



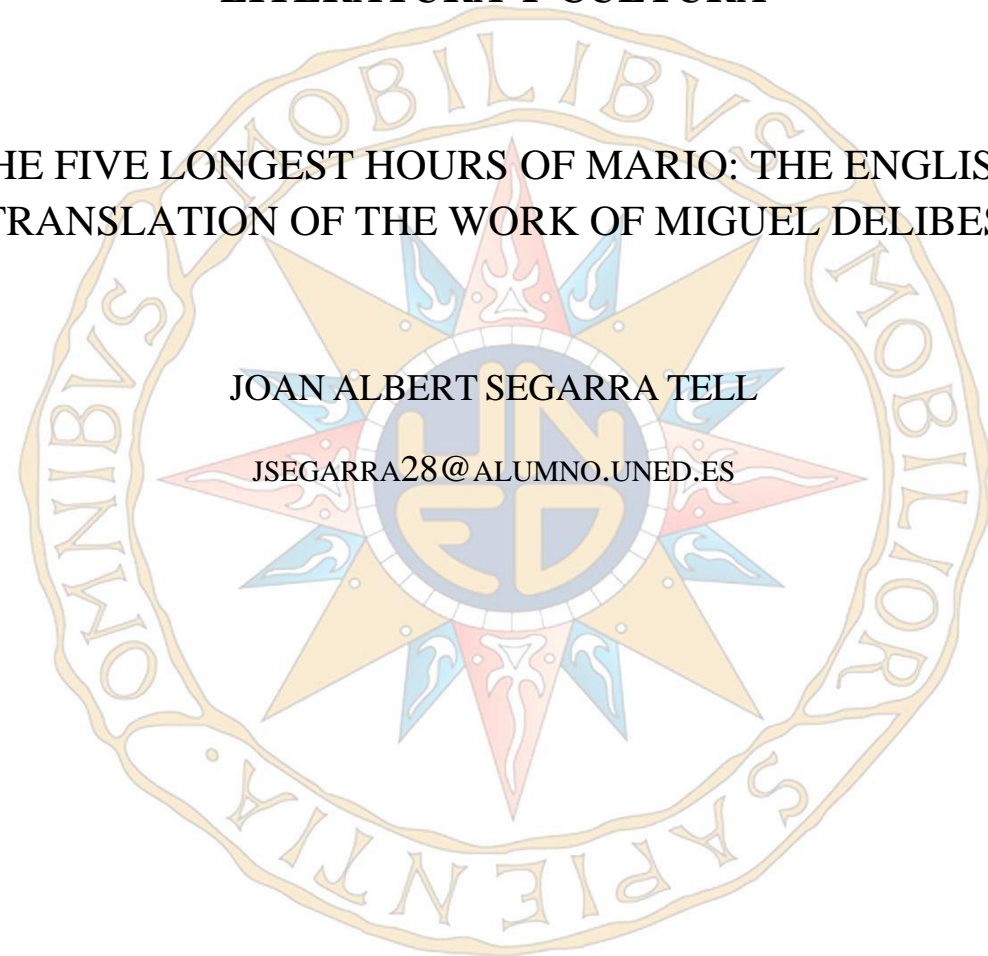
TRABAJO FIN DE GRADO

**GRADO EN ESTUDIOS INGLESES: LENGUA,
LITERATURA Y CULTURA**

THE FIVE LONGEST HOURS OF MARIO: THE ENGLISH
TRANSLATION OF THE WORK OF MIGUEL DELIBES

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Abstract

In the present work we are going to analyze the literary work *Five Hours with Mario* by Miguel Delibes from a linguistic, social and pragmatic point of view in which we are going to grant great importance to discourse analysis. Using the hypothesis of the high subjectivity that accompanies at all times the speech acts of her protagonist, Carmen Sotillo, we are going to delve into the construction of this character around Mario, her antithetical husband. At the same time, we are going to contextualize this work in its recognized function as a chronicle of an entire society at the end of the Franco regime.

Keywords

Delibes, late Francoism, subjectivity, discourse, chronicle.

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INTRODUCTION

Every historical event has its representation in the artistic and cultural manifestations that have taken place both simultaneously and subsequently. Literature, as a field of dissemination of knowledge and culture in which the privileged pens of multiple artisans of letters have been lavished, has been throughout the centuries the means of interweaving in pages with a vocation of permanence the great treasure of artistic representation of the human experience told by different notaries of emotions.

A good way to complement the knowledge of a certain period of history is to know the way of thinking of the society that lived through it. The knowledge of the facts confers rigor to the formation of our interpretations or opinions, but often it is the experiences of lesser-known actors that provide us with the complete photograph of a specific era.

In the present work we are going to pay attention to the characters of a novel that takes place at the dawn of the late Francoist period in Spain, which marked the beginning of a progressive abandonment of a time of scarcity crossed by a fierce repression of individual rights and freedoms and that made the disastrous consequences of the civil war last bitterly.

Among the authoritative voices that recounted that era, decisive in the history of our country, literary works emerged that knew how to perfectly capture the atmosphere that permeated all areas of life, but in this study we want to delve into the prose of Miguel Delibes.

We already pointed out before the polyphony of voices that, each one with its specificity, have been shaping the literary stories of all time. It shouldn't be surprising that in each very personal way of approaching the narrative act, characters emerge, between imagined and real, that are the product of the vision of each writing professional. The discourse that members of a certain social extraction will pronounce to refer to themselves and to members of other social categories is nourished from this individual and subjective stamp that each professional transfers to their stories to a greater or lesser degree. In this work we are going to analyze, precisely, the subjectivity that surrounds at all times the interventions of the protagonist of *Five hours with Mario*, the pinnacle novel of Delibes's urban scene, an environment that the author cultivated to

a discreet extent if compared with the works that are located in a rural setting.¹

The inclusion of a wide spectrum of human behavior in literary production is a technique that decisively contributes to enhancing the cultural heritage of a country's scene. When the wealth that this catalog offers is so overflowing, you must by nature want to broaden your spirit beyond national borders. It is in achieving this task that the translation deploys its full range of resources to achieve optimal transposition of content from one linguistic context to another. Taking into account that subjectivity in the protagonist is one of the distinctive features of the novel and that, therefore, the structure and type of language used will be a reflection of the constant contradictions of the protagonist, we are going to check if the original version and the translation establish a desirable relationship of equivalence or if, on the contrary, the translation departs from the intention of the original source.

Justification

On the road to consolidating democratic societies in the 21st century, there is a consensus that no one is left behind, expressed at various levels: political, economic and socio-cultural. In all these planes of reality, language has acted, often imperceptibly, as a catalyst for the promotion of a transversal society, diverse in its legitimate aspirations and concerns.

It would be starting with a lack of specificity to see language as a simple vehicle for the transmission of ideas that give meaning to the communicative act. Indeed, this is the main function of communication, but this analysis cannot be separated from the dimension of language as a transformer of societies throughout history.

A careful reading of this work allows us to detect throughout all its pages a use of language that is derogatory, histrionic, derisive, simplistic, partial and, ultimately, saturated with excesses. Knowing how to recognize how questionable this use is is the essential step in identifying stereotypes and

¹ Demographic concerns have burst into the news with the emergence in the public debate of the problem of the so-called "Empty Spain", but the consequences of this phenomenon have been visible for a long time, since they date back several decades: "Torrente Ballester had already seen in Delibes that sin was in the city and not in the countryside. But he wanted to go beyond that dichotomy by denouncing the false progress that poisoned the cities and encouraged the abandonment of the villages, killing a peasant culture without replacing it with anything noble" (Egido, 2020, p. 887).

reductionisms that have their roots in the very history of humanity as an advocate of a language that has perpetuated inequalities and all kinds of injustices.

Advancing in the development of civilizations supposes, at the linguistic level, moving away from the perverse categorizations that have decisively contributed to destroying an understanding between cultures and, instead, deepening the consolidation of a real and effective coexistence between diverse societies.

As a bridge of union of cultures, universities play a crucial role in the transfer of knowledge in their areas of influence, since they are supposed to be rigorous in the preparation of their literary, scientific and technical production and to strictly adapt content that is capable of retaining the particularities of all the audiences to which it is addressed.

One of the instruments that universities have to spread this knowledge and do it according to the parameters imposed by each sociocultural reality is translation. Under the umbrella of the line chosen in this work, that of the translation of texts from Spanish to English, the discursive, semantic and grammatical issues that reflect a correct export of the rhetoric of the text will be addressed. To build a comprehensive understanding of all meanings in their context, the work of translating must adhere at all times to the intention of the plot, changeable in its different passages. Only by accessing the original meaning of the words, no matter how reprehensible they may be, can we become fully aware of the extent to which language exerts a great pulling power in the establishment of mental schemes and public perceptions.

With the incorporation of this academic work to the catalogue of the university sphere, we intend to provide a perspective in discourse analysis that illustrates, with contextualized examples, the influence of language in the enrichment of the cultural capital of the population and, above all, in the formation of states of opinion and collective imaginaries, even more so in a context like the current one, of permanent relativization and distortion of the achievements in social rights and dissatisfaction with institutions.

Objectives

- Investigate the relationship that is established between the two protagonists through the use of the interior monologue.
- Calibrate the degree of subjectivity in the protagonist's speech.
- Evaluate the precision with which the translation of the work *Five Hours with Mario* has been reflected in the Anglo-Saxon reality.
- Analyze to what extent the expressions used by the protagonist represent her personal vision of the world or if rather, on the contrary, it is the perception of the whole of society that is embodied in the protagonist's speech.
- Assess the contribution of the work in the Anglo-Saxon literary scene as a cultural work framed in a dictatorial context that wants to be exported to democratic foreign societies.

State of the art

If we look at the previous studies on the matter, we will easily observe that subjectivity in the Delibean novel is a transversal theme in all of them.

Pérez Vicente (2017) analyzes Carmen's soliloquy from a discursive point of view and establishes two well-differentiated blocks delimited in a certain way by the language chosen by the protagonist. In the first, the protagonist delves into the years of living with the deceased to enumerate the list of grievances that, according to her, he inflicted on her during her lifetime, all through highly condemning terms. The balance of everything that happened in her marriage is the pretext on which, according to the author, Carmen bases herself to justify the speech that opens the second section of the play: an alleged episode of infidelity that, in reality, never came to fruition. Pérez Vicente supports her conclusion in the repeated use of the verb "to confess", which leads us to think of a desire for redemption on the part of the protagonist. Thus, the author defends the position supported by other previous essays on the same subject.

After these interventions by the protagonist, it becomes evident that, although her language emulates natural speech, her reasoning is expressed in an excessive way and, therefore, markedly subjective, to the point of falling into

caricature², as the author deduces from the abundant resort to irony by Delibes. From this generalizing technique, the story of Carmen and Mario is no longer explained, but that of the miseries of an entire society.

The author also deals with aspects related to the fidelity of the Italian theatrical version with respect to the original text and her conclusion is clear: the colloquial register has been correctly preserved, keeping intact the almost humorous tone used by the protagonist in several fragments of the work.

Satisfaction with the translation is also general in the Anglo-Saxon case, a fact that is especially remarkable if one takes into account the difficulty involved in transferring such a traditional reality to a very different one. This is stated, for example, by Ugarte García (2010), who praises the English version in its maintenance of the meaning of set phrases and expressions and in their use, in as far as possible, from the frequent ellipses of the original.

Undertaking the arduous task of translating literature cannot be limited to delimiting the text in an autonomous space independent of the context in which it is produced. As Palomo Merino (2019, p. 38) points out, "the text is no longer isolated, but situated in a bigger system and interrelated with a number of other elements". In the same way that the text is not, in any case, a static entity, neither is the meaning given to the translation, which is not a still photo either, but rather a revision of the original text that acquires new forms depending on the readings of the society that welcomes it (Palomo Merino, 2019). In this case, the studies mentioned above make a correct assessment of the translations in both Italian and English.

For her part, Lowe (1999) offers an analysis contrary to the one proposed by Pérez Vicente. Lowe maintains that the repeated use by the protagonist throughout the entire work, even in light contexts, of expressions such as "I confess" or "I swear to you" makes them distorted and, although it is indeed the will of Carmen to harmonize her supposed sins and her doctrinal following of the faith, it is not so clear that she adheres to a usual confession rite. As Lowe (1999) recalls, the concept of forgiveness appears only twice in this most transcendental part, while in previous pages it is frequently used as part of a

² Delibes himself already exposed in an interview his resort to caricature: "If I hadn't concentrated so many defects, if the caricature had been more pious, perhaps the instructive force of the book would have been greater" (Alonso de los Ríos, 1993, p. 77).

spontaneous vocabulary.

It is precisely this continuous devaluation of language one of the phenomena that give meaning to the validation of one of the objectives of this work, that of exposing how subjectivity takes over the speech acts of the protagonist through a hyperbolic use of words that strips them even of their original intention to convert them in an instrument of magnification of the low passions.

As Larraz points out (2009, p. 214), "Carmen's overflowing subjectivity monopolizes her discourse before her dead husband". However, despite the furious dialectical crusade that she undertakes against her husband, Larraz demystifies throughout his text the univocal vision, into which the reader was tempted to fall at first, of identifying Carmen exclusively with conservatism and Mario with progressivism. A more in-depth review points in the direction of ambiguity in both characters and an almost militant defense of their positions that seems less solid in practical matters. The author of the study frames these contradictions precisely in the changing environment of the throes of Francoism, a historical moment of change at all levels that placed its protagonists in the position of relearning what they had acquired. Thus, he defends that subjectivity in Carmen's words is the expected result of this progressive demolition of inherited values and the decline of referents.

Vega Martín (1996) investigates the reception that the work had on the international literary scene, specifically in countries such as Germany or the former Czechoslovakia. Her analysis is not flattering: in a context of resounding rejection of the totalitarian past of the German case, the appearance of works that arose from dictatorial environments such as *Five Hours with Mario* was received with little interest, since it was reasoned that a work born in the bosom of an authoritarian government system had, by force, to reproduce in its lines a logic of submission. Fortunately, this restrictive perception was losing followers and the novel was gradually beginning to be considered as a document of attractive literary value.

In short, as can be deduced from the heated debate that this work provoked in other countries, it is impossible not to highlight the ideological aspect of the work as one of the variables that condition narrative development at all times. Carmen and Mario unintentionally symbolize the two historical and

mutually exclusive conceptions of the Spanish nation, although, as we will explore throughout the work, this slightly reductionist categorization will gradually lose strength in favor of a more complex map of sociopolitical enclaves.

Methodology

Starting from the previous studies that have been mentioned in the previous section, throughout the work we are going to develop the initial hypothesis that the character of Carmen moves in a field marked by subjectivity and, as a consequence of this, the hypothesis that the translation into English has had to be at pains to transfer to a completely different culture features of the colloquial speech of a narrow-minded Castilian middle-class lady. To investigate these issues, we are going to provide, through a qualitative analysis, examples taken directly from the book *Five Hours with Mario* as a direct source and to highlight the approaches that other research has been expounding on the subject through books and articles in magazines.

To contextualize the study, we are going to delimit the historical, political and social framework in which the work was born, published in 1966, in the midst of the decline of Francoism. Aspects such as censorship, whose arms were known to be long, the active participation of religious authorities in public decision-making or, more specifically, the construction of Mario as Carmen speaks, are going to be the starting point for the development of this study.

Next, we are going to think of the structure and typology of the work, of which it has been pointed out on repeated occasions, as a result of the deliberate absence of typical elements of the narration, its framing in the chronicle rather than in the usual novel. Its only feature in common with the novelistic scheme is the division of the story into chapters that, as we will see, do not obey chronological parameters, but thematic ones. We are going to see how the technique of interior monologue, usually reduced to anecdotal examples in the universal literary corpus, runs through almost the entire text here, achieving an extremely realistic effect in the story.

In the following section, we are going to deepen the analysis of the discursive elements of the work, which we are going to include in four great thematic areas that are going to revolve around childhood and adolescence, feminism and ideology, religion and institutions. Similarly, we are going to select

some of the text fragments that illustrate the challenge of translating from Spanish to English lexical and grammatical aspects circumscribed to a specific culture and to evaluate the consistency of this export.

After this work with the text, we are going to ask ourselves to what extent the protagonist of this book externalizes her thoughts autonomously when she makes her speech or if, on the contrary, it is the whole of the Spanish conservative population that speaks through her. This descriptive task of society is going to be contrasted with the one carried out by Camilo José Cela in *La Colmena*, another good example of a novel with the intention of being a chronicle.

Finally, we will conclude this study with a reflection, through a diachrony exercise, about the fit of Carmen Sotillo's discourse in current sociopolitical conditions: would it be an isolated case or would her vision enjoy wide prestige among society?

DEVELOPMENT

Construction of Mario by Carmen's words

When writing about main characters in literature, the aim is to offer in maximum detail their personality and all the dilemmas they face during the different phases they go through, in a task of justification and organization of the set of actions they carry out.

The choice of the interior monologue in the configuration of the character of Carmen Sotillo does not seem to be accidental. The effect that the protagonist's words provoke in those who read them is not very different from hearing first-hand, without the mediation of an author who puts them in writing, a colloquial speech in the street. However, there is another underlying reason behind this decision.

One of the obstacles that Miguel Delibes had to face was the prevailing censorship in all areas of life. A declared practicing Catholic, Delibes never shied away from his commitment to Christian values, which he always understood to be closely linked to the defense of fundamental individual and collective freedoms, so in tune with the progressive spirit of a part of the population. Contrary to what was prescribed by the most official religious doctrine, the writer from Valladolid was a firm activist in reading the Bible together with the Protestants who made up the communities of "separated brothers", a practice that, on the other hand, meant literally fulfilling the directives established by the Second Vatican Council (Buckley, 2012). The high religious classes, reluctant to the openness that this ecumenism drew on the horizon, closed ranks around this issue.

Delibes always started from the vision of the literary profession as one called to improve society. His maxim was clear: his works should not be presided over by transgressive stylistic resources for the pure desire to innovate for the sake of innovating, but rather the writing should obey the ultimate goal of introducing new conceptual frameworks that would introduce far-reaching reforms in the society.

In an environment that did not favor any cultural expression that bordered on the norms, any hint of criticism towards the regime was perceived as a potential attack on its foundations that had to be repressed even before its materialization. Delibes, in the role of director of the newspaper *El Norte de*

Castilla, was due to his liberal profession a habitual suspect of questioning the narrow-mindedness of his time and, therefore, he was well aware of the coercive measures used by the Francoist machinery.

In his desire to imprint a moralizing character also on his work *Five Hours with Mario*, the writer was fully aware that giving free rein to the character of Mario, with all the ideological charge that would run through his speech throughout the narrative, was certainly synonymous with exposure to censorship. It is paradoxical to observe how the prohibition of certain content unleashed creativity and ended up spurring subversive messages even more, as demonstrated by the surprising way that Delibes found to circumvent censorship.

With Mario dead from the beginning, it would be the figure of Carmen who, through a fictitious dialogue, would actively build the character that gives the work its name in the mind of the reader. Vehemently abjuring everything Mario stood for, the writer successfully managed to put his ideas in writing.

Be that as it may, Delibes continued to choose to submit the content of his work to the Francoist censorship section. It should be noted here that, in an exchange of correspondence between the writer and his editor of *Destino*, Josep Vergés, the latter expressed his surprise at the fact that he sent the book to censorship when, having resolved the Mario issue, there was no longer in the novel, in his opinion, no element likely to be censored.

Literature as chronicle

The very structure of the book gives clues about the will it pursues. Its episodes, far from presenting a chronological order, are headed by a quote from the Bible at the service of the marital aspect that will be dealt with on each occasion. The narrative purpose is thus diluted in a tilting monologue between scattered vital passages from which the most intimate thoughts of the protagonist will be extracted in the form of lacerating criticism of her deceased husband. In some way, each chapter adopts an autonomous character that gives a fairly accurate idea of the character of the two, but it is the connection of the different episodes that, ultimately, puts together a faithful portrait of a canonical middle-class couple.

One could even say that reading this work can be compared to immersing oneself in the sections of a newspaper from the end of the dictatorship, since in *Five Hours with Mario* the main social, political and cultural issues of the time are dealt with. It is interesting to observe that, although the insurmountable difference with the journalistic genre is the continuous subjectivity that impregnates the protagonist's discourse, the exhaustive review of all the burning issues makes the book coincide in depth with the topics that dominated the headlines of that period (Sánchez Sánchez, 1988).

Numerous studies have agreed that the lack of narrative consistency in this novel, in the sense of preference for features more typical of the chronicle, irremediably brings it closer to the category of thesis novel. As Larraz (2009, p. 219) points out, there are a series of elements that characterize this type of novel: the dialectical clash of characters that symbolize opposing positions, a moralizing function (which Delibes himself admitted in his work), a mechanism that allows the identification of the reader with some of the recurrent behaviors in the work, the extreme limitation of the language of connotation and a plot development that leaves any hint of ambiguity out of the plot. The end of *Five Hours with Mario*, paradigmatic of this type of novel, makes Larraz (2009, p. 220) incline to frame it in this group: the son of the protagonists emerges as a voice of hope by warning that the ideological position championed by his mother is nothing more than the hindrance of an atavistic past, although, with the same vehemence, he makes an amendment to the whole also to the ideas of Mario Sr. His proposal to "open the windows" (Delibes, 250) for the times to come can be summed up in that the new generations reinvent what they have learned and advocate new values that go beyond divisive dynamics in order to build a future based on dialogue and mutual respect.

Beyond plot considerations, the fact is that this novel makes an extensive display of dialectical resources that are very useful to be subjected to linguistic scrutiny.

Discursive aspects in *Five Hours with Mario*

In this section we are going to look for examples in the text that help us delve into the linguistic universe of the protagonists and compare the original version with the English version to assess the fidelity of the translation.

Childhood and adolescence

“But children don't give you anything but trouble from the time they force their way out, tearing a woman apart down there; thankless children.” This fragment is significant of Carmen's subjectivity. The pronunciation of this caustic sentence occurs in a context in which individuals are articulated in society around a rigid patriarchal hierarchy. Children, who, according to the conservative view of the time, lack any legitimacy to express any will or opinion, are kept only to perpetuate the institution of the family and are devoid of status within the family. They are considered, therefore, a possession, a long-term investment and, in addition, displays of affection are seen as a sign of lightness. Thus, in line with this doctrine, Carmen, parsimonious in praising her children, avoids bringing up any manifestation of maternal love.

If we compare this environment with that of the Anglo-Saxon countries, it is striking to observe that this confinement of childhood was beginning to show signs of fatigue. The sending of young people to Vietnam, the entrenched tensions between two countries that represented two opposite poles in the way of understanding the world and, in short, a society that increasingly felt the effects of the historical moment in which it had had to live, precipitated profound changes in family structures. Spain was not an exception, although the persistence of the dictatorship meant that the changes took place very timidly.

Other references to offspring perceived as a burden are found on page 82: “[...] por más que tu hijo tampoco parezca comprenderlo, que ahora te toca recoger lo que sembraste” (“even though your son doesn't seem to understand it either, now it's time for you to reap what you sowed”), “¡Ten hijos para esto!” (“To have children for this!”). That is to say, Carmen, in another outburst of subjectivity, warns with resignation of the expectations created in the docile character of a childhood which turns out to rebel.

The child question reappears in this excerpt on page 197: “[...] que das más guerra que un hijo tonto” (“you're more trouble than an idiot child”). On this occasion, the degradation of children is doubled, since it extends to biological conditions described with a sordidness that is incompatible with a democratic language and that promotes the protection of minors as one of its founding objectives.

The proverbial disdain towards youth, characteristic of the time and

conveyed through the protagonist's speech, takes shape in the expression “cría cuervos”, which is repeated like a litany in the opening pages of the work. Perceived as a kind of birds of prey, through this harsh set phrase that implicitly implies the most graphic “...y te sacarán los ojos” (“...and they will gouge out your eyes”) a reference is made to a very widespread imaginary at the time in which childhood is not grateful enough to their parents, who see themselves as the sole creditors of all their well-being. In English it has been translated as “thankless children”, with the same meaning but less invasive than the original.

Feminism and ideology

In terms of the Carmen-Mario dichotomy, one of the features that characterize the female protagonist's peculiar worldview already stands out here. Although it is undeniable that Carmen fully embraces conservative postulates, no one should ignore the fact that, unwittingly, she is vindicating the rights of the mother with a vehemence that could well fit in with an incipient form of feminism, one that is not yet aware of the strength it possesses. In any case, we must not forget that, in the issuance of this complaint, as in all those that we will analyze, the parameters of patriarchy operate.

This excerpt taken from page 36 perfectly illustrates the dynamics mentioned above: “But you men just don’t realize these things, sweetheart, the day you get married you buy a slave, you make quite a deal, like I say, because everybody knows that men go for the deals, there’s no two ways about it”. The protagonist exposes here one of the pillars of the current work-family reconciliation policies: the persistent inequality between men and women. Carmen utters out loud a feeling that all women have experienced over time, but she does so without placing real expectations that this situation will change and, in any case, in an attitude of resignation, not of struggle, as shown by the sentence that appears after the previous one: “[...] and I’m not reproaching you for anything, darling, but it does hurt that in more than twenty years you haven’t spoken a word of appreciation”. That is to say, she would have liked a more empathic attitude on the part of her husband, but she does not express a real questioning of the role that has been assigned to women.

In the loquacity of her speech, the figure of Mario suffers a setback that disarms the moral superiority that is supposed to him. As López Romo (2013,

p. 109) reflects, socialism and communism have historically played a central role in the integration of women's aspirations by incorporating them into their set of demands. Nonetheless, the feminist question had to grapple tirelessly even with its ideological allies to find a real niche in progressive space, since:

Just as it is very easy to realize the oppression that the master carries out over the slave, the male-female relationship of oppression is much more difficult to detect. No woman would accept her role if it were not disguised by the ideology invented for her to fulfill; without an awareness on the part of the woman, she would continue to play the traditional role of her without question.

This excerpt brings out one of the walls that feminism has encountered over the decades, since the bourgeoisie-proletariat opposition has absorbed the other struggles in favor of a supposedly superior cause. Mario Díez is a good representative of this school, since while he wields with absolute conviction and with a slight didactic purpose the arguments that support his slogans ("To accept that means accepting that the distribution of wealth is fair", p. 71), he brushes aside his wife's concerns with a note of arrogance when, for example, she doesn't have a good day to go to bed with him ("let's not mix numbers into this", "let's not be stingy with God", p. 132). This clear disconnection between Mario and marital and domestic affairs places him permanently on a theoretical level that prevents him from dealing pragmatically both with his wife and with his ideological rivals, with whom he rarely yields in his maximum positions. The potential censorship that this character could lead to Delibes blurred him from the work, something that, on the other hand, elevates him as an ethereal presence that, with his ideas, transcends the material and the extreme rootedness in the stubborn reality. On the other hand, his wife clings to the most immediate reality due to lack of ambition and cultural heritage or, more likely, out of sheer survival instinct. For all these reasons, Mario is not only a man of ideas, but his condition accentuates his belonging to the world of ideas that his wife is denied.

The gender perspective, still in an embryonic phase in the decade in which the book was written, had reached high levels of relevance in the United Kingdom when it was translated. As Lovenduski (1988, p. 32-35) points out, despite the difficulties in articulating a true academic corpus due to the lack of unity of action in the different feminist sectors, at least a slight awareness of the main demands of women was beginning to take shape. The flourishing literature

in the Anglo-Saxon country was strongly influenced by echoes of radical thought that originated in the United States, but quickly developed more in tune with other European feminist currents.

The appearance of the translated work of Miguel Delibes in this particular context makes it impossible to avoid reading it with a feminist component, a claim whose postulates were beginning to take their rightful place in the academic field. English readers were undoubtedly confronted with a text that, although it placed its narrative action in Spain, challenged them directly, since it described roles that were still fully in force universally.

Religion

There is a fragment in the work in which, prominently, Carmen's most sinister speech is crudely displayed: "the Inquisition was really good because it forced all of us to think right, that is like Christians, you can see how it is in Spain, all Catholics and Catholics to the nth degree" (p. 131). Similarly, another reference to this practice appears on page 132: "We certainly need a little bit of Inquisition, believe me". These hyperbolic sentences contain the origin of the entire reactionary argument of the protagonist, since they are based on a validation that, although it does not exactly legitimize the horror itself of one of the darkest chapters in the history of the European continent, they do defend the repression it symbolizes.

In the English version of the United Kingdom, this excerpt would acquire special relevance for bringing back memories of a national past as one of the countries where the Inquisition was applied more severely, leaving behind one of the highest death rates. In the context of the established Anglo-Saxon democracy, the reception of this phrase must have caused stupefaction, just like here, with the difference that there it contributed to deepen the perception of Spain as a country hostage to a past that did not allow it to overcome the dictatorship in which it was immersed.

Institutions

In Carmen's scale of values, the strict observance of the customs inherited from her closest relatives is non-negotiable and, bearing in mind that she attributes to them the force of an institution, their words have almost the value of law. If before we referred to the image she has of children and, in general, of youth, as champions of transgression ("Those are conventionalisms, Mother; leave me out of it", p. 82), now we observe how she professes unreserved devotion to her mother and magnifies her qualities ("that sharp eye she had", p. 34; "Mama [...] used to really put her finger on it", "Mama [...] never missed a trick", page 50; "Mama was a real lady", page 60). In a similar way to what happens with her children, she incubates a visceral contempt for all the forms of change that emerge in society, which are for her a threat to the apparent order that surrounds her, but, above all, they represent a disassembling of her organizational scheme of life, a challenge she is not willing to take on. This repudiation does not arise, then, from a critical reflection articulated in a political and ideological analysis, but from an outspoken alignment with its social status. Thus, due to the lack of legitimacy that she arrogates neither to herself nor the rest of civil society, she takes the institutions she has known for granted and denies any attempt to alter them by progressive currents, which she considers, together with other elements of change, the germ of the moral degradation that their contemporaries attend. Thus, when it comes to one of the recurrent derivatives from the political organization system, the dilemma between monarchy and republic, Carmen flatly rejects the mere allusion to the latter even as a plausible form of government.

The truth is that not in all countries the acceptance of the monarchy or the republic has caused division of opinions stirred up by the strong political component of the discussion. In the UK translation, this issue did not find a forum in which to reverberate into the public conscience. There this dilemma was received, without a doubt, without further interest, since the institution of the monarchy is considered rooted in the British identity beyond ideological ascriptions and its continuity has been assumed as a reality inseparable from the natural state of things.

Lexical-semantic aspects

If we look at the translation of terms and noun groups from Spanish to English, we will recurrently attend to a particular phenomenon. Despite the difficulties involved in translating a work with a language so typical of the traditional environment, the translator successfully manages to make the transfer to the Anglo-Saxon context, but that does not prevent differences between the two editions that we are going to explore in detail to stand out. These contrasts are in no way attributable to the work of the translator, whose expertise has been more than evident after numerous assessments, but to the disparity of cultural values between the two sociolinguistic communities and, above all, to the way of conceptualizing and organizing with the language the reality that surrounds them.

A first example of this is found on page 50. The sentence “Querer no sé lo que querrán” has been translated into English as “I don’t know what they want”. Although it is undeniable that the meaning is identical, the emphatic nuance that Carmen confers on her speech with the repetition of the verb “want” is lost. This is because there is no structure in English, nor in colloquial language, that emulates the Spanish and, if there is, one must resort to more artificial and periphrastic constructions such as “When it comes to wanting I don't know what they want” or that would incur an error if they replicate the same structure: “*To want I don't know what they want”. On page 98 appears the following excerpt: “Valen se tronchaba y Esther, la sabihonda, que era un libro simbólico, date cuenta, qué sabrá ella, y cuando te dio la depresión o eso, ídem de lienzo...”, translated into English like: “Valen was laughing her head off, and Esther, that know-it-all, saying, that it was a symbolic book, take note, what does she know, and when you had the depression or whatever, same old story...” In this comparison some of the most outstanding features of the two languages on the semantic level are reflected.

While Spanish is characterized by containing terms from which the meaning is not easily inferred, since the signifier of “laughing exaggeratedly” is articulated in “troncharse”, English makes use of a wide spectrum of phrasal verbs linked to signifiers which do flatly denote the concept they describe

(laughing and shaking one's head)³. In addition, Spanish delves into the capacity for abstraction and concentrates the meaning in a single term, a task for which English is more explanatory.

A phenomenon that we also observe in the translation is that the term “sabihonda”, which in Spanish is personalized, in English is detached from this type of adjective and, while maintaining the same meaning, conveys it with a locution, a fact that is not at all strange taking into account the preference for the compositional formation of the terms of the Germanic languages.

There is also in this fragment a case of an explanatory term to complement information that in Spanish, through ellipses, is taken for granted. Hirsch (2020) establishes a classification of the types of explicitation in a translation. One of the types that appears in the analyzed excerpt, semantic explicitation, consists of the reformulation or addition of one or more terms in the target language to make understandable textual constructions that are implicitly contained in the source language. Specifically, the word "saying" is added in English to make the construction comprehensible, since, even pronounced in an informal context like this, a verb is required between the subject and the action, a verb that can be dispensed with by means of ellipses in the colloquial register of Spanish.

As far as expressions are concerned, on page 58 of the original in Spanish, the following sentence appears: "pero el roñoso me abre las carnes, te lo prometo, es que no puedo". It is interesting to observe in this fragment, through the concept of "abrir las carnes", another manifestation of Carmen's affiliation with the human, earthly and, let's not forget, especially subjective way of understanding life, as opposed to the abstraction of Mario. In English, the translator has opted for "but stingy people just about kill me, I tell you, I can't stand them". Once again, the translation needs to add “people” to indicate the description of a human group, since conveying this idea through nominalization (“stinginess”) would have been somewhat distant because of its formalism.

On the other hand, perhaps one of the phenomena that best synthesizes Carmen's latent and frustrated will to foray into the elusive terrain of high culture, probably without even doing it consciously, is the often pronunciation of Latin

³ The idiomatic secrecy carried by the phrasal verbs deserves special attention. The highly figurative meaning in some of them is often the result of the loss of one of its components (Rodríguez-Puente, 2012, p. 81).

phrases as “*inter nos*”. Not only are these penetrations produced as sporadic flashes of inspiration, but they are produced badly, since they are preceded by the preposition “*para*”⁴: “Escucha, Mario, aquí, para *inter nos*...” (p. 124). The English version has not been able to reproduce this peculiarity: “Listen, Mario, here between you and I...”

Grammatical aspects

In the grammatical section, differences between the two languages that could not be transferred in any way are striking. The phenomena of *laísmo*, *leísmo* and *loísmo* are typical of some areas of Spain, both at the time in which the action takes place and today. According to the website of the Diccionario Panhispánico de Dudas, “the *laísta* area itself is basically circumscribed to the central and northwestern area of Castile.”⁵ Valladolid, homeland of both the writer and the protagonists, is among the *laístas* regions, as exemplified on page 254 of the book: “¿La importa que pase un momento?” English, no matter how much it wants to distort itself by simulating a colloquial register, cannot reproduce this peculiarity in any way, since its pronominal system incorporates a reduced number of gender marks and, consequently, any distinction is diluted: “you” designates both the masculine as well as the feminine for this specific case of the unstressed pronoun of the second person of the singular acting as an indirect object.

On page 124 there is another case of *laísmo*: “que la has cogido modorra con el dinero”. Again, the proper pronoun would have been “le” acting as an indirect object. The peculiarity of the phenomenon is diluted in: “you certainly have it in for money”, since the pronoun “it” does not present declensions whatever its grammatical function. On page 98, the phenomenon has been completely lost in translation, since another formula has been used that avoids the pronoun: “Lo que la pasa a Esther es que...” has become “The thing about Esther is that...”.

Similarly, on page 36, a case of *leísmo* appears in a direct object function: “¿Recuerdas el portamonedas que me regaló la tarde [...]? Aún le conservo,

⁴ Available at: <https://www.rae.es/dpd/inter%20nos>

⁵ Available at: <https://www.rae.es/dpd/laismo>

fíjate". Frequent in the same area as *laísmo*, "*leísmo* is not admitted in any way in the educated norm when the referent is inanimate", as indicated on the DPD website.⁶

There is also a grammatical construction very typical of languages such as Spanish that appears inserted in this fragment on page 154: "Si te conoceré, querido, no en balde llevo más de veinte años a tu lado". The part "si te conoceré" here does not denote a conditional value introduced by the conjunction "si" nor does it express the future as one might infer from "conoceré". It is, on the contrary, an emphatic expression equivalent to "figure it out how much I know you" which in English has been translated as "Oh, I know you, darling..."

In a similar way to what happened with the explicitation of "saying", there is another fragment in which a verb is added that lacks in the original source. In the fragment of page 110: "[...] que para mí, la declaración de amor, fundamental, imprescindible, fíjate, por más que tú vengas con que son tonterías" it is understood that between the terms "amor" and "fundamental" the verb "ser" has been eliminated, here with a merely grammatical function. On the contrary, it has been necessary to include it in the translation, since this same construction without the verb "to be" cannot be validated even in the colloquial register: "[...] for me, the declaration of love, **it's** fundamental, absolutely necessary, mind you, no matter how often you insist that it's all foolishness".

Another phenomenon that appears repeatedly in the original, and that more perfectly synthesizes Carmen's adherence to colloquialism as one of her distinctive features, is the use of the causal function reduced to the conjunction "que" instead of "ya que" or equivalent locutions: ("[...] estoy cada día más contenta de haberte hecho pasar por el aro, [...] **que** lo que es por tu gusto...", p. 112). In an even more eloquent way, in the speech style of the protagonist, the conjunction "que" in its completive function provides her speech with an emphatic tone, also very common in today's colloquial register: ("[...] y **que** no es decir que fuese una reunión de tres al cuarto, Mario...", p. 87). There are also several examples of a mixture of the two functions in the same sentence. We see it on page 80: "Tú decías que monarquía y república, por sí mismas, no significaban gran cosa, **que** lo importante es lo que hubiera debajo (causal), **que** a saber qué quieres decir (completive)..." and also on page 170: "Lo lógico,

⁶ Available at <https://www.rae.es/dpd/leísmo>

cuando a uno se le muere la madre es llorar, **que** ya me viste a mí (causal), **que** no es hablar por hablar (completive), no me consolaba con nada...”

In the English translation, the inclusion of these conjunctions with causal or completive value is directly elided: the resulting construction would be grammatically acceptable, but it happens once again that the will to emphasize, paradoxically, would reduce the spontaneity of the discourse. Thus, if we compare it with the sentences indicated in the paragraph above, the sentence on page 112 has been translated as: “[...] I’m happier every day that I made you jump through the hoop, [...] if it had been left to you...” On page 87 we see again a suppression of the conjunction, so part of the emphatic value that introduced the previous proposition is also lost: “[...] and it isn’t as if it was any old group, Mario...” On page 80, however, the causal function of the original in the first part becomes a completive one and the conjunction is included, but not in the second (“You used to say that monarchy and republic, in themselves, didn’t mean a lot, **that** the important thing is what there is underneath, whatever you mean by that”). Finally, it happens on page 170 that the causal conjunction is elided and the completive one is replaced by the copulative conjunction “and”, with which here the desired emphatic effect is achieved: “The logical thing, when a person’s mother has died, is to cry, you saw me, **and** I’m not talking for talk’s sake, I was inconsolable...”

Carmen Sotillo: a peculiar vision of the world or an entire society personified in a woman?

Ugarte García exposes the list of set phrases that appear in the work and indicates that the author deliberately reduces them on numerous occasions as a faithful reflection of colloquial speech. After an exhaustive analysis, she concludes that, unlike the rest of the speech acts that run through her speech, the set phrases do not constitute by themselves a symbol of conservatism, since they are still the product of a language emitted most of the time naturally and spontaneously and reproduced by the whole of society.

Although we understand the reasonable multitude of interpretations that this matter can provoke, from this investigation we are inclined to refute this conclusion.

Nothing in the choice of language is fortuitous. Although Spanish society

at the end of the 1960s was undergoing profound changes, partly sponsored by the liberalization policies in Europe (Ortuño Anaya, 2002), it cannot be overlooked that a large part of the population could not and did not want to part with the acquired social construct, as is evident in the character of Carmen. Precisely because of this choice, which should not be confused with inertia, but rather is the result of obstinate attitudes in their eagerness to maintain the vices of the dictatorship, the set phrases cannot be inscribed in a mere repetition of systematized linguistic structures. The use made of them is, on the contrary, with full knowledge of what each one means and, most importantly, of what they perpetuate.

From the academic field, through numerous essays that have been dedicated to this subject, there is unanimity in recognizing the extraordinary ability of Miguel Delibes to capture the vicissitudes of a time as complex and changing as the late Franco regime. It has been stressed that the writer, with his almost surgical analysis of the aspirations and fears of the time, achieved with this book a result that could well be classified as a chronicle rather than a story.

Following in the wake of works such as *La Colmena*, the great social in-depth analysis of Camilo José Cela written a few years earlier, in 1950, Delibes also saw in this type of literature a unique opportunity to gauge the state of the nation and to make it known. However, while this book involved a display of characters that have made it rise to the record for one of the most choral novels, *Five Hours with Mario* was more modest in this regard and reduced the gross of human behavior to two characters and, at most, a few others who act as satellites.

The analysis of the Castilian society of the time in Cela's work is of such exhaustiveness that it even serves as a record, but it encompasses so many voices that, although it manages to reproduce all the human facets in its extensive repertoire of characters, it goes on tiptoe by some dimensions of the psychology of late Francoism, an objective that is achieved in *Five Hours with Mario*, where Carmen's bitter speech provides us with valuable introspection not only in her most intimate emotions, but also in her ideological position, by far showing no active interest in the logic of politics. Such a solid relationship of equivalence is established between the protagonist and the portfolio of the reactionary discourse that it can be categorically affirmed that Carmen Sotillo is

gray Spain and gray Spain is Carmen Sotillo. In fact, as M. & H. Neuschäfer (2012, p. 29) point out, "that Delibes with his novel refers not only to an isolated case, but to a general situation, it is also deduced from the name of the protagonist who, being called Carmen, evokes the image of traditional Spain". According to this comparison, no one can escape the fact that the mimicry of a person with a country makes the phrase that "the personal is political" a good one, even with the paradox that she lives her day to day outside the political agenda.

Validity of Carmen Sotillo's speech in today's society

Throughout this study, the subjective aspect of Carmen's discourse has been stressed and, at the same time, reference has been made to the effect that readers have on receiving her thoughts in the first person as if they were not mediated by the narrative voice of the writer. Certainly, this immersion in her interior offers an impact of such magnitude that it comes to dismantle the strong idea that an image is worth a thousand words, that here flow in such an introspective way of access to the ideology of the protagonist that one would even say that we monitor her thinking in real time. The vocabulary used and the organization of the discourse are the exclusive instruments with which it is possible to arouse in the public a reaction of stupefaction and predictable rejection of what they are reading.

The ideology of the protagonist connects with a conservative tradition that, fueled by the most pungent linguistic terms, takes us back to past times about which there is a general consensus not to return. There should no longer be any doubt about the power of language to determine states of opinion and frames of reference, as we stated at the beginning of this study. Carmen speaks as she thinks. In her speech there are no elements to attenuate her rigid conception of the world and, although on numerous occasions she qualifies her words ("And I'm not complaining", "And it isn't that I'm going to say now that...", p. 33), grants the value of doubt ("You know lots of other things, I'm not arguing about that", p. 72) or must reinforce the veracity of her speech ("And it's not just for the sake of talking", p. 34; "and I'm not talking for talk's sake", page 170), she always does so regarding conversational aspects with his interlocutor, but never when she unravels the main lines of her diagnosis of society.

The demands of society are increasingly reflected in the political action

of democratic and plural government systems. However, we are witnessing with terror the rise of populist movements that, sponsored by small sectors of the population, raise slogans harmful to the most basic human rights through techniques of confrontation and information manipulation and that seem to multiply endlessly due to the noise they cause. Are there today renewed versions of Cármenes Sotillo?⁷ Unfortunately, yes, but it is advisable not to overestimate its presence: the set of civilizations collectively raise their voices every day and the recognition of their realities sets out on a path of upward progression. *Five Hours with Mario* masterfully performs a testimonial work, a chronicle, of a fateful world that often shows signs of wanting to revive today, but the abundant social achievements and the human and cultural capital that we have internalized as our own allow us to approach to the work from a strictly literary point of view, of deepening the knowledge of a not so distant past, and not of glorifying nostalgia.

⁷ Natalia Millán, actress who has played the character created by Miguel Delibes in the theatrical version: “We all have a Carmen Sotillo inside. We must be humble and recognize the miseries and weaknesses that we all have; also, of course, strengths and virtues”. Interview published in the digital edition of the *ABC* newspaper on 01/14/2011.

CONCLUSIONS

At this point, it is time to take stock and draw conclusions from the results.

To begin with, following the thread of one of the hypotheses raised at the beginning, it has become evident that Carmen Sotillo's speech is pronounced from high levels of subjectivity. This phenomenon is explained by different reasons.

The interior monologue that she emits in her late husband's office occurs at a time when Mario's sudden death is the trigger to open the torrent of emotions and reproaches latent for a long time. Given the seriousness of death, the rush of thoughts can hardly obey a rational scheme. Her soliloquy, therefore, exhaustively reviews all the events that have revealed key differences in the world view of the couple. To do so, her speech is extended over a period of time that in narrative time is the equivalent of five hours.

Carmen is a citizen made in the image and likeness of the regime. Consciously, she does not participate in political life nor has she ever developed a critical thought that allows her to figure out how to act fairly, but the continuous exposure to the dictates of the institutions (both in its strict sense and represented in the figure of the parents, as it has already been exposed), convenient to their middle class interests, turns her into a simplistic loudspeaker that selflessly reproduces the official ideology.

The imminent fall of the regime implies a forced reassessment of all her involuntary political positioning, a task for which her acquired value system is totally unprepared. Somehow, a dissonance occurs between what she has always believed she had to do and what she will have to do from now on.

In all of her vengeful and inflamed rhetoric, her language is one more actor in the display of her most visceral hatred. The words that flow from Mario's office to the reader's mind without any constraint express their own truths, almost instinctive and primary, that have not passed through the sieve of the consensual norms of a society based on the foundations of humanism.

Precisely, the lack of hesitation in expressing herself and pouring out all her truth is what makes her so human when compared to Mario, who

acquires a cold spot as the book progresses, as Larraz's study (2009) points out, which offers nuances to the simplistic vision of two characters that epitomize two unitary and entirely incompatible stances, but it is important not to confuse these reactions and behaviors so deeply human with a sign of humanity. Her attitude does not hide anything, it is transparent, but at the same time she is hostage to her corseted mentality and is unable to understand the other and the others. Therefore, it could be said that the expectations created in her to insert herself into society, if anyone has ever had them, have been thwarted.

Regarding the opposing hypotheses put forward by Pérez Vicente (2020) and Lowe (1999), in this investigation we are inclined to align ourselves with Lowe's position, which maintains that the reiteration throughout the work of expressions of repentance reaches the point of trivializing the pretended confession of the protagonist in the last part of the work.

With regard to the translation into English of the original version in Spanish and, more specifically, to the initial hypothesis of the complex task that must have entailed capturing the spirit of the speech at all times, the result is, in general terms, that the translator has conveyed properly the intention of the original text, as defended by Ugarte García (2010). As we pointed out in the development, the absence of reproduction of grammatical and lexical distortions typical of some areas of Spain, such as *laísmo*, or of sentences emphatically introduced by the completive conjunction "que" is due to the lack of an equivalent phenomenon in the language of arrival. Although it is true that the strength of the externalization of these oral elements takes us back more easily to the Spanish context when they are pronounced in this language, nothing prevents them from being able to verbalize them with alternative resources in another one such as English.

Returning to the question of the validity of Carmen's speech in today's Spain, it is appropriate to recall the study of Palomo Merino (2019) and the relevance it confers on the reading of a translated text depending on the time in which it is produced. Thus, it is clear that, if the monologue exposed in the text already raised hackles in British society at the end of the eighties, the contrast after a reading in the current context is even more conspicuous.

Finally, regarding the reception of the work in the international context, although the prejudices exposed by Vega Martín (1996) in the German case or in the former Czechoslovakia meant a blow to the visibility of the book in the short term, little by little it became manifest that literature, in this case *Five Hours with Mario*, had a unique potential to awaken in the population an active conscience in the defense of public liberties.

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