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**CONSTRUCTION OF THE IMAGE OF WOMEN IN THE GRAPHIC HUMOR OF
HERMANO LOBO WEEKLY (1972 – 1976)**

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ABSTRACT:

The purpose of this piece of research is to analyze the construction of the image of women in the humorous weekly magazine, *Hermano Lobo*. To this end, the cartoons published in the magazine from May 1972, when the publication was first issued, to June 1976, when its publication was discontinued, have been analyzed. From the perspective of graphic humor in *Hermano Lobo*, we found out that the figure of women has low relevance and is scarcely represented. Women act mute extras, they accompany and support men as a consequence of a traditionally androcentric society. This piece of research is part of the doctoral thesis "Humor in the last years of Franco and beginning of the Spanish democratic transition: the case of *Hermano Lobo* (1972-1976)".

KEY WORDS: graphic humor – Franco – dictatorship - hermano lobo – woman – Spain – magazine

**LA CONSTRUCCIÓN DE LA IMAGEN DE LA MUJER EN EL HUMOR
GRÁFICO DEL SEMANARIO HERMANO LOBO (1972 - 1976)**

RESUMEN:

La finalidad de esta investigación es analizar la construcción de la imagen de la mujer en el semanario de humor, *Hermano Lobo*. Con este objetivo, se analizan las viñetas publicadas en la revista desde mayo de 1972, momento en que aparece la publicación, hasta junio de 1976, fecha en que desaparece. A través de la visión del humor gráfico de *Hermano Lobo*, encontramos una figura de la mujer desplazada con escasa representación y relevancia. La mujer ejerce de figurante silenciado como

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acompañante y fiel apoyo del hombre como consecuencia de una sociedad de tradición androcéntrica. Esta investigación forma parte de la tesis doctoral *El humor en los últimos años del franquismo e inicios de la transición democrática española: el caso de *Hermano Lobo* (1972-1976)*.

PALABRAS CLAVE: humor gráfico – franquismo – dictadura – hermano lobo – mujer – España – revista.

1. INTRODUCTION:

1.1. Humor as a witness to history

This piece of research falls within the scope of history of social communication that takes the look of the media as privileged eyewitnesses of the time at which we focus our attention. Through them, we have a vision of events firsthand and their influence on society at that time and their legacy to this day. In this sense, the objective of the analysis is to study "the media and their relationship to the cultural, political, economic or social history in order to clarify the interplay between the media and social change". (Gómez Mompert, 2008: p 91-92.).

The study is tinged by a second key factor: humor. The perspective we have taken to our research focuses on the analysis of "discursive development and social communication related to historical events of a society [...] as a paint or subtle or grotesque sequence of civic life and social customs of its countrymen in any time in modern history." (Borderia Ortiz Martínez Gómez Gallego and Mompert, 2010: p. 9).

Laughter becomes a catalyst of historical facts, especially in a time of censorship as the one existing from 1972 to in Spain. It is unleashed opinion with more elaborate methods to avoid the prohibitions and give a voice to part of society that is supported by these seemingly fictitious vignettes, cartoons or images of society at the time.

1.2 New perspectives of humor

The approach is a novelty because it resurrects a publication as *Hermano Lobo* that has not been studied in depth yet as a reference of humor in Franco's latest times. There are publications that reviewed the best content and history of the magazine, studies that analyzed other humorous publications of the time, as well as general media. Recently, the publication has been addressed through a communication to a congress by a professor of the University of Valencia, Dolors Palau. This communication made known the presence of the monarchy, the army and the church in the weekly. The privilege and interest in a comprehensive study of *Hermano Lobo* is that it tackles the last four years of Franco's times and represents a new wave of cartoonists and journalists.

2. OBJECTIVES INVESTIGACIÓN / RESEARCH

The purpose of this piece of research is to analyze the construction of the image of women in the humorous weekly, *Hermano Lobo*. To this end, the cartoons published in the magazine from May 1972, when the publication was first issued, to June 1976, when its publication was discontinued, have been analyzed.

3. METHODOLOGY

The research method used for analyzing cartoons focuses on observing image and content. We started from the analysis scheme proposed by the *Research Group: Communication, History and Satire* from the University of Valencia, adapted to the specific objectives we pursue in this case.

Through this analysis card, we classified cartoons depending on the subject dealt with, in order to know the aspects that most interest arouse in reference to women in the humorous weekly; the position and relevance of women within the publication is analyzed, as well as the way of each author to build humor. At the same time, the formal and semantic field derived from the analysis of graphical and textual elements and their relationship and observation of rhetorical figures is addressed. The analysis is completed with the moral vision of the piece.

We reviewed a total of 213 issues of *Hermano Lobo* from May 1972 to June 1976, of which 200 cartoons in which women appear have been selected. The cartoonists Summers, Chumy Chúmez, Gila and Forges are primarily responsible for caricaturing the female figure.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1. Hermano lobo: a journal of humor, all things considered

The humorous *Hermano Lobo* weekly came out in 1972, in the last years of Franco, and its publication was discontinued with the democratic transition, in the summer of 1976. Its main promoter was Chumy Chúmez, who intended to fight against the monopoly of *La Codorniz* magazine (1941 - 1978) by way of a very visual and light publication: high volume of graphic illustration combined with brief quality articles in a small number of pages. The publication imitated the way of the humorous French magazine, *Charlie Hebdo*. Summers, El Perich, Gila, Forges and Ops would be some of the graphic collaborators of the weekly together with Chúmez.



Image 1: First and last cover of Hermano Lobo (1972-1976). Source: Hermano Lobo Digital.

Hermano Lobo addressed the issues that were effective in the society of the time by way of:

a high quality Spanish aggressive humor. The magazine covered a need: turn what could not be said nicely into political humor via indirect allusion" (Tubau, 1987, 242 p.). The magazine aimed at quality publications with a few pages that would be expanded later. The whole content was intended to be "good, funny, instructive for the future of approaching hopes and, if possible, leftist in its intellectual branch," said Chumy Chúmez (VV.AA, 1999: p.10).

Differentiation was sought in the quality and in its great political vocation creating "a pictorial magazine illustrated with short articles distinguished for their literary quality, their critique of injustice and humor." (VV.AA, 1999: p.10).

The creation of each of the illustrations and texts in *Hermano Lobo* magazine was due to a desire to connect with the reader, to make the reader guess the author's intentionality filtered through subtlety to avoid colliding with censorship.

A major effort had to be made to find the graphic joke arousing in the reader the same intentionality sought by the artist. It was humor with censorship, one had to think more about the idea and find the trick needed to prevent censorship from seeing the intentionality it really carried. Explained the cartoonist, Perich (Tubau, 1987: p. 244).

4.2. The figure of women in the 70s in Spain

In the studied period, last years of Franco and beginning of the democratic transition, women still had a lower standing than men, they were displaced from numerous public activities in order to have her maintain a traditional role, ie a woman who lives in marriage and dedicates herself to housework. In fact, until 1976,

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"before the married woman could sign any document (a bank account, a passport, a deed or a contract of any type), her husband had to sign authorizing it. This was the figure of the marital license, which limited the legal capacity of married women" (VVAA, 1999: p. 129).

Another example of how women were displaced was the so-called *steering unit* that ensured that decisions regarding the family were made under the unique viewpoint of the man, who had this power. Thus, "*the husband was the sole administrator of the property in the partnership of marriage*" (VVAA, 1999: p. 129).

However, since 1975, the feminist movement began to have influence in Spain. Similarly, women had begun to enter the labor market and the universities. That year, the United Nations proclaimed the *International Year of Women*, "*it was the first step to introduce the rights of women all over the world*" (VVAA, 1999: p. 136). As a result, an Act would amend several articles of the Civil and Commercial Code for "*promoting equality between spouses*" (Roig, 1989: 397 p.).

4.3. Women in the humor of hermano lobo

In the humorous *Hermano Lobo* magazine, we find little relevance of the figure of women, which is confirmed by the low number of cartoons featuring female characters we have found. In most scenes, women act as mute extras simply accompanying and supporting men. The roles played by women in the different parts that have been analyzed confirm their position in the shadow of man in almost all the revised material. Regarding the role of women as objects, two types are shown. One related to female characters who act as wives engaged in housework and children care. The other is represented by young girls dressed in a bolder way for the time, whom men think about as sex objects.



Image 2: The woman has a secondary role and is voiceless. Cartoon by Summers, February 9, 1972. **Source:** *Hermano Lobo* Digital.

That image of wife is repeated in the case of the women who play the role of mothers. Normally they are unkempt, middle-aged women dedicated to the care of their children, their husband and their home. Closely related to the role of mother are the roles of housewife and wife to death. The former is shown as the woman dedicated to serve her husband, who despises and criticizes her work. This type of woman is located in everyday situations contextualized at home.



Image 3: The woman acts as a housewife, a mother and a wife. Cartoon by Chumy Chúmez, March 3, 1973. Source: Hermano Lobo Digital.

In the role of wife to death, the woman faces verbal and physical violence from her husband, with a large dose of black humor, by authors such as Chumy Chúmez or Gila. These bleak situations occur within the institution of marriage, one of the pillars of Franco's times.



Image 4: The cartoonists explicitly depict violence against women within marriage. Cartoon by Gila, June 9, 1972. Source: Hermano Lobo Digital.

Finally, when the woman takes the role of a professional, she is restricted to a series of jobs traditionally associated with the female sex and represented as no-effort-requiring jobs or related to performing household chores such as saleswoman, secretary, maid or prostitute.



Image 5: Women are reserved for jobs traditionally associated with the female sex. Cartoon by Gila, March 3, 1973. **Source:** Hermano Lobo Digital.

Cartoons are represented in general terms, without any perspective and with little color. The number of characters in the scene is low, typically it is dialogues between two people. We see very flat and minimalist pieces with no distractions in which the authors seek to focus the attention on who is saying and what he is saying. The scarcity of details in the illustration is also justified by a contextualization of the scenes in everyday situations known by the reader before. The characters characterized by signs of identity proper to a social group or to the role they play, recognizable by the public, are more important. In the case of women, their clothing and hairstyle are key elements to recognize the role they play, especially when they have no voice.

In this context, exaggeration and irony are the resources present in most of the cartoons, they are backed especially by double meanings and calls to attention through exclamatory texts. For example, the double meaning may be seen through the word *opening* associated with a woman appearing naked and with the liberties supposedly going to be attained as a result of the so-called *Spirit of February 12*. Exaggeration is also used to emphasize absurd situations or situations that are beyond logic.

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Image 6: Irony, exaggeration and double meanings are most used in cartoons in Hermano Lobo . Cartoon by Forges, December 23, 1972. Source: Hermano Lobo Digital.

Sarcasm is present in the cartoons showing the abuse (socially condoned) of men to women, the result of male chauvinism and abuse of power by man. The cartoons are very explicit, with scenes of high brutality. In different examples we observe how men exert physical violence on women with objects such as sticks or knives and presence of verbal threats.

The topics most discussed in the women-featuring cartoons are romantic and family relationships via local-customs-portraying situations. They show a context of women characterized by having society-imposed limits and are represented via their immediate environment: marriage and the family. Premarital sex, which was morally prohibited and punished by society, is represented through unwanted pregnancy. The volume of cartoons about this issue grows in the last year of the magazine, showing an evolution in the liberation of women, represented in its most superficial aspect, what are it, the adoption of a new, and more liberal attitude in love relationships with men.

However, pregnancy outside marriage is represented as a controversial situation since sex before marriage is not accepted. As a result, we see cartoons where the woman wants to terminate a pregnancy or tries to hide who the father is (in spite of its being evidence for the reader) to justify her innocence in the family environment and in other circles that do not share this vision of relationships .

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Image 7: Love relationships are the recurring topic of those cartoons in which women appear. Cartoon by Chumy Chumez, March 6, 1976. Source: Hermano Lobo Digital.

The second topic covers marital relationships. *Hermano Lobo* shows the institution of marriage as a union that lasts forever based on violent scenes showing mistreatment of women or more pleasant scenes that, nevertheless, present very deteriorated relationships where there is no romance. Extramarital relationships appear in the journal both by women and men, but particularly by males. In the case of women, unfaithfulness in marriage usually occurs at home, while the man can be unfaithful in other locations, it is freer unfaithfulness. Also, the woman is always caught in the act by her husband.

The reader and the magazine share temporal reality, therefore, there is connection with the reader through the representation of recognizable everyday scenes. The woman shown by *Hermano Lobo* entirely meets the topics about the status and role of women in the Spanish society of the 70s. The effectiveness of the cartoons would focus on releasing readers not only through the playful aspect but also through the contribution to reflection and consolidation of their opinions, in this case, about the standing of women under Franco's structures.

The cartoonists Summers, Chumy Chumez, Gila and Forges are responsible mainly for caricaturing the figure of women in their cartoons in *Hermano Lobo* in a crazy way and sometimes with biting irony. Chumy Chumez and Gila show the harder and more unpleasant picture of the situation of women, while Summers and Forges depict kinder situations.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Hermano Lobo is a progressive magazine that reproduces patriarchy-related ideas emphasized by the dominant mentality in Franco's times; it bears witness to the

secondary role that women have in society. Via the cartoons of the humorous weekly, the topics on the status and role of women in the society of Franco's times are shown, women framed within the classic roles of housewife, mother and wife. Women have little presence in the cartoons of the magazine if compared to men: they appear as silenced figures playing a secondary role when compared to men or just as extras.

Women appear emotionally tied to a man and doing housework. This fact would explain that most female scenes are framed at home and in familiar settings. The only exceptions to rescue the female figure from household chores and her home are those that show women doing other jobs traditionally reserved to females. Although a new mentality can be shyly made out in *Hermano Lobo* magazine, the traditional roles assigned to women are perpetuated.

Portraying a stereotypical female figure would have to do with criticism at times, but it would also work as a mere instrument with humorous intent. Taking into account that the readers of *Hermano Lobo* would be in line with progressivism opposed to Franco's immobility, the effectiveness of the cartoons would focus not only on arousing laughter but also on inviting to reflect on the role of women in Spain in the 70s.

Women played a secondary role in the making of humor in *Hermano Lobo* magazine. Therefore, the reality of the Spanish women in the 70s would be shown: subordinate-to-men women whose place is to be found at home to act as mothers, housewives and wives.

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