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PSYCHOEDUCATION AND PHILOSOPHY
IN A LITERATURE CLASS –
THE CASE OF *FIVE HOURS WITH MARIO*
BY MIGUEL DELIBES

TOWARDS A MORE OPEN AND LESS POLARIZED SOCIETY

ABSTRACT   The paper presents a novel approach towards the analysis of a classic Spanish 20th century novel, *Five Hours with Mario* by Miguel Delibes. The author of the paper proposes two interpretative frameworks, of which The Moral Foundations Theory developed recently by Jonathan Haidt is the main one, and Karl Popper's concept of the open and closed society, a complementary one. The interdisciplinary reading of Delibes' masterpiece should help students and scholars revive and update their relationship to this worthwhile piece of fiction, as well as provide them with theoretical tools for an in-depth understanding of the differences between the moral outlook of liberals and conservatives, tools applicable both on the level of fiction, as well as in reality.

Key words: **Miguel** Delibes, liberals, conservatives, psychology, Jonathan Haidt, Karl Popper

INTRODUCTION

This paper's objective is to present two novel interpretative tools (one main, the other complementary, as I am about to explain) for Miguel Delibes' classic masterpiece *Five Hours with Mario*,[1] in the hope of refreshing professors' and students' relationship with this valuable book (bound to appear at some point in the curriculum of most of the students of Spanish Literature) and helping literature scholars connect their work, generally considered to be very abstract and detached from the affairs of the "real world", with urgent, tangible issues of the present day; issues that are as pressing in the micro – as in the macroscale.[2] To be precise, my proposal is to analyse *Five Hours with Mario* through the Moral Foundations Theory, developed recently in the field of experimental moral psychology by Jonathan Haidt and his associates, and complement this descriptive kind of analysis, which will constitute the main body of this paper, with one that may be called normative, employing Popper's concept of Open Society.[3]

In my experience, *Five Hours with Mario*, published in 1966, is usually presented to students in the context of experimental novel that appeared on the Spanish market during the 1960s, when several masterpieces employing unusual narrative techniques, such as *Time of Silence* by Luis Martín-Santos, became available to the Iberian public. Important as it is to have some basic grasp of poetics, I am convinced few literature professors would deny that literary technicalities are the least attractive, and from the point of view of many students, the most useless (if we look for a link between theory and the praxis of our everyday lives) part of literary studies. On the other hand, on the level of diegesis the book presents a reality far removed from today's students' experience, and

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[1]   A short reminder of the plot: *Five Hours with Mario* consists almost entirely of a monologue of a forty-odd years old woman, Carmen, over her dead husband's Marios' body. In her peculiar stream of consciousness Carmen recalls various facts from the conjugal past and, while talking, reveals a great deal about her husband's and her moral and political convictions. The readers are quick to notice that the spouses were as different as chalk and cheese – Mario may be described as a liberal, progressive leftist, while Carmen as a staunch conservative, and precisely this difference, resulting in countless misunderstandings, is the source of a great amount of unhappiness in the lives of both of them.

[2]   I refer mainly to the sharp polarization of political attitudes observed in recent years in Western societies (*cf.* G. Lukianoff, J. Haidt, *The Coddling of the American Mind. How Good Intentions and Bad Ideas Are Setting Up a Generation for Failure*, London 2018, pp. 111, 125-132) and to the resurgent dictatorial and/or nationalistic tendencies in some of them.

[3]   The ultimate source of inspiration of, and possibly a justification for, this interdisciplinary methodology is the concept of consilience, revived by E.O. Wilson in his 1998 book *Consilience. The Unity of Knowledge*. I fully agree with Wilson's famous claim*: If the natural sciences can be successfully united with the social sciences and humanities, the liberal arts in higher education will be revitalized. Even the attempt to accomplish that much is a worthwhile goal. Profession-bent students should be helped to understand that in the twenty first century the world will not be run by those who possess mere information alone. Thanks to science and technology, access to factual knowledge of all kinds is rising exponentially while dropping in unit cost. It is destined to become global and democratic. Soon it will be available everywhere on television and computer screens. What then? The answer is clear: synthesis. We are drowning in information, while starving for wisdom* (ibid., p. 294).

even more so if they grew up in another country, whose historical circumstances cannot be easily compared to the experience of the Civil War and the concept of "two Spains".

If that is the case, what type of analytical tools can we employ to evoke the students' interest in Delibes' portrait of a marital conflict in the Francoist period and convince them that it is possible to extract from this piece of fiction important information not only about the past, but also about the present? That the experience of reading it may still be valuable today?

Exploring in depth the psychological dimension of the novel with the help of science, as well as connecting the resulting observations with philosophical issues pertaining to the current political climate, may help students see the relevance of *Five Hours with Mario* for their own lives and their understanding of the surroundings.

WHY PSYCHOEDUCATION?

As it is not typical to talk about psychoeducation in the context of literature, I feel obligated – to provide readers with an explanation of my decision concerning the angle of analysis before proceeding to the main body of the paper. As a person possessing a demonstrable psychological preparation, I am firmly convinced that the lack of psychoeducation, both during the course of obligatory education and at the more advanced, university stages, has truly disastrous effects. At this moment of scientific development humanity possesses a huge treasury of knowledge about human behaviour, motivation, thinking patterns and psychological health, but we are strangely reluctant to use it, as can be easily observed in the area of the humanities,[4] which turns out to be even more bizarre when we recall the fact that the widely assumed goal of the humanities is to enhance the well-being of humans.

When we read books, we read and learn about human experience; books appeal to us because the thought and behaviour patterns displayed by the characters are familiar to us and show a high degree of probability; because we can identify with and compare ourselves to other human beings described in them; because they reveal some truth about people and the culture they construct and refer to.[5] This artificial experience (and I refer here to Dewey's definition of art as experience[6]) can provide a point of departure for acquiring a deeper insight into ourselves and others, and this knowledge, in turn, may be used for more well-being, both individual and collective. This task seems

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[4] According to Steven Pinker, intellectuals working in the field of arts and humanities, where hard data is rarely gathered and analysed, too often get carried away by ideas stemming from anecdotal experience, propagating, as a result, erroneous theories, which may even bring harm to those who try to manage reality according to their precepts. S. Pinker, *Enlightenment Now. The Case of Reason, Science, Humanism, and Progress*, London 2019, pp. 34, 388-409.

[5] For a comprehensive description of psychological effects of fiction see K. Oatley, *Such Stuff as Dreams. The Psychology of Fiction*, Chichester 2011.

[6] As described in J. Dewey, "Art as Experience", in S.D. Ross (ed.), *Art and Its Significance. An Anthology of Aesthetic Theory*, Albany 1994, pp. 204-220.

to me even more urgent when we consider the fact that according to available statistics, the number of people (among them students[7]) with identified or self-identified mental disorders is on a sharp rise in most of the developed world, and the situation is expected to worsen. We can choose to look away, but I do not believe that the project of building a good society, for which educators, due to the character of their profession, carry a particular responsibility, or an open society, among whose pillars Popper mentions humaneness and reasonableness,[8] has a great chance of success when we turn a blind eye to this massive and urgent problem; even more so considering the fact that we are constantly bombarded by counterproductive visions of human happiness (like the ones based on extreme individualism) also from within the humanities. As I view it, psychoeducation is a necessary part of what Popper calls "piecemeal social engineering" (based on the scientific method of trial, error, and change of the hypothesis, as opposed to the utopian, or totalitarian social engineering, based on unverifiable ideals[9]), and of transforming a society according to the findings of science. Let us learn about Haidt's contribution to the available body of knowledge, and subsequently of how it may be used for literary purposes.

JONATHAN HAIDT'S THEORY OF MORAL FOUNDATIONS

Jonathan Haidt's[10] Moral Foundations Theory has been widely acknowledged (although also criticised[11]) by the scientific community after Haidt's book, *The Righteous*

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[7]   To quote data from the United States: *A 2016 report by the Center for Collegiate Mental Health, using data from 139 colleges, found that by the 2015-2016 school year*, half *of all students surveyed reported having attended counseling for mental health concerns.* [...] *These years also saw substantial increases in rates of self-injury and suicide among college students, so while part of the increase may be due to students being more willing to self-diagnose, once again, we know that the underlying rates of mental illness were increasing.* G. Lukianoff, J. Haidt, *The Coddling of the American Mind...*, pp. 156-157.

[8]   K. Popper envision the Open society as a civilization *aiming at humaneness and reasonableness, at equality and freedom* (K. Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, London–New York 2011, p. XXXV).

[9]   As Vaclav Havel explained, *Popper argued for a gradual approach, an effort to improve incrementally the institutions, mechanisms and techniques of human coexistence, to improve them by remaining constantly in touch with life and constantly enriching our experience. Improvements and changes must be made according to whatever has proved to be good, practical, desirable and meaningful, without the arrogant presumption we have understood everything about this world, and thus know everything there is to know about how to change it for the better* (Havel V., "Karl Popper's *The Open Society and Its Enemies* in the Contemporary Global World", in K. Popper, *The Open Society...*, p. XI).

[10]   J. Haidt recognizes that his theory draws on the work and contributions of other scientists, e.g. the psychological anthropologist Richard Schweder's (J. Haidt, *The Righteous Mind. Why Good People are Divided by Politics and Religion*, London 2013, pp. 16-18; 24-26) and Haidt's collaborators, Craig Joseph and Jesse Graham (mentioned as co-authors of some articles in which Haidt is the first author (*ibidem*, pp. 464-465)), as well as Brian Nosek.

[11]   Joshua Greene comments in *The Moral Tribes*: *The survey data that Haidt uses to support his theory (the original version with five foundations) show an enormous division between two clusters: the care-fairness cluster and the loyalty-authority-sanctity cluster. There is , by contrast, relatively little evidence for*

Mind. Why Good People are Divided by Politics and Religion, was published in 2012. Haidt, a psychologist with a philosophical background interested in morality, puts forward a theory based on (his own and others') experiments, specifically designed questionnaires and data analysis (for the complete methodology, please consult the book), explaining the psychological differences between liberals (not libertarians, although their moral choices are also a subject of Haidt's research) and conservatives. Haidt initially identifies five (later this number is extended to six) areas of morality that people care about and include in their moral systems worldwide. These are: care/harm; fairness/cheating; loyalty/betrayal; authority/subversion; sanctity/degradation. Let us clarify the content and function of each of these modules.

1. Care vs. harm

Even in natural conditions, humans do not produce as many babies as most other species, which makes their offspring relatively difficult to replace in case of their death, and therefore especially valuable. Also, human new-borns come into the world long before they are ready for any independent existence, and if our species were not biologically programmed to take care of them and pump a large quantity of resources (food, energy, time) into maintaining the babies alive, it would not have survived. In order to avert such a lot, evolution has endowed us with a nervous apparatus that reacts strongly to the images of distress of children, and, through extrapolation, other animated beings with childlike features (eg. baby seals, but also large-eyed triangles in a movie picture)[12]. Haidt claims that over time we have learned to use this empathy/altruism module to care not only for children and in-groups (with whom we shared genes or had common interests), but also for out-groups, even if they are perfect strangers in a remote village.[13] This is true especially for liberals, as conservatives show a greater tendency to focus their helping efforts on in-groups (eg. the members

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a two-way division within the first cluster or a three-way division within the second cluster, and what evidence there is can be accounted for by the fact that the surveys used to collect these data were designed with five clusters in mind (J. Greene, *The Moral Tribes. Emotion, Reason, and the Gap between Us and Them*, London 2015, p. 386). Haidt frames his conclusions suggesting liberals may have deficient moral palates – employing only three tastes instead of all six. However, what Greene points to is that they may simply have a more refined (nurtured by the ideas created by culture, especially the Enlightenment, not nature) and further-reaching moral radar, as opposed to the parochial focus of conservatives, who, after all, care specifically for their own authorities, their own religion and loyalty to their own community, *ibidem*, pp. 336-338.

[12]   J. Haidt, *The Righteous Mind...*, p. 156.

[13]   Peter Singer described this phenomenon as an "expanding circle of empathy" in his 1981 *The Expanding Circle. Ethics and Sociobiology*. Singer uses as an opening quote of this book a fragment of *The History of European Morals*, by W.E.H Lecky, which summarises the core idea behind his thesis: *The moral unity to be expected in different ages is not a unity of standard, or of acts, but a unity of tendency.... At one time the benevolent affections embrace merely the family, soon the circle expanding includes first a class, then a nation, then a coalition of nations, then all humanity, and finally, its influence is felt in the dealings of man with the animal world* (P. Singer, *The Expanding Circle. Ethics and Sociobiology*, Princeton 1981, p. unnumbered).

of their family and community, as opposed to unknown strangers, unidentified single mothers, immigrants etc.).[14]

That is, however, not the only difference between liberals and conservatives in their approach to the care/harm foundation. People who place themselves on the left side of the political spectrum on average give higher importance to rescuing the needy and the distressed. Indeed, their responses to the experiments and questionnaires devised by Haidt and his collaborators made the researchers come to the conclusion that this group makes ethical decisions by taking into account almost exclusively the care/harm foundation, along with the fairness/cheating module.

2. Fairness/cheating

According to Haidt, this foundation is largely connected to the theory put forward by Robert Trivers, called "reciprocal altruism". Reciprocal altruism is basically about scratching each other's backs – we humans have evolved brains capable of running a record of our interactions with other individuals and registering the favours/help given and received. However, *[t]he current triggers of the Fairness modules include a great many things that have gotten linked, culturally and politically, to the dynamics of reciprocity and cheating.*[15] To give an example, liberals are especially sensitive to social and political causes in which one institution/group tries to take advantage of the other (e.g. the rich enjoying huge profits while paying meagre salaries to their workers), and support policies that make up for the inequalities largely independent of the affected subjects' will, understanding that, with a little slip of luck, they could also find themselves in such an unfavourable position. Meanwhile, for conservatives fairness translates into proportionality – everyone should reap just what they sow, which is why they consider it fair for people *to be rewarded in proportion to what they contribute.*[16]

3. Loyalty/betrayal

This moral foundation is a logical (and evolutionary) result of people's tendency to form groups (in the natural conditions often bound by blood relations) that compete for resources with other groups. As Haidt explains, *[w]e are descendants of successful tribalists, not their more individualistic cousins.*[17] The more loyalty and willingness to make sacrifices for the sake of their community the members of a group display, the greater the chance of outcompeting the rivals. Hence a profound identification with one's group is a very valuable quality in the tribal world. In the modern world, loyalty for one's group (be it a family, local community, nation, religious group, sports team

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[14]   J. Haidt, *The Righteous Mind…*, p. 158.

[15]   *Ibidem*, p. 159.

[16]   *Ibidem*, p. 161.

[17]   *Ibidem*, p. 163.

or any other) is a quality appreciated to a far greater extent by the conservatives than liberals.[18]

4. Authority/subversion

Not only did we evolve in groups, but, as Haidt reminds us, just as in the case of many other animals, particularly primates, these groups were hierarchical. In fact, *the urge to respect hierarchical relationships is so deep that many languages encode it directly,*[19] using separate grammatical forms when addressing higher-ranked individuals. Also, the famous anthropologist Alan Fiske mentions Authority Ranking as one of four universal ways of forming relationships in human societies.[20] Authority relations, according to Fiske, do not entail exclusively oppression, but tend to be a source of mutual benefits for the both parties involved, as well as for the hierarchically structured group: *a principle of* noblesse oblige *usually obtains in AR relations, so that authorities have an obligation to be generous and hospitable to inferiors and to exhibit pastoral responsibility in protecting and sustaining their subordinates.*[21] As Haidt points out, people labelling themselves as liberal are used to conflating authority with oppression and reject this notion as a basis for moral evaluations. Conversely, conservatives place much more importance on showing respect for authority,[22] at least for their particular tribal authority.[23]

5. Sanctity/degradation

This foundation originated from our innate, evolutionarily beneficial propensity to feel disgust. Homo sapiens, just like many other species, possesses a *behavioural immune system* that *consists of a suite of psychological mechanisms that (a) detect cues connoting the presence of infectious pathogens in the immediate environment, (b) trigger disease-relevant*

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[18] *Ibidem*, p. 187.

[19] *Ibidem*, p. 165.

[20] Authority Ranking is one of the building blocks of the Relational Models Theory. The remaining three are: Communal Sharing, Equality Matching (based on reciprocity) and Market Pricing. People use these four cognitive models to generate, understand, coordinate, and evaluate social relationships; they are the source of both motives and norms. A.P. Fiske, "The Four Elementary Forms of Sociality: Framework for a Unified Theory of Social Relations", *Psychological Review*, vol. 99, no. 4 (1992), pp. 689-723.

[21] *Ibidem*, p. 700.

[22] J. Haidt, *The Rightous Mind...*, p. 187.

[23] J. Greene presents a more nuanced vision of the conservatives' respect for authority: *According to Haidt, American social conservatives place greater value on respect for authority, and that's true in a sense. Social conservatives feel less comfortable slapping their fathers, even as a joke, and so on. But social conservatives do not respect authority in a* general *way. Rather, they have great respect for the authorities recognized by their tribe (from the Christian God to various religious and political leaders to parents). [...] American social conservatives' concern for loyalty is also tribal. They don't think that* everyone *should be loyal to their respective countries. If Iranians, for example want to protest against their government, that is to be encouraged* (J. Greene, *Moral Tribes...*, pp. 339-340).

emotional and cognitive responses, and thus (c) facilitate behavioral avoidance of patho-gen infection.[24] However, unlike many other species, e.g. koalas, omnivorous humans are not born knowing what to eat, therefore it may be also beneficial to have culturally established norms concerning food and food preparation (hygiene). Still, our infec-tion/ poison/ filth detectors may also have a say outside the range of its original pur-poses, activating when we are faced with some abstract issues concerning purity, and, by extrapolation, sanctity, e.g. the worth of human life and our right to decide about the duration of others' existence (as it happens in cases of abortion, for example).[25] Once again, Haidt's and his colleagues' research shows that conservatives are substantially more bothered by issues concerning moral purity and possible degradation of the sa-cred values than liberals.[26] This may connect further with their deference towards tribal rules – *the psychology of sacredness helps bind individuals into moral communities. When someone in the community desecrates one of the sacred pillars supporting the community, the reaction is sure to be swift, collective and punitive.*[27]

6. Liberty/oppression

This moral foundation was added a couple of years after the original proposal, contain-ing five foundations, had been drafted. It seems to stem from the reluctance of group/ tribe members to put up with an excessively abusive leader, a dictatorial alpha-male. Re-volts against vicious bullies in the position of power are observed not only in the human communities, but also among chimpanzees,[28] who have occasionally been noted to gang up against such a bully to take him down or even kill him. By eliminating bullies and ex-ceedingly violent individuals humans have undergone a gradual "process of self-domesti-cation", which has brought us to the point at which violent behaviours became punishable by law, and in which we declare solemnly that "all men are created equal", albeit sometimes we may still have problems with implementing this widely accepted rule in practice.

The liberty/oppression foundation may overlap to some extent with fairness under-stood as equality (liberal interpretation), as opposed to proportionality (as conserva-tives seem to understand it). On the other hand, *the Liberty foundation […] operates in tension with the Authority foundation.*[29] Although conservatives show, in general, a greater respect for (their tribal) authority, *we all recognize some kind of authority as legitimate in some contexts.*[30] However, liberals seem more sensitive to the symptoms of self-aggrandisement and tyranny as a result of their deep concern for equality, which

[24] M. Schaller, J.H Park, "The Behavioral Immune System (and Why It Matters)", *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, vol. 20, no. 2 (2011),, p. 99.

[25] J. Haidt, *The Rightous Mind…*, p. 173.

[26] *Ibidem*, p. 187.

[27] *Ibidem*, p. 175.

[28] *Ibidem*, p. 198.

[29] *Ibidem*, p. 201.

[30] *Ibidem*, p. 201.

makes them stand up for civil and human rights on behalf of all those powerless under-dogs whose voice, for a variety of reasons, is not heard, or not heard loud enough. Conversely, for conservatives, *the Liberty/oppression foundation and the hatred of tyranny supports many of the tenets of economic conservatism: don't tread on me (with your liberal nanny state and high taxes), don't tread on my business (with your oppressive regulations) and don't tread on my nation (with your United Nations and your sovereignty-reducing international treaties).*[31]

To sum up, whereas conservatives operate on all six foundations, grading them as (roughly) equally important, liberals show a distinct concern for the care/harm and fairness (understood as equality)/cheating foundation, which converges partially with the liberty (understood as equality of rights)/ oppression foundation. Importantly, the more liberal you are, the more you tend to be guided in your moral evaluations and consequent behaviours by the first two foundations, and the less you care for the remaining three from the original list (loyalty, authority, sanctity). Conversely, the more conservative you are, the more weight you attach to defending the honour and position of your group, observing the hierarchical structures and protecting the purity of the sacred, be it a tribal (such as a flag) or religious symbol or idea.

Let us see how the Moral Foundations Theory operates in Delibes' novel.

MARIO – A DAYDREAMING LIBERAL, CARMEN – A STAUNCH CONSERVATIVE

In the modern western world a marriage of two individuals as incompatible as Mario and Carmen is difficult to find. Still, one can easily imagine that marriages contracted at a very young age and, to a large extent, marriages of convenience, may bind together two people as different as night and day. In *Five Hours with Mario* Delibes, employing his writer's sensibility and insight, managed to capture with awe-inspiring precision the clash between the typical liberal and conservative mindsets, the former represented by the late husband, the latter by the mourning wife.[32]

It is safe to say that what chiefly defines Mario is his concern for the care/harm and fairness/equality (or liberty/oppression, as later suggested by Haidt) principle, which Carmen, in line with Haidt's findings about conservatives, downplays when it comes to outgroups. Coming from a bourgeoise background, Carmen neither understands nor

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[31]   *Ibidem*, p. 204.

[32]   The ideological (and moral – ideology is, at the end of the day, about values) mismatch of the spouses is the easily perceived core idea of the novel and has been commented upon by many other researches, e.g. A Vilanova: *Es evidente [...] que el principal motivo determinante de la profunda desavenencia conyugal que les separa es la distinta jerarquía de valores que sustenta cada uno, no sólo en lo que respecta a su diferente modo de enfocar la conducta moral, sino en el hecho de que cada uno de ellos posee una concepción del mundo y de la vida radicalmente distinta* (A Vilanova, "*Cinco horas con Mario* o el arte de entender las razones del otro", in E. Baena Peña, Enrique, C. Cuevas García, Cristóbal (eds.), *Miguel Delibes, el escritor, la obra y el lector. Actas del V Congreso de Literatura Española Contemporánea, Universidad de Málaga, 12, 13, 14, y 15 de noviembre de 1991*, Málaga 1992, p. 157).

shares Mario's egalitarian ideals, which is why in the novel we can hear her repeatedly deride her husband's sympathy towards the underprivileged, as reflected in the following examples (to quote a few):

– *what's happening is that all of you have fallen for this monomania of culture, and you go around stirring up heaven and earth to let poor people study, that's another mistake, you take poor people out of their element and they're no good either for coarse or fine, you ruin them, make sure of that,*[33] referring to Mario's advocacy for the universal right to access higher education;

– *for you even women of the streets deserve to be pitied, I don't know where we'll wind up with that idea, "Nobody does it because she want to, victims of society", don't make me laugh,*[34] showing Mario's empathy towards prostitutes and, more generally, women that do not live up to the ideals of feminine honour in the Francoist Spain;

– *That's another victory of* El Correo *you can all be proud of, that miserable* Correo, *that only knows how to stir up the poor and you can already see the results, fifteen hundred pesetas for a maid*, in which quote Carmen comments on Mario's struggle for economic equality.

Through Carmen's monologue we learn that Mario not only dreamt of universal equality, but also of eliminating intergroup competition – he wrote a novel praising pacifism, which seems beyond Carmen's comprehension. Amazed and annoyed, she comments: *And those soldiers were really weird, Mario, you've got to understand. How can the soldiers of two opposing armies jump out of the trenches and hug each other and say they wouldn't let themselves be pushed around by THAT FORCE any more?*[35] As for her, intergroup rivalry and the necessarily ensuing need for ingroup loyalty are unquestionable facts of life. Precisely, one of the things she is unable to forgive Mario (and with that complaint many a reader may sympathise) is his scant interest in providing for his own family, or for the members of his tribe,[36] exemplified in the following fragment: *and that's the selfsame reason I'll find it very hard to forgive you, sweetheart, if I live a thousand years, your not letting me have my way about a car, I know that shortly after we were married it was a luxury, but nowadays everybody has a little one – a Six Hundred – at least, Mario, even janitors´ wives as far as that goes.*[37]

There are many other fragments in which Carmen reproaches her husband for neglecting the well-being of his own family, while wasting the resources and time for the

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[33]   M. Delibes, *Five Hours with Mario*, transl. by F.M. López-Morillas, New York 1988, p. 62.

[34]   *Ibidem*, p. 29.

[35]   *Ibidem*, p. 36.

[36]   An issue raised also by other researches, eg. José María Alberich: *Como padre de familia, Mario deja bastante que desear, sobre todo a los ojos de su cónyuge. Los que están siempre preocupados con cambiar el mundo no suelen ser buenos administradores de su hacienda. Y a hemos aludido a algunas de esas «renuncias y abstenciones» , como dice Ortega, y el resultado es que la familia tiene que vivir muy estrechamente, con carencias que para su mujer no son sólo privaciones, sino privaciones humillantes* (J.M. Alberich, "*Cinco horas con Mario* o el tiro por la culata", *Boletín de la Real Academia Sevillana de Buenas Letras: Minervae Baeticae*, no. 32 (2004), pp. 219-220).

[37]   M. Delibes, *Five Hours…*, p. 34.

outgroups, which she perceives as betrayal; at the end of the novel we learn that she takes her revenge on Mario through an act of marital infidelity.

Carmen's idea of fairness does not overlap with equality, but resembles Plato's understanding of justice – everyone should carry out their duties according to their class. What motivates her, just as it was in the case of Edmund Burke when he criticised the French Revolution, is the fear of chaos resulting from too much freedom for everyone, and the ensuing need to uphold the existing social order.[38] Her husband seems to be a simpleton (as she calls him repeatedly), not able to understand such a basic relationship, and she tries to explain it to him using a very commonsensical example: *You've heard Papa, at the time of the Republic, a total mess, nobody could understand anybody else, and why? Don't be closed-minded, my boy, it was because there was no authority, why, to give you an idea, it's as if one day we said to Mario, Menchu, Alvaro, Borja, and Aran, go on, eat whatever you please, yell your heads off, go to bed whenever you take the notion, you're the masters of the house, you give orders just as much as Mother and Daddy, can you imagine the confusion? It's just common sense, Mario, you don't have to be especially intelligent to understand it, you take Higinio Oyarzun the other day "to make a country work well, military discipline".*[39]

Indeed, the authority/subversion foundation is a very important building block in Carmen's moral outlook, and we hear her repeatedly stress its importance for the general well-being, as in chapter V, where she says: *you men think that after you stop being a child you have a right to anything, and I should say not, you're ever so mistaken, when you've grown up you still have to keep on obeying just like when you were children, not your father or mother of course, but authority, yes, authority, takes their place, we'd be in fine shape if it didn't!*[40] Mario, apparently, does not share Carmen's reverence for hierarchy, as he seems unable to understand why he was beaten by a policeman in a park for no serious reason.[41]

Additionally, Carmen's ethical judgements are thoroughly filtered through the sanctity/degradation module, which translates not only into her paying attention to

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[38] *Each contract of each particular state is but a clause in the great primeval contract of eternal society, linking the lower with the higher natures, connecting the visible and invisible world, according to a fixed compact sanctioned by the inviolable oath which holds all physical and all moral natures, each in their appointed place. This law is not subject to the will of those who by an obligation above them, and infinitely superior, are bound to submit their will to that law. The municipal corporations of that universal kingdom are not morally at liberty at their pleasure, and on their speculations of a contingent improvement, wholly to separate and tear asunder the bands of their subordinate community and to dissolve it into an unsocial, uncivil, unconnected chaos of elementary principles* (E. Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, London 1910, pp. 93-94).

[39] M. Delibes, *Five Hours...*, p. 131.

[40] *Ibidem*, pp. 63-64. Carmen judges the world according to the very same principles she has learned at home in her childhood, which is clearly visible in fragments like: *like I say, at our house on April 14* [1931, proclamation of the Second Spanish Republic] *it was like a funeral, Papa was on the point of tears and I'm still not quite sure he didn't cry, all day long pacing back and forth, from his armchair to the study, from his study to the armchair, like he was stunned. Poor Papa aged ten years that day, for him the king was the greatest thing in the world, more than any of us, mind you, more than the whole family put together, veneration was what Papa had for the monarchy, worship* (*ibidem*, p. 76).

[41] *Ibidem*, p. 63.

religious practices and customs, but also to external appearance and purity (let us remember that it stems from our ability to feel disgust towards bad-looking and bad-smelling objects in our surroundings). Thus, at some point we hear her daydream about the same purity treatment her friend, Valentina, gets in the capital: *she goes to Madrid once a week to have her skin cleaned, that's why she has the complexion she has, it's a marvel!* [...] *nobody knows the kind of filth that can get into your skin until it's been cleaned once, you can hardly believe it!* In contrast, Carmen's husband does not seem to care excessively about this principle, wearing shabby clothes, often in disarray, which earns him frequent rebukes from his wife for not observing the dress code suitable for a professor and the social class he belongs to.[42] In addition, Carmen constantly worries that her husband may be "dirty" inside, which she confesses when commenting on Mario's journalistic activity: *every time I saw you take communion, I was scared to death thinking you might be committing a sacrilege, mind you, I never told you so, because there are things that can't be reconciled, for instance God and El Correo, why, that's like lightning one candle to God and another to the devil*[43]. Mario, in contrast, seems to have a much more relaxed attitude towards religion, going as far as to criticise the authorities of his religious group[44], and adapting a personalised attitude towards the Bible, whose selected passages *enriched and calmed him*,[45] a statement that brought Valentina, Carmen's friend, to laughter.

In conclusion, *[e]s evidente, en efecto, que el principal motivo determinante de la incomprensión que ha levantado una muralla infranqueable entre los dos [esposos] es la distina jerarquía de valores en que se funda su respectivo concepto de la moralidad, basado en ambos casos en la afirmación dogmática de sus propias ideas y creencias, elevadas a verdades absolutas.*[46] Haidt's Theory of Moral Foundations allows us to transpose the artificial and individual experience of a clash between the liberal morality of a fictitious husband and the conservative morality of a fictitious wife to the level of scientific abstraction. This move, in turn, gives us experimentally validated tools of analysis for all similar situations, whether fictitious or real. Additionally, it gives us tools for a better understanding of, and a more efficient communication with, the other party, which is hard to overestimate in the times of entrenched partisanship.

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[42] *Ibidem*, p. 57. Carmen's preoccupation with appearances, which for her are a question of decency and even morality, is brought *ad absurdum* in the initial passages of the book, when a parade of kith and kin rolls by the affected family's flat. At his moment we are told that *Carmen has sat up and is looking at herself in the mirror. Furiously she pulls at her sweater under the armpits, first on the left side, then on the right. "I'm a real mess", she murmurs. "With a black bra or a white bra, these breasts of mine aren't mourning or anything like it"* (*ibidem*, p. 22).

[43] *Ibidem*, p. 63.

[44] He even dares to express his negative views on the Inquisition: *and you, criticizing the Inquisition and all the good things, you really amuse me, why, with those tales of yours that the Inquisition's methods were unchristian you're playing right into their hands, and I don't say you do it in bad faith, I don't go as far as that, but out of simple-mindedness, Mario, because you were on very shaky ground when you said it's unchristian to kill a man because he doesn't want to deny his conscience* (*ibidem*, pp. 129-130).

[45] *Ibidem*, p. 22.

[46] A. Vilanova, "*Cinco horas con Mario* o el arte...", p. 162.

FIVE HOURS WITH MARIO AND THE OPEN SOCIETY

Thus we have arrived at the second type of analysis I want to signal briefly. This approach may be called a (more) normative one. Haidt shows us principally, although not exclusively, how things are; philosophers, on the other hand, oftentimes try to convince us how things should be. One of such philosophers was undoubtedly Karl Popper, who wrote *The Open Society and Its Enemies* in a state of great emergency (1943-44), uncertain of what the world affairs will look like after World War II has come to its end, but convinced of the need to develop *our understanding of totalitarianism, and of the significance of the perennial fight against it.*[47] I want to call the readers' attention to the usefulness of combining the analysis of *Five Hours with Mario* with Popper's concept of an open and closed society, as it overlaps to a large extent with the division between liberals and conservatives established by Haidt (once again, via experimental methods). As the Popperian version of this concept dates back to 1944 and has been widely circulated since, I will forgo summarising it. In the context of Delibes' novel it is important to point out that, just as Carmen seems a perfect personification of an average conservative as described in Haidt's theory, she also embodies, and, thus, one may say, constitutes a metaphor of, the Popperian closed society, based on tribalism (the corresponding foundation – loyalty), magical thinking (sanctity) and stable hierarchy (loyalty). Mario, on the other hand, embodies the characteristics by which Popper defines the open society: first of all openness and appreciation of new people, experiences and ideas,[48] rationality (Mario is a professor), humaneness (the corresponding foundation – care) and the appreciation of individual freedom (equality, liberty). Clearly, Popper and Delibes advocate for a more open society as a desired goal, but also go, each of them using his specific methodology, to great lengths to understand the reasoning of their adversaries. With the help of the emotional experience offered by fiction, usually considered far more engaging than abstract scientific disquisitions, it may be easier for us to appreciate the arguments of the other side and, once again, address them without losing sight of our principles. To quote Carmen, *the fact is that a person has principles and principles are sacred, everybody knows that, if you really look at it there's nothing like principles.*[49] Still, according to the rule of "piecemeal social engineering', these principles must be malleable enough to allow for modification when proved wrong.

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[47]   K. Popper, *The Open Society…*, p. XXXV.

[48]   Interestingly, openness to experience is a strong predictor of leaning towards the political left. Cf. A. Furnham, M. Fenton-O'Creevy, "Personality and Political Orientation", *Personality and Individual Differences*, no. 129 (2018), pp. 88-91.

[49]   M. Delibes, *Five Hours…*, p. 31.

CONCLUSION

I hope to have demonstrated that the analysis of *Five Hours with Mario,* a classical piece of Spanish fiction*,* can be successfully carried out using recent findings of experimental psychology, in particular The Moral Foundation Theory by Jonathan Haidt, and can be additionally enriched by an older theoretical framework, that is Karl Popper's concept of the Open and Closed Society. In my experience, such an interdisciplinary approach renders the analysis far more attractive and relevant in the eyes of students. Nevertheless, while using these tools, one should keep in mind that it is untenable from the rational point of view to claim that all moral foundations are equally valid and worthwhile in the present day reality – *the scientific facts militate toward a defensible morality, namely principles that maximize the flourishing of humans and other sentient beings,* […] which are *becoming the de facto morality of modern democracies,*[50] and which overlap to a great extent with the principles found on the left side of the political spectrum, where the key factor is the rejection of parochialism. It is also important to remember that Delibes' novel is, at the end of the day, a satire against the conservative attitudes, which does not exclude interpreting it as *una apología de los emblemas políticos del momento: diálogo, reconciliación, tolerancia y libertad.*[51] Haidt, in turn, notwithstanding his defence of the conservative principles as a necessary element of social cohesion,[52] admits that in practice the moral solutions that seem to work best are utilitarian (consequentialist). Bearing all this in mind, it is still the case that being aware of the six Moral Foundations and the deepest differences between the left and the right side of the political scene may help us enter a dialogue with the other party, which must start with acknowledging the concerns of the other side instead of dismissing them as irrelevant, as that approach can result only in more hostility. Additionally, if we want to see more success in our educational and political endeavours aimed at building a better society for everyone, maybe we should consider not only acknowledging, but also addressing in a suitable way the needs of people using the broader moral spectrum, which is what Haidt suggests. All in all, I believe the knowledge of our moral and political differences and a thorough understanding of their causes may be put to a very good use in service of a more dialogue-oriented, less divided and possibly more open society, and may be acquired not only in a sociology or a social psychology class, but also in a literature class.

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