



## *Ideological Manipulation in the Form of Official Censorship: Audiovisual Tie-ins of Bestselling Novels in Spain under Franco*

by Cristina Gómez Castro

Whereas technical manipulation in the form of necessary “textual dislocations” (Díaz Cintas 2012: 284) may be seen as a common subject of study in audiovisual translation (AVT), ideological manipulation or a deliberate change from what is said (or shown) in the original (ibid.) still seems to have been little studied within the discipline. However, power games play an important role in AVT, as can be illustrated by the repressive forces of censorship at certain times and periods. In the case of Franco’s totalitarian regime in Spain (1939-1975) and also afterwards, the control of every cultural product that entered the country, both in written or audiovisual form, acted as an ideological gatekeeper. The last years of the dictatorship, however, were marked by a progressive weakening of both the regime and its censoring mechanism. By that time the massive importation of best-selling North American novels was taking place; these novels were commonly either adapted into films or turned into TV series to make them famous worldwide. This nurturing of the film industry from literature in the form of tie-ins was a very common synergy at the time and was denounced by some as commercial manipulation and social alienation (Carrero Eras 1977). This article examines the effects of the censoring mechanism on some best-selling North American novels and their film counterparts in an attempt to reveal the manoeuvrings at stake and thus contribute to the research on the subject, and at the same time consider whether the



solitary act of reading versus the public broadcasting of a film had a say in the harsh treatment of products deriving from the same source.

## 1. IDEOLOGICAL MANIPULATION AND TRANSLATION

The so called "cultural turn" (Bassnett and Lefevere 1998) experienced in the 1990s by the discipline of Translation Studies shifted the focus of attention from more technical and linguistic issues to ideological questions that address the role that translation plays in the history and politics of any country. Most research carried out so far in this direction has focused on either colonial or post-colonial contexts, such as that carried out by Niranjana (1992) on the Indian situation or that of Jacquemond (1992) on French-Arabic translation in Egypt. When faced with translation, the attitude prevalent in a certain context can be one of appropriation or of resistance. An appropriation attitude in a colonial context would imply domination and oppression, since it would mean adopting foreign values via translation. On the contrary, an attitude of resistance would mean fighting against oppression and resisting the colonial power.

Although the Spanish context under Franco was not a colonial but an authoritarian one, the attitude of resistance here became relevant as a fight against external cultural and political influences. Translation can therefore be a powerful tool in history:

translators are now considered to be active agents participating in the shaping of the ideological discourse of their culture, whose system of values they may consciously or unconsciously accept, contributing to their dissemination or subversion. (Díaz Cintas 2012: 283)

The activity of translating is therefore directly associated with manipulation and under Franco's regime it was conditioned by a retaliating mechanism in the form of censorship. Lefevere (1992: 14) speaks of *patronage* as "something like the powers (persons, institutions) that can further or hinder the reading, writing and rewriting of literature". Censorship in this context would be the regulatory mechanism *par excellence*. The relationship between translation and manipulation via official censorship can be twofold:

Translation can be a means of avoiding censorship (by publishing the work in a foreign tongue, or by attributing the ideas expressed to a foreign author), but it can also be an occasion to suppress elements of an original text, whether in the name of "taste", or of the "genius of the language" – the justification for such expressions will vary according to context. (St-Pierre 1993: 67)

When the target context is highly nationalistic and authoritarian the attitude that can be expected to any foreign influence is one of suspicion: censorship then acts as a modifying force that changes texts by translating them in a manner that renders them acceptable for the target culture. Official censorship thus constitutes a negative



environment for the activity of translation, suppressing any kind of innovation that could enter the country with the imported material. Translators working in such a situation are therefore conscious of the socio-political context within which they carry out their work and sometimes apply what is known as self-censorship. Power struggles then occur, sometimes under cover and sometimes in the open, but always with the aim of displacing the part of the original that is not welcome for ideological reasons. The role of the researcher is therefore to disentangle the power games at stake in order to “clear the ideological smoke screen that confounds the original message in an attempt to see the silver screen behind it” (Díaz Cintas 2012: 283).

## 2. THE LITERARY AND FILM INDUSTRY IN SPAIN UNDER FRANCO

The narrative production of Spain during the early years of the dictatorship followed the habitual path of literary polysystems in a major crisis: limited national production and a major dependency on translations which gives them a central position (Even-Zohar 1990: 47). As the population had to cope with the difficulties of everyday life, this was the golden age of popular novels, most of which were translated from English. In this respect, Westerns and detective novels captured the market together with adventure stories and romantic novels such as those written by Zane Grey, James Oliver Curwood, Vicky Baum or Pearl S. Buck, to name but a few (Gómez Castro 2005).

On the whole, the period is characterised by what may be called a “literary malaise” (Herzberger 1981) in which no special national achievements can be highlighted. The plentiful importation of foreign material that became so convenient marked the guidelines to follow and led publishers to ask Spanish writers not only to translate successful novels but also to produce their own work in the same vein. This led to the phenomenon known as “pseudotranslation” (Toury 1995: 40): “texts which have been presented as translations with no corresponding source texts in other languages ever having existed”. The publishing industry then became saturated with works that imitated foreign novels but had been written by Spanish authors under the guise of translations and signed with a pseudonym in English phonetics and following the style that had made them successful works. This “cloning” phenomenon (Rabadán 2001) was very much alive during the 1950s, whereas the following decade saw the incursion of the Latin American novel which also had an impact on autochthonous literary production. The latter was tending to enrich style and form at that time, when a relaxing of censorship was beginning to show.

As late as the 1970s an important part of Spanish profits in the publishing industry still derived from translations. The kind of material chosen to be imported began to be dependent mainly on the economic profit that the books could generate and therefore most of the narratives bought by publishing houses had previously been successful in North America or even worldwide. It was the time of tie-ins or close relationships between novels and film scripts: many novels by then were filmed afterwards or became TV series, which increased their popularity and created a connection that fed the film industry with literature in a very clear synergy in the case



of North American bestsellers. These novels had the effect of bringing to Spain an atmosphere of freedom in which themes and topics that would have been forbidden in the case of a Spanish production began to be allowed, mainly because they were representative of a different culture. This would leave its mark on Spanish production, which was to follow the path of innovation in the ensuing years.

Regarding the film industry, the situation during the first decade of the dictatorship was similar to that described for books and it was also characterised by the production of stories encouraging escapism. Foreign films, especially those from the USA, provided interesting and exotic scenarios inhabited by rich and handsome characters, which helped the Spanish population to forget the harsh social reality of the country. According to Bustamante and Zallo (1988: 243), exile, censorship, the post-war economy, and professional incompetence were the factors hindering the flourishing of national cinematographic production.

Over the next decade, and also in keeping with the development that took place in the publishing industry, a trend implying a more social shift in Spanish production seemed to take over. However, even though the main characters of the films appeared to be ordinary citizens with ordinary jobs, the real situation of the country was not represented (Gil Gascón and Gómez García 2010). While Spanish production developed according to these parameters, Franco's regime was considering the empowering effect the Hollywood industry could have on the country: films produced overseas were widely publicised and had the potential to reach a larger audience, which could at the same time attract tourism to the country. Thus "the Franco regime, after some initial reluctance, would place a special significance on American film production" (Rosendorf 2007: 79). Franco had long before, on 23 April 1941, taken the decision to impose dubbing by law, a practice he had copied from Mussolini (Gubern et al. 1995: 454). The reasons for this imposition were mainly political, social and economic (Ballester Casado 2001). The strong nationalistic feeling (inevitably favouring the Spanish language) and the censoring system (which was thus able to manipulate any product with the aim of domesticating it), together with the fact that many Spaniards were illiterate and the different economic interests at play, which foresaw the benefits of this enforcement, led the country to become a dubbing market. However, as even manipulated dubbing was a potential force of innovation, official control mechanisms were wary of the content they allowed to enter the country. As pointed out above, the existing synergy between literature and cinema led the latter to be full of simple approaches to life, with ideological eclecticism and no disturbing pretensions. The main danger was represented by the kind of relationships the characters played as well as the depiction of morally controversial issues, such as divorce, contraception, or abortion. These topics, which were under the spotlight of censorship, were nonetheless introduced into the country and progressively accepted; this situation reached its peak at the end of the regime with the weakening of the whole system.

With the death of Franco, Spain moved into a newly democratised socio-political scene that allowed a burst of cultural liberation and experimentation for the first time in over a generation, a phenomenon felt in both the publishing and the film industries.



### 3. OFFICIAL NARRATIVE CENSORSHIP: THE BACKGROUND

The Spanish Civil War ended in 1939 and by then censorship in the field of narrative had come to be exercised in the form of a book controlling system that supervised the entire publishing industry of the country. This book censorship mechanism was regulated by a Law that had been issued a year earlier, on 24 April 1938, and published in the *Boletín Oficial del Estado* (BOE, Official State Bulletin). This Law was in force for a large part of the dictatorship, as it was not repealed until 1966. During this period Franco's government exercised strict control and dictated the guidelines to follow on how to write and what to write according to the moral behaviour then deemed acceptable. The Church was initially one of the main pillars of the regime and played an active part in the politics of the country (most of the censors belonged to its hierarchy in the early years) while enjoying the privilege of being free from official prosecution (Fraga Iribarne 1966: 76). The main obsessions of the controllers of the nation, namely purity, Catholicism, and traditionalism, were thus not only moral convictions but also aesthetic criteria.

The change in the existing law that took place in 1966 came hand in hand with the appointment of the new Minister of Information and Tourism, Manuel Fraga Iribarne, who became the visible instigator of a change in the legislation and issued a new Law of Press and Printing that appeared in the BOE of 19 March 1966. This law, which introduced changes designed to expedite the distribution of printed material and the whole process of the modification of the legislation, gave the impression that "there was a desire for a new spirit of cultural liberalization in Spain" (Gutiérrez Lanza 2011: 308). The procedure was now based on two possibilities: the previous *consulta voluntaria* [consultation or voluntary submission] of the artistic work, which could result in a positive or negative report on the book under review, and the *depósito* [shelving or archiving] of the printed work at the aforementioned Ministry, which did not necessarily require a censor's opinion. Nonetheless, the latter could mean the sequestration or confiscation of the book by the authorities, if once it reached the market it was believed that its distribution should be avoided. Therefore, while permission was granted for book production to occur without the regime's direct supervision, shelving or archiving could result in a significant economic loss for publishers.

The possibility of issuing a report of *silencio administrativo* [official silence] was also slightly redefined: this formula was used by censors to object to the content of a work while still foreseeing benefits in authorising its publication. By legally declaring silence, the authorities did not explicitly approve of a given book or support its moral content; they simply abstained from blocking its commercial distribution.

Fraga Iribarne had ordered "that the red pencils should be left at the bottom of the drawer" (Cisquella *et al.* 1977: 21, my translation), but it seems that the new legislation did not achieve that aim; it simply moved the red pencils from the hands of the censors to those of the editors and from the latter to the hands of writers and translators, who still had to use them if they wanted to see their books published.



This law remained in force for some time after the death of Franco, although it gradually lost its power once the regime's legal system was dismantled and new social and political advances began to occur.

#### 4. OFFICIAL FILM CENSORSHIP: THE BACKGROUND

In the early years of the dictatorship in the 1940s, the cinema and films were vital to the entertainment of the people since it was one of the few escape channels they could count on together with reading (Martín de la Guardia 2008: 34). The film industry was therefore a powerful means of reaching the nation, and the authorities saw in it a way to indoctrinate the population. It therefore had to be strictly controlled and especially its public aspect, since films are designed to be shown and have a greater collective impact than the solitary act of reading.

These facts could lead the reader to think that the censorship criteria in this field were very clear from the beginning of the system of control of cultural productions. However, the official censorship regulations were not approved until 1963 (BOE 08/03/1963). In the interim years and in particular initially, as no explicit censorship regulations existed, there was great concern about what was permitted and what was likely to be banned in films. In 1946, in an attempt to cast some light on the obscure censorship criteria applied to films, Ortiz Muñoz (at the time a prominent member of the Spanish Censorship Board and a script adviser for Spanish and foreign films) presented the blueprint of the censorship code that had guided the Board's film censorship pronouncements: *Criterio y normas morales de censura cinematográfica* [Criterion and moral rules of film censorship]. These censorship regulations broadly emulated the Hays Code,<sup>1</sup> adapting it to the ideology of Franco's regime. In his code, Ortiz Muñoz presented a decalogue of the main criteria and regulations followed by the censors when dealing with topics like crime, sex, obscenity, dances, costume, vulgarity, religion, national institutions, repellent subjects, and titles and publicity. Censors seem to have broadly applied the unofficial regulations proposed by Ortiz Muñoz.

By the 1970s a few changes were introduced: the word *censorship* disappeared, and apart from the need to specify whether the film was authorised or rejected (the words *banned* and *prohibited* were not used either) the advisory board would indicate whether the film was suitable for people over 14, for all viewers, for children under 14 accompanied by an adult, for adults only, or for people under 18 accompanied by an adult. The gradual change that indicated that the system was becoming more lenient was also clear from the fact that "a poor moral classification of a film no longer necessarily prevented it from being approved" (Gutiérrez Lanza 2011: 311), whereas

---

<sup>1</sup> Named after Will H. Hays, the president of the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America (1922-1945), it referred to the moral guidelines for the industry applied to most United States motion pictures released by major studios from 1930 to 1968; it was officially introduced in 1934.



this had been unthinkable in the early period of the regime when the Church would have banned its showing.

It also became quite common at the time to create double versions of the films, i.e. one of the copies was intended for distribution in Spain and therefore had to comply with the domestic restrictions imposed, whereas the other was filmed for foreign countries with a less restrictive control system or even without any repressive process, which allowed more licence in films. There were also the so-called *Salas de Arte y Ensayo*, cinemas which were not part of the commercial circuit and therefore reached relatively small audiences (Gutiérrez Lanza 2011: 312) but allowed the presence of more controversial topics in the films they showed.

From 1975 onwards, at the very end of the regime, new regulations of film assessment or rating were introduced according to which the terms *bad* and *moral* and those with a religious reference were eliminated from the verdicts of the board. Besides, nakedness was now allowed if it was in harmony with the unity of the film but not for inciting passion or pornography. These slight changes indicate a new direction towards a more open attitude, the highest expression of which was seen in 1976 once censorship was eliminated and it was no longer compulsory to submit the scripts of films for approval. As with novels, this involved risk-taking by commercial distributors who did not want to lose money.

As can be appreciated, in both literature and cinema the initial harshness in the application of the system of control of the products gradually gave way to a more lenient approach by the official government. The lack of definition and of specific criteria at some points led to the confusion of the agents involved in the industry, which had its effects on the final product the reader or viewer received as will be shown in the following section.

## 5. NOVELS AND FILMS CONFRONTED: IDEOLOGICAL MANIPULATION AT PLAY

This section is devoted to the analysis of two bestselling novels of the 1970s, which also became blockbuster movies: *The Godfather* (Mario Puzo 1969/Francis Ford Coppola 1972) and *The Exorcist* (William Peter Blatty 1971/William Friedkin 1973). Both were translated first from English into Spanish and then dubbed for the Spanish screen. Despite their differences in plot and genre, the choice of these two different novels and films is not a random one: they share the status of best-selling novels of the 1970s and also have many other aspects in common such as their entertaining nature, their North American origin, and above all their treatment by the censors. Likewise, both films made a great impression at the time and their censorship was notorious and characteristic of the final years of the regime, as shown in the documentary *Imágenes prohibidas* (Forbidden images, <http://www.rtve.es/alacarta/videos/imagenes-prohibidas/imagenes-prohibidas-ultimas-tijeras/1200763>).

We focus here on those areas that were subjected to official censorship in an attempt to demonstrate whether the ideological manipulation they suffered was



directly related to the medium employed. A more detailed analysis of these examples can be found in Gómez Castro (2009).

### *The Godfather: the Novel*

This novel entered the Spanish system of official censorship in October 1969 but was not published until 1970 under the title of *El Padrino* and translated into Spanish by Ángel Arnau, according to the censoring file number 6978-69. When the censors first had access to the book the manuscript was in English, which can be considered to be one of the strategies the publishers implemented on foreseeing problems with the potential publication of a book: since few censors knew English this could lead to a more indulgent attitude on their part or to the gaining of more time while asking for the translation (Gómez Castro 2008). The result was that they commented on it making reference to numerous passages of explicit love scenes. The censors marked the pages where the problematic scenes appeared and asked for a copy of the translation into Spanish of the novel. The publisher and the translator had therefore prior indications of what had bothered the authorities most.

Once the translation was submitted, the censors' comments were similar and referred again to the erotic descriptions still present in the text. The violence that was also present in the book did not seem to constitute a problem since they justified it as a result of the Mafia environment that dominated the narration and of the remoteness of the events, both in time and space.

According to Abellán (1980: 88), the main areas of concern of official censorship when examining cultural products were sexual morals, political beliefs, the use of indecorous language, and religion. In this case, the censors mainly found fault with the explicit sexual content of the novel and ordered some changes that were mostly followed by the commissioned translator, Ángel Arnau. An example of two of these changes affecting sexuality present in the text can be seen in table 1:

<b>Source text (1969)</b>	<b>Spanish translation &amp; published text (1970)</b>	<b>Translation technique</b>	<b>Censoring action</b>
She gave a little hop in the air so that both her legs were wrapped around his upper thighs. (p. 26)	Lucy dio un pequeño salto en el aire y sus piernas rodearon los muslos de Sonny. (p. 25)	Transference <sup>2</sup>	Deletion of controversial passage
She turned slowly and his hand touched her breast,	La muchacha se volvió despacio, y la mano de	Partial elision <sup>3</sup>	Deletion of controversial

<sup>2</sup> 'Transference' means that the discourse in the source language is transferred to the target language in such a way that the rules of the target system are not violated and the result is an equivalent discourse (Toury 1995: 275).

<sup>3</sup> By means of this technique the translator omits parts of the source text in order to avoid problematic areas that the official censors could find fault with. This technique can be total, when all the information is left out, or partial, when only part of the information is left out, normally the most controversial part.





Source text (1969)	Spanish translation & published text (1970)	Translation technique	Censoring action
soft, full and then she was in his arms so quickly that their bodies came together in one line of silken electricity. (p. 342-3)	Michael <del>tocó sus senos,</del> erguidos y llenos. Entonces, <del>con inesperada</del> rapidez, ella se echó en sus brazos. (p.340)		passage

Table 1. Suppressions by the censors concerning sexual morals in the novel *El Padrino*

The first example corresponds to the scene where Sonny, one of the sons of the Godfather, is making love to Lucy, one of the bridesmaids at his sister's wedding. Sonny is one of the most sexually active characters in the novel and since these scenes were too explicit in both the English and the Spanish version, the censors deemed it necessary to omit the most morbid parts in them. The second example comes from the wedding of Michael Corleone and the virginal Italian girl Apollonia. Even though in this case the translator had already excised part of the conflictive scene, omitting the last section in which their touch is described as electric, the censors still requested the deletion of the rest of the passage in which the two characters engage in physical and therefore impure contact.

With regard to the use of language, the Mafia world which represents the setting for the novel encourages the use of improper or rude language. However, the censors only pointed out this problematic use on four occasions in the whole novel, since a softening action had previously been carried out by the translator. In so doing the image of the characters was improved and the vulgarity of the novel somewhat reduced. In this respect, self-censorship was a frequent practice at the time and the main consequence of official censorship, turning authors and translators into their own censors (Beneyto 1975: 158). However, the translator surrendered to the English content and transferred it literally when dealing with controversial passages on politics and religion, which did not prevent the publication of the novel. The fact that Spanish society was experiencing many social and political changes was largely responsible for this.

It could therefore be said that the result of the translation was a text with a Mafia background, which presents itself as erotically diluted and devoid of improper language but hostile to dictatorial regimes and with a special way of understanding the Catholic faith. The book was very successful in Spain and is still available in the same translation.

### *The Godfather: the Film*

The film was first shown in Spanish cinemas on 20 October 1972, two years after the publication of the translation and following the aforementioned common trend of tie-ins. It was preceded by the reputation of its author, Mario Puzo, but even so the film was only authorised for adults over 18 and given the moral category of *gravemente peligrosa* [extremely dangerous]. It was directed by Francis Ford Coppola and José



López Rubio was in charge of the Spanish version, the dubbing of which was directed by the famous Spanish director and scriptwriter Luis García Berlanga. At the time of its release the press presented it as a sociological phenomenon, similar to that of *Love Story*, directed by Arthur Hiller in 1971. The review from the journal *Arriba* stated that: "The Godfather has set off a sociological phenomenon. It is curious and shocking to confirm the odd fascination this film arouses taking into account the amorality of its characters and their continuous crimes. A great film" (*Cine Asesor* 1972, my translation). Despite the fear that the film would receive (as it certainly did) a poor moral assessment by ecclesiastical censorship, it was hugely successful in the same way as the novel.

Sexual scenes and improper language were targeted by the censorship of the film, in a similar manner in which the censors had behaved towards the novel. In reel 3, the scene in which Sonny and Lucy are having sex behind a door is reduced to the minimum and the sound of moans and thrusts is completely eliminated. This suppression is analogous to the changes undergone by the same scene in the novel, in which the explicitness of the sexual encounter between the two characters is downgraded by means of several deletions.

Also concerning sexuality, in reel 13 and on the wedding night, Apollonia, Michael's bride, gets undressed and her breast is visible. In the case of the novel this scene was also deleted as explicit nudity was still prohibited. In the film, an alternative take was used and the scene ends when Apollonia makes the gesture of lowering her bra straps, as can be seen in Illustration 1:



Illustration 1. Example of a sexual scene censored in the film *El Padrino*

Apart from the changes regarding the sexual behaviour of the characters in the film, the censors also focused on the dialogue and the use of improper language. When dubbing, many Spanish solutions showed the interference of the English language in the fashion of "Spanish imported from Hollywood" (Muñoz García 2005). This implied that examples of swearing or rude language such as 'bastard' were translated by *bastardo* and thus lost their emotional charge and offensive value, since *bastardo* in Spanish only means 'illegal son' and does not convey the vulgarity of the English expression. In terms of censorship this had the desired effect of reducing the impact of the controversial use of language, which in turn led to less deletion. This was the case



with *The Godfather*, where censors only indicated that expressions such as ‘son of a bitch’ in the original should be eliminated and replaced with more neutral ones.

Broadly speaking, in the case of *The Godfather* it could be said that the strictness of official censorship was similar in the book and the film. This, of course, links directly with the self-censoring action of the translators of the book and of the film, who already knew the aspects that would be more closely scrutinised by the censoring boards and acted in consequence.

#### *The Exorcist: the Novel*

The book arrived in Spain in 1971 and enjoyed a similar success to that of *The Godfather*, being quick to make the bestsellers’ lists as recorded in *La Estafeta Literaria*, number 560, pages 29 & 2036. Official readers first examined the document in English and it seemed to satisfy them as they considered that the subject was treated with propriety and in the end Good triumphs over Evil (Censoring file number 8665-71).

However, some deletions were advised before the book could be published. These corrections concerned the use of obscene expressions as some passages were considered too shocking for the Spanish public, such as the passage in which Regan, the possessed girl, masturbates with a crucifix. The strategy of initially submitting the text in English allowed the publishing houses to find out in advance which parts of the books were problematic for the authorities and therefore helped to guide the translators accordingly. In this case, when the publishing house presented the Spanish translation of the text for consultation, they used the Argentine one by Raquel Albornoz that had already been commercialised in that country. Once the censors examined it, they came to the conclusion that the text could be approved if the translation was modified mainly concerning the use of some rude and vulgar expressions on pages indicated in the report. Once this was done, the novel was given the green light and was successively reprinted over the following decade, a reflection of the success it enjoyed among Spanish readers.

When *The Exorcist* was translated into peninsular Spanish by Raquel Albornoz, this was done in keeping with an overall strategy of faithfully reproducing the English source text, which has been confirmed by the translator herself (personal communication by e-mail, 3 January 2005). However, due to the changes advised by the official censorship system, the final publication tended towards the domestication of sexual morals and improper language, the two aspects which were usually most closely controlled by censors at the time. Table 2 presents two examples of this official censoring action on the novel:

Source text (1971)	Argentine translation & published text (1972)	Translation technique	Censoring action
and with both her hands began masturbating frantically.	y con ambas manos comenzó, frenética, a masturbarse.	Transference	Deletion of controversial passage



Source text (1971)	Argentine translation & published text (1972)	Translation technique	Censoring action
(SECTION II; C. 3, page 108)	(SECTION II; C. 3, page 48)		
<i>Bullshit! I heard it!</i> (Section I; C. 1, page 12-13)	<i>¡Mierda! ¡Lo escuché!</i> (Section I; C. 1, page 4)	Transference	Deletion of controversial passage

Table 2. Suppressions by the censors concerning sexual morals and language in the novel *El Exorcista*

Even though the main character in the novel is a 12-year-old girl named Regan, the book is very explicit in certain descriptions of sexual matters, which led the censors to intervene in the most detailed and shocking examples, such as the one in Table 2 in which Regan masturbates with a crucifix. In addition, the connection of most of the scenes with religion added to the offence and did not encourage their approval without any modification.

The language shows a high level of English interference, as was the case with *The Godfather*, when the translator mistook taboo language in English for signs of piety and translated curses into innocent expressions that usually had to do with the Catholic faith. For instance, the expletive “Jesus!” was translated as “¡Jesús!” in Spanish, an inoffensive expression unlike the source one. Thus, censors only intervened in examples such as the one presented in table 2.

Religion and politics were however left alone, which confirms that changes in society were overriding the ideological principles of the dictatorship. As with *The Godfather*, the huge success of the novel is corroborated by its multiple reprints and the fact that the novel is still being sold, quite likely in the same 1970s translation.

#### *The Exorcist: the Film*

The film was first shown in Spain on 1 September 1975, a few years after the publication of the translation and in keeping with the tie-in synergy. It was authorised only for adults over 18 and given the moral category of “extremely dangerous” as in the case of Coppola’s film. It was preceded by the huge success that the novel had enjoyed worldwide and by several films on the subject of exorcisms that had already been shown in Spain, which limited the surprise element to some extent as was noted by contemporary critics: “In the unusual case of *The Exorcist* the copies have preceded the original” (*Cine Asesor* 1975, my translation). Furthermore, the press considered the time it took the film to reach Spanish cinemas excessive, which they attributed to the negotiations with the film companies as the latter considered the language of the demon possessing the girl to be too shocking for Spanish audiences: “in the dubbed Spanish version the vulgarity of the verbal expressions has been toned down as much as possible and some very shocking scenes have been cut” (*ibid.*, my translation). Once released it was a resounding success.

Religion, as can be expected from the title, plays an important role in the film and this criterion was therefore paramount to the censors examining the film, who



tried to suppress all scenes in which offence could be taken for religious reasons. The example given in Illustration 2 concerns the desecration of a Catholic church in the vicinity of Regan's home: a statue of the Virgin Mary is crudely painted and adorned with conical clay additions made to resemble breasts and a penis. Clearly, the attack was too blasphemous to be shown to Spanish spectators of the time and was therefore reduced to a brief flash.

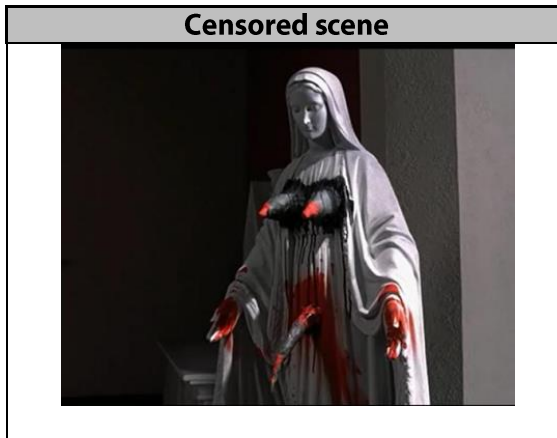


Illustration 2. Scene of the Virgin Mary censored in the film *El Exorcista*

The official censors also recommended the slight modification of the scene in which the main character masturbates with a crucifix, which had also been modified in the written version of *The Exorcist*. They advised the elimination of the first shots in which Regan can be seen starting to hit herself with the cross by thrusting movements, but without making the object explicit. The censored scene is shown in Illustration 3:

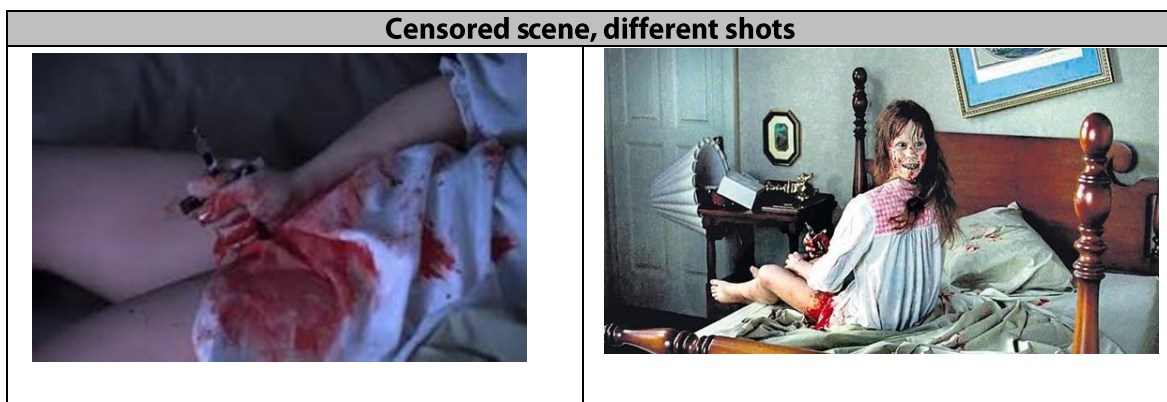


Illustration 3. Scene of Regan masturbating with a crucifix censored in the film *El Exorcista*

Scenes such as the ones of Illustration 3 were too explicit and even though they added tension to the film, which was sought in order to shock the spectator, they were considered too startling for the mostly Catholic Spanish public.



## 5. FINAL REFLECTIONS: DIFFERENT MEDIA, SAME HARSHNESS?

Deviation in the field of translation can be understood to be technical manipulation or ideological interference either in the novel or in the audiovisual programme being translated. In the present article and by means of a comparative study of two novels and their film counterparts, it has been shown how the official censorship operated in Spain during Franco's dictatorship, particularly in its last years, when the stringent previous laws had already been revoked and changes were occurring in society. These changes led to a gradual relaxing of morals and therefore to a change in the way censorship was applied when translating North American bestsellers and blockbusters.

What is evident from this analysis is the synergy existing between the control mechanisms for books and films, highlighting the fact that the literary translation and dubbing processes are "gatekeepers who stand at key control points and rule over what gets in and what stays out of any given cultural or linguistic territory" (Albin 2005: online). A broader and deeper analysis is needed to confirm whether this tendency affects the whole period, in an attempt to find out whether the double filter of translation and censorship fulfilled its original purpose of nationalising every cultural product that entered the country during the years of the dictatorship.

## REFERENCES

Abellán, M. L., 1980, *Censura y creación literaria en España (1939-1976)*, Península, Barcelona.

Albin, V. 2005, "On Censorship: a Conversation with Ilan Stavans", *Translation Journal* 9(3), <<http://translationjournal.net/journal/33censorship1.htm>> (27 September 2015).

Ballester Casado, A., 2001, *Traducción y nacionalismo. La recepción del cine americano en España a través del doblaje (1928-1948)*, Comares, Granada.

Bassnett, S. and A. Lefevere, 1998, *Constructing Cultures, Multilingual Matters*, Clevedon.

Beneyto, A. 1975. *Censura y política en los escritores españoles*. Barcelona: Euros.

Blatty, W. P., 1971, *The Exorcist*, Harper & Row, New York.

Blatty, W. P., 1972, *El exorcista*, Plaza y Janés, Barcelona, traducción de Raquel Albornoz.

Bustamente, E. and R. Zallo, (eds), 1988, *Las industrias culturales en España (Grupos multimedia y transnacionales)*, Akal, Madrid.

Carrero Eras, P., 1977, "Notas para una sociología de la cultura literaria en España desde 1939", *Revista Española de Opinión Pública* 47, pp. 91-121.

*Cine Asesor*, 1975, "Hoja archivable de información", pp. 187-75.

*Cine Asesor*, 1972, "Hoja archivable de información", pp. 260-272.



Cisquella, G., J. L. Erviti and J. A. Sorolla, 1977, *Diez años de represión cultural. La censura de libros durante la ley de prensa (1966-76)*, Editorial Anagrama, Barcelona.

COPPOLA, F. F., 1972, *The Godfather*, 35 mm, 175'.

Díaz Cintas J., 2012, "Clearing the Smoke to See the Screen: Ideological Manipulation in Audiovisual Translation", *Meta* 57(2), pp. 279-293.

Even-Zohar, I., 1990, *Polysystem Studies*, Special issue of *Poetics Today* 11(1).

Fraga Iribarne, M., 1966, *Estructura política de España*. Doncel, Madrid.

FRIEDKIN, W., 1973, *The Exorcist*, 35 mm, 122'.

Gil Gascón, F. and S. Gómez García, 2010, "Women, Engagement and Censorship in Spanish Cinema. 1939-1959", *Revista Latina de Comunicación Social* 10, pp. 460-471.

Gómez Castro, C. 2005, "La presencia de la literatura traducida (inglés>español) en el polisistema literario español de los últimos años del franquismo: la traducción como fuente de modelos literarios", in *II Congreso Internacional AIETI 2005*, Universidad Pontificia de Comillas, Madrid, pp. 955-962.

Gómez Castro, C., 2008, "Translation and Censorship in Franco's Spain: Negotiation as a Pathway for Authorization", in C. O'Sullivan (ed.), *Proceedings of the 7<sup>th</sup> annual Portsmouth Translation Conference*, University of Portsmouth, Portsmouth, pp. 63-76.

Gómez Castro C., 2009, *Traducción y censura de textos narrativos inglés-español en la España franquista y de transición: TRACEni (1970-1978)*, Universidad de León, León, PhD Dissertation.

Gubern, R., J. E. Monterde, J. Pérez Perucha, E. Rimbau and C. Torreiro, 1995, *Historia del Cine Español*, Cátedra, Madrid.

Gutiérrez Lanza, C., 2011, "Censors and Censorship Boards in Franco's Spain (1950's-1960s): An Overview Based on the TRACE Cinema Catalogue", in D. Asimakoulas and M. Rogers (eds), *Multilingual Matters*, Clevedon, pp. 305-320.

Herzberger, D. H., 1981, "The Literary Malaise of Post-Franco Spain", in R. S. Minc (ed.), *Literature and Popular Culture in the Hispanic World: a Symposium*, Hispamérica Montclair State Collage, pp. 185-190.

Jacquemond, R., 1992, "Translation and Cultural Hegemony: The Case of French-Arabic Translation", in L. Venuti (ed.), *Rethinking Translation: Discourse. Subjectivity. Ideology*, Routledge, London, pp. 139-158.

Lefevere, A., 1992, *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*, Routledge, London.

Martín de la Guardia, R., 2008, *Cuestión de tijeras. La censura en la transición a la democracia*, Síntesis, Madrid.

Muñoz García, N., 2005, "El español importado de Hollywood", *Puentes* 6, pp. 87-94.

Niranjana, T., 1992, *Siting Translation. History, Post-structuralism and the Colonial Context*, University of California Press, California.

Ortiz Muñoz, F., 1946, *Criterio y normas morales de censura cinematográfica: conferencia pronunciada en el Salón de Actos del Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas el día 21 de junio de 1946*, Magisterio Español, Madrid.

Puzo, M., 1969, *The Godfather*, G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York.



Puzo, M., 1970, *El padrino*, Grijalbo, Barcelona, traducción de Ángel Arnau.

Rabadán, R., 2001, "Las cadenas intertextuales inglés-español: traducciones y otras transferencias (inter)semióticas", in E. Pajares, R. Merino and J. M. Santamaría (eds), *Trasvases culturales: Literatura, cine, traducción 3*, UPV/EHU, Vitoria-Gastéiz, pp. 29-41.

Rosendorf, N. M., 2007, "'Hollywood in Madrid': American Film Producers and the Franco Regime, 1950–1970", *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 27(1), pp. 77-109.

St-Pierre, P., 1993, "Translation as a Discourse of History", *TTR* 6(1), pp. 61-82.

Toury, G., 1995, *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond*, John Benjamins, Amsterdam.

---

**Dr Cristina Gómez Castro** is currently a lecturer of English at the University of León, Spain, where she teaches ESP. Her main research interests are the theory and methodology of translation, and more precisely, within the field of DTS, the study of the interaction between ideology and translation and the way (self) censorship and manipulation is present in the rewritings of texts. She wrote her dissertation on the topic of translation and censorship under Franco's Spain and she has published on the topic in several journals and books.

[cristina.gomez@unileon.es](mailto:cristina.gomez@unileon.es)