

Graham Greene's *The Living Room*: An Uncomfortable Catholic Play in Franco's Spain

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This article addresses the debate over Graham Greene's *The Living Room* (1953) in Franco's Spain, where theatre critics created a controversy over the play by questioning whether this Catholic dramatic work was heretical or orthodox. It was regarded as a cultural asset to the national stage, but it was also interpreted as a threat to Catholics of wavering faith. In addition, this study uses the censorship files to examine the attitude of the Franco regime towards the play. Contrary to popular belief, Franco's government did not favour the reception of this play despite the fact that Greene was an internationally renowned Catholic writer. On the contrary, banned four times, it ranks among Greene's most censored works under Franco's rule. The article concludes by suggesting that *The Living Room* became an *uncomfortable* Catholic play because it clashed with the tenets of the regime.

Keywords: Graham Greene; Franco's regime; theatre; criticism; censorship

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El cuarto de estar, de Graham Greene: una obra católica incómoda en la España de Franco

Este artículo pone de manifiesto el debate que tuvo lugar en la España de Franco en torno a *El cuarto de estar* (1953), de Graham Greene. Los críticos teatrales suscitaron una polémica a su alrededor al cuestionar si se trataba de una obra dramática católica de carácter herético u ortodoxo. Se consideró un bien cultural para la escena nacional al mismo tiempo que se interpretó como una amenaza para los católicos no firmes en su fe. En esta investigación también se revela la actitud del régimen de Franco hacia la obra mediante el análisis de los expedientes de censura. Contrariamente a lo que podría pensarse, el franquismo no

favoreció la recepción de este drama a pesar de que Greene fuese un escritor católico de reconocido prestigio internacional. Por el contrario, con cuatro prohibiciones, *El cuarto de estar* se sitúa entre sus trabajos más censurados durante el periodo franquista. En resumen, este artículo saca a la luz que *El cuarto de estar* se convirtió en una obra católica *incómoda* cuando entró en conflicto con los principios ideológicos del régimen.

Palabras clave: Graham Greene; régimen de Franco; teatro; crítica; censura

I. INTRODUCTION

The first Spanish academics to consider his works were mainly captivated by Greene's Catholic sensitivity—see Aísa Comps (1958), Durán (1967-1968; 1973; 1974; 1975), Ruiz Vico (1976)—until Fernando Galván Reula's study (1987) of the moral, political and historical implications of *The Quiet American* (1955) opened the way to other works on the richness of meanings and literary techniques with which Greene experimented throughout his artistic life. Accordingly, in the 1990s his detective fiction was examined with an emphasis on the personal conflicts of British secret agents after the Second World War which allowed the novelist to distance himself from the traditional image of the spy that had prevailed throughout the first half of the twentieth century (Font i Adrover 1993). What is more, Greene himself—like the secret agent he also was—became the object of study (Martínez Laínez 2004; Martínez Pujalte 2004). Furthermore, in the field of comparative studies, parallels and discrepancies were established between his travel books and novels, and also between his autobiographical works and fictional works (Henríquez Jiménez 1992). In the early twenty-first century more aspects of his literary expression began to be explored and academics analysed his insightful use and creative mastery of mid-twentieth century journalism techniques to bring the historical reality of *The Quiet American* closer to the public (Rodríguez Martínez 2005). Likewise, Greene's cinematographic narrative and his intense relationship with the film industry came under examination (González-Fierro Santos 2001; Aresté 2006; Fuster Cancio 2008).

There has also been recent interest in the study of the reception of Greene's fiction and theatre under Franco's rule. In relation to his novels, it has been demonstrated that governmental censorship acted in firm opposition to his fictional works throughout the period 1943-1956. Firstly, Franco's regime imposed categorical prohibitions on his books in the 1940s, when publishers were striving to introduce to the Spanish reader *The Man Within* (1929), *Rumour at Nightfall* (1931), *Stamboul Train* (1932) and *It's a Battlefield* (1934). Then, when Greene was becoming an internationally renowned Catholic writer in the 1950s, his Catholic novels—*The Power and the Glory* (1940), *The Heart of the Matter* (1948) and *The End of the Affair* (1951)—were also banned (Olivares Leyva 2011a; 2015). That Greene was becoming a rather controversial novelist at that time became evident when his Catholic characters with lax morals were objected to in various Spanish newspapers, magazines and journals. Conversely, the author won praise from critics who were demanding that Catholic writers should compose novels in the style of foreign authors like Greene. As far as the reception of his drama in Spain is concerned, Franco's censorship also interfered in the introduction of *The Complaisant Lover* (1959), with the result that after being banned in 1962 and 1963, it was finally staged with a number of cuts and amendments in 1968. As a consequence, the public was not exposed to Christian marriage as Greene conceived of it, that is, as one which allows consensual infidelity in order to keep it alive. In contrast to the great amount of information available about the reception of his drama in Spain in the 1960s—

Merino Álvarez (2000), Merino Álvarez and Rabadán (2002), Isabel y Estrada (2004), Rodríguez-Castro (2009-2010), Olivares Leyva (2011b)—not much is published in relation to his early years as a playwright. In response, this article studies the reactions of Franco's regime to Greene's Catholic sensitivity in his first play *The Living Room* (1953).

Given that *The Living Room* combines Catholicism with adultery and suicide, the question posed is the following: how did cultural and political agents react when theatre companies and publishers attempted to introduce the play into Franco's Spain? In order to find answers, the present research has been framed within the field of Descriptive Translation studies, as *The Living Room* was received in Spain by means of translation. I have approached the object of analysis from a target-oriented perspective considering translations as "facts of the culture which hosts them" (Toury 1995, 24) and foregrounding the translation products, either published or performed. In addition, I have considered the important role the translator(s) of *The Living Room* may have played in the reception of this play, as it is the translator who is the first receiver of the product and the one who mediates between the source and the target culture. A descriptive-comparative analysis between the original work and the translation(s) has been carried out in order to analyze the choices of the translator(s) when translating the source text. In doing so, it is possible to determine whether the translator(s) might have resorted to self-censorship, which was the established norm of translation during the period in question, as many works in the field have demonstrated (Gutiérrez Lanza 2000; Serrano Fernández 2003; Rioja Barrocal 2004; Gómez Castro 2009). The study has also taken into account the concept of *paratext* (Genette [1987] 1997) as developed in the field of Translation studies (Tymoczko 2002), since the analysis of the reception of *The Living Room* is based on the examination of the paratextual elements—censorship reports and theatre reviews—that greeted the play when it was introduced in Spain. In this sense, this study offers a critical analysis of the decisions taken by those acting as intermediaries between Greene and the Spanish public. Accordingly, the censors' attitudes towards *The Living Room* have been examined with the aid of the censorship files held at the *Archivo General de la Administración* ["General Administration Archive"] (AGA), in Alcalá de Henares, Madrid. The censors' reports on the play have been scrutinized to determine the extent to which Franco's regime interfered with or favoured the reception of Greene's Catholic sensitivity in Spain. The censorship files also contain the adaptations of *The Living Room*, which have been duly examined in order to find traces of self-censorship as well as government censorship. Additionally, the contribution of literary criticism has been given consideration due to the essential role that it plays in the process of social communication between writer and public. For this reason, the leading Spanish magazines, journals and newspapers of the day have been explored in order to establish critics' interpretation of Greene's Catholic theatre. As a result of this target-oriented approach, it is possible to define quite accurately the nature of the reception of *The Living Room* in Franco's Spain.

The article is divided into two main parts. The first one offers a detailed review of all the application forms submitted by theatrical companies and publishers to the censorship office with a view to staging *The Living Room* in Spain. The second part brings together and analyzes the reactions of Spanish theatre critics to Greene's Catholic dilemmas in the play. By considering the opinions held of the theatrical work by cultural as well as political agents, a clear picture will emerge of the cultural impact of Greene's *The Living Room* on Francoist Spain.

2. THE EXPURGATED TEXT ON STAGE

The reception of *The Living Room* in Spain began in December 1953, when Alfredo Marqueríe sought permission to stage the adaptation by Álvaro de Zárate (AGA (03)046 Sig. 73/09094 File 448-53). After examining his translation, it is possible to determine that the adapter implemented certain changes to the characters of Father James Browne, Rose Pemberton and Mrs Dennis.¹ Firstly, Zárate introduced two lines where the priest interrupts his niece Rose Pemberton when she is complaining about the Catholic Church that he represents. Although Father James Browne—"Santiago" in the Spanish version—shows a compassionate attitude towards Rose's suffering throughout the play, with these new lines, underlined below, it seems that her behaviour scandalizes the priest:

SOURCE TEXT

ROSE: Oh yes, I would. Don't make any mistake about that, Father. I could live a lifetime without the sacraments. That wouldn't hurt—but a lifetime without him... (Greene [1953] 1954, 94)

TARGET TEXT

ROSA: Yo, sí. No lo dudes. Podría pasar toda la vida...

SANTIAGO: ¿Sin sacramentos?

ROSA: Pero una vida sin él... (Zárate 1953, 24)

["ROSE: I would. Don't make any mistake about that. I could live a lifetime... / JAMES: Without the sacraments? / ROSE: But a lifetime without him..." (my translation)]

SOURCE TEXT

ROSE: [...] I don't believe in your Church and your Holy Mother of God. I don't believe. I don't believe (*James holds out a hand to her, but she draws away from it.*) I wish to God I didn't feel so lonely. (Greene [1953] 1954, 113)

¹ The references in the Spanish text revised by the censor are provided (Zárate 1953), as well as the English version published by The Viking Press in 1954 (Greene [1953] 1954). The renderings into English of censored texts have been made by the author of this paper.

TARGET TEXT

ROSA: [...] No creo en tu Iglesia ¡no creo! ¡no creo!

SANTIAGO: ¡Por Dios!

ROSA: Y ojalá Dios no me hiciera sentirme tan sola. (Zárate 1953, 48)

[“ROSE: [...] I don’t believe in your Church. I don’t believe! I don’t believe! / JAMES: For God’s sake! / ROSE: I wish to God I didn’t feel so lonely” (my translation)]

The Catholic Rose Pemberton also comes under Zárate’s scrutiny when admitting her adultery (Greene [1953] 1954, 93), when describing her relationship with Michael Dennis in terms of sex (86, 88, 101), and when restating that she could happily live with a married man (100). Zárate “polished” her sex life and her intention to reconcile religion with adultery as evidenced by his deletions and changes on the pages quoted above. In addition, when Rose Pemberton utters her final words before committing suicide, he added a line expressing her feeling of sorrow for having offended God (Zárate 1953, 50). An act of contrition which, as Víctor García Ruiz argues, toned down Greene’s Catholic progressivism in the play (2006, 129). Finally, he also deviated from the original text when Mrs Dennis suggests that she would accept her husband’s infidelity if she kept her marriage alive with her decision, substituting her proposition “if I’m ready to share him” (Greene [1953] 1954, 100) for “¿y si yo estoy dispuesta a seguir con él?” [“and if I’m prepared to stay with him?” (my translation)]. These examples make it evident that Zárate self-censored in certain passages in order to adapt the female characters to the version of moral correctness defended by the regime. As a result, his self-censorship had an effect on their characterization in the play: when Zárate silenced Mrs Dennis’s resolution to accept her husband’s love affair, her right to choose was also silenced; when Zárate made amendments to Rose Pemberton’s relationship with Michael Dennis, the power of her decision-making with respect to reconcile her religion with her love life was also toned down. In this way, the play was prepared for its inspection at the *Sección de Cinematografía y Teatro* [“Office of Film and Theatre Classification and Censorship”].

When *The Living Room* was received at the censorship office, there were no specific criteria that censors could use to protect the tenets of the National Catholicism supported by the regime. However, it is generally agreed that the censors focused on sexual morality, use of language and portrayal of religion and political views (Abellán 1980, 88-89). The play was examined by one lay censor and two ecclesiastical censors since the Roman Catholic Church exerted a strong influence on Spanish daily life. The most favourable verdict was submitted by the lay censor B.M., who argued that *The Living Room* should be authorized as it was an orthodox theatrical text without any moral fault. The second censor, Father M.B., agreed with the lay censor in considering the play morally orthodox, but he found it inappropriate for Spanish audiences because, in his opinion, they would not understand that Protestantism and Catholicism could coexist. He also reasoned that spectators might perceive a

superficial, and adverse, image of Catholicism, rather than the true religiousness which Greene offered in the play. Father A.A.E.R., the final censor, had the most negative perspective on the play. Considering that he recommended the prohibition of *The End of the Affair* seven months earlier because the novel discredited Catholic priests and included adultery in the plot (Olivares Leyva 2015, 54-55), it is logical to expect that he would also react negatively to a play dealing with similar issues: Father James Browne's ineffectual handling of the illicit relationship between Catholic Rose Pemberton and Protestant Michael Dennis, a married man.

Firstly, the attention of this second religious censor was drawn to suicide in *The Living Room*. He stated that it was not permissible for Greene, as a Catholic writer, to present this moral dilemma without giving an appropriate religious solution. Secondly, like the first religious censor he scrutinized the issue of coexistence between Protestantism and Catholicism. He argued that Spain adhered to Catholicism alone and, consequently, the play was unsuitable for the public. Lastly, he also criticized Greene's portrayal of Father James Browne and his sister Helen Browne because, in his opinion, they were unrepresentative of Catholic behaviour. After expressing his unfavourable remarks, he resolved to authorize Zárate's translation, although only with cuts and corrections on approximately eighteen pages, the majority of the changes relating to the characters of Father James Browne and Helen Browne, and the way God was represented.

The bulk of Father A.A.E.R.'s ire was directed at the character of Father James Browne, who he considered to act incoherently, and without representing the appropriate posture of the Catholic Church on the moral dilemma explored by the play. Father A.A.E.R. felt that the character did not rise to the occasion leading him to the question, "why does he go on stage?" (AGA (03)046 Sig. 73/09094 File 448-53) and skilfully addressed the issue by intensifying the priest's moralising action. For instance, his comprehension of the anguish afflicting Rose Pemberton was omitted by altering Father Browne's suggestion that she should go away with her lover: "Then you'd better go with him, if you're as weak as that" (Greene [1953] 1954, 110). This unviable Catholic solution was resolved by him transforming the statement into a criticism and emphasizing her weakness should Rose run away with Michael: "¿Y serás tan débil como para marcharte con él?" (Zárate 1953, 45) ["Would you be so weak as to run away with him?" (my translation)]. The censor also disapproved of the priest's inaction, and thus deleted a line expressing Father Browne's conviction that God would not require him to do more than he was already doing to remedy the situation: "¿Por qué veo lo que está delante de mis ojos? Dios no me exige que haga otra cosa" (Zárate 1953, 14).²

Father A.A.E.R. also censored the image of God portrayed in *The Living Room*, objecting to the merciful God that Father James Browne believes in and, for this

² See Greene's original: "I see what's in front of my eyes. God doesn't require me to do more" ([1953] 1954, 87).

reason, he crossed out and expurgated from a dialogue between the priest and his sister Teresa his strong belief that God's infinite Mercy would preclude him and the lovers being condemned to Hell:

TERESA: Pero ¿y el infierno, Santiago?

SANTIAGO: ~~No somos tan importantes para eso, Teresa. Creemos en la palabra misericordia. El infierno es para los grandes. No conozco tantos pecadores del calibre de Satanás. (Zárate 1953, 5)~~³

Father A.A.E.R. also censored the moment when Rose Pemberton questions God's infallibility. Her words were toned down by omitting the underlined part of the sentence, which specifies that He is unable to reach all souls: "Sabemos de los éxitos de Dios, pero no de sus fracasos, sus felices fracasos, por ejemplo, de los que no se preocupan de ÉL y siguen viviendo tranquilamente a pesar de todo" (Zárate 1953, 26-27).⁴ Furthermore, Father A.A.E.R.'s indignation at Greene's characterization of Helen Browne is palpable in his report. The censor understood that she was supposed to represent the Catholic posture regarding the moral dilemmas that Greene dissects in the play, but he was puzzled by her weird and odd behaviour. He mainly disapproved of the Catholic pharisaism and dogmatic rigidity depicted by Greene through Helen Browne's interventions. For instance, he reacted against her pharisaic attitude towards the sacrament of Confession and diluted Rose Pemberton's reproach to her by crossing out a line:

ELENA: No estoy avergonzada de lo que hice. La he retenido en el seno de la Iglesia católica. Puede confesarse cuando quiera.

ROSA: Y pecar, y confesar de nuevo, y volver a pecar. ~~¿A eso le llamas tú algo mejor que tener hijos y vivir juntos hasta la muerte?~~ (Zárate 1953, 16)⁵

The censor also deleted two sentences suggesting that dogmatic Catholics lack charity as they believe in their right to judge sinners:

ELENA: Olvidas que él es un hombre casado.

SANTIAGO: ¿Y crees tú que se puede reconocer siempre un pecado mortal donde parece que lo hay...? ¿Estás más enterada que la iglesia, supongo?

³ See Greene's original: "TERESA: But there's Hell, James. / JAMES: ~~We aren't as important as that, Teresa. Mercy is what I believe in. Hell is for the great, the very great. I don't know anyone who's great enough for Hell except Satan.~~" (Greene [1953]1954, 79; my crossing out).

⁴ See Greene's original: "ROSE: Oh, we read about God's successes. We don't read about His failures. His happy failures—who just don't care much about Him, and go on living quietly all the same." (Greene [1953] 1954, 96; my underlining).

⁵ See Greene's original: HELEN: Yes. I'm not ashamed of it. I've kept her in the Church, haven't I?" She can go to confession now any time she likes. / ROSE: And do it again, and go to confession, and do it again? ~~Do you call that better than having children, living together till we die==~~" (Greene [1953] 1954, 88).

ELENA: Por lo menos, ten sentido común, Santiago.

SANTIAGO: De acuerdo. Si tú tienes un poco de caridad. (Zárate 1953, 14)⁶

His insistence on diluting her uncharitable behaviour is also evident when Father James Browne suggests that Helen Browne—and also her sister Teresa—should perhaps have committed a sin in order to have comprehended God's Mercy. Consequently, the censor marked the underlined lines between brackets for deletion:

SANTIAGO: [...] Yo soy sacerdote y he renunciado a esas indagaciones psicológicas. Tus tías son buenas. [Tal vez no hayan cometido un grave pecado en su vida y quién sabe si habría sido mejor que lo hubieran cometido... En mis buenos tiempos solía observar que eran los pecadores los que con frecuencia demostraban tener mayor confianza en la misericordia de Dios. Mis hermanas no la tienen como debieran...] ¿Y tú, tienes miedo a la muerte? (Zárate 1953, 34-35)⁷

Thus, as can be seen, the upshot of the censor's remodelling of Helen Browne's characterization was to tone down her excessive dogmatism. The ecclesiastical censor also entered one more caveat: *The Living Room* should be restricted to being seen only by educated spectators.

On 7 January 1954, the *Sección de Cinematografía y Teatro* allowed Marquerie to stage the play at Madrid María Guerrero Theatre for an audience of over-18s on condition that the deletions and corrections indicated by Father A.A.E.R. were included. It was also deemed unsuitable for broadcast. This same verdict was given to the request of Antonio Senillosa and Mario Lacruz, directors of *Teatro Club*, when they applied for approval to perform Zárate's adaptation at the Comedia Theatre in Barcelona in 1954 (AGA (03)046 Sig. 73/09094 File 448-53). The censorship office informed *Teatro Club* that the company could perform the play only once and only for a small audience. Due to this restrictive verdict, *Teatro Club* could not stage the play for a large public at the Comedia Theatre as planned, and was eventually performed at the Romea Theatre on 27 January (M. 1954). On 10 June 1954, the theatre company directed by María J. Valdés and José M. Mompín also asked permission to perform Zárate's adaptation "in different provinces" (AGA (03)046 Sig. 73/09094 File 448-53). Although the censorship file does not provide evidence on the verdict given in this case, press details do confirm that they performed the play at the Comedia Theatre in Barcelona (Coll 1954b; *La Vanguardia Española* 1954). After the first performances in Madrid and Barcelona, the Spanish

⁶ See Greene's original: "HELEN: Because he's a married man, of course. / JAMES: Do you think you know a mortal sin when you see it? You're wiser than the Church, then. / HELEN: Have some common sense. / JAMES: Yes; if you would have some charity." (Greene [1953] 1954, 87; my crossing out).

⁷ See Greene's original: "JAMES: [...] I'm a priest, and I've given up psychology. They are good people; I doubt if they've ever committed a big sin in their lives—perhaps it would have been better if they had. I used to notice, in the old days, it was often the sinners who had the biggest trust—in mercy. My sisters don't seem to have any trust. Are you afraid of death?" (Greene [1953] 1954, 38; my underlining).

version of *The Living Room* faced criticism. There were complaints that the translation did not achieve the emotional force of the original and, therefore, the vigorous dialogue was perceived as lifeless (Torrente Ballester 1954). It was also argued that the softening of the text had distorted the climax of the drama (M. 1954). After having conducted the comparative analysis for this study between the source and the target text in order to examine Zárate's choices when adapting the original work by Greene to the Spanish context, and having analysed the censors' reports on the adaptation, I would suggest that the censorship implemented on *The Living Room* may well have contributed to the negative perception that these critics had about the performance of the play.

3. FROM THE STAGE TO THE PAGE: MORE OBSTACLES

The reception of *The Living Room* in Spain became even more intricate when the publishing industry attempted to introduce the book in 1954. Despite the fact that the play had been on stage in Madrid and Barcelona that same year, the publishers Edhasa and Iber-Amer were both denied permission to import printed copies of the Argentinian version *El cuarto en que se vive* translated by Victoria Ocampo (Greene [1953] 1960). Elucidating the reasons for the ban is, to a large extent, impracticable since the files from 1954 on *The Living Room* contain no censors' reports on the book (AGA (03)050 Sig. 21/10838 File 5599-54; AGA (03)050 Sig. 21/10913 File 7116-54). Both files include the Argentinian edition as submitted by the two publishers, but only Iber-Amer's copy shows marks made by the censor, which may shed light on the content he could have deemed inappropriate for Spanish readers. Interestingly, some marks in the book coincide with points Father A.A.E.R. had also judged censurable when he examined the theatrical script in 1953. For example, both censors underlined the moment when Father James Browne comments that divine mercy does not exclude anybody from salvation. Although the marks show some similarities between both texts, the censors' decisions were quite different: Father A.A.E.R. suppressed the "offensive" lines from the theatrical text, while the book censor was less permissive, and opted for prohibition. In light of this divergence in opinion between censors, it could be suggested that the state censorship apparatus behaved erratically towards Greene and his work: the Spanish public was able to enjoy theatre performances in 1954, but they were prevented from reading the book. This implies that Franco's system of censorship when *The Living Room* was introduced in Spain was a decision-making body unable to maintain a consistent attitude towards Greene's own brand of Catholicism.

In April 1956 Queromón Editores also sought permission to introduce the Argentinian edition of *The Living Room* in Spain (AGA (03)050 Sig. 21/11423 File 1953-56). The censor criticized the Catholic characters' attitude towards adultery because, in his opinion, Father James Browne and his sisters practically justified the extramarital affair between Rose Pemberton and Michael Dennis. As a consequence of this disapproval, the book was banned. Why was Franco's censorship office still so

reluctant to make the text available to readers? I would suggest that one main reason might derive from the fact that the application was submitted at a crucial moment in the reception of Greene's Catholic works in Spain, with the censorship office at times approving them and at others rejecting them: *The End of the Affair* and *The Heart of the Matter* were both considered unsuitable for importation in 1956 despite the fact that both had received favourable verdicts in 1954 (Olivares Leyva 2015, 51-57). Due to this wide disparity in the censors' decisions, I presume that it must have been difficult to judge a writer who was labelled Catholic, but whose literary works were flooded with morally tendentious situations, such as adultery and suicide, together with continuous reproaches of Catholic pharisaism.

4. BENEFITS OF THE FAILURES OF CENSORSHIP MECHANISMS

The print version of *The Living Room* was, nevertheless, eventually introduced in Spain, despite the obstacles encountered by the publishing industry at the censorship office. The first signs of the shift in the Franco regime's attitude towards the play became visible in 1959, when the publisher Aguilar was granted permission to publish 2,000 copies of the Argentinian translation.⁸ In the same year the *Plan de Estabilización y Liberización* ["Stabilization Plan"] was approved, which heralded the end of autarchy and an opening up in terms of politics and economics (Gubern 1981). Interestingly, the authorization was in fact granted by mistake: the censor based his positive judgement on a note indicating that the text had been given approval in December 1954. Aguilar was also able to publish the Argentinian version in 1961, 1965 and 1970 (AGA (03)050 Sig. 21/12408 File 2347-59; AGA (03)050 Sig. 66/038782 File 6465-69), and the publishers Espasa Calpe and Martínez de Murguía were both also given approval to introduce the play in 1963 and 1968 (AGA (03)052.117 Sig. 66/6450 File 2039-63; AGA (03)052.117 Sig. 66/648 File 256-68). In addition, in October 1962 Joaquim Horta was given permission to print Rafael Tasis's translation, *La sala d'estar*, in October (Greene [1953] 1962) (AGA (03)050 Sig. 21/14188 File 5474-62). Indeed, together with publishers' interest in translating Greene's most famous narrative into Catalan, a total of nine of his books were introduced into the Catalan market in the 1960s: *El ministeri de la por* (1965), *Rocs de Brighton* (1965), *El poder i la glòria* (1965), *L'americà pacífic* (1965), *El fons de la qüestió* (1967), *Final d'home* (1967), *Els comedians* (1968) and *Ens poden deixar el marit? i altres comedies de la vida sexual* (1968) (Olivares Leyva 2015, 112). These Catalan versions could be published because in the 1960s the Franco's regime lifted the ban on translating into Catalan—a language which suffered repression in Franco's times (Solé i Sabaté and Villaroya 1994). As such, Catalan played a significant role in the reception of the writer by strengthening the dissemination of his work.

⁸ *The Living Room* was published in the collected volume *Teatro inglés contemporáneo 1937-1953* in 1960 (AGA (03)050 SIG 21/12408 File 2347-59).

There was one notable exception to this otherwise favourable trend of authorizations, when Edhasa was denied permission to introduce fifty copies of the Argentinian version in February 1962 (AGA (03)052.117 Sig. 66/6428 File 387-62). This was a strange situation bearing in mind that the work—as mentioned earlier—had been authorized in 1959 and was available to Spanish readers since 1960. What is more, the censorship office banned *The Living Room*, regardless of the fact that—with such an insignificant amount of books—the play would not be a threat to the general public. The question that arises then is why the text was considered harmful enough to block its importation on this occasion. The available documentation indicates that the censor considered that it was a comedy about atheism, and he took into consideration the ban imposed in 1954. This demonstrates that the Franco regime's inconstant censorship of Greene's theatre in the mid-1950s also extended into the early 1960s. With its four bans, *The Living Room* ranks among Greene's works that the Franco regime deemed most censurable, the collection of short stories *May We Borrow Your Husband? and Other Comedies of the Sexual Life* (1967) occupying first place with sixteen prohibitions, while *The Heart of the Matter* (1948) and *The End of the Affair* (1951) also had four bans each (Olivares Leyva 2015, 61-64).

5. RETURN TO THE STAGE: VEILED CENSORSHIP

After its first performances in 1954, *The Living Room* fell into oblivion on the Spanish stage until renewed interest emerged in the early 1970s. The company *Justo Alonso* submitted an application to perform an adaptation by Marquerie at the Reina Victoria Theatre in Madrid in 1971 (AGA (03)046 Sig. 73/09862 File 341-71). This version of the theatrical script shows manifold similarities with Zárate's text, but without the suppressions and corrections that the regime's censorship demanded to enhance Father James Browne and Helen Browne's Catholic behaviour—with a few exceptions (for example, Zárate [1953, 14]; Marquerie [1971, 6]). Marquerie had applied for approval to perform Zárate's translation in 1953 and thus presumably would have taken this version as a reference for his own adaptation. Also of interest is the discovery that Marquerie omitted moral content and language that Zárate had included in his adaptation. For instance, Michael Dennis's description of his wife: "she smells success like a dog a bitch" was toned down in the adaptation by Zárate—"olfatea el éxito como el perro las esquinas"—and Marquerie left it out from his script (Greene [1953] 1954, 57; Zárate 1953, 60; Marquerie 1971, 28).

In addition to this, Marquerie's adaptation, like Zárate's before it, toned down the lines where adultery was more visible to the spectator. So why did he make his translation even softer before submitting it for examination? His decision could be explained by the return to repression in the later years of the dictatorship when Alfredo Sánchez Bella held the post of Minister of Information and Tourism (1969-1973). Given that it was a period of regression and greater conservatism—visible in the increasing

number of *prohibiciones por silencio administrativo* ["bannings without any notification from the administration"] and conflicts with authors and publishers (Abellán 1980, 232)—it could be suggested that Marquerié toned down the inappropriate moral content of the text to further reduce the chances that it would be censored. On 22 June 1971, his adaptation was sent for inspection to the *Junta de Censura Teatral* ["Board of Theatre Classification and Censorship"], where the verdict on *The Living Room* depended on the agreement of all the committee members, and the application of the *Normas de Censura Cinematográfica* ["Rules and Regulations for Film Classification and Censorship"]—the first censorship criteria which had been established by the Minister Manuel Fraga Iribarne in 1963. These regulations forbade the justification of divorce, suicide, adultery, revenge, prostitution, abortion, the use of contraceptives, illicit sexual relations, etc. (Gubern 1981). The censors' reports show that two censors were uneasy with the work, one claiming that its inclusion of adultery and suicide made the play dangerous for Spanish spectators. In particular, Greene was reprehended for not providing convincing arguments for introducing these immoral situations into the plot. The censor suggested that the menace could be minimized if it were only performed to an educated audience. In addition to this moral examination, a second censor emphasized the religious content. Although he was inclined to give a positive verdict, he admitted that Greene showed the incapacity of Catholicism to find solutions for the more sensitive points of the drama. For this reason, he stated that his vote would be subject to the ecclesiastical censors' resolutions on the text. The file shows that no member of the Roman Catholic Church posed any objection to the play, which might be explained by the fact that this institution had less power within the Franco regime after the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965). After individual deliberations, the *Junta de Censura Teatral* found it worthy of authorization without cuts for over-18s, but unsuitable for broadcast. After *Justo Alonso's* application to stage *The Living Room*, no other theatrical company or publisher showed interest in the play before the end of the regime.

6. HERETICAL OR ORTHODOX?

After the London première of *The Living Room* in April 1953, Spanish critics were captivated by its combination of intricate meanings and overwhelming emotions. It was a vigorous and animated drama which deviated from the strongly Catholic messages of theatre productions being staged at the time in Spain; consequently, opinions differed greatly. Greene was applauded for his lively and impressive scenes, and praised for scrutinizing Divine Forgiveness (Mayans 1953; T. 1953). Nevertheless, Greene was also objected to on the ground that he was a Catholic author who had produced a drama without a thesis (Valverde Pacheco 1953). The journalist González-Ruano referred to this divergence of opinions of *The Living Room* and also reported that the public was speculating whether the authorities would allow Marquerié's première to be

performed on 12 January 1954 at the Madrid María Guerrero Theatre. *The Living Room* was eventually staged because Marquerié had implemented, as mentioned earlier, the amendments ordered by the censorship office. *Teatro Club* and María J. Valdés and José M. Mompín's company also performed Zárate's adaptation, as previously mentioned, in Barcelona that same year.

The Living Room immediately fuelled a lively debate before and after the first performances. As a matter of fact, Lili Álvarez argued in the journal *Alcalá* that it was the play that “mayor incomprensión y más controversia ha levantado en años” [“had provoked the greatest bewilderment and controversy in years”] (Álvarez, 1954, quoted in García Ruiz 2006, 154; my translation). It seems that the same issue was raised among Spanish spectators: should this Catholic dramatic work be considered heretical or orthodox? (Coll 1954a; Ateneo 1954). Some critics were in favour of the expectation that the play was creating in Spain because it was indicative of the need for regeneration. They provided various arguments to demonstrate that it was an orthodox drama and a cultural asset to the Spanish stage. Firstly, it was argued that, unlike the Catholic productions of Spanish writers' with their trivial stories, Greene dealt straightforwardly with the roots of Catholicism (Zúñiga 1954). In second place, Greene was praised for constructing dialogues whose psychological depth made him superior to Spanish playwrights. Thirdly, his Catholic formula also captivated critics who considered it diametrically opposed to Spanish Catholic literature, which was limited, in their opinion, to characters with extremely virtuous souls. For instance, the fact that Catholic Rose Pemberton commits suicide was judged an original dramatic solution, in contrast to more traditional theatrical conventions which would probably have had her retire to a convent (Coll 1954a). Additionally, Greene was complimented for questioning Catholic pharisaism, something that was otherwise inconceivable on the Spanish stage in the mid-1950s. In particular, attention was drawn to his incisive criticism of Catholics' belief in their moral excellence and piety merely because they were Catholic (Coll 1954b). What is more, Marquerié's adaptation of the play to the context—from England with a Protestant majority to Catholic Spain—was judged to rightly stress Greene's reprobation of religious hypocrisy through Helen and Teresa Browne's characterization as excessively pious Catholics (Starkie 1953). This suggests that Greene was introducing new ideas to the Spanish theatre which called into question the apparent goodness of Catholics.

However, *The Living Room* also proved deficient in religious terms. The controversy over the play was mainly related to three aspects: a merciful God, the character of the priest, and Greene as a Catholic writer. In relation to Greene's compassionate God, *Arriba*—the official weekly newspaper of the *Falange Española*—showed opposition to his conviction that God would grant forgiveness to Catholics who committed suicide (Bueno 1953). It is curious that the divine mercy that the writer examines in *The Living Room* was confronted in the Spanish press, given that the mercifulness of God to Catholics in his fictional works had not received any negative judgements from

the literary critics (Olivares Leyva 2015, 30). Additionally, Father James Browne and his behaviour with regard to Catholics in need of help were also foregrounded, with Greene receiving unfavourable comments: the priest was judged to respond incorrectly to the moral dilemma of adultery, and he was blamed for being inefficient in his exercise of his ministry (Bueno 1953). Lastly, Greene, as the internationally renowned Catholic writer he was supposed to be, disconcerted some critics who debated whether *The Living Room* lived up to their expectations. It was argued that it could not be considered a Catholic play since he had failed to bring the enlightening nature of religion to the fore (Mejía 1953). It was also stated that Greene's continuous religious questioning was a threat to Catholics of wavering faith who, for this reason, were warned to "Be careful with Greene!" (Fernández Figueroa 1954). More tolerant attitudes towards Greene considered the play a source of religious disquietude rather than a threat to Catholics, as expressed in the 1954 article "Un cuarto de estar incómodo" ["An Uncomfortable Living Room"] by José J. Aleixandre. In general terms, then, it may be suggested that in *The Living Room*, Greene trespassed against the religiosity of the most conservative literary critics.

7. CONCLUSION

Greene and his first play *The Living Room* did not go unnoticed in Franco's Spain. As far as literary criticism is concerned, critics questioned whether it was heretical or orthodox because Greene did not propose a Catholic solution to the moral dilemma of suicide and, above all, he depicted an extraordinarily understanding God who could forgive a Catholic who took her own life. Opinions varied greatly and some conservative voices suggested that it was a threat to Catholics whose faith was not firm enough, while others showed more tolerant attitudes towards Greene's failure to spread Catholic doctrine. *The Living Room* also caused divergent impressions at the censorship office throughout Franco's era: Greene was praised for writing an excellent drama, but his portrayal of Catholic characters was considered to contradict his classification as a Catholic writer. Even when the play was resubmitted for inspection in the final years of the Franco period, two censors still found fault with it on the grounds of morality and religion.

On stage, performances of Greene's *The Living Room* were also influenced by the Franco regime. Firstly, in their adaptations of the text Zárate and Marquerie both self-censored in order to accommodate the text to the morals of the regime. Secondly, the play was subject to expurgation by official censorship in its first performances. Added to that, the board of censors' influence over the printed editions was even more disadvantageous for Greene, as is evident from the fact that the introduction of the Argentinian edition into Spain was banned on four occasions, making *The Living Room* among Greene's most censurable, and therefore censored, works during the Franco regime.

This study of the fate of *The Living Room* has also shown conflicting opinions and procedural flaws at the censorship office. In 1954 there was a difference of opinion over the play, with the board of censors assenting to theatre performances, but depriving the public of access to the book. Signs of erratic behaviour were evident again in the 1960s when the Argentinian version and the Catalan translation were available at Spanish bookshops, while the importation of the book was banned in 1962. As for procedure, there were faults in the state censorship apparatus when consulting previous files regarding its publication and importation into Spain. Greene, however, benefited from this inaccuracy of information and the play was allowed to be printed in 1959, despite the book's prohibition in earlier files.

Taking everything into consideration, under Franco, the attitudes of theatre critics and government bodies towards *The Living Room* could be fairly described as "uncomfortable," just as Aleixandre described the play in the title of his article (1954). It was uncomfortable because it clashed with the tenets of the Franco regime as well as with the label of "Catholic writer" so often applied to Greene himself.

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