

Societal Structure and Political Manipulation Under the Franco Regime

Through an analysis of popular Spanish literature and the political discourse it represents, this paper examines the structure of Spanish society under the rule of Generalissimo Francisco Franco Bahamonde and how its composition facilitated authoritarian control by the regime. Political dissidents in oppressive regimes have often employed popular literature as a vehicle of dissent in oppressive regimes, and those of the Franco era are no exception. Of the various roles that literature can play in a society, political protest serves as one of the most significant.

In an oppressive political regime, criticism of the administration is often indirect and carefully hidden within an acceptable context if the message is to reach those for whom it is intended. If any discourse is to lead to the deconstruction of the current society and ultimately to the reconstruction of a new social order, it must be heard; whether formal or informal, the channels of communication must be able to carry the message of the discourse.

The medium chosen for this analysis of the political discourse is that of the novel. Through the development of the human behavior in the novel written in protest against the Franco regime, the author brings to the reader insights into not only literature, but politics as well. Novels are not objective treatises; though based in a context of facts and history, they are subjective works. And yet, this lack of objectivity is often what provides their unique perspectives.¹ The novel manifests a still more subjective view when read by its audience.

Due to its subtlety, the political novel may provide the ideal expression of the politics of a culture or society. It is able to provide access to an era, offering a unique perspective of a specified time and place. This aspect of the novel is of particular significance in studying the political environment of Spain, for as George Wellwarth notes, "The educated Spanish reader, . . . has been well described as a man who gets all his information by reading between the lines."²

As in many authoritarian regimes, writers of Spanish literature during the Francoist period often conveyed their messages through a political code that was readily understandable by the literate public, but that complied with the technical

guidelines of the official censorship apparatus. Spanish novelist Camilo Jose Cela acknowledged the use of this oblique political communication in an interview published in 1977: Literature reveals the social, political, and economic situation in which the author lives. Therefore, it is absurd to think of an ideally “pure” literature, motivated solely by aesthetics. The formal interpretation of literature is a political one which establishes and maintains the status quo. . . Literature, like art in general, is always created for someone’s purpose, even though we may pretend that it is not.³

Cela’s view of the writer extends his or her role within society from one of observer or spectator to that of active participant. He states, “I believe that the novelist is to some degree the moralist of the era in which he lives, and at the same time, its biographer.”⁴ Fellow novelist Juan Goytisolo concurred in a similar interview, stating that through literature, “that which [the government] wants to keep unknown eventually becomes known.”⁵

The literature in this examination clearly presents a relationship between the Franco regime and the Spanish society which it controlled. While Franco was able to manipulate the governmental institutions directly under his authority with more efficiency, his control extended to the informal groups of Spanish society as well. Franco controlled the interaction between these groups and their interaction with the regime, creating an elaborate structure designed to maintain his authority. By limiting or expanding the interaction between various groups, Franco was able to forge powerful coalitions and diffuse potential opposition.

Groups able to offer power or support to the regime were chosen to work in tandem with it, enjoying the rewards of increased power and status in society. Those that rejected the regime, those whose goals conflicted with those of the regime and those who simply had nothing to offer the regime were assigned a less favorable role in society, subject not only to the power of the regime, but to that of more favored groups.

Divide and Conquer

Through the centuries, a traditional class system had evolved in Spain, dividing the elites

and the masses into distinct and separate groups within society. The social institutions of modern Spain developed as equally isolated and distinct units, organized in a hierarchy of power, according to their roles in society. The isolation and lack of contact between these groups, beyond that prescribed by their societal roles, furthered Franco's ability to separate and control them.

The authors consistently represent this manipulation of the Spanish societal structure throughout the literature examined. Franco drew on the existing social environment of these groups and built upon that foundation to maximize his own goals. The Catholic Church, the police and traditional elites, entrenched in positions of power, became worthy allies of Franco. Meanwhile, less influential groups, such as women and society's intellectuals became subject to the actions of not only Franco, but of his more closely allied societal groups.

The literature in this examination presents these segments of Francoist society, emphasizing the societal roles imposed upon them by the regime. Through the use of characterization and metaphor, the authors portray the positions and functions of the groups, as well as their interactions with the regime and one another. Interestingly, those characterizations do not vary significantly among the literary works, suggesting that the roles ascribed to these societal groups were, at best, accurately depicted, and, at worst, commonly acknowledged within the political discourse of the generation.

Employing the same tactic in Spain that he used abroad, Franco divided those around him and strategically set his enemies against one another. Once divided, they struggled against each other, freeing Franco to pursue his own objectives. Brian Crozier makes this point, citing Franco's manipulation of the monarchists and socialists, who at one point had attempted to unite against him, stating, "Once again, Franco knew that he had only to sit tight, leaving his enemies, both Spanish and foreign, to fall out among themselves."⁶

Franco's domestic diplomacy produced other rewards as well, for by tolerating these groups that composed a limited opposition, Franco allowed some degree of expression to dissenters, thereby preventing a dangerous build-up of frustration and political hostility toward

the regime. Franco treated his supporters in much the same way, orchestrating their interactions in the manner that served the regime. Permitted to interact with each other within Franco's limits, the varied groups of Franco's supporters behaved much like those of the opposition. As Crozier remarked,

The selective enmity of each group of his supporters is outweighed at any stage by the inherent mutual hostility of all. At home, therefore, Franco's masterly inertia has consisted of knowing when to give one of the groups something to keep it quiet, while stopping short of the full satisfaction that would provoke other groups to excess. That way, the sum of reasons for satisfaction always outweighs that of reasons for hostility.⁷

Though not a formal institution of the regime, the societal structure was undeniably influenced by the regime and functioned as a complex social force, despite its vaguely defined parameters. By dividing and isolating the various groups within the society, Franco was better able to monitor and influence their interactions with one another, as well as with the regime. Through such machinations, Franco used the institutions and informal groups of Spanish society to maintain control. This intricate and carefully directed political drama was ultimately manipulated by one central, controlling force -- Franco.

The traditional institutions of Spanish society facilitated Franco's efforts in this area, because, by their very nature, they offered a means of dividing and differentiating people within a larger unit. The regime excluded those outside the institutions from those within, and separated and controlled those within through internal hierarchies. These layers of isolation contributed significantly to the power of the Franco regime to control the various cells in the hive of Spanish society.

Sources

This analysis presents six works by different authors to demonstrate the variety of forms political protest assumed under the watchful eye of the Franco regime. In an effort to reflect the significance of the novel and its political message in modern Spanish literature, five of the works

in this analysis are novels because, as James R. Stamm observed, “the literary form in which Spain has been most original and prolific is without doubt the novel.”⁸ The remaining work is a drama, included not only because of the literary stature of its author, but to reflect the importance of more accessible forms of literature, such as theater. The entire body of works presents the political themes common to these works which, though produced in relative isolation from each other, emerged from a single literary generation.

This study includes the novels *La colmena* (*The Hive* 1953) and *La familia de Pascual Duarte* (*The Family of Pascual Duarte* 1942), written by Camilo José Cela. As Anthony Kerrigan notes in the introduction to his English translation of *La familia de Pascual Duarte*, “Camilo José Cela is undoubtedly the finest writer of fiction in post-Civil War Spain.”⁹ As a winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature, Cela is an author of significance not only in Spain, but in a global context. Cela's novels exhibit the heightened levels of violence linked to oppressive regimes in general and the Franco regime in particular.

The Family of Pascual Duarte has been one of the most successful novels of modern Spain, its popularity persisting throughout the past fifty years. Like other works critical of the regime, to escape censorship, Cela wrote *The Family of Pascual Duarte* in code. His use of the code resulted in the publication of his novel and the subsequent acceptance of the work, and the political statements therein, by the public. Ironically, the Franco regime permitted and promoted Cela's work precisely because it appeared to be so non-political.

The Family of Pascual Duarte takes the form of a journal written by Duarte as he awaits his execution. Throughout the novel, Duarte dwells on themes of fate and destiny and the inability of mankind to resist these forces. It is not until the end of the manuscript and his life that Duarte recognizes the power and responsibility that he could have wielded in his own life, warning others to acknowledge their free will and power. Cela uses the depraved character of Duarte to demonstrate the effects of a people who acquiesce to the authoritarian control of a political regime, religion, and the class system, failing to exercise free will and power.

Unlike *The Family of Pascual Duarte*, the Francoist censors did not initially approve *The*

Hive. Because *The Hive*'s criticism of the regime and Francoist society was much more overt than that of *The Family of Pascual Duarte*, the government deemed it unsuitable for publication within Spain.

In *The Hive*, Cela presents the reader with a microcosm of the Franco regime, populated by a multitude of characters whose lives are all connected and interrelated. The common bond uniting these disparate individuals is the location of Dona Rosa's cafe, where each one spends some time and reveals some portion of his or her life to the reader. The characters act and live as members of the "hive," or regime, and their behavior directly or indirectly allows the collective society to continue.

Ana Maria Matute wrote *Primera memoria* (English title changed to *School of the Sun* 1959). At the time that Matute wrote, the very fact that women were published authors represented a challenge to the oppressive regime and the societal norms of the day. As one of the relatively few women writers of the era, Matute provides this study with a distinct perspective from which to examine the political discourse of the Franco years.

The dominant theme of this novel, however, is not that of femininity, but of isolation and alienation. Matute presents this novel from the perspective of an adolescent girl, shunted from one guardian to another, and recounts her struggle to understand and deal with the transition to adulthood and the oppressive nature of the authoritarian political regime.

Cinco horas con Mario (*Five Hours with Mario* 1966) by Miguel Delibes, like *School of the Sun*, addresses the theme of isolation. In this narrative, a widow keeps an overnight vigil with the corpse of her recently deceased husband, reading the underlined passages from his Bible and relating them to their life. Reflecting the significance of religion in the Francoist society, each chapter begins with one of these biblical passages; yet as the narrative progresses, it becomes apparent that the widow's interpretation of each is verse differs significantly from that of her dead husband. Each is isolated within his or her own perspective: she, as a woman within a paternalistic regime, and as a Francoist within her marriage; he as a dissident, was particularly isolated and alienated within his own marriage and society.

Throughout the novel, Delibes discusses the practice of writing and speaking in a political code is discussed. Within this work, the widow criticizes the protagonist for using this code, yet as the reader becomes familiar with the plight of the dissident protagonist, the necessity of the code becomes clear. Ironically, the novel itself was written in that same political code. Its readership not only understood this code, but derived much significance from it, leading *Five Hours with Mario* to become an underground cult classic in Francoist Spain.

Escuadra hacía la muerte (The Condemned Squad 1953), written by Alfonso Sastre, forms an important component of this examination in that it is a drama, accessible not only to the educated, but to the broader public audience. This drama takes place in a futuristic setting of World War III, in which a squadron of misfits and malcontents come under the command of a sadistic corporal to guard the border. Each squadron member hides a shameful past which emerges within the drama, relating him to a particular segment of Spanish society. Isolated and free from any overriding authority, the corporal mistreats his soldiers until they mutiny. The condemned squad represents a condemned generation in Spain, composed of different classes and groups, yet each controlled by the authoritarian regime.

Like *Five Hours with Mario*, Sastre wrote *The Condemned Squad* in political code. The characters provide clear metaphors for aspects of Francoist society criticized by Sastre. *The Condemned Squad* also became an underground cult classic, perhaps due to its accessibility not only as a drama, but as a political statement. Jailed for his political activities, Sastre's opposition to the regime was well-known, and expected within his work.

An interesting technique employed by Sastre to reach his audience is a device used at the end of the drama. Following the desertion and deaths of the other soldiers, one character speaks to the youngest and most likely to survive, instructing him to think of what has transpired there whenever he lights a cigarette. To the Spanish populace, the vast majority of whom smoke, this device established a bond between the statement of the drama and their everyday lives as individuals.

Señas de identidad (Marks of Identity 1966) by Juan Goytisolo, like *The Condemned*

Squad, shares the theme of a generational experience and discourse. According to Gonzalo Sobejano, this expressive work marks the culmination of Goytisolo's career as a novelist.¹⁰ This novel follows a young man's search for his identity as an individual and as part of a generation, a journey which leads him to his past and the painful truth of his father's murder. In learning the hidden truth of his past, he also learns the painful and concealed truth of the society from which he had fled as an exile.

As an exile himself, Goytisolo presents a protagonist who has been exiled as well, and dwells on the concept of isolation. As the character returns to Spain, seeking to establish an identity with his generation and eliminate his feelings of isolation, he discovers that his companions who have remained in Spain are just as isolated as he. Goytisolo presents the idea of "internal exile," isolation from the external world, in conjunction with traditional exile and creates for the reader an oppressive and insular environment.¹¹

Because Goytisolo wrote as an exile, his criticism of the Franco regime is more overt than that of authors writing and publishing within Spain. His portrayal of the Church as a godless socialization agent of the regime is clearly an affront to the Franco administration and the society it controls. His depiction of the police is particularly vicious, describing them as the lawless enforcers of regime policy, rather than guardians of justice. It is, therefore, not surprising that, like *The Hive*, the Franco government did not permit the publication of *Marks of Identity* in Spain for some time.

Societal Structure in Oppositional Literature

Throughout the literature examined in this study, the author presents various societal groups and institutions. Each of these groups has a role to play in the drama of the regime. While some are formal institutions that are well-defined and easily identifiable, others are more subtle and have more vaguely defined parameters.

The following examination addresses these institutions and groups as they are presented in the literature, focusing on several aspects of their function within Francoist society. Voluntarily or involuntarily, each group fulfilled a different role to play in the greater drama of

the regime. These groups were also defined in different ways, be it power, status, wealth, or some other identifying factor. This study examines how the groups operated within such roles and how they were treated within the social structure controlled by the regime.

Related to the concept of societal roles is the manipulation of the groups. While some groups willingly accepted their positions in the social structure, the regime forced others into well-defined and isolated roles. Groups enjoying positions that were relatively free from restrictions needed little prompting to abide by the rules of the regime. Groups that occupied a less promising role often had to be coerced into maintaining their positions and functions.

The literary texts examined here present the relationship between the various groups, as well as each group's relationship to the regime. Because some groups benefitted from the existing social structure, they willingly facilitated the efforts of the regime, while those less fortunate struggled against them. By pitting the segments of Spanish society against one another, the Franco regime was able to maintain control without expending unnecessary efforts to do so.

Due to the essentially literary nature of this examination, the concept of the "voice," or characterization, of the groups emphasized in the literature must be addressed. Although the authors in this study did not collaborate, and in fact one wrote in exile, they share common characterizations of the groups within Francoist society. The fact that the groups are portrayed with a specific characterization consistently throughout the literary selections suggests that the oppositional literature is either depicting these groups as they actually existed in Francoist society, or that they are making an impressionistic statement about these groups.

The statements about Francoist society made by the authors in this study are presented through a variety of literary techniques, both subtle and direct. This examination focuses on the groups that were isolated within the Spanish society and isolated by the authors discussing them. These groups include the police and their importance to the regime, the Catholic Church and its relationship with the regime, the intellectuals of society, women and their role, as well as the elites and their position in Spanish society.

The Police

The role of the police is clearly the most consistent of the groups presented throughout this examination. Interestingly, each author independently represents the police as the least restricted group in the societal structure. With virtually no accountability to the public for their actions, they operate with little regard for the law. As enforcers of the regime's authoritarian control, the police literally are the law, subject only to the power of the regime on whose behalf they act. They are consistently portrayed as brutal, sadistic thugs.

The police, as presented in the literature, are also unique in that they are one of the few groups that voluntarily fulfill their role in society. Due to the lack of restrictions on their behavior, they govern their own actions and judge their own legality. Because such freedom has no equal in the literature, the police not only fulfill their role willingly, but wholeheartedly.

The authors are consistent in their depiction of the relationship of the police to the regime as well. As noted previously, the police are depicted as organized representatives of the regime's harsh and oppressive control over Spanish society. In return for maintaining this control and supporting the regime, the police are allowed to operate without restriction or responsibility.

This characterization extends to the relationship between the police and other members of society. During an interrogation scene in Goytisolo's *Marks of Identity*, the police make their lack of accountability painfully clear to Antonio.

"Let's see if I can make things clear. You played a game and you lost . . . You're in our hands and we can do anything we want with you.

. . . Even kill you. . . . You wouldn't be the first to disappear."¹²

Similarly, in *Five Hours with Mario*, Delibes portrays the police as representatives of the parental authority of the regime, able to act upon others independent of their own laws, as presented by Carmen's lecture to Mario following his arrest and beating by the police.

"If a policeman in a fit of anger hits you with his fist don't think he's doing it for fun, of course not, but for your own good, just like we do with the children. . . .

We have to accept it whether we like it or not . . . a country's like a family."¹³

Matute's characterization of the police resembles that of Goytisolo and Delibes, but is all the more sinister because of the novel's environment. The community, like Spain, exists on an island isolated by war and politics; the brutal and sadistic Taronji brothers are the only authorities present.

The elites of the island support the authority of the Taronjis so that the brothers will continue to maintain the privileged positions of the elite. Working in tandem, the elites and the Taronjis are able to intimidate and coerce the rest of the community into maintaining this social structure. In reducing her perception of Spain to a smaller, more intimate microcosm, Matute emphasizes the brutality and unaccountability of the Francoist police.

The voice of the police, as an institution within Francoist society, is undoubtedly the most powerful of those presented in the literature. Although other institutions, such as the Catholic Church, have greater visibility because of their public activity, the police have the ability and the freedom to instill fear in the other members of society. This fear is emphasized repeatedly throughout the literature and cited as a principal source of the behavior that occurs within Francoist society.

The Catholic Church

As a traditional institution of Spain, the Catholic Church exerted its influence over the Iberian peninsula centuries before the creation of the Franco regime. Its virtual monopoly on the theology of the nation carried with it the political power of generations of Catholic rulers since Isabel and Ferdinand, the "Catholic Kings" of the fifteenth century. Using its considerable influence, the Church was instrumental in the development of Spanish myth and culture. Through myth and the organized bureaucracy of the clergy, the Church was able to impose certain moral standards of behavior and control society to an enormous extent. The Church maintained its power in modern social and political arenas as well, by aligning itself with the ruling monarchy which, in turn, delegated a great deal of authority to the Church.

Under Franco, this alliance of the Church with the ruling administration continued; as the monarch had not abdicated prior to leaving Spain, Franco contended that he merely ruled until conditions were more favorable for the monarchy. By exchanging its political endorsement for control over social areas such as education and charity, the Church was able to maintain a significant degree of political power itself.

Although members of the Basque and Catalan clergy were often torn by regional ties, the formal Church aligned itself with Franco's Nationalists early in the Civil War. In July of 1937, Cardinal Isidro Goma y Tomás, Archbishop of Toledo, officially announced the Church's support of the Nationalists by publishing a letter addressed to the "Bishops of the World."

The letter gave moral backing to the Nationalists, confirming the propaganda of a crusade of Good versus Evil. It fell just short of a full theological justification for

the Nationalists . . . the document made the Church a party to the bloodiest of civil conflicts and the totally unchristian reprisals in its aftermath.¹⁴

According to Robert Graham, "under the Franco regime, the Church was an inseparable part of the establishment and enjoyed a highly privileged status."¹⁵ The Vatican supported Franco, cooperating with his administration until the Second Vatican Council, at which point the Church tried to eliminate its ties to the repressive regimes of many Catholic nations by establishing a policy of abstention from partisan politics (although in recent years, under Pope John Paul II, the Church has revived its policy of intervention in political matters).

Goytisolo portrays the Church as agents of the regime in his account of Alvaro's attempt to gain access to the unused town library. "A priest in a dirty cassock crosses the square and looks at you out of the corner of his eye."¹⁶ When Alvaro is subsequently interrogated regarding his questions about the library, the author clearly completes this negative characterization by implying that the priest is the informant.

Matute presents the alliance between the Church and the ruling elite in her portrayal of the relationship between Monsignor Mayol and Grandmother. Like Goytisolo, she also employs the theme of uncleanness in her discussion of the Church and its relations. While in the island Church, the protagonist, Matia, senses the lack of holiness therein.

A cruel sensation of violence. . . . I told myself that perhaps in the darkness of the corners bats nested, that there were rats fleeing and chasing one another among the gold of the altarpieces. Grandmother's house was also somber and dirty.¹⁷

Like the police, the Church eagerly fulfilled its role in Francoist society in return for the considerable power it was granted in return. In negotiating control over the institutions of education, the Church was able to socialize the young citizens of the regime, exposing them not only to Catholic religious doctrine but to Francoist political dogma as well. Delibes explores this power in his portrayal of Mario's plight as a teacher in Francoist society.

Do you think that a Christian can say right out, in the middle of class, that it was a shame the Church didn't support the French Revolution?

. . . A blasphemy like that? . . . How can principles be Christian if they consist in cutting off the right people's heads?¹⁸

Control over the dispensation of charity was also powerful in that it allowed the Church to dictate to those in economic need, providing them with enough to survive, or denying them as punishment for their behavior.

The priest . . . said that he could not give us anything that my father had brought the trouble on himself that he should have left his family home and that God could not do anything for us and I went away from there very sad.¹⁹

With the police, the voice of the Church is one of the most consistent in the literature. While there is a respect for the foundations of Christian thought, as seen in Delibes' use of Biblical verses, there is a clear theme of anti-clericalism throughout the various works. The clergy is portrayed as decidedly un-Christian in its behavior; rather, it is a sanctimonious bureaucracy, filled with self-righteous hypocrites in cassocks, seeking only their own gain through the education, status, and power accorded them by the Church.

Matute shares this characterization in her portrayal of Monsignor Mayol and the rejected seminarian, Lauro. The monsignor is always described in reference to his appearance, as opposed to any philosophical thought, humanitarian act, or internal quality. The author's portrayal of him is superficial and full of grandeur, while Matute's choice of words implies that the trappings of the Church and its affiliation with the monarchy blind its members to the truth.

Monsignor Mayol appeared in all his glory during those days. Grandmother was right, there was something of the prince about him.

. . . Monsignor Mayol, tall and exquisite, was dressed in the palest of pink, and in gold and pearls. . . . The brilliance of it all blinded one's eyes.²⁰

Similarly, Lauro is accorded no respect within the novel. As a matter of course, he is disrespectfully addressed by the children as Lauro the Chink. Despite his efforts to toady to the Monsignor, he is either ignored or ridiculed. Ultimately, the reader learns of Lauro's secret shame: he was rejected by the seminary because of his lack of faith. This humiliation is exposed

repeatedly, as even the children threaten him with its revelation. "You'd better pray . . . even if you can't pray because you don't believe in anything. . . . Do you know what happens to old perverted apes like you?"²¹

Role of the Intellectual

The role of the intellectual in political opposition is a central one, according to William C. Martin. With the advent of the Reformation and the decline of religious dominance, secular intellectuals have stepped in to generate and establish ideology in modern society. The conflict arises when the intellectual inevitably questions the existing order and its ideology, undermining its legitimacy in favor of a new society and new worldview. The absence of this questioning results in a maintenance of the status quo and a conspicuous lack of change.

The political role of the intellectual is inescapable. When intellectuals have chosen to remain outside the ideological battle, this has had the effect of maintaining the existent social system.²²

Ralf Dahrendorf counters that the role of the intellectual is one of constructive criticism, leading to continual improvement and legitimization of the existent social order, rather than its overthrow. He likens the role of the modern intellectual to that of the court jester, or medieval fool, who operates outside the accepted social system, and is therefore able to criticize it in a way that others cannot.²³

The intellectuals presented in the literature of this examination typically fulfill the role offered by Martin. They are continually at odds with the regime. Their criticism is not meant to facilitate the ruling order, but to end it. The authors differ, however, in their perceptions of the possibility of change and the intellectuals' role in society.

Goytisolo and Delibes present similar views of the intellectual in Spanish society. In the work of each, the role of the intellectual is one of an oppressed force for political and social change. Significantly, the brutality used upon the characters does not reduce their motivation or stop their agitation for progress. Both authors draw from the commonality of Spanish myth in creating their intellectual protagonists in that each character becomes a martyr in the struggle

against the regime. In employing the concept of self-sacrifice and martyrdom so prevalent in Spanish Catholicism, the authors establish a common bond with their readers and give their characters more validity.

The intellectual characters in these works also share a relationship to the regime and to others. In general, this relationship is an antagonistic one in which they are continually observed and controlled by the central force of the regime. Goytisolo's characters of Alvaro and Antonio are both relentlessly hounded by the regime and forced into acquiescence through brutal treatment, imprisonment and exile. Antonio is arrested, tortured and exiled to his native region for the possession of books on democratic and socialist philosophies, while Alvaro is ultimately driven from the homeland that he seeks.

Delibes' character, Mario, though subjected to more subtle forms of intimidation, is similarly monitored and mistreated by his superiors in collusion with the authorities. He finds his teaching position endangered as a result of his denunciation of the Inquisition and is later beaten by the police when they mistake him for a person of lower class while riding his bicycle.

The relationships between these characters and others shares the common theme of isolation. Goytisolo's characters are isolated from others physically, through imprisonment and exile. The isolation of Delibes' character assumes a more insidious form as he is alienated intellectually, by circumstance of his marriage and life in an authoritarian society. His wife, representing the narrow perspective of the regime, not only proves unable, but unwilling, to understand him.

Mario doesn't have any reason to be depressed; he eats well and I do more for him than I can afford the time for. . . . People who think a lot are infantile, Mario, haven't you noticed? Look at Don Lucas Sarmiento, simple tastes and some absurd theories about life, sort of philosophical or something.²⁴

Not for anything in the world would I want to have an intellectual child, a misfortune like that, I'd rather God took him instead, mind you. Recognize once and for all, Mario, intellectuals with their wild ideas, they're the ones who tangle everything up, all of them are half crazy, because they think they know things but

the only thing they know how to do is make trouble, and the one who doesn't wind up a Red winds up a Protestant or something worse.²⁵

In spite of the derision they suffer, the voice ascribed to these intellectuals is notably rational. These characters consistently present the reasonable and thoughtful perspective of a situation; their political views do not attack or impugn other groups in society, as do the views espoused by the regime. As a group, these intellectuals demonstrate not only reason, but appear as the force for inevitable change. Clearly, Goytisolo and Delibes have characterized intellectuals, already identified as agents of political change, in an overwhelmingly positive manner to indicate their opposition to the regime.

In contrast, Cela and Sastre create a decidedly negative and pessimistic view of the intellectual in Spanish society. In *The Hive*, Cela's character, Martín Marco, portrays the intellectual as an essentially non-productive member of society. Although José Ortega contends that Marco expresses indignation at the disordered society that impedes his progress, an examination of the novel suggests that covers the extent of Marco's contribution to society.²⁶

While Marco does not operate within the social order, he does not work against it either. His character becomes an object of ridicule in that he rejects the bourgeois notion of work, yet lives from the charity of those who embrace it. Although he, like the characters of Goytisolo and Delibes, remains isolated from society, it is a self-imposed exile that he suffers due to his sloth and indolence. These traits, added to his hypocrisy and self-importance, create an intellectual incapable of leading any change.

Similarly, Sastre's *The Condemned Squad* presents the character of Javier, a professor and intellectual, educated not through the labor of himself, but of his parents. It becomes clear that the other members of the squad believe that Javier thinks too much, and therefore, isolate him. His inefficacy is demonstrated in more serious terms when the reader learns that his crime, one of cowardice, occurred when he left a mortally wounded comrade in battle.

The voice of the intellectual in Cela's and Sastre's work is virtually unheard -- even unworthy of being heard. These intellectuals are weak, their thoughts random, and their

ideologies without foundation. The sense of frustration and futility contrast sharply with the determination and optimism of the intellectuals of Goytisolo and Delibes. This disparity among intellectuals, about intellectuals, may be due to the hierarchical distinctions within that group.

The intellectuals of Cela and Sastre are academics, "ivory tower" philosophers, detached from reality; although they may criticize the political or social system, they help sustain it by their participation as academics. Therefore, they are dismissed by the artistic intellectuals, who live their thoughts and work, despite the hardships this may entail.

The Role of Women

The literature in this study presents the role of women in Francoist society from an overwhelmingly negative perspective. Interestingly, the most negative female characters are consistently the most powerful. Through their actions, they combine the characteristics of power and evil, as well as the traits of weakness and goodness. Underlying even the weak female characters, however, is an incipient evil that ultimately affects the other characters, particularly the males.

This dichotomous perspective of women is evident in Matute's *School of the Sun*. Although the protagonist lives in the traditionally patriarchal society of Spain, the household in which she lives is ruled by her authoritarian grandmother. The grandmother's power extends beyond the traditional boundaries of the home, however. As a member of the wealthy political elite, connected to the Church and in control of the police, Matia's grandmother is possibly the most powerful individual on the island. Yet she is a bitter and heartless dictator.

Her widowed daughter, Aunt Emilia, is her antithesis, spending her afternoons drinking in her room and pretending that her husband will soon come home from the war. Unable to confront the reality of her own life, she finds herself equally unable to face the truth about the injustice of the society in which she exists.

In *Five Hours with Mario*, Delibes expands upon the relationship of power and the role of women. In emphasizing the suppression of women in society and their empowerment in the home, he presents two different perspectives of women through the character, Carmen.

Although Janet Díaz has pointed out that Carmen's sex may be of secondary importance, and that Delibes intended her to be a stereotype of vain, materialistic, hypocritical, intolerant, and anti-intellectual qualities of middle-class Spain, it is evident that Carmen thinks of herself, first and last, as a woman, wife and mother.²⁷

Carmen embraces the traditional role of women in Spanish society, professing the desirability of a helpless, uneducated woman. She strives to fulfill these requirements and encourages her daughter, Menchu, to do so as well.

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 her those things.²⁸

Despite her weak role in society, Carmen exercises her power to its full extent in the home. She represents what M.C. Smith refers to as "the old Spain," embodying not only the traditional role of women, but the tradition of Spain.²⁹ Ironically, the same tradition that restricts the role of the woman in society expands it in the home.

Both family and nation need authority. In the family, that authority is the Mother, and she recognizes the need to ally herself with the other symbols of authority, Church and State. Authority is the goal, and all else must be sacrificed to it -- even husband and children -- if the family or society is to continue its traditions.³⁰

In Cela's *The Hive*, Doña Rosa is undeniably the most powerful character in the novel. As proprietress of the cafe where all the characters interact, she makes the rules and has her employees enforce them. As Doña Rosa represents the regime, and her cafe a microcosm of Spanish society, her character is decidedly negative. She terrorizes the customers that patronize her business, as well as the employees that faithfully serve her. She doles out her humanity as infrequently as she does her wealth, despite the plights of various unfortunates in the cafe.

The remainder of the female characters in *The Hive* are noticeably weaker than Doña

Rosa. While this weakness is often linked with goodness of intention or purity of heart, Cela makes it clear that it will eventually result in the character's downfall. For Elvira, the middle-aged woman driven to prostitution, "within a few years, her golden dream may well be a bed in the hospital, close to the pipes of the central heating."⁶¹ Similarly, Victorita, who is prostituting herself to pay for her tubercular boyfriend's medicine, begins to exhibit signs of the disease herself.

Perhaps one of the most striking portrayals of women is that within *The Family of Pascual Duarte*, in which all the female characters are depicted negatively. Duarte exists in a matriarchal world of his mother, his wives, his sister, his mare, and his bitch, all of whom exert negative forces of control over his destiny. Alfred Rodriguez and John Timm contend that in Western culture, women typically represent the creativity and abundance of nature; however, the women of Duarte's environment are either sterile and unable to create life, or unable to sustain the life once it has been created. Although Duarte's sister, Rosario, is the most feminine of the women in the traditional sense, she is unable to conceive. Duarte's wife, Lola, miscarries her first child and the second is still-born.

Duarte's mother, while able to reproduce, is "monstrous and degenerate."⁶² She is depicted as a herpes-ridden crone of loose morals and incapable of affection who is often likened to a witch, or to Chispa, Duarte's female dog. Yet her most significant failing is in her role as a mother. As Michael D. Thomas notes, "The first true resentment becomes apparent when the mother is deficient not as a person, but in her maternal role."⁶³

When her lover, and the father of her half-wit son kicks the boy on the scars where his ears were, before being chewed off by a hog, Duarte's mother does not exhibit any maternal concern until after her lover has gone.

The old man gave him a kick with the other foot, right on one of the scars where his ears had been, knocked him senseless, and left him like dead. . . . [The mother] licked his wound all night long, like a bitch licking its pups.³⁴

David William Foster concurs with Rodriguez and Timm, citing the significance of the

sacred image of the Madonna in a Catholic nation such as Spain, and its impact on the perceptions of women in the role of mother and nurturer.

That traditional fountain of virtue, the mother, is the most sinful and perverted member. In Catholic Spain where the cult of the Virgin Mary, the maternal prototype, has been developed to an extreme, such an arrangement on the author's part is calculated to arouse violent reactions.³⁵

Even the female animals are depicted from this negative perspective. Chispa, the dog, has three puppies, yet they are still-born. The mare contributes to the miscarriage of Duarte's first child when she shies and throws Lola.

Through the women and the progression of the action in his novels, Cela establishes and reinforces a connection between femininity and destruction. Contrary to the perception of women as the source of life, Cela creates female characters who are not only unable to give life, but who eagerly destroy it. Duarte's carnal knowledge of Lola on his brother's fresh grave serves as a vivid metaphor for this link. Cela entwines these concepts again in his description of Duarte's vicious stabbing of the mare. "She only breathed deeper, and faster, like when we put her to stud."³⁶ Duarte's matricide is the final blow against the evil of womankind.

Rodriguez and Timm contend that Cela's negative imagery of women is antithetical to the traditional Spanish image of women, and that Cela's subversion of the feminine image represents the destabilization of the societal structure; however, this negative perception of women is not unique to the work of Cela.³⁷ The dichotomous view of women is an ancient one, reflected in the Madonna/Whore concept. Coupled with the prevalence of negative representations of women throughout the literature, it is probable that Cela's portrayal of women in his novels is instead an exaggerated metaphor for the narrowly drawn roles into which they were forced by a traditional and repressive society.

Unlike powerful, organized institutions, such as the Church and the police, the women of Francoist society were coerced into their roles. They did not share the same freedom of action or lack of accountability. Although they may have tried to overcome their impotence in society by

strengthening their power in the home, even this behavior is an outcome of their relationship to the external society of the regime. As George Wythe states, "One of the avowed objectives of the Nationalists was to restore woman to her traditional concern with church, children, and cooking."³⁸

The suppression of women was institutionalized by the administration by subjecting them to the control of the Church and family, as Wythe notes, as well as restricting their access to economic achievement.

Francoist legislation penalized married women who stayed on at work by refusing them any family allowance, while those women who left work when they got married were rewarded with a so-called 'wedding bonus'. . . . These laws favoured a rapid turnover in the textile factories and enabled employers to take on younger and lower-paid women.³⁹

Using the societal pressures of Church, family and economics, the regime was able to manipulate these groups into constricting the boundaries of women. This coercion of Spanish women into traditional roles is expressed in the literature through the characters previously discussed. It is noteworthy that all of the female characters who possess and exercise any degree of power do so at the cost of their humanity. Those without power are depicted as more compassionate, and therefore traditionally feminine, but they exist at the mercy of society.

An interesting aspect of the literature in this examination is that while the female characters, both strong and weak, are all other-directed, or actively involved with other members of their environment, they have very little direct contact with the regime. This role seems to be dominated by the male characters, who are either active participants in the regime or vigorous opponents. The women exhibit less of a relationship to the regime than to other characters and society in general.

Though the family unit is the pillar of the society Franco desired, women, who orchestrate the functioning of that unit, are denigrated and devalued. Ironically, though they are essential to society at its most fundamental, biological level, women are portrayed as dispensable

objects.

The voice of women as depicted in the literature is, overall, a weak and negative one. While some characters are accorded a certain degree of power, they are reduced to inhuman, soulless individuals. It would seem that in the Francoist society depicted in these works, a woman cannot hold power and retain any positive human, let alone feminine, qualities. Yet denied power, women exist at the pleasure of others, dependent on their families and society, reacting rather than acting.

The Elite

Without exception, the elites within the literature comprise two narrowly defined groups, divided by a subtle distinction. The outgoing elite of Francoist society are the traditional elite, descendants of the wealthy and powerful who cling to the remnants of their heritage. They are portrayed as penniless nobles, refusing to acknowledge the reality of their decline. Like the starving aristocrats of Spain's Golden Age who refused to soil their hands by labor, they are ridiculed in the contemporary literature. Cela's Don Leonardo, an impoverished drunkard, epitomizes this characterization.

"We, the Melendez, an age-old line connected with the most ancient families of Castile, were once upon a time the masters of lands and lives. Today, as you see, we're practically in the middle of the street."⁴⁰

The emerging elite are defined not by family, but by economic means. The new elite is composed of professionals, businessmen and those assigned status through their ties to the regime. The significance of economics to the status of the elite is indicated by Matute in *School of the Sun*.

"Why is Grandmother mad at [Don Jorge]?" . . . [Lauro answered] "Why do lords and peasants stay at odds?" And he crudely rubbed his index finger against his thumb [indicating money].⁴¹

Throughout the works examined in this study, the role of the elite is presented as one of control, keeping those beneath them in their proper station. This social distance must be

maintained even in death, as Goytisolo indicates in several discussions of the town cemetery and its reflection of social hierarchies.

The cemetery had been conceived originally as a peaceful and sleepy provincial town with gardens and avenues, squares and boulevards, niches for the lower and middle classes and sumptuous mausoleums for aristocrats and the wealthy.⁴²

Virtually all of the elites in the literature not only accept, but relish, their privilege and power. There is no need to provide any threat or disincentive to oppose the regime, for the incentive to support it is so powerful. The authoritarian grandmother in *School of the Sun* exemplifies this willing elite force, as her "powerful social and economic position makes her an object of respect and fear on the island."⁴³

We are reminded about the seriousness of the division through the political assassinations on the island (one of whom is Manuel's adoptive father), the ostracism and harassment accorded to families on the wrong side, and the fact that the fathers of Matia and Borja are fighting on opposite sides.⁴⁴

Like all groups within Francoist society, the elite exist at the pleasure of the regime, therefore they provide it with support and acquiesce to its orders, that they might sustain their elevated positions within the societal structure. In this way, the regime uses the elite to influence and manipulate the groups positioned beneath them within the hierarchy of the society to the benefit of the regime.

The elite control and manipulation focuses predominantly on the middle and lower class. Just as the Church establishes the standards of morality in Spanish society, the elite define the parameters of acceptable behavior and normality for all of society, whether they abide by these rules or not. The respect and fear accorded them and their ties to the regime facilitates the maintenance of these norms.

Everyone ought to dress according to his class, and a gentleman's always a gentleman, and he gets a different kind of respect and a different kind of consideration. . . . If a policeman, or half a dozen policemen, see you with your

hat on, and with decent clothes, well turned out, it wouldn't occur to them, mind you, and they wouldn't have stopped you . . . because they'd be able to see a mile off that you were an influential person and a man of substance.⁴⁵

Above all, to preserve their power, the elite must remain separate and distinct from those beneath them. Only by maintaining the societal structure, by forcing the lower classes into their assigned roles, can the elite protect and preserve the system that accords them their position of status and privilege. As Delibes' *Carmen* notes, "If you gave yokels an elevator and central heating, they'd stop being yokels, wouldn't they?"⁴⁶ Matute and Goytisolo employ vivid imagery to symbolize the importance of preserving that power, describing repeatedly not only the physical walls that separate the classes, but the violence with which that separation is maintained.

The top of the wall was bristling with small pieces of broken bottle glass, sharp as teeth, ready to rip into the flesh.⁴⁷

Alvaro intensely examined the wall surrounding the place which was crowned with a ridge of broken glass and pieces of broken bottles. His mother rang the bell at the door and a nun opened the latch and immediately closed it again, locking it with a padlock.⁴⁸

Within the literature, the voice of both the traditional and the emerging elite is one that wields power over the lower classes, but is subject to the actions of the regime and its institutions. They are consistently depicted as a group that does not merit its privileged position and status, described as either penniless and inept nobility, clinging to a better past, or *nouveau riche*, who have acquired economic success and financial security through greed and avarice, grasping the superficial trappings and customs of the nobility.

Within these works, discussion of the class system focuses predominantly on the elites and the working class. The middle class is conspicuous by its very absence. However, the neglect of this group in the literature reflects the reality of the Francoist social structure, where the middle class was relatively small.

The lack of intermediary groups in a social system is of significance in that it is this absence which allows the elite to manipulate the masses without the benefit of any filtering mechanism. The middle class provides a sense of stability to society, serving as a buffer between the upper and lower classes. Deprived of a significant middle class, the elite of Francoist Spain were able to wield much more power over the working class than would have been possible in a society with a large, vocal intermediary class.

The Role of the Societal Structure

Each of the works examined presents Francoist society in a unique way, yet they all share the theme of carefully controlled units interacting under the auspices of a powerful central authority. The most direct approach to this theme is found in Cela's *The Hive*. The very title denotes a community of individuals, feverishly engaged in work. Through the center of this microcosm of Spanish society, the cafe, parade the members of society, each character identified with a particular group or institution. Because they all behave in accordance with their designated societal roles, the society continues to function. "The supposed detachment of classes is merely a technical one; the members of each stratum are inextricably linked to one another."⁴⁹

In *The Family of Pascual Duarte*, Cela focuses on the manipulation of interaction within society through the protagonist. Duarte's existence is so controlled that he makes no effort to manage his own life. He perceives himself as an object, acted upon, rather than a subject, acting. It is this conditioning and socialization from his society that is his ultimate downfall.

Society fails to provide Pascual the emotional support and intellectual tools necessary for the development of a coherent hierarchy of values and a framework within which to live his life. . . . He is reduced to reacting rather than acting.⁵⁰

In *Five Hours with Mario*, Delibes continues the theme of controlled behavior. However, his protagonist struggles against this manipulation, attempting to act with initiative rather than react in a prescribed manner. The response of the Francoist society is to isolate him and repress his actions of individuality.

The most significant aspect of this response, however, is that it does not come directly

from the central authority of the regime, but comes instead from the groups of society. The character is berated and ridiculed by the elite, criticized by his wife, rejected by the Church and harassed by the police. This network of manipulation succeeds where a single direct attempt might have failed.

While Delibes' protagonist dies, Goytisolo's characters are simply expelled. Alvaro and Antonio refuse to conform to the behavior norms established by the elites, the Church or the police. In response, Antonio is exiled to his native region where the forces of society are better able to exert a degree of control over his behavior. Alvaro is simply rejected altogether. His society expels him like an organism rejecting a foreign body that irritates it.

Like Cela's hive, Matute's island is a microcosm of Spanish society, reflecting the distorted perceptions of justice and morality present in the Francoist social system. The actions of the Church, the police and the elite are more closely coordinated in this novel than in any of the others. The symbiotic relationship of these groups is portrayed very clearly, as is their manipulation of the island society.

The Grandmother clearly rules the island. The monsignor comes to her when summoned and uses his authority in the Church to support her decisions and actions, as the Church used its power to support Franco from the pulpit. The police are literally her henchmen. Although they exhibit a great amount of freedom in the extent of their brutality, it is sanctioned, if not ordered, by the Grandmother.

Sastre's squadron of soldiers is also a microcosm, representative of the hierarchically ordered Francoist society, complete with injustice, absence of direction and repressive centralized control. Notably, the leader of this squadron society is a corporal, rather than an officer; he is no more qualified than his subordinates to lead. Isolated from any higher authority, the corporal's power is tempered by neither reason nor justice.

Within the literature of this examination, various groups within the Francoist social system are emphasized. These groups and others composed the complex societal structure of Spanish society under Franco. Formal institutions of the society, such as the police and the

Catholic Church, held the positions closest to the Franco administration. These relationships were of mutual benefit in that the police and the Church provided their support and power to the regime, which, in turn, granted these institutions considerable power over other groups within Spanish society. In serving the regime, these groups were serving themselves. Though not a formal institution, the elites of Spanish society shared this symbiotic relationship, feeding off the regime in return for the protection of their privileged status.

The groups of intellectuals and women did not share in the reciprocal relationship with the regime that the police, Church and elite enjoyed. Much of the antagonism between these groups and the regime was a result of their reluctance to fulfill the roles ascribed to them by the regime. This disinclination only exacerbated the tension between the regime and themselves.

Although the power of the repressive Franco regime was considerable, the scope of that power was expanded through the use of the different groups within Spanish society. By manipulating these groups, Franco was able to set in motion a series of actions and establish relationships that would maintain the desired societal structure, without the need for direct control by the regime. Skillfully managed, the groups interacted as planned and the system perpetuated itself with little maintenance. Goytisolo states as much in his novel.

Your homeland had become changed into a grim and sleepy country of thirty-odd million non-uniformed police. . . . In one way or another, the vigilante, the censor, the spy had secretly infiltrated the souls of your fellow countrymen. In every group, . . . the inquisition was reappearing with unsuspected disguises.⁵¹

Endnotes

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Societal Structure and Political Manipulation

Under the Franco Regime

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