

RELIGIOUS IMPLICATIONS IN THE WRITINGS
OF MIGUEL DELIBES

A Thesis

Presented to

the Department of Foreign Languages and
the Graduate Council of the Kansas
State Teachers College of Emporia

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science

by

Herman Leslie Barnett

August 1965

Approved for the Major Department

David E. Lewis

Approved for the Graduate Council

James L. Bryan

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The writer wishes to thank Dr. David E. Travis, Professor of Foreign Languages in the Kansas State Teachers College of Emporia, for his valuable assistance in the preparation and development of this study, and Dr. Minnie M. Miller, head of the Department of Foreign Languages, for her suggestions and aid at all times.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. LIFE OF MIGUEL DELIBES	16
III. PSYCHOLOGICAL NOVELS	21
IV. ANECDOTAL NOVELS	54
V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	63
BIBLIOGRAPHY	67

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the writings of Miguel Delibes with respect to the religious implications contained in them.

After Delibes' extensive studies in the fields of law and business were finished and he was established in a career, he found time to do what he knew he wanted to do--to write a novel on a theme that had tormented him from childhood. This theme was a problem of living, of the direction that a man should give to his life and the individual's responsibility to his fellow man.

Critics have attempted to put traditional descriptive labels on the novels of Delibes, but whatever the label may be on any particular work, there is, especially in the earlier novels, a constant basic concern with man's adjustment to the problems of his nature and existence. José Amor y Vázquez and Ruth H. Kossoff, in their preface to El camino, say that "this preoccupation shows a fundamentally constructive attitude toward life, a conviction that the average man can find reason for and satisfaction in his life when he assumes the responsibilities that are his lot."¹

Delibes is concerned with this problem in all of his first four novels. He has much to say about "el camino," which is presumed to be

¹Miguel Delibes, El camino, ed. José Amor y Vázquez and Ruth H. Kossoff (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960), p. vii.

the manner of each individual's life and which is variously designated as "el camino de la verdad,"² "los caminos del alma,"³ or, generally, "el camino que el Señor nos ha señalado en la Tierra."⁴ Delibes feels that happiness is to be found in accommodating one's steps to the way indicated by God and that unhappiness will be the result of any deviation from this path through worldly ambition, sensuality, or other such attraction. His characters, therefore, are all struggling to find and stay on the road that God has marked out for them, and they find happiness and purpose in life only as they succeed in these efforts. Some may think they are on the way God has indicated for them and, therefore, think they have found happiness, only to discover, in a time of crisis, that they have been mistaken all along. Some may find the way but lose it again simply because they find it harsh and hard and are unable to reconcile themselves to the fact that this can be God's way for them. In this is seen the truth that "there is a way which seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Proverbs 14:12).

As Judith Link points out, Delibes' earlier works are carefully plotted, have a realistic to naturalistic setting, show a definite character evolution and may be called psychological novels or novels

²Miguel Delibes, La sombra del ciprés es alargada, (Barcelona: Ediciones Destino, 1948), p. 230.

³Miguel Delibes, Aun es de día, (Barcelona: Ediciones Destino, 1949), p. 295.

⁴Miguel Delibes, El camino, (Barcelona: Ediciones Destino, 1950), p. 184.

with a definite moral theme. The more recent works exhibit a trend away from the plotted novel toward an interest in the anecdotal. These, being lighter in tone, tend to lack the emotional and philosophical depth of the earlier works. But whether they be psychological or anecdotal in nature, they all carry throughout the same awareness of the problems of man and his adjustment to life.⁵ Each novel will have relevance to this thesis.

Though Delibes' attitude is basically spiritual, he may be generally characterized, not by religious fervor, but by a wealth of human understanding, kindness and sympathy, accompanied by a facility for sharp observation of human life. He wrote, in a letter to Mrs. Carman Davis, graduate student at Kansas State Teachers College of Emporia:

. . . Quiero decirle que en "La sombra" y en "Sisí" quizá yo sermoneaba demasiado. En el resto de mis novelas, el lector debe extraer las conclusiones por su cuenta.⁶

An attempt will be made, therefore, to note the "sermons" which were preached and to extract the conclusions that were indicated by the author and relate them to the teachings of the Bible.

In order to facilitate the reader's acquaintance with the characters and the circumstances referred to in the thesis, a résumé of the

⁵Judith Ann Link, "Major Themes in the Novels of Miguel Delibes" (unpublished Master's thesis, The University of Oklahoma, Norman, 1960), pp. 2-5.

⁶Letter from Miguel Delibes to Carman Davis, April 17, 1965.

novels and short stories used is given at this time.

La sombra del ciprés es alargada, Delibes' first novel, is the story of Pedro, a pessimist. Born in the mystic, walled city of Avila, orphaned early in life, cared for by an uncle who did not have time for him, educated in the cold, impersonal atmosphere of the Lesmes' home, devoted to a classmate who dies shortly of tuberculosis, Pedro's life is a series of experiences which have an adverse effect upon his sensitive soul. There was instilled in him a strong desire to avoid making any bonds of affection, the breaking of which would bring him only more grief and pain.

He chose a career in the Merchant Marines, thinking thus to be able more easily to achieve his purpose. He did succeed for a while in his denial of life. Later, however, he met Jane, a lovely, American girl, and, in spite of his firm resolve, found himself falling in love with her. He steeled himself and persisted for a time in his determination to avoid a tie that could possibly bring him further grief. The conflict between his desires and his fears became so intense that he became grievously ill. His pilot, Luis Bolea, tried to help him to resolve this conflict and, as a result of his and others' efforts, Pedro decided to marry Jane. He discovered then what real happiness can be and seemed to be opening up to the possibilities of life when, as his ship was coming in to port and he was watching the activities on the pier, he saw Jane's car swerve to avoid colliding with a dock worker and plunge into the dirty waters below.

By the time her body was recovered, the blackness of despair had engulfed him. Almost as a man who knows he is about to die, he "set his house in order" and returned to Avila. There, in the cemetery beside the grave of Alfredo, with whom he had by this time completely identified Jane, Pedro found peace and a feeling that he was not alone. As he left the cemetery he received this impression:

Me sonreía el contorno de Avila allá, a lo lejos. Del otro lado de la muralla permanecían Martina, doña Gregoria y el señor Lesmes. Y por encima aún me quedaba Dios.⁷

On the other side of Avila's walls were kindred spirits still, and God above.

Aun es de día is the story of Sebastián Ferrón, the ugly and misshapen son of an ugly and misshapen pedicure who had been hounded to despair and early death by his slovenly and vicious wife.

Sebastián had become the bread-winner for his mother, Aurelia, and his sister, Orenca, who had been born thirteen months after Sebastián's father's death. He had worked for some time in Señor Sixto's delicatessen shop just across the street. There he had observed and been vexed by the owner's unscrupulous practices, by means of which he had amassed great wealth during the war and the years immediately following.

When Sebastián had an opportunity to become an errand boy in Señor Suárez' large fabric store, he gladly accepted. After working there a few months he was promoted to clerk to fill a vacancy created

⁷Delibes, La sombra del ciprés es alargada, p. 278.

by the sudden dismissal of another man.

Due to his deformed body and his self-effacing characteristic, he was the butt of ridicule and the scapegoat for all the sadistically cruel jokes and pranks that his associates and others in the neighborhood could conjure up. He came to love Aurora Sixto, only to discover that she had cruelly deceived him in order that the child she was expecting might have a name.

Understandably, any man in such circumstances might despair. Sebastián did. Depression settled upon him like a dense cloud. But when he learned from a priest that a man's soul transcends his body and that it can be as beautiful as he wants to make it, he discovered the key for overcoming depression and pessimism. Sebastián struggled valiantly and found both purpose and satisfaction in his life. He found the way God had marked out for him.

El camino is the story of Daniel, el Mochuelo. He was the eleven-year-old son of Salvador, the cheese-maker and was about to depart for the city where he would begin seven years of study which would end in the bachillerato. Salvador wanted his son to "progress," to be something more than a cheese-maker.

The story is a series of episodes in the boy's life as he relived them in memory during a wakeful night before he was due to leave for the city. These episodes are connected only by the principal characters, Daniel and his friends, Roque, el Mofígo, and Germán, el Tiñoso, and the setting.

Throughout, Daniel seemed to be convinced that to leave his friends and the peaceful valley where he had spent eleven happy years was to take a road that the Lord had not marked out for him.

Mi idolotrado hijo Sisí⁸ tells of Cecilio Rubes and of his failure to find the way God had marked out for him due to worldly ambition and sensuality.

Cecilio Rubes had inherited a business in bathroom furnishings and he was inordinately proud of his financial success. He had a wife, Adela, whom he married only because he was attracted to her physically. His attractiveness for her was enhanced considerably by his money. On their wedding night he told her that he wanted no children.

Soon tired of Adela, Rubes chanced to meet Paulina, a beautiful girl, half his age. He set her up in a small apartment where he visited her regularly.

Adela discovered that she was pregnant at about the time that Cecilio decided that he needed a son. He also decided, for the welfare of his son, to renounce Paulina, but he postponed it until some time after Sisí was born.

When Sisí was born, Cecilio became as inordinately proud of him as he had been of his business. He did not discipline him at all and thwarted Adela's efforts to do so. As an inevitable result, Sisí, as a young man, was given to all the vices of his father, but to an even greater degree.

⁸Miguel Delibes, Mi idolotrado hijo Sisí, (Barcelona: Ediciones Destino, 1953).

Seventeen years after Cecilio renounced her, Paulina returned and established herself in a small apartment. Sisí visited her now as his father had done before.

But even as this affair was going on, Sisí was attracted to Elisa Sendín, a neighbor girl whom he had known all his life, but who did not excite in him all the evil desires to which he was so given. He gradually fell in love with her and was apparently becoming a new man.

Then he went to war, was killed--and Cecilio Rubes' world fell apart! Rubes, crazed, sought to have another son--another Sisí, but Adela was too old. He went to Paulina, hoping to make her the mother of his second son. He was stunned when he discovered that she was already carrying Sisí's child. Cecilio went home and, shortly afterwards, completely deranged, plunged from his balcony to his death in the street below.

Diario de un cazador⁹ is an account in diary form of the life of Lorenzo, a beadle in a university in one of the provincial towns of Spain.

Lorenzo alternated his duties in the school with frequent trips into the country with his friends to hunt. His was a constant struggle to make ends meet. He held various odd jobs to supplement his income. But his first necessity was always apparent. Whenever his jobs threat-

⁹Miguel Delibes, Diario de un cazador, (Barcelona: Ediciones Destino, 1955).

ened to interfere with his hunting, he soon found a reason for giving up the job.

He met Anita, a hairdresser. He was attracted to her, began to court her and, though the course of love was very stormy, finally married her.

Lorenzo, tired of living from hand to mouth, dreamed of going to America and making a fortune. When Anita's Chilean uncle sent them passages to Santiago, they accepted. The result is recorded in the following book.

In Diario de un emigrante,¹⁰ Lorenzo's dreams of a quick and easy rise to fame and fortune in Chile were soon shattered. The uncle, Egidio, had made his money the hard way and he was determined that Lorenzo should start where he had started twenty-five years before and with the same pay.

Lorenzo endured this for only a short time, then launched out on his own. He was employed in a large hotel and, while still working there, established a shoe-shine shop in partnership with a former co-worker.

But nothing went well. Even his hunting experiences in Chile were disappointing. Lorenzo and Anita both dreamed of returning to Spain with the son that had been born to them. Eventually they were able to save enough money that they could return to Spain "in style,"

¹⁰Miguel Delibes, Diario de un emigrante, (Barcelona: Ediciones Destino, 1958).

carrying gifts to their many friends.

La hoja roja¹¹ is a story of an old man, Don Eloy, and of his adjustment to retirement.

With his wife and one son dead, the other son living in Madrid, unconcerned with his problems, Don Eloy had to adjust to idleness and a scanty compensation.

To care for the apartment and his needs, Don Eloy engaged the services of Desi, an almost illiterate but endearing young woman from a nearby small town. Desi dreamed of marrying El Picaza, a young man whom she had left behind when she came to the city.

Don Eloy was cut by the indifference of his former associates, depressed by the death of his last old friend, and disturbed by evidences of failing health. With all these things on his mind, his attitudes and characteristics became such as to cause the neighbors to regard him as senile or even mentally deranged.

He decided to go to Madrid to visit his son and his family, with the hope that they would want him to stay. But only a few days there enabled him to see there was no place for him. He returned to his little apartment and Desi.

Desi's friend came to the city to spend his time in the army and became a regular visitor at the apartment. His actions troubled the virtuous Desi but she succeeded in holding him at arm's length. Even-

¹¹Miguel Delibes, La hoja roja, (Barcelona: Ediciones Destino, 1959).

tually he got around to suggesting marriage, and Desi was deliriously happy.

But El Picaza's morals were such that he had an affair with another girl and, shortly before Don Eloy returned from Madrid, he slashed the girl's throat in a fit of anger. He was arrested at once, and, during Desi's visit at the jail, remained arrogant and unrepentant. Desi could only turn away with grief.

With utter loneliness for both the only alternative, Don Eloy and Desi found comfort in and increased appreciation for each other.

Las ratas¹² tells of the small boy Nini, who lived with his father in a cave at the edge of a small Spanish town. The father, el Tío Ratero, caught field rats and sold them to the townspeople as a means of livelihood.

Although they had either been dead or gone for several years, Nini still remembered his grandparents. They had occupied a neighboring cave and had taught Nini a great deal of what he knew.

This was an unusual family. One grandfather and the grandmother were the parents of Nini's father; the other grandfather and the grandmother were the parents of his mother. Nini's father was extremely slow-witted, while his mother had had to be committed to a mental institution. Nini was regarded by most of the people of the town as a near-genius.

¹²Miguel Delibes, Las ratas, (Barcelona: Ediciones Destino, 1962).

Several looked upon Nini's wisdom as almost miraculous. Some, when he talked with older people, compared him with Jesus among the doctors of the law. But Nini knew that his wisdom was simply the product of observation and the result of listening to Rufo, el Centenario, who knew much about many things.

Most of the story is a series of episodes in Nini's life. They are connected by a continuous struggle on the part of the town officials to evict Nini and his father from the cave and to put Nini in school. El Tío Ratero was determined to remain in the cave. "La cueva es mía," he would say. He was also determined to keep Nini with him, saying, "El Nini es mío." And, lastly, he was determined to keep all other rat-catchers out of the valley. He doggedly repeated, "Las ratas son mías." These were his life, his reason for being.

When el Tío Ratero finally killed the young rat-catcher from the near-by town of Torrecillóriga, Nini knew that it was the end of a way of life. "Habrá que dejar la cueva," he said, simply.

Siestas con viento sur¹³ is a collection of four long short stories. La mortaja is the first. It is the story of El Senderines, a boy of about ten years of age, whose frail body and childish fears were a bitter disappointment for Trinidad, his widowed father. But when Trinidad came home one evening and lay down on his bed and died because of having gorged himself in a wager as to who could eat and drink the

¹³Miguel Delibes, Siestas con viento sur, (Barcelona: Ediciones Destino, 1957).

most, El Senderines showed himself to be made of sterner stuff than the adults around him. He was determined that, when he notified the proper authorities, they should not discover his father's body nude. His efforts to dress the corpse provide a moving story of adult weakness and childhood strength.

El loco is the fascinating story of Lenoir, a young man who met another man, Robinet, in rather peculiar circumstances and the encounter left him with that strange feeling most people have felt of having experienced the same thing before.

Thoughts of the strange Robinet almost drove Lenoir mad. He tried to contact him again and again but was never successful. Finally, in order to try to discover what connection, if any, the two men had, he went to the French city where his family was living when his father, a promising artist, supposedly committed suicide.

On Lenoir's entering his childhood home, everything became clear. Robinet confronted Lenoir and his wife Aurita and revealed to them his diabolical plan, conceived twenty-five years before, for making himself immortal by a murder.

But before Robinet revealed his plan, Lenoir had already realized that, as a very young child, peering through the keyhole into his father's study, he had seen Robinet kill the artist.

Robinet finally dramatically shot himself before a room filled with people. Later, when everybody was talking about his "perfect" crime, Lenoir understood that Robinet had achieved the immortality he

desired.

Los nogales tells of Nilo and of his frustrated desire for a son and heir. He and his wife had buried five sons who had either been born dead or who had died shortly afterwards. Nilo had insisted that each one be named Nilo, after himself.

When the sixth one was born it was Mongoloid and the doctor, assuming it would soon expire, laid it aside to attend to the mother. When he examined it later he found that it had begun to breathe. He was still quite sure, however, that it would die within twenty-four hours, so he advised Nilo not to show it to the mother. He was to say that it had died.

But it did not die and Nilo hardly knew what to tell his wife. He postponed telling her for so long that the house-keeper finally insisted that she be the one to take the news. When she went into the mother's room, she found her dead.

Nilo reared the child as best he could. He refused to recognize that the child was retarded, always hoping that Nilo, the son, would carry on his work as a walnut expert. He tried to teach him the secret of his own success, but the child was almost completely unresponsive. As a result, Nilo, the father, was forced to climb the walnut trees long after he should have desisted.

One day while the imbecilic son was sleeping under the tree he was supposed to have climbed to work, the old father attempted to do it himself. The inevitable occurred. Like one more of the tree's ripe

fruit, the old man fell through the branches to the ground below. The thud of his father's body landing beside him did not even rouse the boy from his sleep.

Los railes is the account of the parallel lives of two Timoteos, grandfather and grandson. The older was called Teo, the younger Tim. They were both unaware, of course, of the similarity of their lives.

Teo wanted to be a maître and all of his efforts were made with that in mind. He practiced the art of serving tirelessly, but he never seemed to master the subtleties of the task. He lacked the professional touch. When he thought his big chance had come he timidly applied for the job, only to discover that the position had been filled months before.

Tim was a student of law. He wanted to become a lawyer. He studied until he knew his material perfectly. But when he appeared before the examiners he became confused and forgot everything. Twelve times he had gone before the board and twelve times he had failed. He was now ready for the thirteenth attempt. When he sat down in front of the committee it soon became apparent the outcome would be the same. Later, apparently almost with a feeling of relief, he celebrated his failure.

Teo and Tim are examples of those people who think they want something but really do not. Probably neither would have known what to do had he won instead of lost.

CHAPTER II

LIFE OF MIGUEL DELIBES

Entre todos nuestros jóvenes novelistas Miguel Delibes es uno de los que avanzan hasta el momento con paso más seguro en su carrera literaria.¹

With these words Juan Luis Alborg begins his criticism of Delibes' works. Of Delibes, Nicholson B. Adams simply remarks that his "importance as a novelist has been debated, but he is worth watching."²

Delibes came to the fore in 1947 when his first novel, La sombra del ciprés es alargada, received the Premio Eugenio Nadal. He said in connection with this event that he arrived at the novel almost without knowing how, but, with the encouragement afforded him by the prize, he has continued writing with calm, deliberate regularity.³

Born in Valladolid, Spain, October 17, 1920, Delibes was at the right age to participate in the Spanish Civil War. He enlisted in the Navy as a volunteer where he received impressions at first hand of the horror and disillusionments of war which he afterwards related in some of his novels. After the war, in September, 1940, he began his study of both law and business in the University in Valladolid. In 1943 he

¹Juan Luis Alborg, Hora actual de la novela española, (Madrid: Taurus, 1958), p. 153.

²George Tyler Northup, An Introduction to Spanish Literature, (third edition, revised by Nicholson B. Adams; Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1960), p. 476.

³Alborg, loc. cit.

received his Doctor of Laws degree in Madrid. A year later he won, in competitive examinations, the chair in Derecho Mercantil at the Escuela de Comercio in Valladolid. At present he is professor of Historia de la Cultura in that school, combining that task with his work as assistant editor of the daily newspaper, El Norte de Castilla, and his literary career.⁴

Holding titles of Perito Mercantil (1938), Licenciado en Derecho (1941), Profesor Mercantil (1941), Intendente Mercantil (1942) and Doctor en Derecho (1943), Delibes has been a journalist in Madrid, has served as caricaturist for the newspaper which he now edits, and was employed in a bank.⁵ To this varied background can be added the details of his fondness for drawing and his zest for hunting. He drew the sketches for the Holt edition of El camino, and his hunting experiences have great bearing on several of his books.

Stimulated to write by the reading of a textbook in business law,⁶ Delibes has become more and more prominent with each succeeding production. La sombra del ciprés es alargada was followed by Aun es de día (1949), El camino (1950), Mi idolotrado hijo Sisí (1953), Diario de un cazador (1955), Diario de un emigrante (1958), La hoja roja (1959), and Las ratas (1962). In addition to the Premio Nadal in 1947 for La

⁴Alborg, op. cit., p. 154.

⁵Miguel Delibes, El camino, ed. José Amor y Vázquez and Ruth H. Kossoff (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960), pp. v, vi.

⁶Ibid., p. vi.

sombra del ciprés es alargada, Delibes received the Premio Nacional de Literatura in 1955 for Diario de un cazador and the Premio "Juan March" in 1958 for La hoja roja. Besides the novels, he has published a collection of "relatos cortos" entitled La partida (1954); a prose work describing his impressions of South America, Un novelista descubre América (1956), published in 1961, along with impressions of the Canary Islands and, particularly, Tenerife, under the title Por esos mundos; and a collection of short stories, Siestas con viento sur (1957), which obtained for him the Premio Fastenrath de la Real Academia Española. There are French and Italian translations of his works, together with the text of El camino, edited by Holt, Rinehart and Winston, for use in Spanish classes in the United States.

During the past year (1964-65), Delibes has been a visiting professor of Spanish literature at the University of Maryland. This is his first visit to the United States. While there he was invited by the Spanish, Portuguese and Italian Department of the University of Illinois to present a lecture. He was introduced as one of Spain's "most esteemed young writers to emerge since the Civil War." The lecture was entitled "El novelista y sus personajes" and was delivered on November 11, 1964.⁷

The title of this lecture indicates that Delibes is holding

⁷Seymour Menton, "Notes and News," Hispania, XLVIII, (March, 1965), p. 135.

firmly to the conviction stated earlier in his correspondence with the editors of the Holt edition of El camino:

Para mí lo esencial de la novela son los personajes. De que estos estén vivos o sean de cartón depende la calidad de la obra. Un personaje bien trazado hace convincente el más absurdo de los relatos. En puridad, el novelista no debe caminar con un lastre sobre los hombros. Solamente admito las novelas de tesis cuando ésta se desprende espontáneamente de sus incidencias, sin necesidad de pontificar.⁸

That there is a divergence of opinion as to how well Delibes has succeeded in this is readily apparent with the reading of some of the criticisms of his work. Vivanco, for instance, declares that his novel, La sombra del ciprés es alargada is

. . . esencialmente humana, con unos personajes que son seres arrancados de la realidad misma que todos vivimos, que obran y reaccionan como probablemente lo haríamos nosotros en identidad de circunstancias, y que si tienen su problema interior, especialmente el protagonista--base temática de la obra--, es un problema que responde a una génesis completamente normal y lógica dentro de las vicisitudes de su desarrollo, sin tener que forzar sentimientos que entonces sí que resultarían deshumanizados.⁹

Whereas Alborg remarks, concerning the same protagonist, that

. . . la cerrazón de su hombre parece demasiada; demasiado firme sostenida y sin matices su terquedad. Un carácter influído, condicionado y orientado por una educación es humanísimo; sistemáticamente empujado sin medias tintas, sin vaivenes, con tan aparatosa seriedad, es inverosímil.¹⁰

He attributes this fault to the fact that this novel is "una obra de juventud" and that it has a harshness, a bitterness, a gravity that

⁸Delibes, El camino, p. xi.

⁹José Manuel Vivanco, "El premio Nadal, 1947," Cuadernos hispano-americanos, VII (en.-feb., 1949), pp. 223, 224.

¹⁰Alborg, loc. cit.

is not found except in youthful writers. "Con el tiempo," he writes, "se va resquebrajando la dura corteza con que vemos envuelta la realidad en los años problemáticos de la juventud."¹¹ In fact, he believes to see this very result in Delibes' succeeding novels, even though, in his criticism of Aun es de día, he still insists that

. . . las tintas se recargan con exceso en varios pasajes, debido a ese acartonamiento que todavía Delibes no ha conseguido sacudirse del todo. Al novelista se le sigue escapando el arte de la gradación en los matices, y, en consecuencia, algunos aspectos fundamentales de la vida del protagonista no parecen satisfactoriamente definidos.¹²

When he comes to Mi idolotrado hijo Sisí, he can unreservedly say that

. . . personajes y acciones son absolutamente convincentes; el autor no escamotea ninguna realidad, y el resultado es un libro entero, humano y fuerte.¹³

For him, Delibes has made great progress.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid., p. 156.

¹³Ibid., p. 159.

CHAPTER III

PSYCHOLOGICAL NOVELS

Delibes is concerned with the effect of environment upon youth and, improbable as a few of his characters may seem to some, the impressionability of youth and the marked effect of environment upon character is a biblical truth. King Solomon advised, "Remember also thy Creator in the days of thy youth. . ." (Ecclesiastes 12:1) and asserted that "Train up a child in the way he should go, and even when he is old he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6). An examination of the influences which came to bear upon each of Delibes' principal characters make it not too difficult to conceive of such people as are represented by them.

Pedro, in La sombra del ciprés es alargada, attributes his nature and disposition in large measure to the impression created upon him in his formative years by the silence and almost mystical suspension of life of the ancient, walled city of Avila.

Other forces, however, were obviously early at work to make him what he later came to be. One such was the effect created upon the ten-year-old orphaned lad when his tutor-uncle placed him in the Lesmes' home where he was to receive an education at the uncle's expense. Pedro's keen observation of this transaction reveals that which could only have been acutely painful to an impressionable child. As the uncle rose to depart, he took a moment to praise the boy's physical, spiritual

and intellectual qualities, things which, until then, Pedro had never heard from him. When Señor Lesmes, smiling, replied that he was observing those gifts in his face, Pedro thought:

Eran tan falsas unas y otras manifestaciones que, a pesar de mi corta edad, no dejé de ver que las de mi tío las patrocinaba su ferviente deseo de deshacerse de mí y las de mi futuro maestro los pingües honorarios y gastos de manutención que mi alimento físico e intelectual le procuraría (La sombra del ciprés es alargada, p. 16).

The next day, when his new life had begun, he stated:

Cuando me apeé en la puerta de don Mateo me invadió una sensación de soledad como no la había sentido nunca. Me hacía el efecto de que nadie en el mundo daría un paso por afecto hacia mí. Yo era un estorbo que únicamente por dinero podía aceptarse (p. 17).

This feeling remained with him and was intensified as he observed the coldness and the impassivity of those in the Lesmes' household. There was an almost complete lack of demonstration of affection and, although Pedro was cared for well enough in a physical way, one is reminded that "better is a dinner of herbs, where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith" (Proverbs 15:17). In the Lesmes' home there was no suggestion of ill-will, simply an absence of affection. The only bright thing in Pedro's new life was Fany, the Lesmes' dog. He became greatly attached to her because, he said, she "demostraba la alegría de vivir que no existía, al parecer, en los pechos de los demás habitantes de la casa (p. 19).

The arrival of Alfredo brought new life and light into the dismal dwelling and the boys were soon inseparable. A relationship existed which can be compared with that of David and Jonathan, of which it is

written that "the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul" (I Samuel 18:1). When Alfredo died, Pedro's grief was that of David at Jonathan's death. David said of Jonathan, "Thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women" (II Samuel 1:26).

Alfredo, too, was an orphan but in a different sense. His father had died and his mother had become involved with another man in a sordid affair. Alfredo loved his mother but he and "el hombre" were completely incompatible. When his mother decided to place him in the Lesmes' home, Alfredo viewed this as a rejection of him in favor of "el hombre," and he was heartbroken. He could not comprehend that

. . . pudiera existir para el hombre un móvil más fuerte que el amor sin exigencias carnales. Seguramente para Alfredo no existía aún la pasión turbia que, mal contenida, todo lo avasalla (La sombra del ciprés es alargada, p. 38).

He seemed to live in the assurance that some day his mother would break with the man and they could both then return together to the good life they had known before. His mother showed indications from time to time of having this same desire, and this kept Alfredo hoping. But in the end it was always the same; the man would intrude and take his mother away. So strong was the man's hold upon her that, even when Alfredo was dying, despite Don Mateo's repeated calls to her, she was unable to arrive in time to brighten her son's last moments.

This is the first one of Delibes' many references to the force of sensuality. Sensuality had caused a young mother to lose the path of right and decency and had brought pain and anguish, bitterness and dis-

appointment into an innocent young life. It forcefully demonstrates the truth that "Evil companionships corrupt good morals" (I Corinthians 15:33), and it should bring to mind the warning that "He that soweth unto his own flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption" (Galatians 6:7).

Sebastián, in Aun es de día, became aware of the force of sensuality when the beautiful Irene entered the Suárez store for the first time since he had begun to work there. All of the clerks treated her with the greatest respect and Sebastián thought that such a beautiful woman should be capable of dignifying anything she touched. But the respectful admiration of the clerks relaxed as soon as she left the store.

. . . El fervor de los hombres se tornó entonces en un procaz apetito, alentado por una exacerbada animalidad. Expresaba cada cual sus deseos con una desgarrada y deprimente crudeza (Aun es de día, p. 132).

And Sebastián had to confess his error of having thought Irene's beauty sufficient to elevate and dignify the flesh.

Some time later the men in the store were discussing the changing fashions of women. Don Saturnino insisted that the amount of material in a woman's dress is never altered. He said:

-- . . . Si se alargan dos dedos por debajo restarán los dos dedos de otro sitio. No le quepa a usted duda, Urbón: el día que bajen la falda hasta los tobillos se descubrirán los pechos.

Luis se relamió:

--No caerá esa breva, señor Suárez.

Rieron todos (p. 275).

Sebastián had at that moment a very clear idea that ambition and hate were not the worst enemies of mankind. "Constató que lo que amenazaba

la colectiva existencia. . . era la más brutal, ruin y descarnada sensualidad" (p. 275).

Sisí Rubes, in Mi idolotrado hijo Sisí, following in the footsteps of his lecherous father, looked upon his sensuality as a necessity, something that could not be denied. When he tried to follow Luisito Sendín's advice and find other interests in order to conquer the desires of the flesh, he thought to taper off, to give up those practices gradually. But it did not work and he ended by giving himself over completely to his desires.

Later, while he was in the army, he began to love rural life and to search for direct contact with nature. His balance was such that he did not feel so intensely the need of strong drink and his sensuality was moderated, sometimes dominated in its incipency.

. . . Sisí empezaba a darse cuenta que matar la imagen es matar la tentación y admitir la imagen es preparar, y aun exacerbar, la caída inmediata. . . (Mi idolotrado hijo Sisí, p. 271).

Clearly, he had learned by experience what the wise Solomon had declared long ago: "For as he thinketh within himself, so is he" (Proverbs 23:7), and he had learned the wisdom of the sage's advice: "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Proverbs 4:23). He had plumbed the depths of Jesus' teaching: "For out of the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, railings: these are the things which defile the man. . ." (Matthew 15:19, 20).

In La sombra del ciprés es alargada, Pedro's eyes and ears were

alert to catch every indication of life. He heard his patroness, Doña Gregoria, speak of Alfredo's mother's living "de mala manera" with a man. He heard her criticize the Regatillo sisters for their frivolous and, to her, scandalous, flirtations with the young dandies of the town, concluding with "Esas acabarán robando a la ciudad la poca substancia incontaminada que aún le queda. . ." (p. 43). He remembered the niche in the square nearby with the figures of warriors of the Middle Ages in relief and that Don Mateo always said of them "que fueron más serios y mejores que nosotros." And he agreed with Don Mateo that, at least, they were more serious, "bastante más serios que nosotros" (p. 44).

One day Alfredo asked Pedro why Señor Lesmes believed the figures in the niche were "más serios y mejores que nosotros." Pedro explained that Don Mateo was only trying to bring face to face with each other two ages, two concepts of life, two civilizations. He continued:

. . . El entendía que el hombre de cinco o diez siglos antes vivía más en la realidad que el actual. Se afanaba en levantar murallas, conventos o catedrales, porque tenía un concepto más serio de la vida: conservar la existencia, para llegar a Dios. Nuestro maestro condenaba la frivolidad del hombre moderno, el cual se dice hijo de Dios pero cifra todo su ilusión en disfrutar la existencia terrena. En consecuencia, el hombre actual se limitaba a conservar los monumentos del antiguo y únicamente levantaba teatros, cafés y otros lugares de esparcimiento con una raíz exclusivamente material (p. 50).

After reflecting awhile, Alfredo asserted: "Don Mateo parece hijo de las piedras de Avila," and Pedro, in thought, agreed that this was a perfect definition of Señor Lesmes' philosophy (p. 51).

Still later, when Don Mateo, seated on the spot which Santa

Teresa is supposed to have reached when she went out hoping to suffer martyrdom, was explaining this event to Martina, his small daughter, Pedro realized that Avila was not like other cities. It had its roots set in history, different from others. History was invigorating it in its modern sequel, was supplying it its vital substance, was coloring it with a special hue, the impressive green film of time.

On another occasion Don Mateo spoke at length on this subject:

. . . Aquí se percibe mejor que en ninguna otra parte el rapto de nuestros valores espirituales por la civilización. Tal vez porque hasta las piedras encierran estos valores. Yo, por muchas vueltas que le dé, siempre acabo imaginándome la civilización como cualquier parásito, va chupando a nuestros espíritus las mejores substancias para convertirlas en automóviles, aerostatos, cinematógrafos y otros extraños aparatos que constituyen la monumentalidad del más puro materialismo. En resumidas cuentas, en virtud de la civilización, el espíritu deviene materia prima para ser transformado en productos de una utilidad exclusivamente corporal (La sombra del ciprés es alargada, p. 72).

All of this seems to be Delibes' protest against modern society. Judith Link quotes him as stating that "La vida moderna se caracteriza precisamente por la inclinación a hacer frivolidad de las cosas que antaño se consideraban serias y respetables." She adds that what he considers "serias y respetables" seem to be the traditional spiritual values of human charity, respect for morality, aspiration to inner perfection, negation of material possessions and a return to the elements of a simple life.¹ However, he has Pedro say that "La civilización en

¹Judith Link, "Major Themes in the Novels of Miguel Delibes" (unpublished Master's thesis, The University of Oklahoma, Norman, 1960), pp. 42, 43.

sí no era buena ni mala; todo dependía de la orientación que se imprimiese a sus avances" (La sombra del ciprés es alargada, p. 106).

When a visitor in the Lesmes' house made the statement that "La civilización en lo que atañe al espíritu es regresiva," Don Mateo readily agreed. He said:

. . . El hombre se engaña en su bienestar material; no quiere entender que el progreso de la materia requiere un substrato espiritual en que apoyarse. De otra manera se edifica en falso, incurriendo en el peligro de que todo se venga abajo en el momento menos pensado (p. 71).

How similar are the words of Jesus:

. . . Every one therefore that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them, shall be likened unto a wise man, who built his house upon the rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not; for it was founded upon the rock. And everyone that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and smote upon that house: and it fell: and great was the fall thereof (Matthew 7:24-27).

As far as Don Mateo was concerned, wise men had made Avila what it was. He must have been shocked when Alfredo bluntly declared his dislike for the city. But Alfredo explained that there, to have money would be the same as not to have it because there was no place to spend it. "Y," he added, "sin gastar dinero no se puede ser feliz. . ." (La sombra del ciprés es alargada, p. 57).

Don Mateo assured him that he was too young to realize that

. . . el no ser desgraciado es ya lograr bastante felicidad en este mundo. La ambición sin tasa hace a los hombres desdichados si no llegan a conseguir lo que desean. La suprema quietud con poco se alcanza, meramente con lo imprescindible. . . Tal vez el secreto. . . esté en quedarse en poco; lograrlo

todo no da la felicidad, porque al tener compañía siempre el temor de perderlo, que proporciona un desasosiego semejante al de no poseer. Debemos vigilar nuestras conquistas terrenas tanto como a nosotros mismos. . . (p. 58).

He clarified his philosophy by adding:

No es lo mismo perder que no llegar. Si os dan a elegir, quedaos con lo último. El hombre acostumbrado a dos, si le dan tres será feliz; si desciende a uno, apenas percibirá la diferencia. El habituado a diez si baja a tres difícilmente sabrá acomodarse a esta férrea limitación; si llega a veinte no por ellos se incrementará su dicha, porque hay una raya en que, rebasada, las conquistas no proporcionan utilidad (p. 58).

This exposition was followed almost immediately by an unforgettable reinforcement. The little dog, Fany, was startled and angered by the rapid passage of a horse-drawn cart heavily loaded with oranges. She followed, barking at the horse's heels. Alfredo shouted at her, the dog stopped for an instant, looking back--and the wheels of the cart ran over her left front paw. Señor Lesmes predicted rather matter-of-factly that she would remain lame, adding that here they had the demonstration of what he was telling them just before. If Fany had been born lame with two feet, she would be happy with having three at her disposal. But Fany until a short time ago was using four paws. . . The lesson was not lost on Pedro. "Evidentemente había un riesgo en la abundancia e incluso en la misma normalidad."

Pedro understood this lesson but, apparently, failed to grasp what he observed a few days later. Fany came to the boys' door and scratched and when she entered she did not show the depression of the first days after she had been forced to dispense with one paw. "Ahora era feliz con tres y la realidad de una vida soportada a pipiricojo no

parecía sumirla en la triste melancolía de la desgracia que fué y pudo ser evitada" (La sombra del ciprés es alargada, p. 71).

At every opportunity Don Mateo would express his personal philosophy: "Es más fácil perder que ganar, y por eso conviene quedarse en poco." Behind such words as these and the crushing of Fany's paw, Pedro "adivinaba la mano de Dios mostrando. . . por señas lo que la vida era y lo que de ella cabía esperar" (p. 62). According to Don Mateo, happiness was a simple question of the elasticity of our faculty for release or detachment. He asserted: "La vida transcurría en un equilibrio constante entre el toma y el deja. Y lo difícil no era tomar, sino dejar, desasirnos de las cosas que merecen nuestro aprecio" (p. 63). Here were based the possibilities of happiness for each human being: in that his faculty for releasing should be more or less elastic and in that man should be more or less moored to material things.

The apostle John admonishes Christians: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. . . And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (I John 2:15-17). The apostle Paul also urges: "Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth" (Colossians 3:2). And Abraham is described as "a sojourner in the land of promise, as in a land not his own. . . for he looked for the city which hath the foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Hebrews 11:9, 10).

Don Mateo sensed this truth and for that reason he taught that,

for the man of faith, happiness is not of this world. The reality of earthly life, he asserted, is not for the believer, neither for the vicious. For the one it is a hope, for the other a boredom. "La vida terrena," he said,

es del hombre neutro; de quien no ha puesto la base de su felicidad en nada caduco, finito, limitado, aunque tampoco en una vida ulterior; de quien ha hecho de la vida una experiencia sin profundidad, altura, consistencia ni raíz. . . (La sombra del ciprés es alargada, p. 59).

This would be the ideal of man, he believed, if everything were material. But since he has a soul, thanks to which the body breathes, it supposes an aberration to live only for the world (p. 59).

But Don Mateo erred when he insisted that perhaps the basic secret of happiness should be contained in "el hecho de no tomar nunca para no tener que dejar nada." Pedro recognized it for what it was, a negative recourse, one of renunciation, but certainly, he decided, one adequate for such as he, who was devoid of reserves and of the capacity for sacrifice. He wondered, however, if a person could live detached from everything, disconnected from the beings and things which surround him. He questioned whether the individual is capable of developing his own individuality without needing to resort to resources outside himself.

Pedro tried to imagine a grain of wheat isolated from the rest of the grains in a sack, not touching a single one; a grain of sand on a beach without any connection with other grains; a molecule of water in the bosom of the sea isolated from the others. For him it was impossi-

ble. He concluded: "Nada puede existir en el mundo sin una relación de dependencia, de coordinación o de mando. Todo está incrustado en un orden preestablecido, sometido a leyes fatales o voluntarias. . ." (La sombra del ciprés es alargada, p. 64).

He tried to imagine a man independent of other men and things to an absolute degree. He made his man a lighthouse keeper on a solitary crag in the greatest sea of the universe. He immediately realized that his man came from some point, naturally another man; he was to burn the lantern at night to avoid the shipwreck of other men; and, above all, he had to attend to his necessities: food, clothing, cultivation of his spirit. There his man was, enchained, subject to other men and other things. Man absolutely isolated was inconceivable. Pedro understood that "en ese equilibrio entre el toma y el deja, no era solución posible el no tomar nada para no tener que dejar nada" (p. 64).

All of this is stated simply by the apostle Paul: "For none of us liveth to himself, and none dieth to himself" (Romans 14:7).

Señor Lesmes' philosophy of life, "no tomar nada para no tener que dejar nada," though unacceptable to Pedro, was again indelibly impressed upon his developing mind when, on a visit to the cemetery, he observed a funeral procession. The deceased was a young wife and her casket was being followed by the sad, young widower. Don Mateo observed: "Las bodas no serían tan frecuentes ni se adornarían con detalles tan superfluos e insensatos si los novios pensasen en su día que uno de los dos ha de enterrar al otro" (La sombra del ciprés es alargada, p. 79).

Pedro decided at once that he would remain celibate all of his life.

He became obsessed by the thought of death. He determined to avoid close ties and deep-rooted associations so that he might arrive at death with the slightest possible load and that the deaths of others might be to him a matter of indifference. But even as he thus resolved, he recognized that, though he could dispense with much, he could not leave everything. There was already Alfredo.

Pedro's thoughts returned to the young widower many times and his reflections on death were broadened. He was not acquainted with the young man, but he seemed to share his grief. The pain of death which Pedro felt was always for him. "Morir no es malo para el que muere," he thought; "es tremendo para el que queda. . ." (La sombra del ciprés es alargada, p. 119). He remarked to Fany while trying to comfort her after she had had her paw mangled, "Lo que cuesta es renunciar" (p. 66). As Pedro suffered with the young widower and with Fany he was obeying a command, unconsciously, no doubt, of the apostle Paul, "Weep with them that weep" (Romans 12:15).

On the other hand, he felt that "La muerte para el muerto era un acontecimiento de infinito valor si el desligamiento del alma y el cuerpo se había efectuado al amparo de la caricia divina" (p. 84), which is an echo of the pronouncement of the apostle John, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth. . ." (Revelation 14:13) and that of the Psalmist, "Precious in the sight of Jehovah is the death of his saints" (Psalms 116:15).

At the end of the first year of his stay in the Lesmes' home, Pedro looked back over the events of that year and began to realize "que nada hay largo en la vida por muy largo que quiera ser" (La sombra del ciprés es alargada, p. 54). He thought within himself "que si la vida normal se componía de otras sesenta unidades como ésta, tenían mucha razón los que afirmaban que la existencia era un soplo, el transcurso fugaz de un instante. . ." (p. 54). One of those who thus affirm is James: "What is your life? For ye are a vapor that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away" (James 4:14).

Sebastián, too, had his thoughts of the transiency of life. He and Orenca one day were watching the multitudes entering the cemetery carrying flowers to be placed on the graves. The gate of the cemetery was swallowing people with smiles and flowers and was returning them without flowers and sorrowful. From this constant coming and going Sebastián deduced that "la vida, la vida toda, consistía simplemente en eso: en ir y venir, en fluctuar, hasta que la guadaña de la muerte segaba la última trayectoria" (Aun es de día, p. 46).

Later, as he heard the roar coming from the football stadium where the crowd was cheering the contestants on, he was depressed and saddened. It was not because he had a vengeful spirit toward humanity, but because he felt that those manifestations were like a curtain of smoke to hide its ephemeral and finite condition. After a few years, he thought, the stadium would continue roaring as today, but neither the protagonists nor the spectators would be the same; "gota a gota, aquel

gigantesco charco humano se habría ido mudando sin que nadie lo advirtiese. Sí, una vida era bien poco y había que velar la macabra previsión de su desenlace" (Aun es de día, p. 152).

Even Cecilio Rubes, with all his over-weening self-sufficiency, had to admit the limitation of human life. His mother, his old accountant, and others of his friends were gone. "Todo ello demostraba que la vida era efímera y que un día, no tardando mucho, le tocaría a él" (Mi idolotrado hijo Sisí, p. 218). Rubes was terrified sometimes, thinking "Quince años nada más; como mucho, veinte, y al hoyo." When he let his imagination carry him beyond "el hoyo" the thought of nada shook him. He tried to convince himself that he believed in God. He told himself that he wanted to believe in God. But the uncertainty as much as anything else only spurred his fleshly appetites. He wanted to enjoy life while he could and then repent in his old age (p. 218).

Rubes was certainly not a man of deep-rooted faith; "era hombre de misa de una los domingos y tres ayunos anuales a regañadientes." But he did retain a show of respect for religious institutions. A vague fear of hell kept his baser instincts under some restraint (p. 27).

His thoughts of God were very rare (p. 280). They came only in times of emotional stress, such as at the death of his parents, the birth of his son, his son's illness and his first communion and, lastly, his son's death. But even then Cecilio thought it would be egotistical on his part to bother God with petitions when he had everything and there were so many who had nothing (p. 62).

When Adela turned to the church for the comfort she so desperately needed, Cecilio was irritated. At her suggestion that, in those troubled times, they ought to put themselves on the side of the church, Cecilio shouted: "¡La Iglesia! ¡La Iglesia! ¿Qué diablos te da a ti la Iglesia? . . . creo en Dios como tú y como todos, pero no creo que la Iglesia tenga nada que ver en esta merienda de negros" (Mi idolotrado hijo Sisí, p. 214).

Such indifference to religion and the things of the soul distressed Sebastián after his visit to the priest. Until then he had not doubted the existence of the soul but had never recognized its transcendency. He was accustomed to observing that for most men the soul meant nothing and was no cause for worry. No cause for worry, that is, until they came to die! Then they hastily called the priest that he might give them absolution. From Sebastián's viewpoint it appeared that

. . . Entre la infancia y la muerte los pecados se acumulaban en una gigantesca pira que no sacaba al hombre de su indiferencia. Algunos iban los domingos a misa. En realidad era un sacrificio que costaba bien poco. Otros ni eso. Eran coleccionistas de pecados de todos los colores y matices. Mas, cuando la oscuridad inviolable de la tumba amenazaba con zamparse bonitamente sus cuerpos, unos y otros se acordaban de improviso de la posibilidad de una vida posterrenal y llamaban al párroco a grandes gritos (Aun es de día, p. 229).

Until his visit to the convent, Sebastián had never stopped to think about life beyond the grave, nor of the postulates of Christ, nor of his teaching. He was just one of the herd, without belief and without unbelief; one who went to mass on Sundays and prayed for his father year in, year out, compelled more by the crowd and the force of habit

than by the necessity of honoring a divine imperative (p. 137).

The words of the apostle Paul seem to aptly describe all such people: ". . . holding a form of godliness, but having denied the power thereof. . ." (II Timothy 3:5). Jesus, too, spoke of some people much like these: "This people honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me. . ." (Matthew 15:8, 9).

When the priest told him that "Un alma blanca es la suprema satisfacción de un cristiano" (p. 155), Sebastián sincerely believed that the priest was unaware of what life was like outside the convent walls. He wanted to tell him "que el alma era un trasto absurdo. . . y que a nadie le importaba un rábano su blancura." He wanted to tell him of his many acquaintances, all of whom undoubtedly would say they were Christians, and of their vices. As far as Sebastián was concerned,

. . . Al mundo, el alma le importaba un camino. Todos los hombres se bautizaban, pero eso se hacía sin contar para nada con su voluntad. Cuando eran capaces de pensar y discernir, todos, sin excepción, mancillaban su nombre de cristianos. . . (Aun es de día, p. 157).

It is God's truth that ". . . All have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). The apostle John says: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. . . If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us" (I John 1:8, 10). But Sebastián was concerned, as many other people have been, about men's complete indifference to this fact. When he heard the street vendor shout "¡Quiere pan blanco?" he thought:

. . . ¡Eso era! ¡El pan blanco! . . . Por eso luchaban los

hombres y por eso se mataban y hacían guerras horribles y se exterminaban. Por eso: por el pan blanco, por las comodidades, por el dinero. . . A los hombres, a la Humanidad, el alma blanca les importaba un ardite (Aun es de día, p. 159).

Similar thoughts must have occurred to Pedro. He saw the Spanish Civil War at first hand. His ship, like other Spanish ships, performed many humanitarian services, especially that of recovering survivors from the sea. Daily, he was infuriated by this killing just for the sake of killing. He strove to discover the motivating force that caused men to seek to destroy their fellow man. He concluded: ". . . los hombres se mataban por instinto." For him that war was a confirmation of "la frialdad humana."

Al hombre solo le corta las alas la bala que le mata. La gigantesca pira de varios millones de muertos no hace más que avivar la sensualidad de los supervivientes (La sombra del ciprés es alargada, p. 152).

His earlier thoughts as he looked down upon an Avila covered with a blanket of snow are recalled here: ". . . la tierra es bella por sí, que sólo la manchan los hombres con sus protestas, sus carnalidades y sus pasiones" (p. 96).

James said it like this: "Whence come wars and whence come fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your pleasures that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and covet, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war. . ." (James 4:1, 2).

Pedro was deeply pained by what he termed "la glacial indiferencia" that surrounded him at the death of Alfredo. It seemed to him that only he realized the vacancy created when Alfredo died. All about

him were signs that "la vida sigue." It distressed him that

. . . la muerte siempre pasaba; la memoria del ausente iba debilitándose como esos colores que sucumben sin transición, difuminándose. La muerte no suponía para el mundo nada substancial: era un simple accidente. "La vida sigue" (La sombra del ciprés es alargada, p. 126).

Sebastián also deplored the apparent callousness of the world when Emeterio was killed by the streetcar. The workers in the store expressed their feeling that they would miss Emeterio; Emeterio's mother, a widow, was tearfully grateful to Señor Suárez for substituting for Emeterio her next older son Juan, but, observed Sebastián,

. . . con la llegada de Juan el mecanismo de los Almacenes estuvo completo otra vez, y, encajada adecuadamente la nueva pieza, la máquina reanudó su funcionamiento y su producción. Nadie se acordaba, a la semana, del cuerpo ni del alma de Emeterio, y su madre, salvado airoosamente el bache de lo económico, tampoco se sintió preocupada por las circunstancias de su muerte. Los ingresos seguían siendo los mismos y había una boca menos que alimentar. Cierta que perdía una cartilla de racionamiento, pero la cosa no era para llorarla demasiado. Al mes, nadie recordaba en el mundo a un ser que se había llamado Emeterio Ruiz, salvo Sebastián. . ." (Aun es de día, p. 244).

Pedro even, at least for a time, felt deprived of a certain amount of volition by this current of humanity. The exigencies of life, he believed, were the cause of it; they made him a slave of a communal will which neither enjoys nor feels, but simply goes; and he went, therefore, in one sense or another, dragged by circumstances of the moment, motivated by causes absolutely foreign to his own will (La sombra del ciprés es alargada, p. 82).

However, he thought he recognized an inner compulsion. He believed that ". . . todos portamos un impulso que nos impele desde un

principio en un determinado sentido" (p. 125). But, for him, this impulse has only a relative effect; it does not move a man as a puppet might be moved. It simply imbues a tendency. Man can overcome this tendency by an exertion of will.

Sebastián's recognition of the principle of self-determinism is clearer. When he contemplated the two sets of brothers and sisters, Emeterio and Juan and Benjamín Conde and his sister, so much alike without and so very different within, he thought:

. . . El libre albedrío humano se mostraba pujante y descarnado, brutalmente cierto, en aquellos dos pares de hermanos vivificados por la misma masa de sangre, pero diametralmente opuestos en el enfoque de sus destinos. Ello probaba, una vez más, la autonomía espiritual de cada ser, el espontáneo e incoercible poder de determinación del hombre. La belleza del cuerpo era un fenómeno exclusivamente connatural, pero no la conformación del alma, sujeta siempre a las disponibilidades de la voluntad (Aun es de día, p. 294).

Without becoming involved in the intricacies of the problem of man's freedom of will, suffice it to note that man was created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27) and that God has always recognized his creature's freedom to choose. For example, when Cain and Abel brought their offerings before Jehovah, Abel's was accepted but Cain's was rejected. Cain's countenance fell, indicative of his sore displeasure. "And Jehovah said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shall it not be lifted up? and if thou doest not well, sin coucheth at the door; and unto thee shall be its desire; but do thou rule over it" (Genesis 4:6, 7). Too, Joshua, in his farewell speech to the people, said ". . . and if it seem evil unto you

to serve Jehovah, choose you this day whom ye will serve. . ." (Joshua 24:15).

Pedro, in fact, seemed to realize this principle but was incapable of completely discarding his fatalistic ideas. He finally admitted that a man can change everything, even transform himself physically, amend his life, his instincts, his customs, but he never can modify the light that he carries within himself. "El hombre libremente puede elegir su camino, pero no puede alterar su voluntad la luz bajo la cual camina" (La sombra del ciprés es alargada, p. 146). Apparently, he was not aware of the truth acknowledged by the Psalmist to God: "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and light unto my path" (Psalms 119:105), and "The opening of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding to the simple" (Psalms 119:130).

When Pedro was about to finish his studies with Señor Lesmes, he was forced to think about his career. Señor Lesmes, noting what he regarded as an extraordinary facility with numbers, urged him to become an architect or an engineer. Such an ambition was tempting to Pedro but he rejected it as not suiting his character. He seriously considered a religious calling but rejected it, too. He feared not having sufficient strength for a life either excessively contemplative or with educational responsibilities or spent attracting other spirits to God. He yearned for quietness, a neutral state with respect to people and things. He was old enough now to know that

con el correr del tiempo, el cuerpo se transforma, exige un complemento físico; un complemento que iba más allá del comple-

mento limpiamente cordial, sin exigencias más bajas; un complemento cabal, amplio, sin restricciones, donde los sexos descubren, al fin, el misterio para que fueron creados (La sombra del ciprés es alargada, p. 131).

He was determined never to take, to grasp, anything that could affect the area of his sentiments; not to love or be loved; not to let himself be dragged by the force of his instincts; not to form a relationship in which "fatalmente uno de los dos ha de enterrar al otro." He felt that if he had to experience any greater loss than that of Alfredo, it could very well end in what he called "la más abominable traición a Dios: el suicidio" (p. 132).

He finally chose to enter the merchant marines, a career which, he thought, would preserve him in the world but, at the same time, would permit him to maintain himself aloof from it.

Sebastián, too, toyed with the idea of becoming a priest and, likewise, ended by rejecting it, but for a different reason. He thought of the convent as other desperate and depressed men think of drink: as a possible sedative; as an effective and quick means of fleeing from the darkness, the fears and the uncertainty. It was a possible refuge, but he fled from it as from something vaguely sinful. He didn't want to be egoistic. He had a mission!

The priest had told him that

. . . la honradez y la dignidad del mundo es como el agua en un colador. . . se escapa a chorros. Cada hombre que nace abre en él un nuevo agujero. . . Eso no impide. . . que existan almas nobles y honestas. . . Su misión es bien clara, hijo, tan clara como abnegada. Esas almas deben darse prisa a tapar los agujeros que otras almas perdidas abrieron. Solo eso podrá evitar que la Humanidad pierda su dignidad íntegramente (Aun es de día, p. 224).

Sebastián ascertained quickly that this was the mission for which he had been created, that he "acabaría cerrando el agujero que la Aurora y Benjamín Conde abrieron a medias" (p. 297). Though this was repugnant to him, ". . . intuía que era la mano de Dios la que le dirigía y controlaba, que era Dios mismo quien le exigía la reparación de un acto de otro" (p. 296).

Though, admittedly, this is a different figure, the truth involved is that contained in the exhortation of Jesus:

Enter ye in by the narrow gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many are they that enter in thereby. For narrow is the gate, and straitened the way, that leadeth unto life, and few are they that find it (Matthew 7:13, 14).

The task of the soul filling the hole made in the colander by a lost soul is equivalent to that of the man who stands, trying to direct the multitude into the narrow way but seeing them slipping by him into the broad way.

Pedro's choice of career, ironically, was responsible for his first encounter with Jane. He met her when, close to Providence, his ship took in tow a yacht that was adrift and its crew was brought aboard. A conversation which was begun on board ship was continued the next day in Providence, and on several following days.

Before long, Pedro became alarmed at the change that had taken place in him. He was strongly attracted to Jane and he was troubled. He understood

. . . cuán fácil resultaba abstenerse antes de abrirse el apetito, qué sencillo es decir "no tomaré" cuando nada existe

que nos atraiga. Ahora todo era diferente. Había algo a que renunciar; la decisión abstracta, inconcreta, tomada veinte años antes, se concrecionaba de súbito en un objeto deseable al que había que responder con una negativa (La sombra del ciprés es alargada, p. 181).

But he resolutely decided that he must renounce her and must end it as soon as possible. When he left Providence, he left with the intention of not seeing her again.

Enroute to Spain, Luis Bolea, his good friend and pilot, bluntly asserted to him: "Usted debe casarse. . . Le falta equilibrio para pasar solo la vida" (p. 194). Bolea was stating what God said in the beginning: "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him" (Genesis 2:18). Pedro understood this but he was not able yet to comply with its demand.

In Spain, Pedro had occasion to visit with Don Mateo and Doña Gregoria again. It was a sad visit since Pedro had accompanied Martina back to the home from which she had fled several months earlier. She had been miserably deceived by a young man and then forsaken and she was ashamed to return by herself. The old couple received her impassively, as if she were returning from an over-night visit with a friend, but, before Pedro departed, Don Mateo admitted:

Un día le dije, Pedro, que abstenerse es un buen remedio para capear el temporal que la existencia arrastra consigo. Hoy me he dado cuenta de que el hombre siempre tiene mucho que perder, aunque él no lo crea así (La sombra del ciprés es alargada, p. 212).

Also in Spain, Pedro visited in the home of Luis Bolea, and this visit prompted a change in his thinking. He was the recipient of some advice from Doña Sole, the nearly deaf mother-in-law of Luis.

She began with the statement that, after all, this world has not been made to enjoy. Here was an echo of Don Mateo's assertion, but there was a difference. "El goce es vida de otro mundo," she said, "que hay que merecer sufriendo en éste" (La sombra del ciprés es alargada, p. 229).

Suffering is a Christian reality which innumerable Biblical passages will substantiate. Paul, for one, expressed the desire ". . . that I may know him (Christ), and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death" (Philippians 3:10), and "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him" (II Timothy 2:12).

Doña Sole impressed upon Pedro that she believed God's designs are fulfilled perfectly among men and that it is foolish to try to turn them away by force. "Hay," she said, "una verdad sobre todas que se nos impone con carácter de fatalidad: Dios. Por eso, lo que viene de El ha de aceptarse con sumisión, porque somos sus criaturas" (La sombra del ciprés es alargada, p. 229). Paul agrees with the first part when he says that ". . . we know that to them that love God all things work together for good. . ." (Romans 8:28) and Solomon with the second, for it was his desire ". . . that all the people of the earth may know that the Lord is God and that there is none else" (I Kings 8:60). Jesus' rejection of the tempter was with these words: "It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve" (Matthew 4:10).

Afterwards Doña Sole submitted the idea that everything is ruled by a perfect equilibrium. Nature, plants, animals and man give and take with a harmonious deliberateness. Near high mountains are deep valleys, the verdure of spring is followed by the sterility of winter, periods of abundance are followed by periods of want, war follows peace and peace, war, forming strata similar to those of the soil. This is, she said, the law of contrast that rules the world but is, at the same time, the reason that everything has its meaning in the universe.

Then she came to the point. This equilibrium, this alternation between good and bad, she insisted, is not enough to engulf one in pessimism. She continued:

. . . El pesimismo solo nos deja ver las espinas en las rosales, la muerte en el hombre, la carne en el amor. Alimentados de pesimismo no vivimos la vida, la sufrimos. Todo lo malo de la vida se agiganta para el pesimista y, además, lo bueno lo hace malo, precisamente porque de todo escoge su fachada negativa. Y aquí está el error; la contradicción con Dios; la contradicción con nosotros mismos. Cuando la vida amarga, hay que suavizarla con la representación de un Gólgota, y cuando es dulce, mitigar sus dulzuras pensando que otros sufren por lo que nosotros no sufrimos. Siempre tendiendo al equilibrio, que es el camino de la verdad (La sombra del ciprés es alargada, p. 230).

She added these reassuring words: "Dios no envía nunca más de lo que el hombre puede soportar," which are almost identical to those of the apostle Paul: "There hath no temptation taken you but such as man can bear: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make also the way of escape, that ye may be able to endure it" (I Corinthians 10:13).

"La vida debe vivirse serenamente," Doña Sole told Pedro. "No

deben previvirse las amarguras que nos impiden vivir con serenidad."

Jesus' advice is: "Be not therefore anxious for the morrow; for the morrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof" (Matthew 6:34).

Sebastián, like Pedro, was inclined to pessimism until he talked with the priest. Sebastián explained that everything is full of misery; people are preoccupied only with money, comforts and entertainments. But the priest asked him if he were going to doubt just because the good and the honorable are few. He reminded him:

. . . Todo lo perfecto o casi perfecto escasea, pero no quiere eso decir que no exista. La belleza en los hombres y en las cosas, el equilibrio, es muy difícil de encontrar. . . (Aun es de día, p. 223).

Already the priest had said that noble souls should hasten to close the holes that other lost souls opened and, to Sebastián, that indicated that the noble soul would have to renounce happiness beforehand. When he expressed this feeling, he was told that happiness is not found where he was thinking. "La felicidad está en la paz interior. . . en el orden de los instintos" (p. 224). Sebastián then dimly perceived that those base things which he had deplored in himself and others were "instintos desordenados" and were indications of a lack of inner peace. When he observed the multitudes as they celebrated the Festival of San Bienvenido he related what he saw with what he had learned:

. . . Se imaginaban felices en el seno efervescente de aquella babel y lo que estaban era desconcertados, enloquecidos por los gritos, el estallido ininterrumpido de los cohetes y las bombas, los compases agudos y estridentes de la charanga y los trajes vivos y chillones, mareantes, de las mujeres. "La felicidad está

en el orden de los instintos." Y allí predominaba un caótico e irresponsable desorden (Aun es de día, p. 305).

This could be what Jesus referred to when, in preparation for his ascension, he told his disciples, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you" (John 14:27).

The priest reminded Sebastián that the soul is that which deserves all our attention. In this world of base passions, being misunderstood is not important. Other noble souls will understand and that is the important thing. "Recuerde," he said, "que la carne es solo una pella de barro y el alma el soplo de Dios" (Aun es de día, p. 225).

Paul reinforces this idea when he says to Timothy, "And exercise thyself unto godliness: for bodily exercise is profitable for a little; but godliness is profitable for all things" (I Timothy 4:7, 8). Sebastián, now, with this concept, is able to look upon all those carried by base passions as an army of clay dolls openly defying the omnipotence of the Creator, and "aquello era la ruin, la ciega, la impasible rebelión del barro" (Aun es de día, p. 225). Paul speaks similarly when he says, "Walk by the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are contrary the one to the other" (Galatians 5:16, 17).

Sebastián exulted that he was the bearer of a soul that was susceptible to polishing and perfecting. "El cuerpo no se elige," it was said, "pero el alma sí; cada uno hacemos de nuestra alma lo que nos apetece que sea." He did not have to be always as he had been. "Cabía hacerse un hombre completamente diferente, con una misión y un objetivo

definido y escueto" (Aun es de día, p. 231). Paul said, "Wherefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new" (II Corinthians 5:17).

Sebastián's ideas of death were becoming clearer with his new understanding of the importance of the soul. The soul constituted a simple reality, and of the human complex it was the only fundamental thing. Therefore, at death, the body remained on one side, the soul on the other, in a region inaccessible to the living, where it would remain for an interminable period. For Sebastián that was not "el sueño eterno," as it is for most men, but "un eterno despertar" (Aun es de día, p. 230), and since he believed that Emeterio had died in sin and would be condemned forever (p. 241), it horrified him to imagine that "el sueño eterno" of Emeterio

. . . podría consistir en una eterna, incandescente, inacabable pesadilla. Pasarían mil años, millones de millones de años, y la pesadilla de Emeterio podría decirse que no había comenzado aún (Aun es de día, p. 243).

Jesus said that ". . . these (the wicked) shall go away into eternal punishment. . ." (Matthew 25:46) ". . . where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" (Mark 10:48).

Sebastián realized that the same thing might have happened to him; the same thing could happen to all who let themselves be carried by the lusts of the flesh. He thought:

. . . A todos podía ocurrirles lo mismo y, no obstante, en ninguno ocasionaba la repentina muerte de Emeterio una resonancia de contrición o un propósito de enmienda (Aun es de día, p. 243).

Jesus warned against this impassivity when he suggested that the Gali-

leans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices or those upon whom the tower of Siloam had fallen were no more wicked than others. He said: "Except ye repent, ye shall likewise perish" (Luke 13:5).

When the priest suggested a way to improve the relationship between Sebastián and his mother, Aurelia, by inquiring ". . . si él, a lo largo de su vida, había hecho alguna cosa para que su madre fuese de otra manera" (Aun es de día, p. 239), a whole new course of action was opened up to him. It was the suggestion of Jesus: "All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them. . ." (Matthew 7:12). He pursued this course with Aurelia, Orenia, and others, and, although at times he found himself in somewhat embarrassing positions as a result, his embarrassment was dissipated "en cuanto recapacitaba que estaba llevando a cabo una buena acción que redundaría en provecho de su alma" (Aun es de día, p. 253).

It was partly this that caused him to determine to marry Aurora and thus provide a father for her child. This course was repugnant to him but he felt that it was the requisite sacrifice in the fulfillment of his mission. After he had lost his job, he realized that the people would say, when he married Aurora, that he was marrying her for her money. But he asked himself, "¿Qué me importa?" and he decided to marry her, let the people think what they would. He sensed that

. . . era éste el verdadero, auténtico, incontaminado sacrificio; que sólo los actos consumados así, en el secreto de la propia conciencia, son actos meritorios y trascendentes, acreedores, un día, a una eterna contraprestación (Aun es de día, p. 304).

Jesus said: "When therefore thou doest alms, sound not a trumpet before

thee, as the hypocrites do. . . , that they may have glory of men. . .
 But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand
 doeth: that thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father who seeth in
 secret shall recompense thee" (Matthew 6:2, 3).

Something of the confidence and strength that comes to one who
 strives to live the life of faith is seen especially in Sebastián and in
 Adela Rubes. Sebastián had never in his life dared to maintain a point
 of view in the face of the slightest opposition, ". . . mas, de súbito,
 notaba una oleada de vigor que hacía de él, por una vez, un ser autónomo
 e independiente" (Aun es de día, p. 237). Likewise, Adela, who had never
 had any authority over Cecilio nor over her son ". . . advertía que su
 recién descubierta adhesión a la Iglesia la prestaba una firmeza que
 nunca tuvo" (Mi idolotrado hijo Sisí, p. 214). The apostle Paul felt
 this same infusion of strength for he said "I can do all things in him
 (Christ) that strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13).

In Mi idolotrado hijo Sisí there is the implication that limita-
 tion of children is displeasing to God. Cecilio had wanted no children
 at all. While Adela was enduring the agony of giving birth to Sisí she
 exacted a promise from Cecilio that they would have no more. Years
 later, no longer able to have children, she began to suffer excruciating
 pangs of conscience. Often she thought that Sisí's character was a pun-
 ishment from Heaven. This feeling was intensified when she remembered
 that Luis Sendín had stated one day that when there are many children
 they educate each other by friction. Gloria Sendín had also remarked on

one occasion that having many children is a way of teaching them to give up from birth. Adela thought: "¿Por qué no he tenido yo más hijos?" (p. 214).

Cecilio once had the same thought. When Sisí was killed, Elisa Sendín made the remark that she sometimes thought God watches especially over large families. Cecilio said to himself: "¿Por qué no tuve más hijos?" (p. 286).

Cecilio never seemed to attach any blame to himself for Sisí's vices nor for his death, but Adela ". . . sabía que lo de Sisí fue un merecido castigo y lo aceptó resignada. Si pensaba en los hijos que deliberadamente dejaron por nacer, sollozaba a impulsos de un arrepentimiento sincero" (p. 290).

In the beginning God said to the man and woman whom he had created: "Be fruitful, and multiply. . ." (Genesis 1:28). The Psalmist indicated how desirable children are in these words:

. . . Lo, children are a heritage of Jehovah; and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows in the hand of a mighty man, so are the children of youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them; they shall not be put to shame, when they speak with their enemies in the gate (Psalms 127:3-5).

In fact, the tenor of the entire Bible is that children are to be regarded as a blessing from Jehovah. However, what cannot be readily found is justification for regarding deliberate limitation of children as a sin against God.

Delibes' attitude toward other religions and other ways of life appears in a conversation between Jane and Pedro which took place

shortly after their first meeting in Providence. When Jane told Pedro that she was a Catholic, he asserted that it must be difficult to be a Catholic there. She inquired:

--¿Por qué?

--Son la excepción.

--La excepción es siempre lo más puro.

--¿Lo cree usted así?

--¿Por qué no? El que lucha contra corriente tiene que ser un convencido. Si no, resulta más fácil dejarse llevar.

--Más fácil: . . .--dije.

--Pero la dificultad a que usted alude queda compensada por nuestra íntima convicción de que estamos en la verdad. Y a nadie le cuesta seguir un camino que sabe le conduce a buen fin. . .

--En otros lugares la excepción son los otros.

--También son convencidos y en sus prácticas, si usted quiere, más puros. Lo que no quiere decir, naturalmente, que estén en la verdad. . . (La sombra del ciprés es alargada, pp. 173, 174).

The implication is quite clear.

Jesus said: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). From this it is seen that to be in Christ is to be in the truth. This necessarily involves conviction for Jesus also said: ". . . except ye believe that I am he (Christ), ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24). It also involves a struggle against the current for Jesus admonished: "Strive to enter in by the narrow door: for many, I say unto you, shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able" (Luke 13:24). Paul encouraged Timothy to "Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15). This need cannot be over-emphasized, since Jesus advised that "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21).

CHAPTER IV

ANECDOTAL NOVELS

Some of the religious implications which have been noted in the psychological novels appear again in the later anecdotal works, sometimes with increased emphasis. A number of different ones have been observed and developed.

The feeling that Pedro expressed toward "la Naturaleza" is a theme which recurs quite frequently in Delibes' writings. Pedro spent his short honeymoon with Jane in the Appalachian Mountains and there he realized "que el hombre, frente a la Naturaleza, está más cerca que nunca de Dios" (La sombra del ciprés es alargada, p. 247). In El camino, in spring and summer, Roque, el Moñigo, and Daniel, el Mochuelo, were accustomed to sit down on some slight elevation and "desde allí contemplaban, agobiados por una unción casi religiosa, la lánguida e ininterumpida vitalidad del valle" (p. 27). There they sensed with awe the limitless expanse of the universe and expressed their fear of "las estrellas y todas esas cosas que no se abarcan o no se acaban nunca" (p. 29). Lorenzo, in Diario de un cazador, was so impressed with the beauties of the countryside just before sunrise that he believed he felt as "debió de sentirse Dios al terminar de crear el mundo" (p. 136).

This must have been what the Psalmist felt when he said: "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man that thou art mindful of him?"

(Psalms 8:3, 4), or "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork" (Psalms 19:1), or "Jehovah is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside still waters" (Psalms 23:1, 2).

The truth is that God is everywhere: ". . . he is not far from each one of us: for in him we live, and move, and have our being. . ." (Acts 17:27, 28). However, he is seldom anywhere more easily recognized by man than in the magnificence of Nature.

In Daniel's valley there were some defects, but they were mostly human. Even most of those were, to him, excusable. "En ningún cuerpo falta un lunar," he thought (El camino, p. 34). Lorenzo comforted his sister, La Modes, concerning the weakness of Serafín, her husband, by saying that "es ley de vida que hasta el más blanco tenga un lunar" (Diario de un emigrante, p. 34). This is, as has been noted before, in agreement with the statement, found in both the Old Testament and the New, that "all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

Don Ramón, the mayor, charged Daniel's town with being "ferozmente individualista." "Cada uno mira demasiado lo propio," he said, "y olvida que hay cosas que son de todas y hay que cuidar" (El camino, p. 34). Paul reminds that the Christian way is for each to count other better than himself, "not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others" (Philippians 2:3, 4).

Daniel recognized that Don Ramón was not lying when he affirmed

that "cada individuo del pueblo preferiría morirse antes que mover un dedo en beneficio de los demás. La gente vivía aislada y sólo se preocupaba de sí mismo" (El camino, p. 166). This individualism was broken only on Sunday evenings after sunset. Then the youth would pair off and go out to the meadows or woods and the old people would wend their way to the taverns to smoke and drink. Don José, the priest, sadly remarked, "Es lástima que vivamos uno a uno para todas las cosas y necesitemos emparejarnos para ofender al Señor" (El camino, p. 34). That was the bad part. The people only lost their individualism in order to satisfy their baser instincts.

To show the power of sensuality to lure many from right ways, Delibes has Don José to inveigh against these inclinations in a sermon that, for a long time, was not erased from Daniel's memory. Among other things, the grand old man said:

--Hijos, en realidad, todos tenemos un camino marcado en la vida. Debemos seguir siempre nuestro camino, sin renegar de él . . . Algunos pensaréis que eso es bien fácil, pero, en realidad, no es así. A veces el camino que nos señala el Señor es áspero y duro. En realidad eso no quiere decir que ese no sea nuestro camino. Dios dijo: "Tomad la cruz y seguidme."

Una cosa os puedo asegurar. . . El camino del Señor no está en esconderse en la espesura al anochecer los jóvenes y las jóvenes. En realidad, tampoco está en la taberna, donde otros van a buscarlo los sábados y los domingos; ni siquiera está en cavar las patatas o afeitar los maizales durante los días festivos. . . (El camino, p. 184).

He continued saying things about each one's way, and then he passed to consider the unhappiness that comes occasionally to the one who leaves the way marked out by the Lord because of ambition or sensuality. He said something about the fact that "un mendigo podía ser más feliz sin

saber cada día tendría algo que llevarse a la boca, que un rico en un suntuoso palacio lleno de mármoles y criados." He concluded:

--Algunos. . . por ambición, pierden la parte de felicidad que Dios les tenía asignada en un camino más sencillo. La felicidad . . . no está, en realidad, en lo más alto, en lo más grande, en lo más apetitoso, en lo más excelso; está en acomodar nuestros pasos al camino que el Señor nos ha señalado en la Tierra. Aunque sea humilde (El camino, p. 184).

The prophet Micah pointed out that God had shown man what is good. He then enforced his thought with a question: ". . . what doth Jehovah require of thee, but to do justly, and to walk humbly with thy God" (Micah 6:8). Paul encouraged his readers: "Let us walk becomingly, as in the day; not in revelling and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and jealousy" (Romans 13:13).

Much later, when Daniel's father took him to Don José to say farewell, Daniel was reminded of the priest's words on this occasion, and "al recordar esto, Daniel, el Mochuelo, pensó que él renegaba de su camino por la ambición de su padre" (El camino, p. 224).

Daniel deplored the fact that all the things that mattered to him must be left for the sake of progress, which did not matter to him at all. He thought:

. . . El no tenía aún autonomía ni capacidad de decisión. El poder de decisión le llega al hombre cuando ya no le hace falta para nada; cuando ni un solo día puede dejar de guiar un carro o picar piedra si no quiere quedarse sin comer. ¿Para qué valía, entonces, la capacidad de decisión de un hombre, si puede saberse? La vida era el peor tirano conocido. Cuando la vida le agarra a uno, sobra todo poder de decisión. En cambio, él todavía estaba en condiciones de decidir, pero como solamente tenía once años, era su padre quien decidía por él. ¿Por qué, Señor, por qué el mundo se organizaba tan rematadamente mal? (El camino, p. 221).

Lorenzo seemed to be expressing the same lack of power of decision, the same feeling of being dragged by force of circumstances, that was first felt by Pedro, then by Daniel. He wrote:

. . . Uno se maneja en la vida y cree que decide, pero la verdad de la buena es que uno nunca sabe lo que quiere ni quien le empuja (Diario de un emigrante, p. 15).

He looked upon life as a "fandango" and he who does not dance it as "tonto." He also insisted:

. . . Si uno quiere desenvolverse en el mundo y no quedar como un panoli necesita echar mano cada día de una moneda distinta. La vida está organizada de esta manera y uno tiene que achantar la mui y bailar al son que le tocan (p. 57).

Lorenzo apparently believed as Doña Sole. She had said, when talking with Pedro, that: "Hay una verdad sobre todas que se nos impone con carácter de fatalidad: Dios." He comforted León, who was carrying a relic from the war, a bullet, in the wall of his heart, with the idea that ". . . acá no va a pasar nada, sin que de Arriba lo ordenen, porque los médicos, con toda su ciencia, no son más que unos mandados" (p. 238).

King Nebuchadnezzar understood likewise. He was forced to dwell with the beasts of the field and eat grass as oxen until he knew "that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. . ." When his understanding returned to him, Nebuchadnezzar confessed that ". . . he (God) doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" (Daniel 4:24-35).

It is interesting to note the similarity of thoughts about death

of some of the principal characters of Delibes. Pedro, for example, thought: ". . . Vivir es ir perdiendo; todo es perder en el mundo"; Sebastián: ". . . que la vida. . . consistía simplemente en eso: en ir y venir, en fluctuar, hasta que la guadaña de la muerte segaba la última trayectoria." When Germán, el Tiñoso, died, Daniel, perhaps for the first time, thought:

. . . Vivir era ir muriendo día a día, poquito a poco, inexorablemente. A la larga, todos acabarían muriendo. . . Todos eran efímeros y transitorios y a la vuelta de cien años no quedaría rastro de ellos sobre las piedras del pueblo. Como ahora no quedaba rastro de los que les habían precedido en una centena de años. Y la mutación se produciría de una manera lenta e imperceptible. Llegarían a desaparecer del mundo todos, absolutamente todos los que ahora poblaban su costra y el mundo no adviriría el cambio. La muerte era lacónica, misteriosa y terrible (El camino, p. 206).

Don Eloy, in La hoja roja, thought that "la vida es una sala de espera y que como en las salas de espera hay en la vida quien va de la Ceca a la Meca para aturdirse y olvidarse de que está esperando" (p. 83).

Various Biblical passages support these views: ". . . it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this cometh judgment" (Hebrews 9:27); "One generation goeth, and another generation cometh; but the earth abideth for ever" (Ecclesiastes 1:4); "Man, that is born of a woman, is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not" (Job. 14:1).

The story of el Viejo Rabino, in Las ratas, provides an interest-implication. The old man was regarded by Don Eustasio de la Piedra, el Profesor, as living proof that man came from monkey. The reason for this

judgment was the fact that el Viejo Rabino "tenía dos vértebras coxígeas de más, a la manera de un rabo truncado, y el cuerpo cubierto de un vello negro y espeso y cuando se cansaba de andar sobre los pies podía hacerlo fácilmente sobre las manos" (p. 17). The professor showed him off to every interested person in order to demonstrate that it was possible to find examples that were half-way through the process of evolution.

During this period of time, el Viejo Rabino stopped going to church. When Don Zósimo, the priest, asked why he no longer came to mass, the old man replied: "No hay Dios. Mi abuelo era un mono. Don Eustasio lo dice" (p. 18).

There is here the implication that the Christian view of the origin of man is incompatible with the popular theory of evolution. The Bible simply states that God said: "Let us make man in our image. . . And God created man in his own image" (Genesis 1:26, 27). It seems necessary to understand that the man and the woman were mature, ready to comply with the command: "Be fruitful, and multiply. . ." (Genesis 1:28).

Another incident in the life of el Viejo Rabino reveals the savagery of those who go to war against their fellow man. Quirico, who was supposed to be a Christian, came with five boys from the neighboring town, took el Viejo Rabino out and shot him. El Rabino Chico came to the priest to find out why. The following conversation ensued:

. . . "¿No es la cruz la señal del cristiano, señor cura?" "Así es" --respondió el Curón. Y agregó el Rabino Chico: "¿Y no dijo

Cristo: Amaos los unos a los otros?" "Así es" --respondió el Curón. El Rabino Chico cabeceó levemente. Dijo: "Entonces, ¿por qué ese hombre de la cruz ha matado a mi padre?" (Las ratas, p. 19).

The priest then told him about his cousin, also a priest, on the other side, who had been horribly mutilated by some soldiers. He asked: "¿Qué te parece?" The boy replied: "Los otros no son cristianos." Then the priest stated the case plainly: "Mira, Chico, cuando a dos hermanos, sean cristianos o no, se les pone una venda en los ojos, pelean entre sí con más encarnizamiento que dos extraños."

This is truly a sad commentary on those who profess to follow the Christ, ". . . who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously. . ." (I Peter 2:22, 23); who also taught: "Resist not him that is evil: but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also" (Matthew 5:39).

When Justo Fadrique was desperately trying to evict el Ratero and Nini from their cave-home, he hesitated to use his authority to oust them by force. He, "por instinto, detestaba la violencia. Intuía que, tarde o temprano, la violencia termina por volverse contra uno" (Las ratas, p. 61). This, of course, was the warning of Jesus. When one of his disciples, seeking to defend Jesus from the mob, drew his sword and struck off the ear of the servant of the high priest, Jesus told him: "Put up again thy sword into its place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword" (Matthew 26:52).

Delibes, seemingly with tongue in cheek, allowed la Guindilla mayor to protest against Protestantism. She was accustomed to running to Don José, the priest, with the most trivial confessions of sin, and Don José had to use "la paciencia de Job" to tolerate her. One day she came to him and said:

--Don José, no sé si me podrá absolver usted. Ayer domingo leí un libro pecaminoso que hablaba de las religiones en Inglaterra. Los protestantes están allí en franca mayoría. ¿Cree usted, don José, que si yo hubiera nacido en Inglaterra, hubiera sido protestante?

Don José, el cura, tragaba saliva:

--No sería difícil, hija.

--Entonces me acuso, padre, de que podría ser protestante de haber nacido en Inglaterra (El camino, p. 43).

Not so humorous is Lorenzo's observation of the activities of a particular religious group while he was in Santiago, Chile. He wrote:

. . . Al volver a casa me encontré en la esquina una cuadrilla de guitarras y a un gicho largándoles un sermón. Dice el Efrén que son los canutos y que tienen su religión y sus prácticas como cada quisque. De que acabó el sermón, los gilís se pusieron en fila y se fueron por las calles cantando a lo bobo. ¡No te giba! Lo que yo digo, bien es que tengan su religión, que eso nadie se lo discute, pero que canten en su casa por lo bajines y no incordien (Diario de un emigrante, p. 112).

Lorenzo obviously disapproved of such religious practices.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Miguel Delibes is a man deeply concerned with the problems of life and the ways that are used either to resolve or to adjust to those problems.

Delibes finds comfort and peace in rustic settings, far from the bustle and din of the large cities of today. A secluded mountain retreat or a placid stream in the midst of a verdant valley are places where one can find his balance and feel the presence of God.

In the hurry and confusion of the cities, on the other hand, one tends to lose his balance and his sense of well-being. Doubts and fears assail him. He seeks release from them in various forms of dissipation or in ambitious struggles for prestige and position.

In several of Delibes' novels, the protagonists have been very young. In others the author has dealt fully with the protagonists' youth. In all of them he shows clearly the affect of environment on character and on the final outcome of one's life. Though he recognizes that one can overcome the evil effects of environment, he still would have his readers know the difficulty.

Pedro, in La sombra del ciprés es alargada, is molded into the pattern of his teacher, Señor Lesmes. Señor Lesmes' philosophy, "no tomar nunca para no tener que dejar nada," becomes Pedro's. He determines not to allow himself to become attached to anything, the giving

up of which will cause extreme pain. It is, in effect, a renunciation of life. There is no pain, perhaps, but neither is there any joy. This philosophy propounds the idea that "el no ser desgraciado es ya lograr bastante felicidad en este mundo." This philosophy is unfortunate in that its possessor becomes dead weight, a practically useless member of society. He fails to recognize that Christianity is active, not passive; it is a "Go, thou, and do likewise" way of life. So when Pedro finally returns to Avila, his withdrawal from life is complete. He is dead even while he lives.

Had Sebastián been endowed with Pedro's gifts, there apparently would have been no doubt as to the outcome. As it was, since he was reared in squalor and in an atmosphere of immorality, it appears doubtful that the deformed young man can ever become a useful member of society. But when he discovers that his body, which has disturbed him so much and which he could do nothing to improve, is only "una pella de barro" and that he can make of his soul, "el soplo de Dios," a thing of beauty and perfection, he recovers his balance and is on the way to becoming a force for good. His society will have to reckon with him. He has a mission and the carrying out of this mission will make for him more happiness here and will give him more assurance of eternal happiness after while.

Cecilio Rubes is a pathetic example of a man richly endowed but with a complete poverty of accomplishments. Vain and egotistical, he assures his own failure from the outset and the unhappiness and possible

failure of those close to him. He is top-heavy with self and his suicide is perhaps a confession that it would have been better had he never lived.

The unhappiness of both Pedro and Cecilio stems from too many thoughts of self. Sebastián finds happiness when he thinks of others.

When Delibes turns away from these introspective studies, he simply presents a situation and leaves his readers to make their own decision. For example, in El camino, Daniel, from the very beginning, feels that he wants no part of his father's idea of progress. The reader is made to feel that even the author believes it would be better for Daniel not to leave his valley. The only time that Daniel thinks differently is when he feels his inability to express himself correctly in the presence of la Mica. Then he thinks it might be nice to "progress" so that he might approach her on her own level. At the end, though, he weeps because he believes he is taking a road the Lord has not marked out for him. But he is only eleven years of age, and the reader may conclude that Daniel's father, after all, has sensed that this is best for the child, and that Daniel will adjust happily to his new environment and find that it really is God's way for him.

In the development of these and his many other personalities, Delibes has revealed deep spirituality and an understanding of many Divine principles. Throughout his writings, it is evident that he believes Christianity is not just for the sick and disfigured, for those in trouble, for women, children and the aged, but for all men.

He condemns not only sensuality, egotism, ambition, materialism and all "instintos desordenados" but also pharisaic ritualism, the calling oneself Christian by virtue of only having practiced the mechanics of the religious routine.

In the present heavy atmosphere of novelistic pessimism, Delibes' contribution imparts an invigoratingly fresh breath of optimism. It imparts the feeling that, if we will but divorce ourselves from materialism and will return to a simple, domestic way of life; if we will "acomodar nuestros pasos al camino que el Señor nos ha señalado en la Tierra," there is still hope for a better world here and in the world to come eternal life.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES

- Delibes, Miguel. La sombra del ciprés es alargada. Barcelona: Ediciones Destino, 1948. 278 pp.
- _____, Aun es de día. Barcelona: Ediciones Destino, 1949. 307 pp.
- _____, El camino. Barcelona: Ediciones Destino, 1950. 226 pp.
- _____, Mi idolotrado hijo Sisi. Ediciones Destino, 1953. 296 pp.
- _____, Diario de un cazador. Ediciones Destino, 1955. 213 pp.
- _____, Siestas con viento sur. Ediciones Destino, 1957. 194 pp.
- _____, Diario de un emigrante. Ediciones Destino, 1958. 289 pp.
- _____, La hoja roja. Ediciones Destino, 1959. 236 pp.
- _____, Las ratas. Ediciones Destino, 1962. 164 pp.
- The Holy Bible. New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1901.

SECONDARY SOURCES

- Alborg, Juan Luis. Hora actual de la novela española. Madrid: Taurus, 1958. pp. 153-165.
A comprehensive look at the Spanish novel as it appears today and brief sketches of the major modern novelists and their works.
- Delibes, Miguel. El camino. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960. Pp. xiv 244.
An excellent textbook which contains questions over the material in each chapter, together with study lists of idioms and deceptive cognates. The preface contains interesting material about the author.

Link, Judith Ann. "Major Themes in the Novels of Miguel Delibes." Unpublished Master's thesis, The University of Oklahoma, Norman, 1960.

An excellent treatment of the major themes.

Menton, Seymour. "Notes and News," Hispania, XLVIII, March, 1965, p. 135.

A column containing information of interest to teachers of Spanish and Portuguese.

Northup, George Tyler. An Introduction to Spanish Literature. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1960. p. 476.

One of the better introductions to Spanish literature. The final chapter on the twentieth century by Nicholson B. Adams makes a good work better.

Vivanco, José Manuel. "El premio Nadal, 1947," Cuadernos hispanoamericanos, VII, en.-feb., 1949, pp. 223, 224.

An interesting criticism of Delibes' La sombra del ciprés es alargada.

TERTIARY SOURCE

Delibes, Miguel. A letter to Carman Davis, April 17, 1965.

Some interesting comments about his works and some useful information concerning source material.