

# LAOCOONTE

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Texto de **Coordinación editorial**

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‘Las potencias de Alonso Gil’, por **Esther Regueira Mauriz**

Imágenes de *Laocoonte* n.10, de **Alonso Gil**

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Traducción y estética: compatibilidades manifiestas, encuentros necesarios. **Patricia Rojo Lemos**

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## CONVERSANDO CON

**Isabel García Adánez**, por **Patricia Rojo Lemos**

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## TEXTO INVITADO

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EDITA

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**El golpe. Cultura del entorno**



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EDITA

**SEyTA.**  
SOCIEDAD ESPAÑOLA  
DE ESTÉTICA Y TEORÍA DE LAS ARTES

CON LA COLABORACIÓN DE



LAOCOONTE aparece en los catálogos:



†

El equipo editorial de *Laocoonte* lamenta la pérdida de nuestro apreciado colega Luigi Russo (1943-2018) de la Università di Palermo. Agradecemos su valiosa colaboración como miembro del Comité científico de nuestra revista.

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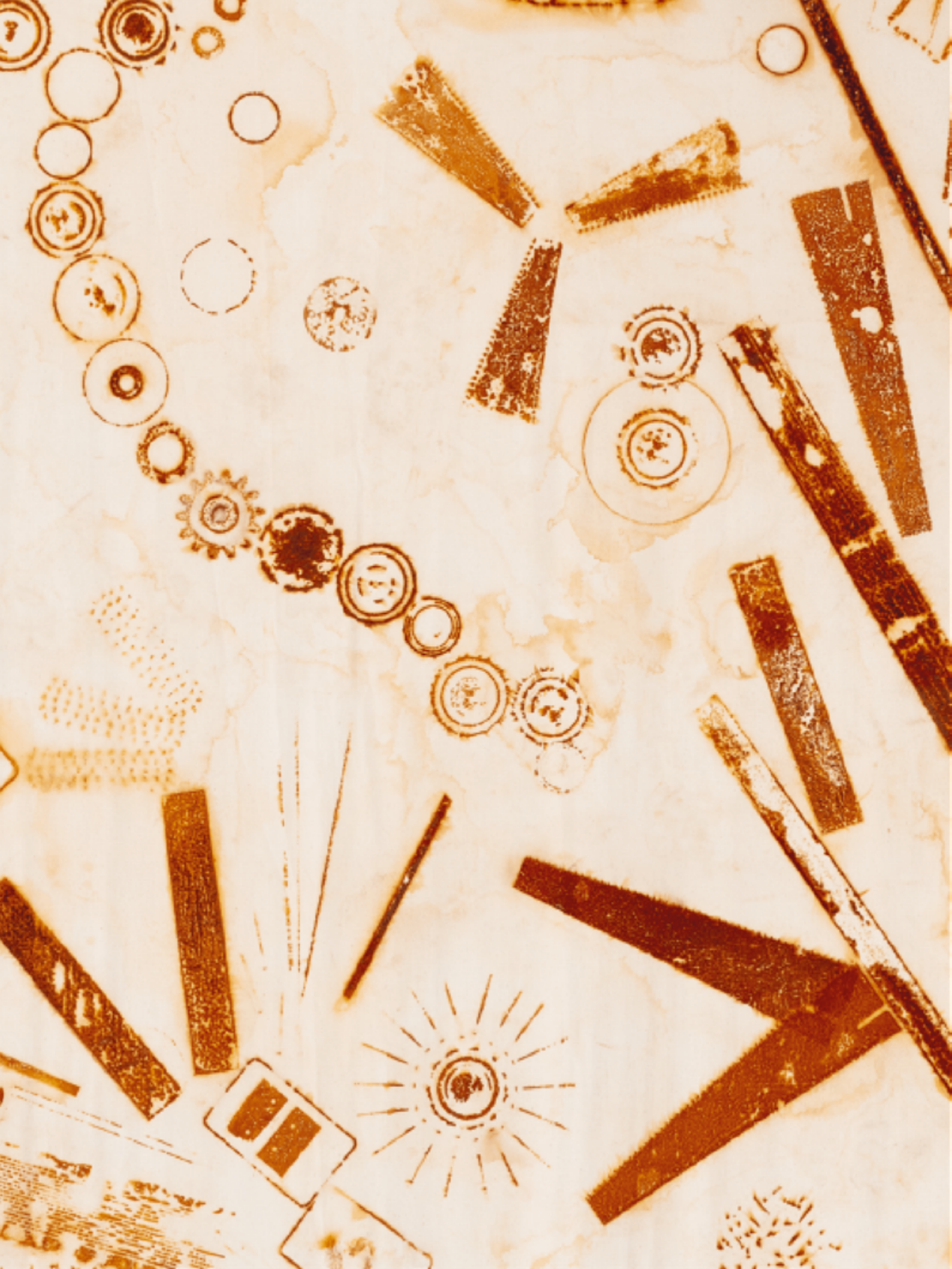
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# LOCOONTE

PANORAMA: TRADUCCIÓN Y ESTÉTICA: COMPATIBILIDADES MANIFIESTAS,  
ENCUENTROS NECESARIOS  
ARTÍCULOS





## *Some Like it Hot* in Communist Romania and Francoist Spain

Cristina Zimbroianu\*

### Resumen

Las películas norteamericanas fueron una gran inspiración, especialmente para los espectadores que tuvieron que vivir bajo regímenes totalitarios. Representaban los valores capitalistas que eran la puerta de entrada al mundo occidental. En la Rumanía comunista, estas películas se estrenaron principalmente a mediados de los años sesenta y setenta, y en España desde los años sesenta hasta el final del régimen franquista en 1975. Sin embargo, no todas las películas de Hollywood fueron bien recibidas en estos países, ya que tenían que cumplir las normas de la dictadura comunista en Rumanía y las normas católico-nacionales del régimen franquista. Este artículo analiza la recepción de la película de Billy Wilder *Some Like It Hot* en la Rumanía comunista y en la España franquista desde una perspectiva sociocultural de los estudios de Traducción, más que desde una perspectiva puramente lingüística, que pone de relieve las considerables discrepancias entre los textos fuente y destino.

**Palabras clave:** comunismo, franquismo, cine de Hollywood, censura

### Abstract

North American films were a great inspiration, especially for viewers who had to live under totalitarian regimes. They represented the capitalist values that were the gateway to the Western world. In communist Romania, these films were released mainly in the mid-1960s and 1970s, and in Spain from the 1960s until the end of the Francoist regime in 1975. However, not all Hollywood films were well received in these countries, as they had to comply with the norms of the communist dictatorship in Romania and the national Catholic rules of the Francoist regime. This article discusses the reception of Billy Wilder's film *Some Like It Hot* in Communist Romania and in Francoist Spain from a socio-cultural perspective of translation studies rather than a purely linguistic perspective that highlights the considerable discrepancies between the source and target texts.

**Keywords:** communism, Francoism, Hollywood film, censorship

### Introduction

The American film *Some Like It Hot* (1959), directed by Billy Wilder and starring Marilyn Monroe, Tony Curtis and Jack Lemmon, is one of the most famous classic Hollywood films of all time. Set in 1929, Joe (Tony Curtis), a jazz saxophonist, and his friend Jerry (Jack Lemmon), a jazz double bass player, accidentally witness Spats and his henchmen gun down "Toothpick" and his gang in revenge. The film was inspired by the real-life Valentine's Day Massacre (the murder of seven members of Chicago's

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North Side Gang, which occurred on Valentine's Day 1929 and was apparently ordered by Al Capone (Bergreen 1994: 307-314)). Joe and Jerry are frightened and desperate to get out of town. So, they disguise themselves as women named Josephine and Daphne to join Sweet Sue and her Society Syncopators, an all-female band heading to Florida. Joe and Jerry befriend Sugar Kane (Marilyn Monroe), the band's singer and ukulele player, who is looking for a millionaire to marry. This film is considered a masterpiece primarily because Wilder managed to circumvent the censorship norms imposed by the Hays Code, also known as the Motion Picture Production Code.

The Hays Code was a set of guidelines sanctioned in the film industry to keep films above a certain moral threshold. The code included a list of subjects to be avoided, such as blasphemy, nudity, illegal drugs, sexual perversion, white slavery, race relations, the subject of sexual hygiene, birth scenes, the sexual organs of children, mockery of the clergy, and deliberate insult to a nation, race or creed (GradeSaver "Some Like it Hot. The Hays Code"). The film *Some Like It Hot*, which features cross-dressing and homosexual couples, was released in 1959 without Production Code Administration approval. The plot was a veritable catalogue of once forbidden themes, but it was an overwhelming success, and many believed that weakened the authority of the code (Mondello 2008). A year after releasing *Some Like It Hot*, the head of the Motion Picture Association suggested that some kind of classification system might work better than a censorship system that no one paid attention to. In 1968, his organisation finally moved to warn audiences rather than restrict filmmakers, using the film rating system we know today (Mondello 2008).

Although *Some Like It Hot* managed to circumvent the censorship imposed by the American Hays Code, the film was initially unable to overcome the censorship systems in communist Romania and Francoist Spain. In communist Romania, it was submitted to censorship in 1960 and the censors rejected it because it was "vulgar", "absurd" and "full of sensuality" (Censorship File 11/1960). In Spain, the film was first reviewed by the censors in 1959 and found to be immoral (Censorship File 12706). It was finally approved in 1973. In Romania, scholars showed no interest in studying the censors' reaction to *Some Like It Hot*, as they were more fascinated by Marilyn Monroe's life, since several monographs and articles were published on her life and career. Some of the most representative works are *Marilyn. Ultimul interviu (Marilyn. The Last interview)*<sup>1</sup> by Eugen Cazan (2005), *OZN Anchetatorii au viața scurtă (UFO Investigators have a short life)* by Emil Străinu (2011) and *Marilyn Monroe pe o curbă închisă (Marilyn Monroe on a tight curve)* by Ungureanu Dănuț (2012). On the other hand, several works on the censorship of *Some Like It Hot* have been published in Spain, such as "“Funny Fictions”: Francoist Translation Censorship of Two Billy Wilder Films" by Jeroen Vandaele (2002), and "Con faldas y a lo Wilder. Impacto y superación del Código Hays en *Some Like It Hot* (1959), de Billy Wilder" ("With Skirts in Wilder's Style. Effects of and Overcoming the Hays Code in *Some Like It Hot* (1959), by Billy Wilder") by Álvaro Martín Sanz (2019). The hypothesis of this research, then, is that although the film was initially banned in both the Communist and Francoist regimes, the reasons that led to this censorship are completely different, as each regime operated under a different ideology and therefore perceived the film

1 All translations from Romanian/Spanish into English are the author's own unless otherwise stated.

differently. The aim of this study is to compare the reaction of the communist and the Francoist censors to *Some Like It Hot*, and to this end, the so-called sociological theory applied to translation will be employed.

Theorists such as Hermans (1985) and Lefevere (1992) examined translation from a slightly different angle, namely from a socio-cultural perspective rather than a purely linguistic one that highlights all the significant inconsistencies between the source and target texts (cited in Díaz Cintas 2012: 282). This is understood as sociology applied to translation, for all translation is inevitably bound up in social contexts. The act of translation is undeniably performed by individuals in a social system, and the phenomenon of translation is inevitably linked to social and political institutions that significantly determine the selection, production and dissemination of translations (Zheng 2017: 28). The distribution of translations, in this case of the Hollywood film *Some Like It Hot*, was made dependent on the decision of the censors in communist Romania and Francoist Spain as to whether the film conformed to the given socio-political agenda.

### ***Some Like It Hot in Communist Romania and Francoist Spain***

In order to interpret the censor's response to *Some Like It Hot*, the procedure of film censorship in communist Romania and Francoist Spain is first presented. Therefore, after the Second World War, Romania had been ruled by the communist regime since 1947, after King Michael, the last German descendant of the Hohenzollern-Sigmaringer dynasty, had forcibly stripped the country of its power. After the official election victory, the improvised Communist Workers' Party led by Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej took power and in 1967 Nicolae Ceaușescu became its undisputed leader until 1989 (Iliescu 2009: 17). Once communism was installed, all cultural representations, books, newspapers and films were subjected to censorship. Regarding filmmakers, they were severely restricted in terms of their subjects. Iliescu (2009: 20) explains that the state financed productions, expanded the number of cinemas, but at the same time dictated and censored content. Even comedic content was sometimes attacked by critics, who often argued that the film "does not disclose the positive attributes of the regime that removed the bourgeoisie from power" (Liehm & Liehm 1977). Reality was thus presented either as a flourishing political ideal, as a glorious past, as carefree and light-hearted, or simply as fantasy (Iliescu 2009: 20). The censorship authority Direcția Generală a Presei și a Tipăriturilor (the General Directorate of Press and Printing, GDPP) was responsible for censoring all national or imported films to be shown in cinemas.

In the case of imported films, the censorship process involved several stages. First, the film was examined by the Direcția Rețelei Cinematografice și Difuzării Filmelor (Directorate of the Cinematographic Network and Film Distribution), an institution responsible for acquiring imported films and corresponding with the production and distribution companies (Malița 2016: 310). At this stage, the film was simultaneously but not definitively translated into Romanian. Secondly, the film was screened by a panel of accountants who decided whether it would be a commercial success or not. Once the film has gone through this process, it will be sent for translation to the Mogoșoaia lab, where it will undergo final censorship. The film is shown again to the representatives of the GDPP to identify suspicious scenes, which are then deleted without the production company knowing about it and without checking whether the



film makes sense without these deleted scenes (Malița 2016: 311).

In Francoist Spain, in contrast to communist Romania, film censorship was exercised with the participation of church representatives who ensured strict adherence to moral rules. Ecclesiastical influence began during the Civil War in 1937, when Franco imposed film censorship as a wartime measure through the Junta Superior de Censura Cinematográfica (Supreme Film Censorship Board), composed of representatives of the Catholic Church, the fascist Falange party and the army (Díaz-Cintas 2019: 4). Gutiérrez Lanza (1999: 70) explains that a final step towards the creation of a single qualified body with a national character was taken on 17 February 1950, when the Episcopal Commission for Orthodoxy and Morality (Comisión Episcopal de Ortodoxia y Moralidad), in agreement with the Central Directorate for Catholic Action (Dirección Central de Acción Católica), approved the Instrucciones y Normas para la Censura Moral de Espectáculos (Instructions and Rules for the Moral Censorship of Performances). Thus, these instructions released in 1950, became the first censorship code in Spain applied to films (Gutiérrez Lanza 1999: 71).

This censorship code contains an extensive table of rules that were applied to the films under review. The films were graded one, two, three and four as specified in the Instrucciones y Normas para la Censura Moral de Espectáculos cited by Gutiérrez Lanza (1999: 88):

According to the new table, the rules of a general nature which such evaluations must satisfy are as follows:

1) According to its thesis, conclusion or consequence.

Qualification 1st and 2nd – Always moral, unreserved or indifferent.

Qualification 3rd – The thesis is not immoral.

Qualification 3R and 4th – Thesis against dogma, morality or both.

According to these instructions, censors banned aspects such as:

Murder and generally vices or vicious characters, romantic, passionate or sensual acts, free love, adultery, provocative dress, frivolous ideas about marriage, seduction, rude or impertinent dialogue, lewd or duplicitous language, obscene and provocative gestures. (Gutiérrez Lanza 1999: 89)

The code was faithfully employed during at least ten years, after which it became obvious that Western society evolved faster than the Catholic moral standards. Also, the economic development and the remoteness of the Second World War participated in reducing the Catholic influence on the public (Gutiérrez Lanza 1999: 73). Cinema became an issue of great excitement for the public who was enchanted by “the expansion of colours, the creation of large formats and the achievement of an extraordinary sound” (Martínez Bretón 1988: 110-111). However, what would best characterize cinema would be “the liberalisation of feelings, human relations, sex, etc., and the renewal of language” (Martínez Bretón 1988: 110-111). At this point, one could observe a shift in the analysis of films from a moral and religious perspective that prevailed until the 1960s to a more aesthetic and narrative perspective (Gutiérrez Lanza 1999: 73).

As for imported foreign films, the prevailing opinion was that these, especially American ones, were essential to keep the entertainment business going. But at the same time, they were considered immoral because Spaniards were Catholic and most Americans were Protestant. This led to a series of misinterpretations and a lack of morality that the Spanish censorship authorities could not tolerate. An example of this misinterpretation is the meaning of the word “marriage”, which is understood differently by Catholics and Protestants. For Catholics, marriage did not include the word “divorce”, while in American films marriage also implied “divorce”, which was not approved by the Catholic Church:

Almost all these films end in marriage, so as not to take the romance (and the venom) out of these so-called sentimental scenes, which are vulgarly passionate. They end in marriage, and so they hide and conceal the divorce, which – almost always – happens years later. [...] Young Spanish women have devoured hundreds of films in which scantily clad and kissing American girls go out alone at night with their boyfriends and end up as brides on the arm of a tall and rich man at the altar. The beauty of the day is never mocked or ridiculed. They all succeed in life and love – in the hour and a half that the film lasts – but the end that these so-called marriages usually have is not shown. That is why this film ‘school’ has done so much damage to our mores over hundreds of films. (Quoted in Gutiérrez Lanza 1999: 68)

With this in mind, it will be interesting to discuss the Spanish censorship board’s response to *Some Like It Hot*. But let us first analyse the reaction of the Romanian communist censors to Wilder’s film.

*Some Like It Hot* was reviewed by the Romanian censors in 1960. The film reached the second stage of the censorship process, when it was screened by a GDPP representative who did not find it suitable for Romanian audiences, as mentioned in their report:

A slapstick comedy pushed to the absurd. To escape some gangsters who want to kill them because they witnessed a murder, two young instrumentalists disguise themselves as women and join a female jazz orchestra. The film depicts the adventures of the two young men who are mistaken for women. They have courtiers, one falls in love with a female colleague and finally they escape on the yacht of a ridiculous, wealthy American who “is in love” with one of them. A satire on gangster films and vulgar musicals. It is steeped in sensuality, buffoonery, and absurdity, which is why the committee rejects the film. The delegate of the General Directorate of Press and Printing agrees with this decision. (Censorship File 11/1960)

The report thus offers a brief summary of the film and gives the reasons why the Committee does not accept it. They note a satirical tone, referring to films about gangsters and musicals, but they do not approve the film, even though they interpret it as a comedy. Their main concern is the issue of “sensuality”, “buffoonery” and “absurdity”. An important aspect is that they do not place any particular emphasis on the sex change, which is apparently interpreted as a means of escape from the gangsters. “Sensuality”, “buffoonery” and “absurdity” are a problem for the censors because they do not fit into the communist ideology and do not contribute to the creation of the “new man”. This ideological communist concept was originally developed by Lenin. He held that the creation of a society devoted entirely to the



working man would naturally involve the “forging of a labour discipline, the forging of new forms of social bonds between men, the forging of new forms and methods of training men in labour” (Lenin 1956: 511). This concept was adopted by the leaders of the Romanian Communist Party, Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej (1955-1965) and Nicolae Ceaușescu (1965-1989). Gheorghiu-Dej mentioned in his political report at the Third Congress of the Communist Party in June 1960 that:

As a result of the socio-economic changes in our country, a new socialist morality has emerged, a new attitude towards work, property and social duties, new relations of comradesly mutual aid between those who work, and they are developing more and more. (quoted in Pleșa 2020: 366)

Thus, *Some Like It Hot* reached the censors in 1960 when Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej ruled Romania and whose goal was to affirm and legitimise communism (Iftene 2020: 814) by all means, including culture. Thus, during this period, most of the films released were communist propaganda films, such as *În sat la noi* (1951)/(*In Our Village*), *Erupția* (1957)/(*The Eruption*), *Valurile Dunării* (1960)/(*The Waves of the Danube*) (Iftene 2020: 808-809). Considering this context, there is no surprise that censors rejected *Some Like It Hot*, despite Wilder’s ingenious techniques to reduce the charge of sensuality. The Hays Code censured too any sexual insinuation and hint of sensuality, however, Wilder managed to disguise it through comedy or drama, and this granted him the approval of the American censors:

I always played an honest game with the censors. Sex is in my pictures, but it is dramatic, or it is funny. Well, for instance, the scene between Marilyn Monroe and Tony Curtis on the boat. That is just one laugh after another. That, the censors forgave me, because it was funny. I saw a picture in the very beginning, and – here is how they went around censorship- the guy is saying, “You son of a bitch.” It’s not allowed, but it was allowed as “If you had a mother, she’d bark.” When you kind of put a little something funny in it, you know. They just let it go. I am very, very careful with... *that thing*, the censorship board. I was fair with them, and they were fair with me... (Crowe, 1999: 156)

In the scene between Marilyn Monroe and Tony Curtis on the boat, Wilder employs several comic mechanisms. On the one hand, Curtis mentions that he is impotent and would marry any woman who would free him from this condition. So, the humour here works by reversing the situation in which it is Monroe’s character, the erotic myth, who must seduce the man, and not the other way around, as expected. And while Monroe kisses Curtis to cure his illness, there are flashbacks to the scene where Lemmon, transformed into Daphne, dances with his fiancée Osgood. Wilder thus uses the combination of the scenes of the two couples through a montage that comes and goes to achieve a comic effect that reduces the sensuality present in the scene on the boat (Martín Sanz 2019: 52).

The game of seduction that Monroe played, and that Wilder dressed up with humour is not, however, the kind of game that Romanian women were expected to observe and model themselves on. They were expected to build the socialist state, and to do that they had to be good mothers, housewives and, above all, good workers, because the goal of communism was equality between men and women. Therefore, women performed all kinds of skilled or unskilled jobs, some of which were previously unknown to women: miners, wagon drivers, turners, locksmiths, welders, furnace workers, guards, sailors, worked in heavy industry or in construction, in the gardens,

on the canal or in transport (Șerban). But women were also able to find access to politics, and proof of this is comrade Ana Pauker. After an intense period of activity within the party, she was appointed Foreign Minister of Romania in 1947. She was the first female foreign minister in the history of the country and the world (Șerban, Historia). Comrade Pauker's celebrity is not unique, however. *Woman* magazine takes stock of women in political and public office up to April 1950:

Ministers, ministerial councillors, directors of ministries, 31 deputies to the Grand National Assembly, 64 directors of companies, 27 university professors, one dean and academician. Hundreds of women belong to Provisional Committees in cities and towns, thousands of women were recently elected as People's Advisors. Hundreds more housewives, poor and middle peasant women are proposed for the new leadership of the cooperatives. (quoted in Șerban)

Everywhere women contributed in the administration of public affairs with honest, devoted communist conscience. In this way, women emancipated themselves as they participated to a great extent in the labour market and were liberated from patriarchal rule through gender equality.

However, the equality policy served primarily to legitimise the regime was not a real, genuine emancipation of women. Although the communist regime's gender equality policy was formally in line with Western developments, it was mainly used as an ideological and economic weapon (Ghebrea 2015: 29). The policy was not aimed at women's quality of life, but at using them as a means to assert the superiority of the regime. Ghebrea explains that equality was not only ideologically important, but also pragmatic, as women were useful as labour in the extensive industrialisation processes of the communist regime (2015: 29). This equality forced women to bear a double burden, working alongside men in the labour market while maintaining their role as the main or usually exclusive provider in the household (Marinescu 2018: 29). Against this backdrop, *Some Like It Hot* would not be a good example for Romanian women, especially because they were expected to work hard to realise the communist ideal and not dream of meeting a millionaire who would rescue them from misery, as the Monroe character dreamed.

Iftene (2020: 811) provides an example of this through the film *Un film cu o fată fermecătoare* (*A Film with a Charming Girl*) directed by Lucian Bratu (1966). The film presents as its main character a modern young woman who tries to land a film role with her charm, but whose moral ambivalence can hardly serve as a role model for the working population, for whom heroes with a clearer life are created. For example, the girl who leaves the ideal world of the capital for the smell of gas from oil production *Erupția* (*The Eruption*) by Liviu Ciulei (1957), or the young man who copes with his existential crisis at the construction site in *Diminețile unui băiat cuminte* (*The Morning of a Good Boy*) by Andrei Blaier (1967). The fact is that *A Film with a Charming Girl* disappears from the cinemas four days after its premiere and the authors are forced to rewrite the ending with a more moralistic note: the main character does not get the part because you cannot achieve anything without work (Iftene 2020: 811).

Sensuality was thus one of the reasons why the communist censors rejected the film, and the other two reasons given in the report are "buffoonery" and "absurdity". However, it is not clear what these two terms mean to the censors. Possibly they refer to Jack Lemmon and Tony Curtis, as their transformation into women is comical, or in the words of the censors: "absurd" and "buffoonery" (Censorship File 11/1960).

It seems that cross-dressing does not meet the humour standards of the Romanian censors, although it is used in *Some Like It Hot* to save lives and for comical effect. Cross-dressing was also rejected in the United States by the National Legion of Decency, which denounced that the film promoted homosexuality, lesbianism and transvestism (quoted in Martín Sanz 2019: 45).

In any case, at least in the early days of the regime, in the 50s and 60s, the communist Romanian censors would not have accepted any kind of homosexuality and transvestism, as they were considered subversive. Therefore, anti-homosexual crackdowns and trials were carried out in the 50s and 60s as part of the political campaigns of the time: against capitalism, the decadent Western culture and the intellectuals (Buhuceanu 2011: 17). The Communist Party could see nothing in the non-reproductive forms of homosexuality other than a contradiction to the ideals of the heroic mothers and fathers who worked to realise the socialist family. Homosexuality was perceived as a tacit construction of an alternative to the accepted family type and punished as such (Buhuceanu 2011: 17). This punishment was established by the Penal code of 1936 reviewed in 1968, which mentioned that sexual relations with people of the same sex are punished with prison from one to five years (Human Rights Watch 1988: 3).

The communist authorities were convinced that the intellectuals were the ones affected by the disease of homosexuality. For these could only be educated people who had contact with books, films and people from the Western world, an obviously corrupt and morally depraved world, as Buhuceanu (2011: 19) explains. It was not accepted that there were homosexuals, among the peasants, the workers, that is, among the strata that formed the healthy and flourishing basis of socialist society. The danger of moral decay came from the intellectuals, that is, from the well-read, the perverse (Buhuceanu 2011: 19). Under these circumstances, the cross-dressing of Jack Lemmon and Tony Curtis, even for comic reasons, was not accepted by the communist censors.

Their idea of comedy was linked to educating people in socialist, communist values. To ensure this education, they adapted foreign comedies to communist beliefs. The result was “many rudimentary and crude imitations of established films from abroad, often embedded with ideological messages” (Iftene 2020: 816). Comedies of all kinds, including musicals, had a moralistic and propagandistic tone. For example, actors sing and dance in textile factories (*Nu vreau să mă însor (I Don't Want to Get Married)*), 1961, Manole Marcus) and discover the beauty of working on a construction site (*Vacanță la mare (Holidays by the Sea)*, 1963, Andrei Calarasu) (Iftene 2020: 817). The ideal main character was created along the lines of the bald, resourceful, seductive peasant who has innate intelligence and whose naivety thwarts the most ambitious plans of those around him. Such a character can be seen in films such as *Nea Mărin miliardarul (Nea Mărin the Billionaire)*, 1979 by Sergiu Nicolaescu (Iftene 2020: 817). Therefore, “sensuality”, “buffoonery” and “absurd”, which the communist censors mention in their report, are terms that characterise what is contrary to communist values, which are basically the struggle to build a socialist society in which capitalism plays no role. Moreover, *Some Like It Hot* seems to have been quite polemical, because in Francoist Spain the film was received in a similar way as in communist Romania, even if the reasons for this reception are somewhat different.

The distributor C.B. Films submitted *Some Like It Hot* for consideration in 1959,



and in 1960 the Spanish censors gave their verdict on the film, whose title was initially translated as *Una Eva y dos Adanes*, which later became *Con faldas y a lo loco*. Thus, in February 1960, the film was rejected throughout the national territory (Censorship File 12706/59). One of the censorship reports of 15 February 1960 mentioned the following:

From a moral point of view, the film is inadmissible. I suspect that the film cannot even be saved by cutting and suppressing scenes, unless it were to be completely mutilated. The main and supporting scenes are all reproachable. (Censorship File 12706/59)

In order to obtain approval, the distributor removed all exhibitionist scenes and love scenes in 1961, a total of 16 cuts. The censors pointed out that despite these cuts, the scenes between Monroe and Lemmon on the train and between Monroe and Curtis on the yacht, as well as Lemmon's dance as Daphne with his fiancée, were inadmissible. They agreed that sexual ambiguity promotes corruption:

From a social point of view, sexual ambiguity stimulates corruption. The natural borderline between the sexes should be preserved in public life, limiting this disease to a mystery of private life. This is the only objection that can be made against this extremely funny film, but it is an overriding one, because the two heroes keep on dressing as women and 'enveloping' themselves in femininity, during ten reels (out of the thirteen), with such perfection that they succeed in all parts of the game, like bathing with other girls (who fail to notice the major change) and all those other things that living together in hotels, trains and even in bed brings with it. All of this implies a strong encouragement to the social 'audacity' or impudence of homosexuals. They even get engaged!

But there is something worse even: while the film is so lavish in its display of 'poofs', it is reduced, very much reduced, in terms of scenes that depict the sexuality of the normal people. Pornographic scenes in which Marilyn is the protagonist. We think it should be forbidden. (Censorship File 12706/59 translation by Vandaele, J. (2002))

The film was approved after a twelve-year delay in 1973, two years before Franco's death in 1975. It is clear from these reports that the Francoist censors could not tolerate the cross-dressing of Jack Lemmon and Tony Curtis and some of the scenes with Marilyn Monroe, which were considered pornographic and not sensual as the Communist censors claimed. Jeroen Vandaele (2002) analysed two of Wilder's films *The Apartment* and *Some Like It Hot* from the point of view of Bakhtinian humour (radically subversive) or Freudian humour (rhetorically subversive or even harmless). He asks whether this depends on the text, the recipient or both. It is obvious that humour, in this case depends more on what the recipient, the Francoist censors, consider humour. As Vandaele mentions, from the perspective of film reception, "humorous fiction is not 'just' fictional, operating at a safe distance from reality, but should be taken as being deeply implicated in real life" (2002: 270). This means that homosexuality is part of reality, and the censors could not tolerate to expose such reality to the public.

Both homosexuality and the "pornographic" scenes Monroe depicts are challenged by the morality imposed by the Catholic Church. Unlike in communist Romania, where morality stood for all actions undertaken to build the communist state, in Francoist Spain morality stood for all actions the Catholic Church considered moral,

i.e., decency, obedience, chastity, marriage, etc. Moreover, the above-mentioned instructions and rules for the moral censorship of performances clearly stated that “passionate or sensual acts of love”, “provocative dresses”, “seduction”, “suggestive or picaresque turns of phrase with double meanings”, “main characters with scenes of sexual perversion” were censored (Gutiérrez Lanza 1999: 89). These elements can be easily identified in *Some Like It Hot*, as passion, seduction and provocative clothing are mainly portrayed by Monroe. Picaresque expressions such as “No Sugar” when Curtis implies that Sugar/Monroe cannot be eaten by Lemmon, and sexual perversion may include cross-dressing and subtle hints of homosexuality between Lemmon/Daphne and Brown/Osgood.

These elements were banned because they ran counter to the Catholic code, which was one of the pillars of the Francoist regime, a strict morality that reduced people’s freedom to a minimum. In contrast to the communist regime, whose main aim was apparently to promote gender equality and to introduce women into the labour market, the Francoist regime reduced women only to the household and thus to their independence. In the national Catholic mindset, women were subservient to men, unable to shape their own lives without always being patronised first by their fathers and then by their husbands. Their real task was to be mothers and obedient wives (Álvarez 2014). In the book *La virilidad y sus fundamentos sexuales (Virility and its Sexual Foundations)* by the physician and Jesuit Federico Arvesu, it is stated that “the woman’s body is destined to serve the womb, while the man’s body is destined to serve the brain” (quoted in Álvarez 2014).

Women were therefore trained to be mothers and housewives. One of the training centres was a branch of the Falangist Party, the Female Section, headed by Pilar Primo de Rivera, the sister of José Antonio Primo de Rivera, the founder of the Falangist Party. At this centre, women learned the subjects of housework, home economics, childcare and cooking, and were supplemented by courses in gymnastics and music to build the national spirit (Agulló Díaz 1999). They were denied other interests and activities not related to procreation and the household. Women did not have to work in factories or engage in scientific activity:

The state should dismiss the married woman from the workshop and factory [...]. How many women doctors, how many women lawyers, how many women graduates in the chemical sciences practise their profession profitably? That is not the woman’s job. Woman was created to be the mother of a family, and she still has much to learn in order to properly fulfil such a high task. (Álvarez 2014)

Against this background, *Some Like It Hot* would not be a good example for women. The actresses were singers and dancers, wore sexy clothes and Marilyn Monroe’s character ‘Sugar’ enjoyed herself with Lemmon and Curtis. Spanish women were expected “to play the role of spiritual and political reclamation of the domestic sphere, as transmitters of religious and moral values in the family” (Moreno Seco 2018: 167). In contrast to the national Catholic discourse on the different roles of men and women was the workers’ discourse, the precursor to communism, which called for equality between women and men. They believed that women’s problems would disappear with the end of capitalism and the establishment of a future socialist society, so the conquest of women’s rights was often postponed until the social revolution (Moreno Seco 2018: 166). However, this discourse would never have succeeded, as the Francoist regime was against any communist idea.

If women procreated and ran the household, men could not be gay. The Francoist regime defended the idea of virile masculinity in absolute opposition to femininity and promoted it as the basis of its identity. Virility was seen as a category of essential national identity, allegorically linked to elements such as bravery, courage, strength and dominance. A concept often repeated in Franco's speeches, which became one of the maxims of Francoist ideology (Mora Gaspar 2019: 177). While the Romanian Penal Code of 1936, revised in 1968, punished homosexuals with imprisonment, the Spanish *Ley de Vagos y Maleantes* (Law on Vagabonds and Malefactors), enacted in 1933 and revised in 1954, sent them to labour institutions or agricultural colonies (Zimbroianu 2022: 58). Unlike the communists, who believed that only intellectuals became homosexuals because they came into contact with the cultural input of capitalism, the Francoists divided homosexuals into two groups: The first represented people who became homosexual for vicious and economic reasons, and the second group represented "the sick", those who were homosexual from birth. In each case, they were to be punished if their behaviour went beyond public life (Mora Gaspar 2019: 177).

These rigid rules of national Catholic ideology in Spain prevented the release of *Some Like It Hot* until 5 June 1973, when the film was cleared for people over 18 (Censorship File 69509/73). This shift in opinion was probably facilitated by the fact that the 1970s were labelled "Developmentalist Francoism", "a period marked by the arrival of neo-capitalism in Spain, the emergence of an incipient consumer society and growing social mobilisation" (cited in Mora Gaspar 2019: 176). As a result, 70 out of 146 foreign films that had not been approved before 1970 were reviewed and approved. (Gutiérrez Lanza 1999: 87)

## Conclusion

In summary, the Communist and Francoist censors seem to have reacted similarly to *Some Like It Hot*, as both banned the film from the beginning. The Communist censors rejected the film for its scenes of sensuality and buffoonery, while the Francoist censors rejected it for its pornography and promotion of homosexuality. At first glance, the reasons of both regimes are the same, but the communists struggled to create "the new man" in a socialist, equal society where men and women worked together to build the communist state. This included gender equality and allowing women to work outside the home, whereas the Francoist regime tried to impose the strong, virile man who represented the country and put women under the domination of the virile man. Therefore, equality between men and women was misplaced. Unlike communist Romanian women, whose main goal was to work in the factories and in all sectors of society that contributed to the construction of the socialist state, especially in the 1950s and mid-60s, Spanish women, at least in the first two to three decades of Francoism, participated in the construction of national Catholicism by having children and being good wives. In neither regime did films like *Some Like It Hot*, which were also subject to the Hays Code in the United States, have a place. For further research, it would be interesting to consult the Romanian Directorate of Film Network and Distribution's list of films to find out if *Some Like It Hot* was ever allowed in Romania after its revision by the censors in 1960.



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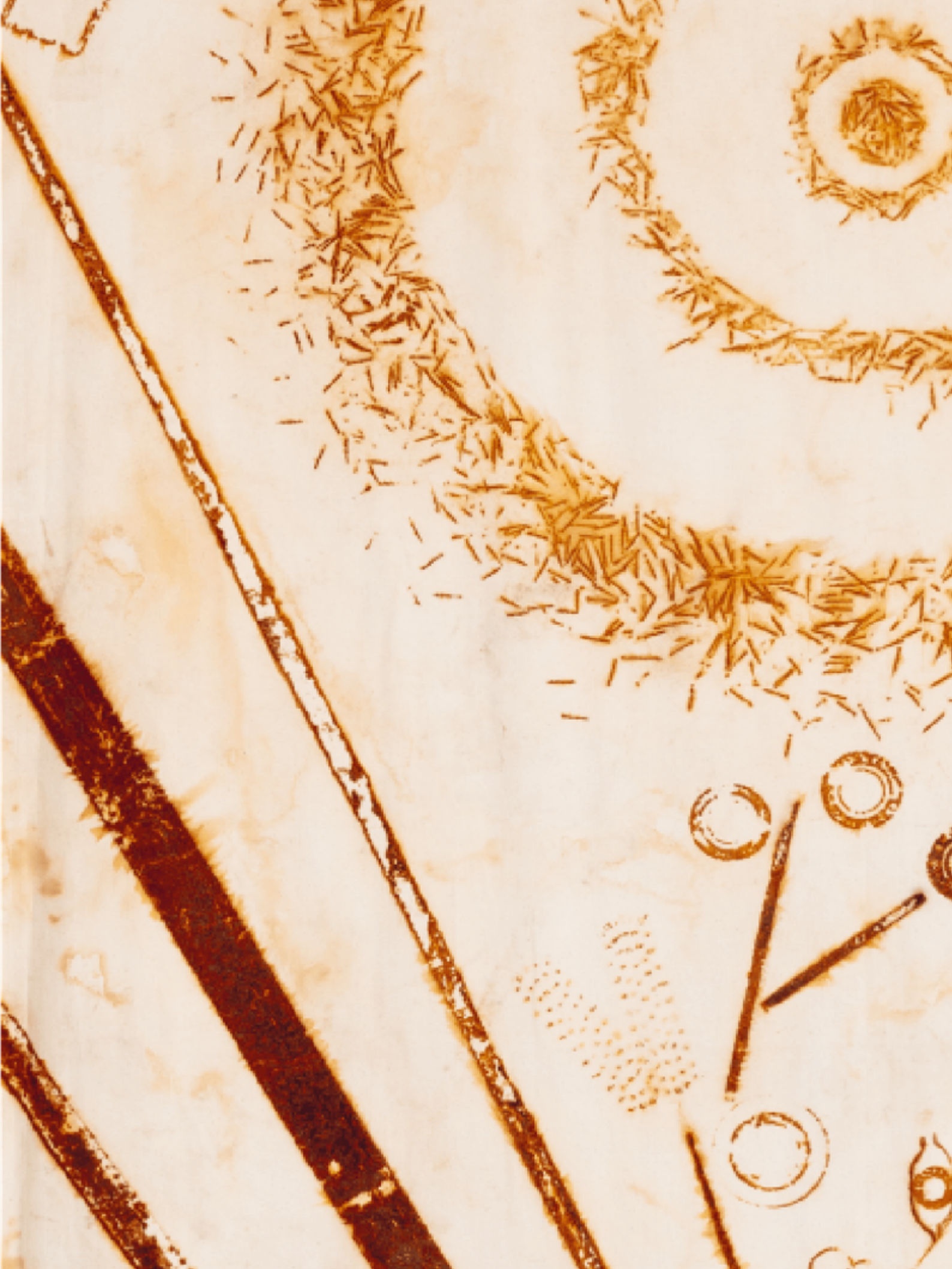
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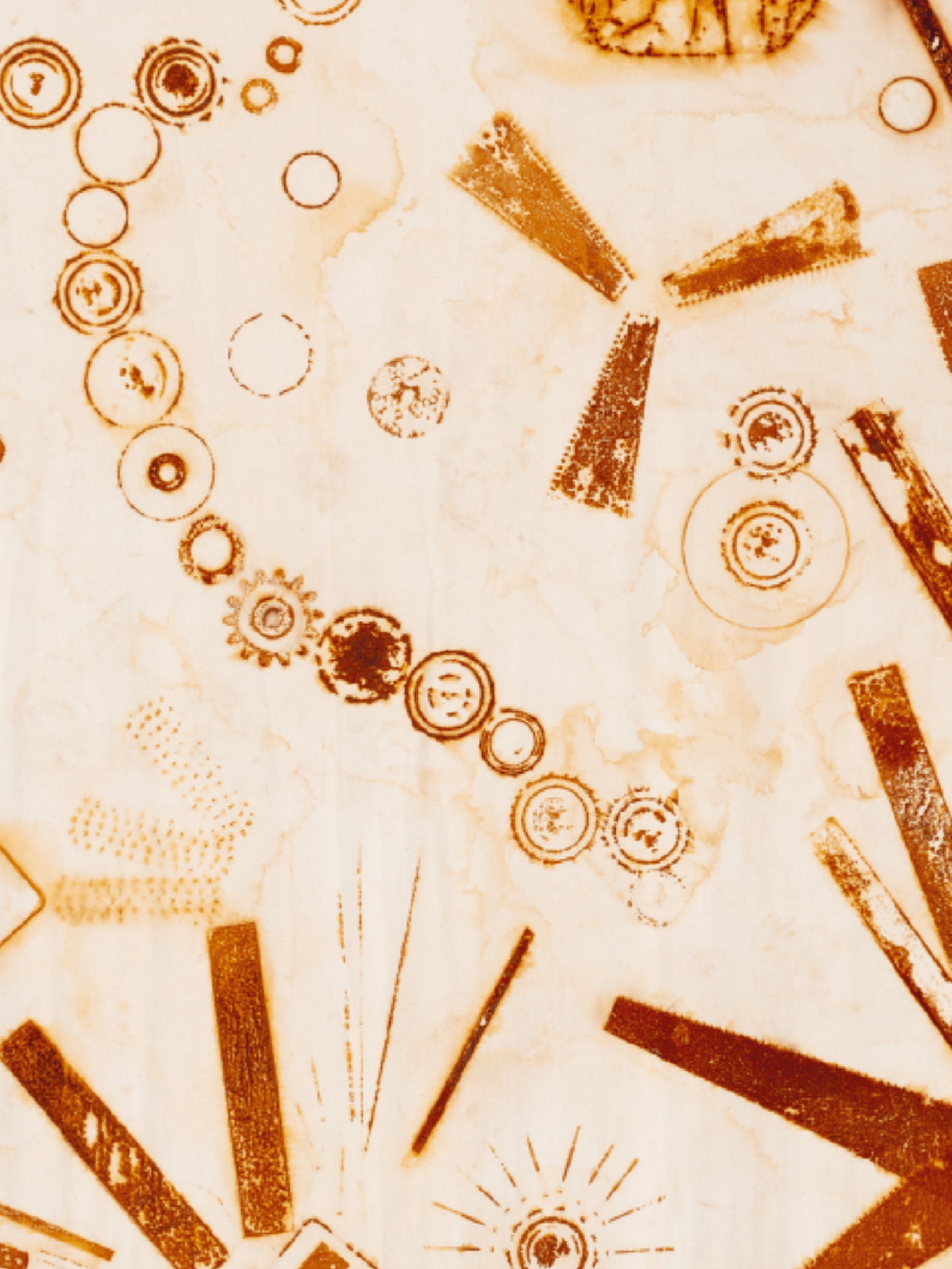
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