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To what extent did censorship affect the writing of *Cinco Horas con Mario*?

Colin Tarbat

The censorial regulations introduced by the Franco regime created a harsh environment for authors wishing to include dissenting messages in their writing. Despite being published after the supposedly liberating Press Law of 1966, Miguel Delibes clearly felt the need to self-censor while writing *Cinco Horas con Mario* as letters between the Spanish author and his editor testify. Although perhaps less conservative in his approach to censorship than his predecessors, the minister of culture and tourism, Manuel Fraga, who introduced the law, only appeared to encourage greater caution from Spanish writers while approaching their work. If any viewpoint criticizing the regime was traced, the offending novel would be confiscated and its author either fined or imprisoned. Through intelligent use of characterisation, imagery and authorial silence, Delibes edited and altered his work sufficiently in order to smuggle his dissenting opinions past censors. As a result, his novel *Cinco Horas con Mario* included subtle criticism of the on-going ideological conflict, the Church's dubious relationship with the regime and the disadvantaged situation of women in Francoist society whilst maintaining a legitimate relationship with the regime after its publication.

By the time Franco declared his final victory over Republican forces in a radio speech on 1st April 1939, his Nationalist movement had already begun to

COLIN TARBAT is currently in his fifth year at the University of Glasgow, studying Spanish and History. The intelligent use of the Spanish language, employed by Miguel Delibes in *Cinco Horas con Mario*, to survive the harsh writing environment under Franco while smuggling subversive messages past his censors, combined interests he has in both of his degree subjects. He hopes that, through this article, he can clearly communicate this fascination which has greatly developed throughout this academic year.

introduce censorship regulations. The Press and Propaganda office had been established in Salamanca in 1936 and immediately attempted to control the content of public media within the areas of Spain where Franco's forces held power. During the last year of the Civil War, and throughout the subsequent regime until 1966, The Press Law of 1938 required that every piece of written material seeking publication had to first be scrutinized by censors. Any material deemed to be incompatible with the ideals of the Nationalists would either be edited or prohibited.¹ In practice however, due to the lack of detailed censorial criteria, it proved difficult for the authorities to establish any uniform treatment of submitted manuscripts. The authorization of a novel largely depended on an individual censor's interpretation of both the ambiguous questions on censorial reports and the text that required analysis. As a result, a number of authors found themselves editing their work, and even changing their initial ideas before putting pen to paper, in order to try and avoid a confrontation with the censors. Although restricted by the regime's regulations, many writers persisted in developing literature that would circumvent censorship while containing coded criticism in its subtext.

Miguel Delibes is widely considered to be one of the finest post-Civil War Spanish writers and has admitted to having self-censored in order to try and circumvent Franco's censors. Although he has only ever referred to practicing conscious self-censorship, it is worth noting that the refined social criticism apparent in much of his writing may have also been influenced by factors unrelated to the regime. If Freud's analysis is correct, some of his critical nuances may also have originated from an unconscious revision of his ideas before writing. This analysis, however, will focus on the conscious efforts to

¹ Maria DiFrancesco, 'Censorship and Literature in Spain' in Maureen Ihrie and Salvador A. Oropesa (eds.) *World Literature in Spanish: An Encyclopedia* (Santa Barbara, 2011), 170

deliberately evade Franco's censors practised by Delibes during the writing of his extensively acclaimed work, *Cinco Horas con Mario*.²

To avoid censorship while preserving the social commentary in his work, Delibes developed various literary techniques which effectively avoided penalization. Using intelligent style and structure in *Cinco Horas con Mario*, the Spanish author succeeded in creating a notable novel that was applauded for its literary achievement whilst simultaneously criticizing aspects of the regime under which he was living. It is, perhaps, this conscious effort to hide authorial opinion which led Vilanova to describe *Cinco Horas con Mario* as "the deepest, most complex and most ambitious" of his novels that "most directly connected with Spain's social and political reality."³ The lack of any clearly oppositional writing encouraged a large number of the literate Spanish public to read between the lines of new works of fiction in the hope of discovering the author's critical sentiments. The analysis of Delibes' intelligently chosen dialogue and distancing of authorial opinion will demonstrate how his composition maintained a legitimate relationship with the regime. Franco desired to manipulate and control the language used by the Spanish people to promote the regime's 'legitimacy'. Delibes, however, recognized the impact that the control of language could have, and succeeded in outplaying the regime at its own game. His seemingly innocuous literature was permitted publication and went on to spread coded dissenting messages amongst its readers through perceptive use of imagery, characterization and, most importantly, carefully chosen silences.

During the Spanish Civil War, Miguel Delibes had sided with the Nationalists with a view to defending the Catholic faith, volunteering as a seaman in

² M. L. Abellán, 'Censura y autocensura en la producción literaria española', *Nuevo Hispanismo 1* (1982), 169-80

³ 'Cinco Horas con Mario, la más honda, compleja y ambiciosa de las novelas escritas por Miguel Delibes y la más directamente conectada con la realidad social y política de España en que vive', Antonio Vilanova (ed.), *Miguel Delibes Josep Vergés: Correspondencia, 1948-1986* (Barcelona, 2002), 16

Franco's navy. His support for Franco diminished after the war, as he felt a need to bring democratic values back to Spain. According to Oropesa, Delibes greatly influenced intellectual Catholics who wished to maintain their faith while upholding a middle political stance between the idea of Marxist liberation and Franco's National Catholicism. The increasing resentment that both Delibes and his editor, Josep Vergés, developed towards the regime and its censorship is evident in their correspondence throughout the 1950s and 1960s. In a letter from Doctor Demetrio Ramos, a provincial delegate of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Vergés is accused of being a "suspicious person."⁴ Knowing that his editor, and friend, was suffering under the regime's pressure, Delibes asked Vergés in a letter on the 17th February 1962 to "accept things as they are, without too much irritation. You only have one life and it is senseless to let four fools bother you."⁵ In July of the same year, Manuel Fraga was appointed as Franco's new director of censorship. Although widely considered to be a more liberal administrator than his predecessor, dissidents clearly still suffered during his time in power. In 1958, Delibes became director of Valladolid based newspaper *El Norte de Castilla*, where he had begun his career as a cartoonist. In 1963, however, a year after Fraga's appointment, he was pressured by the authorities to step down for refusing to follow regulations limiting freedom of expression in the press.

Delibes claimed that, under the censorial restrictions at *El Norte de Castilla*, "journalism showed me how to put the maximum amount of information into the minimum number of words".⁶ Before starting the writing of *Cinco Horas*

⁴ 'Persona sospecha' Letter from Demetrio Ramos to Josep Vergés, *Ibid.*, 22

⁵ 'Admite las cosas como son, sin demasiado calor. Dispones solamente de una vida y es insensato dejar que te la amarguen cuatro majaderos' (17/2/1962) Letter from Miguel Delibes to Josep Vergés, *Ibid.*, 193

⁶ Miguel Delibes quoted in Alasdair Fotheringham 'Miguel Delibes: Spanish writer who found a way past Franco's censors with his stark novels of rural and provincial life', *The Independent* (2010, Apr 2), retrieved 22/12/2011
[<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/obituaries/miguel-delibes-spanish-writer-who->

con Mario, Delibes was already evidently well aware that he would have to censor himself if he hoped to get his work published. Around the time of the novel's publication, the Valladolid based author wrote in a letter to his editor that work was going badly at the newspaper and that the authorities made "constant use of blackmail and threats."⁷ It would appear that *Cinco Horas con Mario* would serve as a coded and deeply sought after outlet for Delibes' frustration with the regime.

The supposedly liberal Press Law of 1966, which came into effect about half a year before *Cinco Horas con Mario* was published, appears to have only encouraged the author to be even more cautious when writing. Although not believing in freedom of the press, Franco had conceded that a reform was needed to give an impression, externally as much as internally, that Spain was progressing towards democracy. The law abolished pre-publication censorship, which had been enforced in Spain since 1938, theoretically providing authors with a greater liberty to express dissenting viewpoints. The ambiguity of the law's Article 2 understandably encouraged suspicion amongst writers and editors however. It stated that "freedom of expression and the right to spread information, recognized in Article 1, will have no limitation other than that imposed by the law." It appears that it was now the official responsibility of the Spanish citizen to adhere to the regime's doctrine. Failure to do so could result in fines, confiscation or imprisonment.⁸ The claim that novels were now free to be published without any censorship whatsoever was clearly extremely misleading. Writers were now arguably under even more pressure to cut out passages that could ultimately offend the principles of the regime. A vast increase in editorial censorship is evident after 1966 as it became the publisher's

found-a-way-past-francos-censors-with-his-stark-novels-of-rural-and-provincial-life-1933731.html]

⁷ 'Se valen del chantaje y de la amenaza' (23/8/1966) Letter from Miguel Delibes to Josep Vergés in Antonio Vilanova (ed.), *Miguel Delibes Josep Vergés: Correspondencia, 1948-1986*, 284

⁸ Cristina Palomares, *The Quest For Survival After Franco: Moderate Francoism and the Slow Journey to the Polls* (Brighton, 2004), 91

responsibility to act as censor and decide whether a book was likely to be confiscated or not.⁹ Contrastingly however, Vergés appears to have been convinced that *Cinco Horas con Mario* would not be censored and would have published it “without any fear whatsoever.”¹⁰ It was Delibes who demonstrated doubt in the apparent new found tolerance, admitting to changing his original idea for the novel due to censorship. With friends in the Ministry of Culture and Tourism such as the general managers Juan Beneyto and Florentino Pérez Embid as well as the censor and monk Padre Miguel de la Pinta Llorente, Delibes still felt the need for a censor to look at his work before publication.¹¹ In a letter to Vergés on 7 August 1966, justifying why he approached a friend and censor to look over his manuscript, Delibes demonstrated how paranoia and self-censorship continued to affect authors in this supposedly more liberal period:

I took this decision to take advantage of a friend’s offer because of a fear – which has now subsided – that the book would be appropriated after its

⁹ Amongst the numerous examples is that of Luis de Caralt: When publishing a Spanish edition of Hemingway’s *Old Man at the Bridge*, a story about the Spanish Civil War, Caralt changed the word ‘fascistas’ to ‘tropas’ in the phrase ‘Era domingo de Resurrección y las tropas avanzaban hacia el Ebro.’ When the publisher Planeta tried to reintroduce the word ‘fascistas’ while re-releasing the book in 1969, the censors eliminated the entire sentence. Douglas E. LaPrade, *Censura y Recepción de Hemingway en España* (Valencia, 2005), 75 ; Similarly, Juan Mollá’s novel *Segunda Compañía* was rejected for release by the publisher Destino and after being presented to Plaza & Janés, the literary director, Mercedes Salisachs, cut a number of passages before submitting the book to the censor’s office. Manuel L. Abellán, *Censura y Creación Literaria en España (1939-1976)* (Barcelona, 1980), 99

¹⁰ ‘lo hubiera publicado sin temor alguno’ (2/8/1966) Letter from Josep Vergés to Miguel Delibes in Antonio Vilanova (ed.), *Miguel Delibes Josep Vergés: Correspondencia, 1948-1986*, 281

¹¹ Cristina Palomares, *The Quest For Survival After Franco*, 91

distribution. Now everything is in order and no one can suggest an argument against the book's publication.¹²

No alterations or editing were ultimately needed, demonstrating that Delibes' own self-censorship, due to his fear of the novel's confiscation, was sufficient to avoid its prohibition. Writing with Franco's censors in mind allowed Delibes to create a novel that appeared superficially legitimate whilst subtly criticizing Spain's ideological conflict, societal inequality and the Church's support of Franco.

Bourdreau claims that due to its ironic criticism of Francoist society, it is "surprising" that *Cinco Horas con Mario* wasn't censored.¹³ When Delibes' intelligent structuring of the novel and discreet concealment of his own opinions are examined, however, it is perhaps no surprise that the dictatorship's censors overlooked any oppositional sentiment. In a letter to his editor, a year before the novel was published, Delibes wrote that he intended to "... leave it up to the reader to see through the composition."¹⁴ During the prologue of *Cinco Horas con Mario*, set in Spain in 1966, a narrator prepares the reader to enter the thoughts of the protagonist, alone with her deceased husband for the central part of the novel. Even before Carmen's monologue begins, the ideological tensions between the two families present at Mario's wake, suggest that Mario did not die "comforted by spiritual aids" as the funeral notice on the

¹² 'Tomé esta decisión aprovechando los ofrecimientos de un buen amigo y ante el temor - como ahora acaba de ocurrir - de que se produjese un secuestro del libro después de editado. Ahora todo está en orden y nadie puede oponer ningún argumento contra la edición del libro' (7/8/1966) Letter from Miguel Delibes to Josep Vergés in Vilanova, Antonio (ed.) *Miguel Delibes Josep Vergés: Correspondencia, 1948-1986*, 280

¹³ H. L. Bourdreau, 'Cinco Horas Con Mario and the Dynamics of Irony', *Anales de la novela posguerra*, Vol.2, (1977), 7-17

¹⁴ 'se lo dejo ver al lector a través de la composición' (7/8/1966) Letter from Miguel Delibes to Josep Vergés in Antonio Vilanova (ed.), *Miguel Delibes Josep Vergés: Correspondencia, 1948-1986*, 281

opening page claims.¹⁵ As the reader enters the mind of the complex, unhappy and frustrated protagonist, Delibes has already greatly distanced his own opinion from his writing. It is solely Carmen's internal sentiments and judgments that are exposed in her recollections, without any interference from the author. By entering her mind, the reader is encouraged to judge and analyze the views of the protagonist. In the five hours that Carmen is beside Mario's side, she reviews almost thirty years. During this period, social injustices take place off-stage and are alluded to indirectly. They are presented through the eyes of the protagonist, who, ignoring the social and political subtext, uses them as a method to criticize her husband. When reflecting on an incident where Mario has appeared to have been intentionally knocked off his bicycle by a police officer, Carmen reprimands her spouse for having been out so late, rather than regarding the incident as needless rough treatment. She then claims that "if he'd killed [Mario]...it would have been in the course of his duty."¹⁶ Similarly, when Mario's publication appears to be under governmental pressure for its content, Carmen fails to see that the intervention of the authorities is unjust. Due to the connotations of police brutality and censorship that these events evoke, critical judgment is encouraged from the reader without any provocation from the author. By structuring the novel around the inner workings of Carmen's mind, Delibes was able to successfully obscure his own viewpoint and encourage his readers to think critically about the Franco regime.¹⁷

The ideological differences that had polarized Spain throughout the Civil War caused significant societal tensions during the regime that followed. Although the demonizing of leftist supporters became less prominent towards the end of the regime, pro-leftist literature continued to be regarded as an attack on the

¹⁵ 'confortado con los Auxilios Espirituales' Miguel Delibes, Leo Hickey (ed.), *Cinco Horas con Mario* (London, 1977), 7

¹⁶ Miguel Delibes, (trans.) Frances M. López-Morillas, *Five Hours with Mario* (New York, 1988), 63

¹⁷ Miguel Delibes, Leo Hickey (ed.), *Cinco Horas con Mario*, vii-ix

regime's ideology, qualifying it for censorship. Writing in 1939, Giménez Caballero demonstrates the Nationalist sentiment towards Republican supporters that is evident in the characters of both Carmen in *Cinco Horas con Mario* and Matia's grandmother in *Primera Memoria*:

We - the Imperial - do not however ignore the fact that the 'class struggle' is an eternal reality of history. Because there have always been weak and strong, ugly and handsome, stupid and intelligent, cowardly and brave. And the struggle and hate of the miserable, the ugly, the stupid and the cowardly, will always exist against the wealthy, the handsome, the able and brave man.¹⁸

A Decree passed on April 18, 1947 highlights the continuing ideological struggle that existed during Franco's dictatorship. In its introductory paragraph, an attempt was made to dehumanize the few Republican guerillas still active in certain regions of the country:

Crimes of terrorism and banditry, which constitute the most serious forms of offence in the postwar situation, a consequence of the relaxing of morals and the exalting of the cruelty and aggressiveness of criminals and misfits, require special measures of repression, the seriousness of which will correspond to the crimes it is trying to eradicate.¹⁹

¹⁸ 'Nosotros - los imperiales - no ignoramos en cambio que la 'lucha de clases' es una realidad eterna de la historia. Porque siempre ha habido débiles y poderosos, feos y guapos, tontos e inteligentes, cobardes y valientes. Y siempre existirá la lucha y el odio, del miserable, del feo, del tonto y del cobarde contra el pudiente, el apuesto, el capaz y el hombre bravo', Ernesto Giménez Caballero, *Genio de España: Exaltaciones a una Resurrección Nacional y del Mundo* (Barcelona, 1939), 235

¹⁹ 'Los delitos de terrorismo y bandidaje, que constituyen las más graves especies delictivas de toda situación de posguerra, secuela de la relajación de vínculos morales y de la exaltación de los impulsos de crueldad y acometividad de gentes criminales e inadaptadas, requieren especiales medidas de represión, cuya gravedad corresponda a la de los crímenes que se trata de combatir.' Boletín Oficial del Estado, May 3, 1947 in José,

Although Delibes did not choose to resort to violence to express his frustration with the regime, he still needed to take care when expressing liberal opinions in a dictatorship which evidently regarded all opposition as a threat.

Janet Pérez notes how ‘the rhetoric of silence’ enabled a number of post-Civil War writers to express discontentment in a covert manner. She remarks how the conscious decision to omit certain material, or the deliberate allusion to a character’s silence in a text, was an effective technique to circumvent censorship and criticize Spanish social issues. Its use often aroused an interest in the reader who would subsequently look at a passage in more depth to find a hidden meaning. Pérez also notes that the use of silence during Franco’s dictatorship contributed to a subtlety and aesthetic refinement she feels regularly lacks in the literature produced after state censorship was lifted.²⁰

In *Cinco Horas Con Mario*, Delibes appears to use subtle irony to attack the regime’s rightist ideology which the protagonist Carmen represents. The reader is subjected to Carmen’s personal view of her late husband who reconstructs his personality in a way that suits her. She immediately begins to criticise Mario, rather than mourn his death, suggesting that there may be a hidden reality that isn’t directly obvious to the reader at first. The death of Mario off-stage before the novel begins immediately presents a ‘silenced’ protagonist unable to state his case. In an interview in 1980, Delibes commented that his “first idea was to present Mario alive, but the censors would never have allowed Mario to speak against...society”.²¹ Alterations such as these, caused by censorship, encouraged Delibes to claim, like Pérez, that censorship didn’t necessarily always have a

B. Monleón, ‘Dictatorship and Publicity. Cela’s Pascual Duarte: The Monster Speaks’, *Revista Canadiense de Estudios Hispánicos*, Vol.18, 2 (Invierno, 1994), 266

²⁰ Janet Pérez, ‘Functions of the Rhetoric of Silence’, *South Central Review*, Vol.1 No.1/2 (Spring-summer, 1984), 117

²¹ ‘mi primera idea fue presentar a Mario vivo, pero Mario hablando contra la sociedad que estábamos viviendo nunca hubiera aceptado por la censura’, Miguel Delibes in Pilar Concejo, ‘Miguel Delibes: Realismo y Utopía’, *Hispanic Journal* 2.1 (1980), 105

negative effect on literature and occasionally “operated in a convenient way,” allowing writers to “retain subtlety” in their writing; a refinement which he laments disappeared in Spanish literature during the years following Franco’s death in 1975.²²

According to Bourdreau, through Delibes’ choice to ‘silence’ Mario, alongside his clever and subtle use of ‘covert irony’, the reader concludes that there is more depth to the novel than at first thought, and begins to “reconstruct unspoken meanings...that for some reason cannot be accepted at face value.”²³ This conclusion cannot be drawn at first however as the irony lacks context. Carmen proves to be self-centred, materialistic, small minded and naive whilst behaving insensitively towards her children unless she uses them as a means for her own contentment. She appears to be the polar opposite of the ‘silenced’ Mario who she criticises throughout the novel for being idealistic, humane and academic. Convinced that “a strong authority is a guarantee of order,” Carmen manipulates the novel’s discourse.²⁴ Correlating to the censorship imposed by Franco on any dissenting views of the regime, she censors the memory of her silent dead husband. She also appears to act as a censor towards her own children:

... if personality means refusing to wear mourning for a father or having no respect for a mother, then I don’t want children with personality.²⁵

Just as subversive messages succeeded in circumventing Franco’s censors, the ‘true’ image of Mario, which Carmen attempts to suppress, materializes in her thoughts. She criticizes Mario for having refused to accept an apartment to protect his five children which at first seems like a plausible complaint. She

²² ‘A veces la censura ha operado de manera conveniente en cuanto que nos ha hecho utilizar las formulas...esa sutileza se ha perdido al perderse la censura’, *Ibid.*

²³ H. L. Bourdreau, *Anales de la novela posguerra*, Vol.2, (1977), 7-17

²⁴ Miguel Delibes, (trans.) Frances M. López-Morillas, *Five Hours with Mario*, 114

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 113

later concedes, however, that as a Republican idealist, Mario felt that being offered a subsidized apartment for government employees was a governmental method to buy his silence. She also attacks her husband for having refused to sign an agreement for the rigged acts of a referendum which she felt showed weakness in his character.

Before having completed the novel, Delibes wrote to his editor on 2 August 1965 stating that he intended to “oppose the two ways of thinking that exist in the country: the obstinate, traditional and hypocritical, and the open and healthy advocated by John XXIII.” Due to the characterised ideological conflict between Mario and Carmen, one progressive and the other conservative, Bourdreau argues that the reader assumes that there must be an authorial preference for one of the conflicting sides.²⁶ In Carmen’s reports of Mario’s dark mood after discovering the outcome of the Civil War, it is clear that her husband supported the defeated liberal ranks while Carmen appears to have supported whatever her conservative bourgeoisie family and friends suggested. Demonstrating more unattractive personality traits, Carmen can’t seem to understand that it is remotely possible that Mario was brought up with different values to her. When reflecting on the ‘Crusade’, a term which Franco and his supporters used to define the Spanish Civil War, Carmen is still surprised that it “seemed like a tragedy” to Mario and can’t ever seem to comprehend the fact that they may have had different standpoints.

Due to the negative portrayal of Carmen, there appears to be a subtle insinuation that the protagonist stands in stark contrast to Delibes’ ideological beliefs. For a reader overlooking the irony of the novel, it is possible that Carmen could be seen as a victim after losing a husband who didn’t fulfil her needs in life. On 10 October 1966, Delibes wrote: “it scares me to think that

²⁶ H. L. Bourdreau, *Anales de la novela posguerra*, Vol.2, (1977), 9

someone could regard Carmen's position as plausible."²⁷ The idea may have alarmed him, but it was evidently his intention to allow such a reading when he claimed to Josep Vergés that "the monologue of this woman and the criticism of her husband will appease the censors."²⁸ He was right to assume so. Evidently failing to detect the irony of the novel, and therefore adopting Carmen's viewpoint, one of Franco's censors, an acquaintance of Delibes, noted on 23 July 1966 that the novel had a "moral intention" and didn't require any changes.²⁹ As Carmen consistently represents a social standpoint that was shared by a significant proportion of the higher classes, and therefore an ideology coherent with the regime's dogma, *Cinco Horas con Mario* successfully avoided censorship. Delibes' subtle and indirect criticism of her personality, however, ensured that *antifranquista* readers would take note of his opposition to the regime.

Under Franco's government, the traditional roles of daughter, mother and housewife were regularly imposed. This included the enforcement of the *permiso marital* law which prevented women from finding work without first asking the permission of their husbands.³⁰ Moral codes and sexual restrictions were implemented on the Spanish female population while no comparable limitations applied to men. If a woman wanted to stay on at work after getting married she would be refused any family allowance while a 'wedding bonus' would be presented to those who left work after their wedding. The propaganda and legal restrictions imposed by the dictatorship appear to have

²⁷ 'me asusta pensar que alguien pueda tomar la postura de Menchu [Carmen] como plausible' Letter from Miguel Delibes to Josep Vergés in Antonio Vilanova (ed.), *Miguel Delibes Josep Vergés: Correspondencia, 1948-1986* (Barcelona, 2002), 287

²⁸ 'El monólogo de esta mujer y los reproches al marido darán por el gusto de los censores' (2/8/1965) Letter from Miguel Delibes to Josep Vergés, *Ibid.*, 281

²⁹ 'La novela esta de Miguel Delibes nos parece de intención moralizada' Censors report for *Cinco Horas con Mario* in Hans-Jörg Neuschäfer, *Adiós a la España Eterna: La Dialéctica de la Censura. Novela, Teatro y Cine bajo el Franquismo* (Madrid, 1994), 327

³⁰ Kristin A. Kiely, *Female Subjective Strategies in post-Franco Spain as presented by Rosa Montero and Lucia Etxebarria* (Florida, 2008), 15

made it very difficult for women to escape taking up a traditional motherly role in the home. According to Balfour, this produced a quick turnaround in numerous businesses, such as textile factories, which allowed employers to pay less for new, younger, less experienced female staff.³¹ As any direct criticism of the disadvantaged female position during the regime would have been considered an attack on its moral code, writers needed to employ intelligent use of metaphor and characterization to highlight these issues while avoiding censorship. The despair and lack of ability to escape the enforced traditionalist ideals is evoked through the protagonist in *Cinco Horas con Mario*.³²

Carmen is bound by tradition and actively wants to promote the moral values of 'the old Spain' to her daughter in an almost dictatorial manner:

What's the use of a girl going on with studies, I'd like to know? What does she get out of it, you tell me? Make herself all mannish.... A young lady only needs to know how to walk, how to look, and how to smile, and the best professor in the world can't teach those things.³³

Carmen, convinced that Mario was lying when he assured her that he was a virgin, holds a universal distrust of men. She appears to desire the attention of males, but, at the same time, wishes to have complete control over them. When referring to her husband's dead body, she is convinced that "he was her corpse; she had manufactured him herself". Carmen is obsessed with what a woman 'should' be and 'should' do in her society. As well as demonstrating authoritarian qualities, Carmen also appears to represent a helpless uneducated woman who has been brought up to believe that "reading and thinking are bad".³⁴ Throughout the novel she refers to Mario and his male friends "speaking in code", excluding her from conversation and never taking the trouble to

³¹ Sebastian Balfour, *Dictatorship, Workers, and the City: Labour in Greater Barcelona Since 1939* (Oxford, 1989), 11

³² Miguel Delibes, Leo Hickey (ed.), *Cinco Horas con Mario*, xxxv

³³ Miguel Delibes, (trans.) Frances M. López-Morillas, *Five Hours with Mario*, 69-70

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 46

explain what they were talking about.³⁵ This may have been due to the fact she either didn't understand or simply preferred not to. It is her intellectual friend Esther who is laughed at within their group of friends for claiming to understand Mario. Comparable to Franco himself, Carmen criticizes intelligent, politicised women like Esther for "destroying family life."

The protagonist has been coerced into her role in society and appears to have nothing else to believe in besides the morals she was taught as a child: "a person has principles and principles are sacred."³⁶ A lot of her comments represent, as Highfill suggests, a "psycho-logic" of how women are 'supposed' to feel and to behave, given their situation.³⁷ She has accepted the role that society expects her to perform and has become a negative character as a result. When reflecting on her sister who was cast out of the family for having a child out of wedlock, Carmen appears to fantasize about a liberty she doesn't possess: "imagine Julia, seven years alone in Madrid, and with such a little child, the freedom that implies"³⁸ Although given the opportunity to break from her role and commit adultery, she fails to do so. She suffers emotional and sexual frustration in a failing marriage and yet stands by what she is convinced every woman 'should' believe in. Although the depiction of marital conflict may have been a taboo subject in a country which didn't legally permit divorce until 1982, through Carmen's troubled portrayal, Delibes draws attention to the exceptional lack of freedom which women suffered under Franco.³⁹

The regime's relationship with the Catholic Church was clearly exceptionally important due to the fact it represented the only realistic claim of 'legitimacy' that Franco possessed. During the Second Vatican Council which took place between 1962 and 1965, this idea was challenged. In 1963, *pacem in terris* was

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 14

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 31

³⁷ Juli Highfill, 'Reading at Variance: Icon, Index, and Symbol in *Cinco Horas con Mario*', *Anales de la literatura española contemporánea*, Vol. 21, No.1/2 (1996), 64

³⁸ Miguel Delibes, (trans.) Frances M. López-Morillas, *Five Hours with Mario*, 186

³⁹ Janet Pérez, 'Functions of the Rhetoric of Silence', 123

published by Pope John XXIII, urging the importance of freedom of speech and democracy.⁴⁰ Although also aimed at eastern communist countries, it was also unmistakably a warning to the only non-democratic nation in Western Europe. A document named *Dignitas humanae* encouraged religious tolerance and freedom of practice, a freedom which at that moment in time didn't exist in Spain. *Christus Dominus* added to the liberal demands and invited civil authorities to surrender their right to elect bishops which Franco refused to do. The Council encouraged Catholic lay organizations opposed to the close relationship between Catholicism and the regime to express their views. In 1960, 339 priests, the majority of whom were based in the Basque country, signed a letter demanding the end of the Church's involvement with the dictatorship. Three years later, the abbot of Monserrat, the religious symbol of Catalonia, publicly attacked the authoritarian rule of a country, which, at the time, held more Catholic priests in its prisons than anywhere else in the world.⁴¹ Delibes was greatly encouraged by the developments and evidently felt that if such progressive thinking had existed earlier, it may have prevented his country from descending into conflict:

And talking about Christ, I think the histories of the Spanish Civil War have undervalued the role of religion. My own judgment is that this is a key factor. I have the opinion, that, if there had been a John XXIII before 1936, the Spanish Civil War would not have started or at least it would have had a different character.⁴²

⁴⁰ Salvador A. Oropesa, "The Never-Ending Reformation: Miguel Delibes's *The Heretic*" in Mary R. Reichardt (ed.), *Between Human and Divine: The Catholic Vision in Contemporary Literature* (Washington, D.C., 2010), 86-102

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² "Y ya que hablamos de Cristo, yo pienso que el factor religioso no se ha valorado lo suficiente en las historias de la guerra civil y, a mi juicio, es clave, hasta el punto de que yo soy de los que creen que si hubiera habido un Juan XXIII antes de 1936, la guerra española no se hubiera desencadenado o hubiese tenido otro carácter." César Alonso de los Ríos from *Conversaciones con Miguel Delibes* (Madrid, 1971), 50, trans. in Salvador A. Oropesa, "The Never-Ending Reformation: Miguel Delibes's *The Heretic*" in Mary R.

This was an issue he would later explore in more depth in his historical novel *El Hereje* without the watchful eye of Franco's censors.

Cinco Horas con Mario, published a year after the Council had concluded, presented subtle but similar religious challenges to Franco's regime. Manuel Ibrarme Fraga, the head of censorial operations at the time, employed a number of young Catholics, some of whom had previously contributed to Catholic journals. As this was a period of uncertainty for Catholicism in Spain, Delibes was careful to avoid any obvious criticism of the volatile religious situation and used Carmen as a shield for his own beliefs.⁴³

Carmen's intransigent views are evident as she attacks Vatican II: "Nowadays everything's all stirred up with that business about the Council"⁴⁴ Representing the regime's standpoint, she later states that the "wretched Council" is "turning everything upside down."⁴⁵ Carmen appears to have suffered during her upbringing in a household where Catholicism was regarded as a status symbol and a privilege for her class. As a result, the newly proposed liberal laws don't appear to sit well with her: "John XXIII...placed the Church in a dead-end street...[He] has done and said things that are enough to scare anybody."⁴⁶ Contrasting completely with Carmen, Mario is found to have been a progressive Catholic. It is learned he lost two brothers during the Civil War, one killed by the Republicans and the other by Nationalist forces. The Catholic Mario evidently suffered during the papacy of Pius XI, who, agreeing with the Nationalist's cause in the Civil War, blessed Franco's forces and declared it a 'Crusade.' As the authorities regarded Carmen's standpoint to be genuine, the novel remained legitimate. The intended reader, however, was clearly expected

Reichardt (ed.), *Between Human and Divine: The Catholic Vision in Contemporary Literature*, p.91

⁴³ Cristina Palomares, *The Quest For Survival After Franco*, 89

⁴⁴ Miguel Delibes, (trans.) Frances M. López-Morillas, *Five Hours with Mario*, 58

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 59

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 123

to recognize the allusions to the identity crisis that the Catholic Church was suffering at the time, and, in doing so, completely disregard Carmen's views as ultra conservative and absurd.

After the more liberal Manuel Fraga Iribarne took charge of censorial operations in 1962, many authors hoped that writing through the regime's repression would become easier. In letters sent to his editor, Josep Vergés, it is clear that Delibes viewed this supposedly more liberal period with suspicion however. Despite his editor's confidence in the regime's supposed new found liberalism, and the fact that pre-publication censorship was now optional, Delibes wrote *Cinco Horas con Mario* with a view to intelligently hiding any material that the authorities might judge to be censurable.⁴⁷ Even with Fraga's reforms of Francoist censorship, the fear of a novel's confiscation by the authorities evidently still weighed heavily on the writing of established authors such as Delibes.

Through the use of 'authorial silence' and intelligent structuring, Delibes managed to obscure his relationship with his own creation. The Spanish author succeeded in stepping back from his work whilst subtly insinuating to readers which particular criticisms should be made of Franco's society.

Delibes used the protagonist Carmen to screen his sentiments in *Cinco Horas con Mario*. The world is seen through her eyes and the body of the text is revolved around her monologue.⁴⁸ As a result, no obvious contradictory opinion is evident. She alludes to injustices such as police brutality and imposed censorship, but, due to her conservative upbringing, rather than seeing them as unjust repression, she prefers to use these events to vent her frustration on her dead husband. Those reading the novel were expected to see through Delibes' irony and observe for themselves that such incidents were discriminatory and commonplace in Francoist society.

⁴⁷ Cristina Palomares, *The Quest For Survival After Franco*, 91

⁴⁸ H. L. Bourdreau, *Anales de la novela posguerra*, Vol.2, (1977), 7-17

It is clear that, due to state censorship, a large number of fundamental literary elements such as characters, dialogue and structure needed to be completely rethought. Having enlisted his intended readers as critical co-creators of his novel, Delibes was ensured that his subtle, but judicious, metaphors would be understood.

Carmen, in *Cinco Horas con Mario*, as an advocator of Nationalist ideals, was brought up to behave as a woman in her society 'should' do. No alternative has been offered to her throughout her life which encourages her dictatorial approach towards her children. She has been coerced into a traditional role in the home and can't escape.⁴⁹ As the reader discovers that, at heart, she is an insecure, frightened individual, Carmen provides a prime example of the negative effects that having a promoted national female stereotype can have. Throughout the novel, Carmen consistently criticizes the Second Vatican Council and the progressive Catholicism it proposed.⁵⁰ The novelist evidently intended that his readers would react against her unreasonable opinions and decide, if they hadn't already, that it was time to actively oppose the Church's close involvement with the dictatorship.

Delibes' coded writing provided a legal, and therefore much more readily available, denouncing of Franco's dictatorship to the Spanish public. The fact that much of the content and structure of *Cinco Horas con Mario* was specifically contrived to circumvent Franco's censors, demonstrates the great extent to which the fear of censorship influenced his writing. Despite having suffered with the imposed restrictions, his self-constraint and exploration of refined writing resulted in the creation of an outstanding composition. The notable amount of literary criticism and appreciation that the novel has

⁴⁹ Juli Highfill, 'Reading at Variance: Icon, Index, and Symbol in *Cinco Horas con Mario*', 64

⁵⁰ Salvador A. Oropesa, 'The Never-Ending Reformation: Miguel Delibes's *The Heretic*', 86-102

attracted strongly suggests that the effect Franco's censorship had on Delibes' literature wasn't necessarily entirely negative.

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