



EVELYN WAUGH'S *DECLINE AND FALL* AND *VILE BODIES* IN FRANCO'S SPAIN AND COMMUNIST ROMANIA

CRISTINA ZIMBROIANU

Universidad Autónoma de Madrid / Universidad Politécnica de Madrid

ABSTRACT: Despite Evelyn Waugh's success as a novelist, his work was criticised in England for his political, religious and moral views. The purpose of this paper is to study the reception of Waugh's novels in two countries governed by totalitarian regimes—Franco's Spain and communist Romania—where culture was controlled by severe censorship systems. The methodology employed is based on Hans Robert Jauss's aesthetics of reception. The research conducted at the General Archive of the Administration in Alcalá de Henares and the National Archives of Romania in Bucharest shows that the reception of Waugh's novels in both countries was conditioned by the censorial apparatus.

KEYWORDS: reception, literary criticism, censorship, Spain, Romania

La recepción de *Decline and Fall* y *Vile Bodies*, de Evelyn Waugh, en la España de Franco y la Rumanía comunista

RESUMEN: A pesar del éxito alcanzado por Evelyn Waugh como novelista, su obra fue criticada en Inglaterra por sus principios políticos, religiosos y morales. El propósito de este artículo es estudiar la recepción de dos de sus novelas en países gobernados por regímenes totalitarios, como España y Rumanía, que empleaban un férreo sistema de censura con el propósito de controlar la cultura. La metodología se basa en la estética de la recepción del crítico alemán Hans Robert Jauss. La investigación se llevó a cabo en el Archivo General de la Administración en Alcalá de Henares y en los Archivos Nacionales de Rumanía en Bucarest y muestra que la recepción de las novelas de Waugh en ambos países estuvo condicionada por el aparato censor.

PALABRAS CLAVE: recepción, crítica literaria, censura, España, Rumanía

1. INTRODUCTION

Evelyn Waugh (1903-1966) is one of the most successful British novelists of the twentieth century. He is well-known for his travel books, biographies and satirical novels. Two of his most famous satires are his early novels *Decline and Fall* (1928) and *Vile Bodies* (1930). The first denounces the ill functioning of the educational and judiciary systems, as well as the unlawful ways in which London's high society became rich; the second shows the faults and irresponsible behaviour of the generation of Bright Young People. Both novels reached Spain in 1955 with a delay of 27 and 25 years, respectively. EDHASA, the publishing house, wanted to import from Argentina 600 copies of *Decline and Fall* and *Vile Bodies*, translated by Floreal

Mazía. However, before reaching the readers, these translations had to pass through the censorship department, which defended the moral, religious and political values of Franco's government. In Romania, a translated version of *Decline and Fall* by Petre Solomon was published in 1968. *Vile Bodies* was not translated; nonetheless, an original edition published by Jonathan Cape and Harrison Smith was registered at the Library of the National Academy in Bucharest. These editions were revised by a censorship institution, *Direcția Generală a Presei și Tipăriturilor* (the General Directorate of Press and Printing), which determined that all books containing any negative references to Romania or the communist regime should be banned.

The aim of the present article is to analyse the critical and censorial reception of these two novels in Spain and Romania. The answer of Spanish and Romanian censors to Waugh's work has not been studied until now. The comparative approach pursued here tries to show how censorship functions under two political regimes, one fascist and one communist. To develop this research, I consulted the censorship files at the General Archive of the Administration in Alcalá de Henares, the *Arhivele Naționale ale României* (National Archives of Romania), the Library of the National Academy in Bucharest, and the critical works about Waugh produced in Spain and Romania during the dictatorial regimes.

2. CENSORSHIP IN SPAIN AND ROMANIA

This research is based on reception theory, which focuses on the social and historical function of literature. The model proposed by the German critic Hans Robert Jauss (1982) will guide much of this study. Jauss explores the evaluative and interpretative response of the general public or the informed readers over a span of time. Their changing responses are explained through the concept of 'horizon of expectation' (1982, 25). Since regular readers and literary critics have access to not only the literary text, but also the published responses of former readers and scholars, then an evolving historical tradition develops and attends social, artistic and political determinants, which are essential for the study of Waugh's reception in Spain and Romania. Thus, for the analysis of the reception of *Decline and Fall* and *Vile Bodies* in these countries, the historical context as well as the critics' response need to be considered.

By the time *Decline and Fall* and *Vile Bodies* reached Spain, all publications were controlled by the censorship laws implemented by Franco's government. The importing of both novels was regulated by 'la Ley de Prensa' (the Law of Press) signed on 29 April 1938 by the Minister of Internal Affairs Ramón Serrano Suñer. This law regulated the entry and publication of all written material, periodical and non-periodical. The main function of the law was the employment of prior censorship, which forced the publishing houses to submit to the censorship office two copies of the book they intended to put into circulation, as Article 4 says:

Without the prior permission of the Ministry, the selling and circulation of books, pamphlets and other printed material produced abroad is prohibited in national territory, regardless of the language they are written. Publishers, booksellers or merchants who wish to sell such works must submit two copies to prior censorship. (*Boletín Oficial de Estado*, 1938, p. 7036)¹

The censors, or 'the readers', as they were usually called, protected the Francoist regime by employing two types of criteria: fixed and variable (Abellán, 1980, 88). The fixed criteria include references to the inviolability of the Francoist institutional system, its ideological

principles, inspirational sources, and the laws intended to construct a society in accordance with such ideology. The variable criteria concern public morality and represent a literal transcription of the main Catholic principles (Abellán, 1980, 88). Both types of criteria may be reduced to four basic categories, according to Abellán: *sexual morality*, or the prohibition of talking about things that constitute, in one way or another, an insult to decency and good manners, including “abortion, homosexuality and divorce”; *political opinions*, which seeks to preserve the ideological apparatus of the Franco regime and the laws issued to implement such ideology; the *use of language* “considered indecent, provocative and unfit for the good manners that guide the behaviour of people who define themselves as decent”, and, finally, *religion*, as an “institution and hierarchy that protects all divine and human values” (Abellán, 1980, 88-89).

One of the main tasks of the censors was to fill out a report for each book subjected to prior censorship. This report included several questions regarding the content: Does it attack the dogma? The morality? The church and its ministers? The regime and its institutions? The people that had collaborated and still collaborate with the regime? (Abellán, 1980, 19).

The Law of Press (‘Ley de Prensa’) of 1938 was ultimately revoked in 1966 by the Law of Press and Printing (‘Ley de Prensa e Imprenta’) signed by Manuel Fraga Iribarne, the Minister of Tourism. This law allowed freedom of press, so that prior censorship was cancelled. Even so, article four of the law admitted voluntary consultation, which replaced prior censorship (*Boletín Oficial del Estado*, 1966, 3310). The main difference between these two consisted in the fact that the publishing houses were not forced to present their works to the censorship office, as they had the freedom to decide whether or not to submit their material to voluntary consultation.

The presentation of material to voluntary consultation involved the risk of seizure, something which some publishing houses accepted but others preferred to avoid. Cisquella, Erviti and Sorolla (2002) explain that the simple fact of presenting a literary work to voluntary consultation potentially involved the censor’s suspicions and mistrust (1977, 57). Thus, considering this criterion, some publishing houses, like Fundamentos and Anagrama chose not to submit their books to consultation (1977, 57). However, other publishing houses such as ZYX had to turn to voluntary consultation as its books had been constantly detained and its economy was falling (1977, 57). In general terms, publishers preferred to practice voluntary consultation, since they risked being punished through seizure if the authorities discovered any material considered dangerous for the regime. Even after Franco’s death in 1975, the Law of Press and Printing of 1966 continued valid until 1 April 1977 when King Juan Carlos issued a Royal Decree-Law which revoked the limitations of the freedom of press as well as the seizure of printed material (Real Decreto-Ley, 24/1977).

In Romania the censorship institution, which operated since 1949, was *Direcția Generală a Presei și Tipăriturilor* (General Directorate of Press and Printing). It followed the model set by the *Glavlit*, the Soviet institution founded in 1922. The main function of the General Directorate was to safeguard the policy of the communist regime by controlling all aspects of culture. Some of the main attributions of this institution were enumerated in Decree 218 issued in 1949:

- a) Writes the Official Bulletin of the Romanian Popular Republic.
- b) Authorizes the publishing of all books in the capital city and province.

- c) Authorizes the circulation and selling of books, newspapers and other printings, as well as the import and export of newspapers, books and objects of art.
- d) Regulates the functioning conditions of libraries, book antiquarians, public libraries, newspapers deposit and books deposit (File 6/1951)

The strategy employed by the censors consisted in two methods of text censorship. First, a group of censors had to grant the printing authorization called *bun de tipar* (good for print). Second, another group of readers oversaw the distribution of the material and had to authorize it through the stamp *bun de difuzat* (it can be distributed). Thus, to obtain a positive authorization, all printed material had to first be stamped with *bun de tipar* and, secondly, with *bun de difuzat* (Corobca, 2014, 149). The General Directorate of Press and Printing was closed in 1977, yet two years before its closure, Nicolae Ceaușescu issued a decree on 30 May 1975 which transformed this institution into *Comitetul pentru Presă și Tipărituri* (Committee for Press and Printing). It is important to mention that the fund of this Committee was declassified fifteen years after the fall of the communist dictatorship, at the end of 2004, although much of the material had been destroyed (Stănescu, 2005).

Direcția Generală a Presei și Tipăriturilor saved books from purging by founding the Secret and Documentary Funds. As a consequence of the decree-law number 364 of 2 May 1945, thousands of books published prior to 1944 were destroyed (*Monitorul Oficial*, 1945, 1). In 1949, the General Directorate of Press and Printing studied the books selected for burning and issued some reports regarding the value of those worth being saved. Censors kept many of them in the so called 'documentary fund' located at the headquarters of the General Directorate or at the Library of the Romanian Academy, the oldest and the most valued library in Romania founded in 1867. These saved books represented the basis of the 'Secret Fund' (Corobca, 2014, 79).

In *Fond Secret. Fond "S" Special* (1995), Costea, Király and Radosav include a note issued in the period 1950-1955 regarding the instructions for book selection. According to these instructions, books were classified into three libraries: forbidden, documentary, and open. The books published before 1914 were included in the open library. Books with an anti-Marxist, chauvinist, and antisemitic content were kept in the forbidden library:

1) Forbidden library:

The following books will be purged:

- a) Fascist books, mainly those from the years 1937-1944;
- b) chauvinist, anti-communist and anti-Marxist books of a militant and propagandistic nature;
- c) detective books, except for the classics of the genre (e.g. Doyle), pornographic books, Pitigrilli, Lawrence, Segur, etc. (adventure books) [...];
- d) translations of Anglo-American literature from the period 1920-1945 [...];
- e) occultist and unscientific books [...];
- f) manuals for schools and high schools from the period 1920-1948;
- g) the laws of political, fascist and legionary parties.

2) Documentary library. The following books will be documented:

- a) the classics of philosophical literature and sciences when they are commented by authors whose work is forbidden, e.g. Kant commented by Rădulescu Motru or Petrovici;
- b) even science books, whose authors are war criminals or refugees, cannot be made available to the general public, as well as science books containing biased data;

- c) history works (propaganda works are not included, as they will be purged) and geography works containing the Bessarabia problem;
- d) cosmopolitan works: Jules Romain;
- e) military material, regulations, treatises, and so on of 1916;
- f) the laws and instructions that regulate them from 1920-1945;
- g) Marxist, socialist and democratic books that no longer meet the current conditions, as for example the books of the socialist library. All the newspapers except for the current ones (cited in Costea, Király, and Radosav, 1995, 260-261; my translation)

The present document also informed on the access to these libraries. For instance, access to the forbidden library was not allowed without special permission. The documentary library could only be consulted by university professors and students authorised by an academic institution (cited in Costea, Király, and Radosav, 1995, 262). The books registered in the forbidden and the documentary funds were signalled with letters 'S' from 'secret' and 'D' from 'documentary'. Their registration cards were also marked with these two letters. Nowadays, many books and registration cards at the Library of the Romanian Academy display these letters. Many of them have been erased, yet some cards still show a perceptible print of the secret letters, 'S' and 'D'. The secret and documentary books were returned to the public in 1990 after the fall of the communist dictatorship.

3. *DECLINE AND FALL AND VILE BODIES*

Decline and Fall was Waugh's first novel, published in 1928 by Chapman and Hall. This work narrates the story of young Paul Pennyfeather, a student of theology at Scone College, an imaginary Oxford college. Pennyfeather's experiences and all the characters he encounters are considered "exhilaratingly fresh and funny", yet at the same time "implicitly serious" (Heath, 1982, 63). Through Paul's experiences, Waugh satirizes the educational system, the state church, the penal system, high society, politics and politicians. The satire is "outrageously hilarious" (Heath, 1982, 65). Pennyfeather is a student at Scone College when he gets into trouble with the members of Bollinger Club and is expelled. Forced to search for a job, he finally accepts employment as a schoolteacher at the Llanabba Castle School in North Wales. While he is tutoring one of his students, Peter Beste-Chetwynde, he falls in love with his mother, Margot. She asks him for help with her business in South America and he accepts. Just before marrying Margot, Paul is arrested and sent to prison for prostitute trafficking. Margot's fortune comes from the brothels in South America. She decides to marry Sir Humphrey Maltravers, Minister of Transportation, because he promises to help Paul get out from prison. Maltravers orders to falsify Paul's death certificate, so he could start a new life. Paul returns to college to study theology under a new identity.

Vile Bodies, a social satire of the generation of Bright Young People, was first published by Chapman and Hall in 1930. The Uniform Edition appeared in 1965. Richard Jacobs, in the introduction to the 2012 edition, states that "there is remarkably little sex in *Vile Bodies*" as Waugh attempted to avoid the editorial censorship that his first novel *Decline and Fall* suffered (2012, xix). D. J. Taylor describes this generation as one of the most outstanding youth cults in British history (2010, 1). The Bright Young People were a "pleasure-seeking band of bohemian party-givers and blue-blooded socialites" presented in the gossip columns of 1920s newspapers (Taylor, 2010, 1). The gossip columnist Patrick Balfour explains that the "party

generation” was marked by irresponsibility, as “there was no particular object in anything that we did, but we were sensible of its full flavour as we did it” (1933, 65). The behaviour of the Bright Young People was influenced by the post-war uncertainty which transformed them into a tormented generation, “undecided what to believe, now that so much of what they had been taught to believe was meaningless” (1933, 65). They “grew defiant” and, consequently, “destroyed themselves, degenerating into a slough of dope and other excesses” (1933, 172).

In *Vile Bodies*, Father Rothchild, described by Waugh as a fake priest who stole a small suitcase of crocodile imitation from the valet-de-chambre of his hotel, notices that the young generation refuses to follow the traditional teachings of the Church, which preached that “if a thing’s worth doing at all, it’s worth doing well” (126). The Bright Young People did exactly the opposite, as they believed that “if a thing’s not worth doing well, it’s not worth doing at all” (126). The object of Waugh’s satire is the young generation of the 1920s, Father Rothchild, and London’s high society; nonetheless, the centre of interest is Adam Fenwick-Symes, whose aim is to publish a memoir to earn some money and marry Nina Blount. Unfortunately, his memoir is considered “downright dirt” (25) and it is confiscated by a customs officer as Adam disembarks from a ship. Adam and Nina, alongside their friends Miss Agatha Runcible, Archie and Miles, use to spend most of their time in all types of parties, without having a clear purpose in life:

Masked parties, Savage parties, Victorian parties, Greek parties, Wild West parties, Russian parties, Circus parties, parties where one had to dress as somebody else, almost naked parties in St John’s Wood, parties in flats and studios and houses and ships and hotels and night clubs, in windmills and swimming-baths, tea parties at school where one ate muffins and meringues and tinned crab, parties at Oxford where one drank brown sherry and smoked Turkish cigarettes, dull dances in London and comic dances in Scotland and disgusting dances in Paris—all that succession and repetition of massed humanity... Those vile bodies... (119)

Waugh did not fail to mock the religious faith of certain characters who made a good business out of preaching this faith. For instance, Margot Metroland, the former Margot Beste-Chetwynde already introduced in *Decline and Fall*, gives a party for the famous evangelist Mrs Melrose Ape and her ‘angels’ who are called after the Christian virtues: Faith, Charity, Fortitude, Chastity, Humility, Prudence, Divine Discontent, Mercy, Justice, and Creative Endeavour. Mrs Ape always charges people for her preaching because she believes that “salvation doesn’t do them the same good if they think it’s free” (22). At Margot’s party, Mrs Ape manages to convert members of the English upper class. The gossip columnist Simon Balcain reports her success to the newspaper *Excess*. After reproducing his best column, Balcain commits suicide and Mrs Ape, along with the other participants at the party, take the *Excess* to court.

4. CRITICAL RECEPTION IN BRITAIN

In general terms, Waugh’s works were positively received in Britain, though there were critics who disagreed with the content of certain novels. They questioned Waugh’s responsibility as a satirist, his Catholic faith and political views. Martin Stannard (2002), who studies the critical reception of Waugh in Britain, makes reference to the experienced “men of letters” who controlled the London literary reviews at the time Waugh initiated his literary

career: John Collings Squire, Arnold Bennett and Gerald Gould (2002, 5). These critics appreciated *Decline and Fall* and considered it a “light comedy of a high order” (Stannard, 2002, 14). In a review published in *Observer* on 23 September 1928, Gould writes that the novel is “richly and roaringly funny”. He considers Waugh a humourist with an “exquisite ingenuousness of manner combined with a searching ingenuity of method” (cited in Stannard, 2002, 81). Another positive assessment was given by the novelist and playwright Arnold Bennett in a review published in *Evening Standard* on 11 October 1928. Bennett assessed *Decline and Fall* as an “uncompromising and brilliantly malicious satire” (cited in Stannard, 2002, 82). The novelist Cyril Connolly reviewed *Decline and Fall* for *New Statesman* on 3 November 1928. Connolly said that, even though the novel was not a masterpiece, it was a “funny book, and the only one that [...] he has ever read twice” (cited in Stannard, 2002, 87). Writing for *The Times* in 1966, John Willet agreed that *Decline and Fall* was Waugh’s funniest book. He said that despite all its “imperfections”, Waugh’s “sense of ridicule [was] astonishingly modern” and “the book has the germ of life” (cited in Stannard, 2002, 94).

Decline and Fall was “scandalous in its subject-matter” and suffered a series of modifications in order to be published (Stannard, 2002, 14). The novel was initially rejected for its “indelicacy” by Duckworth Publishers and it was finally accepted by Waugh’s father’s publishing house, Chapman and Hall, on condition that Waugh approved all the changes that the editor Ralph Straus required in the manuscript “for reasons of propriety and literary improvement” (Doyle, 1967, 4). Waugh accepted these changes, and a modified version was published in 1928. In the 1962 edition, Waugh restored the original text. In “Decline and Fall: Two Versions” (1967), P. A. Doyle provides some differences between the standard edition of 1928 and the restored edition of 1962. For instance, a sentence in which Communism is mentioned was only published in the 1962 edition: “It reminds me of the communist rising in Budapest when I was on the debt commission”. Doyle clarifies that this sentence was probably deleted from the 1928 edition to prevent the conduct of an Oxford brotherhood from being contaminated by any metaphor involving Communism (1967, 4). Similarly, in the edition of 1928, one can read that the sons and daughters of a Welsh family “rarely mate with human kind except their own blood relations”, whereas in the edition of 1962 Waugh wrote: “Their sons and daughters mate freely with the sheep but not with human kind except their own blood relations” (cited in Doyle, 1967, 5).

Vile Bodies was quite successful. Nevertheless, critics adopted a more serious tone. The novel was positively assessed by Ralph Straus in a review published in 1930 in *Bystander*. Straus mentions that he did not expect Waugh to repeat the work he had done in *Decline and Fall*, but he did. He considers *Vile Bodies* a “masterpiece of inconsequence” full of irony and “the right amount of malice” (cited in Stannard, 2002, 95). The only negative aspect that Straus identifies in the novel is the lack of plot outline. Arnold Bennett does not share Straus’s positive opinion. In a review written for *Evening Standard* on 31 January 1930, Bennett states that *Vile Bodies* was not as successful as *Decline and Fall* and, even though he started reading the novel with “great expectations, [he] found hard times in the middle of it” (cited in Stannard, 2002, 99). In a review published on January 1930 in *Saturday Review*, the novelist and critic Leslie Poles Hartley underlines that Waugh’s comedy is not as comical as it seems. She highlights that Waugh is not the “happy humourist he seems” and that the characters of *Vile Bodies* lack a sense of reality, as they respond to life like the “drunkard” who “laugh[s] in his cups” or the “lunatic” who is “diverted by his delusions” (cited in Stannard, 2002, 98). Even Waugh was disappointed with *Vile Bodies*, as he believed that it was not as good as *Decline and Fall*

because he was deeply affected by his wife's desertion while he was writing *Vile Bodies* in 1929: "I was in the middle of 'Vile Bodies' when she left me. It was a bad book, I think, not so carefully constructed as the first [...] It was secondhand too" (cited in Stannard, 2002, 16)

5. CRITICAL RECEPTION OF *DECLINE AND FALL* AND *VILE BODIES* IN SPAIN DURING THE FRANCOIST PERIOD

The critical response to Waugh's work during the Francoist regime dates from 1949 when Nuño Aguirre de Cárcer published the article "La novela católica en la Inglaterra actual" ("The Catholic Novel in Contemporary England") in the journal *Arbor*. Aguirre de Cárcer argued that probably his article was the first one that introduced Waugh to the Spanish reader. For this reason, he provided a thorough presentation of the author's life and literary production. In the section "La sociedad desatada" ("The Uncontrollable Society"), Aguirre de Cárcer refers to *Decline and Fall* and *Vile Bodies*. These novels—he says—portray a series of "irresponsible characters", represented by "barbarous youth, old chatterboxes, hysterical girls and insolent students, all of whom are gifted with a mosquito brain, radically unable to tolerate the weight of a single significant idea. They were the arbiters of the brilliant and bustling society prior to the First War and the beginning of the post-war period" (1949, 83).² Aguirre de Cárcer claims that Waugh wastes his imagination, as he employs in *Decline and Fall* and *Vile Bodies* an amount of material that other writers would have used to fill up a dozen novels. He calls both works the "Vanity Fair" of the 1930s, as they portray an époque and are inspired by real people, such as the evangelist preacher Aimée McPherson, represented in the novel by Mrs. Ape (1949, 84).

Some years later, in 1959, Carlos Luis Álvarez publishes the article "Evelyn Waugh (Crítica de la muerte aséptica)" ("Evelyn Waugh (Criticism of Aseptic Death)"). According to Álvarez, Waugh criticises a materialistic society which has ignored that "unique and authentic civilization depends on the spirit, not on the substance" (1959, 30). Álvarez notices that Waugh's early novels, *Decline and Fall* and *Vile Bodies*, analyse the "futile and grotesque" generation of Bright Young People, night clubs and any other puppet that Waugh encounters in his way (1959, 29). In "E. Waugh, un humorista serio" (1961) ("E. Waugh, a Serious Humourist"), the journalist Carola Osete provides a review of some of Waugh's novels. Regarding *Decline and Fall* and *Vile Bodies*, she points out that they recreate a decadent high society. *Vile Bodies* is the apotheosis of the parties given by this society, seasoned by Waugh with "salt and vinegar": "garden-parties, birthday-parties, fancy-dress-parties, savage-parties, futuristic-parties, and all sorts of parties. A human mass having fun: those vile bodies" (Osete, 1961, 78).

Furthermore, in 1968, the journalist Harpo publishes in *ABC* newspaper an article about the film adaptation of *Decline and Fall*.³ The film, directed by John Krish, was presented at the San Sebastián Film Festival in 1968. Harpo claims that the novel by Waugh overpowers the film adaptation. He states that Krish had diluted Waugh's acid humour and his sharp vision of society. The film only maintained the "anecdotal part" of the novel and employed an easily accessible and mediocre humour (1968, 87). Therefore, the adaptation of *Decline and Fall* was not a faithful version of the novel, as it was too far from the original; nonetheless, "it was a brilliant presentation, yet quite superficial that will certainly be commercial" (1968, 87).

The journalist Antonio de Obregón had a different opinion regarding the film adaptation of *Decline and Fall*. In a review published in *ABC* on 9 August 1969, Obregón dislikes the film's

“nearly outrageous” title (1969, 53): *Decline and Fall of a Bird Watcher*. He states that *Decline and Fall* represents a definitive fall and decline; thus, “it should never be interpreted as a joke, since English humour was always very serious” (1969, 53). Obregón suggests that, in the novel, Waugh denounces a cruel society that constructs an inhuman system where the main character, Paul Pennyfeather, suffers all sorts of sorrows. His experience is rather dramatic, and the spectators usually laugh because they think they have to, yet only the intelligent audience understands the real value of the film. Obregon regards the actors Robert Philips and Genevieve Page as intelligent interpreters who give the film the correct tone. He concludes his review by mentioning that there are still a lot of great novels, which are not “laughing novels” (1969, 53), that can be adapted to film.

6. THE CENSORS’ RECEPTION OF *DECLINE AND FALL* AND *VILE BODIES* IN SPAIN

6.1. *Decline and Fall* in Spain

Decline and Fall was revised by the Spanish censors on 13 October 1955 when the Law of Press of 1938 forced the publishing houses to ask prior permission to the censorship office to translate, publish, or import a translation. The novel had already been translated in Argentina by Floreal Mazía as *Decadencia y caída* and was published by Sudamericana in 1955. Floreal Mazía was a poet, journalist, critic and translator who spoke five languages (Fondebrider, 2009). As a translator, he worked for Argentinian, Spanish, Uruguayan and Mexican publishing houses. He translated authors like Lawrence Durrell, Mark Twain, Oscar Wilde, Richard Wright, Robert Wilder and Friedrich Pollock (Fondebrider, 2009). In Spain, EDHASA asked for authorization to import Mazía’s translation of Waugh with the intention of distributing 300 copies priced at 62 pesetas each.

Mazía’s membership of the Communist Party could have negatively influenced the reception of his translations by the Spanish censors.⁴ However, the censors focused on the content of the translation rather than on the political orientation of the translator. Censors were habituated to revise translations imported from Argentina and Mexico produced by Mazía, Josefina Gáinza or Pedro Lecuona, a Spanish diplomat and consul of the Spanish Republic in Buenos Aires. Cristina Gómez Castro argues that, after the Spanish Civil War, many intellectuals who supported the Republican Army went into exile to South America. They founded publishing houses that later established cultural ties with Spain (2009, 42). Gómez Castro explains that contemporary foreign authors preferred their works to be translated in South America rather than in Spain, to avoid Spanish censorship (2009, 43). They were not aware that such translations were most likely to be later imported into Spain, where they had to pass through the censorship office, as the translations produced in Spain did (2009, 43). Spanish translators were “already accustomed to the censorship mechanisms” and, therefore, could “manipulate” their translations so that they may be authorized (2009, 43). By contrast, as Gómez Castro says, South American translators did not have to consider the “taboo themes” that would not be approved in Spain (2009, 43). As a consequence, sometimes translations from South America were modified or even rejected (2009, 43).

Decadencia y caída was positively assessed by the censors. They noted that the novel had “nothing censurable”, as it was concerned with the education of some children, who depended on “a collection of failed teachers” (File 5357/55).⁵ The censors concluded that the novel was a critique of some of the English schools and they authorized the import on 8 November 1955.

In 1962, Aguilar intended to introduce the novel in the collection *Obras escogidas*, which was not published that year. However, in 1966 Aguilar published the collection *Novelas escogidas*, which was handed in to the censors in 1967. In the report of antecedents of file 61/67, the censor mentions that the novel was authorised with erasures in 1962 when included in the collection *Obras escogidas*. Nevertheless, censorship files 6545/62 and 61/67 do not enclose a report that could clarify what passages were erased. All the novels in *Novelas escogidas*, including *Decline and Fall*, were authorised and 10.000 copies were distributed throughout Spain.

It is somewhat surprising that the Spanish censors assumed that *Decline and Fall* was merely a satire of English schools and, thus, authorised its distribution. As mentioned previously, in England, Duckworth Publishers rejected the novel for its “indelicacy” and Chapman and Hall accepted it only with certain changes, which slightly mitigated the polemical charge of the novel (Doyle, 1967, 4). In 1962, a revised edition was published by Chapman and Hall with some modifications “for reasons of propriety and literary improvement” (Doyle, 1967, 4). The Spanish censors could have considered the novel inappropriate, at least from a moral and religious point of view. Waugh displayed in *Decline and Fall* numerous implicit and explicit references to sex, prostitution, and offences against women. Moreover, Catholicism, which represented the pillar of Franco’s regime, was constantly mocked.

The fact that the censor was reading a more mitigated version of the novel might have influenced his decision to authorize it. For instance, in the restored edition of 1962, the stationmaster regularly offers his sister to men: “I’ve been talking to the stationmaster here’, he said, ‘and if either of you ever wants a woman, his sister—” (cited in Doyle, 1967, 5). In the edition of 1928, translated by Mazía in 1955 and approved by the Spanish censor, the stationmaster’s “sister” is a “young lady”: “-¿Se sienten solitarios? -preguntó-. ‘He estado hablando con el jefe de la estación, ese que está allá, y si alguno de ustedes quiere que le presente a una joven...’” (Waugh, 1955, 40). “Una joven” might not have been considered inappropriate by the censor. Another clear reference to sexual relations is provided by Mr Fagan when he criticises Welsh people. Fagan mentions that Welsh sons and daughters “rarely mate with humankind except their own blood relations” (cited in Doyle, 1967, 4). Mazía’s translation into Spanish of the 1928 version was almost literal: “sus hijos se unen muy raramente a representantes de la raza humana, excepción hecha de sus parientes consanguíneos” (Waugh, 1955, 88). Nevertheless, the verb “mate” should have been probably translated “se aparean” to transmit the mating action practiced by animals. The translation of “mate” into “se unen”, which the censor might have not considered improper, mitigates the idea of sexual relations between humans and animals.

Even though the censor read a mitigated version, the novel includes clearly immoral scenes, which the censor did not find inappropriate. For instance, a scene charged with immorality involves Margot Beste-Chetwynde, a rich North American who amassed her fortune through the brothels she owned in South America. She had three free posts in these brothels, and she interviewed several girls to send to Rio:

‘Nombre?’ ‘Jane Grimes’. ‘¿Quién te envió?’ ‘El caballero de Cardiff. Me dio esto para que se lo entregara’. [...] ‘Sí, ya veo. ¿De modo que eres nueva en el oficio, Jane?’ ‘Como un niño recién nacido, señora’. ‘¿Pero estás casada?’ ‘Sí, señora, pero fue durante la guerra, y él estaba muy borracho’. ‘¿Dónde está tu esposo?’ ‘Muerto, según me han dicho’. ‘Excelente, Jane. Eres la clase de persona que necesitamos. ¿Cuándo puedes zarpar?’ ‘¿Cuándo querrá que lo haga?’ ‘Bien, en

Río hay una vacante que quiero llenar a fin de semana. Enviaré a dos chicas muy simpáticas. ¿Te gustaría ir con ellas?’ ‘Sí señora; encantada, se lo aseguro’. (Waugh, 1955, 197-98)⁶

The interview scene might have been called by Heath “outrageous”, because Waugh “made the outrageous sound normal”, as for him “the normal was outrageous” (1982, 78). Probably, the Spanish censors also noted that the outrageous sounded normal and, for this reason, they authorized the book. It seemed that they found the sexual references, prostitution and the offences towards women acceptable. Or they perhaps found these offences funny, as Waugh himself declared that the book was meant to be funny, yet no comedy can be noticed in prostitution practice: “everything is drawn, without malice, from the vaguest of imaginations. Please bear in mind throughout that IT IS MEANT TO BE FUNNY” (cited in Doyle, 1967, 4).

Funny indeed are the passages where Waugh mocks the penal system and religious practice. There is a particularly hilarious scene acted out by the director of the prison—Mr Wilfred—, the Chief Warder, and a lunatic prisoner. The lunatic prisoner is praying intensively with the Bible in one hand and a piece of wood in the other, as he insults a warder using all sorts of expressions, like “whore of Babylon”:

‘¡Bendita sea mi alma!’— exclamó sir Wilfred —. Este es el hombre que puse en tratamiento especial. ¿Por qué está aquí?’ [...] ‘Al acercarme a la mirilla de observación vi al prisionero paseándose por la celda en un estado de gran excitación. En una mano tenía su Biblia y en la otra un trozo de madera que había arrancado de su banquillo [...]. Censuré al prisionero cuando se dirigió a mí en términos perjudiciales para la buena disciplina. [...] Me llamó moabita, abominación de Moab, bacina, cosa impura, moabita incircunciso y prostituta de Babilonia, señor’. [...] ‘¿Cuál cree usted que es la parte más significativa de lo que dijo el prisionero?’— preguntó [sir Wilfred]. ‘Creo que en conjunto prostituta de Babilonia, señor’. [...] ‘Y bien, yo’ — dijo [sir Wilfred]— ‘soy de distinta opinión. Podrá sorprenderle, pero yo diría que la cosa significativa en esta cuestión es el hecho de que el prisionero haya blandido un trozo de banquillo’. ‘Destrucción de la propiedad carcelaria’ — dijo el Jefe de Guardias — ‘Sí, es grave’. (Waugh, 1955, 246-47)⁷

Although the style that Waugh employs to present the faults of British society is comical, the substance is serious. He criticises the manner in which some high society representatives like Margot Beste-Chetwynde achieve their fortune, the lack of professionalism of school masters—Grimes always falls into the soup and he enjoys drinking—, the inadequate way religion is practiced, and the deficient administration of the penal system.

6.2. *Vile Bodies* in Spain

In Spain, *Vile Bodies* was submitted to censorship on 13 October 1955 while the Law of Press of 1938 was still controlling book publishing. In 1955, EDHASA requested authorization to import *Vile Bodies* from Argentina and distribute three hundred copies at 61 pesetas each. *Vile Bodies* was translated by the same translator of *Decline and Fall*: Floreal Mazía. The censor’s report on *Cuerpos viles* states that the novel represents “humorous aspects of English social life replete with caustic intentions” (File 5354/55).⁸ According to the censor, the English life depicted in the novel is a consequence of the development of social life in all nations. This development is caused by the disappearance of social differences (File 5354/55). The novel was authorized on 3 November 1955. This translation was the only edition approved in Spain during the Francoist regime. *Vile Bodies*, unlike *Decline and Fall*, *Black Mischief*, *Scoop* and

A Handful of Dust, was not included in the collection *Novelas escogidas* published by Aguilar in 1966.

The approval of *Vile Bodies* by the Spanish censors is perhaps surprising, since the novel comprises a series of references to prostitution that, from a moral point of view, could have represented a menace for Francoist values. As previously mentioned, Richard Jacobs (2012) states that there is little sex in the novel, yet enough to be found offensive by the Spanish Catholic Church. Mrs Margot Metroland works as prostitute recruiter in *Vile Bodies* as she did in *Decline and Fall*. At the party dedicated to Mrs Ape, the American evangelist, she attempts to recruit two of the girls who work for Mrs Ape and send them to Latin America to entertain men:

‘No pareces dichosa querida [...]. Si sientes que necesitas un cambio, házmelo saber luego, y puedo conseguirte un trabajo en Sudamérica. Y lo digo en serio’. ‘Oh, gracias’ – dijo Castidad – ‘pero jamás podría abandonar a Mrs. Ape’. ‘Bueno, piénsalo, niña. Eres demasiado hermosa para malgastar tu tiempo cantando himnos. Dile a la otra jovencita, a la pelirroja, que probablemente también pueda encontrarle un puesto’. ‘¿A quién, a Humildad? No se ocupe de ella. Es una malvada’. ‘Bueno, a algunos hombres les gustan los modales bruscos, pero no quiero a nadie que pueda provocar disturbios con las otras muchachas’. (Waugh, 1955, 115)⁹

The ignorant girls, Chastity and Divine Discontent, accept the offer. Waugh clarifies that the young women’s friends have also practiced prostitution, yet not in Latin America but in Oberammergau. In a letter to their friends, the two girls criticise “Latin American entertainment”, and their friends complain that their conditions are not too different:

Con intervalos llegaban cartas de Buenos Aires, en las que Castidad y Divino Descontento hablaban un tanto críticamente de las diversiones latinoamericanas. ‘No supieron conformarse con lo que tenían’ – dijo Mrs. Ape. ‘No nos parece muy distinto de lo que nos está pasando a nosotras’ – dijo Esfuerzo creador con avidez. (Waugh, 1955, 131)¹⁰

When the war breaks out, Chastity goes to different places including the East to be with the soldiers: “Hicieron una alharaca en cuanto a mi pasaporte y me llamaron número mille soixante dix-huit, y nos enviaron, a mí y a muchas otras chicas, al Este, para estar con los soldados allí” (Waugh, 1955, 265).¹¹ Chastity’s final destiny is to be with a drunk old Captain who owes Adam one thousand pounds. He finds her legs “fine”, “little” and “strong”:

‘Bien, tiene muchísima razón, señorita’ – dijo – ‘de modo que a ver si sonrío y se muestra feliz. No tiene que quedarse sentada ahí, enfurruñada, ¿sabe? Tiene una boquita demasiado linda para hacer mohínes. Permítame que le saque ese pesado capote. Mire, se lo pondré en torno a las rodillas. Vaya, ahora está mejor, ¿verdad? Hermosas piernecitas, fuertes ¿eh...?’ (Waugh, 1955, 266)¹²

It seems that, for the Spanish censors, prostitution had not offended the moral values that the Catholic Church defended. If it had, then they would have censored the novel, or at least those passages where Waugh describes the immoral behaviour of Mrs Margot Metroland, Chastity and her friends. However, censors were right about the “superficial love story” between Adam and Nina. Adam loves Nina enough to decide to sell her to Ginger Littlejohn to get money for his hotel bill:

‘Y bien, Pelirrojo, dígame la verdad. ¿Cuánto vale Nina para usted?’ ‘¡Buen Dios, qué pregunta extraordinaria! ¡Todo el mundo, por supuesto! Por esa chica pasaría por el fuego y el agua’. ‘Bueno, se la vendo.’ ‘Pero oiga, buen Dios, quiero decir maldición’. ‘Le venderé mi participación en ella por cien libras’. ‘¡Finge estar enamorado de Nina y habla de ella de ese modo! ¡No es nada decente! Además, cien libras son demasiadas. Quiero decir, casarse es una cuestión condenadamente costosa, ¿sabe?’ [...] ‘Cien libras al contado y le dejo a Nina. Creo que es barato’. ‘Cincuenta’. ‘Cien’. ‘Setenta y cinco’. ‘Cien’. ‘Maldito sea si pago más de setenta y cinco’. Aceptaré setenta y ocho libras dieciséis chelines y dos peniques. No puedo rebajar nada más’. ‘Muy bien, le pagaré eso’. (Waugh, 1955, 234-35)¹³

Considering that *Vile Bodies* and *Decline and Fall* do not accomplish the values regarding sexual morality described by Abellán (1980), since both novels imply an “insult to decency and good manners” (1980, 88-89), they should have been censured. Nonetheless, even though the novels did not accomplish the criteria previously explained, they might have been authorised on account of arbitrariness. Luis Pegenaute underlines that the law did not prevent the censor’s arbitrariness, which made contradiction frequent (1999, 91). Contradiction was caused by the fact that censorship as an institution was quite bureaucratic: censors or “readers” were placed at “the bottom of the ladder” and worked under a temporary contract “without having real access to an explicit code of rules” (1999, 91). According to Raquel Merino and Rosa Rabadán, the readers were “Church representatives, lower-rank officials and men of letters” who shared Franco’s ideological principles or accepted their role as censors just as a job that provided a wage (2002, 125). Therefore, there were no clear rules of what to censure and what to tolerate, “so decisions would often depend on the composition of the boards of censors and their degree of ideological conviction” (Merino and Rabadán, 2002, 143).

Arbitrariness and contradiction were not the only aspects that might have influenced the censors’ decision to authorise *Decline and Fall* and *Vile Bodies*. On the one hand, during the 1950s, when both novels passed through the censorship department, Spanish readers became more receptive to foreign cultural products, and the practice of censoring cultural material became more tolerant (Merino and Rabadán, 2002, 127). Furthermore, in the 1950s, the power of the Catholic Church, which censored immoralities such as the practice of prostitution described in *Decline and Fall* and *Vile Bodies*, started to decline, and Spain made a step forward towards achieving democracy (Merino and Rabadán, 2002, 127). On the other hand, censors authorised works that were “ideologically clean”, meaning that they did not threaten Franco’s policy, and whose “plots and settings were both mentally and physically distant”, such as Western novels, spy novels or sci-fi stories (Merino and Rabadán, 2002, 137). Censors employed this strategy to “create a distorted idea of other cultures” (Merino and Rabadán, 2002, 137). In their reports, censors emphasized the fact that *Decline and Fall* criticises the English educational system, and *Vile Bodies* narrates the love story between a journalist and the daughter of a typical English colonel. Thus, the events described in both novels have no connection with Spain, as the action develops in a place as far away as England.

7. CRITICAL RECEPTION OF *DECLINE AND FALL* AND *VILE BODIES* IN ROMANIA DURING THE COMMUNIST PERIOD

In Romania, during the communist period (1948-1989), the first references to *Decline and Fall* and *Vile Bodies* date from 1968. Virgil Nemoianu wrote the prologue to *Decline and Fall*,

translated in Romanian as *Declin și prăbușire* (1968) by Petre Solomon. This prologue is divided into six sections. The third one, entitled “Societatea descompusă” (“The Decomposed Society”), focuses on Waugh’s satirical novels. According to Nemoianu, the world in these novels is dominated by boredom and frenzy. The main characters are only toys in the hands of destiny. One of them is Adam Symes in *Vile Bodies*, who “floated without any weapon and compass in the margins of society” (1968, 13). Adam and his fiancée Nina, as well as Pennyfeather in *Decline and Fall*, are presented as groping, amazed, ironic, frustrated and isolated characters unable to find a purpose and create some order in their lives (1968, 13-14).

Monica Botez (1988) also analyses Waugh’s work. She regards him as one of the greatest satirists of the twentieth century and says that his reputation is primarily based on his early novels: *Decline and Fall*, *Vile Bodies*, *Black Mischief* and *A Handful of Dust*. Botez states that these works depict a society of irrevocable and appalling futility where moral values have collapsed or become useless. She compares Waugh with Jonathan Swift, as he employs the same ruthless satire (1988, 33). Botez claims that Waugh’s early novels are a merciless comedy that reduces the characters to cartoons whose suffering and disgrace would not impress the reader: “a pitiless comedy and satire which operates such a simplification of characters as to reduce them to bidimensional cartoons whose appalling fate cannot consequently impress us with their suffering” (1998, 34). As characters are reduced to cartoons, the reader feels no sorrow for the death of Mr. Prendergast and little Lord Tangent in *Decline and Fall* or Agatha Ranoible in *Vile Bodies*. These characters are such “manageable abstractions” that they could be seen as real people (1998, 35).

Another work that analyses Waugh’s oeuvre is *Trepte (Steps)*, by Silviu Iosifescu (1988). Iosifescu focuses on the “innocent characters” that become victims. One of these characters is Paul Pennyfeather in *Decline and Fall*, who unconsciously tolerates the pressure of incomprehensible events. This critic notes that, sometimes, innocents become victims because they are forced to pay for others’ faults, or they are defeated by hazard. Such characters belong to novels with bitter nuances which coexist with comical details that are rarely absent in Waugh’s novels (1988, 44).

8. THE CENSORS’ RECEPTION OF *DECLINE AND FALL* AND *VILE BODIES* IN ROMANIA

8.1. *Decline and Fall* in Romania

The Romanian communist institution *Comitetul pentru Presă și Tipărituri* (Committee for Press and Printing) should hold the answer of the Romanian censors to Waugh’s work. As mentioned previously, this Committee replaced the *Direcția Generală a Presei și Tipăriturilor* (General Directorate of Press and Printing), which dissolved in 1977. Nowadays, the fund of the Committee for Press and Printing holds the censorship files issued on the oeuvre of different foreign authors. Unlike the Spanish files, the Romanian are not classified according to the name of the writer and the year of publication, but only chronologically. Therefore, the researcher must check thousands of files from 1945 until 1989 to find a single file on Waugh’s novel *Decline and Fall*. These censorship files are the reports written by censors like Antoaneta Ralian (1924-2015), one of the most prestigious Romanian translators. In an interview granted to *România liberă* in 2007, Ralian mentions that in 1948 she worked for the Ministry of Culture in the section Purging of Libraries. Her task consisted in writing lists of subversive foreign books, which were either destroyed or deposited in the secret fund. According to

Ralian, subversive books were those with an anti-communist and fascist content and those that made even a slight reference to the welfare of Western countries or the most harmless allusion to religion or eroticism, which was considered “a disgusting characteristic of capitalism” (Ralian, 2007). Ralian, a cultured young scholar interested in literature, was forced to send to the secret fund authors like Huxley, Dostoevsky, Kant and Freud (Ralian, 2007).

Years later, Ralian was accused of “cosmopolitanism” for reading foreign literature in three languages. She was sent to work as editor at the publishing house Univers, where she got in direct contact with censorship (Ralian, 2007). She was asked to modify passages of those works that were to be published: “It was not just concrete passages, black on white or taboo words like ‘God’, ‘Bible’, ‘sexuality’, ‘homosexuality’, but also ‘what could be interpreted’, meaning the intention, the anticipation of the text, which proved that some censors had an esprit mal tourné, as the French say” (Ralian, 2007). Thus, the editor’s job was to make up the blank spaces to maintain the continuity of action (Ralian, 2007). During her career, Ralian translated 113 books from authors such as Iris Murdoch, Henry Miller, Virginia Woolf, D. H. Lawrence, Henry James and Truman Capote, among others. She did not mention whether Evelyn Waugh was censored when she worked as editor at Univers.

There is no report on *Decline and Fall* in the censorship files at the National Archives in Romania. Nevertheless, the fact that the novel and the registration card were not signed with letter “S” for Secret and “D” for Documentary tells that the book was authorised by the censors. The Library of the Romanian Academy holds a translation of this novel entitled *Declin și prăbușire*, published by Editura pentru Literatură Universală. Apart from *Decline and Fall*, Petre Solomon translated works by writers such as William Shakespeare, Mark Twain, Lord Byron, Graham Greene, Joseph Conrad, Charles Dickens, Walter Scott, Percy Shelley and John Milton (Grupul Humanitas, 2008). The translated edition at the Library of the Romanian Academy states that the novel was authorised by the censors. The back cover of this edition underlines that it was submitted to censorship on 12 October 1967. The censors considered the novel to be *bun de tipar* (good for print) and authorised it on 12 February 1968. Accordingly, the Bucharest printer called *13 Decembrie 1918* printed 30,160 copies, which were distributed to libraries throughout the country.

The decision of the censor to authorise this novel is difficult to understand, especially when the censor’s report is missing. Such decision, however, may be explained following Eugen Negrici, who divides Romanian culture during communism into three stages: the Stalinist stage (1948-1964), the stage of “liberalization and cultural opening” (1964-1971), and the period of decline, when Ceaușescu imposed his own version of communism (1971-1989) (Ionescu, 2012, 60). *Decline and Fall* corresponds to the second stage of liberalization. Arleen Ionescu explains that in this second stage Ceaușescu intended to strengthen the relationship with the West and made a decision that no other communist country would have made: “the condemnation of the Soviet army’s invasion of Czechoslovakia in May 1968” (Ionescu, 2012, 60). Thus, between the sixties and the seventies, censorship of translations proved to be more flexible. The 2006 report of the Presidential Commission for the Study of the Communist Dictatorship in Romania states that Ceaușescu distanced the country from the Soviet Union, “gradually abandoning the Bolshevik model in favor of a more democratic one” (Tismăneanu, 2006, 103-104).¹⁴ Consequently, authors like Mark Twain, James Joyce, Edgar Allan Poe and Ernest Hemingway were translated by some of the most productive Romanian translators, such as Petre Solomon (Ionescu, 2012, 61).

8.2. *Vile Bodies* in Romania

Unlike *Decline and Fall*, *Vile Bodies* was not authorised by the Romanian censors. Unfortunately, the National Archives in Bucharest do not have a censorship file of *Vile Bodies*, which would clarify the censor's reasons for rejection. An edition of *Vile Bodies* published in 1930 in New York by Jonathan Cape and Harrison Smith is registered at the Library of the Academy in Bucharest. This edition was deposited in the documentary fund and registered with the letter 'D' and number 49374. This means that the book was forbidden. It is difficult to determine whether the letter 'D' was ever written on the registration card, since the librarians employed a pencil. In 1990, when the books kept in the documentary and secret funds were returned to the public, the librarians easily erased the letters 'D' and 'S', which bore proof of the existence of the secret fund. Fortunately, these letters were also written in ink on the first pages of the books considered dangerous, so they could not be erased.

There may be several reasons why *Vile Bodies* was banned in Romania. First, if we bear in mind the instructions for book selection issued in the period 1950-1955, the novel might have been considered a "cosmopolitan" work. Antoaneta Ralian (2007) refers to this aspect when she mentions that "Western literature written in foreign languages was a condemnable cosmopolitanism". Therefore, these books were deposited either in the secret or documentary fund. Second, any immoral content, such as the practice of prostitution clearly described in *Vile Bodies*, was forbidden. According to Ralian (2007), immoral references were not allowed precisely because they were "capitalist manifestations, as damaging as the Coca-Cola capitalist drink, against which the system fought with ideological weapons".

Third, the communists' work in implementing the ideology was not revealed to the public even after the fall of communism. In order to keep Romanian people ignorant about communist practices, in 1991 the Romanian Intelligence Service (SRI) destroyed part of the funds kept in the Security Archives, which contained files before and after 1989 (Stănescu, 2005). Therefore, as *Vile Bodies* describes the practice of censorship in England, which had a lot in common with Romanian censorship, Romanian censors might have considered that readers could not learn about the practice of censorship. Therefore, they decided to reject the novel. *Vile Bodies* includes a scene where the English customs officers behave like the Romanian representatives of the General Directorate of Press and Printing; they check the luggage of all the passengers and confiscate all books considered subversive, a practice that the Romanian authorities exerted since the Soviets had reached power. Thus, when Adam Symes disembarks, he is forced to declare his luggage. The customs officer disapproves and retains Adam's books including an autobiography that he is about to publish. The officer informs Adam that the autobiography seems like propaganda and ought to be burned:

'I've nothing but some very old clothes and some books,' he said. [...] 'Books, eh?' he said. 'And what sort of books, may I ask?' 'Look for yourself.' [...] 'But as for this autobiography, that's just downright dirt, and we burns that straight away, see.' 'But, good heavens, there isn't a word in the book – you must be misinterpreting it.' 'Not so much of it. I knows dirt when I sees it or I shouldn't be where I am to-day.' 'But do you realize that my whole livelihood depends on this book?' 'And my livelihood depends on stopping works like this coming into the country'. (Waugh, 2012, 55-56)

A note enclosed in file 9/1962 reveals that Romanian censors practiced censorship at the customs points similar to the activity described by Waugh in *Vile Bodies*. According to this note

issued on 5 January 1962, the representatives of the General Directorate of Press and Printing had to control all the packages that entered the customs points, mainly those coming from capitalist countries. Censors were interested in finding all sorts of publications, such as books and discs. Those having inappropriate content had to be sent to the institutions which held secret funds. All provocative anti-communist and anti-Soviet publications were confiscated. All material that praised the Western lifestyle, as well as pornographic publications, would be returned to the sender. Thus, the Romanian censors, like the British customs officers, controlled the entry into the country of all types of publications and confiscated the material they considered dangerous. *Vile Bodies*, a novel about Bright Young People free to behave as they want and enjoying all sort of parties, depicts a free and colourful world that would contradict the communist propaganda against the West. The West was supposed to be “poor and suffering and people were unemployed and not able to afford the bare necessities; if it had not been for the food that Romania exported to them, the West would have starved” (Sandru, 2012, 116).

9. CONCLUSION

Even though Spanish censorship files do not explain the censors’ reasons to authorise Waugh’s novels, they give certain evidences that can clarify their approval. First, censors played their role as employees who were paid for a job and who had no access to a clear code of rules and, second, scenes charged with immoral actions like recruiting prostitutes were authorised in order to highlight the faults of other cultures, like the English. In Romania, the lack of a censorship file of *Decline and Fall* and *Vile Bodies* made this research difficult. After the fall of communism, many files that would inform about the censors’ response to some literary works were destroyed. However, the historical context and the secret and documentary funds can give us a clue about the destiny of these two novels during communism. Thus, *Decline and Fall* was authorised in the 1960s, as in that period Ceauşescu intended to improve the relationships with the West and became more permissive with Western culture. *Vile Bodies*, however, was censored and deposited in the documentary fund. Censors might have found threatening the scene where the customs officer confiscates Adam’s book, since Romanian customs officers did the same. All cultural material that entered the country was controlled and destroyed if considered inappropriate. Moreover, *Vile Bodies* contains sexual references, which were banned in Romania, as they were considered capitalist manifestations. Censorship institutions in Spain and Romania gathered data of the books they revised. The fact that some of the censors’ reports are incomplete or do not exist indicates that censorship was indeed subject to arbitrariness.

NOTES

- ¹ Original version: “Queda prohibida la venta y circulación, en territorio nacional, de libros, folletos y demás impresos, producidos en el Extranjero, cualquiera que sea el idioma en que estén escritos, sin la previa autorización de este Ministerio. Los editores, librereros o concesionarios que pretendan poner en venta o circulación tales obras, deberán remitir dos ejemplares a la previa censura” (*Boletín Oficial de Estado*, 1938, 7036). Unless otherwise stated, all translations from Spanish and Romanian are mine.
- ² Original version: “Tanto en una como en otra desfilan una serie de personajes irresponsables, de jóvenes bárbaros, de viejas cotorras, de niñas histéricas, de estudiantes desvergonzados, todos ellos

dotados de un cerebro de mosquito radicalmente incapaz de soportar el peso de una sola idea elevada. Son los árbitros de la sociedad, brillante y bulliciosa, de antes de la primera guerra y principios de la posguerra” (Aguirre de Cárcer, 1949, 83).

- 3 We only refer to the film adaptation of *Decline and Fall* and the opinions of Spanish cinema critics because the film was released in Spain during the Franco regime. The first film adaptation of *Vile Bodies* dates from 2003.
- 4 According to Camino Gutiérrez Lanza, during the Francoist period many books of anarchist and communist tendencies were destroyed and the reading of those books containing leftist ideas or separatist tendencies was prohibited (1997, 283).
- 5 Original version, censorship file 5357/55: “Nada censurable. En un colegio inglés se reúne un claustro de profesores. Uno de ellos había aspirado a una situación mejor que la conseguida. En resumen, la educación de los niños depende de una colección de profesores fracasados. Resulta una crítica del ambiente de algunos colegios ingleses”.
- 6 Original version: “‘Name?’ ‘Jane Grimes.’ ‘Who sent you to me?’ ‘The gentleman at Cardiff. He gave me this to give you.’ [...] ‘Yes, I see. So, you’re new to the business, Jane?’ ‘Like a babe unborn, mum.’ ‘But you married?’ ‘Yes, mum, but nothing happened. It was in the war and he was very drunk.’ ‘Where’s your husband?’ ‘Dead, so they do say.’ ‘That’s excellent, Jane. You’re just the sort we want. How soon can you sail?’ ‘How soon would you be wanting me to?’ ‘Well, there’s a vacancy in Rio I’m filling at the end of the week. I’m sending out two very nice girls. Would you like to be going with them?’ ‘Yes, mum, very pleased, I’m sure” (Waugh, 2012, 271).
- 7 Original version: “‘God bless my soul!’ said Sir Wilfred; ‘that’s the man I put on special treatment. What is he here for?’ [...] ‘Upon going to the observation hole I observed the prisoner pacing up and down his cell in a state of high excitement. In one hand he held his Bible, and in the other a piece of wood which he had broken from his stool. I remonstrated with the prisoner when he addressed me in terms prejudicial to good discipline. [...] He called me a Moabite, an abomination of Moab, a wash pot, an unclean thing, an uncircumcised Moabite, an idolater, and a whore of Babylon, sir’. [...] ‘What would you say was the most significant part of the evidence?’ he [Sir Wilfred] asked. The Chief Warder considered. ‘I think whore of Babylon, on the whole, sir’. [...] ‘Now I,’ he said, ‘am of different opinion. It may surprise you, but I should say that the significant thing about this case was the fact that the prisoner held a piece of the stool.’ ‘Destruction of prison property,’ said the Chief Warder. ‘Yes, that’s pretty bad” (Waugh, 2012, 214-15).
- 8 Original version, censorship file 5354/55: “Son cuadros de vida inglesa llenos de humor y de intención cáustica. Una vida inglesa de un futuro inmediato, consecuencia del desarrollo que hoy se espera en la vida social de todos los pueblos, causado en gran parte por una desaparición de diferencias de estatus. Con este fondo una leve historia de amor entre un periodista y la hija de un típico coronel inglés. Procede su autorización”.
- 9 Original version: “‘You don’t look happy, my dear,’ she found time to say to Chastity, as she led them across a job in South America. ‘I mean it.’ ‘Oh, thank you,’ said Chastity, ‘but I could never leave Mrs Ape.’ ‘Well, think it over, child. You’re far too pretty a girl to waste your time singing hymns. Tell that other girl, the red-headed one, that I can probably find a place for her, too.’ ‘What, Humility? Don’t you have nothing to do with her. She’s a fiend.’ ‘Well, some men like rough stuff, but I don’t want anyone who makes trouble with the other girls” (Waugh, 2012, 92).
- 10 Original version: “At intervals letters arrived from Buenos Aires in which Chastity and Divine Discontent spoke rather critically of Latin American entertainment. ‘They didn’t know when they were well off,’ said Mrs Ape. ‘It doesn’t sound much different from us,’ said Creative Endeavour wistfully” (Waugh, 2012, 106).
- 11 Original version: “I hadn’t no money and they made a fuss about my passport, so they called me *numéro mille soixante dix-huit* and they sent me and a lot of other girls off to the East to be with the soldiers there” (Waugh, 2012, 212).

- ¹² Original version: “Well, you’re as right as rain now, little lady,’ he said, ‘so let’s see you smile and look happy. You mustn’t sit there scowling, you know—far too pretty a little mouth for that. Let me take off that heavy coat. Look, I’ll wrap it round your knees. There, now, isn’t that better?... Fine, strong little legs, eh?” (Waugh, 2012, 212).
- ¹³ Original version: “Now, Ginger, tell the truth. What’s Nina worth to you?’ ‘Good Lord, why what an extraordinary thing to ask; everything in the world of course. I’d go through fire and water for that girl.’ ‘Well, I’ll sell her to you.’ ‘You pretend to be fond of Nina and you talk about her like that!’ [...] ‘A hundred down, and I leave Nina to you. I think it’s cheap.’ ‘Fifty.’ ‘A hundred.’ ‘Seventy-five.’ ‘A hundred.’ ‘I’m damned if I’ll pay more than seventy-five.’ ‘I’ll take seventy-eight pounds sixteen and two pence. I can’t go lower than that.’ ‘All right, I’ll pay that” (Waugh, 2012, 186-187).
- ¹⁴ Romania distanced itself from the Soviet Union even before Ceaușescu reached power. Dennis Deletant explains that in February 1963, when Gheorghe-Georghiu Dej was still leader of Romania, Khrushchev intended to give Comecon (Council for Mutual Economic Assistance) a “supranational economic planning role” (Deletant, 2008, 132). If the Romanian Workers’ Party had accepted the Soviet arrangement, Romania would have been forced to function as a “supplier of raw materials” to its partners and to abandon its plans for industrialization (2008, 132). The Soviet proposals were taken as a “threat” to Romania’s independence, so the First Secretary, Gheorghiu-Dej, rejected them (2008, 132). As a consequence, a de-Russification process began with the closing of the Russian Institute in Bucharest and the restoration to their original Romanian names of those “city’s streets which had been given Russian names” (2008, 132). According to Deletant, these actions urged a “de-Stalinization of Romanian cultural policies that ushered in the rehabilitation of historical, political and literary figures who were prominent in the nineteenth-century movement for independence” (2008, 132).

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Cristina Zimbroianu holds a PhD in English Literature. She teaches at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid and the Universidad Politécnica de Madrid, Spain.