Social Intercourse and the Combustion Engine in Spanish Literature

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SOCIAL INTERCOURSE AND THE COMBUSTION ENGINE IN SPANISH LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT

The dissertation is a study of the socio-cultural impact of the automobile in Spanish Literature: repression, economic progress, sexual liberation, fragmented identity, and abandonment. These socio-cultural issues are found in the following representative works: Réquiem por un campesino español (1953) by Ramón J. Sender, Cinco horas con Mario (1966) and Los santos inocentes (1981) both by Miguel Delibes, Rosa Montero’s Crónica del desamor (1979), Volverás a Región (1966) by Juan Benet, and Señas de identidad (1966) by Juan Goytisolo. In order to focus these issues a kaleidoscope of methods is employed: providing a historical context of the Franco regime and its repressive tactics; discussing and defining power and authority in conjunction with the automobile; showing the consequences of fragmented identity and abandonment asserted by the automobile. The dissertation also shows how the automobile is a micro-structure of both national and individual economic progress through the symbolism of the Seat 600. Given the automobile its due as a form of repression and symbol of the economic miracle of the 1960s, the dissertation also sheds light on the impact of the automobile as a tool for facilitating sexual relations and freedom in Spain in the mid 1970s.
INTRODUCTION

While cursing and fighting the early morning traffic jam on our way to work, has it ever occurred to us to consider the role that the automobile plays in our lives, or is it taken for granted as just another method of transportation? Indeed, automobiles reflect the various social and cultural differences that we human beings possess in all terrains of life, including popular culture venues such as literature, music, and cinema which reflect both the individual and the national socio-cultural make-up of a society. The automobile in Spanish literature provides important insight into the post-war era, and its role in reshaping both the culture and history of Spain in the past fifty years, offering readers with a powerful reflection of historical events and socio-cultural issues during the Franco regime.

The first chapter of this study is dedicated to summarizing the regime´s struggle to establish and retain power, in addition to rebuilding and industrializing a war-torn nation. The regime´s first phase was characterized by repressive techniques employed to eliminate Republican loyalists and to retain power and authority; the 1940s were marked by serious blood-letting and harsh laws. In addition, Franco and his advisors were faced with a war-torn nation with no economy nor industrialization. The post-war economy of the 1940s and early 1950s is aptly called the “Years of Hunger” the most backward economic era in Spain´s modern history. Unwilling to move from an autocratic economy to a free market immediately after the war, the regime finally proposed to industrialize the country with the implementation of the Plan de Estabilización in 1959. In the 1960s a small economic miracle took place in Spain as the country moved toward a free market and opened its borders to tourism and progress. One tangible indicator of this progress was the appearance of the infamous automobile, the Seat 600, which would reshape popular culture and define the Spain of the late 1950s and the 1960s. In the end, for many a Spaniard, “España ya no fue la misma” (Gimeno Valledor 1). The automobile´s impact is seen in Spanish post-Civil War and transition literature. These writings present a kaleidoscope of illustrations and manifestations of the different roles the automobile has played in literature from 1953-1981.
The second chapter offers a thorough examination of the potent elixir of the automobile and its relation to power and authority, a theme which is brilliantly reflected in Ramón J. Sender’s *Réquiem por un campesino español* (1953). Set in a small rural village of Aragón, at the beginning of the civil war, the novel focuses on the relationship between the village priest, Mosén Millán, and Paco el del Molino, while providing a strong anti-franquista tone as portrayed through the eyes of the exile. The two protagonists symbolize the ever-changing political ideals that were interfaced at the beginning of the conflict. Indeed, the role of the automobile is essential to an understanding of the nationalist political agenda based on repressive power and authority. Used as a tool to spread fear and panic through the town, the automobile is a severely critical tool regarding the alliance formed between the Catholic Church and the Franco regime. To analyze the automobile as an elixir, this chapter focuses on three essential facets: 1) the change of the novel’s title from *Mosén Millán* to *Réquiem por un campesino español*; 2) the importance of the ballad in highlighting the abusive power and authority of austere institutions; and 3) various theories of power and authority to develop and enhance the interpretation of the automobile as a death instrument.

Like power and authority, the small economic miracle resulting from the Plan de Estabilización of 1959, is reflected in the period’s literature. The third chapter of the study will focus on the novel *Cinco horas con Mario* (1966) by Miguel Delibes, a work which provides a clear example of this phenomenon through Carmen’s monolog as she berates her deceased husband for not having purchased a Seat 600. This automobile and the Seat 1500 were the symbols of individual and national economic progress and social class during the 1960s. Moreover, the Seat 600 changed popular culture by introducing the concept of a long weekend or excursion, or a sense of personal freedom. An analysis of Carmen’s angry monolog illustrates the most positive impact the automobile had on Spanish economy and popular culture during the 1960s, thus cleaning up the image of the Franco regime.

The fourth chapter of this study looks at other ways in which the automobile affected Spain when it exploded onto the scene during the 1960s. With the existence of cars such as the Seat 600, mobility, distance, and the illusion of privacy gave way to another phenomenon: sex. In the works *Cinco horas con Mario* (1966) and *Los santos inocentes* (1981), both by Delibes, and *Crónica del desamor* (1979) by Rosa Montero, the
automobile is used as both a phallic and seductive device. Even as the automobile helped issues of sexuality to surface, it also showed less titillating aspects of Spanish identity: inferiority and abandonment. Novelists such as Juan Benet and Juan Goytisolo represent a post-war generation scarred by the horrors of war, with the ensuing feelings of inferiority, abandonment, and fragmentation. The final chapter, then, considers the automobile as a symbol of abandonment in Volverás a Región (1967) by Benet, as well as the concept of fragmentation revealed through the car cemetery and the incubus that envelopes Álvaro Mendiola in Goytisolo’s Señas de identidad (1966). Both novels provide an in-depth, gut-wrenching, exile view of a generation searching for its identity under a fascist regime during the post-war years.

Several questions arise at this point, for example: why should power and authority be considered in Réquiem por un campesino español (1953)? Secondly, how can economic progress be seen through Carmen’s berating, abusive monolog in Cinco horas con Mario (1966)? Thirdly, how do the body, color, and interior of the automobile convey sexual freedom and expression in Cinco horas con Mario (1966), Crónica del desamor (1979), and Los santos inocentes (1981)? Finally, how are the concepts of fragmentation and abandonment portrayed via the automobile in Señas de identidad (1966) and Volverás a Región (1967) when related to an incubus and a car cemetery? Interestingly, all of these themes stem from the discord resulting from an authoritative individual, entity, or body imposing its power and authority over those who must either rebel or conform.
CHAPTER I

REPRESSION

With these words, two eras of widely varying political ideals interfaced in a land where a bloody, destructive, three-year civil war came to an end. The first of these eras, under the Spanish Republic from 1931 to 1936, came to a grinding halt as a result of the military defeat suffered at the hands of the Nationalist armies directed by Generalissimo Francisco Franco. At the same time, these words planted a seed that would blossom into a strong, traditional, fascist dictatorship that would endure from 1939 to 1975 under the leadership of Franco and his group of political advisors. Although the military victory was the crowning achievement that founded and facilitated the Franco regime, the rise to power and control of Spanish society cannot be attributed solely to the three-year military campaign. Rather, consideration must be given to the era of repression and poverty that directly followed the Spanish Civil War, better known as “la posguerra española.”

At the end of the conflict, Franco and the Nationalists were confronted with a country not only destroyed by bombs and military campaigns, but suffering from economic and political horrors as well. The decade of the 1940s and until the mid 1950s was known as “la época del hambre,” perhaps the most brutal economic and political years under the Franco regime. As a point of departure, it is imperative to divide the Franco years into two parts to see how history has played a defining role in the literary writings to be analyzed in future chapters of this study.

The first period examined extends from 1939 to 1945 and focuses on the early political efforts of the regime. In this political context, these early years were based on and characterized by the concept of repression and establishing power. Franquismo gave priority to fighting the last phase of the Spanish Civil War through the liquidation of those
individuals sympathetic to the Republican cause. According to Julio Montero Díaz, “tanto la guerra como la represión eliminaron a los enemigos más importantes y mejor organizados” (641). Montero Díaz further describes how imperative it became for Franquismo to attack the following bastions of Republican support during the early years of the regime:

Primero, el aparato estatal en todos sus niveles, luego, las organizaciones, partidos y personas que se enfrentaron al levantamiento militar. Unos murieron durante la contienda en defensa de sus planteamientos; otros se vieron obligados a abandonar el país, otro grupo, en fin sufrió en primera persona los efectos de la represión de la posguerra. (641)

As a part of this philosophy, in order to establish a firm control over the society even before the end of the war, the Nationalists implemented La Ley de Responsabilidades Políticas del 9 de febrero de 1939. For many a Spaniard, this law was a tool that legally facilitated the subsequent harsh repression. To cover all facets of society, the basis of the law was essentially all-encompassing:

(…) además de castigar los delitos más frecuentes en una guerra, establecía también otros que simplemente declaraban fuera de la ley la manifestación, defensa y organización de opciones contrarias a la ideología de los triunfadores. Pero, además, y contra todo Derecho, se establecía que eran perseguibles y punibles estas acciones realizadas antes de la promulgación de la misma ley. Es decir: se aplicó una norma penal con sentido retroactivo. (Montero Díaz 643)

To illustrate further, the three groups most targeted were revolutionary parties, left-wing Republicans, and nationalist groups. Of the three, the first group was targeted due to the large number of socialists, communists, and anarchists who used the democratic Republic as a breeding ground to convey their political views. Aside from these revolutionary political groups, in Spain there has been a long-standing tradition of regionalism found in such autonomous regions as País Vasco and Cataluña. For this reason, the Franco regime sought out all regionalist political groups that promoted ideas of regionalism and independence from Spain; in those regions it was prohibited to speak the Basque and Catalan languages and practice traditional regional customs. As a consequence, many have accused the Franco regime of wanting to abolish sentiments of regional and political ideas.
In a kind of recurrence of the Generation of 1898, many literary works would criticize the stance of the Franco regime regarding the regional identity issue, but they would also give evidence of a national identity crisis. The presence of repression would cause a major psychological inferiority complex and loss of identity, as future generations would try and search to determine what defines being Spanish, as seen in Volverás a Región (1967) by Juan Benet and Señas de identidad (1966) by Juan Goytisolo.

For Julio Montero Díaz, the post-war period was an epoch of trial and tribulation marked by violence: “El período más duro, por el elevado número de condenas, tanto a prisión como de ejecuciones, fue el inmediatamente posterior a la guerra. La pena de muerte se aplicaba a los dirigentes con máxima responsabilidad política en los organigramas de partidos y sindicatos, también a las autoridades republicanas de máximo nivel” (643). In fact, the number of executions and those imprisoned is staggering for such a short amount of time: “The summer of 1939 was an orgy of informing, private vendettas, and sanctioned executions,” writes Mark Williams in The Story of Spain (1990): “Tens of thousands died in the mass bloodletting; Mussolini’s son-in-law reported 250 executions a day in Madrid alone, mostly by firing squad” (230). Indeed, democracy was out and the new mode of fascism was in as repression began to sweep throughout the country. Fear and fleeing became household words for Spaniards. For those who were children at the time, such as Constancio Castrillo Ortega of Burgos, the experiences were equally horrifying:

Lo que más recuerdo es el hambre. También el miedo. A los ocho años, estaba jugando a pelota a mano y vi a los guardias y oí que tenían en una lista el nombre de mi padre, Feliciano. Corrí a mi casa y avisé a mi padre que huyó al monte con otros 10 ó 15 vecinos del pueblo, y allí se ocultaron. Algunos estuvieron ocultos hasta dos años y comían hojas de roble, hierbas. Los vecinos del pueblo los ayudaban con pan y leche. No podían regresar hasta que acabó la guerra y fueron a la cárcel. La mujer y los hijos pasaban hambres y penas. Con 8 ó 9 años nos entrenaban para la guerra, a manejar un fusil de madera.

Further demonstrating the intense feeling of fear that swept the nation, Montero Díaz states in “El franquismo: planteamiento general” in Historia comtemporánea de
España (siglo XX) the following statistics from 1939 to 1945 which present solid evidence of the blood-letting that was taking place:

Los fusilamientos fueron abundantes en los primeros años y fueron desapareciendo después. La mayor parte se realizaron a lo largo de 1939 a 1940. En el período de 1939 a 1945 se produjeron unas 28.000 ejecuciones. Esta progresiva disminución se explica no sólo por la progresiva flexibilidad en la aplicación de las penas, sino por la simple desaparición de los posibles afectados.

Con todo, lo más frecuente fueron las condenas a prisión desde los 15 años a los seis meses. Los tribunales solían imponer fuertes condenas, que luego se rebajaban. Al finalizar 1939 había 270.000 presos. Sólo a partir de 1945 el número empezó a estar por debajo de 50.000. Se estableció la redención de pena por trabajo voluntario en algunos sectores, especialmente en construcción. (643)

Although capital punishment and imprisonment were the preferred methods of extending and facilitating power throughout the nation, repression was not limited to these two forms, as there were more subtle and equally effective measures. For example, as seen in the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the idea of purging was always a popular venue of making people “disappear” in the exertion of power. The concept of the purge, under the reign of Stalin, was used to eliminate those individuals outside and inside the Communist Party who expressed contrary ideas or conspiracies against the Stalin regime. For the Franco regime, the majority of these purges were directed toward members of the judicial branch of government and toward individuals in the education community. Of these two groups, the latter posed the greatest threat to the establishment of power.

Aside from military and civilian casualties, another disheartening part of this tragedy was the regime’s decision to purge Spain of many of its top individuals. Waves were felt throughout the literary world, as many authors, poets, and playwrights were exiled, imprisoned, or assassinated due to this anti-intellectual movement. As a result, the Spanish narrative would suffer a difficult, yet innovative period in which authors had to discover new techniques in order to avoid the rigid system of censorship imposed by the regime. It should be noted that the marked individuals included not only intellectuals but also journalists. Under the Franco regime there were only a few newspapers, strongly censured and un-sympathetic to Republican loyalists, that were permitted. Like the
intellectuals, journalists often were either entirely or partially prohibited from practicing their profession. As a result of the repression singling out these two specific groups, literature would undergo a transformation that would strongly identify and reflect Spanish society during the Franco years.

Ultimately, this repression would carry over into other venues of society. For example, there were many limitations on where people could assume residency within the country. Many people were prohibited from living in certain cities and regions within Spain due to their political beliefs. This form of repression pertained not only to cities, but included specific neighborhoods in cities and towns within the regions. In some areas, repression directly affected the daily lives of the inhabitants, as seen in the article “El franquismo: planteamiento general”: “desde la ‘obligación’ de escuchar en pie y brazo en alto los himnos de los vencedores, hasta concreciones externas de la moralidad” (Montero Díaz 644). Interestingly, these “obligations” were not always imposed by laws or legal norms, “sino por la presión directa de los vencedores en sus lugares de trabajo y domicilios, y en los de sus vecinos” (Montero Díaz 644).

Another example of repression was the distinction between the triumphant Nationalists and the defeated Republicans, which resulted in a system of fringe benefits within society for those on the side of the victors. In those first years after the war, there were many programs which determined whether individuals were “politically” worthy to receive these fringe benefits. According to Montero Díaz:

Hubo “exámenes patrióticos” en los que los combatientes eran aprobados sin comprobar más que su permanencia en el bando de los vencedores; también abundaron las incorporaciones a la Administración pública en sus diversas escamas por ser combatiente, o mutilado de guerra (naturalmente, sólo del bando nacionalista). (644)

Fringe benefits for the victors were not limited to positions within public administration, but they also extended into the corporate and private sectors as well: “las ventajas se extendieron a las empresas privadas y los antiguos combatientes franquistas fueron preferidos a los que no lo eran para ocupar puestos de trabajo en unos momentos en que éstos escaseaban” (Montero Díaz 644).
Aside from these rigorous forms of repression, there were more pressing problems to be addressed while achieving the liquidation of all Republican supporters. Perhaps the most important of these problems was an evaluation of the alarming economical situation of early post-war Spain from 1939 to 1945.

At war’s end, Franco had assumed control of a country devastated by a long and grueling conflict. The destruction caused during this bellicose period should be examined not only in terms of bombardment and military campaigns, but as seen in the horrors of an economy virtually destroyed by an impotent government that failed to develop the country on many levels. As a result, various areas that affect quality of life were neglected; for example, national and public parks and urban housing development were minimal in the cities and towns during that time period. Moreover, “transportation was also backward,” writes Mark Williams in The Story of Spain: “until 1947 there was no railroad between Madrid and Valencia, Spain’s third largest city. Goods to and from the provinces were forced to take the most roundabout routes, always via the capital” (235). This in turn created a dismal market for the automobile industry before the breakthrough year of the Seat 600 in 1957.

As the economy under the Republic was a predominantly backwards agrarian system, little attention was given to the development of industrialization. Somewhat later, while still under the Franco regime, Spain would explode with corporations and factories and reap the benefits of their presence as they eliminated some of the problems that had been plaguing Spain since the 1940s and 1950s. This change, however, would not come easily, for the biggest difficulty was the depletion of natural resources, especially metals: “Los enormes gastos bélicos consumieron las reservas metálicas de la República y endeudaron a los vencedores. Eso sin contar con las transformaciones forzosas de establecimientos industriales, y de actividades económicas en general, para satisfacer las necesidades primarias de material bélico” (Montero Díaz 642).

Aside from the depletion of natural resources due to the war, the regime had to confront the challenging task of ending hunger brought on by the conflict. As an indication of what conditions were like in the cities, one ex-Republican combatant, Mariano Quijada, offered his personal experiences in an interview:
Recuerdo que no había trigo, por eso Franco pidió a los campesinos en Galicia que cultivaran maíz para hacer cereales y pan para el pueblo. Cuando comía los cereales de maíz, recuerdo que sólo duraban un día y el día siguiente eran como ladrillos, y si los hubieras tirado a alguien, le habrías matado de lo duro que estaban después de un día. Recuerdo que casi no había panaderías, empezaron a aparecer con frecuencia a partir de 1955, cuando la situación estaba más estable. También recuerdo cómo tenía que limpiar las lentejas porque había bichos en ellas, y esas venían de Méjico porque no había lentejas para todo el mundo aquí.

For many Spaniards, like Justa Gil Mediavilla, a rigid program of food rationing was implemented at the end of the war and would carry on until 1952. She shared the following childhood experience in an interview:

El pan, el azúcar, el aceite, el arroz, el tabaco estaban racionados con cartilla y se canjeaban por puntos. Si te daban azúcar no te daban arroz. El azúcar era rojo. Se repartía todas las semanas pero cantidades muy escasas, una libra de aceite por ejemplo. Mi madre, Celedonia, hacía el pan con media fanega de trigo y media de centeno. También de maíz. Recuerdo que me iba a dormir con hambre pues sólo cenaba patatas cocidas y sopas de pan. Mi madre se quedaba sin cenar para que cenásemos mis hermanos y yo, todos muy pequeños. Ella era una mujer muy valiente que iba de noche con burros por caminos y bosques a muchos kilómetros de distancia para conseguir trigo para alimentarnos a nosotros.

Along with these problems, the government had yet another formidable issue to address. A transition period was going to take place, not only in political but in economic terms as well. In these early years, Franco, with the help of his advisors, walked a very fine line while dealing with these glaring problems. The organization of a post-war economy would depend upon two important factors: first, as previously mentioned, an economic transition based upon making the switch from a war-time economy to a post-war, prosperous economy aimed at promoting the industrialization of a country that had been held back under an inept, unstable republic; and secondly, the obviously essential unification of Spain on all levels of society. These two most important themes were mutually dependent. Economic unity would resuscitate Spain from an outdated agrarian-based economy into an industrialized, prosperous country using the corporate sectors, but
this was only possible with unification on the political front. The ultimate political unification under one central government that would make decisions for the whole country was achieved through the many mediums of repression exercised by the Franco regime.

In the first few years after the war, a “robust economy” would become very difficult to attain because of the depletion of natural resources, as well as the destruction of all the fiscal capital. The financing of both the Republican and Nationalist sides stripped Spain of any economic surplus that had existed. Thus, the first two decades of Franquismo were slow in achieving economic growth. The post-war recovery would be based upon harsh economic consequences influenced by the international situation of the time, though the harshest of those economic consequences, during the early years, came via Franco. For many economic scholars, such as Juan Manuel Matés Barco in “La economía durante el régimen de Franco (1939-1975)”, the Spanish economy in the first ten years of the Franco regime reflects an autocratic style whereby Spain was self-reliant and Franco possessed the ultimate authority in all decisions made.

This judgment was based upon the political strategies Franco devised at the end of the war which were in large part the result of the Second World War in which Spain, in spite of Hitler’s request that they join the Axis cause, remained neutral. For Franco, the offer to join the Second World War was rather problematic, for the infrastructure of Spain was severely damaged in all its facets. For example, the Spanish military was outdated when compared to the technologically rich Germans and their new form of warfare known as Blitzkrieg. Moreover, the moral and economic resources of the country were totally depleted at the turn of 1940 when Hitler approached Franco to repay his debt for German help in the Civil War. In order to appease Hitler, Franco sent a division of volunteers, known as the Blue Division, to fight at the Russian front, not only to appease Hitler but to intensify the hatred of the Nationalists towards communist politics.

Spain’s isolation was not limited to military neutrality during the Second World War, for, as the war lagged on, Franco and his government saw the political schism over the division of Europe between the allies already taking place. These differences would eventually become obvious during the Cold War, a period in which Spain would reap tremendous benefits due to its new-found relationship with the United States of America. Spain’s isolation before the Cold War until the decade of the 1950s was mainly brought
about by two forces: first, Franco implemented a patriarchal attitude that blossomed into a form of autocracy, since he saw Spain as a nation that had to be self-sufficient in its post-war reconstruction; and secondly, the international community was apprehensive about embracing a country and government still based on the ideals of fascism. Isolation, therefore, was a result of international policy not dealing with a leader and form of government that had already been defeated. An example of this attitude occurred in 1948 with the facilitation of the Marshall Plan to provide relief to Germany in the re-establishment of a post-war economy; Spain, however, was left out in the cold because of the attitude toward Franco and his fascist government. All possible alliances with Spain were postponed due to distrust of Franco. Nonetheless, with U.S. assistance, Spain would make strong advances after 1953 when it became a member of the United Nations and then eventually the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1982. In response to the unwelcoming attitude of the international community, Spain further isolated herself by closing her borders. Some, like Gibraltar, were not reopened until 1964 when Spain began to open up politically and economically as a result of changing attitudes.

Not all the international community, however, had turned a cold shoulder towards Spain. In the mid 1940s, Perón’s Argentina provided much economic aid to the Franco regime. Perón, like Franco, had come to power through the military and would establish a dictatorship in Argentina lasting from 1946 to 1955. This link between Perón and Franco would result in aid in the form of food products such as wheat and meat. Meanwhile, Spain continued with an autocratic form, with Franco leading the way in all policy-making decisions.

The first years of the regime were characterized by Franco’s unwillingness to accept opinions in decision-making from others serving on the government. As a result, according to Juan Manuel Matés Barco, the economy “apenas sobrepasa el 1% entre 1940 y 1950” (809). Due to this alarming lack of growth, Franco renovated his cabinet five times before 1951, a date that serves as a watermark for the beginning of reforms that would take place after the autocratic era. Still in the era of autocracy, however, a typical characteristic of these first years was intervention on behalf of the state. It was felt at all levels of society, including personal, individual levels, as seen not only in repression and the rationing of food, but in the governmental attitude toward the weak agrarian economy.
Agriculture during the first years of the regime was demoted to a secondary role as the administration strove for industrialization. Agricultural production declined steadily until the 1950s. The lack of production of cereals and vegetables during the 1940s, for example, was devastating for the wheat crop due to the low market price, which made it difficult for farmers to produce this as a cash crop. Moreover, measures set forth by the Franco administration demanded that farmers transport the crops to the markets, but they were not compensated in a generous manner because of lack of finances. Consequently, as the black market became stronger, the agricultural situation became more bleak.

In response to the black market situation, the regime developed El Servicio Nacional del Trigo in 1937. The idea of this service was to establish the following criteria, so that the regime and society could benefit:

(…) obligaba a los agricultores a vender sus producciones a un precio de tasa para su posterior reventa a precios también tasados. Su objetivo básico consistía en realizar una distribución equitativa de productos básicos como el trigo y el aceite, pero el control de existencias, comercialización y precios que llevó a cabo, terminaron por alentar aún más si cabe el mercado negro y fomentando su escasez (Matés Barco 810)

Although the agrarian situation was important, it was not the principal focus of the administration during the first years. The Franco regime´s obsession with industrializing Spain was impeded by two political ideas: the first idea “respondía a las presiones externas propiciadas por el incierto signo de la Guerra mundial y el aislamiento acordado por las Naciones Unidas en 1946,” and this fear was linked to the idea that “en estrecha conexión se encontraba el temor a un levantamiento interno apoyado por las potencias aliadas” (Matés Barco 810). These concerns led to the administration´s adopting an isolationist stance which contributed to the autocratic system. Yet upon further review, Franco and his advisors began to realize that opening up to the international community could be beneficial in the long run for the bleak economic situation. On the other hand, the second existing political ideology came from the Falange and was based on the combination of industrialization and building of a strong military, the latter, of course, being traditionally linked to intervention on behalf of the state when the need arises to protect the business interests and enterprises of a particular country. In short, these ideas or fears led to the

The intent of these two laws “(...) pretendió estimular la producción de materias primas españolas, aislar la economía nacional de la influencia extranjera y acabar con la importación de productos exóticos a nuestro país” (Matés Barco 811). However, this attitude would prove costly: “Durante el primer franquismo, cerca del 60% de las importaciones eran inputs para la industria y el transporte, a pesar de su ineficiencia. Las escasas divisas se empleaban en adquirir maquinaria para obtener gasolina mediante procedimientos muy rudimentarios, con unos rendimientos verdaderamente paupérrimos” (811).

For Matés Barco, in “La economía durante el regimen de Franco (1939-1975)”, the need to supply these basic materials was understandable, yet the situation left the general population without some significant daily necessities. Therefore, a conflict provoked a discrepancy in the process of economic stimulation:

Mientras tanto, la población atravesaba una situación de auténtica penuria padeciendo la escasez de alimentos básicos. Se reflejaba casi al pie de la letra la política estalinista de cambiar industrialización por bienestar. En estos términos, la tarea de levantar una industria nacional menospreciando las ventajas del comercio internacional y la propia ventaja en la dotación de factores, resultaba costosísimo e incierto para un país grande; en un pequeño como España era intentar la cuadratura del círculo. (811)

Ultimately, it became necessary to create a body that would focus specifically on the stimulation of the economy, rather than trying to appease and resolve both of the previously mentioned situations. The administration thus decided to create an organization modeled after Mussolini’s Istituto per la Ricostruzione Industriale Italiano (IRI) which had resulted from the political currents looking to revive industries following the Great Depression. The IRI was intended to acquire a basic portion of public industry but was converted into a holding company for Italian public industrial enterprises.

By way of this model, the Franco regime created the Instituto Nacional de Industria in 1941 in order to stimulate an economy devastated by the Civil War. It would serve as an instrument to “financiar al servicio de la nación la creación y resurgimiento de nuestras
industrias, en especial las que proponen como fin principal la resolución de los problemas impuestos por la defensa del país o que se dirijan al desenvolvimiento de nuestra autarquía económica” (Matés Barco 812). Between 1942 and 1948, the INI would fail miserably in a variety of ventures. Some of these failures were seen through the obsessive search for minerals and resources, the need for gasoline and bituminous rock to produce lubricants and combustibles, and the search for fertile land to cultivate cotton and corn cash crops, etc. In fact, the only positive achievement was the production of electric energy. These failures were due to the regime’s attention being misdirected by the obsession to achieve an industrialized country, whose need for resources should have been a lower priority in society ravaged by a lack of clothing, food, and industrialization.

Aside from the problems of the INI, the laws of defense and protection were making the situation unnecessarily complex due to the bureaucratic environment that was being constructed. For example, it was very complicated to import products into Spain. An industry or business would have to show proof to the government that they were incapable of obtaining these products on domestic soil. For this reason, many entrepreneurs and foreign investors were apprehensive about investments. It became extremely expensive to maintain this system that was not producing any advantages in fiscal terms. Along these same lines, the government continued to intervene, thus causing havoc in the employment market by causing the following repercussions:

Se proyectó un sindicato único, vertical, de obligado alistamiento, cuya línea de mandos era nombrada por el gobierno y donde los jefes provinciales garantizaban el control político del aparato sindical. Se suprimió la libre contratación entre las partes, y los salarios reales de los agricultores, mineros, obreros metalúrgicos y trabajadores del sector textil experimentaron una tremenda caída. (Matés Barco 814)

In addition to these problems, the rate of inflation was quite disturbing during this time. “Entre 1940 y 1945, la inflación medida por el índice de precios,” writes Matés Barco in “La economía durante el régimen de Franco (1939-1975) alcanzó un 11.6% annual cumulativo, y fue todavía mayor (12.7%) en la segunda mitad de la década” (816). As a result, a law enacted on May 17, 1940, prohibited the creation of new banks and gave the Banco de España the power to create a monopoly over the flow of money, although this was very dangerous for business. Another example of monetary control was established
through the creation of the Instituto Español de Moneda Extranjera (IEME) whose purpose was to control monetary exchanges with the international community.

A positive indication of trying to create a monetary reserve was revealed through a new law that was approved on December 30, 1943. This legislation established a financial reserve solely for the use of projects that would positively facilitate the situation of the citizens. Two positive outcomes of this law were the improvement of working conditions and the establishment of the Instituto Nacional de la Vivienda which would be an important factor during the following decade as urban planning and development became a key focus for the administration. Although the 1940s were seen as the “época del hambre” the following decade would prove to be an era of transition and the beginning of a miracle in the works.

During the 1950s, the economy under the Franco administration would begin to experience gradual changes for the better, changes apparent in the new attitudes adopted towards agriculture and public works. Aside from these domestic advances, the regime made great strides in integrating with the international community during the middle and end of the decade. For example, the signing of an agreement signaled the beginning of a strong US presence. In addition, an official visit in 1953 from President Eisenhower (a military man, like Franco) sealed the positive diplomatic, economic, and popular culture relations between the two countries.

An illustration of U.S. presence was seen through the agricultural scope. Since 1952 the agrarian situation had drastically improved when the administration decided to permit the importation of superior farming equipment and permitted United States enterprises to promote their products in Spain. The most famous of these agrarian enterprises was John Deere and Company:

(... se encontraba la fábrica de tractores que Lanz Ibérica tenía situada en el madrileño municipio de Getafe. Dicha fábrica, en la que desde 1956 se producían los famosos tractores LANZ BULLDOG, se destinó a la producción de tractores para el mercado español y así, en 1963, salió de la cadena de montaje el primer tractor John Deere fabricado en España, una unidad modelo JD 505.

(John Deere 1)
Also during the 1950s, Franco appointed a new Minister of Agriculture, Rafael Cavestany. The regime made strong efforts to modernize agriculture via colonization or collectivization of farming lands. Inspired by Mussolini’s regime in Italy, the focus was on converting fertile lands into cash crop production and repopulating depleted forests. This agricultural reform was important not only for the well-being of the country but for the regime’s image as well, and was brought about by the Republic’s failure to comply with its promises to reform agriculture. One of the more urgent problems the Republic encountered was the issue of irrigation, so shortly after the end of the war, the regime devised an ambitious plan to make this possible; on April 18, 1943, the Law of Hydraulic Public Works was expedited, thus ending one of the most important issues disputed since the days of the Republic.

Another law passed on April 21, 1949, dealt with the organization and distribution of irrigated lands. This law was put into effect in order to jump start the process of bringing water to the land, but its effects were not felt until after 1950. Perhaps the best example of the ambitious regime’s eagerness to clean up its image in the agricultural terrain would be the Colonization, Industrialization, and Work Plan implemented in Badajoz in 1952. This plan had three principal parts: 1) it proposed to extend all irrigation zones, 2) it set out to repopulate the depleted forests, and 3) it addressed the need to industrialize various agrarian products (Matés Barco 819).

Alongside the agriculture situation, industrialization advanced little by little through the steel and iron industries. In addition, there was a movement to expedite progress in the chemical industries and to provide electric power to serve the people better. One issue remained unresolved: the administration still had not settled on its views of attracting foreign investors. This attitude would change soon after 1950 when the regime began to see the necessity and the importance of attracting large corporations such as REPESA, ENSIDESSA, and SEAT. Of the three, SEAT would leave an indisputably positive mark not only on the economy of Spain but also on popular culture with its famous automobile, the SEAT 600.

The change from an isolationist policy was inevitable as Franco began to relate the interests of the western world to economic sanctions. Moreover, the regime recognized the potential threat that the United States had presented politically and militarily since the end
of World War II with its new-found international super power status. With this threat in mind, Franco began to see the advantages of an alliance based on common interests: an anti-communist policy towards the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and its satellite states. As a consequence of the gradual changes made by Franco´s administration, Spain received US support for membership in the United Nations in 1955. One of the big changes was the elimination of all restrictions on population movement and the system of food rationing in 1952. Also, the renewal of international relations permitted foreign investors to begin considering investments in Spain. These gradual advances notwithstanding, there still lingered an over-protective attitude that did not permit Spain to integrate fully with Europe.

A dramatic change, however, would occur on December 26, 1957, when the law permitted a new political fiscal policy. This law proposed to achieve the necessary finances to avoid falling into the tendencies of inflation using “los rendimientos del trabajo personal, las rentas del capital, el impuesto industrial y el de sociedades.” However this reform “supuso un importante avance desde el punto de vista recaudatorio y posibilitó afrontar la política monetaria con más garantías” (Matés Barco 821). Although there would be many similar reforms, it was obvious that the economy could not be self-sufficient and thus would have to adopt western capitalism. At the end of the 1950s, the economic situation of Spain was shaky, but help was on the way.

One of the most important issues that frequently appears in the post- Spanish Civil War narrative is that of the economic miracles that occurred during the end of the decade of the 1950s and lasted well into the 1960s. Throughout the narrative, the appearance of the automobile repeatedly reflects an industry that breathed life into the popular culture of Spain as a result of the economic miracle known as El Plan de Estabilización de 1959. This plan was not an official document, but rather a series of actions put through an organization known as the FMI (Fondo Monetario Internacional). These actions were complemented by a collection of laws that had been ratified before 1959 which served as a basis for the plan.

In the midst of a period of enormous inflation, the Plan de Estabilización set out to stabilize a country that was spiraling downward into economic oblivion. In “La larga marcha” Joaquín Estefanía cites an interview published in 1959 with then Ministro de Comercio Alberto Ullastres, who outlined the Plan de Estabilización as “Convertibilidad,
estabilización, liberalización, integración” (6). Aside from these four objectives, the plan set out to “reducir la inflación, liberalizar el comercio exterior, conseguir la convertibilidad de la peseta para facilitar los intercambios y liberalizar la actividad interna. En definitiva, lograr un mayor desarrollo aprovechando la coyuntura mundial y facilitar la integración de la economía española en la internacional” (Estefanía 6).

The final and perhaps the most intriguing part of the plan was integrating Spain into the international market in order to promote foreign investments. The administration decided to lift restrictions and permit international investments in the country, yet it was essential that Spanish enterprises not be left on the outside looking in. Therefore, many investors were encouraged to partake in joint ventures with Spanish enterprises. The result of this was the stabilization of the exchange rate, as the peseta fluctuated less, in spite of this wave of progress the administration was experiencing.

Above all, foreign investment substantially paved the way for further growth and the success that Spain was to enjoy during the 1960s. The biggest form of foreign investment came through the waves of immigrants from Latin America and other parts of Europe during this period. As Spain continued to open its borders, more and more people came to look for employment opportunities in hopes of achieving a better life. Another form of foreign investment came through tourism, which played an integral part in lifting Spain out of the economic doldrums. Even though much of Europe was going through an economic surge and many Spanish laborers went looking for employment opportunities outside the country, immigration and the money generated by tourism amply covered the deficit left by these workers. Tourism contributed an enormous amount of money, as people came to Spain for vacations, thus turning the country into the Florida of Europe. While tourists flocked to Spain from numerous countries, domestic tourism was on the upswing due to this influx of money. The force behind this change can be attributed to the affordable automobile prices at the time, thus giving many Spaniards their first automobile and the concept of the long weekend. Every SEAT 600 sold came with a sense of personal liberation and progress as many Spaniards set off to coastal towns such as Benidorm and Torremolinos to have some fun in the sun.

Internationally, the global economy was going through a period of expansion in which economic frontiers were disintegrating slowly as the trade market increased in
productivity with exchange between fellow nations. In Spain alone many imported products arrived, so many of the restrictions the regime once upheld were abolished. Although this was all very positive, the regime was not the sole driving force. Spanish citizens also felt the need and desire to move beyond to the previous twenty years of the post-war era. Having spent the entire decade of the 1940s in the doldrums and then surviving the transitional 1950s, they welcomed the feeling of economic hope that corresponded to the 1960s. Speaking for many Spaniards, María del Pilar Martínez Vicén of Madrid stated in an oral interview that “durante los años sesenta vivíamos muy bien, había un sentimiento de seguridad en la vida diaria, a diferencia de la época de mis padres inmediatamente después de la guerra.”

The regime’s image was much more positive, though there were some lingering issues concerning repression still to be answered. Spanish popular culture began to flourish as well with the influence of foreign presence through various means of communication and arts. Despite the host of intellectuals in exile during the Franco years, many poets and writers continued to enjoy success with writings that strongly criticized the regime. Moreover, many writings allude to the international presence that was slowly beginning to saturate Spain. An example of this foreign influence can be seen in the presence of the automobile in the post-war narrative. The economic boom Spain was experiencing paved the way for automobile industries such as SEAT to make an impact on the daily lives of citizens. The appearance of the automobile industry provided Spaniards with a new-found freedom to travel and explore. The opportunity to own an automobile was made possible with the very economical car, the SEAT 600. In an oral interview, Mariano Mellado Gutiérrez of Madrid stated that “el SEAT 600 fue el coche que marcó la década de los años 60 porque era el coche más económico.” As might be expected, some authors, such as Miguel Delibes in Cinco horas con Mario (1966), have used the automobile as a criticism of social classification and personal progress; by the same token, some writers have used it as a medium to criticize the repression of Franquismo.

As we have seen, the first years of Franquismo immediately following the war were not characterized solely by the country’s poor economic situation. After the “años del hambre” the regime’s image was cleaned up dramatically due in part to the economic boom, but there were some lingering issues pertaining to the regime’s politics towards
Republican sympathizers. Repression, in spite of economic success, was still part of Franco’s politics. Although not occurring on the same grand scale as in the period immediately after the war, there were still policies that did not sit well with many of the intellectuals forced into exile. They saw Franco as an anti-intellectual dictator who robbed the common man of his freedom of speech and, using blood-letting repression, constructed a fascist dictatorship that would last for almost four decades.

This anti-Franquismo attitude is reflected brilliantly in the novel Réquiem por un campesino español (1953) by Ramón J. Sender, which will be analyzed in the following chapter in the study of the expanding role of the automobile as a power symbol of the Franco regime, instilling fear throughout society as it was used to search for Republican sympathizers.
 CHAPTER II

DEATH ON WHEELS

Austere institutions’ use of the automobile as a facilitator of abusive power and authority is a common theme found in many artistic genres. In order to establish an understanding, we turn briefly to the cinema, which has provided ample representation by way of the various gangster films produced within the past thirty years. A fine example of the automobile as a tool for establishing and facilitating power and authority would be the assassination of Sonny Corleone in The Godfather (1972). In an attempt to rescue his sister Connie from her abusive husband, Sonny is led into a trap, and pinned in his automobile by other gangsters cars, and brutally machined gunned to death in a traditional gangland style execution. Here, the automobile is employed as a death instrument that takes advantage of Sonny’s famous temper, thus making the hit decisive and easier to remove him, in one last attempt, as the leader of a politically and financially powerful mafia family. In the end the overall plot fails and Michael Corleone comes to power, but the role of the automobile in this scene symbolizes the bloody power struggle between the five mafia families of New York. Although cinematic, it is a brilliant interpretation of one of the methods that is used to establish and retain power and authority in the world of organized crime.

Like American cinema, Spanish literature, too, possesses rich examples of the automobile as a symbol of power and authority. For example, Réquiem por un campesino español (1953) by Ramón J. Sender provides harsh criticism of the violence and atrocities committed by the Nationalist side at the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War. Moreover, the novel also provides a strong anti-Franquista tone in response to the repression employed by the Franco regime to establish a powerful institution that would endure for almost 40 years.

Born in Aragón in 1901, Sender, like many other intellectuals, was disenchanted by the Civil War, including those events that affected him not only politically but personally.
The first of these events was the execution of his wife and brother by the Nationalists in Zamora during the war, which then forced him to go to France with his two children. Secondly, two months after having arrived in France, Sender asked the Communists to send him to the Aragon front; however, due to fighting within the Communists and their distrust of him, he was rejected. Hence, he was forced into exile in 1938, one year before the end of the Spanish Civil War. After returning to France, Sender and his children would go on to spend time in Mexico and most notably the United States where he served as a Professor of Spanish Literature at the universities of New Mexico and Southern California. Upon retirement, he moved to San Diego, where he continued writing till his death in 1982. During his time in the United States, he wrote numerous works such as Réquiem por un campesino español which, like Sender’s horrific experience, is a very tight, tense, and short novel depicting the clash between the two different political ideologies at the outset of the Spanish Civil War in 1936.

Set in a small town in Aragón at the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, the novel is a reflection on the life and last days of Paco el del Molino through the eyes of the local priest Mosén Millán, a reflection that commences as Mosén Millán and Paco’s three fascist adversaries wait to begin the requiem mass for Paco’s soul one year after his death. As a result, the reader is provided with a series of flashbacks from Paco’s childhood up to and including his horrifying death at the hands of Nationalist bloodletting. The interaction between Paco and Mosén Millán’s characters provides a glimpse of the different conflicting ideas that encompassed the political landscape of Spain at the beginning of the Spanish Civil War.

Although both characters are prime examples of the politics surrounding the conflict, the role of the automobile is essential in understanding the Nationalist political agenda that was carried out through repressive power and authority. Used as an instrument to spread fear and panic amongst Republican sympathizers, the automobile also serves as a tool for criticizing the strong relationship formed by the Catholic Church and the Franco regime as seen through the execution of Paco el del Molino at the end of the novel. Therefore, to develop and understand the potent force that the automobile possesses, the following facets will be addressed in this chapter: 1) the change of the book’s title from Mosén Millán to Réquiem por un campesino español. 2) the importance of the ballad to
enhance and reflect Sender’s attitude towards the abuse of power and authority by austere institutions, and 3) defining and applying various theories of power and authority to develop and enhance our interpretation of the automobile as an instrument of death and abusive power.

By way of departure, the change of the novel’s title from Mosén Millán to Réquiem por un campesino español presents an intriguing challenge that can perhaps begin to be resolved by giving consideration to the political ideology that Sender possessed. While in exile, in an interview with Marcelino Peñuelas which appears in Michiko Nonomoya’s book entitled El anarquismo en las obras de Ramón J. Sender (1979), “Sender manifiesta muy claramente su actitud hacia el anarquismo y el comunismo ruso” (161). It is well known that the Communists and Anarchists, which also composed the Republican side during the war, possessed anti-Catholic attitudes during the Second Spanish Republic and during the conflict. Moreover, these groups were largely responsible for many war crimes committed by the Republican side against the Catholic Church. For example, many priests and nuns were routinely executed, and churches were desecrated and burned in response to the church’s alliance with the Nationalists during the war. Through Mosen Millán’s character, the reader is able to see an internal and external conflict that serves as the microstructure for many sides involved in the narration. Internally, his character reflects a human side that is marked by the deep struggle within him to come to terms with his role involving the death of his friend Paco in the novel. Exteriorly, Millán serves as a binary opposition that reflects not only the alliance and power that the Catholic Church enjoyed during the Franco regime, but also the negative powerful criticism of these two institutions through the eyes of the Republican exile. As a result, due to this powerful and controversial role of Mosen Millán’s character, the book was originally entitled Mosén Millán.

However, it could also be argued that these same political beliefs led the author to change the title from Mosén Millán to Réquiem por un campesino español in order to provide more power to a character that strongly reflects the Second Spanish Republic: Paco el del Molino. As a result of the title change, power has now been taken away from the controversial figure of Mosén Millán, thus shedding more emphasis on a character whose death symbolizes the hopes and dreams of the defunct Second Spanish Republic. Although
Millán’s character continues to play a central role in the work after the title change, it is now Paco’s requiem mass and character that serve as the voice of the exile’s harsh criticism of the alliance formed by the Catholic Church and the Franco regime. Therefore, the reader is left with the shattered hopes and dreams of what the Second Spanish Republic should have been through the eyes of the exile.

Along these same lines, the change of titles also sheds light on the appearance of a ballad chanted by the altar boy throughout the novel. Prior to the change of titles, we would probably lightly consider the importance or the power that this ballad possesses in the novel. On the other hand, with the change of title, the ballad gains more importance and adds to the over-all depth of the novel and serves as the microstructure of the situation of the exile. In “Réquiem por un campesino español and the Problematics of Exile” Compitello writes “Réquiem por un campesino español is the ballad of Ramón J. Sender” (99). Indeed, both the novel and the ballad of Paco el del Molino reflect the short, intense, and powerful experience that Sender has had as an exile. Hence, the ballad not only reflects the situation of Paco el del Molino and that of Sender, it also symbolizes the experiences and atrocities suffered by the exiles due to the alliance between the Franco regime and the Catholic Church.

This negative point of view towards the regime and the lack of responsibility of Spanish society can be seen in Michiko Nonomoya’s El anarquismo en las obras de Ramón J. Sender (1979) where Sender states, “que el pueblo español siempre fallaba al entregar el poder, una vez adquirido, en las manos inadecuadas de los políticos profesionales y que el municipio donde los campesinos habían adquirido el poder funcionaba bien” (162). For this reason, it becomes imperative for Sender to use the structure of the novel as a tactic to promote the responsibility of the intellectual to condemn the atrocities of the regime. In “Réquiem por un campesino and the Problematics of Exile” Compitello states:

Such structural tactics mirror the exile’s world view: Spain’s civil war marks the country so definitively that the imposition of the Francoist regime impedes normal development and opens a process of decadence and decay that precludes advancement. Outside of Spain, the exiled writer can only observe this process and measure it against his own tragic dilemma. He is stuck in a present where the
possibility for the kind of future desired is severely diminished by political realities that also cause the present to be overtaken by the past. (99)

The ballad also reflects the concern of the exile for the well-being and retarded state of the country during the Franco regime. Aside from being the voice of the exile, the ballad is also an intellectual call to arms in which Sender challenges other exiles to rise up and criticize the Franco regime. Edward Said, an exiled Palestinian intellectual, writes in the article “Enemies of the State” that the intellectual has the responsibility to “speak up against these terrible abuses of power. No one is safe unless every citizen protests what in effect is a reversion to medieval practices of autocracy” (5). Sender’s work takes hold of Said’s view and sheds light on the tyrannical state of Spain during the post war era. For this reason, the ballad is a micro structure of the novel which aims to implement a call to arms to rise up against the negative abuse of power by organized politics, a system that is imbedded in the town’s powerful political characters: Don Gumersindo, Don Cástulo Pérez, and Don Valeriano the fascist enemies of Paco, a deadly trio that strongly reflects the influence of the regime and its alliance with the church as seen at the end of the novel through the decision of Mosén Millán’s character. Although, for Compitello the ballad serves as the voice of the exile against the power structure represented by Paco’s enemies, the negative use of the automobile further enhances and permits us to consider how the Franco regime established and retained power and authority for nearly four decades.

In concordance with the time frame of the novel, Franquismo began to evolve as a political entity shortly after the conflict began. The proclamation of Franco as Head of State took place in late 1936 and was followed shortly thereafter by the Unification Decree of April 19, 1937. This political law established the groundwork for the umbrella political party that would have sole possession of the Spanish political scene: El Movimiento Nacional. The decree issued served as:

(…) pretexto de superar las divisiones en el seno de las fuerzas políticas colaboradoras en el alzamiento militar, unía a Falange con los tradicionalistas (carlistas) y ponía bajo jefatura directa del caudillo (título recibido por el propio Franco) a Falange Española Tradicionalista y de las Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional-Sindicalista (FET y de las JONS), único partido autorizado por el régimen, y pronto diluido bajo la expresión “Movimiento Nacional”. (1)
As a result, this decree began to unify Spain politically under Franco at the outset of the war. Moreover, Franco’s political powers and the Movimiento Nacional would be based upon three fundamental pillars criticized in Sender’s work: 1) La Falange, 2) the Catholic Church, and 3) the military.

At this we are ready to consider the automobile as a lethal instrument of power and authority employed during the “imposition of the Franco regime” (Compitello 99) in Sender’s Réquiem por un campesino español. Arriving at one simple, specific definition for power and authority is a virtually impossible task that has sparked philosophical discussions for centuries. Therefore, we shall briefly consider a variety of philosophical ideas that will stem from several intellectual disciplines that will lead to a solid analysis of the power and authority found in Réquiem por un campesino español.

In Sender’s work, power can be seen through the acts of manipulation and influence represented by the characters: the local priest, Mosén Millán, and the potent fascist trinity, Don Gumersindo, Don Cástulo Pérez, and el señor Valeriano. To begin, manipulation and influence can be linked to what Michel Foucault commonly refers to as “meta-power”. In an interview in Power and Knowledge (1980), Foucault defines it as follows:

(…) “meta-power” … is structured essentially around a certain number of great prohibition functions; but this meta-power with its prohibitions can only take hold and secure its footing where it is rooted in a whole series of multiple and indefinite power relations that supply the necessary basis for the great negative forms of power (Foucault 122).

For the Franco regime the establishment of meta-power came through a series of prohibition functions such as imprisonment and executions of Republican sympathizers. Through these repressive actions and a system of propaganda, the regime was able to establish and exercise power for nearly four decades. Interestingly, Marcelino Peñuelas in La obra narrativa de Ramón J. Sender (1971) indicates that Spain was susceptible to this kind of power establishment because of:

(…) los tres niveles de la difícil convivencia española: arriba, los propietarios de las tierras; abajo, los campesinos, sumidos en la miseria. Y en medio, el tercer factor, la iglesia, que con su influencia moral bien orientada podría servir de enlace suavizador de tensiones … pero que por la inercia de la historia, por su tradicional
actitud de preocuparse demasiado por intereses seculares, se alía con el dinero y el poder. (139)

The alliance between the church and the regime is reflected and harshly criticized by Sender in the novel through the central figure of the town priest Mosen Millán. The power position that Millán holds in the town is one that not only reflects the meta-power that Foucault speaks of, it also shows us Sender’s negative view towards figures of civil authority. Therefore, in correlation with this concept we must keep in mind the position of the Franco regime and its association with the Roman Catholic Church in Spain, so we will focus on civil authority.

According to the article by Joseph Rickaby in the Catholic Encyclopedia, civil authority is defined as:

The moral power of command, supported (when need be) by physical coercion, which the state exercises over its constituent members. Civil authority is of God, not by any revelation or positive institution, but by the mere fact that God is the Author of Nature, and Nature imperatively requires civil authority to be set up or obeyed… In this sense, God is at the back of every State, binding men in conscience to observe the behests of the State within the sphere of its competence.

(1-2)

In the case of Réquiem por un campesino español, the power of moral command is constructed on tradition and official power and seen through the figure of Mosén Millán, who takes Paco under his wing, since Paco’s parents “eran poco religiosos” (Sender 27). Through Millán’s influence on Paco during his experience as an altar boy, Paco begins to develop a social conscience. The negative aspect to this, is that Paco’s social conscience will make him a symbol of the youth who supported the ideas of the Second Spanish Republic, thus bringing about enemies in the authoritarian, fascist trinity of Don Gumersindo, Don Cástulo Pérez, and el señor Valeriano, who are ironically the only ones present at the requiem mass held one year after Paco’s death. In essence, these three gentleman represent the “physical coercion” that will be found in the repression during Spain’s post-war era. Compitello notes that the monaguillo continues to recite Paco’s ballad, which is dispersed throughout the entire narrative, at one point Don Gumersindo threatens the young boy by telling him in a repressive manner, “No lo digas todo, zagal,
porque aquí, el alcalde te llevará a la cárcel” (97). This repressive, brutal attitude is symbolic of the Nationalist stance directed towards those such as Paco who symbolize Republican resistance, and it is almost certainly a criticism based on the experience of the intellectual in exile and repressive powers that take away basic freedoms such as the right of speech. Later in the novel, it is, in fact, Paco’s erstwhile protector Mosén Millán, who, upon being pressured at gun point by the centurion, will reveal Paco’s hiding place. In this situation, although it was against Millán’s wishes, his betrayal of Paco gives rise to adamantly negative Catholic sentiment, for it was a man of the church who revealed the hiding place and helped facilitate repression and punishment leading to Paco’s execution.

Is this a social virtue that brings justice and efficiency to the State? If we consider the economic structure of the decade of the 1940s in Spain, all final decisions were based upon the autocratic model, a structure which permits one individual to make decisions for the few. As a result, Franco took on a patriarchal role; according to María de Pilar Martínez Vicens of Madrid: “Sentía como si Franco fuera un padre, no había miedo si caminabas por las calles por la noche o el día.” Interestingly, it is a description that conjures the Catholic concept of the priest that watches over his congregation as if he were a pastor, a fatherly figure who keeps a watchful eye and protects the flock from predators. Moreover, Rickaby states that “civil differs from domestic”, and explains the difference between the two:

The father cares for the members of his household one by one, singly and individually. The State cares for its members collectively, and for the individual only in his collective aspect. Hence it follows that the power of life and death is inherent in the State, not in the family. A man is hanged for the common good of the rest, never for his own good. (3)

According to this way of thinking, Paco’s execution in the novel is justified since it is for the good of the State and its alliance with the church. Anarchist, Communist, and Socialist ideas were feared by those against the Republic. On the other hand, for the Franco supporters in Spanish society, Franco was the fatherly figure whom Spanish society instilled her faith. He was seen as “El Salvador,” the leader who could lead Spain to a robust economy, industrial development, and a good standard of living for the average citizen. An example of this can be seen in through the oral interview of Rita Gutiérrez of
Madrid: “Franco fue el único que pudo salvar España, era El Salvador para nosotros.”
Hence, if the State and church are linked, then the people must exhibit and entrust themselves with some form of tranquility that comes as a result of authority. The action of authority leads to trust or the “sum of truths …which the Church presents to us in a brief form in her creeds…faith stands for the habit or virtue by which we assent to those truths” (Pope 1). If we can return to the figure of Franco and the oral interview of Rita Gutiérrez, it is easy to see that the dictator was the deity-like figure that lead the Nationalist crusade to liberate Spain from the clutches of “los rojos.” As a result, and very much like organized religion, the people trusted in the regime to resolve the moral and economic issues plaguing the country immediately after the war. Given Rickaby’s view on civil authority, it can be seen how civil authority is positive, for it is God’s law that must be obeyed. If we obey God or a leader of a regime, then the people instill their faith within him without question. Authority and faith are linked, thus giving way to the establishment of traditions that are invoked upon exercising authority. For example, the propaganda organization known as the NODO (Noticiarios y Documentales) during post-Civil War Spain served as Franco’s propaganda tool to promote the image of the regime throughout his reign. The power of this propaganda tool helped establish and facilitate the concepts and traditions on which the Nationalist crusade had built its political ideals. The NODO in correlation with power demonstrates that “power is therefore a more active agent than authority, with elements (people and things) of power relying on their own initiative and agenda to influence, control, or dominate people, circumstances, or events” (Nordlund 11). As a result, Paco and Mosén Millán reflect the strong, controversial relationship between the Franco regime and the Roman Catholic Church. However, we should not lose sight of developing and outlining and applying the different theories of power in our interpretation of Sender’s work. To that end, we will look at the investigations conducted by the Frankfurt School of Social Research. Although the Frankfurt School is characterized by bright, controversial thinkers who delved into various subject matters, their work on authority, power, and social pathology contributes a very interesting perspective to our study involving the automobile as an instrument of death in Sender’s Réquiem por un campesino español.

Respected and controversial, the Frankfurt School of philosophical thought stemmed from The Institute of Social Research in pre-war Germany during the decade of
the 1920s. The focus of research conducted by the Frankfurt School is a kaleidoscope of intellectual disciplines such as: philosophy, literary theory, theology, history, psychology, anthropology, sociology, and economics. Interestingly, the Institute was forced to leave Nazi Germany upon Hitler´s rise to power in 1933. In the late 1930s, after having spent some time in Switzerland and New York, the Institute relocated to California. The investigations conducted by the Institute would be instrumental in introducing a new style of research facilitated within North American universities. In fact, as indicated by Nordlund, “The Frankfurt School could be given credit for being the quasi-founders of that style of umbrella like research that has become so stylish among culture-ologists who design cultural studies for many North American universities” (45).

The experiences brought about by the presence of the Nazis would greatly influence the work of the Institute, for many members served as witnesses to the political, social, and economic upheaval of Europe during the decades of the 1930s and 1940s. For this reason, the majority of their research was devoted to the question of power and authority and their link to psychology and the history of social and economic theory. Nevertheless, we will look briefly at Erich Fromm´s analysis of power and authority as it appears in the second generation Frankfurt Scholar´s book Escape from Freedom (1941) and see how it relates to the topic of the automobile as an instrument of death in Sender´s novel.

At times, the language of the Frankfurt School becomes a tangled, confusing, incomprehensible and contradictory web. Fromm is very precise and brief in his definition of power:

The word ´power´ has a two fold meaning. One is the possession of power over somebody, the ability to dominate him; the other meaning is the possession to do something, to be able, to be potent. The latter meaning has nothing to do with domination; it expresses mastery in the sense of ability… Power, in the sense of domination, is the perversion of potency, just as sexual sadism is the perversion of sexual love. (160-61)

This definition is relevant to our study; since power through possession is seen through the use of Don Cástulo Pérez´s car in Sender´s work, for it helps facilitate the quick rise to power of the Nationalists. The car as a personal possession that permits mobility becomes a possession of the state to facilitate the sequestering and murder of those sympathetic to
the Republican struggle in the novel. (As later chapters will show, power through domination in the sexual sense would be a more appropriate definition for the treatment of the car as a medium for facilitating sexual liberation; see chapter 4 Los santos inocentes (1981) by Miguel Delibes and Crónica del desamor (1979) by Rosa Montero.)

Fromm’s view of authority is:

Authority is not a quality that one person ‘has’ in the sense that he has property or physical qualities. Authority refers to an interpersonal relation in which one person looks upon another as somebody superior to him. But there is a fundamental difference between a kind of superiority/inferiority relation which can be called rational authority and one which may be described as inhibiting authority. (162-63)

For Nordlund, the central concept of this definition is found in a superiority/inferiority dichotomy. Authority, therefore, is qualitative, while power is quantitative (48), and authority is for Fromm a form of hierarchy. This is not necessarily positive or negative; many Spaniards, as we saw in the personal testimony of María del Pilar Martínez Vicens, saw Franco as a positive fatherly figure looking out for the best interests of the whole society and not just the influential, wealthy few. For Herbert Marcuse, Fromm’s colleague in the Frankfurt School of Social Research, this type of figure is the key ingredient in authority. In Eros and Civilization (1966), according to Nordlund, “Marcuse identifies the authority figure in terms of the sustainer of society’s patriarchal order: the father figure” (54). Moreover, “the father establishes domination in his own interest, but in doing so he is justified by his age, by his biological function, and (most of all) by his success: he creates that ‘order’ without which the group would immediately dissolve” (Marcuse 62).

It should be mentioned that this is one of the basic tenants on which fascism is based upon, for it has appeal to the entire society. In Réquiem por un campesino español, the Nationalist hierarchy would be constructed as the following: Franco (father figure), the centurion (the son and henchman), and the lower end of this hierarchy, Don Gumersindo, Don Cáustulo-Pérez, and Don Valeriano (the children), the latter beneath the power of the centurion who comes into town to liquidate all Republican sympathizers. The importance of these three individuals is highlighted by Fromm’s definition, with special attention on the words “inhibiting authority” which results in a situation wherein “resentment or
hostility will arise against the exploiter” (Nordlund 48). These three individual characters will be the facilitators of mutual resentment and hostility against Republican sympathizers such as Paco el del Molino. Besides the hierarchy involving Franco and the centurion, we can turn to a theological image of hierarchy and see Don Gumersindo, Don Cástulo-Pérez, and Don Valeriano as a dark, holy trinity, for they are Paco’s fascist enemies. These three men, along with the centurion, take control of the town and govern via the brutality and violence displayed at the outset of the Civil War.

To develop our definition of authority and shed more light on the personalities of these individuals within the hierarchy, let us examine the psychological aspects of the authoritarian, with a focus on social psychology. For Nordlund, a “personality type that does make decisions, or rather forces these decisions on others, it is an authoritarian personality” (56). The landmark work in the field, The Authoritarian Personality (1950), written by T.W. Adorno et al., provides an interesting glimpse into the psychological make-up. In order to condense the tangling, confusing, and incomprehensible web of language, Nordlund’s comprehensible summary helps bring to light the characteristics: Authoritarian personality is one that subscribes to a dogmatic and conservative value system to one’s overall approach to life that results in, or is manifested by, a personality structure which can be summarized as: aggressive (physically and/or verbally), destructive and exploitive-manipulative; hostile and extra punitive; overly concerned with one’s social status; anxious to impose one’s own authority (an emphasis on hierarchy); hesitant to display charity; clannish; fastidiously clean; believes in stereotypes and is therefore prejudiced and ethnocentric. This person denies inner conflict; conforms with social religious norms; is cynical; often depends on others for self-affirmation; is highly respectful of the father figure; hides fear; is suspicious of intellectuals, workers’ unions, and political/social liberalism; disdains the weak; rejects or avoids sensual pleasure and praises will power; and is prone to illness such as stomach ulcers caused by stress brought on by exaggerated worrying. (58)

This effectively describes the personality that Franco displayed during his 36-year reign. Moreover, it is the personality Sender portrays and criticizes in the dark, holy trinity exemplified by Don Gumersindo, Don Valeriano, and Don Cástulo Pérez. In addition, the
presence of the centurion enhances this definition and provides a microstructure of the Franco regime in Sender’s work.

The Frankfurt School, unlike Foucault, directs more energy towards authority than power. Obviously, the Frankfurt School’s ideas arose during the turbulent 1930s when words such as fascism, nazism, falange, authority, and power were frequently employed in daily conversations. Nonetheless, the Frankfurt School serves as a philosophical bridge to links with the power/authority theories of Michel Foucault for whom power is produced by a “form of knowledge-power strictly opposed to the art of initiations and the masterful secret: I have in mind the confession” (58).

The scene in Réquiem por un campesino español where Paco el del Molino is executed is perhaps the best example of a Foucauldian interpretation of power. By way of explanation, the novel is narrated through the thoughts of Mosén Millán. While waiting to celebrate the requiem mass one year after Paco´s death, Mosén Millán begins mentally replaying Paco´s life from Paco´s baptism to Mosén Millán´s role in his death. While Mosén Millán reminisces, the church is empty except for three gentleman who are presented as Paco’s enemies: Don Gumersindo, Don Cástulo Pérez, and Don Valeriano. Problems began to arise for Paco when the town celebrated elections, thus ushering a new generation into the town hall where “Entretanto, la bandera tricolor flotaba al aire en el balcón de la casa consistorial y encima de la puerta de la escuela” (Sender 69-70). For the town, “los nuevos concejales eran jóvenes, y con excepción de algunos, según don Valeriano, gente baja” (67). Don Valeriano reflects the conservative generation’s disgruntlement while Paco begins to see the point of politics as he tries to help implement new ideas that will benefit the town. One of the ideas central to the book is Paco’s goal to “quitarle la hierba al duque” (Sender 68). The duke influences the local government to retain his power in the locality, power exercised when the duke responds to the local government by telegraph that: “doy orden a mis guardas de que vigilen mis montes, y disparen sobre cualquier animal o persona que entre en ellos. El municipio debe hacerlo pregonar para evitar la pérdida de bienes o de vidas humanas” (Sender 71-72). The conflict is further intesified when Paco suggests to the mayor that the guards “fuera destituidos, y que les dieran un cargo mejor retribuido en el sindicato de riegos, en la huerta” (Sender 72). Thus begins a conflict that will coincide with the Civil War, as the duke and other wealthy
power holders take the side of the Nationalists in an effort to root out the government headed by Paco and those supporting the Second Spanish Republic. The standoff is initiated when Paco declares: “dígale al duque que si tiene tantos derechos, puede venir a defenderlos él mismo, pero que traiga un rifle nuevo, porque los de los dos guardas los tenemos nosotros” (Sender 75).

The first overt violence occurs when:

Un grupo de señoritos con vergas y con pistolas ... mataron a seis campesinos- entre ellos cuatro de los que vivían en las cuevas- y dejaron sus cuerpos en las cunetas de la carretera entre el pueblo y el carasol. Como los perros acudían a lamer sangre, pusieron a uno de los guardas del duque de vigilancia para alejarlos. Nadie preguntaba. Nadie comprendía. No había guardias civiles que salieran al paso de los forasteros. (80-81)

As waves of terror spread throughout the town, the Nationalists’ rise to power is insidious. The disappearance of people seems to have a profound impact on residents because “ nadie sabía cuándo mataban a la gente. Es decir, lo sabían, pero nadie los veía. Lo hacían por la noche, y durante el día el pueblo parecía en calma” (Sender 82). Making people disappear is a very typical act when an authoritarian regime is in the process of taking over or trying to maintain power. The residents are affected by this demonstration of power and employ auto-censorship for their own well-being. As the previous quote indicates, fear as a power mechanism attacks and breaks the spirit of the individual, providing for the facilitation of power. The majority of these executions take place during the night, thus conjuring images by Francisco Goya y Lucientes´ El tercero de mayo de 1808 set on the outskirts of Madrid during the night. The painting portrays Spaniards being executed by Napoleon´s soldiers during the Spanish War of Independence.

At this point we will consider how Foucault´s definition of power is based on the importance of the confession. For Foucault, “the confession has spread its effects far and wide. It plays a part in justice, medicine, education, family relationships, in love relations, in the most ordinary affairs of everyday life, and in the most solemn rites” (59), a definition that reflects the application of the automobile in finding the whereabouts of and the murder of Paco el del Molino in the novel.
The question may now be posed, if the confession has had such an impact on life, then how is it exactly carried out to obtain information? For Foucault the confession:

Is a ritual of discourse in which the speaking subject is also the subject of the statement; it is also a ritual that unfolds within a power relationship, for one does not confess without the presence (or virtual presence) of a partner who is not simply the interlocutor but the authority who requires the confession, prescribes and appreciates it, and interviews in order to judge, punish, forgive, console and reconcile. (61-62)

In other words, this “ritual of discourse” is realized by the individual who listens and then acts upon the verdict, for example, a teacher, physician, priest, or parent. For Foucault defining power is less important than working toward “a definition of specific domain formed by relations of power, and total determination of the instruments that will make possible its analysis” (82). In Réquiem por un campesino español, one of these instruments that also accompanies the confession is torture, which Foucault labels as one of “the dark twins” (59). For Foucault, torture “has accompanied it like a shadow and supported it when it could go no further” (59). Included along with torture is execution which according to Foucault “is like an additional shame that justice is ashamed to impose on the condemned man; so it keeps its distance from the act, tending always to entrust it to others, under the seal of secrecy” (9-10). This is never so true as in this work by Sender, where light is literally shed on the disappearance of those people being executed at night in the headlights of a car.

The previous mention of repression is also relevant here, for we saw that Franco delegated these clandestine duties to the secret police and those people sympathetic to the Nationalist cause. The result was either the exile or assassination of many of the top intellectuals. Sender, Goytisolo, and Alberti, for example, were forced to flee from Franco’s dark iron hand of death. Those who stayed often met their fate via executions carried out in the countryside in secret. The prime example is the execution of Federico García Lorca early in the conflict, a scene immortalized in the movie The Disappearance of García Lorca (1997).

In Foucault’s analysis:
power must be understood in the first instance as the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization; as the process which, through ceaseless struggles and confrontations, transforms, strengthens or reverses them; as the support which these force relations find in one another, thus forming a chain or a system, or on the contrary, the disjunctions and contradictions which isolate them from one another. (92)

This idea once again alludes to the idea of the theological based confession, an information obtaining system that produces judgment. Moreover, for Foucault, power is present in most situations, for example, the issue at hand in Sender´s novel, the Spanish Civil War, suggests that, “power is always already there, that one is never outside it, that there are no margins for those who break with the system to gambol in” (141). At the same time, “where there is power, there is resistance… These points of resistance are present everywhere in the power network” (95). Power is omnipresent throughout Sender´s novel and comes to a head in the final execution scene involving Paco, with the power network represented by those individuals in opposition to Paco and his generation´s ideas. Foucault establishes in The Confession of the Flesh (1977) that: “in reality power means relations, a more-or-less organized, hierarchical, co-ordinated cluster of relations” (198). The two most important hierarchical institutions when referring to authority are organized religion and government, but Foucault reminds us that:

power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society… power is exercised from innumerable points, in the interplay of nonegalitarian and mobile relations. (93-94)

Referring back to Discipline and Punish, we see that the driving force behind power is the body, and how punishment now shifts its focus from the prisoner´s body to his soul, in a process described thusly:

The human body was entering a machinery of power that explores it, breaks it down and rearranges it. A political anatomy, which was also a mechanics of power, was being born; it defined how one may have a hold over others´ bodies, not only so that they may do what one wishes, but so that they may operate as one wishes, with the techniques, the speed and the efficiency that one determines. (138)
For this reason, execution or the threat of it is enough to put fear into the soul of the being. Torture and execution, alternatives employed by the Franco regime, indeed break the spirits of many men. As we see in the novel, the use of the automobile can also create a breaking of the spirit. The automobile, a source of meta-powers from which negative uses of power stem, is seen in Paco’s execution in Don Cástulo Pérez’s car’s headlights, thus linking it symbolically to both Paco’s martyrdom and demise. It suggests political implications as well as anti-religious criticism.

The first appearance of the automobile in the novel is after the reception following Paco’s marriage to Águeda when: “El señor Cástulo intervino, y ofreció llevarlos en su automóvil. Al oír este ofrecimiento, el cura puso atención. No creía que Cástulo fuera tan amigo de la casa” (Sender 58). Mosén Millán’s perplexity is curious, and for the reader foreshadows the role Don Cástulo Pérez will play later in the book. In addition to Millán’s curiosity, La Jerónima’s traditional, rural, feminine instinct also foreshadows the negative events that will be taking place later in the town. Her reaction is the antithesis to this negative, macho automobile syndrome being used to spread power and authority. Although matrimony is a sacred bond in which two lives are reborn and forged into one, for Paco and Águeda this is a new beginning, but the sinister presence of Don Cástulo Pérez anticipates tragedy. In fact, when Mosén Millán, later under pressure from the centurión, reveals Paco’s hiding place, it is Don Cástulo Pérez’s car that is used to facilitate the executions on that fateful night.

This last dramatic scene shows how the information system of the confession helps gather the knowledge used to produce power and, indeed, how the meta-power/automobile connection results in a negative system of power. Sender illustrates this when Paco and two others are convicted of supporting Republican ideals. During the night time, the three men are taken to the cemetery. The image of the cemetery invokes religious considerations, for, of course, Sender is criticizing the role the church played in Franco’s rise to power and indicating support for the constitution that the Republic drafted in which: “anti-clericals such as Azaña seemed eager to grind the clergy into the mud” (Williams 198). This attitude was reflected in Article 26 which: “removed Catholicism as the official religion, forbade religious orders from teaching, abolished clerical salaries, legalized divorce, and paved the way to disbanding the Jesuits… later laws banned Catholic burials
unless requested in the deceased’s will and prohibited such things as religious processions and ringing church bells” (Williams 198). The cemetery, then, takes on a new meaning, not just as part of the hierarchical religious power, but also as a symbol of martyrdom.

Transported to the cemetery, and lined up against a nearby wall, the accused, the centurión remembers, have not been given the opportunity for a last confession. Here Foucault’s theory of the confession as a system of gaining knowledge in order to establish power is essential. The centurión sends for Mosén Millán, who arrives by car, and we thus see a link between the automobile and negative power involving government and religion:

Éste se extrañó de ver que lo llevaban en el coche del señor Cástulo. (Él lo había ofrecido a las nuevas autoridades.) El coche pudo avanzar hasta el lugar de la ejecución. No se había atrevido Mosén Millán a preguntar nada. Cuando vio a Paco, no sintió sorpresa alguna, sino un gran desaliento. Se confesaron los tres. Uno de ellos era un hombre que había trabajado en la casa de Paco. El pobre, sin saber lo que hacía, repetía fuera de sí una vez y otra entre dientes: “Yo me acuso, padre..., yo me acuso, padre...” El mismo coche del señor Cástulo servía de confesionario, con la puerta abierta y el sacerdote sentado dentro. El reo se arrodillaba en el estribo. Cuando Mosén Millán decía *ego te absolvo*, dos hombres arrancaban el penitente y volvían a llevarlo al muro. (99)

At this point the biblical metaphor takes shape; the sacrifice of the young, idealistic scapegoat, the grouping of the three gentleman that expedite power in the town, the involuntary and ironic admission implicit in the words “yo me acuso padre” (99) are all counterbalanced by the unsettling image of the modern monolithic car.

Confession in this passage is employed by the Nationalist faction to achieve the following: learning the names of other Republican supporters in the town, hearing self accusations of participation in Republican ideals (namely those expressed in Article 26 of the constitution), and any other sins for which the accused may wish to repent. The first two are the most important, because they convey knowledge that will help establish more power/authority structure within the town. Rooting out the supporters of the Republic, the Nationalists´ task becomes much easier.

Thus we have a means of transportation facilitating a negative power structure in
conjunction with religion. The only description we have of the car is the fact that it has a running board, the door is open, and the priest is in the back seat of this make-shift confessional. The car aids in facilitating the rise to power. Mosén Millán and the accused represent a visual micro-structure illustrated by their corporal positions: Mosén Millán in the car, thus reflecting a higher position and the accused on the running board with his feet on the ground, symbolizing the lowest tier of the hierarchy and those suppressed by institutions of negative power.

We have mentioned in passing the martyrdom implicit in this final execution scene. Paco, upon confessing, pleads with Mosén Millán to intervene: “Usted sabe que soy inocente, que somos todos inocentes...Mosén Millán, usted me conoce – gritaba enloquecido” (Sender 100-02). His pleading, not withstanding, Mosén Millán will not and/or cannot intervene: “Sí, hijo. Todos sois inocentes; pero, ¿qué puedo hacer yo?... A veces, hijo mío, Dios permite que muera un inocente. Lo permitió de su propio Hijo, que era más inocente que vosotros tres” (Sender 100). All along Sender has set the reader up to see Paco as a Christ figure, a martyr sacrificed for his beliefs. Just as Peter denied Christ three times, Mosén Millán denies his knowledge of Paco´s whereabouts (see “Religious Symbolism in Sender´s Mosén Millán” by Cedric Bussette). Secondly, Compitello in “Réquiem por un campesino español and the Problematics of Exile” further points out that the mass, “draws near, only the three responsible for Paco´s death appear to hear it: Don Valeriano, Don Gumersindo, and Don Cástulo Pérez. Each attempts to pay for the mass, and each, in turn, is refused by the priest” (93). Paco is the Republican lamb that must be sacrificed to inspire future generations to fight and die for a new democratic, liberal Spain, in the Republic tradition. The Christ-figure image becomes more overt when Paco is finally taken to the nearby wall and placed between the two other men. This scene symbolizes the crucifix of Christ placed on the cross between two thieves. As mentioned earlier this is reminiscent of Goya´s painting, El tercero de mayo de 1808, where French soldiers are executing innocent Spanish civilians for their rioting against the occupation of Madrid by Napoleon´s troops. The main figure is dressed in a white shirt and pants with his arms stretched out in defiance. This painting shares with the scene in Sender´s novel a curious feature: the use of light.
In Goya’s painting, the accused are lined up against the wall, and the representation of the Christ-like figure is illuminated by lanterns that throw light, so the victims can see their assassins. Perhaps the lanterns were put there just to “shed light,” so the French soldiers could see what they were doing. In either case, we are interested in the semiotic connotation, which is the Christ-like figure and Goya’s use of light to symbolize the spirit of Spanish patriotism. Sender, a century later, writes:

Los faros del coche- del mismo coche donde estaba Mosén Millán- se encendieron, y la descarga sonó casi al mismo tiempo sin que nadie diera órdenes ni se escuchara voz alguna. Los otros dos campesinos cayeron, pero Paco, cubierto de sangre, corrió hacia el coche. (102)

Horrifying yet symbolic, the Christ figure briefly escapes for one final attempt for freedom. Paco, covered in blood symbolizing the blood shed during the Civil War and the lives that were sacrificed, tries to break through the power structure, pleading, “-Mosén Millán, usted me conoce- gritaba enloquecido…Pregunten a Mosén Millán; él me conoce” (Sender 102). Sender continues:

Quiso entrar, no podía. Todo manchaba de sangre. Mosén Millán callaba, con los ojos cerrados y rezando. El centurión puso su revólver detrás de la oreja de Paco...

Se oyeron dos o tres tiros más. Luego siguió un silencio en el cual todavía susurraba Paco: “Él me denunció..., Mosén Millán, Mosén Millán...”... El sacerdote seguía en el coche, con los ojos abiertos, oyendo su nombre sin poder rezar.

Alguien había vuelto a apagar las luces del coche. (102-03)

The lights of the car represent Paco’s brief life, a tragic, young martyr who meets his fate in Christ-like fashion. He is more than just a Christ figure; his youth represents the Republic, which also had a brief life span, from 1931-1936. His life is like a candle that emits life but is snuffed out by a strong repressive force, the Franco regime, that will not allow Spain to breathe democratically until after 1975.

As we have seen, Sender depicts the automobile as an enforcer to help facilitate the acquisition of power. The car as an instrument of death, in Foucauldian terms, is just another tool that falls under the category of torture, a treacherous device that institutions have and will constantly employ in power/authority situations. Although the automobile for Sender is death on wheels, it will go on to affect Spain in a very positive way during the
decades of the mid-1950s to the 1970s. As mentioned in Chapter I, after the years of the repression illustrated in Réquiem por un campesino español, the Franco administration would begin focus on industrialization and a better standard of life for the average citizen, the regime ultimately appealing to the United States for aid. With a strong group of advisors, Franco will guide Spain and realize this goal, an achievement that can be measured by the presence of an automobile manufacturers in the country. It was the dawning of an era that was defined by one car and one alone, the unforgottably famous SEAT 600.
CHAPTER III

El SEAT 600: GOOD TIMES NEVER SEEMED SO GOOD

The phrase “the decade of the sixties” inspires wildly different images in the minds of individuals throughout the world. For aging U.S. hippies, the assassination of President John F. Kennedy marked an end of innocence and hurled the nation into a period of turbulence: the Vietnam War, civil rights protests, the Cold War, and the assassinations of Malcolm X, Martin Luther King Jr., and Robert Kennedy. At the same time, members of this “flower child generation” would tell you that it was a time of cultural revolution symbolized by Woodstock and such popular phrases as “smoking pot,” “feeling groovy,” “making love not war” and “peace, brother”. The music also underwent some impressive changes as evidenced by the Beatles, Motown, and the psychedelic guitar licks and vocals of Jimi Hendricks. Moreover, the space race between the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics came to a climax on July 20, 1969, with Neil Armstrong’s declaration, “That’s one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind.” Although much attention was focused on the United States during the 1960s, it must be remembered that this decade shaped an entire world.

For example, the Vietnamese from the same “baby boom” generation probably have memories of United States troops mobilizing and searching for “Charlie” in their country. For them, this decade can be captured in one word: pain. Or, when thinking about the Cold War, many tend to associate this word with the renowned Berlin Wall or “the iron curtain.” Yet, for most Czechs between the ages of 50 and 60, the spring of 1968 invokes memories of the Soviet invasion of their capital, Prague. For them the decade could be summed up by the word: hatred. In contrast with all that was taking place in the world, Spain continued to be ruled by a fascist regime under the strong hand of Generalissimo Francisco Franco.

Almost half a century later Spanish society is showing a renewed interest in this era. Many books, movies, essays and plays have been written about this era, but current Spanish
television offers an interesting and original perspective. The prime time Thursday night sitcom Cuéntame cómo pasó examines “(...) desde la óptica de un preadolescente, una sociedad en constante embulloición. Es la visión tiernamente humorística de un narrador que revive sus años juveniles desde la perspectiva de su madurez” (TeleInteligente 1). Similar to the U.S. sitcom Wonder Years, popular during the late 1980s and early 1990s, the Spanish viewer can, “a través de los ojos de Carlos Alcántara, observar la transformación de una familia de aquella época” (TeleInteligente 1).

In Spain, during the 1960s, the benchmark of comfort status was not measured solely by colored television, but rather in owning a car. In Cuéntame cómo pasó, for example, “Los Alacántra viven en un modesto piso del extrarradio madrileño y ya piensan en adquirir un ´600´” (TeleInteligente 1). For many Spaniards during this era, the SEAT 600 was for the middle class family the heart of the “The Spanish Dream,” an idea that can be seen in the works of some authors, such as Miguel Delibes

Born in Valladolid in 1920, Delibes, was in high school at the time of the Civil War. However, in 1938, seeing that the war was dragging out, he decided to volunteer in the Navy. Upon completion of the war, he became a cartoonist for the newspaper El Norte de Castilla, which he eventually became director of until 1963. In 1946, he married Ángeles de Castro, who would influence his literary vocation. His first novel, La sombra del ciprés es alargada (1947), won the Premio Nadal in 1948. A master of the Spanish language, Delibes has written on hunting, social injustices, life in the country, nature, life in Castilla-León, ignorant Spain of the Franco era, and the need for progress. Thanks to these themes and Delibes´s lengthy career we are provided intense insight into Spanish society of the Franco era.

As mentioned, one of the social issues tackled by Delibes in the mid-60s is progress and its battle against ignorant Spain, which is the basis of a dream that is also brilliantly documented in Spanish literature by Delibes´ novel Cinco horas con Mario (1966) where the reader encounters Mario´ s widow Carmen, who sits in front of her dead husband´ s coffin and berates the dead body for not purchasing a SEAT 600 for the family, thus playing a central role in the interpretation of the work.

For people like the characters in Delibes´ novel and in the fictional television series, the 1960s in Spain represented a time of personal economic growth and freedom.
For many, “los años del hambre” served as a sobering reminder of what Spain once was under the autocratic economic system of the 1940s and early 1950s when food rationing continued as late as 1952. At the end of the 1950s, however the Franco regime had implemented El Plan de Estabilización de 1959, which formed the basis of the small economic miracle that lifted Spain from the doldrums. Perhaps the most important phase of this plan was the law that redefined foreign investments.

In a stroke of brilliance, this law promoted joint ventures between Spanish companies and international investors. This phase of the plan helped stabilize the peseta and begin to open Spain toward the decade of the 1960s. The roots were firmly planted: “with the start of the Cold War in the late forties, Franco could play his anti-communist card with the Americans, well aware of Spain’s strategic location. The ice was broken in 1950 with an American ambassador to Madrid and a loan” (Williams 237). In spite of a general dislike between President Truman and Franco, relations between the two countries would improve. This relationship was portrayed in the Spanish cinema: “one amusing film in 1952 was Bienvenido, Mr. Marshall, a comedy by Berlanga about the new connection between the wealthy, powerful United States and impoverished but proud Spain” (Williams 237).

One of the most important foreign investments made at this time occurred early on in the decade of the 1950s. In 1953 the United States Navy was looking to establish bases in Spain for the Mediterranean Fleet in order to help protect interests in the Middle East. President Dwight D. Eisenhower, a former military man, came to an agreement with Franco, “permitting four American bases on Spanish soil in return for substantial aid ($1.8 billion by 1965)” (Williams 237). As a result of this agreement, “the treaty would help launch Spain’s economic recovery and indirectly its later political form, but at this time its most important result was to legitimize the Franco regime” (Williams 237). Moreover, as previously mentioned, corporate sectors such as John Deere and Ford would later move into Spain, eager to spread their products to a country that was definitely suffering from a lack of industrialization and agricultural production. Their presence also created more jobs which aided Spaniards in their personal post-war recovery. However, another element that helped open the country was the regime’s astuteness in taking advantage of the country’s historical and natural tourist structures.
According to Mariano Mellado Gutiérrez of Madrid, “España, en los años ´60, abrió porque muchos del norte de Europa vineron para aprovechar del sol y las playas en las Costas del Levante y Sol.” In fact, “numbers of foreign visitors rocketed from 4 million in 1960 to 14 million in 1965 and would go through the roof in the next decade” (Williams 239). It became essential to promote tourism for it “promoted jobs and badly needed foreign exchange for purchasing imports such as petroleum” (Williams 239). As a result, towns such as Benidorm (Costa del Levante) and Torremolinos (Costa del Sol) surged “with the influx of tourists (…) as Spain seemed to go mad with building projects along its coast” (Williams 239). The focus of this construction boom was not only to attract those from northern Europe, but also many people here in Spain who were beginning to see the benefits of the Plan de Estabilización during the mid 1960s. As money became more available and plentiful, many Spaniards were able to save not only for a car, but an apartment to escape the harsh summers of the cities.

While some were escaping the cities for plush summer vacations in the previously mentioned destinations, the populace began to shift from the country to the city. The main factor that determined this population shift was the huge influx in industries that were creating a surplus of jobs. Statistics indicate that “in 1960 agriculture still employed 42 per cent of the labor force, but this had shrunk to 25 percent a decade later. By 1970 1.6 million Andalusians had left their region, and half of them were living in Barcelona” (Williams 239). For every action there is a reaction, and, in Spain´s case this was felt in industrial growth: “During the decade Spain´s overall growth rate was second only to Japan´s, and in the 15 years after 1960, industry´s share of exports rose from 21 to 78 per cent. By 1965 Spain ranked sixth world wide in shipbuilding, ahead of the United States” (Williams 239).

At this point, the legitimacy of the Franco regime was very well established, and the rewards of the treaty with the United States were beginning to be reaped. Prior to this economic miracle, however, it was known that “economics was not Franco´s strong suit, and there are indications that he never grasped how bad things really were in those first years” (Williams 236). The credit for the economic miracle; therefore, cannot be attributed solely to Franco; attention should be given to a group of individuals who were members of a powerful and influential religious group. Tracing the presence of Opus Dei in the Franco
regime and its role in the economic miracle that took place during the sixties will help explain Carmen´s characters´ dream in Cinco horas con Mario (1966): El Seat 600.

The origins of Opus Dei are traced back to 1928, when a young 26 year old Catholic priest, José María Escrivá, founded this group in Aragón. The basic fundamental philosophies of this organization are found in Escrivá´s work The Way, which “reads like a Spanish version of the Protestant work ethic” (Williams 239). The following summary, cited on the official home page of the Opus Dei, explains the ideas presented in Escrivá´s work:

ordinary people live up to their Christian calling in their day-to-day affairs by giving them the spiritual support and formation they need to achieve this. It promotes an awareness of the universal call to holiness- the radical idea that every person is called by God to be a saint- especially holiness in and by means of one´s ordinary work and daily routine. (…)The primary apostolic work of Opus Dei is that carried out by each of its members, as free and responsible individuals acting on their own initiative. There are also corporate undertakings in which Opus Dei oversees the spiritual and doctrinal aspects. These are always not-for-profit ventures. (Opus Dei 1)

Aside from these non-profit ventures, “Opus Dei strives to increase Catholic influence in all realms of society, especially among the intellectual elite” (Williams 239). One of those realms of society mentioned by Williams is the domain of politics. The presence of the Opus Dei in the politics of the Franco regime has been debated for the past two decades, and many have tried to ascertain exactly what type of influence this religious group had on the politics of the Franco regime. Moreover, other questions have been raised on the interpretation of the Opus Dei´s attitude towards involvement in issues between the Catholic church, Opus Dei, and the regime. However, Giuseppe Romano, in his article “Érase una vez Franco” discusses the stance that Opus Dei took in regard to the politics of the Franco regime:
En realidad el Opus Dei no formula un programa político (...) ni posee los instrumentos ideológicos necesarios para desarrollar teológicamente la autonomía de la esfera política y el consiguiente pluralismo en ese terreno. Hay en el Opus Dei una separación implícita, de hecho, de la religión respecto a la política. A esa concepción desideologizada de la política como técnica, corresponde una interiorización de la fe de clara naturaleza burguesa. Por paradójico que resulte, es la pobreza política del Opus lo que explica su situación y su papel en el franquismo. (261)

Therefore, when Franco began to fill posts within his government, the names of many individuals associated with this organization came to the forefront and were inserted into positions where their talents could be most beneficial. It was not a question of religion influencing politics, although that cannot be discounted; rather the presence of Opus Dei grew more noticeable through the qualifications of those individuals known as “la gente de Carrero Blanco.” Along with Franco’s consent, Luis Carrero Blanco’s support was equally important in making these appointments to government positions.

The name Carrero Blanco arrived on the Spanish political scene in 1957 when Franco overhauled his government. An ex-admiral, Blanco was Franco’s personal confidant for many years, a member of Opus Dei, and a military man like Franco. In an oral testimony, Gregorio Gil Martín expressed the feeling of most Spaniards: “Carrero Blanco hubiese sido un buen dirigente después de la muerte de Franco si no hubiese sido asesinado por ETA.” Assassinated while on his way to church in 1973, Carrero Blanco had been named President of the Government on July 11, 1973, by an ailing Franco who was looking to delegate some of the daily duties carried out by a Head of State. As a result of the assassination, Spain would begin to perceive the roots that would lead to the democratic transition and the restoration of the Bourbon monarchy after Franco’s death.

Of all the ministers appointed from various banks and universities that came to power, two individuals stand out from the rest: Mariano Navarro Rubio, was the Administrative Director of Banco Popular before accepting the position of Ministro de Hacienda. Secondly, Alberto Ullastres Calvo, a former Professor of History of Economics at la Universidad de Madrid, was named Ministro de Comercio. These two individuals were the first two members from Opus Dei to be appointed to posts within the government.
Others would follow, later, including Gregorio López Bravo as Ministro de Industria and, most notably, “el hombre de Carrero” Laureano López Bravo as Comisario General del Plan de Desarrollo Económico. For automobile historian Pablo Gimeno Valledor:

Estos “hombres de Carrero” trajeron nuevos aires a este país y pasaron a ser conocidos como los “tecnócratas” no significaba otra cosa que quienes ostenteaban esos puestos eran técnicos en general enormemente cualificados, es que fueron esos hombres que pusieron España en el camino de la Europa occidental y permitieron un desarrollo creciente y sostenido. (44)

Ullastres and Navarro Rubio’s claim to fame came in the form of a series of brilliant ideas mentioned earlier: El Plan de Estabilización de 1959. As stated, it was a plan “que no era en muchos aspectos sino un conjunto de normas liberalizadoras de la economía que recibieron el beneplácito del Fondo Monetario Internacional, y con ello comenzaron a llegar los créditos que salvaron al país que pudo progresar de forma ininterrumpida desde esas fechas y durante todos los años sesenta” (Gimeno Valledor 46).

Logically, the next question would be, how to measure Spain’s progress of Spain during this decade? The answer is quite simple for Gimeno Valledor, because “el SEAT 600 iba a convertirse en el símbolo por atonomasia de dicho crecimiento” (46). Indeed, the biggest benefactor of this economic miracle generated by those ministers was the automobile industry. Prior to the economic miracle, the automobile industry was virtually non-existent; many people purchased whatever was affordable, since there was not much that was affordable in the early days of the Franco regime, that is, during “los años de hambre” and the autocratic economic system. Therefore, as we approach Delibe’s Cinco horas con Mario, we will see that the SEAT 600 symbolized not only national progress, but also individual progress and a sense of liberty while revolutionizing an era.

The difference of opinion Carmen has with her deceased husband is fundamental in understanding the importance of the Seat 600 in Spanish society. Mario’s character is presented as one of anti-progress or perhaps just ignorance that is symbolized by his bicycle as a mode of transportation not only to and from work at the university, but for the family as a whole. These qualities as symbolized are evident in the argument that Carmen presents to rebut Mario’s unwillingness to acquire an automobile. For Carmen, not only is the lack of an automobile a focal point, but Mario’s bicycle as a mode of transportation is a symbol
of the lack of personal progress and their unmet need to belong to a social group within the society of the town where they live: “Mario, cariño, la bici no es para los de tu clase, que cada vez que te veía se me abrían las carnes, créeme, y no te digo nada cuando pusiste la sillita en la barra para el niño, te hubiese matado, que me hiciste llorar y todo” (Delibes 45).

Besides the disgust she feels toward the bicycle, the lack of an automobile symbolizing personal progress and social class identity is associated with one car in particular: El Seat 600. In this example, Carmen stresses the importance of having a Seat 600 and the pleasure it would give to the family: “Los niños se hubieran vuelto locos con un Seiscientos, Mario, y en lo tocante a mí, imagina, de cambiarme la vida. Pero no, un coche es un lujo, figúrate a estas alturas, cualquiera que te oiga, lo mismo que la cubertería” (Delibes 44). The importance of being like one of the others is equally important, hence the following:

 pero qué menos que un Seiscientos, Mario, si un Seiscientos lo tienen hoy hasta las porteras, pero si les llaman ombligos, cariño, ¿no lo sabías?, porque dicen que los tiene todo el mundo. ¡Cómo hubiera sido, Mario!, de cambiarle la vida, fíjate; no quiero pensararlo. Pero ya, ya, un automóvil es un lujo, una cátedra no da para tanto. (Delibes 91-92)

Interestingly, the attitude expressed in these harsh complaints also alludes to another important aspect of the importance of the Seat 600 during the decade of the 1960s: the feeling of personal liberty. Her words indicate that Carmen is concerned with her place as a woman in Spanish society. The need to have a change in her life is evident, for she is in a situation where there is little if any opportunity to advance due to the limitations laid down by her husband. Of the many things that the SEAT 600 contributed to Spanish popular culture during the 1960s, perhaps one of the most important was “la incorporación de la mujer al tráfico, especialmente al tráfico urbano, con la indudable ganancia de libertad e independencia que la motorización supuso y supone para la mujer” (Gimeno Valledor 27). Amparo Múñoz Solsona of Valencia reflects this concern with personal transportation when asked about her first car: “Cuando era joven había pocas mujeres que tenían un coche. Yo era una excepción porque mi padre tuvo una perspectiva diferente de la vida gracias a su educación en el extranjero. Me compró un coche y mis amigas y yo íbamos por todas partes, me sentía especial y había un sentimiento de libertad personal.”
Carmen’s problem with Mario is not limited to the lack of personal progress but includes her lack of independence as a woman in society. Her argument also demonstrates not only the difference of mentalities, but the difference between Spain and other developed European nations at the end of the 1950s. At the time, “las mujeres al volante comienzan a verse en algunos países europeos, los más desarrollados, tras la primera Guerra mundial, cuando cambiaron las modas, los peinados y, sobre todo, los hábitos de no pocas féminas, especialmente en las clases burguesas” (Gimeno Valledor 27).

Ironically, Mario’s character presents a strong contradiction, for he is an intellectual, many of whom, including university professors, had to flee Spain. Moreover, if we consider his full name, Mario Díez Collado, we see through a semiotic connotation of the second last name that his character is anti-progressive. At the very beginning of the novel, the reader encounters a death notice typical of the ones that appear in many Spanish newspapers. In this particular obituary we see the names of all the members of Mario’s family, his age, and the day of his death. In addition, the last name Collado suggests an association with two Spanish verbs. The first, “collar,” means collar in English, implying a sense of restraint, as the restraint seen in Mario’s anti-progressive attitude symbolized by his unwillingness to purchase a vehicle. The other verb “callar” in English means to be silent. He is, of course, silenced because he is dead, but Carmen’s monologue reflects the silence that Mario employed in life. Carmen also alludes to the fact that Mario was sexually silent, hinting that he is perhaps not only intellectually but sexually impotent.

Therefore, he is the Spain that is dead to the rest of Europe, a Spain that is not as advanced as France and England where “son frecuentes las estampas de automóviles conducidos por mujeres” (Gimeno Valledor 27). Mario is the Spain where so many were “más atrasados económicamente y mentalmente, y estos fenómenos, aunque se daban, afectaban a porcentajes muy reducidos de la población; el automóvil era algo fundamentalmente masculino” (Gimeno Valledor 27). On the other hand, for Carmen and other Spaniards:

la aparición del Seat 600 permitió a muchas familias de clase media y media alta la incorporación a las mismas del “segundo coche” y, aunque fuese algo discriminatorio por lo de “segundo”, ese coche era el de la mujer, y ésta disponía al fin de un vehículo de manera regular y, sobre todo, tenía la independencia que dicho
vehículo permitía. También en eso de la incorporación de la mujer al automóvil gracias al Seat 600 podría hacerse un estudio sociológico. (Gimeno Valledor 27)

Counterpointing Carmen´s feelings toward her deceased husband, Gimeno Valledor tells us that “muchos hombres sentían ese incremento femenino en el tráfico rodado como una pérdida de `territorio propio´” (28). Perhaps this is one of the reason, besides being anti-progressive, that Mario was unwilling to purchase a car. It could be argued that “La denominada liberalización de la mujer, en lo que a España concierne, pasa por el Seat 600 en una medida nada despreciable” (Gimeno Valledor 28). The Seat 600 contributed to the personal freedom and liberation of the population in general, however, not only to women. One aspect of this liberation was the long weekend day trips that many young people made during this time, an impossibility for her that further provokes Carmen´s disgust with Mario when she thinks of her situation in comparison with other women. The lack of mobility for Carmen is still an open wound, for, unlike other women, she is forced to go into town “a patita” (Delibes 96). Her annoyance provokes this outburst:

el que me quitases el capricho de un coche. Comprendo que a poco de casarnos eso era un lujo, pero hoy un Seiscientos lo tiene todo el mundo, Mario, hasta las porterás si me apuras, que a la vista está. Nunca lo entenderás, pero a una mujer, no sé cómo decirte, le humilla que todas sus amigas vayan en coche y ella a patita, que, te digo mi verdad, pero cada vez que Esther o Valentina o el mismo Crescente, el ultramarinero, me hablaban de su excursión del domingo me enfermaba, palabra. (Delibes 40)

Carmen´s association of the Seat 600 with travel is accurate, according to Gimeno Valledor: “eso del apartamento o del chalet del fin de semana, e incluso del veraneo en la costa o la montaña, con todo lo que lleva aparejado de movimiento económico, es algo que en España y por los españoles se inicia con el Seat 600, porque turismo sí había, pero los turistas eran fundamentalmente extranjeros (28).”

The decade of the 1960s, the tourism and construction boom period, was an era when many foreigners came to take advantage of the climate and wonderful beaches. At the same time, Spaniards were now exercising their own freedom, by taking many domestic and international trips in their brand new Seat 600: “es con el 600 como a su vez miles de
españoles comienzan a ser turistas fuera de España, aunque fuese en salidas breves, casi tímidas, de unos pocos kilómetros fuera de nuestras fronteras” (Gimeno Valledor 29).

Indeed, Carmen´s desire to escape from the repressive noose in the form of her anti-progressive husband is seen to be legitimate.

The personal testimony of José Tuset Barrachina of Valencia exemplifies this new experience: “El primer coche que compré fue un SEAT 600, fue blanco. El primer viaje fue a Pantons de Tous que es unos 44 kilómetros desde Valencia con un grupo de amigos en plan excursión. Sentí una libertad personal porque muchos jóvenes no tenían un coche. Luego lo preparé con tubo de escape para hacer rallys.”

By way of comparison, it could be argued that the SEAT 600 was very much like the Ford Model T that helped revolutionize the United States. Indeed the automobile did revolutionize 1960s Spain. It now seems incredible that “when the first SEAT factory was built in 1952, managers worried that the market could not absorb a hundred cars a month; by the 1970s SEAT employed 20,000 workers, and Spanish automakers churned out 750,000 cars a year” (Williams 239). With these astounding numbers it is not surprising to see that: “El Seat 600 fue el primer automóvil de muchos españoles y el primer coche que entró en muchas familias en las que, desde generaciones, no sólo había coche, sino que lo que siempre hubo fue penuria, y para las que el coche propio era algo reservado únicamente ´a los ricos´” (Gimeno Valledor 25).

Prior to the success of the Seat 600, the prime method of personal transportation was motorcycles, most notably the Vespa. The popularity of the motorcycle during that time is reflected in a personal testimony by Amelia Mellado Gutiérrez of Madrid: “Una vez mi marido cogió su Vespa y con un amigo recorrieron toda Italia.” In Spain, today, motorcycles are considered a sporty means of transportation. During the 1950s, “el número de motos era de unas 220.000, lo que no permitía hablar de motorización masiva, pero sí suponía un inicio importante de la misma,” but when the Seat 600 began to replace the motorcycle as the main method of transportation, “se matricularon en España 31.184 automóviles y 100.158 motos” (Gimeno Valledor 53).

Such statistics strengthen Carmen´s argument, although it is hard to believe that Mario was so totally backwards in an era in which Spain´s economy was dramatically improving. The novel´s publication and Mario´s death both occur in the year 1966. By that
year the Plan de Estabilización was in full swing, and Spain was coming out of the
doldrums. Moreover, given the numbers, the mere idea of a bicycle as a principal method
of personal transportation appears almost anachronistic during that time period and gives
more credence to Carmen’s disenchanted discourse.

The Seat 600 as stated was the first vehicle to became affordable for the average
Spaniard. It made waves in Spanish popular culture that are still felt today and was a
sterling example of the progress made by a nation and a government recovering from a
bloody civil war. On a personal level, the Seat 600 was also a symbol of a personal
freedom and progress that had never been enjoyed up until that time. Although a Seat 600
would be a symbol of success and would represent a change in her lifestyle, Carmen’s
digust with Mario does not stop there. Just as she has compared her personal situation with
that of other women in the town where she lives, she measures her lifeless husband against
his fellow colleagues at the university: “Desengáñate, querido, hoy un coche es un artículo
de primera necesidad, ahí tienes al propio don Nicolás, un Milquinientos, y si tanto caso le
haces para unas cosas, a ver por qué no le imitas en todas, que me da rabia de verdad, que
para lo malo sea San Nicolás y para lo bueno, un cero a la izquierda” (Delibes 162).

The character of don Nicolás, Mario’s boss at the university, is the symbol of the
success of fruitful labor within the university community. However, Carmen leads the
reader to believe that Mario was totally incapable of sharing in this economic success due
to his impotent human existence. Once again, Carmen goes back to the automobile as a
means of comparison: “un Milquinientos, que es lo que yo digo, una cosa es predicar y otra
dar trigo, que mucho igualdad y todas esas historias pero ya le ves a él” (Delibes 92). In
this case, the automobile for personal success is not the Seat 600, but rather another model
known as the Seat 1500.

The Seat 1500, like the Seat 600, was designed to allow people to move and enjoy a
personal sense of liberty. However, aside from the size and price differences, the Seat 1500
was destined for a different market. A four-door vehicle, the Seat 1500 was much bigger
than the Seat 600 and was meant to be a family vehicle. Its function was to provide large
families the same opportunities to enjoy personal freedom as the owners of the Seat 600
had.
The Seat 1500 replaced the various models of the Seat 1400, which were the first automobiles ever produced in Spain by Seat between the years 1953 to 1964, and according to Gimeno Valledor: “el primer pilar sobre el que se asentó y desarrolló la aventura de Seat en España” (50). The 1400 in turn gave way to the Seat 1500 which would “formará parte del paisaje urbano y rutero del país hasta casi nuestros días” (Gimeno Valledor 50). Aside from being a vehicle for large families, the 1500 was a luxury automobile with an upgraded engine and more horsepower. Although important, it did not sell in great numbers like the Seat 600, perhaps because its price was practically double that of the Seat 600.

Don Nicolás’s situation in the novel demonstrates that the 1500 was not just a car that provided freedom for those with large families but was also a symbol of the upper-class bracket who were reaping the benefits of the Plan de Estabilización. Even though a robust economy was beginning to unfold, there was still a tremendous gap between the social classes in economic terms. Many could afford a Seat 600, but the Seat 1500 was the model associated with highly successful families and individuals. Carmen is painfully aware that a Seat 600, then, is not enough for her: “Eso por un lado, que si pones peseta a peseta, una detrás de otra, lo que Encarna representa, mañana un Seiscientos, Mario, ¡qué digo!, un Milquinientos y puede que me quede corta” (Delibes 175). As she looks for any route to escape her repressed situation, everything and everyone is used as an instrument in constructing her deconstructive attitude towards Mario.

For many Spaniards, its influence was even seen in popular slang phrases; for example, Mariano Mellado Gutiérrez of Madrid states that, “los jóvenes de mi época usaban la calidad del Seat 600 como medio de comparación y era muy popular decir, no me puedes comparar esto con un Seiscientos.”

Carmen lashes out at Mario not only as a frustrated widow, but as the voice of a generation looking for personal freedom and liberty in an oppressive regime. The automobile was for many the escape mechanism that permitted them to forget life for a weekend and to enjoy a sense of progress in their lives. In the words of Amparo Solsona Muñoz of Valencia, “El Seat 600 definió una época en la historia de mi país.” Moreover, the automobile changed the role of women in society, as more and more women began to seek driver licenses. The Seat 600 was the medium for all of these feelings, whereas the 1500 was the symbol of ultimate progress for the individual who made it in society, the big
car for the big individual who managed to reap the benefits offered by the Plan de Estabilización.

The contributions of the automobile to Spanish society during the 1960s were enormous. As in the United States, the automobile in Spain also contributed to a now synonymous theme: sex. The sexual liberation of the 1960s in part can be traced to the automobile, which continues to be a popular and cheap venue for sexual relations. In an era when sex was a taboo topic in Spain, the automobile appears as a prime mover of sexual relations and liberation from a repressive regime. As a point of departure for this discussion, the novels Delibes´ Cinco horas con Mario (1966), Crónica del desamor (1979) by Rosa Montero, and Los santos inocentes (1981), also by Delibes will serve as examples of the literary expression of sexual liberation in Spanish culture using the automobile.
CHAPTER IV
WORKIN´ THE MOJO AND THE BACK SEAT MAMBO

The automobile has been a significant influence in facilitating sexual relations in Western Culture. On a smaller scale, this impact is reflected through Spanish literature as a tool for understanding the lifestyle of the 1960s and 1970s in Spain. During the Franco regime, Spain was wrapped in the iron grip of a repressive dictatorship that had a cozy alliance with the powerful Roman Catholic Church. Immediately after the Civil War, piety and morality were employed in order to unify the country even more, and sexual expression in public was harshly repressed and carried stiff penalties. The blatant displays of public affection today´s young Spanish couples freely exhibit and the topless and nude beaches sprinkling the Spanish coastline are surely direct results of going from a repressive regime to an open democracy.

Not surprisingly, the theme of sex and the automobile appears in Spanish popular music, in, for example Qué difícil es hacer el amor en un Simca 1000, performed by the Valencian group Los Inhumanos. The comically depicts the economic situation of a poor young man who finds it difficult to have sex in a small car. Although the Simca 1000 was popular during the 1980s, this song still reflects two important themes from the decades of the 1960s and 1970s. First, like Carmen in Cinco horas con Mario (1966), the protagonist is concerned with his economic situation: “Soy pobre y sólo pude comprar un Simca 1000 bastante vulgar. Soy pobre y sólo pude alquilar un picadero para ligar. Y cuando alguna me quiero cepillar, en mi coche me tengo que apañar” (Atame 1).

The automobile here symbolizes someone of a lower economic status, who can only afford a car that, unlike the infamous Seat 600 in the sixties, many link with limited success. But, the necessity of having a car to facilitate sexual encounters is equally important. In addition, it seems that the condition, size, and make of the car are significant
details. The frustration expressed in the chorus, “Qué difícil es hacer el amor en un Simca 1000, en un Simca 1000” (Atame 1) is illustrated through an amusing account of how the two individuals are limited to complicated sexual positions due to the lack of space:

El asiento no se echa para atrás y la postura a buscar tiene dificultad.

Pon tu pierna aquí, yo la pondré, allá tendremos que abrir la puerta de atrás.

El volante me vuelve a fastidiar ese no es el pito que debes tocar.

Cuando sea rico voy a comprar un autobús para pillar.

Y cuando alguna me quiero cepillar en mi coche me tengo que apañar. (Atame 1)

Besides music, film has also contributed to a more open attitude toward sexuality. The movies of Oscar Award winning director Pedro Almodóvar are quite provocative in many ways, including consideration of the automobile. In many cases, the automobile is not solely a representation of time, space, technology, power, and movement, but also sex; for example, the red automobile in the movie Kika (1993) has sexual connotations due in part to the overall theme of sex that runs throughout the movie.

In the 1960s, however, the Franco regime maintained a rigid stance towards sexual expression, so writers seeking to express themselves artistically and critically resorted to sexual connotations with the automobile to convey their messages. Therefore, this part of the study will focus on two periods of the Spanish novel dealing with sex and the automobile. The first novel we will consider, Cinco horas con Mario by Delibes, is relevant because of the issues Carmen has with her late husband Mario. Secondly, Los santos inocentes (1981), also by Delibes, is set in an undetermined part of rural Spain and depicts the poor lifestyle of farm workers suppressed by a young, wealthy landowner. Although written a few years after the Franco era, it provides a vision of the rural ambience experienced by so many during those years. Finally, Crónica del desamor (1979) by Rosa Montero offers a commentary on the sexual liberation and the situation of women during the years of the transition to democracy. Each of these novels is distinct in flavor, yet all are united by the common theme of sex and the automobile as a mirror of cultural and social commentary of Spain during the 1960s and 1970s.

Turning back to the decades of the 1950s and 1960s, the personal testimony of Teresa Díaz of Madrid provides some valuable insight to the generally repressed feeling of the era: “No podías caminar mano a mano como novios, ni dar besos en público. Había
policías en los parques que vigilaban a las personas jóvenes. También, ponían ropa en las estatuas desnudas y quitaron las pinturas desnudas de muchos sitios.” The regime’s attitude was established by Franco himself, although he was influenced by his deeply religious and pious wife, Doña Carmen Polo, who was put in charge of censoring the cinema. The same rigid system of censorship ruled over literature, hence the number of intellectuals who went into exile to create and use their works as instruments to criticize the regime. The economic miracle notwithstanding, a super-conservative attitude towards intellectuals and sexual expression was predominant.

Once again, our study turns to the Delibes novel *Cinco horas con Mario* and Carmen’s never-ending critical monologue directed toward her late husband. As discussed in the previous chapter, the main basis for her argument is Mario’s anti-progressive attitude and unwillingness to purchase a Seat 600 so they can be like the rest of the people. At the same time, Carmen begins to show that she is sexually frustrated due largely to Mario’s having neglected her sexual needs and fantasies because of Mario’s implied impotence sexually and as a human being. Carmen is forced to look to other outlets to fuel and fulfill her sexual desires. The automobile turns out to be the facilitator of these sexual needs and fantasies as portrayed through the Citroën DS that frequently appears throughout the novel.

The Citroën DS, otherwise known as the “Tiburón” for its shark-like body, is the ultimate fantasy machine for Carmen. Unlike the Seat 600 and the Seat 1500 that she so desperately wants to feel economically equal to the rest of her friends, the Tiburón makes her feel more sexually appreciated. For Carmen, the car and its driver are the epitome of machismo or, in other words, a real car for a real man. This Iberian macho is portrayed by the car’s driver Paco, a middle-aged Civil War veteran, a bachelor with enough sex appeal to turn the head of any woman. He represents the successful individual making it big during this era; indeed, the Tiburón and Paco are the image of the 1960s post-war stability that permeated the whole country. Paco is, moreover, an example of the typical rags to riches story that most people, including Carmen, admire, as is obvious as she talks about him:

"ya ves Paco, de chico le traían sin cuidado las palabras, lo mismo le daba una que otra, que confundía “perspectiva” con “preceptiva”, todo lo que trabucaba, que era una juerga, pues mírale ahora, se ríe del mundo, con un Tiburón de aquí hasta allá y
apaleando millones (...) que él me lo decía el otro día, que por bien que marche el Tiburón, hay veces que no basta, y a cada dos por tres, el avión, a París, Londres o Barcelona, ya se sabe, lo que son los negocios, donde sea. (Delibes 197)

For Carmen, Paco is the man she had hoped Mario would be. He is the epitome of financial stability and personal progress, and is above all a sexy, erotic masculine figure that encompasses all of her sexual desires. This feeling becomes apparent when she comments on his eyes which she perceives to be powerful and masculine: “Los ojos, para mi gusto, siempre los tuvo ideales, de un verde raro, entre de gato y de agua de piscina” (Delibes 161). In this sentence, two metaphors serve to convey a sense of seduction. First, the comparison of his eyes to those of a cat suggests a sly, suave, macho side of Paco. They are eyes that pierce Carmen´s soul, revealing her dissatisfaction with Mario. The second metaphor compares his eyes to water in a swimming pool, possibly implying that the eyes are a reflecting pool in which Carmen sees everything she cannot have due to Mario´s impotence on all levels of life. Moreover, this rare color of green that appears in the comparison could be a reference to a mysterious sexual element about Paco that intrigues Carmen. This notion of Carmen´s intense interest in Paco is revealed not only through her description of the eyes, but also other elements, such as a masculine odor that she considers to be more manly than that of Mario´s: “(...) que sólo podia oler, que olía a esa mezcla tan varonil de tabaco rubio y colonia de fricción que es un olor (...)” (Delibes 198). Strong masculine scents such as those being described serve to further highlight Carmen´s unhappiness; cologne and tobacco being two elements that are strongly linked to machismo and the assertion of one´s masculinity in Spanish culture. However, we can see that the description of Paco´s eyes and masculine odors are all strongly linked to the automobile. It is important to note that all interaction between Paco and Carmen takes place in the Tiburón where the potent combination these masculine attributes and the automobile serve as a strong elixir for Carmen´s arousal and desire for liberation.

The fascination with Paco continues one day when Carmen is waiting for the bus to go into town. She tells her deceased husband: “Paco me llevó al centro en su Tiburón, un cochazo de aquí hasta allá, no veas cosa igual, que yo estaba parada en la cola del autobús y, de repente, ¡plaf!, un frenazo, pero de película, ¿eh?” (Delibes 104). As we would expect, Carmen does not hesitate to accept due to her desire to have a car. While in the car,
Carmen begins to take a really good look at Paco, and it is then that her strong sexual attraction towards him becomes obvious. This feeling is conveyed as she begins to comment upon his driving: “(...) que Paco conduce con una seguridad como si no hubiera hecho otra cosa en su vida, y yo, como parezco tonta, el corazón paf, paf, paf, todo el tiempo, no por nada, sólo de verme encerrada en un coche con otro hombre que no fueras tú” (Delibes 104-05).

This fascination is further intensified when she links the car and Paco as if they were connected by an umbilical cord: “¡Y cómo conduce, Mario!, si da Gloria verle, no hace un solo movimiento de más, que parece que ha nacido con el volante entre las manos” (Delibes 162). Fascinating, definitely, yet more erotic than ever before is Carmen’s attitude. Attention must be given to the erotic, almost religious-like description of Paco’s hands on the steering wheel of the car, for they appeal to Carmen’s sensuality. Paco’s driving technique is a mix of finesse and machismo, for he dominates and controls the car, offering a sense of domination that Carmen observes, desires, and compares in her thoughts to her situation with Mario. Moreover, the language used imitates the erotic stimulation that a woman receives from the male touch. This male touch, portrayed by Paco’s handling of the steering wheel, sparks images that are very similar to the male’s caressing the female’s breasts during foreplay. Besides using his hands to control and dominate the car as if it were a woman, it can also be deduced that the automobile is an extension of Paco’s penis, seeking the seduction and conquest of Carmen. It is obvious that the Tiburón has been transformed into an instrument with sexual connotation, via Paco’s personality and description.

The Tiburón, also known as the Citröen DS, was manufactured in France from 1955-1975. The Tiburón driven by Paco in this novel can be linked to a model known as the Citröen DS 19, which was one of the first convertible models. The first model of this line was presented on August 31, 1960, in Bois de Boulogne (Rémond 64). In France, “Le cabriolet sera très apprécié des jeunes bourgeoises pour son élégance, son prestige et sa facilité de conduite” (Rémond 66). This description perfectly fits Paco’s personality and intensifies the situation of Carmen’s character in the novel, for the Tiburón is very elegant and Paco drives it as if he were in a movie. Moreover, Paco’s situation is such that he is an extremely successful individual during a time in which Spain was going through an
economic miracle. To have a car like the Citröen DS would have been seen as a luxury or a vehicle that defined an individual as being rich. It was an elegant car that demanded a prestigious, progressive attitude in its owner, hence the character of Paco. In addition to these comments the brief historical overview and intended market of the automobile, the body of the automobile is quite intriguing. To begin, the front part of this unique automobile is the reason why it has been called el “Tiburón” in Spanish. The front part of the car is very extended, with a hood that stretches out and curves downward leading to two elongated headlights that resemble the eyes of a shark. Moreover, the radiator grill and bumper area on the front of the automobile resemble what would be considered a shark’s mouth and denture region. For this reason, the automobile’s lengthened body appears to be like that of the shark, minus the fins, of course. Therefore, due to its physical and aggressive appearance, this automobile is a phallic device that is an extension of Paco’s personality and sexuality. Moreover, like a shark in the ocean, this automobile indeed portrays Paco as a sexual predator, while on the other hand, for Carmen the automobile represents all that is erotic and non-impotent.

Aside from the physical appearance of the Tiburón, the color scheme that Delibes has selected is quite interesting as well when related to this expression of sexuality. Intriguingly, of all the colors available in this model, Delibes has chosen the color red, a strong color that can be associated with power, passion, and sex due in part to Paco’s macho qualities and need to exert himself sexually. This combination of sexual connotations with the color red invites limitless and enthralling interpretations, in this case passionate extramarital sex between two lovers, Carmen and Paco, although their relationship never culminates in a sexual escapade, but rather a deep passionate kiss in the front seat of the Tiburón.

Besides the feelings of passion and energy mentioned, Carmen’s actions have been provoked by a form of sexual repression directly linked to her husband, who is nothing more than an impotent human being. In that light, Paco’s red Tiburón can also inspire the feelings of revolution and anger. This anger, fueled by Mario’s impotence, becomes a spirit of rebellion in which she is inclined to join Paco in his red Tiburón. Although hesitant at first, Carmen will accept Paco’s generosity to take her into town quite frequently. Moreover, red as a color of revolution could also be linked with Paco, for it is
his liberal attitude and assertion of masculinity that facilitate these sexual connotations. However, it could be that the red Tiburón also represents pro-Republic political allusions that could possibly serve as a criticism of the Franco regime.

Paco and the Tiburón could also be likened to the character of the wolf in Little Red Riding Hood. The shark-like automobile is driven by an aggressive, predator-like character who is the epitome of masculinity, very much like the role of the wolf in Little Red Riding Hood. There is no doubt that Paco wishes to deflower Carmen, comparable to the sexual overtones transmitted in a semiotic analysis of Little Red Riding Hood. Hence, Carmen’s purported innocence when she accepts Paco’s invitation the first time is important, for it shows the collective conscience of a nation suffering from a repressive sexual attitude. Moreover, it is a commentary on the role of the woman and how a married woman could be chastised for getting into another man’s car, especially if she was married.

This portrayal of feminine innocence is highlighted when Carmen inquires: “¿qué va a decir la gente?” (Delibes 239), and Paco quickly denounces in a rebellious predator-like tone: “déjales que digan misa” (Delibes 239). The color red when applied to these statements reflects a strong rebellious tone seen in Paco, yet it also implies the loss of virginity and innocence. This loss of innocence will become clearer as the novel moves on, for there will be other moments in the novel in which Carmen will accept Paco’s offer to ride into town, rather than waiting for the bus. It could thus be argued that the color red also reflects Carmen’s desire for a loss of virginity in the social sense, an attitude that could possibly categorize her as a Little Red Riding Hood character, innocent but with underlying motives for accepting Paco’s offers.

If Carmen is Little Red Riding Hood in the form of a sexually suppressed woman looking for a way out, her escape is provided by the aggressive, wolf-like Paco and his predator-like Tiburón which serves as his tool of seduction. The result is that Carmen becomes entranced with the automobile and Paco and, in a climactic scene, after her husband’s death, exclaims:

(…) que tiene el cuerpo como una criaba, la de metrallazos, no puedes hacerte idea. Bueno, pues le ves conducir ahora y te caes de espalda, ¡qué soltura!, es que no hace ni un solo movimiento de más, que parece que hubiera nacido con el volante entre las manos. Y luego ese olor que se gasta, como a tabaco rubio mezclado con colonia
The repression experienced by Carmen becomes more evident during her ride with Paco when he begins to ask her questions. Instinctively, he realizes that Carmen is not happy and remarks: “todos nos equivocamos, no es fácil acertar” (Delibes 241). Carmen is left speechless, and Paco then begins to probe some more by asking what could be called the million dollar question of the novel: “¿no eres feliz?” (Delibes 241). Immediately Carmen protests by stating: “dejemos eso. Vivo y no es poco” (Delibes 241). As they are talking, Carmen begins to notice that Paco: “me miraba cada vez más cerca” (Delibes 241). As she begins to talk about their salad days, Paco initiates intimacy which Carmen describes to the non-responsive Mario:

(…) se desabotonó la camisa, que no lleva suéter ni nada, en pleno invierno, y me enseñó las cicatrices del pecho, un horror, no te puedes ni imaginar, entre los pelos, que quién lo hubiera dicho, tan varonil, que de chico era un poco niño Jesús, que me dejó helada, te lo prometo, que eso es lo último que me esperaba, y le dije “pobre”, sólo eso, nada más te lo juro (...) (241)

Carmen continues describing the situation with a touch of innocence. Paco begins her subtle seduction by using his body as a tool to establish an intimate setting, which leads to a climactic, deep, passionate kiss in the front seat of the red Tiburón:

(…) pero él me puso el brazo por detrás, que yo pensé que en buen plan, te lo juro, y cuando me quise dar cuenta ya me estaba besando, visto y no visto, y sí, desde luego, muy fuerte, que yo ni sabía lo que hacía, como de tornillo, sí, apretadísimo y muy largo, ésta es la verdad, pero yo no puse nada de mi parte, como lo estás oyendo, que estaba como hipnotizada, te lo juro, que me había estado mirando sin dejarlo yo que sé el tiempo, y luego aquel olor entre de colonia y de tabaco rubio, que trastorna a cualquiera (...). (241-42).

Impressive, indeed, but, there seems to be some ambiguity on Carmen´s part. Her reaction to Paco´s kiss is somewhat reserved, perhaps a reaction brought about by her repression, but one senses that morals have come into play. In front of her, she has everything she wants in a man, but at the same time she feels a moral and social obligation that directly
reflects the attitude of Spanish society towards this theme during the Franco regime. As a result, Carmen begins a long confession, in which she is begging her deceased husband for forgiveness:

(…) lo importante es que no pasó nada, te lo prometo, sólo hubiera faltado, el respeto que te debo y nuestros hijos, pero, por favor, no te quedas ahí parado, ¿es que no me crees?, te lo he contado todo, Mario, cariño, de pe a pa, tal como fue, te lo juro, no me guardo nada, como si me estuviera confesando, palabra, Paco me besó y me abrazó, lo reconozco, pero de ahí no pasó, estaría bueno, te lo juro, y tienes que creerme, es mi última oportunidad, Mario, ¿no lo comprendes?, y si tú no me crees yo me vuelvo loca, te lo prometo, y si te quedas ahí parado es que no me crees (...) te lo pido de rodillas si quieres, no tengo nada de qué avergonzarme, ¿te lo juro, Mario, te lo juro! ¡te lo juro, mírame!! ¡¡que me muera si no es verdad!! pero no te encojas de hombros, por favor, mírame, de rodillas te lo pido, anda, que no lo puedo resistir, no puedo, Mario, te lo juro, ¡mírame o me vuelvo loca! ¡¡Anda, por favor...!! (243-45)

Is this a true, sincere, apologetic confession Carmen is making? Maybe, however it seems very ambiguous due to one comment that she makes in the confession: “Es mi última oportunidad, Mario, ¿no lo comprendes?” (Delibes 243). As a result, the implications resulting from the ambiguous statement become twofold: First, it could be viewed as Carmen referring to her last chance for forgiveness, for she seems to be trapped in a moral crisis that was frowned upon by Spanish society at the time. On the other hand, the “last chance” can be seen as one last opportunity to liberate herself through the ultimate sexual experience that she has been longing for. This “last chance” in both cases is seen as one last opportunity to free herself from social impotency before starting her new life and social status as a widow.

In all, this confession is interesting for it harkens back to the ideas of Foucault and how power is derived from the confession. For this reason, although deceased, Mario is a powerful individual, for it is his death that provokes a five-hour monologue that reveals Carmen´s mentality. Although impotent as a human being, he is ironically powerful because his anti-progressive attitude represses Carmen on all levels in the novel, which, as we have seen, are primarily based on personal progress and sex. The problems presented
and discussed in these two chapters have been further developed by the role of the automobile as a facilitator for pro-progress and sexual liberation ideas in Spanish society. Using the automobile, Delibes is taking on the responsibility of the individual to criticize a regime and its abuse of power, in addition to certain cultural norms pertaining to the liberation of the role of the woman in society.

Nevertheless, Delibes did not cease commenting on the disenchanting facets of Spanish society. Even though Los santos inocentes was written in 1981, it does not portray the events of that time period such as the transition to democracy nor the failed coup d’état of Antonio Tejero and Milans del Bosch in February of that same year. Instead, Delibes creates a novel that focuses on:

(...) los primeros años sesenta. Era la España que salía de la autarquía postbélica y enfilaba el camino del desarrollo a través del Plan nacional de la Vivienda y, sobre todo, del I Plan de Desarrollo (febrero de 1962), comandado por Laureano López Rodó. Pero era también la España del Congreso de Múnich (junio de 1962), en el que se reclamó la democratización del país, con el resultado de la suspensión del artículo 14 del Fuero de los Españoles (gracias a la cual pudieron ser desterrados los asistentes al Congreso), y era la España del fusilamiento de Julián Grimau, miembro del Comité Central del Partido Comunista, y la de la jactanciosa hinchazón de la industria nacional, que tuvo en Matesa un emblema (desmoronado al final de la década), y, en fin, la España del éxodo masivo de las zonas rurales a las grandes ciudades y de la emigración a Francia y Alemania. (Ródenas de Moya, 123-24)

Perhaps this focus on the Spain of the 1960s can be attributed to a persisting fear after Franco’s death, a fear caused by the doubtful attitude towards the impact that democracy would have in Spain. For many people such as José Tuset Barrachina of Valencia, the failed coup d’état of February 23, 1981, showed: “La gente todavía tenía miedo después de la muerte de Franco. No estaba acostumbrada al concepto de la democracia, por eso el atentado fue por unos que querían volver a los tiempos de Franco.” Delibes, it seems, chose to return to the Franco regime to establish a platform for the promotion of democracy, a concept based upon the meta powers used to establish power and control. Los santos inocentes, the next novel to be considered, will focus on the
repressive side of the Franco regime and the many atrocities that occurred as he tried to establish and retain power for almost four decades.

For Delibes, sex is one of the major themes of Los santos inocentes, in which the author depicts the harsh treatment and social injustices of people living in the rural areas of Spain. Although written fifteen years after Cinco horas con Mario, it is an intriguing novel that depicts a repressed family’s impoverished lifestyle while working and living on a private farm. Aside from sex and poverty, the microstructure of Spanish society under Franco is seen in the repressive hierarchy symbolized by the young wealthy landowner Iván. Although set in the 1960s, we once again turn to the influence of the automobile in order to understand this repression and sexual liberation.

To begin the discussion, the theme of repression as stated before is portrayed primarily by señorito Iván. His character represents how meta powers are a: “(...) vínculo virtualmente agresivo que vulnera el equilibrio natural” (Ródenas de Moya 122). Like a regime there is a physical and natural barrier created between the workers and Iván, a barrier that reflects a cold, repressive, cruel attitude reflected by Ivan’s actions towards Azarías and Paco, el Bajo. Domingo Ródenas de Moya cites:

Los señores residen lejos, en la ciudad, y acuden al campo sólo de tarde en tarde, por ejemplo cuando pasan las zuriras y las torcaces, hacia octubre. Mantienen una distancia estamental insalvable que los hace inhumanos y no conocen el respeto a la dignidad del inferior. La discordia irrepresuosa con la naturaleza y con sus criaturas se hace arquetipo en el personaje de Iván, el señorito cazador. Una vez tras otra, viola impunemente el orden de esa Arcadia que es la vida del campo y acumula en sí todos los vicios y defectos del depredador. No sólo dispara gratuita y cruelmente contra la milana de Azarías, en un acto que supone su sentencia de muerte, sino que ha humillado a los criados ante René el francés, ha destrozado el matrimonio de Pedro, el Périto, ha hecho cegar los palomos que sirven de señuelo sólo porque su agitación espasmódica atrae mejor las piezas, ha dejado cojo a Paco, el Bajo, ha pensado en desflorar a Nieves, aunque su extrema juventud lo ha retraído ... (122)

Through this description, it is obvious that Iván is the authority figure that abuses power in order to maintain control over those living on his estate. He is a powerful, seductive, sexual predator who goes on to destroy Pedro’s marriage (a scene that will later
be discussed), and considers deflowering Nieves. In spite of his non-pious, immoral actions, he is the Franco figure in the novel. However, it is the automobile’s negative influence that aids in the destruction of Pedro’s marriage.

To begin, it has been mentioned that Iván’s character symbolizes the repressive side of the Franco regime, yet he can be considered a direct symbol of Franco himself. This direct symbolism is portrayed through Iván’s deep passion for hunting wild game, an activity that brings to mind the many propaganda scenes from the NODO where Franco was often seen either fishing or hunting. Iván’s passion for wild game is found in his interest for hunting birds, in which he teams with Paco, el Bajo to partake in contests with other people of his social class.

The use of the automobile to facilitate this passion is quite interesting, for it too carries military connotations other than its use as a utility sports vehicle. For Iván the vehicles of choice are the Land Rover and Jeep, which are used not only by him but the other colleagues of his social class to partake in these weekend excursions of hunting birds. The appearance of the jeep as a rural vehicle portrays the upper class in this instance, for it is this class that possesses the economic resources to own these vehicles. In addition, it also takes on a double meaning when consideration is given to its military background. The jeep was developed by the Willys-Overland Corporation when they received the Army patent to come up with a light, fast vehicle that could be used to maneuver around the battlefield. As a result, this corporation came up with a vehicle weighing in at a quarter ton, which would be “one of the most volatile and versatile vehicles ever made (…) it’s been used in combat and for desert racing, for rock crawling or daily driving” (Allen 1).

Turning our attention back to literature, the jeep for Iván serves as a double-edged sword. First, it allows him to move freely throughout the countryside while hunting. Secondly, it is strongly linked to Iván’s need to observe and often check in on the residents and workers, thus reflecting the constant observation and control that was employed by Franco. Without the automobile in this sense, it is hard to imagine a figure such as Iván trying to operate and extend his negative influence and power over the estate. The jeep aids in the creation of Iván’s incubus elixir of a negative, powerful omnipresence over the estate.
On the other hand, the jeep reflects social status on the estate when contrasted with farm equipment such as the tractor. In comparison to the jeep, the farm equipment is the symbol of the lower class represented by Paco, el Bajo and Azarías. If the jeep is a symbol of Franquismo’s repressive side, then the Land Rover further enriches his authority over his farm workers. The Land Rover is just another sports utility vehicle that permits Iván even more freedom to move about the countryside and expedite his will on those under him. Furthermore, the Land Rover is seen as a sign of repression when Iván displays non-sympathetic dependent feelings towards Paco, el Bajo due to needing him for the most important hunting tournament of the year. Due to Iván’s cruelty and lack of respect for Paco, el Bajo as a human being, Iván has left Paco in a horrible situation with a broken leg resulting from a terrible fall from a tree while on a hunt. On the day before the following hunt while Paco is convalescing, Iván “llegó en el Land Rover marrón” (Delibes 136). Here, due to Iván’s mobility with the Land Rover, Paco is unable to peacefully rest and recuperate from the accident. Iván insists that Paco participate in the next day’s hunt with him, so that Iván can win the competition due to Paco’s special gift for spotting birds. Eventually Paco will go with Iván due to obligation and an underlying fear that he may be punished by Iván in some way. As a result, he falls and injures his leg worse than before. Here, the appearance of the Land Rover pulling up in front of Paco’s house is very reminiscent of the government trucks that would stop in front of a house to sequester those who were pro-Republican. Like Justa Gil Mediavilla of Burgos who witnessed: “A un vecino mío lo detuvieron y lo llevaron en un camión y más tarde lo fusilaron en una zanja junto a la carretera.” Thus, Iván’s Land Rover does cause a sensation of fear that could lead to some form of punishment if he does not help Iván in the contest. In short, if one combines the notions of the jeep and the Land Rover in the novel, not only do they depict Iván’s social status, but they serve as micro-structures that represent repressive authority and the military presence of the Franco regime in Spain. Aside from Iván’s sports utility vehicles as a form of authority and social status, there remains one automobile that functions as Iván’s seduction device to facilitate his aggressive, seductive, sexual demeanor. This is can be attributed to the use of Iván’s Mercedes Benz as an extension of his masculinity. Therefore in the next section, the study will entertain the idea of the Mercedes Benz as a tool to facilitate sexual escapades between Iván and Purita.
The Mercedes Benz has two important facets that must be commented upon: First, it too, serves as a symbol of Franco. Secondly, it is a criticism of sexual liberty during the Franco era. To begin, María del Pilar Matínez Vicen of Madrid in an oral interview stated: “Cuando era niña, cuando había una corrida de toros en Las Ventas al lado de nuestra casa, siempre nos poníamos en la Avenida de Toreros para que pudiéramos ver a Franco pasar en su Mercedes cuando asistía las corridas allí en la plaza de Las Ventas.” Aside from this personal testimony, the Mercedes Benz is present in many photos involving Franco. For Franco, the Mercedes Benz was his car of choice when attending political or social functions and was a symbol of power and authority due to its market value and name. Moreover, in general it is known that the Mercedes Benz is a brand of automobile that is marketed to those individuals and institutions that have the economic resources available to purchase such luxury vehicles. Therefore, when referring back to Los santos inocentes, Iván’s character is further enhanced as a power figure symbolizing Franco when linked to the appearance and presence of the Mercedes Benz in the novel. Moreover, it is known that Iván took “el coche azul” (Delibes 100) when Don Pedro is interrogating Régula as to the whereabouts of his wife. Interestingly, the color blue could be a reference to the Franco regime’s rise to power. First, the color blue was a symbol connected to Franco’s adopted political party, the Falange Española Tradicionalista, which united all right-wing, conservative groups after the war. Founded by José Antonio Primo de Rivera, the Falange members were known for their wearing of blue shirts. Interestingly, it is known that Franco always would wear a blue shirt under his military uniforms as a symbol that his heart, soul, and body were one with his nationalist movement and the Falange.

On the other hand, the Mercedes Benz as a facilitator of sexual relations would make Franco cringe, for Iván is a sexual predator that drives a big car in order to assert his sexuality. Iván’s powerful sexual presence is just another facet in the novel that helps him abuse his power over those working for him on the estate. Iván’s sexual desires are directed towards Don Pedro’s wife Doña Purita, whose name carries a very interesting connotation when applied to this situation. Purita, the diminutive derived from the adjective ‘pura’ provokes a sense of purity and innocence. Ironically, it conveys the opposite because her character is all but pure in her escapades with Iván. For this reason, a problem arises and Don Pedro is forced to confront Iván.
To begin, Don Pedro, el Périto is suspicious of his wife’s activity when he shows up unannounced at Paco’s house, asking Régula, who is in charge of opening the gate, if: “así que no viste salir a la señora, a doña Purita, digo, Régula” (Delibes 99). To which Régula replies: “ae, no señor, don Pedro, por el portón no salió, ya se lo digo, anoche no quitamos la tranca más que para pasara el coche del señorito Iván” (Delibes 99), thus further disturbing and arousing the suspicions of Don Pedro. At that moment Don Pedro disappears, and suddenly Nieves confirms the suspicion that: “doña Purita andaba anoche abrazándose en el cenador con el señorito Iván, ¡madre qué besos!” (Delibes 99). Don Pedro returns and begins to question Régula on Doña Purita’s whereabouts. In order to gain some idea, he resorts to asking: “el señorito Iván llevaba el Mercedes, ¿no es cierto, Régula?” (Delibes 101), to which Régula replies: “ae, don Pedro, ya sabe que yo de eso no entiendo, el coche azul traía, ¿le basta?” (Delibes 101). At that Don Pedro replies: “El Mercedes” (Delibes 101) and then proceeds to ask if Purita was in the back seat covered by clothes, so that nobody would see her leave with Iván. Régula answers and assures him that she only saw Iván leave the estate and that Purita could not possibly have accompanied him from the estate. The problem continues until: “el sábado siguiente, cuando sonó ante el portón del Cortijo el claxon del Mercedes” (Delibes 102).

In order to shed more light, we should briefly consider this scene as portrayed in the movie Los santos inocentes. As the Mercedes is on the outside of the gate waiting to enter, sexual connotations begin to arise. First, the body of the Mercedes is elongated and dark. The gate is not like the one described in the book, which is opened by only lifting the wooden bar that blocks the opening. On the other hand, the gate in the movie is constructed with iron doors which are attached to cement pillars and kept under lock and key by Régula. As the car enters, the doors open in a manner in which they simulate the movement of the legs of the female during a sexual encounter, thus letting the Mercedes, serving as a phallic device, to enter the estate very much like the male during sexual intercourse. In addition, as a side note, reference should be made to the connotation that Régula implies in this scene. In Spanish, the word la regla is often employed by females when describing their period. For this reason, the sexual connotation of the automobile, the gate, and the name of the gatekeeper acknowledge a sense of guilt and a loss of Purita’s innocence.
Upon stopping after having entered the estate, Iván is confronted by Pedro: “¿no viste por casualidad a Purita la otra noche después de la comida? No sé lo que ha podido sucederle, en el Cortijo no está y...” (Delibes 102). Suddenly, a smiling Iván gets out of the car and jokes with Pedro as if he were a little child: “no me digas que has perdido tu mujer, Pedro, está bueno eso (...)” (Delibes 102). Pedro is nervous as Iván begins asking him if they had had a fight a week ago, thus provoking her to mysteriously escape from the estate by hiding in the Mercedes. However, Pedro mentions to him that Régula has sworn that she did not see Purita leave the estate in the back seat of the Mercedes. At this moment, in order to smooth things over and to put Pedro’s mind at ease, Iván proposes that an argument may have led to the following:

si habíais regañado, ella pudo meterse en la maleta de mi coche, Pedro, o en el hueco del asiento trasero, el Mercedes es muy capaz, ¿comprendes?, meterse en cualquier sitio, digo, Pedro, sin que yo me enterase y luego apareciera en Cordovilla, o en Fresno, que tomé gasolina, o, si me apuras, en el mismo Madrid, ¿no?, yo soy distraído, ni me hubiera dado cuenta (...) y el señorito Iván se ajustó la visera, abrió de nuevo su generosa sonrisa y le propinó un amistoso golpe en el hombro a don Pedro, el Périto, a través de la ventanilla, (...) y otra cosa no te pienses, Pedro, que frente está lisa como la palma de la mano, puedes dormir tranquilo...(102-03)

Here the back seat of the Mercedes has sexual connotations, for when people cannot afford a hotel or hostal or they cannot go home, they have sex in the back seat of the car while taking advantage of the space it provides. Moreover, Iván mentions that he stopped to put gas in the car. The act of putting gas in the car ignites sexual connotations that are symbolized by the phallic gas pump and the vagina-shaped gas tank that opens to receive the gas pump, all reminiscent of the gate scene portrayed in the movie. Moreover, if we were to consider a syntactic analysis of the preceding quote, the verb ‘meterse´ appears two times in Iván’s discourse. ‘Meterse´, meaning: “to put (in), place, insert, introduce (in), get (in)” (Larousse 202), when used in slang is equivalent to the verb “to fuck” which is used when discussing the act of sex in Spain. Therefore, perhaps the underlying connotation of Iván’s discourse is the confirmation that he has had sex with Purita.
Aside from these sexual connotations, the friendly pat on the back that Iván gives to Pedro facilitates the possibility that Iván is possibly lying to Pedro. Hence, it has become obvious that Iván, as a sexual predator, has asserted his masculinity and deflowered Purita, destroying Pedro’s marriage. As a result, the automobile promotes Iván as both a symbol of Franco and a sexual predator of the upper social class in Spanish society. Through this use of the automobile, Delibes has made an effective and strong criticism of the Franco legacy during a time when Spain was undergoing a major political face lift. Moreover, the use of the automobile as a prime mover for discussing and provoking underlying commentary on sex in society has become a central theme for Delibes as he argues for more sexual liberation, a sense of liberty that was being experimented with in 1981 as Spain was feeling the effects of the transition to democracy and the attempt at a coup d’état. However, there was another facet of liberty that was dominating Spanish popular culture of the late seventies and early eighties. This generation, immortalized in Almodóvar’s movies, Blanca Andreu’s poetry, and Rosa Montero’s novels, gave birth to a pop culture movement in Madrid known as “La Movida.” Unlike their parents, the young individuals of this generation would openly question, critique, and promote open use of drugs and sex in the arts. For this reason, it is imperative to briefly define and outline the transition to democracy and the role of the Movida in relation to the automobile as a facilitator of sex in Montero’s novel Crónica del desamor (1979).

Born in Madrid in 1951, Montero is a very well-known journalist who publishes a weekly column in El País. Aside from exercising her profession as a journalist, she is also a prominent novelist and has recently published a book entitled La loca en la casa (2003). However, it is her first novel that brought her into the limelight and her labeling as a feminist writer. Montero, like her first novel Crónica del desamor, is the reference point for a generation that experienced Franquismo and matured with the dawning of democracy. As feminist, many of her female characters in her early novels reflect this change in society, a change that opened the doors of opportunity for women to rid themselves of machismo repression that characterized the Franco era. For Montero and her generation, this change began to take root in late 1973.

When trying to establish a time line for the transition to democracy in Spain, the year 1973 seems to be the benchmark from which all discussion evolves. Two years before
the death of Franco, the million dollar question was ¿y después de Franco, qué? The dictator was not healthy, trips to the emergency room were becoming frequent while he was desperately trying to retain his iron-handed control over a nation and fight ailments of old age. In addition to these circumstances and a youthful generation looking to partake in freedoms that their parents had never experienced in the previous decades, Spain was beginning to experience the first waves of change. Perhaps the most important event that sparked this change was December 20, 1973, when Carrero Blanco was assassinated in Madrid by ETA commandoes. The upshot of this stroke of violence was a shocked country and a visibly shaken, frail Franco. More violence would erupt from that day on as Williams cites: “The year 1975 was the most violent since the 1940s, with terrorist groups mushrooming on both extremes. ETA and new bands like FRAP continued a rampage of random violence in which many innocent people were slaughtered” (243).

The bloodletting year of 1975 would go down as the most violent since the time when Franco was trying to establish his regime. Yet, it is not the violence shed that makes this year unforgettable, rather it is a single day: Thursday, November 20, 1975. For many Spaniards, such as José Tuset Barrachina of Valencia, this day continues to live on in memory because: “Estaba yo en la casa mirando las noticias cuando Arias Navarro salió en la televisión, y nos comunicó la muerte de Franco. Mis padres lloraron y por la primera vez sentí incertidumbre de lo que iba a ocurrir después de su muerte.” Like many middle-aged United States citizens who remember the shock after the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, the same holds true for many Spaniards of this same generation. The death of Franco left a hole and a sense of uncertainty as to where the future of Spain would go; moreover there seemed to be a general distrust of returning to a Bourbon monarchy that had been absent from the scene since 1931 when Alfonso XIII fled in shame from the country. Divided once again, half of Spain cried while the other celebrated with popping champagne corks. However, a breath of fresh air from young, ambitious politicians under the direction of Juan Carlos I de Borbon would lead Spain to an era of liberal, democratic aperture that would culminate in the first elections in more than four decades.

This move to democracy effectively began when Juan Carlos I replaced Arias Navarro with a relatively unknown, young politician named Adolfo Suárez, a move that would prove to be beneficial and very popular with the general public as reflected in the
testimony of José Tuset Barrachina of Valencia: “Para mí, Adolfo Suarez, fue, es y siempre será el mejor político que España ha tenido.” In 1977, Spain celebrated its first democratic elections in 41 years. The UCD (Unión Central Democrático), a centralist coalition led by Suárez, received the majority of the votes, and thus continued to pave the way for a smooth transition. As cited in Williams: “The key to a successful transition was to align the new political system with the social and economic realities of Spanish society” (247). The economic reality resulted in a large working, middle-class interested in prosperity and enjoying the comforts of their modest homes and basic necessities.

The following year, 1978, a new constitution was passed creating the basic laws on which all democratic principles would be based. It was designed so that governments would not fall with ease as in the case of the Second Spanish Republic. Moreover, interestingly enough, the Catholic Church lost its powerful role as a dominant religion. Although regionalism was still present, it did not stop the majority of the populace from excepting this document with overwhelming approval on the road to national referendum. Although Franquismo was pretty much abolished as a political movement and its ideas totally outdated, there were still some individuals that had not fully accepted the change to democracy. In other words, they were not all that comfortable with the changes that were taking place, so on February 23, 1981:

A band of gun-wielding civil guards, led by the mustachioed Colonel Antonio Tejero, invaded parliament and held deputies hostage for many tense hours. It was a complicated affair involving a handful of army brass, including the king’s close advisor, General Armada. A former Blue Division commander named Jaime Milans del Bosch managed to lead tank units through the streets of Valencia, and certain civilian extremists such as Girón and the neo-fascist Fuerza Nueva also took part. (Williams 250-51)

It was obvious that some military officers were not willing to break from the past. Issues such as “regional autonomy and legalization of the communist party, and ETA’s murderous campaign which had claimed a top army commander” (Williams 251) were eternal sore spots with military commanders.

However, the rebellion was quickly put down when Juan Carlos I appeared on television and announced that those individuals would only succeed if they were to
eliminate him from power. Aside from political power problems, this period ushered in an abundance of social problems that helped define the popular culture of this time period, social problems such as:

(…) crime, drugs, pornography- that did not exist before or were swept under the rug. There was widespread grumbling among police as crime rates rocketed after thousands of common criminals were released along with political prisoners. By 1978 there were 30 to 40 muggings a day in tourist mecca Torremolinos, and robberies of Spanish pharmacies went from zero in 1974 to nearly two-thousand five years later. The drug problem exploded and by 1980 Spain had an estimated 80,000 heroin addicts. Some 60 per cent of South America’s cocaine now came through Madrid’s Barajas Airport. (Williams 250)

With a reaction such as this to the aperture to democracy, one may begin to question why such extremes took place. Perhaps the answer can be linked to the overall mentality of Spanish society. For Williams: “many Spaniards hold a uniquely anarchistic definition of democracy that boils down to `everyone can do whatever they want´, or in short, `anything goes´” (250). Although true, it is obvious and understood that these reactions were perfectly normal for a country that was coming out of nearly 40 years of repression. The celebration of Franco’s death and the dawn of liberty were celebrated through a variety of actions, including these Williams cites:

Suddenly bewildered tourists could see and do things in Spain- from watching oral sex on stage to sitting topless at a beach bar- that were unthinkable in far-older and relatively permissive democracies. Barcelona became the Hamburg of southern Europe, and one outrageous sex show was only broken up through the intervention of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to animals. Spain was still managing to be “different.” (250)

Aside from these actions that helped contribute to the popular culture of the Movida, the transition would bring about a major improvement in the role of Spanish women in society as compared to the generation under Franquismo. Williams cites this difference as a generational gap:

For decades they had cowered under Article 57 of the civil code, which stated that a husband’s approval (permiso marital) was required for virtually every decision or
activity. This law was repealed, and divorce, contraception, and limited abortion became illegal. Women began working at jobs that would have been unthinkable 20 years earlier and without their husband’s permission. Slowly, the infamous Spanish machismo seemed to be retreating in the face of women’s rights. (250)

Actions such as the aforementioned and the improved role of women in Spanish society helped revamp the popular culture during this time. For example, within literature there was no longer a rigid censorship system to contend with. Authors were now free to write as explicitly as they desired, hence the descriptive, detailed sex scenes in the novel Crónica del desamor by Rosa Montero. Aside from sexual aperture in the novel, many beat poets such as Blanca Andreu include the drug culture that was found on the streets during that time. For Andreu, many a poem discusses her experiences with and the effect of caballo, another word for heroin.

The first transsexual comic book hero now appears in Spain. Almodóvar, perhaps the Movida’s greatest representative, made his first movie during the transition, thus embarking on a re-definition of Spanish cinema. This redefinition begins with the film Pepi, Luci, Bom y otras chicas del montón (1979), in which the Movida in Madrid is portrayed as a world where there are no sexual limitations. Following the thread of sexual liberty, many authors in Spanish literature during this time period began to do the same. One of the best examples of sexual liberation and the role of the woman is the book Crónica del desamor by Rosa Montero. In this novel, the reader encounters a series of stories in which the protagonists engage in a series of adventures and many themes are presented, the most notable being that of sexuality. Once again, it is the automobile that is used to promote the concept of sexual liberation during the transition to democracy.

In Rosa Montero’s Crónica del desamor, one of the protagonists Elena has her first oral sex experience with her male counterpart Miguel Ángel. Although the description of the fellatio is very explicit, it draws our attention through the automobile’s sexual overtones. To this point in the chapter, we have observed how: 1) Paco’s Tiburón is used to extend his masculinity in hopes of conquering Carmen and 2) Iván’s uses of the Mercedes to extend his dominant, masculine, sexual power in deflowering Purita and thus destroying Pedro’s marriage. However, the difference between the use of those automobiles
and that of Montero’s is the lack of focus on the interior of the automobile that Delibes presents in his novels.

The fellatio scene with Miguel Ángel and Elena is quite provocative because Montero uses internal instruments found in the car to help solidify and promote sexual awareness and liberation within Spanish society. However, it should not be limited to Spanish society in general, for there is a strong criticism of the woman’s revamped role in Spanish society, a role that was being redefined since the death of Franco. If we remember Williams’s analysis of the situation, we see that women were becoming more liberated, not just politically and socially, but for Montero, sexually as well.

Miguel Ángel and Elena leave the sierra, where they had been taking advantage of the house that Miguel Ángel’s parents have there. Although the escapade did not culminate in a sexual encounter due to Miguel Ángel’s insistence that, “Porque si eres virgen es mejor que encuentres a alguien que te merezca más... Yo no te merezco, no te merezco” (Montero 53). But when they leave Miguel Ángel is not satisfied: “Repentinamente Miguel Ángel tuerce el volante, se mete en un oscuro campo de rastrojos quemados por el hielo, para el coche” (Montero 54). Elena is confused by Miguel Ángel’s sudden behavior, for earlier he was claiming that he could not do anything with Elena due to the respect that he had for her virginity. However, after a change of heart, he suddenly begins to beg Elena: “Por favor…acaríciame” (Montero 55). At that moment, Miguel Ángel, “se desbrocha la bragueta, está empalmado, duro, es la primera vez que Elena se atreve a mirar el sexo de un hombre” (Montero 55). Possibly, Elena is in total shock as to what is unfolding before her eyes. Yet, Miguel Ángel insists, desperately begging her: “Tócame, por favor, tócame... Elena no sabe que hacer, está angustiada. El coge su mano, la dirige despacio hacia su sexo, la coloca encima, es una carne suave y muy cálida. Ella no está excitada en absoluto, se encuentra a sí misma vacía, abandonada y sin respuestas. Le toca inhábilmente” (Montero 55).

Here, Elena is very uncomfortable with the situation. In addition, this is a commentary on how women are seen as nothing more than objects by men, which in turn suggests the idea of the feminist theory of the “male gaze.” The description continues and Elena is increasingly repulsed, as Miguel Ángel insists:
con reparo y algo de repugnancia, “chúpamela”, dice él muy quedo, en un murmullo, “chúpamela”, insiste, Elena duda, le da asco, Miguel Ángel empuja suave pero con firmeza su cabeza, ella opone al principio alguna resistencia pero al fin consiente, se encuentra tan torpe, tan culpable por no saber, desea que Miguel Ángel vuelva a ser de nuevo cariñoso y no entiende muy bien qué es lo que espera de ella. (Montero 55)

There seems to be guilt on Elena’s part, and a sense of innocence is embellished by her lack of experience. It should be noted that this appearance of innocence is a direct criticism of the previous generation under Franco, as it is an innocence that is nothing more than a commentary on the repressed role that women had, a repression that led to women being ashamed to express their sexuality. For example, according to Daniel Ferreras of Morgantown: “Recuerdo un día cuando entramos en la habitación de la madre de un amigo mío. Estábamos pasando por todos los cajones cuando encontramos un vestido con agujero en la parte baja. Años después me di cuenta de que era el vestido que usó la madre de mi amigo para la primera noche de la luna de miel cuando ella se casó.” This example of sexual repression and others are the ones that Montero is bringing to the attention of the reader through Elena’s character. Although she is feeling guilty, Elena in the end decides to consent:

Al fin abre la boca, le chupa, su sexo está caliente y sabe algo salado, intenta no pensar en ello, entre las piernas de él ve el freno, el acelerador, los pedales del coche, irrealmente iluminados con la escasa luz de la lámpara interior, se concentra en esas formas y mantiene la mente en blanco, de repente siente algo cálido y viscoso que le quema la garganta, se sorprende; en su estupor de inexperta no había pensado tan siquiera que él eyaculase, es eso pues, ha eyaculado en su boca, siente unas náuseas violentas, se incorpora, abre la ventanilla empañada, el frío la golpea en las mejillas y resbala por su cuello, Elena escupe furiosamente una y otra vez a la tierra reseca, se frota los labios y la lengua con el dorso de la mano, él la mira como desde muy lejos, musita un “perdón” muy bajito, saca un pañuelo, se limpia, cierra la bragueta, pone en marcha el coche. (Montero 55-56)

With this experience, Elena will probably be marked for life, and as
Montero writes: “se concretó para Elena en la imposibilidad posterior de volver a besar el sexo de un hombre, taponada por el asco durante años” (56). It is the car once again used as a place where it is easy to engage in sex, thus reflecting a generation´s practice of living at home while moving into adulthood both sexually and economically. In addition, it could be argued that parking the car in a very discreet place in the countryside also refers to the repressive attitude of a generation that was on its way out. It must be remembered that the Franco era had been gone for only four years and many people were still not comfortable with the sudden turn to democracy and aperture. For this reason, although the description is detailed and reflects the political and social aperture of the nation, the car still represents the generation that had to seek out reclusive areas in their cars in order to engage in sexual activity.

Aside from the economical and social criticism that the automobile offers, equally important is the interior of the automobile as a symbol for sex. As mentioned previously in the chapter, in both of Delibes´ works the car serves as a phallic device or an extension of the penis. In the case of Montero´s novel, corporal parts are derived from the underlying connotations seen through the various interior parts of the automobile. If one were to refer back to Elena seeing these parts of the car, the accelerator, brakes, and pedals symbol Miguel Ángel´s penis. However, if the system of binary oppositions is considered, the accelerator and brakes can be seen as much more. More than a phallic reference, they symbolize the upward and downward movement that Elena is making, so that Miguel Ángel is further stimulated thus ejaculating into her mouth. In addition, on a larger scale, these same parts of the car convey the obligatory movement of two people when having sex. Finally, when Miguel Ángel puts the car into gear, it obviously ends the encounter but it further provokes observation in the sexual sense. The shifting of the gears or the accelerating could refer to Miguel Ángel having very little if any respect for Elena in the end, a rejection reflecting the lack of love involved. In other words, it could be that due to the aperture and new-found freedom, more people will go on to have casual sex without love and significance, since divorce and abortion were becoming household words in Spain after Franco´s death.

In short, the automobile as a tool for promoting sex seems to play an indispensable role in western society as seen in post-Franco Spain. It has been seen that sex and the
automobile have been strongly linked to avoid censorship, offer commentary on the masculine and feminine roles of society, and the abuse of power through sexual relations. The process of developing the automobile as a symbol of sexual liberation during the Franco regime and transition is a fascinating one. Moreover, it has been seen that the sexual personality of the owner of the automobile is defined by the vehicle. However, the role of the automobile does not stop with the question of sex, for it is also an important part of the psychological identity of each and every driver on the road. Yet, on a national basis, the automobile can be the collective symbol of identity for a whole country, a strong consideration when discussing the post war generation of Franco´s Spain as seen in Juan Goytisolo´s Señas de identidad (1966) and Juan Benet´s Volverás a Región (1967).
The inferiority complex and fragmented identity in Spanish post-war literature is a wonderful, provocative, profound theme to consider when discussing the Franco era. As a result, this has gone on to spawn the age-old question: What does it mean to be a Spaniard? -a profound question that has rocked and disturbed the collective psyche of a generation. This issue is characterized in the novel by the use of interior monologues, wherein words reflect the post-war generation’s search for a collective psyche and answers to the problems of an inferiority complex and fragmented identity.

These are moreover the interior monologue of a generation looking for answers while confronting the memory of the Civil War and an era of depression. The task of analyzing this complex situation is not easy; however using the automobile as a tool offers an interesting perspective. If the Seat 600 symbolizes the economic miracle achieved by the Franco regime, then the impact of foreign models in literature during the mid-sixties serves as a sterling example of the Spaniard who has been exiled and is searching for an identity. Exemplifying these preoccupations, the novels of Juan Goytisolo and Juan Benet serve as testimonies of this generation’s experience; as members of the same generation, they are writing about the same atrocities and horrors of the Civil War.

Goytisolo, born in 1931 in Barcelona, is from a wealthy family that was deeply affected by the Civil War. His father, a monarchist, was imprisoned by the Republicans at the beginning of the conflict. In addition, later in the war, his mother was killed by Nationalist bombing raids on the city. As a result of the repression, Goytisolo moved on to France where he continued to publish novels. All of his works, including Señas de identidad (1966), were banned in Spain until the end of the Franco era. Señas de identidad is perhaps an autobiography in which the author describes the bitter return of an exile to Barcelona, Spain, only to find that things have changed dramatically. So distinct are the
changes that he is fragmented to the point where the narration techniques of the novel are visibly disturbed.

Different but equally original, Benet´s *Volverás a Región* (1967) is one of the most important novels after the Civil War. Born in 1927 in Madrid, Benet was unlike other writers of his generation due to his engineering background. However, he does share the common thread of having been impacted by the horrors of the Spanish Civil War. His father was executed by the anarchists during the war when Benet was still a child. Later, Benet moved around Spain due in part to his profession, although he continued to publish novels, essays, and plays. Benet´s untimely death in 1993 may have taken away a great writer, but his horrifying experience of the Civil War lives on in *Volverás a Región*.

The work´s narration is tangled in a verbal labyrinth arising from three different narrative voices. This novel, like Goytisolo´s confronts the question of the fragmented identity of the losing side of the war but with an interesting twist. Benet, like Gabriel García Márquez in *Cien años de soledad* (1982), uses geography to develop the character of the people living in Región, and thus digs up memories and experiences from the Civil War. These memories are reflected in the abnormal behavior of a man-child who is given a tranquilizer by Dr. Daniel Sebastián just before the doctor receives a visit from a mysterious woman, an evening visit during which both will share their memories and destinies in long, disjointed dialogue where memory is more powerful than action.

In short, we see that the puzzling dialogs in both novels can be better comprehended when using the automobile to decipher their messages. It is a device employed by a generation seeking a collective rational identity during an era of repression and redemption. Consideration will first be given to the automobile as a symbol of Spain like an orphaned child suffering from abandonment because of the horrors and atrocities of the Civil War. Yet, the automobile is also the voice of a generation in exile and strongly opposed to Franquismo (and, perhaps, in the case of Goytisolo, an expression of the Catalán point of view, a feeling that is intensified and fragmented by the appearance of an automobile cemetery on the outskirts of Barcelona). Moreover, the strong presence of international brands of automobiles is a double-edged sword, reflecting both the economic miracle, and an inferiority complex.
For many Spaniards of the post-war generation, the Spanish Civil War and Franco’s rise to power served as an incubus and left many with the question: What if the Republic had survived? Set during the 1960s, Benet’s novel portrays Región as a land where the nightmares of the past actually exist presently through the detailed description of the terrain that constitutes the first fifty pages of the work. For Margenot, “Benet consistently portrays a hell-like world throughout his fiction” (1). This incubus-breeding terrain is the furthest thing from a field of dreams. The detailed, scientific, harsh description sounds as if it were taken from a geography text, but it is nothing more than an expression of Benet’s engineering background converting topography into a tool that highlights the similarities between Región and the personalities of its inhabitants.

Let’s open with a discussion of the presence of an impassable, centrally located forest named Mantua. A mythical forest, it is the representation of the past, characterized as “el tabernáculo de la ruina” (Benet 249). Margenot notes that, “It is not by mere coincidence that Benet names the impenetrable forest Mantua, thus bringing to mind Dante and hell. Mantua is a terrifying place as most groves tend to be…Indeed, Mantua likens a hell-like world devoted entirely to destruction and damnation” (4). Interestingly, Mantua is reminiscent of Macondo in Cien años de soledad by García Márquez. Mantua, like Macondo, represents the horrifying memory of what existed beforehand. While Margenot argues that this is just part of the demonic world representing the horrors of the Civil War, there is a more profound second level: Mantua’s impenetrable characteristics symbolize the rigid structure of government and abuse of power that the Franco regime employed at the outset of the post war period. To support this, we turn to Bollnow’s idea that “the possibility of a violent adversary lurking within the grove exacerbates the anxiety of those inside it” (197). This “violent adversary” is embodied in the mythical presence of Numa.

Margenot argues that the presence of Numa further intensifies the “menacing quality of the woodland” (4). Margenot further comments: “Numa forms part of a bipolar system controlled by a ruthless, determined, and melancholy tyrant leader” (4). His characteristics, which emerge from Adorno’s definition of an authoritarian personality, and are further employed in Northrop Frye’s description of one ‘who commands loyalty only if he is egocentric enough to represent the collective ego of his followers’. The pole is represented by the pharmakos or sacrificed victim, who has to be killed to strengthen
others” (148). This combination of characteristics of the authoritarian personality unite to produce a mythological character with a non-fictional counterpart. Numa, in fact, did exist in the persona of El Caudillo, Francisco Franco. The description of Numa could possibly allude to Franco; for example: “Several characteristics intimate Numa´s tyrannical role. He wears primitive clothing as well as a rosary made from victims´ teeth. Besides his excellent marksmanship, this despot´s cruelty and cunning are legendary throughout Región. Moreover his primary function is to murder whoever enters Mantua” (Margenot 4). Numa´s “primitive clothing” conjures images of a soldier wearing the same standard-issue uniform used by all infantry men to establish a sense of community and equality amongst the men, a concept that could refer to Franco before he became a general and Head of State.

In addition to the primitive clothing, the rosary made from the teeth of victims further strengthens the idea of Numa as a representation of Franco, serving as a criticism of the increasing power of the Catholic Church which continued to enjoy a special relationship with Franco. Also, it reflects the deep pious attitude that Franco acquired later in life from the influence of his devoutly Catholic wife, Doña Carmen Polo. The teeth may be the symbol of memories or personal prizes that some soldiers actually collect from their military campaigns.

In relation to the Spanish Civil War, the rosary with teeth possibly symbolizes those soldiers who were killed while defending the Republic or it could be Benet´s criticism of the unjustified murders performed by the Franco regime while establishing power. In addition, Numa possesses a sense of cruelty and cunning that is necessary to retain power. Besides these two characteristics, another technique that Numa uses to retain control of the forest is his marksmanship, an interest that brings Numa´s relation to Franco full circle. It is has been well documented in photos and in regime propaganda that Franco was an avid outdoorsman who enjoyed the thrills of fishing and hunting wild game, that is, the enthusiasm Franco had for these activities is mirrored in Numa´s “extreme zeal and efficiency” (Margenot 4) that he exhibits while murdering those who enter into Mantua. Moreover, the appearance of Numa “embodies the desires of a group determined to eliminate those who defy its laws. Consequently, various scapegoats perish at the hands of the tyrant-leader patrolling Mantua (who) hastens their death in an immutable world of ruin
and decay” (Margenot 5). Obviously, Margenot’s observations on Benet’s use of these mythological entities contribute to the argument that Benet has indeed established hell-like conditions linked to the Civil War and that Numa’s presence refers to much more than the atrocities the Nationalists committed during the war: Numa serves as a conglomeration epitomizing the repressive side of the Franco regime during the post-war years up until the last executions of captured etarras in late 1975.

Besides the presence of Mantua and its keeper, Numa, the importance of the isolation and barrenness that the traveler encounters upon entering the area cannot be ignored. The reader is converted into a traveler who is introduced by Benet to a place where, for Margenot, “Numerous references to the desert stress its oppressive quality” (8). It is a true wasteland, and Benet states in a startling opening sentence, “Es cierto, el viajero que saliendo de Región pretende llegar a su sierra siguiendo el antiguo camino real- porque el moderno dejó de serlo- se ve obligado a atravesar un pequeño y elevado desierto que parece interminable” (7).

The description of the desert and the mountains is tacitly linked to bellicose actions, and, according to Margenot, “From any point in Región its imposing mountainous terrain strangles life and complicates communication. All attempts to till impoverished and diseased soil are useless” (8). This reflects the vast, empty, non-prosperous feelings of a bitter generation that has not accepted the change of power. The uncultivated and unfertile soil is Benet’s generation which has been poisoned by a repressive regime negating all hope and prosperity. It could also be argued that the desert represents those who may have felt deserted by an impotent republic that failed to fulfill political responsibilities and expectations.

Another problem that plagued both the Republic and the Franco regime was Morocco. The desert as a vast wasteland that breeds Spain’s incubus of various failures while attempting to colonize Morocco is a hell-like reality. For many kings and leaders, especially at the outset of the twentieth century, Morocco, due to its strategic location, was considered a must-have territory to protect Spanish interests in Ceuta and Melilla. In spite of a major military effort, colonizing Morocco became an embarrassment as blunders and failed attempts began to accumulate. A military victory in Morocco was desperately needed at the outset of the twentieth century in the wake of the loss of the last remaining
outposts of the Spanish empire to the United States in the Spanish American War of 1898.
Thus, Región’s desert could be a reference to Spain’s impotence as an international power
and a yearning to return to the golden empire where the sun never set.

Combining the desert with the mountain chain, we see isolation at its peak, that is, a
country that cannot grow due in part to the after effects of the disastrous foreign policy of
previous leaders and the repressive regime. The mountains, then, are a representation of
the isolationist attitude that characterized the regime in regard to foreign policy during the
decade of the forties, an era defined by high inflation and a non-functioning self-dependent
economy while establishing an autocratic regime. Amid this dense geographical description
we find the first mention of the automobile as a necessity to reach the desert from Región:
“se necesita casi un día de coche” (Benet 8). The resulting image is an area impoverished
and underdeveloped, aptly reflecting Spain in the early 1940s immediately after the
conflict: “Las pocas carreteras que existen en la comarca son caminos de manada que
siguen el curso de los ríos, sin enlace transversal, de forma que la comunicación entre dos
valles paralelos ha de hacerse, durante los ocho meses fríos del año, a lo largo de las líneas
de agua hasta su confluencia, y en sentido opuesto” (Benet 8).

The negativity of the lexicon in this sentence presents echoes found in the horrors of
war and repression. What is more, the words “en sentido opuesto” (Benet 8) accurately
summarize the thoughts of a generation that is regressing and losing all hope of prosperity.
This sense of prosperity would not begin to take root until the following decade; it was not
until the 1950s that Spain, with the help of the United States, began to re-establish foreign
policy relations with the rest of the western world.

The description of the geography at the outset of the novel foreshadows the
personalities of the individuals living in Región and, when unified with the appearance of
the automobile, deepens the negative feelings. The automobile is an extension of the
horrors Benet has created using a personal mythology. The feeling of abandonment that
contributes to the fragmented identity is in the character of the man-child, an individual
who is visibly shaken when he sees an automobile passing along on the road to Región.
Neither automobile nor individual is ordinary, thus he associates the vehicle with the
automobile that his mother used upon abandoning him as a young child.
The appearance of the car interrupts the description of the geography so closely associated with the horrors of the civil war. The automobile further intensifies the lack of communication that plagues Región. The roads to facilitate transportation are underdeveloped, thus making it rather difficult to get back and forth between places in a reasonable amount of time. An automobile is necessary to reach, move about in, and leave Región. The advent of the Seat 600 permitted many people to travel independently for the first time. For those who had never seen the Mediterranean Sea, the car led them to tourist-infested beaches that are still enjoyed at this present. However, the automobile in this work is a symbol referring to the lack of development that has already been linked to the geographical climate of the novel.

Nonetheless, the car is not restricted to extending and intensifying the importance of the geography and its relation to the inhabitants of Región. Rather, it contributes to the concept of time and Dr. Sebastián’s role in developing the narrative. The first mention of this is in reference to, “ese excéntrico extranjero que llega a Región con un coche atestado de bultos y aparatos científicos...” (Benet 9). Although not explicitly identified, it is obvious that the scientific equipment is a direct reference to Dr. Sebastián, who is a stranger to the present, yet not the past. He returns to Región by himself by way of car and being loaded down with an assortment of miscellaneous materials and scientific equipment is another way to assess the time that has passed, as he looks to establish a connection to the past, an era that is strongly present in his man child patient, the object of the scientific treatment.

Time’s essence and importance in the novel is personified by the automobile that is linked to “el zumbo del motor todo el pasado” (Benet 12). In addition, the sound of a motor is connected to events that took place during the war, for example: “(...) huyeron con el ruido de los caballos y los carruajes, que resucitan enfermas con el sonido de los motores y el eco de los disparos, mezclado al silbido de las espadañas al igual que en los días finales de aquella edad sin razón quedó unido al sonido acerbo y evocativo de triángulos y xilófonos” (12).

This war-time event obviously refers to the attempt to flee from the Nationalist troops who were wrapping up the final phases of occupation. Here, the sound of the motor could be a dual reference to Nationalist trucks that were used for deploying soldiers.
throughout the town to achieve the ultimate goal of occupation and the motor from those same trucks that were used to sequester people for execution by firing squad. Regarding this form of punishment, Justa Gil Mediavilla of Burgos commented in an oral interview: “De la guerra en sí, no tengo recuerdo pues Burgos era la capital de la zona de Franco, pero sí de la represión. A un vecino mío lo detuvieron y lo llevaron en un camión y más tarde lo fusilaron en una zanja junto a la carretera.”

The use of the automobile to facilitate the abuse of power is equally important in Volverás a Región, as in other novels that have been discussed. On the other hand, we must remember that the problem of a fragmented idea is the issue at hand in this chapter. Aside from the importance of repression implied through geography and trucks, the idea of fragmentation is added when a black automobile suddenly appears. It is just not any automobile, but rather:

un coche negro, de modelo antiguo pero con empaque (...)ni el hecho de ser conducido por una mujer, despertó la curiosidad de los que lo vieron pasar a la caída de la tarde, un día dorado de septiembre, sublimación, éxtasis y agonía de un verano sediento y de un anhelo de agua; más bien vino a aumentar el recelo por los extraños y la confianza en su tierra, capaz de atraer hacia su fin a un género de personas hasta entonces nunca vistas. (Benet 12)

Later in the novel, the appearance of the black car, although the make is unidentified, sheds light upon the situation of the man-child. First, the connotation of the color black invokes negative, fearful interpretations that surface when considering the characteristics of Región. In addition, the woman behind the wheel is a microstructure of the Spain that has abandoned an entire generation whose pain is exhibited by the man-child. Moreover, the late summer and early fall backdrop is a sign that the long, bleak months of winter are around the corner, thus enhancing a sense of mortality and negativity.

These feelings become more apparent when Benet describes the military zone during the winter months of the war. The combatants decide to withdraw due to the weather and geography. In the withdrawal process: “los coches se abandonaron en las cunetas con la cubiertas acuchilladas, los motores y radiadores ametrallados, los depósitos llenos de agua, las baterías reventadas y los cables sueltos” (Benet 36). Hollowed out and left as only shells, these cars are a microstructure of Spain during the forties and fifties.
While this debris alludes to the horrors of war, it says much more in regard to the theme of fragmented identity, for the damage to these automobiles is nothing more than the internal, mental torture that was inflicted upon a generation of Spaniards. The abandoned cars with their damaged internal organs are a representation of the psychological status of a war-torn nation in crisis. By the same token, the cars are also a criticism of the repressive Franco regime that stripped many people of their rights and identity during its reign. The conditions of abandonment and neglect summarize the stance of those pro-Republicans who were forced into exile. Moreover, it is also the voice of the generation whose civil rights and identity were stripped away from them by a fascist regime looking to seize and maintain power during the early years after the war.

Interestingly, the appearance of abandoned vehicles seems to be a reoccurring theme taken up in Señas de identidad by Goytisolo. Although the vehicles in Goytisolo’s work are not involved in a military conflict, the car cemetery plays an important role. It too is a commentary on the fragmented identity of Spain during the post-war period, although these two scenes do not have to be limited to criticizing the Franco regime and the distraught situation of the society. This fragmented feeling of neglect and abandonment can also be their exiled voices upon return from France. After having been exiled for a long period of time, their feelings could very well resemble those hollowed-out cars, leaving both authors with the outer shell of who they used to be and the challenge of reconstructing their identity and lives as Spanish citizens.

Returning to the importance of the black car in Volverás a Región and its effects on the man-child, it can be argued that the black car exacerbates these same feelings of neglect and abandonment. The appearance of the black car and its link to the man-child become the focus of second part of the novel. The reader, like the man-child, is left alone to try and understand what is happening as Dr. Sebastián and Marré talk about the past. The car triggers the past in the man-child’s psyche. As the car approaches Sebastián’s house, the doctor gives the man-child a Valium to calm his nerves frazzled by seeing the black car enter Región.

It is unsettlingly similar to the one that resulted in the abandonment of the man-child. From a distance the child observes the automobile as painful memories parade through his head: “Ciertamente era un coche parecido, del mismo color negro, a aquel en
que se había marchado su madre al principio de la guerra. Pero si el recuerdo de su madre se había borrado- (...) - el del coche había quedado, aislado en la memoria e inatacable al dolor” (Benet 91). Merely seeing this car has provoked a painful obsession: “Toda la tarde lo estuvo observando desde lejos, de detrás de una cerca de piedras, los ojos clavados en sus dos grandes faros, incapaz de curar con el recuerdo aquello que la memoria ha sellado con dolor” (Benet 91).

Obviously, this individual is suffering from the trauma that any child would experience upon being abandoned by the mother figure. At the same time, the pain intensified when: “una mujer elevada de estatura pareció junto a él. Un bolso le colgaba del hombro; llevaba unas gafas oscuras que se quitó al abrir la portezuela, encendió el cigarrillo y se introdujo en el coche, después de mirar al cielo” (Benet 91). The painful combination of automobile and woman stir up the man-child´s memories and repressed pain. His first reactions are that of fear as he rushes home to inform the doctor of what he has seen:

Entonces echó a correr, a través de los campos de centeno recién segados, saltando las cercas de piedra (...) El conocimiento que en vano interroga a la voluntad acerca de un registro sepultado bajo la soledad, bajo mil tardes soleadas de abandono, se transforma en malestar e inquietud (...) mientras contemplaba la nube de polvo que avanzaba lentamente hacia él. (Benet 92)

The man-child races home as the car continues into Región and enters the room where the doctor is taking his daily afternoon siesta, a part of the house he would not normally venture into:

Abrió la puerta de un golpe, el doctor alzó la cabeza y le vio temblar en la penumbra: una figura corpulenta y torpe, con el torso medio desnudo y la cabeza desdibujada, unos grandes lentes, una maraña de pelo prematuramente engrisecido y esas facciones carentes de energía y carácter de quien ha madurado en la apatía e ignorancia. (Benet 93).

Suddenly, the narrator proceeds to describe to the reader the basis for the man-child´s reaction, a reaction that is deeply rooted in the past and linked to an automobile that intensifies abandonment and an already fragmented identity:

La conciencia y la realidad se compenetran entre sí: no se aíslan pero tampoco se identifican, incluso cuando una y otra no son sino costumbres. Raras veces un
suceso no habitual logra impresionar la conciencia del adulto sin duda porque su conocimiento la ha revestido de una película protectora, formada de imágenes adquiridas, que no sólo lubrifica el roce cotidiano con la realidad sino que le sirve para referirlo a un muestrario familiar de emociones. Pero en ocasiones algo atraviesa es delicada gelatina que la memoria extiende por doquier-aunque no conoce ni nombra- para asomar con toda su crudeza y herir una conciencia indefensa, sensible y medrosa que sólo a través de la herida podrá segregar el nuevo humor que la proteja; y entonces se convierte en una costumbre refleja, en conocimiento ficticio, en disimulo ya que, en verdad, el miedo, la piedad o el amor no se llegan a conocer. (Benet 92-93)

The narrator likens this flashback to that of a movie that has passed through the man-child’s mind. Obviously that the protective world provided by the doctor has been thrown into disarray and replaced by a fictitious world where key feelings have never been experienced:

Hay una palabra para cada uno de esos instantes que, aunque el entendimiento reconoce, la memoria no recuerda jamás; no se transmiten en el tiempo ni siquiera se reproducen porque algo-la costumbre, el instinto quizá-se preocupará de silenciar y relegar a un tiempo de ficción. Sólo cuando se produce ese instante otra memoria-no compaciente y en cierto modo involuntaria, que se alimenta del miedo y extrae sus recursos de un instinto opuesto al de supervivencia, y de una voluntad contraria al afán de dominio- despierta y alumbrá un tiempo- no lo cuentan los relojes ni los calendarios, como si su propia densidad conjure el movimiento de los péndulos y los engranajes en su seno- que carece de horas y años, no tiene pasado ni futuro, no tiene nombre porque la memoria se ha obligado a no legitimarlo; sólo cuenta con un ayer cicatrizado en cuya propia insensibilidad se mide la magnitud de la herida. El coche negro no pertenece al tiempo sino a ese ayer intemporal, transformado por la futurición en un ingrávido y abortivo presente. (Benet 93)

Indeed, the automobile is the channel from which this sense of bastardization is emitted. The situation of the man-child is utterly hopeless, for he has not been allowed to grow mentally. His life has been taken away from him by the absence of a mother figure, which serves as a microstructure of the political and social structure of Spain during this
era. Additionally, there is a sense of lost feeling: as the unfertile fields of Región will never be cultivated due to the effects of the war and geographic climate, all the sense and feelings of the people in Región are just as dead as the life that the man-child leads. The appearance of the automobile facilitates these feelings when viewed by the man-child. Painful sentiments have been embedded since the day he was abandoned, a day that has led to his lack of mental and character development, forever imprisoning him in a structure that will not permit him to better his situation. He is condemned by the system just as Spain under Franco was for Benet.

In addition to the disturbing behavior caused by the black automobile, “Dr. Sebastián’s defunct mental clinic founded to treat mental disorders” (Margenot 12) is a microstructure of imprisonment for Margenot. This prison aspect is furthered when Dr. Sebastián “de un cajón de la mesa sacó una llave y unas cuerdas” (Benet 96). This vision intimates some of the methods of punishment that could have been employed by the jailers of the Franco regime. The house, Margenot mentions: “conforms clearly to a jail since he functions as a jailer throughout Volverás a Región. He keeps the house closed in darkness. As a jailer, Sebastián allows no one to enter or leave. Such is the case with the man-child he must physically bind, sedate, and confine to a room resembling a prison cell secured by a bolted door” (12). The doctor then leads the man-child to a room upstairs that is described as if it were one of the many prison cells that existed during the period immediately after the conflict: “En la habitación de arriba no había más que un camastro de hierro, una palangana en el suelo y unas alparagatas, unos montes de ropa descuidada y sucia, salpicada de barro y paja. La ventana se hallaba protegida por una gruesa y doble malla metálica cuya pantalla exterior estaba salpicada de mariposas de luz e insectos muertos” (Benet 96).

The window is a commentary on the lack of opportunity that befell a generation immediately after the war, a window that was locked and sealed by hunger, repression, censorship, and depression, all of which are mechanisms for fragmenting the identity of the populace and the man-child. For Margenot, “frequent allusions to the house as hell create a satanic ambience” (12) and further illustrate the lack of hope in the black hole known as Región. Even though Dr. Sebastián is portrayed as the individual charged with caring for
the man-child, he is nothing more than an extension of the repressive Franco regime through the role of the jailer.

The description then shifts from the prison-like bedroom to a detailed play-by-play of Dr. Sebastián’s efforts to restrain the man-child, generating images of what could have taken place as the Nationalists established power and control in small towns throughout Spain:

Le volvió la cara hacia la ventana y le juntó los pies; luego sin necesidad de hacer mucho esfuerzo, en tal grado parecía el joven acostumbrado a ello, le ató los codos junto a la espalda dejándole las manos libres. Cuando hubo terminado le fue empujando con suavidad hacia el borde del camastro y le obligó a tenderse costado, con la cara vuelta hacia la pared. Le dio unas palabras al oído y, (...) le dio unas palmadas en el hombro y se retiró de cuarto echando la llave, con dos vueltas a la cerradura. (Benet 96)

As the form of restraint possesses elements of sheer cruelty and even violence, it is a strong commentary. Once again, the reader is presented with a criticism of the regime’s harsh forms of discipline and punishment. Then again, as the car comes to a stop in front of Dr. Sebastián’s clinic, it becomes evident that sequestering the man-child in the above mentioned form will not be sufficient. Therefore, while the surprise visitor goes about trying to see if anyone is inhabiting the residence, Dr. Sebastián “extraído la jeringa y las agujas hipodérmicas que limpió con alcohol (…) llenaba la jeringa con una sola mano, sosteniendo la ampolla con dos dedos (...) Con la jeringa en alto, descorchó la botella, echó otro trago, subió las escaleras y volvió a golpear con los nudillos” (Benet 98). The doctor does not want any evidence that there is another person in the house if the stranger should enter, and with the tranquilizer the threat of a violent rebellion and a violation of the doctor’s personal security is minimized. In short, perhaps this is a microstructure that alludes to the civil war as well as the various methods employed by Franco to ensure national security.

It is also a commentary on behalf of the exile, a criticism of repressive methods of imprisonment, execution, and censorship. Moreover, it mimics the absent right of freedom of speech during the Franco era:
(...) le clavó la aguja en la nalga, con temblor y con destreza. (..) El joven yacía con la cabeza ladeada sobre el colchón sin sábanas, la boca entreabierta y jadeante y el pelo desordenado; sus gafas se habían deslizado por la cara y el ojo, pegado a la pared, parecía acomodarse a su liberación de la visión con un parpadeo lento y rítmico, como la respiración de un pez recién cobrado, tirado a la orilla del agua. Un mechon de pelo se había metido en su boca; la nariz, los labios y la barba se hallaban mojados de lágrimas. (Benet 98)

This disconcerting scene of medical science being employed for the purpose of establishing power provokes images of ghastly experiments the Nazis performed on Jewish prisoners in concentration camps. The inflicted pain of abandonment has come to a culmination as the man-child has been animalized and stripped of his basic human rights. The appearance of the automobile and the hellish house together form an austere institution capable of destroying an individual who represents a generation with no hope. The collective psyche of this generation has been fragmented to the point that it is unclear what being Spanish means during the post-war period. This fragmentation is characterized by a feeling of numbness, very much like the sedated man-child who is looking for an explanation as to why he was abandoned by a similar automobile and an unloving mother. Metaphorically, the black automobile is the agent of Franquismo that abandoned and marked a generation immediately after the war, and the man-child is the agonizing post-war generation of Spain searching for an answer to the question: Madre Patria, why have you abandoned us?

Written while the author was exiled in France, Señas de identidad (1966) by Juan Goytisolo questions the very same issues of fragmentation and inferiority. From a Catalán perspective, this experience can be linked with his fictional, perhaps autobiographical character, Álvaro Mendiola. Upon his return home from France, Álvaro Mendiola finds that many things have changed in Barcelona and the surrounding areas. Some, more drastic than others, visibly affect him in a nostalgic, cinema-like narration that paints his fragmented identity using a disjointed, incoherent prose with a lack of punctuation that lets the reader enter into the disturbed mind of Álvaro Mendiola as he tries to negotiate the reconstruction of his identity and life as a Spanish citizen.
The painting *Reflexiones sobre el exilio: Irún-Hendaya* by Eduardo Arroyo, which graces the cover of the Alianza Editorial edition of Goytisolo´s novel, merits consideration. Interestingly, we see a couple that has crossed the border and has stopped to contemplate the landscape. In the foreground of the painting all the Spanish and French flags establish a system of binary oppositions that implies criticism of the era. The couple, having crossed the border, has turned to look back on a country where they once led an established life but now have had to flee the repressive regime coming to power. Above all, this painting serves as a preparation for what the reader will be encountering within the mind of Álvaro Mendiola upon his return from France.

The foreshadowing the painting provides is evident from the first page of the novel, where the reader begins to experience the disjointed thoughts of Mendiola: “Instalado en París cómodamente instalado en París con más años de permanencia en Francia que en España con más costumbres francesas que españolas” (Goytisolo 11). Immediately there is an identity crisis, for the narrator feels more French than ever, although he is a Spanish citizen. Within the narrator, however, there is a burning desire to remember and define what being a Spaniard is. This criticism towards the regime through the voice of the exile argues that Franco abolished Spanish identity through repressive tactics while rising to power:

el Régimen que exista en nuestra patria a partir de la Contrarreforma para acá
España viene padeciendo los ataques más injustos irritantes e intolerables que a nación alguna se le hayan podido dirigir ataques que de manera sistemática tienen su rebrote periódico (...) no puede haber libertad ni manga ancha ni una tolerancia que serían criminosas que hay miseria y dolor en España (...) claro que hay hambre sequedad y desamparo en el tuétano de todo este escenario de Murcia y Andalucía. (Goytisolo 12-13)

These disjointed ideas serve as a point of reference for what many considered to be the negative aspect of the regime, in spite of the positive efforts that were made to industrialize Spain. On the other hand, this negative sentiment shifts from an analysis of the national situation to one that focuses on Mendiola´s loss of identity and conscience, a loss that is portrayed through the return visit to his parents´ house, where we learn through the
words of a friend that Mendiola possesses a fragmented interior that is further affected by
the negative attitude his parents display upon receiving him at their house:

(…) al fin y al cabo no serás el primer español que ha desamado a su patria pero
entonces para qué volver mejor te quedas fuera y renuncias de modo definitivo a
nosotros reflexionando aún estás a tiempo nuestra firmeza es inconmovible y ningún
esfuerzo de los tuyos lograrás socavarla piedra somos y piedra permaneceremos por
qué buscas ciegamente el desastre olvídate de nosotros y te olvidaremos tu
nacimiento fue un error repáralo. (Goytisolo 15)

Subsequently, he goes into an attic, where he comes into direct contact with the
past. The restructuring of the past is not an easy task for Mendiola; however, with
appearance of an automobile, the reader is given an idea of what his past was like. For the
narrator and the reader, the automobile becomes the beacon that restructures and defines his
pre and post-exiled life and condition.

For Mendiola, Spain in the mid sixties came as a severe shock, for he returned
during the economic miracle that helped spark the tourist boom. An illustration would be
the description of the summer of 1963:

(…) en este abrasado verano de 1963 (la radio había anunciado, exultante, la entrada
de cien mil vehículos por la frontera del Perthus durante el último fin de semana:
franceses, suizos, belgas, holandeses, alemanes, ingleses, escandinavos que venían a
ver las corridas de toros; beber manzanilla; tenderse al sol como saurios; comer
pizza y hot-dogs en flamantes cafeterías bautizadas con nombres carpetovétónicos y
castizos tales como Westminster, Orly, Saint-Trop, Whiskly Club, l´Imprévu, Old
England y otros; inciar por fin al pueblo español en el ejercicio indispensable de los
valores industriales y crematísticos, convirtiéndolo de golpe, por obra del
radicalismo proverbial vuestro, en un fértil y lozano semillero de trepadores y
chorizos. (Goytisolo 162)

The description here depicts a world that is distinctly different from the one that
Mendiola has left. Although the tourist and automobile industries helped spark a robust
economy, they also contributed to the fragmentation and inferiority complex of the
populace. While these industries paved the way for rapid industrialization, Spain still had
another image: “A cubierto de la ruidosa ola turística que, como maná del cielo, caía sobre
el dormido y perezoso país” (Goytisolo 162). This stereotypical billing of Spain as the land of matadors, flamenco dancers, and sunny, wide beaches where the lazy Spaniard takes a siesta still plagues the country to this present time. Therefore, a troubled and fragmented individual such as Mendiola, trying to define what being Spanish is, tries to break this stereotypical, widespread view of Spaniards are inferior.

In addition to the economic boom, the flocks of tourists in their automobiles crossing the boarder invoke a horror within Mendiola that is linked with the Spanish Civil War:

(…) (quince años después, en la cinemateca de la rue d´Ulm, Álvaro había visto con emoción las dolorosas imágenes de la derrota, de la caravana de centenares de miles de personas, hombres, mujeres, niños, ancianos que, a pie, con sus miserables enseres a cuestas, huían hacia la frontera del Perthus, éxodo masivo numéricamente comparable sólo al actual, en sentido inverso, de los turistas de todas las edades y países que, en automóvil, con remolques y carromatos, parecían huir escapados de alguna silenciosa y tranquila hectacómba ante las mismas penas, los mismos árboles, el mismo paisaje que fueran escenario del gran cataclismo del febrero del 39). (Goytisolo 163-64)

For the exile, the robust Spanish economy of the sixties under Franco was not enough to erase the horrors of the Spanish Civil War. Perhaps to the exile it seemed that the regime was selling a false image in the wake of such a promising economic recovery. Like the exile, the interior of the country was still fragmented, living under a repressive regime that continued to carry out executions and imprisonments. For Mendiola, perhaps this is the most difficult part to accept, thus making it more difficult to reconstruct his identity as a Spaniard on a national and personal level.

Upon restructuring his condition, Mendiola will come into contact with people, that he knew before he left the country, such as Dolores. Presumably Mendiola and Dolores were lovers before his departure, and she serves as a support system for his return as he desperately tries to regain his identity and conscience. One evening, while he is visiting with Dolores, two friends appear: “El Dofín gris había trazado un semicírculo de luz amarilla antes de inmovilizarse al borde del mirador y, casi simultáneamente, las cuatro puertas se abrieron y Ricardo y Artigas surgieron en compañía de dos muchachas rubias de
aspecto extranjero, con camisas y tejanos ceñidos” (Goytisolo 63). The appearance of the Dofín, a widely popular utility vehicle during this time period, serves as the first stone of a foundation destined for disaster.

The Dofín symbolizes the era in which Mendiola has returned to familiar but strange surroundings. Along with the automobile, the appearance of two blonde, good-looking girls wearing jeans suggests the stereotypical foreigner who was invading the beaches and sunny climate of Spain during the tourist boom. Furthermore, a machista comment by Artigas- that “Danish women very sexy beautiful women” (Goytisolo 64)- refers to the sexual and moral repression of Spanish society during this era. This theme was not easily spoken about during the Franco years, but the advent of the automobile, as we have seen in the course of this study, did provide a venue for sex. If the automobile and tourist industries both paved the way for a robust economy, sexual encounters, and a negative stereotyping of the Spaniard, then consideration should also be given to the fragmentation of identity through the automobile and repression, especially when it is linked with the horrible memories that ravage Mendiola’s interior. One of the most disturbing memories for Mendiola is the assassination of his Uncle Lucas.

During this episode, the narrator mentions that Lucas was driving “el Viejo Ford” (Goytisolo 157). While this is a scene demonstrating the repressive side of the regime, it is also the first appearance of a vehicle made by a United States company. The Ford in this scene serves as a nice binary opposition that reflects the hypocritical stance of the regime as seen through the eyes of the exile. As political murders and imprisonments took place, Franco played an anti-communist hand with the United States so that international aid would help the Spanish economy. The Ford, then, is a direct reference to the strong United States economic, military, and popular culture presence that the United States maintained in Spain. Moreover, Ford was the symbol of the robust economic potential of the United States. The presence of this large corporation was visible on the international scene with the exportation of vehicles. Spain was no exception, for Ford established factories which helped contribute to a flourishing employment pool during the sixties.

Throughout the novel, many makes of vehicles appear as Mendiola attempts to reconstruct his identity. At the same time, the automobile serves as a tool to link various pre-exile experiences. In addition, the automobile has served as an important facilitator for
discussing the economic and tourist aperture of Spain. Vehicles from large companies such as Ford, SEAT, Peugeot, Citröen, and Volkswagen all were hailed as symbols of Spain during the sixties. But for Goytisolo the automobile will also serve as a tool to demonstrate the negative impact this phenomena had on the psyche of the exile and the average Spanish citizen.

In the novel, Goytisolo describes an encounter between Dolores and Mendiola where the lack of communication is due to Mendiola’s psychological impotence. Once again, the automobile is used to convey what is taking place inside Mendiola’s mind as the two of them are together: “el paisaje se transformó. Los objetos cobraron una existencia autónoma, impenetrable. La nada se abrió tus pies. Transeúntes y automóviles circulaban caóticos, privados de finalidad y de sustancia. El mundo extraño a ti y tú extraño al mundo. Roto el contacto entre los dos. Irremediablemente solo” (Goytisolo 369).

Mendiola’s psyche is disconnected from the world. Like Mario in Delibes’s novel, Mendiola is impotent, thus making him technically dead to the rest of society. This disjointed, disconnected feeling that permeates Mendiola’s interior comes to a visible head when further linked to the automobile in the cemetery, a powerful element that Goytisolo included in the novel to transmit the exile experience.

Upon exploring the country side, Mendiola wanders through the town with “la cabeza hueca y el corazón te latía como un reló” (Goytisolo 377). As a result of his fragmented, disconnected interior, he wanders through the town by way of “un sendero abrupto (que) serpenteaba entre las casitas de Madera” (Goytisolo 377), thus leaving him at the end of the path which “desembocaba de pronto en un cementerio de coches” (Goytisolo 377). Mendiola is presented with a powerful material representation of his interior. The description of the cemetery is just as grotesque, distorted, and fragmented as Mendiola:

Los viejos Fords, Cadillac, Chevrolet, De Soto se descomponían lentamente en la explanada, testigos oxidiados y maltrechos de una época desaparecida. Sin vidrios, sin ruedas, sin motores las carrocerías exhibían sus fauces hambrientas, abiertas en un bostezo oscuro y doloroso. Las auras tiñosas trazaban espirales sobre el esqueleto de los automóviles y te tumbaste boca arriba en un claro y contemplaste fijamente el cielo. Un aroma de muerte y putrefacción impregnaba agudamente el paisaje. El sol reverberaba con fuerza y el aire estaba estancado. (Goytisolo 377)
Indeed, the description is a mirror image of the grotesque post-exile experience that Mendiola is living. The spiraling and decomposing automobiles in this cemetery further illustrate how his mind is moving in a vicious circle that will never permit him to reconnect with Spanish society. Furthermore, the decomposing automobiles, which have various parts missing from their bodies, illustrate the various mental abilities that Mendiola lacks to negotiate his current situation. Likewise, this is a physical representation not only of the death of Spain as a nation, but the individual in society as well. Condemned to be a lonely outsider within his country, Mendiola is a tragedy that has no remedy. He is nothing more than one of many individuals who suffered through the same mental fragmentation and inferiority upon return from the exile.

The cemetery on a larger scale is a potent criticism of the Franco regime’s repressive nature. To further intensify the power of the cemetery and its representation of the fragmented Spanish identity, we turn to Fernando Arrabal’s play El cemeterio de automóviles (1958). This work expands upon some of the very same themes that are observed in Goytisolo’s novel. Also, like Goytisolo, Arrabal was deeply affected by experiences of the Civil War, especially the death of his father who was executed by Nationalist troops. Like Goytisolo, Arrabal depicts a society that is decaying due to conflict and change. Diana Taylor explains that the characters are put in a situation where: “privados de toda comunicación significante, y condenados a una penosa convivencia, reaccionan con hostilidad y violencia” (24). Here, in spite of the violence, the environment is more or less the same incubus that Mendiola is living. Furthermore, Arrabal, like Goytisolo, uses the cemetery to criticize Spain’s situation:

La obra nos enfrenta a los escombros del orden social: coches deshechos, arreglados como casitas en miniatura, proporcionan albergue temporal a los huéspedes invisibles que disfrutan del refugio negado al pobre. Los señores del viejo orden han perdido su posición de autoridad, en otro tiempo protegido por nociones tradicionales de responsabilidad de clase. (Taylor 24)

The presence of cars in these two works serves as a symbol of the repressive, fragmented, distorted situation of the anti-Franco individual in society. Goytisolo and Arrabal use the cars as: “una poderosa metáfora visual de una civilización que, regida por el vértigo de la producción de consumo, acaba siendo, irónicamente, una
sociedad residual. El hombre, en este contexto, padece doble mengua- la pérdida de la naturaleza por un lado, y de la cultura del otro” (Taylor 25). Such is Mendiola´s situation, and foreign automobiles abandoned in the cemetery criticize the repressive liquidation of Spanish identity and culture.

Another theme that links both texts is silence. Like Mendiola, Arrabal´s characters are “fastidiados por la presencia de los otros, ansían, como Dila, `silencio´” (Taylor 25). Mendiola´s anxiety and fragmented identity are the product of silence, thus evolving from and criticizing a rigid system of censorship. The structure of Goytisolo´s novel implies this through Mendiola´s disjointed monologues, thoughts, memories, and the car cemetery. Censorship is just another element in the stripping of identity which excludes freedom of speech also abolished by the repressive regime. Silence, when linked to the cemetery, is nothing more than an intellectual death of sorts.

Likewise, the foreign automobiles in the cemetery serve as tombstones whose occupants are the companies that manufactured them. As noted, the majority of these corporations hail from the United States. Perhaps for individuals like Goytisolo United States aid was not welcomed after all. It could be seen as a form of politically and economically exploiting the average Spaniard, as Franco and the United States reaped the benefits of a robust Spanish economy. For intellectual Spain, this is a morbid and tragic situation. This international invasion was brought on by a regime that eagerly played a hypocritical hand in selling a clean image abroad, yet continued to repress anti Franquistas behind closed doors.

Indeed, the automobile serves as marker of the passage of time. Mendiola, for example, uses them to structure his problem of negotiating post war-Spain. The automobile has also been employed to indicate the positive opening of Spain and the robust economy that symbolized personal and national progress. On the other hand, the car cemetery, whose decomposing, deoxidizing, foreign automobiles serve as tombstones commemorating the tragic death of an intellectual, exiled Spain, is a physical representation of Spanish society.

Throughout this discussion, the automobile has been proposed as being used by Benet and Goytisolo to represent the fragmented identity and inferiority complex of post-war Spain. In Volverás a Región, the automobile was employed by a generation
questioning why they had been abandoned by one government and repressed by another. Moreover, both the automobile and the man-child in this novel depict a post-war world that left no hope for improving the situation of the exile. Mendiola, like the man-child, is fragmented by a world that he does not know and will never come to know due to his fragmented identity as a returning exile. The automobiles in *Volverás a Región* (1967) and *Señas de identidad* (1966) are thus tragic elements used to describe and portray the incubus of the Spaniard inside and outside of Spain.
CONCLUSION

As seen in the works analyzed, the automobile has played a multi-purpose role in defining the socio-cultural aspect of Spain during the Franco years and those of the transition to democracy. The car in 20th century Spain is more than meets the eye due to its impact during the Franco years when it proved to be a binary opposition reflecting the positive and negative aspects of a regime that thrived and governed with an iron hand for almost forty years, a period that has been impressively recreated by Sender in his work Réquiem por un campesino español (1953). The automobile, a dichotomy in itself, is not only the painful voice of the exile, but also the foundation on which abusive power and authority were carried out in Franco’s crusade to liberate Spain and maintain power by eliminating all those loyal to the Republic. This interpretation is enhanced by the power and authority theories of Foucault which lead us to see the automobile employed literally as a tool for deriving a confession and to further establish Nationalist power in the village in a devious act carried out by the authoritative centurión and his forces with the help of Mosén Millán.

In spite of all the negative uses of the automobile as portrayed by Sender, it also shows a positive side to the regime. Delibes, through the berating, condescending monologue of a widow, demonstrates the need to be socially accepted and belong to a specific social class by owning a car. Thus, the automobile is converted into a symbol of economic progress. The fabled Seat 600 is the beacon of light that resulted from the small economic miracle, for it introduced Spaniards to another lifestyle: the long weekend and the sunny beaches advocated by not only international but domestic tourism as well. The symbolism of this automobile in Cinco horas con Mario (1966) becomes one of the crowning achievements of the Franco regime, for it obtained its goal of industrializing Spain and cleaning up its image both abroad and domestically. Thus, Carmen’s monologue serves as a reflection of not only the personal issues at hand but also a micro-structure of the regime’s desire to belong to the international community.

Indeed, both Réquiem por un campesino español and Cinco horas con Mario present a powerful binary opposition that defines the role of the automobile on a national and personal level from the 1940s to the 1960s, yet it does not stop with repression and
economic progress. As in the United States, the automobile did much to facilitate sexual relationships during the 1960s. In order to escape the pious, Catholic, moral attitude that dominated society, many young couples took advantage of the car to engage in sexual encounters. This liberal attitude, although kept on a secret basis between couples, was in sync with the sexual liberation that was sweeping the world by the end of the decade.

The need for the Spaniard to break from this harsh sexual repression is reflected in Delibes´ novel Cinco horas con Mario (1966), where Carmen is enthralled by Paco and his sleek Tiburón. This work shows how the automobile also serves as a tool for Carmen to express herself sexually in the form of a fantasy involving her, Paco, and his car. Besides the color scheme of the car and her need to be with a macho sexual predator, the car is also a reflection of the penis. The lack of sex, due to Mario´ s impotency as a human and lover, have left Carmen in dire straits, therefore the car is transformed into the object that she most desires: the penis.

Clearly, Carmen´ s monologue and Paco´ s automobile are techniques to avoid censorship when discussing this subject. Somewhat later, Delibes employs this same symbol in Los santos inocentes (1981). Like Cinco horas con Mario, the novel Los santos inocentes also employs a color scheme and body description as an artistic technique to avoid censorship, so that sexual freedom can be expressed subtly. Iván´ s character, reminiscent of Franco´ s, seeks to exert and enforce his power over those living and working on his estate. An avid hunter and sexual predator, Iván breaks up a marriage through the symbolism of his automobile going in and out of the gates of his estate. Like Paco´ s Tiburón, Iván´ s car becomes an extension of his penis, and the necessity to exert it becomes essential through his sexual escapade with Purita.

Moreover, Delibes reflects the non-religious, non-pious aspect repressed by the regime, anticipated the natural need for sexual exploration and freedom as Spaniards moved from home and into adulthood. Social change will spread like wild-fire after Franco´ s death and usher Spain into contemporary times where assertion and knowledge of one´ s sexuality is an open theme in Spain, as exemplified by Rosa Montero´ s novel Crónica del desamor (1979).

Montero´ s novel employs a lexical and semiotic description of oral sex, an indication of the dramatic change that Spanish women and society had undergone in the
years immediately after the death of Franco. Previously such language would have been censored immediately. With these changes, the automobile’s new-found role becomes more complex. Although the automobile had been facilitating the search for sexual freedom and expression behind closed doors for many years, it will continue to serve, due to economic limitations, as a place where young couples can freely explore sex. Secondly, it reflects the figure of women in Spanish society who at that time were becoming more liberated after having suffered under a repressive regime. Overall, the search for sexual identity and liberation on behalf of the young generation of the mid 1970s to the present time has been furthered in great part by the automobile. However, unlike Montero’s commentary on sex, the automobile also provides insight into the problem of a national fragmented identity and the feeling of abandonment characterized by exile writers Juan Benet and Juan Goytisolo

Through the motifs of an incubus in Benet’s Volverás a Región (1967) and the car cemetery in Señas de identidad (1966), the reader is presented with a generation’s point of view and two very important questions represented by the automobile: 1) What does it mean to “be Spanish”? and 2) Why have we been abandoned? The answer to these questions is found when the characters are put in contact with the automobile. For the man-child in Benet’s work it conjures images and nightmares of a generation that feels fragmented and abandoned by a country that still suffers from the nightmarish conditions of the Civil War. On the other hand, Mendiola’s fragmented identity is a pride-swallowing, soul-searching experience that is reflected in the car cemetery upon seeing foreign brand cars oxidized and junked outside of Barcelona. The need to know what it means to be Spanish and the desire to break from the Civil War are tasks that will haunt Mendiola till his end. He is a broken man with a broken heart from a different time period. Through Benet’s man-child and Goytisolo’s Mendiola, we are invited into bodies which are very much like the abandoned, hollowed-out cars found alongside roads and in car cemeteries. They are the microstructure of the post-war generation that was still soul-searching some twenty years after the Civil War. The automobile evidences the powerful forces that society endured in spite of the Franco regime’s insistence on nationalizing the country as “una grande y libre España.”
In conclusion, the impact of the automobile in literature is felt in the voices of two generations of Spaniards. The first is the repressed, fragmented, abandoned exile generation searching for answers through a bittersweet binary opposition handed down by the Franco regime. It is characterized not only by the automobile as a minister of death, but also by the Seat 600 as the sugar-coated candy symbolizing the climax of the regime’s desire for a robust economy. The other voice is that of a generation for whom the automobile was a symbol of liberal sexual freedom and expression. It is the voice of a generation whose strongest supporter is a woman searching for the right to express herself sexually and in society. Combined, these voices form a conglomeration of ideas, a vivid, bittersweet picture of the socio-cultural developments of a bygone era that remains fresh in the minds of many Spaniards. Thus, the automobile cultivates our knowledge to better understand the contemporary history of one of Europe’s most fascinating countries: Spain.


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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

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