorial point of view. Uspensky affirms:

The narrator may change his positions, borrowing the time sense of first one character, then another – or he may assume his own temporal position and use his own authorial time, which may not coincide with the individual time sense of any of the characters. Different combinations of characters' temporal positions and authorial time determine the degree of complexity of the compositional structure of the work. (66)

This vacillation between past and present verb forms occurs repeatedly when the protagonist reminisces about his nation. He remarks:

Nuestra lucha no **había sido** detenida, **se encontraba** solamente envuelta en la niebla que la historia fuerza a veces en las causas nobles. La nueva generación de cubanos **se preparaba** para renacer y ser digna de su patria. La verdad **es**, y **es** muy triste, que la libertad se hubiera conseguido si no nos hubiéramos distraído en nuestras propias miserias y pasiones, en el egoísmo de sentirnos débiles y miserables y de buscar una caricia para calmar nuestros sentidos. **Me siento** culpable. **Busqué** excusas para justificar mi pena y **me duele ahora. Me duele** hondo. (43)

Here, an outside voice (that of the playwright himself?) expresses his current guilt and pain over the loss of nation, over the lack of freedom in his relationship to his homeland, and over his tormented feelings because of what was going on in the past.

To better direct the war for independence from exile, Martí moves to the United States and this act, too, evokes tormented images of the patriot's relationship to his nation. Once again the verbs the protagonist expresses vacillate between past and present tense. “¿Cuál **es** este tormento que constantemente **quema** mis entrañas? ¿Dónde encontrar la respuesta a mi deber de padre y marido? ¿Dónde encontrar el lugar que Cuba me **tiene** designado? El conflicto **dividió** mi corazón como el cuchillo de Salomón, pero no **era** tan sabio” (52). From his exile in the United States, the protagonist wonders, in the present tense, what his role is in relationship to Cuba. The same conflict that divided Martí's heart weighs heavily on the “present” soul as well.

Like Beatriz Mosquera's protagonist analyzed by Adler, Cárdenas's protagonist sometimes uses his monologues as a way to work through his, and perhaps the author's, guilt. In speaking with Carmita, one of his lovers (perhaps his most important because she seems to understand his love for



Cuba more than anyone), Martí queries, “¿Qué *podemos* hacer, Carmita? ¿Qué *podemos* hacer? Me *siento* culpable. . . Quizás *debimos* haber esperado un poco más. La impaciencia de mi corazón *es* grande, pero no *puedo* vencer esta batalla sólo” (54). The switch between past and present tense verbs and the unclear references to the battle, past and present, suggest that the author himself is still waging this battle and that, rather than referring to a concrete, external battle, it is a patriotic battle within his soul.

Nonetheless, the present author/patriot is determined to win this battle. In a conversation directed to the audience and interrupted by a Martí poem expressing the patriot’s resignation with regard to Cuba, once again the change in verb tenses postulates a switch in narrative position within the monologue. The protagonist states, “Mi deber ya *estaba* más claro y definido que nunca. Todo aquel andar por las tierras de América me *había enseñado* que si el cubano *quería* de verdad la libertad para su isla *tenía* que pelear sólo. ¡¡Sólo!!!. . . *Esta vez vamos a triunfar*” (56-7).

The juxtaposition and confusion between past and present verb forms continues through the end of the play. As Martí is about to join forces with Generals Gómez and Antonio and declare war on his nation to free it, the protagonist remarks, “Yo *evoqué* la Guerra. Mi responsabilidad *comienza* con ella en vez de acabar. Para mí, la patria no *será* nunca triunfo, sino agonía y deber. Ya *arde* la sangre. . . ¡Para mí ya *es* hora!” (70). The protagonist (writer?) clearly expresses here that as he evoked the war (of the past) he knows his present responsibilities and feelings.

Since there is only one character in Cárdenas’s play, the playwright uses many strategies to insert and affirm his own authorial point of view with regard to nation.

Beyond monologue and the vacillation between past and present tense verbs, the Martí intertexts and the way they are woven into the play further shift the focus of the text from Martí’s to Cárdenas’s perspective on nation. Martí’s actual texts are often alternated with the author’s text (the protagonist’s words that this author has written), making it difficult to distinguish between the two. Moreover, although the intertexts are taken from many Martí sources (essays, letters, *Versos sencillos*, *Versos libres*, and his theatre), the predominance of his play *Abdala*, the many references to theatre in Cárdenas’s play, and the primary role of the audience as interlocutor suggest a self consciousness about theatre in general and about this play in particular as a way to stage the relationship of a writer with his nation.

Writing, then, takes on heightened significance in the play from the outset. The opening stage directions emphasize Martí's papers, books, and diary in the middle of this open-air camp in Dos Ríos, Cuba and also indicate that, "Todo el texto que aparece entre comillas es original de José Martí: versos, discursos, cartas, los cuales se han adaptado para darle más veracidad al personaje" (7). The playwright admits, however, that "este material se ha utilizado en forma libre, ajustándolo y editándolo de acuerdo con las necesidades de la obra" (7). Writing, the text, Martí's texts, are all in process here; even though the playwright attempts to recreate Martí and his voice(s), he is admittedly editing Martí's texts as he goes and re-creating his own version of them.

The many juxtapositions of Martí's literary texts with the protagonist's words (Cárdenas's text) further highlight the similarities between the nineteenth-century patriot's view of nation and Cardenas's. The protagonist himself knows, "No seré yo el último, estoy seguro, que escriba sobre estas crueldades mientras exista un poder, sea cual sea su nombre y condición ideológica, que estrangule a Cuba" (28). Recognizing that others who come after him will write about the "cruelties of a power that strangles Cuba," the protagonist then begins to write Martí's own words, quoting from Martí's writings about nation, which are heard from a tape recorder off stage, "(PIENSA Y ESCRIBE. SE ESCUCHA SU VOZ MIENTRAS ESCRIBE-Grabación:) 'Dejadme pensar que no lo sabéis aún: que en esta tierra hay honra todavía. . . Volver por vuestra honra. . .'" (29).

The Martí quote refers to his nation's colonization by Spain and the patriot's anguish because of his and his nation's lack of freedom. However, the fictional Martí's announcement that others after him will write about the cruelties of a power that strangles Cuba, regardless of that power's name or ideological condition, moves the text forward and suggests that Castro is that contemporary strangling power and that Cárdenas is the "other" writer who will expose these injustices. The character's words (written by Cárdenas) frame and surround the "real" Martí's words. Only a careful reading can determine who is speaking here and about what time frame. The multiple voices, Martí's as writer and this new writer re-writing, suggest that Cárdenas is in fact one of those "other" writers who are denouncing this new tyrannical power strangling Cuba. Cárdenas's text then echoes Martí's, once again postulating that the playwright's views on nation also parallel those of the nineteenth-century patriot's.

Other excerpts from Martí's texts explain his views on patriotism. At one point, the protagonist turns to the public and in Martí's words defines what it means to be a foreigner, "Estaba convencido que no era 'extranjero ni en México, ni fuera de México. Los verdaderos extranjeros son los enemigos del decoro y de la vergüenza de los pueblos; son aquellos que en vez de prestar a su patria apoyo útil y honrado, la desprestigian'" (36). As Martí did not consider himself a foreigner in Mexico or outside of it, Cárdenas is not a foreigner in the United States; he, like Martí, is Cuban in any space.

Often, Cárdenas includes fragments of quotes from Martí's actual texts within a line in which the protagonist gives the verse a new context. The protagonist contextualizes the Martí verse that follows it, for example, by initiating it with the words, "Para mí, para todos, 'la patria no será nunca triunfo, sino agonía y deber'" (58). The interspersing of Martí intertexts alongside the "new" Martí's (protagonist's) words ("Para mí, para todos"), rewrites the sentiment of the nineteenth-century verses, giving them a broader and more contemporary context.

At the end of the play, Cárdenas interweaves quotes and fragments from Martí's letters to General Gómez with his protagonist's own words, once again modernizing the context and reinterpreting Martí's writing to apply them to the current struggle for Cuban identity. Speaking with the imaginary general, Martí affirms, "Si nos dejamos gobernar por una sola autoridad '¿Qué garantías puede haber de que las libertades públicas sean mejor respetadas mañana?'" (62). The juxtaposition of the new text with the past text as well as the question that directs the ideology on liberty to a "mañana" or future time, broadens the meaning; that "mañana" that José Martí evoked is the author's present time.

The structure of the rest of this conversation remains the same: intertextual fragments alongside and within the new text, past juxtaposed with present and future tense verbs. The protagonist continues, "'la patria no es de nadie; y si es de alguien, será, y esto sólo en el espíritu, de quien la sirva con mayor desprendimiento e inteligencia' . . . Considéreme lo que usted quiera, pero la República no es de uno, sino de todos" (62). The protagonist, through Martí's real text, reflects upon the essence of his nation; however, the protagonist, in his own (Cárdenas's) words, includes himself and his contemporaries within that ideology of nation.

Even though Cárdenas incorporates fragments of many different Martí texts, the theatre, both Martí's and his own, is his primary focus. We have seen above how the different types of monologue expand the message

of this play and switch the thematic focus from Martí to Cárdenas's relationship to his nation and that, most of the time, Martí talks to the audience. Adler argues that "el personaje que actúa solo sobre el escenario con ayuda de la fantasía del espectador puede actualizar su ámbito de vida cerrada, viajar por el tiempo y el espacio y realizar y aun transformar su identidad" (133).<sup>7</sup>

In *Un hombre al amanecer* the audience is the primary interlocutor and this metatheatrical strategy is one way in which theatre and its important function in shedding light on nation is foregrounded. During his conversations with the audience, Martí reveals important information about himself and his relationship to his nation. Beyond the awareness of an involved and complicit public, however, the protagonist views the history of his nation as drama, as well. To the audience he says that "El drama sangriento de los Diez Años comenzó a desarrollarse. . ." (18). Soon after, he turns to his parents and DIALOGA, "Déjeme, madre, déjeme. No tengo que engañarlos, ni mentirles. 'Yo no le tengo miedo al público y me importa poco que me idolatren o que me zahieran'" (19). Is this latter quote, in which he talks about his relationship with the audience, taken from Martí's own texts? Or is this protagonist responding to the current audience reaction to the views he had just expressed to them? In either case the protagonist compares the history of his nation to a play and at the same time is conscious of his role in that play. As Martí and other historical figures are judged by their audience, so too is this protagonist aware of his role and that of his audience.

The metatheatrical elements in Cárdenas's play, however, go beyond a self awareness of character, audience, and theatre's roles in history and with regard to individual and nation; the play also foregrounds Martí's theatre in order to rescript its style and message. In the first stage directions Cárdenas writes that "El último poema se ha tomado de la pieza *Abdala*. En él se ha sustituido la palabra 'Nubia' por 'Cuba' para lograr el efecto adecuado al desenlace de la obra" (7). Notably, Martí's play is an intertext throughout most of Cárdenas's play, not just at the end.

The excerpt Cárdenas includes is a direct quote from Martí's *Abdala*, a play that was published in the only issue of *La patria libre*, the Cuban newspaper that the character Martí had just referred to in his monologue, and which he and Fermín had founded. Printed on October 23, 1869, *Abdala: Escrito expresamente para la patria*, is a dramatic poem praising and honoring Cuba.<sup>8</sup> In the Martí play, the protagonist Abdala leaves his mother to fight to free his homeland from the foreign oppressors. The first excerpt

that Cárdenas includes comes from Abdala's dialogue with his mother in which the son explains to her his intense love for his homeland.

El amor, madre, a la patria  
 no es el amor ridículo a la tierra,  
 ni a la yerba que pisan nuestras plantas:  
 es el odio invencible a quien la oprime,  
 es el rencor eterno a quien le ataca.  
 Y tal amor despierta en nuestro pecho  
 El mundo de recuerdos que nos llama  
 A la vida otra vez, cuando la sangre,  
 Herida brota con angustia el alma.  
 ¡La imagen del amor que nos consuela  
 y las memorias plácidas que guarda! (Cárdenas 19)

In the following passage in Martí's "real" text, however, the mother questions the greatness of her son's love of nation and she asks, "¿Y es más grande ese amor que el que despierta en tu pecho tu madre?" Abdala responds to her with the question, "¿Acaso crees que hay algo más sublime que la patria?" (21). The quote from *Abdala* that Cárdenas includes shows the love/hate relationship of the patriot to his nation. His soul is in turmoil, filled with passion and anguish flowing as from an open wound, juxtaposed with a love that consoles the patriot as well. What Cárdenas chooses to omit from the Martí intertext, however, is the assertion that, in spite of the inner battle that patriotism wages, love for the nation is greater and more sublime than any love.

In fact, love for his nation is greater than love of any woman and Cárdenas proves this in his depiction of Martí's amorous relationships. Once again, he uses the theatre to do this. Cárdenas includes excerpts from Martí's comedy, *Amor con amor se paga*, to reveal his love affair with Concha Padilla, the actress in his play. From offstage, Concha's tape-recorded voice recites the final verses of that play. Those verses, directed to the audience of Martí's "real" play, reflect on the nature of patriotism, love, and exile and both the writer's and the actor's role in facing them. The real Martí wrote and this Martí hears:

Sienta, ama, perdona  
 con tu natural bondad:  
 si es malo, la voluntad  
 de actor y poeta lo abona.  
 Nada mejor puede dar

quien sin patria en que vivir,  
 ni mujer por quien morir  
 ni soberbia que tentar,  
 sufre, vacila y se halaga  
 imaginando que al menos  
 entre los públicos buenos  
 amor con amor se paga. (39)

These plays and Cárdenas's play demonstrate the intense love that the playwright feels toward his nation. Though the writer has many female lovers, Cuba is his primary passion. When he is in exile in Mexico, for example, he fills the emptiness in this soul by beginning a relationship with Rosario. Nonetheless, the protagonist turns to the audience and admits that, "Las horas más dulces de mi vida las he pasado en brazos de una mujer. Solamente esta isla que tiene nombre de mujer puede robarse la pasión de mi corazón" (37). The island is foremost in his thoughts and first among his lovers.

Both his third and fourth lover emerge in and through his theatre, yet the protagonist feels guilty because he uses these women as substitutes for the nation he cannot be part of. Curiously, his guilt comes forth not because he is using the women, but rather because he feels like he is slighting his nation. He expresses, "Tan lejos de Cuba en aquel momento, preocupado por amoríos egoístas y sensuales, me sentí culpable" (40).

The protagonist affirms that Cuba is for him "como mujer enamorada y deseosa." He further extends the lover/nation metaphor by quoting from Martí's texts, "Que Cuba, desolada, vuelve a nosotros los ojos. . . Las palmas son novias que esperan y hemos de poner la justicia tan alta como las palmas. . . Y pongamos alrededor de la estrella, en la bandera nueva, esta fórmula del amor triunfante!" (63-4).

The excerpts from Martí's plays serve a dual purpose; they reinforce Martí's passion for his lost nation by making that nation his most beloved lover and they show how theatre can and does portray, intensify, and dramatize texts, history, and ideologies. The other included fragments of Martí's texts serve to refocus the plot of Cárdenas's play; it is no longer Martí's Cuba that is being dramatized, but rather Cárdenas's. A close examination of the protagonist's words reveals how Cárdenas subtly changes the time frame of the text. Martí turns to the audience and says:

. . . en mi corazón el vacío de una Cuba lejana. . . la de las mañanas cálidas y soleadas, la de las flores frescas y fragantes, la del mar azul esmeralda y las olas de espuma

blanca, la de las playas de arena fina, la de los campos de caña dulce. ¡Mi Cuba! La Cuba que se volvía a estremecer ante un *nuevo* crimen. (my emphasis 30)

Is this *new* crime that of Fidel Castro's revolution and the resultant exile of our writer?

At another moment, the protagonist reflects on the future of Cuba postulating that it is time to dry the tears and stop Cuba's weeping. Again, he speaks in the protagonist/ writer's words, but mentions the real Martí poem, *Cuba llora*. The alternation between Cárdenas's text and Martí's fuses past with present and shows how relevant Martí's words are to Cuba's current situation:

(COMO UN ORADOR, DESDE SU BALCÓN) Esta bandera es de la futura República de Cuba. De esa Cuba que llora en las madres despojadas de sus hijos, y en los hijos arrancados del seno de la patria. 'Cuba llora' y sus lágrimas empapan las sepulturas de nuestros muertos, y las calles y ciudades, y los campos y sembrados. 'Cuba llora' y sus lágrimas son la lluvia redentora que renace en el alma de patriotas una flor limpia para el día de mañana. 'Cuba llora' y ha llegado la hora de enjugar su llanto. (31)

According to Ivan A. Schulman, Martí's life and writings embraced a return to the past while at the same time they intuited a perception of a renewed present and future. For Martí, Schulman suggests, "modernizar no implicaba enterrar el pasado, sino actualizarlo de modo original, individual y creador" (17). In like manner, Raúl de Cárdenas employs Martí's life and his writings, both to pay homage to a Cuban past and, at the same time, to rewrite and relive that national history in an original way. The (con)fusion between Martí's texts and Cárdenas's text, and between past and present, suggests a blurred boundary between the two writers and their texts. As writers they both represent the Cuban nation and express their relationship to it from their exiled position and through their texts.

Along with the alternating past/present points of view, the various types of monologue in *Un hombre al amanecer* narrate a complex life in many voices and from diverse spaces and create movement where there is none. The voices of the monologue further serve to expose the protagonist/ writer's conflicting feelings about his nation. Heidrun Adler suggests that, sometimes, "en el monólogo (un protagonista) habla también sin ningún disfraz" (129). At times, when Cárdenas's protagonist is speaking to himself he reveals

his innermost self, as if we are witnessing and hearing the true José Martí. What is interesting, however, is that at these times we are NOT reading Martí's writings, but rather those of Cárdenas; this is highlighted because those words are juxtaposed to actual Martí quotes. Cárdenas succeeds in making Martí live, through Cárdenas's own writing, which combined with the actual Martí texts transports the message to the present time and to new Cuban spaces. In Cárdenas's play, as in Martí's real life, the exiled patriot returns to Cuba, if only metaphorically. The protagonist describes his love, his nation, and knows that, even when he is far away, he belongs to his homeland.

Moreover, the metatheatrical strategies - the self-consciousness of the protagonist about theatre (talking to the audience, his spectator role at some theatrical performances) and the predominance of Martí's theatrical text, *Abdala*, among the intertexts - further emphasize theatre as a means to portray the nation and speak about it. *Abdala*'s protagonist loves his nation above all even though he has many questions about nation and his relationship to it; that Martí play dramatizes the playwright's true love for his nation and its protagonist performs his inner struggles over his own national identity. In similar fashion, Raúl de Cárdenas writes *Un hombre al amanecer*, a patriotic play whose protagonist loves his nation above all and is willing to die for his Cuba.

*Un hombre al amanecer* does not just write the story of José Martí facing the Cuban dawn on the day of his death; the man at dawn is Cárdenas, a Cuban exile who is at the dawn of understanding his tormented relationship with his beloved homeland. Filled with turmoil, he, like his protagonist, learns that, "Así se hace la Guerra contra el país que nos dio la vida pero nos estrangula como si hubiera convertido de madre en ciega tirana" (9).

Yet that dawn of understanding also includes a new inner peace and acceptance of the exile's position with regard to his nation. Like the protagonist, the writer realizes that, even when he is far away from it, he belongs to his Cuba and loves it above all else.

Beatriz Rizk suggests that, according to Carlos Rincón, modern and postmodern authors may employ "intertextual procedures" to express a desire for continuity or its opposite, a desire for discontinuity (126). In *Un hombre al amanecer* both contradictory desires are at work; on the one hand, the play is about Martí's inner struggle to come to terms with his relationship to his nation. Cárdenas shows Martí's turmoil as noble and worthy of his heroic essence. On the other hand, Cárdenas's play raises more questions than it



answers, not about Martí, but about the essence of patriotism. What did Martí gain by his loyalty? Should one put patriotism above all else? And what does the nation give in return? In this way, intertextuality posits a rupture or discontinuity in the view of history and nation that are presented. This play allows Cárdenas to explore some of his own ambivalent and tormented feelings about his nation and his national identity while at the same time expressing his unquestionable love for his Cuba.

Even though, as Matías Montes-Huidobro postulates, “es más fácil aceptar la historia oficial y reproducirla de acuerdo con los dictámenes de la oficialidad . . . la verdadera historia sólo puede escribirse por oposición, al precio inclusive de no ser representada” (42-3). Cárdenas includes these oppositions within his play and represents history from multiple points of view through the monologue and intertextual fragments he incorporates; in doing so, he also explores what it means to be Cuban today. Because of Cuba’s traumatic political situation and the abuse these citizens have suffered for their nation, these two patriots harbor an intense love-hate relationship with the nation that forced them into exile. Nonetheless, though they lament their nation’s plight and their own, both writers profess a sublime and passionate love for their homeland and a strong identification with it. Their love for Cuba extends beyond national borders and endures throughout time.

As E.J. Westlake reminds us, theatre is a poignant way to represent nation and national sentiment. Through one voice, Cárdenas fuses two plays along with two writers’ words on nation, and narrates those texts in a monologue that represents a complex historical relationship with a nation and raises contemporary questions about it. In this monologue, Raúl de Cárdenas dramatizes Cuba’s history and its contemporary situation and the resulting impact on Cubans in both times and in many spaces.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> At the end of the edition of *Un hombre al amanecer* published by the North-South Center of the University of Miami, the editor writes, “Según el autor, escribió *Un hombre al amanecer* ‘porque José Martí es uno de los personajes más interesantes de América Latina y posiblemente uno de los menos conocidos de los Estados Unidos’” (74).

<sup>2</sup> Many other Cárdenas plays also incorporate intertextuality as a means of refocusing or reinforcing his message. In the introduction to his *Los hijos de Ochún* in González-Pérez’s

book, Cárdenas affirms his attraction to classic Greek theatre and also discusses his interest in the Afro-Cuban sources that he uses as the basis for *Los hijos de Ochún* (142).

<sup>3</sup> Rizk lists a number of other Cuban plays that prioritize intertextuality in an effort to demonstrate the instability and unraveling of perspectives on history. Besides those we mentioned earlier, she cites Joel Cano's *Timeball*, Abilio Estévez' *Santa Cecilia: Ceremonia para una actriz* (also a monologue) and Alberto Sarraín's *Yarini* (*Ollantay* 124-29).

<sup>4</sup> (De espaldas al público) "¡Quién pudiera conciliar el sueño! Ni la hamaca, ni la noche, ni el frescor de las gotas de rocío pueden calmar esta agitación que siento desbordarse" (8).

<sup>5</sup> On one remembered return the protagonist says, "Bajo el nombre de Julián Pérez, atraído por el instinto y la nostalgia, tomé un barco que se dirigía a La Habana. Mi Habana. (BREVE PAUSA) Al llegar, la ciudad dormía. Las luces del Puerto comenzaban a despertarse, y en mi corazón, los recuerdos. La ausencia. Las canteras. La fragancia de sus noches de luna y sus patios de jazmines y gardenias. Las calles estrechas y el hormigueo de volantas y quitrines... .Mi Habana. Al desembarcar, amanecía" (41).

<sup>6</sup> The bold letters and the italics are my emphasis; past tense forms are highlighted in bold plain text and present tense verbs are in bold italics.

<sup>7</sup> Adler's study analyzes these monologue strategies exclusively within the scope of Latin American theatre written by women. She writes, "Así que el monólogo se ofrece como forma de representación para mostrar aquella subjetividad femenina por la cual se está luchando: las mujeres toman la palabra, se dan voz a sí mismas, se muestran solas en el escenario, se ponen en escena y, sobre la argumentación de su situación personal, vista desde su propia perspectiva, exhortan el diálogo." Adler ends by questioning, "El monólogo ¿una realización teatral de los *gender-studies*?" (133). We agree with the theorist's discussion of the form and function of the monologue in Latin American plays written by women, though we hope to have shown how some of these strategies can be applied to discussions on monologue by other "marginalized" (exiled?) playwrights.

<sup>8</sup> This subtitle is taken from the title of Martí's play. In that text, as Cárdenas notes, Cuba is called Nubia.

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