

(DE)POLITICISING EMIGRATION AND THE ÉMIGRÉ'S RETURN IN THE NO-DO FILM PRODUCTIONS*

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INTRODUCTION

In 1958, the Franco regime's official film production organisation, *Noticiarios y Documentales* ("News and Documentaries"), commonly referred to as NO-DO, released a colour documentary in Spain directed by Alberto Carles Blat titled *Aires de mi tierra* [Breezes of My Land]. In December of the same year, a colour documentary by Manuel Arís Torres titled *Un viaje por Galicia* [A Trip around Galicia] premiered at the Gran Mitre cinema in Buenos Aires. While Arís's film belongs to the tradition of "correspondence cinema" (films shot by émigrés while on a trip back home for the purpose of exhibition to the diaspora community abroad), Carles Blat's NO-DO production presents a fictional account of the return of an émigré to Galicia, placing the image at the service of the political legitimisation of Francoist Spain.

At the time these films were made, the position of Information and Tourism Minister was

still held by Gabriel Arias-Salgado, a committed Falangist, Catholic fundamentalist and the principal architect of the strict censorship restrictions that existed in Spain until the enactment of the *Ley de Prensa* (Press Act) in 1966 (promoted by his successor, Manuel Fraga). It was not the only important position that Arias-Salgado held, as he had also been the chief ideologue for NO-DO, and it was during his time as Vice-Secretary of Popular Education that the organisation was created "with the aim of maintaining a national cinematic information service that could operate on its own with suitable guidelines" (Tranche & Sánchez-Biosca 2006: 13). While he was minister, Spain's economic development experienced an extraordinary leap forward that would shore up the political legitimacy of the Franco regime for many years (Pack, 2009: 147), in terms of both its information and its tourism strategies. The political and economic possibilities that tourism opened up for the regime became more obvious with the

increased number of foreign tourists each year, but it also made it clear that the time had come to modify the official discourses and narratives to ensure future success.

The objective of this article is to offer a thick description (Geertz, 2011) of the NO-DO documentary in terms of how it served this purpose, using Arís's film contrastively (more than comparatively) to analyse the political implications and narrative purposes pursued by the representational devices of the state machinery (Foucault, 1978) in fictionalising the return visit of an émigré to Galicia. This analysis is based on the premise that Manuel Arís's *Un viaje por Galicia*—as correspondence cinema—is enunciated from the perspective of an agent directly affected by migration, aware of and involved in the socio-political, cultural and emotional factors that condition the phenomenon, while *Aires de mi tierra*, conversely, is a fictional construction by an indirect agent that offers a trivialised, artificial, distortive, subaltern depiction of a manufactured emigration experience to serve commercial interests and legitimise the Franco regime.

Both productions involve the use of elements of identity and emotion, as both Arís's film and Carles Blat's documentary offer an idealised, mythical, sweetly sentimental representation of a Galicia frozen in time (Miguélez-Carballeira, 2014), characterised by a kind of Orientalising vision of the region for which Busto Miramontes (2020, 2021) has coined the term *Galaiquismo*. However, the hypothesis of this study is that Carles Blat's film entailed a distortion of emigration: while Arís's film was shot, structured and enunciated by a real émigré on short trips back to Galicia for the screening to the Galician diaspora in order to allow them to experience "the return home through the (magic) cinematic image" (Mouriño Lorenzo, 2008: 1), *Aires de mi tierra*, in contrast, sought to offer an archetypal depiction of a saccharine emigration experience that was neutralised and depoliticised by the Franco regime's machinery of production and representation.

BACKGROUND AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Based on the accepted division of the Francoist era into sub-eras, this study covers the National Catholic period of isolation and subsequent international reintegration (1945-1959) and the authoritarian period of technocratic development and economic expansion (1959-1969) (Moradiellos, 2003: 25-27). NO-DO had been created in 1942 as a service for the distribution of newsreels and reports filmed in Spain and abroad, launched in January 1943 with the clear intention to maintain exclusive control over the production and reproduction of the information that reached the Spanish public (Tranche & Sánchez-Biosca, 2006). The projection of the NO-DO newsreels prior to the screening of a feature film was compulsory in all theatres in Spain and its colonies until 1976. This turned the service into an apparatus of power, as cinema of the State that bore witness to the tension between what could and could not change in government operations.

Carmona Badía and Fernández González (2005) and Rico Boquete (2005) consider the periodisation established for Francoism in Spain to be equally applicable to the Galician region. These authors agree that the 1950s served as a period of socioeconomic and political transition between the brutal repression and poverty of the 1940s and the developmentalism and tourism of the 1960s. However, in the case of Galicia, the lack of prospects for economic development resulted in continued overseas emigration and a mass exodus to Spain's biggest cities (Carmona Badía & Fernández González, 2005; Maiz, 1998; Rico Boquete, 2005). There have been very few studies analysing the Galicia-Spain relationship in the Franco years from a decolonial perspective, the critical epistemology adopted for this study. The first scholar to characterise this relationship—Xoan González-Millán (2000)—identified the subaltern status of Galician culture in relation to the

Spanish State as a central factor. Since then, it has been explored by Miguélez-Carballeira (2014) in her study of the mythical construction of Galician sentimentalism, and by Busto Miramontes (2020, 2021), applied specifically to the analysis of cinematic representations of the Franco regime.

The films studied in this article were released in geographical and political contexts that are different but related through emigration. *Aires de mi tierra* was produced by NO-DO at a time when Galicians were still emigrating in large numbers to Latin America, while Spain was opening up diplomatically and undergoing rapid transformations that required the regime to change the obscurantist, bucolic, backward and primitivist image of Galicia that it had promoted to legitimise a violent colonial policy that it had pursued with particular fervour in relation to Galicia (Busto Miramontes, 2021; Miguélez-Carballeira, 2014). The colonial policy and the individual as colonised subject was to be maintained (Bhabha, 2013), but at the same time it was important to depict some legitimising modernity and a degree of openness that would allow tourists to enjoy their own “colonial” experience. The bathing gowns on the beaches gradually gave way to bikinis, and the little seaside towns essentialised in the 1950s as bastions of a mythical patriarchy in which the heroic man would set out to the sea while the woman (*femina patiens*) waited for him while sewing inside a dark, silent Galician home (Jiménez-Esquinas, 2021: 155-188) turned into the perfect destinations for water-skiing. Highways began being built at a frenetic pace, enabling Spaniards to criss-cross the country on their holidays; airports were opened in Santiago and Vigo, as well as hotels and *paradors* such as the Baiona for beach tourists. The NO-DO films began to replace their themes of morality, faith and Christ the King with tourism, beaches, scenery and seafood.

Un viaje por Galicia—a film recovered by the CGAI¹—was shot by Arís himself between 1953 and 1958 on the three trips he took to Galicia

in those years. It is a 73-minute cinematic journey around the four provinces of the region. The footage shows a series of “postcard images” mostly along the AP-9 (a highway that has been the source of controversy in Galicia for serving only the most developed part of the region on the western coast), where Arís filmed “different monuments and locations in colour with a 16mm camera. [...] The film remained in theatres for two and a half months, and Galician emigrants made the pilgrimage to the cinema to see their villages on screen and confirm that their homeland was still there, just as they remembered it” (Barreiro González, 2018a: 46).² The film has been analysed in detail by various scholars, including the aforementioned study by Barreiro González, as well as Manuel González (1996), Mouriño Lorenzo (2008) and Redondo Neira & Pérez Pereiro (2018), together with other films related to this genre. The most representative examples of such films would be: *Porriño y su distrito* [O Porriño and Vicinity] (León Artola, 1925); the two films by José Gil, *Nuestras fiestas de allá* [Our Festivities Back There] (1928) and *Galicia y Buenos Aires* [Galicia and Buenos Aires] (1931); *Un viaje por Galicia* [A Trip through Galicia] (Luis R. Alonso, 1929); *Centro Orensano* [Centre of Orense] (Eligio González, 1942), and *Rutas de Lobanes y Romería de la Madalena* [Routes of Lobanes and the Romería Pilgrimage] (director unknown, 1956). All these productions, along with Arís’s 1958 film, form part of the most outstanding group of films associated with the genre of “Galician cinematic correspondence” or “Cinematic Postcards of Galician Emigration”, a category that essentially involves “the production of a series of short films over the course of the first half of the 20th century in different parts of Galicia for the purpose of exhibiting them to expatriates living overseas who originally came from these places” (Mouriño Lorenzo, 2008: 1).

Carles Blat’s *Aires de mi tierra* was produced on 35mm film by NO-DO (and therefore directly by an apparatus of power) and released in Spain

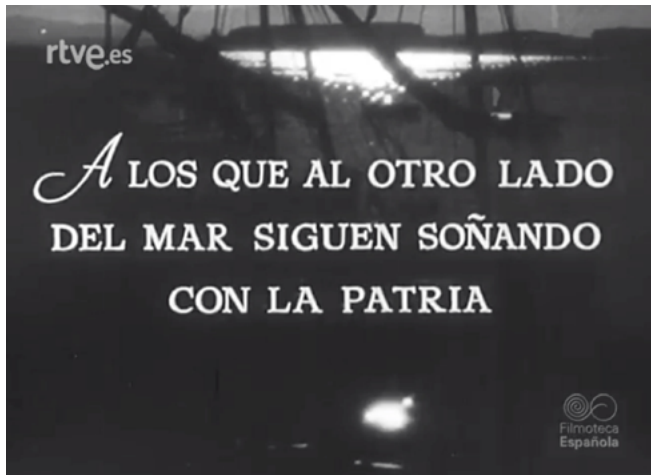


Figure 1. Opening credits, *Galicia y sus gentes* (1951)

in 1958. The sound was recorded by Juan Justo Ruiz, the voiceover was by Juan Martínez Navas, post-production was handled by Daniel Quiterio Prieto Sierra and the music was by Antonio Ramírez-Ángel and José Pagan. It has a duration of ten minutes and, like Arís's film, it is essentially a journey around Galicia, but in this case featuring an actor playing the role of an émigré on a short visit back home to Galicia with his wife. The film takes us through only six locations (Arís visits many more), which are also geotourism destinations promoted by the Franco regime. All of them are associated with the "AP-9 axis"; the provinces Ourense and Lugo are left out. This film represented a clear change to the modes of representation that NO-DO had used until then to portray Galicia, its culture and its people. The essentialist image of Galician society as dim, backward, primitive, bucolic but also cheerful, naive, hard-working, poetic, Christian and patriarchal was replaced with a more attractive image that made this one of the region's first tourism films.

Until the mid-1960s, Galicia had always been constructed on screen based on the repetition and reinforcement of cultural, social, geographical, linguistic and pseudo-psychological stereotypes. NO-DO was a prominent architect of the colonial gaze on Galicia, a gaze that bore no resemblance

whatsoever to the geographical, cultural or linguistic reality of the region, as it was merely an essentialist image of the "Other", an exoticised alterity (Said, 2013). This image is effectively encapsulated in a documentary titled *Galicia y sus gentes. Ayer y hoy de las tierras meigas* [Galicia and Its People: Yesterday and Today in the Witching Lands] (Alberto Reig & Cristian Anwander, 1951), dedicated "to those on the other side of the sea who continue to dream of the homeland." This is one of the few brief explicit mentions of emigration in a NO-DO production, as exile was not acknowledged and emigration was more conspicuous for its absence than its presence (Tranche & Sánchez-Biosca, 2009: 64).

Arís begins his journey at a crowded port in Buenos Aires where countless anonymous emigrants bid farewell to the shipload of passengers making the longed-for and oft-imagined return home. The last shot in his documentary is of a sunset over the Atlantic, a memorable image of west Galicia. Carles Blat begins his journey with the image of a beach, an aeroplane window through which we see Vigo and a small aircraft landing at an aerodrome that might be the airport at Santiago de Compostela (which was built by political prisoners and began operating in the 1950s) or Vigo. This arrival is accompanied by a soundtrack that adds some ethnic colour right from the beginning, with a choir singing the first song in Marcial Valladares's Galician songbook *Ayes de mi tierra* (do Pico Orjais & Rei Sanmartín, 2010), with the stanza: "[If you loved me]/you would come search for me/like water seeks the river/like the river seeks the sea."³ The film ends with the departure on a passenger ship from the port of Vigo, while a foghorn blows over the same tune, this time with the lines: "Little breezes, breezy breezes/little breezes of my land/little breezes, breezy breezes/little breezes, lift me home."⁴ The film ends with an *aturuxo*, a plaintive cry in the Galician folk tradition.

The two documentaries begin in ways that are extraordinarily similar and yet markedly dif-

ferent. From the matching first image of a mythologised, idealised and wistful Galicia, their respective narratives diverge, one conforming to emigration cinema and the other to a Francoist model with a trivially touristic focus, neutralising a social and political reality as significant as emigration, the exodus that the Franco regime itself had provoked (Foucault, 1978).

ANALYSIS

Neutralisation by touristification of the political subject

In 1957, Carles Blat began making documentaries in colour for NO-DO. From 1957 to 1959, he directed nine ten-minute films that formed part of a cohesive series of tourism promotion documentaries with clear formal parallels between them. The titles are: *La capra hispánica* (1957), *Alto Pirineo* (1957), *Vigías del mar* (1958), *Reportaje en Ansó* (1958), *El Turia* (1958), *Costa Blanca* (1958), *Aires de mi tierra* (1958), *El poema de Córdoba* (1959), and *De Yuste a Guadalupe (Cuna de conquistadores)* (1959). All were co-produced by the Ministry of Information and Tourism and presented potential tourist routes, showing the spectator cultural features objectified as consumer products.

The titles mentioned above all have a similar formal structure. In addition to their duration and the fact they are all in colour, they all travel along tourist routes on which something is consumed as a product. In *La capra hispánica* (1957), the consumer product is hunting; in *Alto Pirineo* (1957) and *Reportaje en Ansó* (1958), it is hiking and mountaineering; in *Costa Blanca* (1958), it is sun, sand and camping; in *Turia* (1958), it is oranges, paella and Valencia's Falles festival; and in *Aires de mi tierra* (1958), it is sentimentalism, folklore, and Galician scenery. Secondly, the protagonists of the journeys are couples or trios of actors taking the trip as tourists while the camera follows them around on their thematic experience. This is the standard in all of the films except *Turia* and *El*

THE FIRST-PERSON VOICE-OVER IN CONSTITUTES AN ACT OF VIOLENCE PERPETRATED BY POWER

poema de Córdoba (which do not have actors) and *La capra hispánica*, where the norm of hegemonic masculinity requires a large group of men to take part in the hunting experience. Of the films that do conform to this standard, *Costa Blanca* and *Reportaje en Ansó* feature two single women (if they had been married, NO-DO would have presented them on holiday with their husbands); *Alto Pirineo* features a man, two women and a dog; *De Yuste a Guadalupe* features a young man and two female university students; and *Aires de mi tierra* features a married couple (a Galician émigré and his foreign wife). Moreover, all of these films (except *El poema de Córdoba*) include a voice-over narration in the first-person singular, serving as a legitimising device for the story told in the documentary and the organisation responsible for the discourse. The émigré in *Aires de mi tierra* is the only character presented as a native of the place depicted, playing the role of tour guide.

Considering NO-DO from a Foucauldian epistemological perspective, this study proposes to analyse it as a machine of power whose violent operation activates "effective instruments for the accumulation of knowledge, techniques of registration and procedures for investigation" (Foucault, 1978: 146) that confirm not only the representation of the image but its very existence as an apparatus of power. From this perspective, the first-person voice-over in *Aires de mi tierra* constitutes an appropriation of the Galician émigré, an act of violence entailing the abduction of the subaltern voice, its corporeal expression stolen, its political experience neutralised, while the social drama of the exodus is placed at the service of the machinery of the Francoist State for the purpose of tourism promotion. The film thus constructs a



Figure 2. Women making lace, *Galicia y sus gentes* (1951)

depoliticised subject stripped of drama, of a past and a present (the subject's historical experience), which is used not only to promote the region to tourists but also to legitimise the Franco regime as the architect of regional development. It constructs a tourist who legitimises developmentalism by means of the invented discourse of an émigré on a visit to his homeland who then returns to Latin America. The émigré and his social status are *touristified* through the film, converting him into a tourist in the same way that the women's branch of the Francoist Falange, Sección Femenina, converted the woman sewing Galician lace inside her house in Costa da Morte into a "housewife" (Jiménez-Esquinas, 2021: 156; Mies, 2014).

The violent act of constructing an invented and depoliticised subjectivity is also perpetrated against the two single women who go hiking in *Reportaje en Ansó* and in the male domination implicit in the vertical relationship established between the man and the two women, subjectified as *becarias* (scholarship holders), in *De Yuste a Guadalupe*. What makes *Aires de mi tierra* a perversely violent documentary is the fact that the subject who is robbed of his voice is an émigré, a subaltern. And it is the only film that uses a social and political conflict as a cliché or folkloric archetype to promote tourism.

By the eve of World War I, "a community of 150,000 Galicians were living in the Argentine capital. It is no exaggeration to say that this made Buenos Aires the city with the largest Galician population on the planet; far more than Vigo or A Coruña in the same era" (Núñez Seixas, 2002: 42).⁵ Between the 1940s and the 1960s—out of necessity or due to "acute suggestionitis"⁶—another 100,000 Galicians emigrated to Argentina alone (Vázquez González, 2011: 31-57). In this socioeconomic context, with Galicia losing much of its working population to a mass exodus, Carles Blat drew on the cliché of the Galician émigré, transformed into a *morriñento* and *choromiqueiro* (homesick and teary-eyed) subaltern who returns home on a visit with his wife, presented in the documentary as a consort who, holding her husband's hand, discovers the *little homeland* that Galicia represented in relation to Spain, the nation. The film is not just an expository documentary—which itself is authoritarian—as the production constructs a depiction of Galicia that is impossible to dispute, but it also produces a depoliticised subjectivity based on the face of an actor, on the modern American clothing he wears, and on his physicality. A fictitious subalternity is inscribed on his body: the subjugated status of the émigré, who appears in front of the camera without looking at it directly, doing Galician things that no Galician ever does, such as strolling around inside a factory in Vigo (in a clear effort to legitimise the regime), speaking to us in a voice-over that tells us that his body is an émigré's, that his feelings are an émigré's, and that his pain at not being able to return home is an émigré's. "My body was returned to me spread-eagled, disjointed, redone, draped in mourning on this white winter's day" (Fanon, 1991: 80).

This depiction seems to raise the celebrated question posed by Gayatri Spivak: "Can the subaltern speak?" Spivak points out that the assumption that subalterns can speak for themselves itself constitutes an act of epistemic violence (for which she blames Foucault and Deleuze). She argues that the conditions that would make it possi-

ble for subalterns to speak for themselves simply do not exist, for example, in a colonial system (Spivak, 2009). The Galicians represented in the NO-DO films are not given the opportunity to speak, and moreover, the cinematic apparatus designed to endorse the regime creates a tangible physicality and an experience recognisable as a *Galician's* experience placed at the service of the political legitimisation of the regime and turned into a folkloric cliché. While a bucolic *muiñeira* arrangement plays in the background, after we have heard the choir sing the aforementioned song from *Ayes de mi tierra*, the “émigré” speaks in first person:

As the years of absence grow, I feel ever more strongly the desire to return to Spain and visit the little homeland. A whole world lived in a dream of the past reappears instantly. The impatient longing to show my wife all those things pushed us at once out onto the street, in search of... Who knows what! Any place!

It is the cliché, the archetype, the anchoring of a complex, political reality in a simple and mundane context through the stereotype of the Galician émigré to provide discursive support to a colonial model in which even subjectivity is colonised, because ultimately, as Bhabha, Fanon, Guha, Spivak, Said and other decolonial theorists point out, the colonised subject is also constructed—also, of course, in the image of himself that is returned to him—and the main discursive element of this process is none other than the stereotype.

The stereotype is not a simplification because it is a false representation of a given reality. It is a simplification because it is an arrested, fixated form of representation that, in denying the play of difference (which the negation through the Other permits), constitutes a problem for the *representation* of the subject (Bhabha, 2004: 107).

Neutralisation by touristification of the political territory

The subject is not the only one who suffers violence through neutralisation in the documentary, as the land itself is subject to the same process.

THE SUBJECT IS NOT THE ONLY ONE WHO SUFFERS VIOLENCE THROUGH NEUTRALISATION, AS THE LAND ITSELF IS SUBJECT TO THE SAME PROCESS

Maria Soliña Barreiro suggests at the beginning of one article that “[t]he landscape emerges when we distance ourselves from the farmland” (Barreiro González, 2018a: 43).⁷ In that article and others (2018b), she offers a detailed analysis of Manuel Arís’s *Un viaje por Galicia* and other correspondence documentaries, arguing that many of these films conform to a narrative model that transforms the land from territory into scenery.

In correspondence films, time and space seem frozen in a mythical dimension that allowed the émigré to confirm with relief that everything in Galicia was just the same, awaiting his return. From the perspective of symbolic anthropology, the migration process could be characterised as a rite of passage “betwixt and between” structural states: between “separation and aggregation”, between the outbound journey and the return (Turner, 1980: 103-123). The problem arises when the migration process is extended beyond what liminality can bear, precisely because it is an inherently finite phase. For many émigrés, the liminal phase became irrevocably structural because they were unable to return, whether out of fear of being judged as failures, due to limited resources or for other reasons (Núñez Seixas, 1998, 2002).

As pointed out in Barreiro González’s studies and the work of Fernando Redondo and Marta Pérez (2018), Arís’s documentary is a series of postcard images of iconic locations, at least until the moment when he breaks away from this landscape narrative to express a dynamic affectivity when he films his own house, his own mother, and his neighbours at work in the fields. In the film’s successive idealised postcard images, time is presented as standing still and the land is

stripped of any historical reading, any experience of conflict, turning into scenery to look at rather than a territory to live in. This recurring idea of representing Galicia as an idyllic landscape fixed in time, primitive, rural, natural, beautiful and always essentialised, was present both in the NO-DO films and in correspondence cinema, as well as in contemporary productions. Advertisements promoting Galicia to tourists today depict stereotypical, essentialist vestiges of the same unaltered scenery, when “Galicia in fact has one of the most intensely ‘humanised’ landscapes in Europe [...]; it is only emigration that facilitated the misleading idea of an ‘empty country’ that has had such a profound impact on the tourists’ fantasy” (Murado, 2013: 30).⁸

The region is presented as so fixed, mythical, virgin, ancient and unchangeable in the NO-DO films—and in correspondence cinema—that it may seem that rather than cinematic images what we are viewing is a series of still photographs or postcard images. In NO-DO, this picture of Galicia presented a pseudo-ethnographic allegory of the *noble savage* who was ultimately civilised, Christianised, disciplined and saved by Franco’s Spain, thereby justifying the colonial project. In emigration cinema, Galicia was displayed with the focus on its unchanging natural beauty rather than its dynamic history, helping to mitigate the frustration of a liminality turned into a structure. The use of photographs frozen in time thus acquires its full meaning.

Photographs may be more memorable than moving images, because they are a neat slice of time, not a flow. Television is a stream of underselected images, each of which cancels its predecessor. Each still photograph is a privileged moment turned into a slim object that one can keep and look at again (Sontag, 2008: 17-18).

Correspondence cinema can be considered a series of filmic photographs of Galicia in the sense that time is trapped in each film shot. This is why Manuel Arís and even the camera operators



Figure 3. Viewing the scenery from Mount Santa Tegra

working for NO-DO use their equipment more like photo cameras than movie cameras. Photographic time effectively slows down cinematographic time—the time that slips away before our eyes—facilitating an emotional uplift on seeing a place anchored in an eternal present that is waiting for our return. But as a dynamic device, the movie camera also helps construct the fantasy of a transported present, a time right now over there on the other side of the ocean: the motion of the film image lends verisimilitude, as it films the present even while freezing it in the static form of a photograph, and it is this moving image that enables the spectator to feel transported into an imagined present.

The landscape in *Aires de mi tierra* is to a large extent frozen, neutralised, depoliticised and feminised. It is the same series of unaltered photographs that prioritise Galicia’s affected folkloric image shown in Arís’s documentary, but in this case framed for tourism. This narrative of a scenic Ga-

THE LANDSCAPE IN AIRES DE MI TIERRA IS TO A LARGE EXTENT WAYS FROZEN, NEUTRALISED, DEPOLITICISED AND FEMINISED

licia packaged for tourists is conveyed in the documentary using the archetype of the émigré as a depoliticised subject, reinforcing the recurrent cliché of a mournful, sentimental Galicia whose émigrés are inevitably *morriñentos* and *choromiqueiros* (Miguélez-Carballeira, 2014). While he sits on a rock atop Mount Santa Tegra to admire the view, the émigré remarks: “We dedicated another day to the scenery, to that wonderful scenery of my land that is the envy of all and a torment in our memories.” The views from Santa Tegra were also used by Aris.

It is not the only place exploited in the documentary and that has continued to be exploited in the years since. Every location (except one) is a geotourism destination: Combarro, a small town on the Pontevedra coast, used *ad nauseum* for tourism promotion, has become an icon of the postcard seaport, preserved like a theme park or souvenir of local folklore. Illa da Toxa (a Galician place name always translated into Spanish in the NO-DO films) serves to show off the hotel infrastructure to the luxury tourist, with high-end accommodations that most émigrés could never afford. A Coruña is presented in the image for only a moment to be depicted as an emigration port. The only places shown in Santiago de Compostela are the main square (Praza do Obradoiro), the Praza das Praterías and the statue of the apostle on the cathedral altarpiece, reminding us that in 1958 Spain was still in the final years of its Catholic nationalist period. Santiago de Compostela appears eternalised under an architectural cloak of plasterboard while the narrator declares: “Santiago! What do the years of my absence mean to you...?” in a rhetorical exercise suggesting that time has stood still.

There is only one filmed location in *Aires de mi tierra* that is not named even as scenery. It is the bucolic fantasy setting where the couple sit down for a picnic on a hilltop with views of the sea. Suddenly, a group of girls dressed in kitsch traditional folk outfits appears unexpectedly (supposedly) on

the hillside. The camera turns around to show us a group of men (also dressed up) arriving on the other side in an “improvised procession”, simulating a chance encounter between two groups of young people in a folkloric Galicia that has never existed anywhere, leaving no doubt that this folk group has been purposefully organized to *perform* for NO-DO. The fact that this is the only stop on the route whose specific location is not mentioned serves the process of fantasy construction well. An unnamed folkloric setting could be anywhere; indeed, it could be every possible place in Galicia where tourists could enjoy an ethnic thematic experience (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2011). Moreover, these folkloric Galician men and women are presented as characters in the same fantasy, dispossessed of their names and their everyday attire and turned into abstract archetypes of an aberrant dream. If their names and the location had been revealed, the *Galaiquista* fantasy would have collapsed under the weight of realism.

There is one location in the film that fulfils a function other than tourism promotion: Vigo. The city of Vigo is shown after the arrival on the small aircraft, making it the first city to appear in the story, and it serves not as a tourist attraction but as a means of legitimising the Franco regime. In Vigo, the émigré as tourist becomes an émigré as legiti-



Figure 4. The émigré and his wife arriving in Galicia

miser of the regime. His travels around this city are limited to a stroll around the port. There are also shots of the fish market and inside factories and shipyards that were probably filmed by NO-DO camera crews under different circumstances, as the couple does not appear in the indoor scenes. The narrator matter-of-factly details the advances and developments in Vigo, depicting it as an example of the economic boom of those years. The most significant aspect of these shots is the disconnection between the strolling couple and the port filled with workers going about their daily routines. The distance and verticality of the physical and spatial relationship established between the couple and what is going on around them exposes the colonial bias that informed the shot. Ultimately, what is represented in the image is a relationship between two observers and the many objects of their observation; two people symbolically above and everybody else below; two people who are supposedly émigrés, but whose physicality disavows that status as what it really shows is a pair of bourgeois invaders into a working class world, a work site and a zone of conflict, to present it to the camera as a mollified territory reduced to a Galician curiosity.

The stroll around Vigo is a paradigm of the violence perpetrated against the subjectified individual as a colonised subject of the Francoist hegemony, presented here as an expatriate on a visit from overseas. Vigo, the only place we see real people engaging in real everyday activities rather than essentialist folklore, is a working class city where the *touristified* émigré tries to convince us that Spain is finally developing and thriving thanks to Franco, while ten minutes later he boards a ship to return to Latin America.

CONCLUSIONS

This article has taken a critical anthropological perspective on the NO-DO documentary *Aires de mi tierra*, using a correspondence film as a contrast frame to analyse the representation of emigration

in cinema. The plotlines of both films are related to Galician emigration to Latin America, but while one is enunciated by an agent directly affected by the phenomenon, the other constructs a violent narrative characteristic of State cinema, with an invented, depoliticised protagonist. Both films offer mythologised journeys around a region that has been turned into frozen scenery, which in Arís's film serves the socio-affective function of depicting the imagined Galicia for an emigrant audience, while Carles Blat's film is propaganda that places the theme of emigration at the service of the State for two purposes: to legitimise the regime and to promote tourism.

Thus, given that Manuel Arís's documentary was informed by real emigration experiences that included the subjective experience of the filmmaker himself, despite its poeticised mournfulness, it succeeds in moving the spectator, while Carles Blat's merely distorts its subject. *Un viaje por Galicia* is ultimately a series of *Galaiquista* clichés, but they are all filmed, narrated and edited by a subaltern in an effort to share his pain, his longing and his feelings of distance with other subalterns. *Aires de mi tierra*, on the other hand, is a documentary produced by an institution of power in a clear operation of verticality and hegemony to further the colonising mission: depoliticising the political subject, depoliticising the historical territory, reducing the culture to folklore and racialising the alterity of the Galician with the sole objective of depicting a colonial territory ripe for invasion by developmentalist tourism and for legitimising the regime.

Of all the films made by Carles Blat in those years, *Aires de mi tierra* is the only one that effectively neutralises the political subject, turning an émigré into a Galician archetype who returns to his homeland as a tourist. It is also the only film that makes deliberate use of the music of oral tradition and poetic creation to reinforce the stereotype of subjugating sentimentality of *Galicianness* in the context of emigration. The stanzas chosen

to this end are not incidental, as they speak metaphorically of the emotions that besiege emigrants separated from their homeland. The use of lines such as “*como a agua busca o río/como o río busca o mar(e)*” [“like water seeking the river/like the river seeking the sea”] or “*airiños da miña terra/airiños levaima a ela*” [“breezes of my land/breezes, life me home”] are a form of cultural (and linguistic) appropriation that sentimentalises and feminises a folkloric version of Galicia essentialised as fragile in opposition to a vigorous, masculinised Spain, in a symbolically violent operation of patriarchal-colonial condescension. In keeping with all of the above, it is also the only film with a poetic title, in contrast to the simple place-name titles of the rest of his filmography.

Aires de mi tierra represents the violent colonial appropriation of Galician emigration in Spanish cinema. It reinforces folkloric stereotypes of Galicia, creating a depoliticised subjectivity and depicting a territory converted into scenery in which all social conflict has been neutralised, with the sole purpose of selling cultural and emotional features in a violent operation of touristification that continues today, objectifying the drama and pain of absence. ■

NOTES

- * This study forms part of the academic research conducted by the Galabra-USC research group.
- 1 Centro Galego de Artes da Imaxe, the Galician region’s film archives.
 - 2 Original Galician: “*distintos monumentos e paraxes cun aparello de 16 mm en cor. [...] O filme mantívose en cartel dous meses e medio durante os que os galegos emigrados peregrinaban ao cine para recoñecer as súas aldeas e comprobar que aínda existía o seu País tal como o lembraban.*”
 - 3 Original Galician: “[*Si me tuveras cariño*]/*habíasme vir buscar(e)/como a agua busca o río/como o río busca o mar(e)*” The first line is cut short. The (e) is a paragoge.
 - 4 Original Galician: “*Airiños, aires aires/airiños da miña terra/airiños, airiños, aires/airiños levaima a ela.*” The li-

nes are from a poem by the 19th-century Galician poet Rosalia de Castro. The English translation used here is by Erin Moure, originally published in the collection *Galician Songs* (Small Stations Press-Xunta de Galicia, 2003).

- 5 Original Galician: “*en vésperas da I Guerra Mundial moraba un continxente de 150.000 galegos na capital arxentina. Iso convertía a Bos Aires, sen esaxeración ningunha, na urbe con maior número de galaicos do planeta, moi por riba de Vigo ou A Coruña pola mesma época.*”
- 6 This refers to the effect of suggestion that spread among younger Galician men when they met returnees who had made their fortune in the New World (Núñez Seixas, 1998).
- 7 Original Galician: “*A paisaxe xorde cando nos distanciamos da terra de labor.*”
- 8 Original Galician: “*Galicia ten, de feito, unha das paisaxes máis intensamente “humanizadas” de Europa [...] é só a emigración a que permitiu esa idea enganosa de “país baleiro” que tan fondamente ten calado na fantasía dos turistas.*”

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(DE)POLITICISING EMIGRATION AND THE ÉMIGRÉ'S RETURN IN THE NO-DO FILM PRODUCTIONS

Abstract

In 1958, the Franco regime's official film production organization, NO-DO, released a documentary in colour directed by Alberto Carles Blat, titled *Aires de mi tierra*. In December of the same year, a colour documentary by Manuel Arís Torres titled *Un viaje por Galicia* [A Trip Around Galicia] premiered at the Gran Mitre cinema in Buenos Aires. While Arís's film belongs to the tradition of "correspondence cinema" (films made by émigrés who returned home temporarily for the purpose of exhibition to the diaspora community abroad), Carles Blat's NO-DO production presents a fictional account of the return of an émigré to Galicia, placing the image at the service of the political legitimisation of Francoist Spain. This article offers an anthropological analysis of these two documentaries, the way in which each one cinematically represents Galician emigration and how NO-DO functioned as an apparatus for the representation of alterity, making use of a *touristified*, subaltern, colonial depiction of the emigre subject and his homeland, thereby feeding the stereotype of a Galicia frozen in time for the purposes of tourism development.

Key words

Emigration; NO-DO; Power; Representation; Subalternity.

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LA (DES)POLITIZACIÓN DE LA EMIGRACIÓN Y DE SU RETORNO EN EL CINE DE NO-DO

Resumen

En el año 1958, el organismo cinematográfico NO-DO, emitió un documental a color dirigido por Alberto Carles Blat titulado *Aires de mi tierra*. En diciembre del mismo año se estrenaba en el cine Gran Mitre de Buenos Aires un documental a color de Manuel Arís titulado *Un viaje por Galicia*. El de Arís se encuadra en el «cine de correspondencia» (películas filmadas por emigrantes temporalmente retornados con el objetivo de ser proyectadas en la diáspora ante la emigración). El de Carles Blat en NO-DO ficciona el retorno de un emigrante a Galicia poniendo la imagen al servicio de la legitimación política en la España franquista. Este artículo es una reflexión antropológica sobre ambos documentales, la manera en la que uno y otro representaron a la emigración gallega en el cine y cómo NO-DO funcionó como dispositivo de representación de la alteridad, haciendo un uso turistificado, subalterno y colonial del sujeto emigrado y de su territorio de origen, alimentando el estereotipo de una Galicia congelada al servicio del desarrollismo turístico.

Palabras clave

Emigración; NO-DO; poder; representación; subalternidad.

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