

# Women's Voice in Julia Alvarez's *In the Time of Butterflies*

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**ABSTRACT:** The purpose of this paper is to apply the theories of Luce Irigaray (1930- ) to Julia Alvarez's (1950- ) *In the Time of Butterflies* (1995). Having focused on women's speech, which puts emphasis on their independency and liberation, the main argument in this paper is to find such a point in Alvarez's *In the Time of Butterflies*. This notion emanates from women's body reminding them of the perfect time they had with their mothers in the imaginary order. Moreover, Irigaray argues that to seek such individuality women have to move beyond the maternal role defined by men through which they might be related to their daughters. In this way, women can in various ways resist against being defined by men such as demonstrating their refusal and rejection of patriarchal 'norms' through their hysteria. Consequently, it is possible to create an identity for women whereby they can have their own language, leading them to declare their resistance; thus, achieve their liberation. Through applying such notions to *In the time of Butterflies*, it has been demonstrated that although the women characters of the story are under the dominance of the patriarchal regime of Trujillo and his laws disseminated throughout the society, they resist such ideologies through education they acquire, the hysteric character they show of themselves, and the language they create from their body.

**Keywords:** Femininity, Hysteria, Identity, Imaginary Order, Patriarchy, Woman Speech

## INTRODUCTION

This paper aims at finding the traces of Luce Irigaray's ideas in Julia Alvarez's *In the Time of Butterflies* such as hysteria, woman speech, femininity, resistance, etc. The notion of femininity and what woman should mean has always been a challenging issue in the way feminists deal with these concepts since women have always, throughout centuries, been defined by men and as a part of men as they do not have any identity of their own. However, Irigaray has tried to regain the bygone statues of women through propelling them into creating their own language emanating from their body, being a part of them. This paper gets help from the significant concepts of this theorist to illustrate how women are defined *In the Time Butterflies* and how they are set against such definitions imposed upon them by the patriarchal society of the time. In short, this paper clarifies the existing situation of women in the patriarchal system depicted by Alvarez in *In the Time of Butterflies* and the ways they resist such ideologies to attain their own independence and autonomy.

Although Julia Alvarez was born in New York City on March 27, 1950, her family moved to the Dominican Republic shortly after her birth, and it was there that she spent the majority of her childhood. In 1960, when Alvarez was ten years old, her family immigrated to the United States, fleeing the Dominican Republic because of Alvarez's father's involvement with an unsuccessful attempt to overthrow the Trujillo dictatorship. In 1967, she began studying at Connecticut College; after two years, she transferred to Middlebury College where, in 1971, she received her Bachelor of Arts degree (summa cum laude). Alvarez also attended Syracuse University, from which she received her M.F.A. in 1975, and Bread Loaf School of English, where she took graduate courses in English and American literature.

In the years since 1975, Alvarez has held various positions. From 1975 until 1978, she served as a writer-in-residence for Kentucky, Delaware, and North Carolina schools. She has taught creative writing and English at Phillips Andover Academy in Massachusetts (1979-81), University of Vermont (1981-83), and University of Illinois (1985-88). In 1984, she was the Jenny McKean Moore Visiting Writer at George Washington University. Having previously served as a professor at Middlebury College from 1988 to 1998, she is currently a writer-in-residence there.

There have been controversies over the nature of this novel whether it is a story based on true events in the life of Mirabals's sisters or not. However, Alvarez claims that the events are not real but she has tried to make them close to the real characters as they had lived in their time. Though Isabel Zakrzewski Brown in her "Historiographic Met fiction in *In the Time of the Butterflies*" (1999) is trying to avoid lionizing the Mirabals. She suggests that Alvarez "informed by social constructs characteristic of conventional occidental perceptions of ideal women, fashions stereotypes, rather than real people. These include: the pious one, Patria, the pragmatic one, Dede, the rebellious one, Minerva, and the innocent one Mate" (10). Alvarez maintains in an interview about the book that she wishes to make these women human and as close to her readers as possible for as icons the Mirabal "were being robbed of the dignity of being real human beings and ... the dignity of what the sacrifice meant" (Rosario-Sievert 35). As Charlotte Rich in his "Back to El Jefe: Genre, polyphony, and dialogic resistance in ..." (2002) argues: "Alvarez has not intended to describe the sisters with "epic distance but rather with the humanizing immediacy that novelistic discourse can allow" (174).

Wendy Sue Blauman in her "Language and Border Crossing in the Works of Julia Alvarez: Identity, Homeland, Education, and Orality" (2008) explains about the word *Butterflies* and its definitions which refer to the concept of femininity and independence. The word actually has more implications as well: "butterfly imagery has a lengthy literary and entomological significance. Generally, butterflies signify hope, rebirth, transformation and transcendence" (102). She further continues: "Spring and the association of butterflies with femininity cannot be overlooked as aspects of butterfly symbolism demonstrated in this author's writing, where strong female protagonists predominate" (Blauman 102).

*In the Time of the Butterflies* presents itself as the type of women-like story which Joan Scott explains: "it seeks to illuminate the structures of ordinary women's lives as well as those of notable women and to discover the nature of the feminist or female consciousness that motivated their behaviors" (19). Such an approach focuses on challenging patriarchy through female agency examined in "personal experience, familial and domestic structures, collective (female) reinterpretations of social definitions of women's roles and networks of female friendship" (Scott 20). The novel, in fact, approximates this method of historical recovery, often relying on "female solidarity, female-oriented religious imagery, and domestic spaces and experiences to resist the oppressiveness of Trujillo's regime" (Jessica Magnani 51). It talks about the patriarchy and the femininity.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

Luce Irigaray is a major critic whose ideas are compelling in the field of literature and feminism, especially her idea of woman speech which comes from their bodies and is specific to women giving them independence and liberation from the language of men. As Grosz elucidates: "this is an effect of language's capacity to inscribe the bodies of males and females with specific values and meanings. Masculine and feminine identities are the effects of a rift with nature; they are not natural in themselves" (24). Irigaray puts emphasis on the autonomy of women as a separate entity from men who can stand on their own without being regarded as a part of man or just the reflection of men's masculinity. That is to say, men have defined "femininity in terms of their own needs, fears, and desires" (Tyson 101). Moreover she, argues that if women want to gain their autonomy they have to go beyond the maternal role defined for them, namely feeding and nurturing their children and husbands. They have to be independent so as to make their daughters independent as themselves who can take part in diverse social activities. She gives this privilege to women as they have multiple areas through which they attain sexual pleasures while men have one and this gives privilege to women to have multiple social roles as well since their bodies allow them. In this regard, Grosz states: "Irigaray accepts the phallogocentric image of woman as 'not one' but reverses its meaning: if woman is 'not one', she is more than one. The two lips, fluidity, are plenitude, a form of auto-erotic self-containment" (119). Furthermore, she talks about the rare situation that women can resist the patriarchal system and gain autonomy as hysteria which is a situation in which women are expected to do what is expected of them but they do it in a wrong way. This becomes a sort of resistance, rejection and liberation from patriarchy as it sometimes turns out to be the parody of their way of behavior. As Grosz maintains: "The hysteric thus attempts to 'cope with the demands and expectations of a male-dominated culture by summoning up an apparently incapacitating 'illness', which prevents her from giving satisfaction to men while satisfying herself in a compromising or symptomatic form" (84). It becomes a form of refusal and defiance of what they have been told to do, thus it becomes a parody of patriarchal behavior

and action. Therefore as Grosz claims, “hers (woman) is a mode of defiance of patriarchy, not the site of its frustration” (ibid). As noticed, hysteria is a way to reject the authority of men and declare women’s liberation and independence.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

For 31 years, Trujillo exercised his repressive tyrannical rule over the Dominican Republic including the torture and murder of thousands of people. In the *Time of the Butterflies* describes Trujillo’s regime in the Dominican Republic as overtly paternalistic. Names such as Jefe, Benefactor, Patrón, and slogans such as Dios y Trujillo, which were all common throughout the regime, reappear in this novel as a means of emphasizing the ways power is often represented as strictly masculine. He is here designated as the father of the nation whose rules are the rules of a father imposing upon their children.

In Dominican Republic where Trujillo controlled more than fifty percent of the nation’s wealth and seized the assets of all “enemies of the state, the designation was not far from the mark” (Hartlyn 22-25). The repetition of the slogan Dios y Trujillo reinforces the manufactured relationship between the dictator and God and serves as a means of establishing Trujillo’s power as a type of divine right, masculine and omnipotent which incorporates and covers all strata of the society. He is described in an announcement as Christ: “All through nature there is a feeling of ecstasy. A strange otherworldly light suffuses the house smelling of labor and sanctity. The 24th of October in 1891. God’s glory made flesh in a miracle. Rafael Leonidas Trujillo has been born!” (ITB 20). So far as the father, Trujillo, whose law is rampant and the society is a patriarchal, they all should obey and tolerate the suppression imposed on them by these laws. However, while he is married he is seeking satisfaction from other girls. As the leader of the nation he demonstrates his masculinity by abusing the girls about which no one can do anything. For instance, at school, there are girls all around including Minerva. One day Trujillo sees from afar one of the girls named Lina who is about 14 years old. He has many girlfriends all around the country. Minerva does not have any idea what has become of her and she thinks Lina is happy with Trujillo, but one day when she along with her father is crossing the city, her father tells her what happens to such girls.

“Look, Minerva, one of Trujillo’s girlfriends lives there, your old schoolmate, Lina Lovatón.” “Lina?!” My breath felt tight inside my chest as if it couldn’t get out. “But Trujillo is married,” I argued. “How can he have Lina as a girlfriend?” Papá looked at me a long time before he said, “He’s got many of them, all over the island, set up in big, fancy houses. Lina Lovatón is just a sad case, because she really does love him, Pobrecita.” Right there he took the opportunity to lecture me about why the hens shouldn’t wander away from the safety of the barnyard. Back at school in the fall during one of our nightly sessions, the rest of the story came out. Lina Lovatón had gotten pregnant in the big house. Trujillo’s wife Doña María had found out and gone after her with a knife. So Trujillo shipped Lina off to a mansion he’d bought for her in Miami where he knew she’d be safe. She lived all alone now, waiting for him to call her up. I guess there was a whole other pretty girl now taking up his attention. (ITB 19).

When Minerva finds out the truth about Trujillo and her friend, Lina, she is surprised and does not know that the dictator has taken her as his girlfriend. He has power as a masculine in a patriarchal society and is the leader of this society. In addition, he is regarded as the father of the nation and so having as many girls as he wants to abuse. He gets her pregnant and leaves her alone when his wife finds about her pregnancy.

He does such an action to show his power and his masculinity and sometimes it might be political. Therefore Trujillo often uses women as a means of articulating his power and his sense of masculinity. Historian Valentina Peguero explains that “Trujillo’s romantic and sexual relationships were occasionally interconnected with his political manipulation. He used his mistresses not only for personal gratification but for political purposes as well. Trujillo seduced and used women to punish enemies, to humiliate functionaries and to test and reward loyalty” (50). As Minerva’s father argues Trujillo has many of such girls around the country to fulfill his passion and lust. It is then seen how cruel he is to misuse his power to abuse girls for his lust, even to show his political power as being superior to women.

The same point can be seen in relation to Minerva in order to have their father back, Trujillo offers her to sleep with him and to let the father go: “a private conference with El Jefe would be the quickest, most effective way to end all this nonsense.” Don Manuel continues. “I would like to bring you personally to him tonight at his suite at El Jaragua. Bypass all this red tape” (ITB 87). He wants to acquire every woman but she resists turning down his offer as she does not sell her dignity.

In one part of *In the Time of the Butterflies*, Maria Teresa in her notebook compares his father with Trujillo as they are one in role, who is watching her as if she is doing anything wrong. This picture symbolically depicts the influence of patriarchy which dominates every house whether it is the father or the leader of the nation, Trujillo. They are enforcing their laws upon the women as the powerful ‘Big’ others who decide for all and they should follow their rules; otherwise, they would be punished. Here Maria Teresa exposes an impression as if she is describing the

situation in Orwell's 1984, in which there is always a picture and a slogan that Big Brother is watching people who are doomed to watch their own behavior, not to do anything wrong.

He is intensifying his power via his law, and surveillance as Rich argues: "The authoritarian voice of Trujillo's government is represented in the novel on several levels. In addition to dialogue literally spoken by the dictator himself, his laws, pronouncements, and methods of punishing resistance are constantly invoked" (175). This is what actually happens in the patriarchal society in which the power is in the hands of the males whether the father or Trujillo representing all patriarchal forces in the society to whose laws every woman should submit herself.

It is so strange now I know something I'm not supposed to know. Everything looks just a little different. I see a guardian, and I think who you have killed. I hear a police siren, and I think who is going to be killed. See what I mean? I see the picture of our president with eyes that follow me around the room, and I am thinking he is trying to catch me doing something wrong. Before, I always thought our president was like God, watching over everything I did. I am not saying I don't love our president, because I do. It's like if I were to find out Papá did something wrong. I would still love him, wouldn't I? (ITB 32).

She sees a picture of the president following her in every corner of the room. She regards him as God watching every little action she does. It is interesting that although she is afraid of him in one way or another, she still loves him as she loves her father. She is comparing them with one another having the same influence as representatives of patriarchal power on her.

There has been a deal between Trujillo and Minerva in which Minerva is allowed to go to university studying law while no other woman has been allowed to do so. She actually goes to the university getting license but when she is done Trujillo does not allow her to work with the degree she has acquired in law. As seen again here, he uses his power to impose it on women. "What a shock, then, when Minerva got handed the law degree but not the license to practice. Here we all thought El Jefe had relented against our family and let Minerva enroll in law school. But really what he was planning all along was to let her study for five whole years only to render that degree useless in the end. How cruel!" (ITB 110). He is so much cruel that he has first let her study but at the end the degree is of no use to her, and she is not given the license to work. He wants again to demonstrate his power in this way to remind her that she cannot do anything against him because his patriarchal supremacy would defeat her.

### ***Woman: objects of exchange***

Women are not given any social roles and are just objects to be exchanged between men in such a patriarchal society. They do not have any value until defined and recognized by men. They are given no right of education, no autonomy to be themselves, they belong to men and it is the son who will hand down the family's name. Even Don Enrique, the father of the Mirabals, considers the daughters as an object satisfying men's needs. There is a discussion among the father, mother, and the daughter about daughter's beauty. Father describes each daughter's beauty as she is a beautiful object in the hands of men which makes the mother uncomfortable. "'And me, Papá, and me?' Maria Teresa pipes up in her little girl's voice, not wanting to be left out of the future. 'You, mi ñapita, you'll be our little coquette. You'll make a lot of men's—' Their mother coughs her correcting-your-manners cough. '—a lot of men's mouths water,' their father concludes'" (ITB 20). One can observe here that Maria Teresa is seen as a daughter watering men's mouth like a candy watering someone's mouth. She is like an exchanged object for men to be used and as something beautiful to show her to other men, not having any individual and autonomous existence and identity. She is there just to be identified by men.

Moreover, dance can be considered as an exchange of women among men, such as Minerva's case when she dances with Trujillo who calls her a national treasure having value. He regards her as a treasure which can be exchanged. More importantly, there are women who are handed to other men. First Trujillo dances with the attractive, blond wife of the old senator, then she is replaced by Minerva.

Manuel de Moya is a terrific dancer. I keep throwing my head back and laughing. When I look over at our table, Patria is studying me, not quite sure what to make of my pleasure. Everything happens very fast then. A slow bolero starts, and I feel myself being led towards where Trujillo is now dancing with the attractive, blond wife of the old senator. When we are abreast of them, Manuel de Moya lets go of my hand and opens up our couple. "Shall we visit?" he asks me, but it is El Jefe who nods. The blond woman pouts as she is whisked away. "A visit is not a long stay," she reminds El Jefe, flashing her eyes at him over Manuel de Moya's shoulder. I stand a moment, my arms at my sides, feeling the same stagefright of five years back. El Jefe takes my hand. "May I have the pleasure?" He doesn't wait for an answer, but pulls me to him. ... "You dance very well," he says gallantly. "But then women from El Cibao make the best dancers and the best lovers," he whispers, tightening his hold. I can feel the moisture of his breath on my ear. "And your last partner, was she from El Cibao?" I ask ... He holds me out in his arms, his eyes moving over my body, exploring it rudely with his glances. "I am speaking of the national treasure in my arms," he

says, smiling. I laugh out loud, my fear dissipating, a dangerous sense of my own power growing. "I don't feel very much like a national treasure." "And why not, a jewel like you?" His eyes sparkle with interest. (ITB 76).

She is exchanged between two men, first Manuel de Moya and then Trujillo. She is dancing with them and switched. Moreover, she is regarded as jewel, an object which is worn for beauty to show it to others. She does not have existence beyond the one defined for her in the patriarchal society. Both as a dancer and as jewelry, she is nothing but a thing to be exchanged like an object for sale.

### ***Hysteria as Attraction and Refusal***

In such a culture everything is defined by masculine standards and women have no voice of their own, the only way to resist them is to act through their discourse and the same vehicles they have suppressed woman, that is, their law via language. Women should read themselves based on patriarchal system and use their techniques against themselves whereby they have constrained women. The hysterical symptoms are the step through which a woman can deceive others but at the same time reject them. It is like giving someone hopes of acquiring something and at final step refusing to give it.

The hysterical symptom is a response to her "annihilation as active subject, a resistance or refusal to confirm what is expected of her. Not able to take up an active position by will alone, she lives out and uses her passivity in an active defiance of her social position" (Grosz 138). Hysteria is one of those positions through which women can claim their rights and stand against the patriarchal system whereby they can demonstrate their resistance and autonomy at the same time. By gently refusing what is expected of her, as an act of rebellion, woman has already rejected to be under the patriarchal laws, thus attaining independence through this action. Such hysterical action is, too, seen in the novel which is practiced in various occasions by the characters.

Don Enrique, Patria, and Minerva have been invited to a party held by Trujillo in which everyone is getting a partner to dance with, even Manuel de Moya, the secretary of state, is looking for a dancer. He asks Minerva to dance with him, and she has no way but to accept it; however, she refuses to dance by means of an excuse.

"Could I have the honor?" Manuel de Moya is standing at my side. I shake my head. "Ay, Don Manuel, what a headache I have." I feel a little glee at being able to legitimately refuse him. A cloud of annoyance crosses his face. But in a flash, he is all good manners. "We must get you a calmante then." "No, no," I wave him off. "It will pass if I sit here quietly." I stress quietly. I do not want to make conversation with Don Manuel about my headache. (ITB 75).

Here she gently rejects him even though he is one of the most important persons in the government. She must be careful, and is expected to dance here but as she does not like to dance with him she resorts to an excuse that she has a severe headache. This is an act of rejecting the patriarchy and what is expected of her.

In another occasion in the same party she dances with Trujillo in which she surreptitiously uses Trujillo's speech and through her beauty tries to draw his attention in order to utter her wish which is going to study law at the university. When Trujillo calls her as a national treasure she disagrees and says she is wasting her time in their own city and wishes to come to the capital of the country to study law, in this way he can see her more, which is in fact her plan to attract his attention. She argues that if she achieves what she wants, in that sense she is a national treasure. Actually, she wants him to persuade his father to let her study law and to encourage him, by enticing him, to let her study law. She uses language as a weapon against him by slyly wheedling him that he has always been defending women's right (which is not true), and that he has advocated the rights of women to vote. By meticulously and artfully coaxing him into believing that he is a man of intellect and an advocate of the rights of women, she tries to become the center of his attention so that he lets her study law.

He holds me out in his arms, his eyes moving over my body, exploring it rudely with his glances. "I am speaking of the national treasure in my arms," he says, smiling. I laugh out loud, my fear dissipating, a dangerous sense of my own power growing. "I don't feel very much like a national treasure." "And why not, a jewel like you?" His eyes sparkle with interest. "I feel like I'm wasting my life in Ojo de Agua." "Perhaps we can bring you down to the capital," he says archly. "That's exactly what I'm trying to convince Papa to do. I want to go to the university," I confess, playing this man against my own father. If El Jefe says he wants me to study, Papa will have to let me. "I've always wanted to study law." He gives me the indulgent smile of an adult hearing an outrageous claim from a child. "A woman like you, a lawyer?" I play on his vanity, and so, perhaps, become his creature like all the others. "You gave the women the vote in 42. You encouraged the founding of the women's branch of the Dominican party. You've always been an advocate for women."

"That I have." He grins a naughty grin. "A woman with a mind of her own. So you want to study in the capital, eh?" (ITB 77)

As noticed here, Minerva tries to use her body, her beauty to magnetize Trujillo's attention. She acts as a hysterical individual by doing what is expected of her, while using it for her own benefit without fulfilling his need. He

wants her to sleep with him but she deceitfully rejects him, and at the same time keeps him satisfied while reaching her own aim which is getting his acceptance of studying law at the university. She craftily lets him get near her to talk to her and then she starts flirting with him, leading to have her request as Rich says: "Minerva selects the words of her response to foster the dictator's pride in their university's long heritage, anticipating his susceptibility to flattery" (178).

Captain Peña, the head of the northern division of the SIM, has brought the news that Patria's oldest son, Nelson, who has been imprisoned for the actions done against the regime will be released. Patria gets excited and decides to have Pena over for a sancocho, a national food, when celebrating his return. In fact, they do not like to invite him over for dinner but at the same time the mother of the family has a plan, sensing revenge. The mother wants to invite the new neighbors. They are the new residents of the house when they have just moved to the new place. They do not know their new neighbors as most of them did not come, afraid of being seen socialized with the blackmarked Mirabals. This is her revenge by inviting all the neighbors to come but neither will show up; thus, Pena would think that all the sancocho is meant to be for him. All the neighbors will get upset to turn down the invitation in which the head of the SIM was here.

"As for the Pena promesa," she added, "I have a plan." There was that little edge of revenge in her voice. "We'll invite all the neighbors." I didn't have to remind her that we weren't living among our kin anymore. Most of these new neighbors wouldn't come, afraid of being seen socializing with the blackmarked Mirabals. That was part of Mama's plan. "Peña will show up, thinking the sancocho is meant just for him." I started laughing before she was through. I could see which way her revenge was going. "All those neighbors will look out their windows and kick themselves when they realize they slighted the head of the northern SIM!" "Ay, Mamá," I laughed. "You are becoming la jefa of revenge!" (ITB 177).

First the mother wants to show what is expected from her, inviting all neighbors to celebrate the return of Nelson. However, she has invited the neighbors who will never come when all decided not to have connection with the family. Therefore when Pena comes to their celebration, the neighbors "look out their windows and kick themselves when they realize they slighted the head of the northern SIM" (ITB 177). This is first inviting them and then artfully rejecting them as she knows that no one will come. However, when Pena comes, she will revenge on them.

### ***Hysterical Weapons: Song and Letter***

Minerva and Patria are imprisoned for doing actions against the regime. In the same prison they are kept among non-political prisoners such as whores and thieves. In order to resist and have a voice in prison, Minerva along with others begins singing national song. The guards could do nothing about it because it is their national song, even though they know that by singing such a song they are expressing their resistance against the present regime. This hysterical action of Minerva causes the other prisoners to sing along with her to show that they refuse to have such a regime and they wish a country in which all should be free. They love their country and miss the country in which freedom is suppressed. "Minerva leads us in singing the national anthem. We know through knocking with our neighbor cell that our serenades really help raise the men's spirits. The guards don't even try to stop us anymore. What harm are we doing? Minerva asks. In fact, we're being patriotic, saying good morning to our country" (ITB 186). As noticed, by doing this they are raising against men's spirit in prison. Women in prisons make the guards accede to what they do without shutting them down.

Minerva and Maria Teresa have been sentenced for five years in prison, however, through direct order of Trujillo their confinement has declined to house arrest. Therefore as an act of gratitude Pena has asked the girls to write a letter to Trujillo and thank him for releasing them from prison. Although Minerva disagrees, all the other girls are consent with that reasoning that all the people will know why they have written this letter through which they might pave the way for the freedom of their husbands from the prison.

By accepting to do what they are asked for, they are actually using the situation for their own benefit because first of all the people will know that they have written the letter under duress and by writing this letter to the regime they show they have regretted what they have done against the regime. This may force the regime to release their husbands who are in prison for political actions. "Now, Minerva," Patria reasoned. "You know if he publishes the silly thing everyone will know why we wrote it ... What finally convinced me was Patria's argument that the letter might help free the men. A grateful note from the Mirabal sisters might just soften El Jefe's heart towards our husbands" (ITB 211). Here as observed, they both agree to write the letter but simultaneously they take advantage of the situation.

## CONCLUSION

This paper shows that the society in which the characters live is a patriarchal one established based on the Law of the Father, being father or Trujillo, by which their ideologies are imposed on women. In this way, the women have no right to educate or take part in social activities. Women are regarded as objects of exchange among men, possessing no identity of their own until defined by the masculine power which through its language imposes its ideology on the society. However, there are women in the story to change such a view about women by trying to set up their own discourse through which they can attain an identity specific to themselves.

They become hysterical characters who pretend to be under the control of men, whereas, simultaneously reject them and make benefit from this, such as the case with Minerva which causes her to study law at the university under such a harsh system. They are asked to imitate and do what is desired by the system. They actually imitate what is expected of them but this imitation becomes the parody of what they do and becomes more like a joke to them, bringing about a crack in their system. To put it simply, what the women are after is the resistance against the Laws either from the father or Trujillo by various means such as acquiring education, or showing hysterical actions to attain their independence and identity which belong to themselves as woman.

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