DIALOGUE
Susana de Sousa Dias

(DIS)AGREEMENTS
Archives–in–the–Making,
Vulnerable Communities
and Migration

NOTEBOOK
**The Migrant Archive:
Studies on Migration
through Film Archives**

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CINEMA, MIGRATION AND ARCHIVES*

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CINEMA AND MIGRATION

Throughout its history, cinema has been associated with migration. It was, after all, the first form of audiovisual entertainment to transcend national boundaries and language barriers. In this sense, filmmaking has always been an essentially mobile medium, in terms of both production (from the first Lumière camera operators to the large number of immigrants who have worked in Hollywood, for example) and consumption (with huge communities of displaced people and exiles being among the first regular film-goers around the world, using the public event of a film screening as an opportunity to come together) (Allen, Gomery, 1995). In general, however, apart from a few studies of specific cases (e.g. the massive emigration of German directors and cinematographers to Hollywood during the interwar period), it would not be until the 1990s that film scholars would begin focusing on phenomena of human

mobility as a key to understanding the history of cinema. Research in this area would be associated specifically with multiculturalism and post-colonialism, with particular importance given to studies focusing on exilic, diasporic and migrant experiences (Shohat, Stam, 1994; Naficy, 1999, 2001). It was no coincidence that these studies should have begun to appear around the same time as the rise to prominence of work by professional filmmakers who established filmic discourses related to their own experience (or that of their families) as migrants to countries with consolidated film industries, such as the United Kingdom, France, Germany and the United States. Collectively, these filmmakers have developed a set of concepts that are essential for making sense of the relationship between cinema and migration in clearly political terms, both in relation to access to representations of migrants and at the level of the potential development of alternative modes of production and distribution to the hegemonic

model established by Hollywood and the media corporations. At the same time, the emergence—also in the 1990s—of studies of appropriation and found footage (Bonet, 1993; Russell, 1999) as historiographic, creative, narrative ways of exploring migration flows constituted another pivotal point on which the shared knowledge of the possibilities for subversive readings of the archive would turn.

THE INCLUSION OF PRODUCTIONS MADE BY AND ABOUT MIGRANTS IN TRADITIONAL FILM ARCHIVES IS FAR FROM A STRAIGHTFORWARD OR SIMPLE PROCESS

In this context, the inclusion of productions made by and about migrants in traditional film archives is far from a straightforward or simple process. Established as national institutions, film archives have been conceived with the objective of constructing and preserving the unity of a national narrative, a mission undermined by the tensions caused by human mobility. It is therefore clear that migration phenomena, involving both emigrants and immigrants, tend to destabilise and challenge the territorial logic on which the nation-state is founded.

In our era, in view of the consequences of human displacements, the collection, preservation, study and exhibition of these productions has acquired the utmost importance. Both through historiographic approaches focusing on the study of "film exile networks" (Carter, 2021) and through attention to contemporary migration movements, the interaction of cinema, migration and archives has been considered (albeit in less depth than might be expected) from the transnational, cosmopolitan, global and decolonial perspectives that have dominated a whole sector of film studies for the past few decades.[1]

For our purposes here, the triangulation of cinema, migration and archives has been approached through an exploration of the tensions existing between the codifying mandate of the archive and the volatility and dispersion resulting from human and material mobility associated with migration. On the one hand, it has been founded on a critical review of the role of national archives, in a kind of reflexivity that sometimes originates directly within the institution and aims to identify the very basic essence of an archive (cinematic, but also historical, artistic, literary, administrative, etc.) and the principles of "archivability" (Mbembe, 2002). From this perspective, the archive is in itself a "meta-intervention" (Appadurai, 2003: 24), wherein the process of collection of material it holds already forms part of (and is itself) a reflection on public activities and processes of selection, cataloguing, preservation and cultural promotion. In consonance with the key issues explored in archive studies since around the mid-1990s (if we take works such as Derrida's *Archive Fever* [1995] as a benchmark), any academic, creative or institutional investigation of the archive is based on considering or reconsidering the following questions: Who is archiving? What is being archived? What are the principles governing the archiving of certain materials? For what and for whom is it being archived? Who accesses the archive and how do they use it? In these questions it is easy to identify an opening for decolonial and postcolonial reflections in which institutional criticism takes a dominant role, resulting in the activation of all kinds of archives, as will be discussed below. For now, suffice it to say that in the case of film archives there is a call to develop "a more diverse conception of 'heritage'" based on principles "that transcend traditional conceptions revolving around national cinema, auteurist approaches, and film-as-art discourse" (Fossati, 2021: 130).

After all, migrant experiences themselves are often unstable, and as Appadurai observes in a text that we will return to below, "the diasporic

story is always understood to be one of breaks and gaps" (Appadurai, 2003: 21). With this in mind, and in view of the nature of these migration experiences, it is hardly surprising that there is no single archive capable of compiling and uniting all migrant stories; instead, as the studies and conversations included in this issue demonstrate, the marks left by filmmakers and films (both professional and amateur) dealing with migration are scattered (often in incomplete form) in different repositories, film libraries and other types of archives all over the world.

THE MIGRANT ARCHIVE

The concept of the migrant archive is therefore used here as a way of approaching the vast range of possibilities offered by the study of film footage produced by displaced persons. For example, previous publications have analysed videos made by undocumented African migrants on their way to Europe (Fernández Labayen & Gutierrez, 2022), in an effort to understand how many of these random recordings, made under conditions of forced (im)mobility and in situations of danger and uncertainty, give rise to a (self-)archive of their own wanderings, and, as suggested in the name of one of the associations contributing to this issue, an archive of migrant memories.

In short, as has been made clear in previous publications that have used the term "migrant archive" (Appadurai, 2003; Lazo, 2010), the inclusion of migration experiences in discussions about archives brings questions of identity and memory into play; moreover, the migrant archive is "characterized by the presence of voice, agency and debate, rather than of mere reading, reception and interpellation" (Appadurai, 2003: 22).

This activation of the political dimension of the archive (in terms of both the material archived and the archiving processes) effectively expands the parameters of film studies related to migrant cinema, which thus not only facilitate analytical readings of on-screen representations in different film texts, but also help us to understand films made by migrants as "ways for the immigrants to find a context for themselves" in which "film is just one part in a cultural process of creating locality, a future context" (Andersson & Sundholm, 2019: 5, 14).

We therefore seek to position this issue of *L'Atalante. Revista de estudios cinematográficos* right on the intersection where the analysis of and engagement with migration phenomena connect with film studies and archives. The articles contained here offer a series of findings in film archive studies in recent years, either through the activation of pre-existing archives, or through the creation and consolidation of new digital archives focusing on migration issues. These findings are listed below, as a guide to this monographic issue on cinema, archives and migration:

- The archive should be understood as a "point of origin" (Prelinger, 2010). In other words, archives are not a destination that marks a conclusive series of filmmaking practices related to migration, but a departure point that invites debate and creation in relation to questions of national memory (or memories), heritage, a sense of community and intersectional issues.
- This notion of the archive as a starting point is precisely what makes it possible to stress the vital importance of "activating the archive" (Carter, 2022; Paalman, Fossati & Masson, 2021). Specifically, the importance of the archive lies not only in its potential "heritage" value, but in how it is used in order to express that potential in different ways and with different meanings. One example of these activations are of course the various films made with archive footage, from both public and private collections, which share stories and meanings related to colonial processes, exile or forced displacement (see the articles

by Berzosa & Cerdán; Íscar, Sánchez and Villanueva Baselga; and Fernández Labayen & Oroz in this issue). In this way, archives become cultural producers (Prelinger, 2010: 173) while also being open to other, different types of intervention.[2]

This potential of archives is intrinsically associated with what has been referred to as their "aspirational" quality (Appadurai, 2003; Anselmo, 2021), a notion that is especially important in the case of records on human mobility. Whether forced or voluntary, human displacement is imbued with an idea of the future, an aspirational impulse towards betterment (professional, social, emotional) that is palpable in all of the traces and marks left behind by the displaced person. Obviously, in the filmic and cinematic forms in which this aspiration is expressed, utopia coexists with disappointment, frustration with wistfulness, the hope of reaching a new land with the longing for friends left behind, even if the memories are hazy and blended with idealisation or invention (as made evident in two articles included in this issue, one authored by Castro de Paz and Héctor Paz and the other by Beatriz Busto Miramontes, dealing with filmed correspondence by Galician emigrants).

This aspirational quality makes it possible to posit ways in which archival practice can "contribute to some form of 'public' or 'common' good" (Paalman, Masson & Fossati, 2021: 5). While a perhaps excessively celebratory reading might lead us to believe that films and archives about migration have the potential to act as mediators in the political sense of the term, exposing and reconciling the interests of the different parties to international conflicts (Cerdán & Fernández Labayen, 2015), the use of archives in projects of reparation,

self-representation and to raise awareness of the imbalances caused by colonialism form part of this impulse.

As noted above, the transience associated with migration is reflected in the transnational and global nature of migrant archives, which are fragmented and scattered across a wide variety of repositories. This poses numerous complications for studying what contributors to this issue have described as "wandering archives" (Wood & García López), "unruly objects" (Sundholm) or "artefacts on suspension" (Carter & Kent), whose dispersed nature gives rise to a number of historiographic and methodological challenges. Researchers thus need to work with methods of "multidirectional assemblage" (Carter & Kent, in this issue), but also to forge partnerships and collaborations that can facilitate an exchange of knowledge between the different communities implicated by the migrant archive (Prelinger, 2010; Paalman, Massson & Fossati, 2021).

These five points sum up what we believe to be some of the most interesting and meaningful perspectives for conducting research on the connections between cinema, migration and archives. They view the archive not merely as a site of state power but as a space of opposition and cultural appropriation (Burton, 2006; Stoler, 2009). However, these calls to action should not be understood as naive interpretations resulting from an ignorance of the politics involved in any act of encoding and (re-)writing of these archives. On the contrary, all of these positions are based on an understanding of the archive as a "regulated, connecting, and converging apparatus; a conceptual metaphor that reminds us that we are dealing with social practices and material premises where subjects and objects meet and interact, tearing against each other" (Sundholm, 2021: 93).

NOTEBOOK

This monographic issue draws on our work on the research project "Cinematic Cartographies of Mobility in the Hispanic Atlantic". For more than four years, we have been working together with colleagues at different universities in Europe and the Americas on research into the ways that migration processes have been inscribed in film, both in economic terms (i.e., the displacement of film industry professionals) and in aesthetic terms (specifically, the ways that migration flows have been represented and the stylistic choices made by filmmakers in their on-screen depictions of those flows). Although our geopolitical focus has prioritised the Atlantic region, with special attention on the ways that Ibero-American filmmakers have participated in making migration visible, the context has necessarily been expanded to include other dynamics of migrant waves that often cross Ibero-American territories on their way to and from other regions.

One aim of this issue is to open migrant archives up to all kinds of transnational connections, critical historiographies and political practices that reflect and act on processes of creation, consolidation, preservation and dissemination of migration cinema. In this sense, in keeping with Giovanna Fossati & Annie van den Oever's (2016) proposal to understand the film archive as a "research lab", the different sections of this issue dedicated to the "migrant archive" should be understood as different scientific and creative frameworks and experiences that bring together the practices of academics, creators, archivists, cultural managers and artists in the area of film heritage and migration.

Firstly, the Notebook section offers eight articles that address different phenomena and historical moments involving the intersection of cinema, migration and archives. Thematically, these eight studies explore the activation of amateur film collections in different Spanish public film libraries through the production of documentaries

such as *Diarios del exilio* [Exile Diaries] (Irene Gutiérrez, 2019) and *Memorias de Ultramar* [Overseas Memoirs] (Carmen Bellas & Alberto Berzosa, 2021) in the article by Berzosa and Cerdán that opens the section; "correspondence cinema" as a form of filmmaking used to weave together memories and communication between Galicians who emigrated overseas and those who stayed behind in Galicia (in the articles by José Luis Castro de Paz & Héctor Paz and by Beatriz Busto Miramonte); the transnational archives of the anti-fascist filmmaker Herbert Kline (Woods & García López); the relationship between the (re)production of colonial images and the colonialism of power and its re-readings in contemporary documentary (Íscar, Sánchez & Villanueva Baselga); the haphazard wanderings that shaped the different versions of the Finnish-Swedish-Turkish film *Ulkomaalainen/ Utlänningen/Yabanci* [Foreigner] by the Turkish director Muammer Özer, shot in 1981 between Turkey, Finland and Sweden (Sundholm); the "film-archive-in motion" of the Sudanese artist Hussein Shariffe, whose work in exile is scattered across archives in different countries in Africa, the Americas and Europe (in the article by Carter & Kent); and finally, an analysis of the use of family, anthropological and public archives in three recent Spanish documentaries: *África 815* (Pilar Monsell, 2014), *De los nombres de las cabras* [On the Names of Goats] (Silvia Navarro, Miguel G. Morales, 2019) and *Anunciaron tormenta* [A Storm Was Coming] (Javier Fernández Vázquez, 2020) in the article by Fernández Labayen & Oroz.

As the outline above shows, the geographic range and the variety of archives consulted offers a sample of the methodological and material complexities involved in studying migrant cinema. Apart from the analysis of representation, the articles featured in this issue explore and investigate archival materials including but by no means limited to those of Filmoteca Española, Filmoteca Canaria, and Filmoteca Valenciana, private collections like those of Miguel Vives Munné, Antonio

Portabella-Camps and Ana María Amparo García Vázquez, the archives of the NO-DO newsreels, the archives at Centro Galego de Artes da Imaxe (CGAI), the Spanish Refugee Relief Association (SRRA) at Columbia University, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM), the John Steinbeck Personal Papers at Stanford University, and the Swedish Film Institute, the archives of the Canarian anthropologist Diego Cuscoy, and the personal collections of Hussein Shariffe. This partial outline of sources consulted by the different researchers who have contributed to this issue also reflects the potential of scholarship on the migrant archive to offer a better understanding of cinema as a social, cultural, aesthetic and political phenomenon, as well as the different stories told by the archival materials (and the places that preserve them) (Sundholm, 2021). At the same time, a more in-depth review of the research processes undertaken by the contributors to this Notebook would almost certainly give rise to a productive debate about the methodologies and the personal and professional relationships developed in this type of research on cinema, archives and migration. In this respect, it is impossible to ignore the richness and variety of techniques and approaches used not only by academics but also by filmmakers and archivists, documentalists and cultural managers to obtain, preserve and exhibit these archives on migration. Although this is not the place to delve into the complexities of metadata, archival organisation, the idiomatic and linguistic issues, the human and material resources available to preserve these materials or other key concerns of what could be described as a material history of the archive, simply acknowledging this heterogeneity is sufficient to underscore the need to develop strategies for collaboration and to broaden our vision of how to work with the migrant archive.

In the interests of exploring the field to get a sense of the specific nature of the methods and processes for working with migrant archives,

IN THE INTERESTS OF EXPLORING THE FIELD TO GET A SENSE OF THE SPECIFIC NATURE OF THE METHODS AND PROCESSES FOR WORKING WITH MIGRANT ARCHIVES, THE "DIALOGUE" SECTION OFFERS A CONVERSATION WITH THE PORTUGUESE FILMMAKER SUSANA DE SOUSA DIAS

the "Dialogue" section offers a conversation with the Portuguese filmmaker Susana de Sousa Dias. With an acclaimed international filmography notable for works such as *Natureza morta* [Still Life] (2005), *48* (2009) and *Fordlândia Malaise* (2019), de Sousa Dias has attracted considerable interest in her use and activation of archive materials such as the photographic records of the Portuguese police force and the colonial archives of the Cinemateca Portuguesa film library. As Iván Villarmea Álvarez and Nieves Limón Serrano indicate in their interview with the filmmaker, de Sousa Dias reactivates the archives she uses to allow the victims of the Salazar regime to speak and to propose an approach to the archive that includes the voices of people who were recorded by the political authorities for the purpose of stigmatising and condemning them. Through a detailed exploration of her entire filmography, right up to her recent film *Journey to the Sun* (Viagem ao Sol, 2021), Villarmea and Limón offer a fascinating conversation on the formal features of de Sousa Dias's films, on the levels of sound, image and editing, as well as her work methods. Questions such as the use of zoom to reframe the photographs filmed, the use of a flicker effect in certain sequences, slowing down and speeding up the shot and other framing and editing strategies lead to some incipient reflections on ways of working with archives. At the same time, the Portuguese documentary maker's observations about the nature and content of archives—including public and private, state and

corporate, colonial and police collections—construct a clear vision of her epistemological and artistic interventions, which have consolidated her reputation as one of the most consistent, rigorous and committed filmmakers when it comes to opening archives up to contemporary meanings.

The issue closes with the "(Dis)Agreements" section, coordinated by Miguel Fernández Labayen and Elena Oroz. The conversation brings together members of four research projects (Archive/Counter-Archive, Make Film History, Ithaca: Interconnecting Histories and Archives for Migrant Agency and Reel Borders) and one association (Archivio delle memorie migranti), all committed to the preservation, creation and restoration of mostly audiovisual archives associated with migration and subaltern communities made freely available online. The dialogue with the directors of these initiatives, based in Canada, the United Kingdom, Italy and Belgium, explores technical and ethical aspects, relations with their grassroots communities, transfer activities and the difficulties associated with preservation in the digital environment of certain types of film that are inherently unstable. In general terms, these initiatives are based on a critical approach to the archive, considering different ways to "bring archives into communities and communities into archives" (Prelinger, 2010: 172). In a context that in the last twenty years has been marked by the growth and expansion of (digital) collective and community archives independent of government initiatives (Appadurai, 2003; Schaefer, 2007), the projects presented here constitute valuable examples of the productive intersection between the broader understandings of the use of film archives in recent years, both in terms of exhibition and access, and in terms of their inclusion as an audiovisual heritage that transcends national boundaries and the essential educational dimension of cinema of mobility in the context of studies of media literacy and film production training (Fernández Labayen, Gutierrez & Moya Jorge, 2022; Fernández Labayen, Díaz, Dueñas, Lomas, Moya Jorge & Gutierrez, 2021).

Without doubt, as reflected in all of the articles featured in this issue of *L'Atalante. Revista de estudios cinematográficos*, the most interesting aspect of this new field of research lies in the progress made by researchers to connect and transfer knowledge to the social sphere, along with their traditional commitment to rigorous analysis attentive to the histories of the medium and to the recognition, evaluation and use of archives with the institutions, agencies, individuals and communities that preserve them and give them meaning. Driven by the eminently social focus of research on mobility, film scholars analysing cinema and migration are now advocating a critical intervention in the public space. This intervention is and should be underpinned by the creation of a "living archive" out of sounds and images of mobility (Grossman, O'Brien, 2007), while responding to the need to compile, analyse and render visible the migration practices mediated by cinema. It is therefore our hope that the reflections, investigations and opinions presented in this issue on the dimensions of heritage, ethics, education and politics in relation to archives, cinema and migration may be built on in future research both

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THE MOST INTERESTING ASPECT OF THIS NEW FIELD OF RESEARCH LIES IN THE PROGRESS MADE BY RESEARCHERS TO CONNECT AND TRANSFER KNOWLEDGE TO THE SOCIAL SPHERE, ALONG WITH THEIR TRADITIONAL COMMITMENT TO RIGOROUS ANALYSIS ATTENTIVE TO THE HISTORIES OF THE MEDIUM AND TO THE RECOGNITION, EVALUATION AND USE OF ARCHIVES WITH THE INSTITUTIONS, AGENCIES, INDIVIDUALS AND COMMUNITIES THAT PRESERVE THEM AND GIVE THEM MEANING

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in and outside Spain. Clearly, the explorations of archives on questions of migration and human mobility will be a particularly rewarding topic for a multitude of studies and interventions demonstrating the contemporary importance of research on the connection between film archives and the past and present histories of displaced persons.

NOTES

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1 The historiographic analysis of filmmakers' wanderings around the world has fortunately given rise to some of the most productive contributions to Spanish film studies in recent years. Key works in this research have been the studies of archives related to the migration of actresses and directors (Aguilar & Cabrerizo, 2021; Fibla Gutiérrez, 2021; Parés, 2011).

2 Other examples include the various initiatives launched by Arsenal-Institut für Film und Videokunst in Berlin on the "Living Archive" (discussed in the article by Erica Carter and Laurence Kent in this issue, and accessible at <https://www.arsenal-berlin.de/archiv-distribution/archivprojekte/)> and by the Eye Filmmuseum and the University of Amsterdam for the conference "Activating the Archive: Audio-Visual Collections and Civic Engagement, Political Dissent and Societal Change", held in 2018. Projects like Archive/Counter-Archive and the association Archivio delle memorie migranti, both of which are discussed in the "(Dis)Agreements" section, also form part of this turn towards the social activation of archives.

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CINEMA, MIGRATION AND ARCHIVES

Abstract

This article considers the relationship between cinema, migration and archives. Based on a historiographical approach, it explores the ways that archives of very different types have become key spaces for research and artistic creation related to human displacement and the consequences of colonialism. In this way, the notion of archive and its traditional relationship with the nation-state is challenged and redefined through the blurring of national and regional boundaries by migration experiences. In line with recent approaches to archival studies and migration studies, the article posits the idea of the migrant archive as a way of examining and activating the social, political, and material issues underlying all archives, arguing for the need to reconsider and question the relationship of the archive with human mobility flows through research and film production, and at the same time calling for public debate (in both academic and cinematic circles) about the mechanisms of control, the rationales of cultural heritage and the processes of past and present writing on migration and its representation in archives.

Key words

Migrant archive; Film archives; Migration; Exile; Colonialism.

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CINE, MIGRACIÓN Y ARCHIVOS

Resumen

Este artículo aborda la relación entre el cine, la migración y los archivos. A partir de una aproximación historiográfica, el texto explora las formas en que archivos de muy distinto tipo se han convertido en espacios fundamentales para la investigación y la creación artística sobre los desplazamientos humanos y las consecuencias del colonialismo. De esta manera, la noción de archivo y su tradicional relación con cuestiones nacionales se ve cuestionada y desbordada a partir del ensanchamiento de los límites estatales y territoriales por parte de las experiencias migrantes. En línea con recientes aproximaciones al estudio de los archivos y las migraciones, el artículo propone la noción del archivo migrante como una forma de afrontar y activar las problemáticas cuestiones sociales, políticas y materiales que subyacen a todo archivo. Así pues, el texto argumenta sobre la necesidad de revisar y cuestionar el archivo, en su relación con los flujos de movilidad humana, a través de la investigación y la producción fílmica. Asimismo, se promueve el debate público (académico y cinematográfico) sobre los mecanismos de control, las lógicas patrimoniales y los procesos de escritura pasada y presente sobre los procesos migratorios y su materialización en los archivos.

Palabras clave

Archivo migrante; archivos fílmicos; migración; exilio; colonialismo.

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THE MIGRANT ARCHIVE: STUDIES ON MIGRATION THROUGH FILM ARCHIVES

EXILES AND COLONISTS IN THE FIRST PERSON: THE FAMILY ARCHIVE AND ITS RECENT (RE)INTERPRETATIONS IN SPAIN[1]

ALBERTO BERZOSA
JOSETXO CERDÁN

Film archives are complex institutions, characterised by the coexistence of many levels of management, involving material that carries the weight of history and territorial identities. Notwithstanding the national or regional status of most filmic artefacts, it is worth remembering that filmmaking, at least in its early years, was transnational by definition, and in most countries around the world the idea of a national or regional cinema took decades to develop. This adds a further complication to the multiple responsibilities associated with the transfer of this cultural heritage, which ranges from the preservation of the film footage that has survived the passage of time to exhibition programming or the increasingly prominent question of education. For years, one of the biggest challenges faced by film libraries has been the management of family collections of films made in substandard formats with amateur approaches. Such films are usually limited to showing the lifestyles of private individuals, their celebrations and domestic dynamics, projecting an idealised image of the family. But they may also document painful and controversial episodes in a country's history, such as exile or the colonial past of the 20th century. In such cases, the complexities associated with "cinema of mobility", which in a way make these films harder to classify due to their constantly changing nature, are added to difficulties in the location and handling of these documents in political and territorial terms. Film libraries have addressed these issues by adopting various strategies. Recently, for example, the Cinemateca Portuguesa film archive, which may be useful for comparison with the Spanish case given the historical similarities between Spain and Portugal over the past century (a long, fascist-leaning dictatorship followed in the mid-1970s by a process of transition—revolutionary in Portugal's case and reformist in Spain's—that would mark each country's political evolution in the decades that followed), has

promoted its colonial film collections through a tribute to their curator, Joana Pimentel (Pimentel, 2020). However, the focus of these collections is on the colonial question rather than on their household origins, no doubt because of the weight of the former in Portugal's transition to democracy in the 1970s. These collections thus contain footage of diverse origins with images of the Portuguese colonies. Another potential case for comparison is the *Archivo Memoria* (Memory Archive) at Mexico's Cineteca Nacional, a project launched in 2010 and still active today, involving the indiscriminate collection of home movies by the institution with the idea of

> preserving images that shape our social memory and raising awareness of its importance through an extensive program of preservation and access. Beyond "saving" these films, the purpose of the project is to reimagine the archive as a place for creation: to conceive of its activities as a means of creating new understandings and new creative projects through the reuse of these moving pictures (Archivo Memoria, 2021).

In a country where the displacement of communities continues to be an often painful reality, there can be no doubt as to the key role these collections could play in terms of mobility. The case of Spain's film archive, Filmoteca Española, is also unique. In recent years, its curators have been giving special attention to home movies as a proactive approach to focusing on the question of Spain's film heritage. These domestic film collections include footage related to exile, mainly involving Spanish citizens who were forced to flee the country after the Civil War (1936-1939), but also related to the Spanish colonies, particularly Spain's possessions in Africa, which were given up over the course of the 20th century. This article explores how these collections have been managed by Filmoteca Española in recent years, from a perspective positioned at the intersection between the specificity of cinema of mobility and the issues of the contemporary archive.

ON MOBILITY, FILM ARCHIVES AND HOMELESS IMAGES

Nobody would deny that movement from one place to another has been an unavoidable reality of human history since the age of the first hunters and gatherers. And it is equally true that as the centuries passed, mobility began to give way to settlements, and that the modern State, with increasingly firm borders and stricter controls on movement, sounded the death knell for nomadic culture. Yet paradoxically, the geopolitical conditions created by imbalances between nations at the same time have given rise to human displacements that are increasingly being viewed in negative terms. Nevertheless, ever since its birth in the 19th century, the principle of mobility has been an inherent part of cinema, as an heir to the trajectories initiated by the magic lantern in the 16th century and developed by the railway in the 18th (Crary, 2008). Whether as spectacle or as scientific apparatus, from the outset cinema seemed to be designed to move from one place to another and reveal this hybrid quality: to travel further, to grow as an industry, and to help confirm and promote the advances of science in far-flung lands (Elena, 1996). Certain specific episodes, such as Aleksander Medvedkin's cinetrain in the 1930s in the Soviet Union, and more general trends, such as the rise of international co-productions for the purpose of expanding the film industry in Europe in the late 1950s, have become particularly popular case studies in the scholarly literature on the subject.

At the same time, as a result of the paradox mentioned above, the history of cinema and mobility is a history filled with complicating twists and turns. Some have to do with negative views of mobility, while others are related to the scale of the medium itself. In the case of the former,

it must not be overlooked that at the very heart of displacement in cinema are reflections of the negative interpretations that have emerged in the context of modernity, related mainly to the trauma inherent in processes such as colonialism and exile. As for the latter, the scale of the medium is reduced in the case of films made outside the mainstream, in non-professional formats such as 8mm, 9.5mm, Super-8, or even 16mm. In such films, the point of view is located outside the context of the industry to take up a position in the realm of family life and of amateur filmmaking. These two considerations effectively multiply the narratives, so that a univocal history is augmented into a multitude of voices telling different life stories, intersecting with the complex plotlines woven by individual, family and collective identities. And moreover, when decades have passed, it is no longer the ones who recorded the images who mediate the memory, but the generations after them, rendering matters even more complex, as will be shown below. In this context, the issue and the institution of the archive becomes essential.

As we enter the third decade of the 21st century, it is striking to note that despite the importance that contemporary society gives to moving images, the film archive continues to be the most undervalued—and therefore underused—of all document repositories of the past century. But this is not solely or even mainly a problem affecting filmmakers or those engaged in film studies in the broadest sense of the term. The problem is worse among historians, anthropologists, sociologists, art historians and cultural scholars. Cinema, mainly but not exclusively through its archives, directly documents the historical events of the past century: whether our perspective is top-down or bottom-up, from the epicentre or from what has been more or less agreed and accepted as the margins. Cinema was there and today it is the film archives that store and preserve all those images (at least, those that have survived), wait-

ing to be viewed, interpreted, and (re)defined. And in the case of displacements, there is probably no better repository for understanding the 20th century with its many twists and turns and its many points of view than the library of moving images, especially when those images are the product of family or even individual filmmaking rather than the film industry.

As part of the so-called "heritage turn" that has defined the activity of film libraries since the late 1980s (Costa, 2004), collections of homemade films in substandard formats have gradually acquired a larger presence in archive collections, being rightfully recognised as an essential part of a national or regional audiovisual heritage. The collection of this material, and particularly of films produced in exile or in the colonies, poses numerous challenges for film archivists. In particular, it raises a number of critical questions that have been affecting the archives for at least two decades: the legal complexity of managing the rights to deposit the images, and the rights to the images themselves entailed in the dissemination of the footage; the challenge for restoration teams dealing with films that arrive in the archives in precarious condition; the delicate question of how to reconcile this type of amateur, intrahistorical filmmaking with the exhibition policies of film libraries (given that they are films that were made exclusively for private family viewing); and the problems sometimes associated with the historical episodes documented in the images if they touch on unresolved questions of national identity or issues that are in some way taboo (Costa, 2004; García-Casado, Alberich-Pascual, 2014).

In the Spanish case, these challenges have become especially thought-provoking in the context of the initiatives proposed in recent years by Filmoteca Española, implemented in collaboration with any public film archives that have been willing (and able) to take part with their home movie collections. In conjunction with these initi-

atives, some definitive policies have been adopted to expand access to this material, to recover the heritage it represents, to educate the public about its social significance and to find ways of exhibiting it. An example of these initiatives is the program implemented from 2018 to 2021 to recover episodes of Spanish history that still cause friction today, based on working with home movie footage located in different public film archives, whatever institution they may belong to, under the coordination of Filmoteca Española. This program resulted in the production of a trilogy of films. The first, Elena Oroz and Xosé Prieto Souto's *Vestigios en Super-8* [Vestiges on Super-8] (2018), was made on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the enactment of the Spanish Constitution that laid the foundations for the country's transition to democracy after the Franco dictatorship, using amateur footage—in some cases filmed with clearly militant objectives—that documents the country's political sea change through the private lives of its people. The other two films were Irene Gutiérrez's *Diarios del exilio* [Diaries of Exile] (2019) and Carmen Bellas and Alberto Berzosa's *Memorias de Ultramar* [Overseas Memoirs] (2021). These last two films will be discussed in detail below, as they consist precisely of images of mobility, dealing with exile in the first case and the colonies in the second. However, before delving into Filmoteca Española's policies for its home movie collections and examining the cases of these two most recent productions, some conceptual clarification about this type of material is in order.

The home movie footage recovered and preserved in film archives is worthy of study because it represents a bottom-up view located at the very eye of the hurricane of history, but without a specific historical objective beyond recording important episodes in the lives of those who filmed them, their friends and loved ones, given that this was the potential audience that these films were intended for. Despite the generic classification

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of footage like this as a kind of grassroots cinema, it is important to acknowledge that access to filming and exhibition equipment took a long time to be democratised, and that therefore this bottom-up view has a clear class-based element. Not everybody had the resources to buy the necessary equipment (camera, projector, splicer, acetone, etc.), or the material required to shoot the footage (the film, which would also subsequently need to be processed in professional labs). Nor did everyone have the leisure time necessary to learn how to make films. Moreover, there is still a need for detailed analysis of the strong gender bias that characterises this type of filmmaking, as reflected in a manual published in 1973, translated into Spanish in the early 1980s, which contains statements like the following: "[e]quipped with a camera, the student, the working youth, the adolescent or the adult male—in short, anyone—will enjoy pleasant surprises and great satisfaction if they dedicate themselves to making 8mm films [*sic*]" (Lafrance, 1980: 10).

There is a clear connection between footage taken by people in exile and films made by colonists. For different historical reasons, both have been uprooted from a homeland or place of reference. It is important to bear in mind that both types of images have an aesthetic similar to that of other amateur films, based on similar princi-

ples of non-professional production for a private audience. However, although they share these limitations on circulation and target audience with other types of home-made productions, domestic images of exile and of the colonies possess a much more powerful quality in which uprootedness and deterritorialisation play an essential role that needs to be taken into account, offering a vision not only of a private, closed world but also of the world outside it, a somewhat strange and/or exotic environment, while the political events and economic realities of each time and place seep into that vision with an especially emphatic effect.

At the same time, the ontological differences between images of exile and colonial images are very clear: while the first depict individuals who have been forced to flee their country for whatever reason, the second are the work of people who form part of the imposed rule of a metropolis over another territory. This is why exile images fit well into the various conceptualisations of what is known as "accented cinema" or "minor cinema" (Andersson, Sundholm, 2019: 21-33) posited by post-colonial theorists, while images filmed by colonists, despite their many similarities with exile images, usually fall outside these categories. However, the focus of this study is on the idea of the story of individuals in their private world, over and above any institutional visions of the social realities themselves. There is no doubt that the two perspectives—institutional and private—ultimately overlap and intertwine, and there may even be a clear transfer of the institutional narrative into the family narrative (which may be more obvious in the case of colonial film collections), but it is precisely in the places where that transfer fails that these films are of the greatest interest. And those failures usually arise out of the idea—and, especially, the feeling—of uprootedness. Beyond their similarities and differences, it is evident that the images both of exiles and of colonists are in a way symptomatic of the phe-

nomenon of homelessness that philosophers as diverse as Martin Heidegger and György Lukács identified as one of the key characteristics of the modern human, and therefore, of the cultural products of modernity (Demos, 2013).

The logic and violence of the archive (Derrida, 1997), including the audiovisual archive, which on the one hand can be traced back to the encyclopaedia and the museum, and on the other is marked by the neoliberal crisis afflicting the contemporary public sphere (García-Casado, Alberich-Pascual, 2014), may often prove inoperative for the type of images described above. However, as noted at the beginning of this article, in recent years film libraries have been on the hunt for strategies and resources that can help them take a bold and effective approach to the points of friction that can arise in terms of preservation, accessibility, transfer and memory in the efforts to store, protect and catalogue images like these, created in the context of homelessness. Filmoteca Española offers a good case study for this.

AMATEUR CINEMA IN FILMOTECA ESPAÑOLA: THE COLLECTIONS

Major public archives like Filmoteca Española operate in a context which, paradoxically, could be described as disadvantageous for the development of collections of films that fall outside mainstream film industry production (what is known as national cinema). Even in the context of film industry production itself, the policies of the major public archives are defined by a need to limit the scope of action to canonical works of national cinema, which they undoubtedly help to construct with their policies of recovery, preservation and dissemination. Other productions, including works of amateur cinema, have historically been largely ignored. Although, as noted above, the heritage turn that began in the 1980s brought more attention to collections outside the canon of films produced for theatres, it is unde-

niable that the major archives, including Filmoteca Española, have been slow in reacting to the change. In fact, it is important to point out that Filmoteca Española has never initiated any specific campaigns like those of other public film libraries (such as the libraries of the Basque Country, Andalusia, Valencia and Extremadura, to name four singular examples) to recover amateur film footage that could chart an audiovisual map of the territory. In Catalonia, on the other hand, the development of such a map, both geographic and political, has focused not so much on home movies as on the important amateur film movement that was particularly active in the region from the 1920s to the 1950s.

With the above in mind, we seek here to establish a categorisation of the relationships between home movies and amateur films according to a different taxonomy from the one traditionally adopted. A hundred years ago, in the second decade of the 20ᵗʰ century, the term "amateur film" was coined (and associated to it the term *"cineísta"*, as a difference from that of *cineasta*/filmmaker) as a form of filmmaking distinct from (and to some extent opposite to) home moviemaking. While the latter was limited to capturing happy private family moments with the sole purpose of having them documented for posterity and for viewing in the same private context as their production, amateur films were created with a clearly creative intention, and although they might be produced in the same private context, the aim was to create works for public exhibition, if only among peers at amateur film conventions and competitions. A review of the records of these conventions generally reveals how amateur film was legitimised in part by establishing a distinction (of superiority) from home movies, with aspirations that were essentially creative (or, as was asserted in that era, artistic). A similar distinction was established from mainstream cinema (for theatres), although it is clear that commercial films, as well as experimental (arthouse) films, reports and newsreels,

also served as inspiration for these amateur *cineístas*. However, over time, as substandard formats became more widely popular (especially after the appearance of Super-8 film in the mid-1960s), amateur filmmakers (and their interactions) underwent a process of progressive transformation. The changing times in most Western societies, with substandard film formats becoming accessible to classes and generations other than those that had been using them until then, gave rise to new habits and practices in filmmaking, and in the contexts for exhibition and viewing. There can be no doubt that in this era, recently baptised "the long sixties" for the case of the United States (Strain, 2017) and perhaps too easily extended to the rest of the West, low-budget filmmaking found new purposes which, while remaining amateur, in many cases moved beyond the realm of the family, and of course distanced itself from the (bourgeois) artistic pretensions of amateur film as it had been known up until then, in a quest for a much more obvious dimension of social portrait. Even when the objective was still to depict family life, that depiction became much more contextualised in a broader social setting, as if the boundaries of the domestic world had expanded. While the accessibility of film formats to other social classes led to this representation of social change, or at least to hints at such an intention, among younger practitioners of filmmaking using substandard formats the field also opened up to collective, generational portraits that went beyond the limits of the traditional (idealised) family that had previously been the main focus of these practices. These new collective visions also entailed reflections of new spaces, as well as a whole range of behaviours and a less inhibited attitude towards the camera. In Spain, a good example of this phenomenon are the collections of films made in the 1960s and especially in the 1970s by young people who used their cameras to capture new social, sexual, political and collective movements emerging at that time.

MAPPING OUT THE LONG HISTORICAL TRAJECTORY OF AMATEUR FILM DOWN TO OUR OWN TIMES, IT WOULD SEEM FITTING TO CLASSIFY HOME MOVIES AS PART OF THAT TRAJECTORY, IRRESPECTIVE OF THE FACT THAT FOR A NUMBER OF DECADES (1920-1960) THE "AMATEUR FILM" MOVEMENT EFFECTIVELY CONSTRUCTED ITS LEGITIMACY IN OPPOSITION TO SUCH FILMS

Any analysis of all these developments in Western societies from the vantage point of our times, when the vast majority of adults (and many yet to reach adulthood) make daily use of devices whose multiple functions include that of a portable camera, compels us to reconsider certain perspectives that might have seemed useful a few decades ago but that today, in most cases, are merely nostalgic. Mapping out the long historical trajectory of amateur film down to our own times, it would seem fitting to classify home movies as part of that trajectory, irrespective of the fact that for a number of decades (1920-1960) the "amateur film" movement effectively constructed its legitimacy in opposition to such films. Another consideration of importance from a contemporary viewpoint is whether it would be more appropriate to characterise this type of film as domestic rather than family-related, as the portrait of this *domus* or domesticity pushes far beyond the boundaries of the traditional, idealised nuclear family that home movie collections depicted in a particular historical period. Having established these necessary preliminary points related to how the concept of amateur film is understood today, and with the additional clarification that Filmoteca Española has never had a proactive policy towards these types of films due to institutional factors (notwithstanding the best efforts and intentions of its staff), what follows is a brief description of

collections of this kind.[2] At the time of writing, Filmoteca Española has a total of 155 home movie collections in its archives. It is important to clarify that the size of each of these collections may vary widely, from collections made up of a single film reel to others with more than fifty containers with multiple reels in each one.

Despite the limitations mentioned above, the number of amateur film collections has grown progressively since 1979, when the first two were received: one in the form of a deposit and the other resulting from a purchase. The table below presents the evolution of the collection by decade:
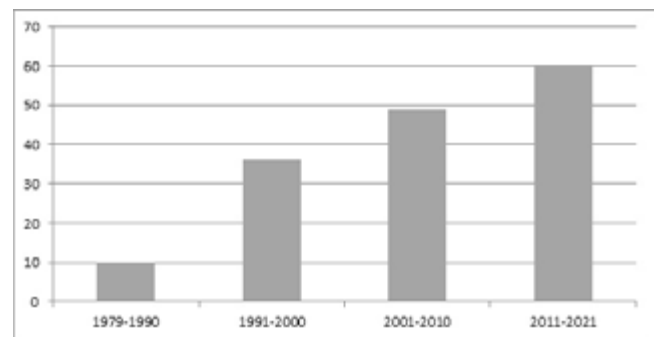
Image 1

A total of 62% of the collections are deposits and therefore the property of third parties, while only 38% have been acquired by the institution in various ways (donation, purchase, bequest, etc.). There is something inherent in the nature of these images that makes the families or descendants of the filmmakers reluctant to let them go, despite their obvious inability to view them. This is a common issue that affects many archives other than Filmoteca Española, and it also poses a problem related to the legal vacuum created when the relatives who made the deposit pass on, or even simply forget to update their contact details with the institution when they move, which happens with troublesome frequency.

Unfortunately, most amateur film footage archived at Filmoteca Española (a little more than

60%) has not yet been adequately classified, studied and dated, a fact that gives a clear idea of the work that still needs to be done with this material, which in the best of cases has only been inventoried. However, by analysing the data on the film format of each collection we can get an approximate idea, albeit with a wide margin for error, of the period when most of them may have been made:
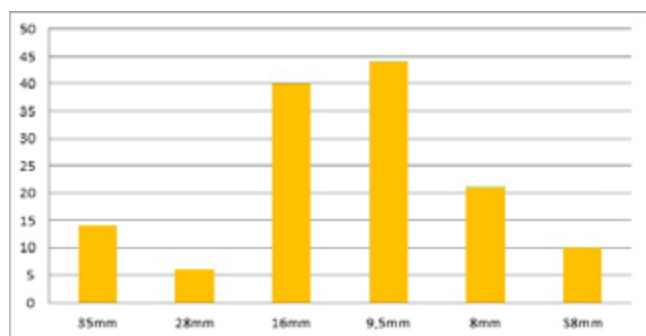
Image 2

While it is not possible to be certain, the table above suggests that most of the amateur film collections archived in Filmoteca Española were produced in the first half of the 20th century. The use of 35mm film for non-professional filmmaking was accessible only to a select few until other formats were developed. The 28mm format had a brief moment of glory in the 1910s, while the use of 9.5mm began in the early 1920s and declined ten years later when 8mm film became popular, although the two formats coexisted for several decades. Also widely used during this period was the 16mm format, which first appeared in the first half of the 1920s. This suggests that only the collections on 8mm and especially Super-8 (introduced in the mid-1960s) would have been made in the second half of the century. This clearly reflects a historical cycle whereby film collections are deposited with the institution only after having been passed onto the next generation after that of their creators. Nevertheless, it is troubling to note that the apparent awareness of the heritage value of these collections among the wealthier classes (those who engaged in amateur filmmaking in the first half of the last century) did not spread equally to other classes once filmmaking became more widespread thanks to the more accessible formats. Needless to say, the advent of home video recorders made this problem alarmingly worse.

AMATEUR CINEMA IN FILMOTECA ESPAÑOLA: ACCESS AND DISSEMINATION

Despite its policy to archive amateur films since the late 1960s, Filmoteca Española has taken decades to draw attention to these collections and to develop an active policy for making them accessible. It has only been in the last few years that the film library has begun making more concerted efforts to develop initiatives with amateur films that would bring them off the shelves and onto screens. Notable among the strategies for making active use of the more interesting of these collections is a program implemented from 2018 to 2021 to curate and produce films based on non-professional or amateur home movies. This initiative involved the proposal of a collaboration between two individuals from different professional fields who did not usually work together in the interests of ensuring a balance between expertise in filmmaking technique and the fundamentals of academic research and analysis. These two people would take on the task of exploring the archives of Filmoteca Española, the network of public film libraries, and other archives and collections (especially those of private collectors and families) in an effort to locate home-made films dealing with the topics of Spain's transition to democracy, exile, and the colonial gaze. The research and material selection process triggered some vitally important dynamics of heritage management: digitisation of copies ensured less pressure on the original material associated with its use and would facilitate viewing and working with these images in the future; contact with the repositories of the material

chosen made it possible to collect information on the content of the films in the context of specific research, inevitably increasing the amount of contextual information on each film and fine-tuning its classification; and finally, if the material located was in the possession of private individuals, this open process helped initiate conversations that could lead to archival deposits or acquisitions, with the consequent enrichment of the collections preserved and accessible to the public. The ultimate objective of the research project proposed by Filmoteca Española was the production of a new film based on the footage chosen. Once complete, this new production would begin a new stage of dissemination in non-commercial professional contexts, ranging from film festivals to academic conferences.

With this approach, Filmoteca Española explored the possibility of expanding the scope of its heritage policies, especially in relation to cross-sectoral cooperation and visibility. In its nearly four years of activity, the program showed good results in each of these areas. Cross-sectoral cooperation was evident in the different departments of Filmoteca Española involved (collection management, digital lab, programming, communication and promotion) and the coordination with other archives, as well as the participation of sector professionals who generally collaborate externally on the more technical aspects of film production: editing, sound design, colour and graphics. In terms of visibility, the three films produced have been (and continue to be) exhibited at festivals and cultural centres, screened at the country's various public film libraries, and programmed as objects of discussion at seminars and conferences, both in Spain and internationally.[3] All of this has brought home movie footage to screens that never would have been imagined by those who made the original films, and has raised awareness about the archive work of Filmoteca Española in places outside its usual dissemination channels and venues.

As mentioned above, of the three films resulting from the project, the last two constitute paradigmatic cases of working with images of mobility: in the case of *Diarios del exilio*, for what it says about Spanish exile through images filmed by Republican politicians and other Spaniards sympathetic to the Republican cause who were forced to flee Spain to avoid persecution, hardship or even execution after the victory of the Nationalist faction of the army led by Franco; and in *Memorias de ultramar*, for its images documenting the colonies, filmed between 1940 and 1975, mostly by Spaniards living in the last African territories still under Spanish rule. In addition to the issues discussed above, such as the common theme of mobility and the very different historical factors behind exile and colonialism, it is also important to consider these films from the perspective of historical memory and its imaginaries, as in the Spanish context this question is key for making sense of the different meanings of images of exile and of the colonies.

On this last point, it is necessary to return to the foundational moment of contemporary Spain: the transition to democracy. By the 1970s, the memory of exile had already become a highly topical question, and in the midst of the process of political change a number of innovative studies emerged, such as the research directed by José Luís Abellán (1976), published in several volumes under the title *El exilio español de 1939* [Spanish Exile of 1939]. The issue was even taken up in studies on Spanish cinema, such as Román Gubern's publication, also in 1976, titled *El cine español en el exilio* [Spanish Cinema in Exile]. In the political sphere, exiles also played a very important role in both practical and symbolic terms, and certain political and social movements of the period cannot be explained without them. For example, the President of the Catalan government, Josep Tarradellas, and the Basque *Lehendakari*, Jesús M. Leiazola, were both still in exile when they began discussions in 1976 with the newly elected Span-

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THE FOUNDATIONAL MOMENT OF
CONTEMPORARY SPAIN: THE TRANSITION
TO DEMOCRACY. BY THE 1970S, THE
MEMORY OF EXILE HAD ALREADY BECOME
A HIGHLY TOPICAL QUESTION

ish prime minister, Adolfo Suárez, about potential changes to the country's regional affairs. Another example is the symbolic significance of the dissolution of the Spanish Republican government in exile and its embassy in Mexico in 1977, an act interpreted as a natural step towards the reconciliation of the Spanish people that was necessary to ensure the viability of Spain's new democratic project.[4] In this same sense, the return to Spain of various prominent exiles (both Republicans and others), such as Salvador de Madariaga, Dolores Ibárruri, Rafael Alberti, Santiago Carrillo, Federica Montseny, Claudio Sánchez Albornoz, and Josep Tarradellas himself, was understood as a representation of the rapprochement between the two different Spains, culminating with the arrival in the country of Pablo Picasso's *Guernica* in 1981, the last exile, and another image of mobility.

On the other hand, Spain's recent colonial past did not receive the same level of political attention during the transition. Morocco and Equatorial Guinea had attained independence many years earlier and did not feature in the imaginaries or the political debates of the period. Conversely, the question of Western Sahara was a current issue at the time, appearing in the news, in the speeches and policies of the political parties, in the writings of critical cultural figures like Juan Goytisolo (Martínez Rubio, 2016), and in the works of collectives of visual artists linked to the radical left, such as La Familia Lavapiés and El Cubri. Nevertheless, the colonial question did not have the influence on the direction of the transition to democracy that exile did.[5] On the contrary, the legacy of the colo-

nial relationship between Spain, Western Sahara, and the nation's other former African colonies has not received attention in terms of historical memory until much more recently. To understand the magnitude of this difference, we could take the example of cinema and consider how many exiles and how many people associated with Spain's colonial past in Africa took part in major documentaries on the transition, such as *Informe general* [General Report] (Pere Portabella, 1976), *La vieja memoria* [Old Memory] (Jaime Camino, 1978), *Entre la esperanza y el fraude* [Between Hope and Fraud] (Cooperativa de Cine Alternativo, 1979), *Dolores* (José Luis García Sánchez, Andrés Linares, 1981), or *Después de...* [After...] (Cecilia & José Juan Bartolomé, 1983). All these films feature the voices of exiles, some who have returned to Spain and others still living abroad, representing a milestone in the political movement towards democracy, while images of the colonies or testimonies related to the colonial past are entirely absent. The memory of colonial Africa would not begin to appear in cinema until much later, although it did resonate effectively in one pioneering film in the final years of the Franco dictatorship, *El desastre de Annual* [The Disaster of Annual] (Ricardo Franco, 1976). It would not be explored again until the release of titles such as Cecilia Bartolomé's *Black Island* (Lejos de África, 1996), and, after another long hiatus, Maria Ruido's *África 815* (Pilar Monsell, 2014) and *El ojo imperativo* [The Imperative Eye] (2015), both focusing on the case of Morocco, or projects like Laura Casielles' webdoc *Provincia 53* (2020) about Western Sahara, and Javier Fernández's *A Storm Was Coming* (Anunciaron tormenta, 2020) about Equatorial Guinea. The films *Diarios del exilio* and *Memorias de ultramar*, both of which will be discussed below, are intimately related to these different sensibilities of memory, and both their production processes and the narratives they invoke in the imaginaries of contemporary Spain tie in with the different genealogies of films outlined above.

Diarios del exilio is a documentary directed by the filmmaker and academic researcher Irene Gutiérrez.[6] The film explores Republican exile with the aim of offering a broad picture of the issue, without adding specific data or information on the particular circumstances of the exiles featured or the places where the scenes occur. This place called exile includes settings in Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela, Cuba, the United States, France, Italy, Austria, Switzerland, Norway, the United Kingdom, the USSR, Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, North Korea, and China. It is a setting in constant flux where, in contrast to the usual approach to exile, the filmmaker offers us no oral testimonies of those who left Spain during and after the Civil War, but instead shows fragments of their everyday lives, filmed by them or their family members as amateur filmmakers in non-commercial formats (9.5mm, Super-8 and 16mm film), all supported by a soundtrack that is equally fragmentary, as will be discussed below.

In the research process, the filmmaker consulted archives in the network of Spanish public film libraries[7] and the Cineteca Nacional in Mexico, where she had access to various anonymous collections identified solely by the subject of exile, and others by individuals of political or cultural significance, such as the Basque *Lehendakari* José Antonio Aguirre, Catalan president Josep Tarradellas i Joan, the graphic designer Avel·li Artís Gener, the teacher Alejandra Soler and her translator husband Arnaldo Azzati, and the political leader Dolores Ibárruri, commonly known in Spain as *La Pasionaria* ("Passionflower"). Of all the footage featured in the film, the images of *La Pasionaria* are of the greatest significance for several reasons. Apart from the charisma of the woman herself and her historical importance as Secretary General and President of the Spanish Communist Party while in exile,[8] her collection offers an open window through which we glimpse international icons of 20th-century political and cultural history, such as Fidel Castro and Joan Báez, and important Spanish figures such as Santiago Carrillo and Ignacio Gallego. What is interesting about these individuals, however, is the fact that despite their political importance they all appear in a non-historical context, in ordinary situations far from the media spotlight, relaxing, talking casually at a table, taking a walk, sitting on a bench, riding a sled, playing with a pebble or getting their feet wet on the seashore with their trouser sleeves rolled up above their ankles.

As home movies filmed in exile, Dolores Ibárruri's collection of images is similar to those of other exiles, such as José Urraca Cristóbal and his family, who had similar historical and political reasons for their mobility. On the other hand, the symbolic and political significance of *La Pasionaria* is different and evokes a romantic mysticism associated with her that is not present when others appear on the screen, such as Soler-Azzati family, for example. Although she is not the only one with this aura in *Diarios del exilio*, as the appearance of Catalan president Lluís Companys or *Lehendakari* Aguirre produces similar effects, it is a quality that characterises images of Ibárruri in other films as well. A paradigmatic example of this is *La vieja memoria*, a film including original footage shot by Jaime Camino's film crew at her house in Moscow, which vests her with a humanity that the other politicians featured do not seem to have. And the same is true of *Dolores*, a film in which the interest in offering a gentler depiction of the character is more obvious. Fifty years later, *Diarios del exilio* establishes a link to that film through the evocation of memory and nostalgia around the same figure, perhaps magnified here through the use of family footage of the communist leader and through the central role she occupies in the film compared to the other people featured.

Beyond the images, the film evokes exile constantly through the soundtrack, whereby newly created elements, such as the music composed by Cristóbal Fernández (who was also responsible for

the sound design and editing), which propels the narrative forward, are combined with archival work that helps anchor what we see in its historical context. The reflections of the Republicans, the evocation of the distance and bleakness of the homeland, and the harsh conditions of exile resonate in the fragments of the old Republican standard *"Himno de Riego"*, the broadcasts of the communist radio station Radio Pirenaica, various declarations by Ibárruri addressed to emigrants, a speech by the Socialist Party leader Indalecio Prieto, the reading of the manifestos in support of political refugees, and even messages in the Basque language praising Basque culture.

Throughout the film, the personal and the collective components of the exile experience are interwoven into a single narrative. Elements familiar to exiles appear on screen in the form of traditions, parties, food, family interactions and leisure activities. However, the personal dimension of the narrative has more than a single face, as it appears with numerous nuances, given that *La Pasionaria*, Companys, Arnaldo Azzati, and José Urraca Cristóbal all have their own ways of celebrating or relaxing. This imbalance operates as a paradox, as it brings the collective memory triggered in *Diarios del exilio* closer to traditional narratives of history constructed on the basis of the experiences (albeit personal ones) of public figures with institutional status or significance, while the logic of a bottom-up history is nuanced throughout the film, despite relying on family collections for its construction. The memory of exile presented here is very close to the source of Spanish exiles' political agency during the transition, in which the major documentaries of the period cited above also participated, turning an interest in exile, sympathy for its victims and respect for their memory into one of the generally accepted pillars of our democracy.

For the next edition of the program to promote Spain's amateur film heritage, Filmoteca Española placed the focus on the colonial gaze, assign-

ing the research task to the film director Carmen Bellas and the art historian Alberto Berzosa. The guiding principle connecting the collections featured in *Memorias de ultramar* is the fact they were all filmed in African territories under Spanish control in different colonial contexts during the 20th century. This included the Protectorate of Morocco, which tied this country to Spain from 1912 to 1956, the city of Tangier, which was part of the Protectorate from June 1940 to October 1945, Spanish Guinea, comprising several colonies and islands in the Gulf of Guinea under Spanish rule from 1778 to 1968, and the Spanish Sahara, which was controlled by Spain from 1884 to 1975. The object of analysis was thus made up of images from a diverse range of geographical and cultural settings, connected by virtue of their relationship to a single metropolis. This was significant because, as in the case of exile, the aim was to offer a general portrait of the colonial gaze rather than to explore the specific conditions of each territory. Once again, it was an examination of a single theme based on material that reflected different individual histories.

But the material that gave shape to this film is different from that of *Diarios del exilio*. The first difference lies in the objective factors conditioning the mobility of those who filmed the footage, most of whom had left Spain for work reasons. Another is the greater degree of homogeneity between the collections in terms of the public prominence of their protagonists. Most of the films were made in family contexts by people who, although they were of significance to the local community given that many were landowners, business leaders and professionals with political profiles and institutional connections, never had the level of social significance of the exiles featured in *Diarios del exilio*. Two possible exceptions to this could be found in the collections of Armando Balboa and Nicolás Muller. Balboa was a politician with the National Liberation Movement of Equatorial Guinea (MONALIGE), one of the parties that formed part

THE IMAGES IN *MEMORIAS DE ULTRAMAR* ARE TAKEN FROM TEN DIFFERENT COLLECTIONS, SOME OF WHICH COME FROM THE ARCHIVES OF THE NETWORK OF PUBLIC FILM LIBRARIES,[9] BUT ALSO FROM THE PRIVATE COLLECTIONS OF FORMER COLONISTS AND THEIR HEIRS WHO HAD THE ORIGINAL FILMS STASHED AWAY IN CLOSETS AND DRAWERS.

of the newly independent country's first government in 1968, and he also ended up becoming a victim of the repression of the dictator Francisco Macías just one year later. Muller was a photographer of Hungarian origin who shot several home movies in Tangier and other Moroccan cities while on an extended stay in the territory in the late 1940s. Neither of these two is highlighted in the film for his importance as a public figure. However, Balboa's collection does have one distinctive feature, as the protagonists of the footage are a mixed-race couple: the African Balboa and his middle-class Catalan wife, along with their children. Within the diegesis this collection represents a change in the direction of the gaze, as it is not the gaze of a regular colonist but of an African who was educated in the metropolis (in Barcelona) and then returned to his homeland to lead a new political movement, initially undercover and subsequently in power.

The images in *Memorias de ultramar* are taken from ten different collections, some of which come from the archives of the network of public film libraries,[9] but also from the private collections of former colonists and their heirs who had the original films stashed away in closets and drawers. Some of these private collections, such as those of Miguel Vives Munné, Antonio Portabella-Camps, and Ana María Amparo García Vázquez, ended up being donated to the Filmoteca Española archives. Access to these films and

to other similar footage that was not ultimately included in the work was made possible by the process of reconstructing the networks of former colonists and natives through blogs, Facebook pages, institutions and cultural centres,[10] as well as the diaries of employees in official agencies and researchers with experience working on Guinea, Morocco, Tangier, or Western Sahara.

After locating, viewing and selecting the footage, three main themes were identified for the articulation of a story of life in the colonies: a relationship with nature that oscillates between fascination and the desire to dominate it; the persistence of common traditions related to celebrations, cuisine and leisure activities; and the emphasis on the identification of an "us" (white European settlers of the upper or upper-middle class) and a "them" (racialised native Africans of the lower classes). The narrative objective of the film was to offer a general picture of life in the colonies, while also capturing the diverse nuances of the different territories and individual experiences. To do this, it was essential to underscore certain recurring motifs based on these main themes. Without historicising pretensions, the narrative also aims to offer some idea of the chronological evolution of the colonies, from the first arrival of the Spaniards through to their final departure. To this end, images of arrivals by sea and air are shown in the first few minutes, while the ending is organised around other aerial shots of the Sahara Desert alluding to the abandonment of the province in 1975.

The soundtrack also plays a key role in this film, as it was decided to give uniformity to the images with a sound design created by Juan Carlos Blancas that functions as a kind of soundscape. This strategy unifies the fragments, serving to underscore recurring features that contribute to the narrative flow. It also denaturalises the images because they are not realistically related to what we hear, which is also quite different from the stereotypical sounds of exotic settings. Only one

narration was included, taken from original recordings with the footage provided by Ana María Amparo García Vázquez, as the way the speaker presents the characters is also appropriate for situating the general action of the film.

Memorias de ultramar effectively brings to the screen a reality that does not form part of the mainstream collective imaginary of our country: the reality of the Spanish colonies in Africa. Colonial memory in Spain is much more closely associated with the countries of Latin America, whose processes of decolonisation and subsequent cooperation have a longer history and are more naturalised. Moreover, Spain's current relations with Western Sahara, Equatorial Guinea Ecuatorial and Morocco represent diplomatic challenges that often threaten to descend into political conflicts affecting Spain's interests, particularly in terms of fishing policy, migration, national security, political exile and energy dependence. The fact that relations with these former colonies constitute ongoing political issues today complicates the development of a colonial memory in strictly historical terms. *Memorias de ultramar*, along with the other two recently produced films discussed above, participates in a newly established process to articulate a discourse of memory related to Spain's colonies in Africa, and it forms part of a recent and more problematic genealogy as it presently lacks a general consensus to support it.

CONCLUSION

It can be considered a success of the so-called critical institutionalism today that the call made with the heritage turn of the 1980s is being answered. Beyond the change of focus, implementing cultural and heritage policies of substance represents a practical challenge that Filmoteca Española has been rising to now for decades. In the last five years, these efforts have also centred on a type of filmmaking that needs special attention in terms of heritage, given its traditionally precarious na-

ture in institutional terms: amateur film. In itself, this type of film is elusive and complicated to manage due to questions related to people's right to privacy and to control over their own image under Spanish law (Ley Orgánica 1/1982, de 5 de mayo) and even to the legal definition of the films in these collections as "cinematic works" (Real Decreto Legislativo 1/1996, de 12 de abril), a concept more traditionally associated with the world of copyright protection for commercial films. This added complexity gives rise to certain problems for the conception and development of ways of facilitating access to such material and expanding its audience. A further complication is the neglect that films like these have suffered historically, which far too often has exacerbated the deterioration of the film reels due to the inadequate conditions under which they have been stored.

In the specific case studied here, there is the added variable of mobility in the origins of the films, which complicates matters even further, especially when that mobility is the product of exile, as in the case of the Republicans after the Civil War, or due to the colonial logic of Francoist Spain in the period when the great empires of the past (with European metropolises) had effectively been reduced to a few dying embers.

With images filmed in the mid-20th century from the perspective of the physical and emotional fragility of homelessness, in private settings with family and friends, the collections related to exile and to the African colonies held in the amateur film archives of Filmoteca Española constitute highly sensitive material. The recent efforts made by the institution to explore this complex heritage have had a number of positive consequences both in terms of the preservation and expansion of the collections and in relation to access and dissemination.

Of course, the work of public heritage institutions like Filmoteca Española is not immune to the social and historical complexities and culture wars that always come into play in such circum-

stances. Added to the usual complications associated with cultural and heritage management is its relationship to complex realities of national identity that are still disputed today, such as the memory of Republican Spain and the country's recent colonial history. In this context, the Filmoteca Española program launched in 2018 to work with amateur films, reviewing Spain's transition to democracy from a bottom-up perspective through footage shot by ordinary people, posed the challenge of working with images of mobility in the form of exile and colonialism. The work undertaken in 2019 and 2020 facilitated the identification, classification, restoration and digitisation of film reels of very diverse origins, some of which have since come to form part of the catalogue of films available to future researchers. At the same time, it initiated creative processes that gave rise to two new productions: *Diarios del exilio* and *Memorias de ultramar*. Both films are inscribed in specific traditions in the history of Spanish cinema, albeit in unexpected ways, based on footage that had not been taken with the idea of being useful outside the households, political circles or generations of those who filmed them. Moreover, this amateur filmmaking is characterised by another paradox that serves as a kind of moral to the story: through their mobile, almost de-territorialised nature and even through the nostalgia elicited by their disconnection from their settings (even when those settings may be fascinating from a Eurocentric colonial perspective), these films bring images into our present that offer new angles on questions as theoretically static as the essence and roots of Spanish identity. The questioning of these supposedly immutable principles through the gaze of exiles and colonists can only be understood from the perspective of a better and broader understanding of the diverse range of recent historical processes that continue to have an impact on our present. ∎

NOTES

1   This article has been written in the context of the research projects "Fossil Aesthetics: A Political Ecology of Art History, Visual Culture and the Cultural Imaginaries of Modernity" (PIE ref. 202010E005), co-ordinated by the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC), and "Cartographies of Cinema of Mobility in the Hispanic Atlantic" (CSO2017-85290-P), financed by the Ministry of Science and Innovation - State Research Agency, and the European Regional Development Fund.

2   The figures shown in the table form part of the research conducted at Filmoteca Española's Preservation and Restoration Centre for the Film Library Conference held in Pamplona on 22 and 23 November 2021 and were presented in a talk by Marián del Egido and Josetxo Cerdán at that conference.

3   Venues where the films were screened include the Beijing International Film Festival (China), the Curtas Vila du Conde International Film Festival (Portugal), the *Rencontres Transfrontalières des Associations de la Mémoire historique, démocratique et antifasciste* (France), the *Colloque Hispanística XX: Empreintes d'ailleurs* (France), Centro Cultural Español in Buenos Aires (Argentina), the *Festival Etnovideográfico Internacional del Museo de Castilla y León* (Spain), Cineteca de Madrid (Spain), Casa Árabe (Madrid), and the Spanish film libraries in the regions of Galicia, Navarra, Zaragoza, Castilla y León, Valencia, and Andalusia.

4   Victoria Kent described the closure of the Republican Embassy in these terms in a column for the Spanish daily newspaper *El País* in 1977 (quoted in De Oliveira Acosta & Ortín Ramón, 1996: 225).

5   However, Javier Tusell and Genoveva G. Queipo de Llano (2003: 217-232) suggest that the issue of Western Sahara did at least serve as a pretext for King Juan Carlos I to begin exercising political autonomy and for Francoist Spain's last prime minister, Arias Navarro, to hold onto leadership.

6   Gutiérrez was supported in this research by Julián Etienne, an academic and programmer in Mexico, although it was Gutiérrez who ultimately gave the piece its final form.

7   The libraries in question were Filmoteca Española, Filmoteca Andaluza, Filmoteca de Catalunya, La Filmoteca - Institut Valencià de Cultura, Euskadiko Filmategia - Filmoteca Vasca, and Filmoteca de Canarias.

8   She was General Secretary of the party from 1942 to 1960, when Santiago Carrillo took over the leadership, and from that time she held the title of president until her death in 1989.

9   In this case, only from Filmoteca Española and La Filmoteca - Institut Valencià de Cultura. It is important to bear in mind that the project only really got up and running at the end of 2019 and its progress was severely affected by the lockdowns caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. This affected the project participants' ability to consult the collections of different film archives, as well as their mobility and the pace of the work. The original plan was for the project to be presented in October 2020, but in the end this took place in March 2021.

10 Casa África, Centro Cultural de España in Malabo, Biblioteca Islámica del AECID, La Medina, Casa Árabe, Instituto Cervantes (Headquarters), and its branches in Tunisia and Tangier-Tetouan, Casa Sefarad-Israel, and Hermandad de las Tropas Nómadas.

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EXILES AND COLONISTS IN THE FIRST PERSON: THE FAMILY ARCHIVE AND ITS RECENT (RE) WRITINGS IN SPAIN

Abstract

Filmoteca Española has among its amateur film collections some very special collections in terms of mobility: films shot during the central decades of the 20th century in Republican exile and in the African colonies. These are very particular cultural products with a controversial historical character and complex conditions of management, conservation and dissemination by the institution. This article will first describe the particularities shared by both types of mobility images and will trace the lines that distinguish them. Then, the policies that have been carried out by Filmoteca Española for their conservation and dissemination are analysed; for this purpose, the research and curatorial programme implemented between 2018 and 2021 to recover these parcels of history by working with amateur images located in the archive's collection will be especially taken into account. Finally, we will analyse the two pieces produced within the framework of this programme related to exile and the colonies: *Diarios del exilio* (Irene Gutiérrez, 2029) and *Memorias de Ultramar* (Carmen Bellas and Alberto Berzosa, 2020).

Key words

Hobby Film; Film Archive; Exile; Colony; Memory.

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EXILIADOS Y COLONOS EN PRIMERA PERSONA: EL ARCHIVO FAMILIAR Y SUS (RE)ESCRITURAS RECIENTES EN ESPAÑA

Resumen

Filmoteca Española cuenta entre sus colecciones de cine aficionado con unos fondos muy especiales en términos de movilidad: películas filmadas durante las décadas centrales del siglo XX en el exilio republicano y en las colonias africanas. Se trata de productos culturales muy particulares con un carácter histórico polémico y unas complejas condiciones de gestión, conservación y difusión por parte de la institución. En este artículo, en primer lugar, se describen las particularidades que comparten ambos tipos de imágenes de movilidad y se trazan las líneas que las distinguen. Después, se analizan las políticas que se han llevado a cabo desde Filmoteca Española con vistas a su conservación y difusión, para lo cual se tendrá especialmente en cuenta el programa de investigación y comisariado implementado entre 2018 y 2021, con objeto de recuperar estas parcelas de la historia a partir del trabajo con imágenes de aficionado encontradas en los fondos de su archivo. Por último, se analizan las dos piezas producidas en el marco de este programa relacionadas con el exilio y las colonias: *Diarios del exilio* (Irene Gutiérrez, 2029) y *Memorias de Ultramar* (Carmen Bellas, Alberto Berzosa, 2020).

Palabras clave

Cine aficionado; archivo fílmico; exilio; colonia; memoria.

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RESTITUTION OF MEMORY: IMAGES AND TRACES IN GALICIAN CORRESPONDENCE FILMS*

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Bereft of memory, a person becomes the prisoner of an illusory existence; falling out of time he is unable to seize his own link with the outside world—in other words he is doomed to madness.

(TARKOVSKY, 1989: 57–58)

But the direct time-image always gives us access to that Proustian dimension where people and things occupy a place in time which is incommensurable with the one they have in space.

(DELEUZE, 1986: 39)

1. INTRODUCTION: CORPUS, METHODOLOGY AND SOURCES

Just when Odysseus and his crew were on the point of reaching their homeland of Ithaca, a wild storm blew their ship off course to an unknown island. Odysseus sent some of his men to explore the island and gather information about its inhabitants. They thus came into contact with the natives, who welcomed them warmly and offered them a mysterious food: the sweet fruit of the lotus plant. Upon eating the plant, the men fell into a kind of lethargy that made them forget everything: their companions, their family, and their home. They thus lost their longing to return to Ithaca. When they didn't come back to the ship, Odysseus decided to go in search of them with the rest of the crew, and on finding them he managed to drag them back by force.

The peril that Odysseus must face here is the danger of forgetting, interpreted in the epic poem as synonymous with death. Mircea Eliade (1968: 121) argues that "insofar as it is 'forgotten', the 'past'—historical or primordial—is homologized with death." The common colloquial expression "keeping a memory alive" hovers in the connotative margins of this interpretation, underlying humanity's ancestral determination to mitigate the devastating effects of the passage of time: "Proust also spoke of raising 'a vast edifice of memories', and that seems to me to be what cinema is called to do" (Tarkovsky, 1989: 59). In relation to the ontology of the photographic image, André Bazin argues that a portrait helps us to remember the

subject, and therefore rescues that subject from a second, spiritual death: "To preserve, artificially, his bodily appearance is to snatch it from the flow of time, to stow it away neatly, so to speak, in the hold of life" (Bazin, 2004: 9). Of course, in the context of this article's object of study, i.e., films made for the wistful gaze of the émigré, this kind of "reincarnation" that Bazin describes should be understood as more of a "re-presentation", an attempt to bring a trace of the past into the present:

> This production by automatic means has radically affected our psychology of the image. The objective nature of photography confers on it a quality of credibility absent from all other picture-making. In spite of any objections our critical spirit may offer, we are forced to accept as real the existence of the object reproduced, actually re-presented, set before us, that is to say, in time and space. (Bazin, 2004: 13-14)

In the title card that opens one of the films analysed here, *Nuestras fiestas de allá* [Our Festivities Over There] (José Gil, 1928), written the journalist and writer Jaime Solá,[1] the following line appears under the heading "EVOCATION": "There, where our memories remain forever, is a lovely country called 'Val Miñor'. It lives in our spirit and our eyes carry it before them. Its festivities are our festivities. It trembles with joy and pain and we tremble like absent children." And it continues with a phrase that encapsulates the ultimate meaning of what is known as the correspondence film: "To see it (Val Miñor) drawn to us by the hand of art is to fly home to it."[2] It is not merely to see the place but to be there. Solá's text is founded on the certainty that "the outward appearance is more than an accessory; it is a point of access to the essence of things" (Esqueda Verano, 2019: 11). Like a Proustian madeleine, the film image triggers the memory (located on the temporal axis), which in turn triggers a longing to return (spatial axis), thereby combining the two dimensions of the nostalgia that the émigré projects onto the images while viewing them. It is not merely a question of not forgetting, but of

IT IS NOT MERELY A QUESTION OF NOT FORGETTING, BUT OF RELIVING AN EXPERIENCE; REVIVING IT, LIVING IT AGAIN, BEING THERE AGAIN, RETURNING HOME

reliving an experience; reviving it, living it again, being there again, returning home.

For the purposes of delimiting the object of study analysed in this article, we believe it fitting to refer to Manuel González's definition, and particularly to his label "correspondence cinema", which he attributes to the

> relatively wide range of visual, documentary and news footage related to migration processes [...] Grouped under this title is all visual footage made with an explicitly descriptive/denotative objective and produced especially either to serve as propaganda for the industrial-cultural territory of the metropolis in overseas countries or to remember the beloved people, customs and landscapes on either side of the ocean. (González, 2006: 5-6)[3]

Moreover, as is the case for written correspondence, correspondence cinema is defined by a two-way flow, which in general terms involves two types of material: footage filmed in the homeland (Galicia) at the request of emigrant communities in Latin America so that different filmed scenes of the land they left behind can be viewed in the host country; and film footage taken to show people in the country of origin the activities of the different emigrant communities scattered throughout Latin America.[4] In either case, the footage would "travel in the holds of the same steamships that transported émigrés or returnees, so that they could then be shown in the best film theatres in Buenos Aires, Havana, Vigo or A Coruña" (González, 2006: 5).[5] This brief study explores films made in Galicia for viewing by Galicians living overseas, since the objective here, as outlined above, is to analyse the gaze that revels in a wound left by a time and place left behind. This analysis must necessarily focus

on *traces*—the most suitable term to refer to images constructed as "paths once trod that will never be walked again"—which are what films of this kind largely consist of. The direct analysis of these traces will facilitate the development of some "plausible conjectures" (Hernández, 1995: 530).

Therefore, for the construction of these conjectures, this study will offer a filmic, historical and cultural analysis of three films shot in Galicia[6] for viewing by expats in their host countries. These films were made during the two biggest periods of Galician migration to Latin America: the first in the late 19th and early 20th century, and the second in the context of the Franco dictatorship in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. Chronologically, the first of these films is the aforementioned *Nuestras fiestas de allá*, shot by José Gil[7] and released in 1928. Gil's film was commissioned by the *Unión de Hijos de Morgadanes* [Children of Morgadans Association] based in Montevideo, Uruguay, and it documents festive, recreational, religious, social and culinary events in the Galician *comarca* (county) of Val Miñor, as well as the schools built with money donated by the Uruguayan expat association. The second film is *Un viaje por Galicia*[8] [A Trip around Galicia] (1958), by Manuel Arís,[9] made up of footage taken by the filmmaker on three trips he made around the region between 1953 and 1958. Arís's camera revels in the beauty of the Galician landscape, with one slight digression into his family life, as will be discussed below. Finally, the third of the films included in this study is *Alma gallega* [Galician Soul], filmed and written by Amando Hermida Luaces[10] in 1966. According to its opening title card, this film was "shot in Galicia to extol its beauty and its customs, its monuments, and its industrial and commercial progress, with a script by Amando H. (Hermida) Luaces."

Despite the time intervals between the films and the extraordinary aesthetic evolution of global filmmaking over the long period they cover, the obsession of an emotional filmmaker with recording the landscape, the period and other elements, along with the amateur nature of the filming,

serves to explain the striking formal similarity between them.

2. MODES OF REPRESENTATION: CAPTURE OR BIOSCOPIC RECORDING

Xosé Nogueira argues that in terms of production the first films made by Galician filmmakers in the first third of the 20th century were located "at the most basic level according to Janet Staiger's categorisation: the 'camera operator' level" (Nogueira, 2004: 73),[11] characterised by a unified personal perspective whereby the cameraman was the one responsible for choosing the topic and filming it within the limits of his technical abilities. As noted above, this resulted in films whose finished products are somewhat amateur. Based on this premise, and with the aim of establishing a much more precise classification system for this type of film (which will place us in a better position to clarify the hypothetical subjectivities that might be experienced by the individual expat when viewing them), this study draws on a recent monograph on documentary authored by Santos Zuzunegui and Imanol Zumalde, titled *Ver para creer. Avatares de la verdad cinematográfica.*[12] These two authors borrow an expression from Jean-Marie Straub, using the terms "capture" and "bioscopic record" to refer to what is commonly known as a "document", i.e., "an audiovisual fragment on which a series of sounds and images have been recorded" (Zunzunegui & Zumalde, 2019: 169). Among the wide range of bioscopic documents (or records), the purest of all would be images taken by security cameras. However, much closer to the films analysed in this article is the work of the Lumières' camera operators, whose films are notable for "their 'indexical intention', their referential power, often quite deliberately reflected in the unusual nature of the framing" (Zunzunegui & Zumalde, 2019: 171), and which steer clear of any interference that might threaten the *truth-effect* inherent in the indexical image. In this sense, to maintain

its purity the ideal scopic document would only allow a static shot—established according to strictly functional criteria—with an invariable continuity, or at most broken only by a mechanical disruption, such as the flickering images of security cameras, for example. Of course, we must not overlook the fact that in practice there are documentary films which,

> even while committing some of the aforementioned transgressions (camera movements, changes of point of view, editing, etc.), enable the spectator to view (strictly speaking, they successfully *make the spectator believe* that he or she is viewing) a real event directly and without mediation, and thus these external interferences do not undermine (on the contrary, in some cases they enhance) the factual, probative and referential foundation of the bioscopic document [...]. In short, we will assign the problematic label of *pure or raw bioscopic document* to that type of self-conscious text which, while dispensing with the most popular resources of cinematic language and conventional mechanisms of filmic veracity, clearly stresses the indexical nature of its raw material in order to produce a quintessential *truth-effect* in relation to a particular event. (Zunzunegui & Zumalde, 2019: 181-182)

Many of the films made by the Lumières' camera operators can be placed unproblematically in this category, although as will be shown below, not all of them fit into it quite so neatly.[13]

Based on this framework, which (as the analysis that follows will demonstrate) offers a flexible structure in which to place the three documentaries chosen for this study, we can begin to trace the contours of the evocation filmed by José Gil for his documentary *Nuestras fiestas de allá.*

3. FORMAL, HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL ANALYSIS: EVOCATION TOWARDS RESTITUTION

According to the Spanish language's most authoritative dictionary (Real Academia Española,

2014), the word *restituir* has three definitions, of which the second and third are of particular interest for this study: "2. To reinstate something or restore it to the state it had previously" and "3. Of a person: To return to the place that one departed from."[14] The combination of these two definitions establishes the essential parameters of a memory: "the state it had *previously* and the *place* that one departed from", i.e., recovering the past and returning to the place left behind. These dictionary definitions seem to suggest that the most effective way of evoking a memory is through its restitution rather than its (re)construction.

Constructing a memory implies a process of substitution, as it involves a new, clear, corporeal image intended to bury the image associated with the original memory stored in the spectator's mind. They are essentially two images in competition, one of them at a disadvantage, as the constructed image possesses the vibrancy of the present and of the visible stimulus that triggers it, while the other—the original memory—struggles to shake off the dust of time that shrouds it.[15] It would thus seem that the key to evocation consists in offering a *restitutive* image that can trigger the subjectivity of the audience, to help them rescue their own personal memory rather than the memory imposed by a *substitutive* image. And how is this process of restitution realised? José Manuel Mouriño Lorenzo offers an analysis that may help us form an approximate idea:

> [I]f we examine the basic pattern that emerges from the way it operates, the systematic repetition of the substantial gesture represented by *recording a remote homeland in images to offer them to a community in exile*, we will obtain an ideal paradigm that could reveal numerous connections. Let us briefly return to the moment of filming and reconsider what the camera is really framing in that instant. It is not just a landscape that will be familiar to the expat's eyes. That image functions in practice as a "reactive principle" for the memory, an index that stimulates the memory of a past that is inevitably associated

with that location. Thus, through this submission *en masse* to the seduction of these images based on their status as evocative indices, the social event of the exhibition of these films ultimately shaped the collective memory of the group through the manifestation of and confrontation with the evoked memory. (Mouriño Lorenzo, 2008: 2-3)

The "reactive principle", activated to help us remember, constitutes a constant in the correspondence films analysed here. In *Nuestras fiestas de allá*, for example, it is expressed in the wide shots that open each of the sequences, which are effectively blocks of images from the different villages recorded by José Gil's camera [Figure 1]. Each block begins with an introductory title that informs us of the village that the expat will be able to "visit" next, along with some explanatory details—for example: "Vincios. There is the village wandered through in childhood days, strolled around on visits to the homeland, remembered always"[16]—that constitute the only connotative licence taken in an otherwise monolithically denotative and referential construction. Then the image appears: a wide shot in which a long, shaky pan—the kind that completes a 360° degree turn, or even begins panning back in the opposite direction after completing the first sweep around—explores a rural landscape from an elevated position. In this way, the image locates the émigré-spectator in a recognisable place, its presence prolonged on the screen to ensure the effectiveness of the "reactive principle" and to create an expectation. This is followed by shots of a somewhat closer range than the opening shot, where the villagers enter the scene to act out the ritual or event (a procession, dance, picnic, etc.), without losing the points of reference that help identify the exact location where the event is taking place [Figure 2]. These points of reference, in imitation of the tourist attractions filmed by the

Figure 1. *Nuestras fiestas de allá* (1928).

Lumières' camera operators, are generally monuments—crosses, bell towers, theatres, façades of churches, etc.—that ensure that viewers will be able to identify a specific location. And finally, the third element of the compositions created by José Gil goes further into the desire to recognise, but this time it is the desire to recognise people:

> When it appeared on screen it was a touching moment. As the camera made its first passes, the audience members opened their eyes as wide as possible so as not to miss a detail, and at the same time they picked out some acquaintance or relative among the characters of the film, as various viewers made occasional comments such as "hey, look at so-and-so," or "there's the alder tree we used to jump into the water from when we went swimming." (González, 1996: 221)

The camera moves in closer to identify the people taking part in the events, in group shots or medium-long shots that allow the spectator to scrutinise their faces. José Gil's compositional approach can thus be summed up as follows: a wide shot of a landscape (reactive principle); a wide or long establishing shot of places and people (search for recognisable places); group shots and medium-long shots of people (search for familiar individuals).

The ritual nature of the religious ceremonies and processions, along with the landscapes and monuments, convey a temporal immutability that lightens the sorrow of the émigré, who succumbs to the illusion that everything is still the same in their absence, that time has stopped, and that if they ever save up enough money to be able to return home they will find their past exactly as they left it:

> The sense of arrested time in the landscapes seems to be a necessary requirement to express the émigré's loss. The landscape belongs to a time anchored in memory and the images will come to life once again in the emigrants' return for as long as they remain away from home. If their village and its human landscape were to undergo changes, the whole operation of the migration story, the whole sacrifice, would have been in vain and their identity would be wounded. (Barreiro, 2018: 73)[17]

It is important here to acknowledge certain footage filmed in the context of the *Noticiario Cinematográfico Español* (the Spanish newsreel service of the period, popularly known as *NO-DO*), especially its weekly magazine program *Imágenes* and the documentaries that would explore different parts of Galicia to present its scenery and its customs. This footage displays some similarities to the correspondence films analysed here in terms of their visual composition:

Figure 2. *Nuestras fiestas de allá* (1928).

THESE POINTS OF REFERENCE, IN IMITATION OF THE TOURIST ATTRACTIONS FILMED BY THE LUMIÈRES' CAMERA OPERATORS, ARE GENERALLY MONUMENTS—CROSSES, BELL TOWERS, THEATRES, FAÇADES OF CHURCHES, ETC.—THAT ENSURE THAT VIEWERS WILL BE ABLE TO IDENTIFY A SPECIFIC LOCATION

> The idyllic longing for a country that exists outside time could not be separated from the desire to rediscover and celebrate the beatific peace of its people in its purest state (the countryside, the villages), honouring their traditions, with their loaves of bread under their arms, in the heat of the hearth, dancing their traditional dances and immersed in their most cherished and unchanging possession: the Catholic religion. (Tranche & Sánchez-Biosca, 2006: 529)

In short, these are images that offer us a sterile and atemporal *topos*: "The territory is turned into an abstract space in which nothing changes or can ever change, where there is no conflict or scars or struggle" (Barreiro, 2018: 58).[18] It is a faultless, carefree place, immune to the passage of time, and therefore ideal for inciting longing.[19]

At the same time, to keep the image from invading the subjectivity of the spectator and losing its evocative power, it must adhere strictly to its indexical purpose. This is where its bioscopic essence comes into play, an essential element for respecting that "degree zero" (or close to zero) where all traces of the narrative voice are rendered invisible. One of the parameters of the mise-en-scène that defines these documents, present in the first scenes filmed by the Lumière camera operators (and in correspondence cinema, partly thanks to its obviously amateur nature), is its capacity to generate unruly images, evident on a spatial level in shots "that are constantly overrun and/or over-

flowing with the people and objects that appear in them, sometimes instantaneously and fleetingly" (Zunzunegui & Zumalde, 2019: 185), and on a temporal level in the absence of a beginning or ending revealed in the shots when viewing them,[20] allowing chance to burst onto the scene and accentuate the *truth effect* of everything being recorded. It is precisely this element of chance that gives rise to another outstanding feature of these films: the gazes to camera, present in all of the titles studied here, although it is in José Gil's documentary—either because in his images human figures appear in greater numbers and are generally closer to the camera, or because at the time he was filming (1928) film cameras were much more unusual than they would be decades later—that we find the most examples of this *anti-transparent* factor. If these were fiction films we might describe them in terms of what Noël Burch calls "forbidden gazes" that disrupt the *voyeurism* inherent in all film viewing and expose a "manipulative" presence; however, in the case of documentaries, the effect can actually contribute to the verisimilitude of the shot, as the dissonance between these appeals to the camera and all the profilmic elements that make absolutely no acknowledgement of the presence of the camera allows us to evaluate the shots "in terms of *truth*, as a sign, in short, that denotes the spontaneous and unplanned (and therefore authentic and *real*) nature of this behaviour, and by extension of the *possible world* in which it occurs" (Zunzunegui & Zumalde, 2019: 188). In other words, if these gazes to camera were not present, the final product may have raised suspicions of artificiality, offering evidence of an order given previously by the operator/filmmaker to the passers-by to pretend to ignore the existence of the device. Thus, as noted above, all three films analysed here present a continuous succession of individuals who, after passing in front of the camera, direct their gaze towards it, thereby establishing a bond with the spectators in the expat community, in addition to any connections that may already

exist due to family or community ties. There are some individuals who reinforce this link not only by gazing to camera but also by waving their hats in a very obvious greeting, while others react in a way that is quite distinct but just as effective in betraying the presence of the camera, concealing their faces as they come into the frame. There are even children and older individuals who step into the foreground with their backs to the event being filmed in the background to stare unabashedly straight at the camera operator while he is filming [Figure 3]. In their analysis of the composition of some of the Lumière scenes, Zunzunegui and Zumalde point out that their verisimilitude is reinforced by the gazes to camera "because they alert the spectator to the fact that the cameraman who is being looked at is on location and in plain view" (Zunzunegui & Zumalde, 2019: 188), like a special television news correspondent who offers the spectator an introduction to the story in front of an emblematic monument on the scene of the events, in an effort to give the impression of an eyewitness account.

Alma gallega (1966) gives the spectator a close-up of Amando Hermida Luaces, the camera operator, director and producer of the film [Figure 4]. He is carrying a camera and tripod on his shoulder as he walks over the rough terrain of Mount

Figure 3. *Nuestras fiestas de allá* (1928).

Santa Tegra, with the Miño river flowing into the Atlantic Ocean in view in the background, near the seaside village of A Guarda. The filmmaker, in his role as a character in the film, feigns fatigue from his climb to the mountaintop, reflecting the effort necessary to reach the perfect point to capture the spectacle of the estuary. Despite the aforementioned similarities to the other two films, this film is distinguished by a modern self-reflexive game that seems to defer the repetitious bioscopic records in the shots taken by José Gil and Manuel Arís, reflected in part by the wide shots of the Galician landscapes. Amando Hermida interferes in his documentary much more extensively by inserting brief, humorous sketches with very simple storylines—an innocent flirtation between a shepherd and a shepherdess after performing a Galician folk song, a fisherman who falls off a pier into the sea—and a voiceover that loads the film with connotative commentary. Nevertheless, as noted above, *Alma gallega* exhibits something of an indexical approach when Hermida focuses his camera on landscapes and celebrations. Here the amateur nature of the mise-en-scène becomes clear, bringing these sequences closer to the spatial and temporal instability of raw footage, with rudimentary editing of a succession of "tourist sights and folk scenes": landscapes, monuments, celebrations, cuisine, processions, sporting events, workers in the fields and on the sea, urban traffic, traditions, etc., all without any narrative, as however much the voiceover may attempt to give the jumble of images some coherent meaning, it is left up to the spectator/expat to provide them with a story ("that is the chapel where I got married"; "there is where we used to play when we were kids"; "I went to that procession every year with my parents"; "my grandparents' house is near that vineyard"). Otherwise, we would be viewing a substitutive image, rather than a restitutive image that effectively evokes a memory that can then be elaborated into a story. The memory is not shown on the screen but is elicited

Figure 4. *Alma gallega* (1966). Amado Hermida Luaces appears on screen with his film camera

by it, and this is where the essential value of the referential quality of the image and its objectivity, as *raw* images—like photo negatives—that need to be developed, to which end the elicited memory is the perfect darkroom.

However, there is one exception to the narrativity and objectivity—beyond Amando Hermida's aforementioned sketches and some of the voiceover comments—that bursts wildly onto the scene in Manuel Aris's *Un viaje por Galicia*. This is when the filmmaker arrives in his hometown, Poio, and we hear his voiceover say: "The village where I was born." Then later, he points out "the thresher on my farm at home,"[21] and finally, he declares: "Allow me to introduce to you this lady working so hard: it is my mother" [Figure 5]. This narrative is personal—although, as will be explored below, not untransferable—for the filmmaker; it is uniquely his. There is no way for spectators to contribute their own story here. However, this sequence opens another option for the spectator to participate: through projection and identification. The voiceover narrative has taken the journey that every émigré longs to take: first arriving in his village, then at his house, and then finally at his mother's side. It is also worth remembering that Aris's film also offers images of the ship voyage across the Atlantic on its way the Galician port. In this way, the filmmaker depicts his return, satisfy-

Figure 5. *Un viaje por Galicia* (1958). Manuel Arís's mother

ing the spectator's desire to return through Arís's first-person narrative. The spectator's projection will ultimately evolve into identification through the figure of the mother.

> This sequence features one of the decisive moments in the relationship between the audience and Aris's gaze. These family images assimilate the Galician emigrant community with his own family, and thus he shares the intimate space of his childhood, giving his personal journey a collective meaning; everything is still there, and the mother was waiting for him. The licence taken by Arís with these family scenes was criticised by Seoane, who considered it to be interference inappropriate to the conception of Galician cinema. Seoane may well be right, but Arís was not trying to offer a reflection of reality; rather, he recognised the myth that the emigrant community clung to. With the gift of the sequence with his mother, he invoked the mother of each spectator; she would become everyone's "mother" on the joyful occasion of the return to the mother and the motherland. (Barreiro, 2018: 69)[22]

The mother is essentially the image of the wait; a figure who, like Penelope, every expatriate longs to see once more.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The extreme historical circumstances surrounding Galician migration in the 20th century inadvertently turned José Gil (and those who came after him) into the precursor(s) to a trend of meaningful, complex appropriation of found home movie footage, with minimal manipulation, by documentary makers such as Péter Forgács with his praiseworthy *Private Hungary* series (1988-1997). As we have sought to demonstrate in this article, due to the almost complete absence of manipulation of filmed images, emigration films possess an intensely evocative power that facilitates the restitution rather than the substitution of memories.

However, in contrast to the dark and eerie tone that home movie footage acquires with the passage of time, in this case that tone is present in the image from the moment it is filmed—or, more precisely, from the moment it is engraved in the eyes of its first expatriate spectators—due to the enormous wound of a distance constituted by time (and money), and finally, almost always, death without ever returning home.

NOTES

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1   Jaime Solá was the founder and editor of the magazine *Vida gallega* throughout the first period of its existence from 1909 to 1938. The publication featured extensive graphic material by José Gil. The cover to the first issue featured a painting by Castelao, an artist and politician considered to be one of the fathers of Galician nationalism.

2   The film, shot after the death of two of his daughters, bears witness to an old, tired and aching gaze that still

has faith in cinema as a powerful "machine of restitution": "A person in a film (he wrote) never really dies" (Castro de Paz, Folgar de la Calle & Nogueira Otero, 2010: 387).

3 Original Galician: *"conxunto relativamente amplo de materiais visuais, documentais e reportaxes, relacionados cos procesos migratorios [...] Agrupamos baixo esta denominación todos os materiais visuais realizados con obxectivo explícitamente descritivo/denotativo e producidos especialmente, ben para a propaganda do territorio xeográfico industrial-cultural da metrópole nos países de ultramar, ou ben para a lembranza dos seres, costumes e paisaxes queridos dunha e doutra banda do mar."*

4 Notable among these is *50 aniversario del Centro Galego de Buenos Aires* [50th Anniversary of the Buenos Aires Galician Centre] (1957), due to the presence of María Casares, the daughter of Santiago Casares Quiroga, who was Prime Minister of the Spanish Republic at the time of the military coup in 1936. The actress, who had trained in France, would draw on the pain of exile to create some of her best performances on stage and screen (cf. Castro de Paz, 2017: 107-122).

5 Original Galician: *"viaxaban nas bodegas dos mesmos barcos a vapor que transportaban emigrantes ou retornados, para logo ser proxectadas nos mellores cinematógrafos de Bos Aires, La Habana, Vigo ou Coruña."*

6 For a more detailed exploration not only of the correspondence films produced for the Galician community but also for the rest of Spain's expatriate communities, see the study by Rubén Sánchez Domínguez (2020: 79-121).

7 A prominent figure in early Galician cinema, José Gil (born in the village of Rubiós in the province of Pontevedra in 1870) started off, like so many filmmaking pioneers, in photography. In 1910, he bought a Gaumont film camera, which he used to record social and cultural events in the city of Vigo. He was responsible for the first fiction film ever made in Galicia, *Miss Ledya* (1916). Together with Fausto Otero, he launched Galicia Films, the region's first film production company, with the aim of making family films, industrial reports, and of course, films for overseas emigrant communities.

After several years of both personal and professional difficulties, he established his last company, Galicia Cinegráfica, where he would produce *Nuestras fiestas de allá* and another important title in correspondence cinema: *Galicia y Buenos Aires* (1931).

8 Not to be confused with the 1929 film of the same name by Luis R. Alonso, which was commissioned by the four Galician local councils for the Ibero-American Expo in Seville. Alonso's film was an institutional production that has nothing to do with correspondence cinema.

9 Manuel Arís Torres (born in Poio, Pontevedra province, in 1920) experienced the pain of emigration first-hand when he sailed for Montevideo at the age of nine. In 1951, he began working for the emigrant community in the Uruguayan capital, making productions on 16mm film: *Caminos de España en el Uruguay* [Spanish Roads in Uruguay] (1954-1957), to which he would later add the films made during his trips around the Iberian Peninsula: *Por los caminos de España* [Along Spanish Roads] (1959) and *Tierra de nuestros mayores* [Land of Our Elders] (1960) complete the trilogy that he began with *Un viaje por Galicia.*

10 Amado Hermida Luaces (born in Ribadavia, Ourense province, in 1909) emigrated to Buenos Aires in 1929. After buying a 16mm camera and founding his own production studio (Hermifilms), he took advantage of his travels to make three films: *Galicia al día* [Galicia Today] (1959), *De Irún a Tuy* [From Irun to Tui] (1958) and the aforementioned *Alma gallega.*

11 Original Galician: *"no nivel máis elemental se atendemos á clasificación de Janet Steiger: o de 'operador de cámara'."*

12 Although we recognise the value of the classifications proposed by Bill Nichols, Zuzunegui and Zumalde's work offers the opportunity to take a more nuanced approach to the films analysed in this study.

13 In addition to bioscopic capture, the taxonomy of documentaries proposed by Zunzunegui and Zumalde includes three other categories. The authors use the term "common (sense) documentary" to refer to what film historians classify as the documentary genre, consisting of films that aim to give their sounds and images a single, cohesive and ordered meaning. Per-

haps the best example of this type of documentary is the war propaganda film, created for a propagandistic purpose that it makes no effort to conceal. The third category, given the label "intervened or conceptual document", involves an intervention in the footage that makes explicit the filmmakers intentions in the selection of the profilimic material, mise-en-scène, lighting, etc. This is an intervention that does not aim to erase the referential quality of the document, but enhances it in a different way, giving rise to a meaning that stems from the artist's intention and not from the bioscopic document. The fourth and final type of documentary, referred to as the "sublimated documentary", aims to divert the substantive indexicality of the bioscopic material in a new semantic direction.

14 Original Spanish: *"2. Restablecer o poner algo en el estado que antes tenía; 3. Dicho de una persona: Volver al lugar de donde había salido."* It is worth noting the connection established between the latter definition and the line that opens José Gil's film *Nuestras fiestas de allá:* "To see it drawn to us by the hand of art is to fly home to it."

15 In his novel about Galician émigrés in London, *Virtudes (e misterios)* [Virtues and Mysteries], which recently won the Spanish National Literature Prize for Narrative, the writer Xesús Fraga describes a curious dispute between two images: a photograph that materialises the absence of the narrator's grandfather, who emigrated to Venezuela, and his own face, which, according to everyone in his family, bears an extraordinary resemblance to the face of his forebear. The comparison arises from the placement of a passport-sized photo of his grandfather in the frame of a mirror that the narrator often looks at his reflection in: "At home, I would compare my resemblance to the only photograph of my grandfather that I knew of. Someone had stuck it in the bottom corner of the frame of the mirror, in which I saw my reflection twice: the image in the daguerreotype found a muffled echo in a youthful face, frozen decades earlier" [Original Galician: *Na casa, eu confrontaba as similitudes coa única fotografía do avó que coñecía. Alguén a colocara na esquina inferior do marco dun espello, no*

que me reflectía por partida dobre: a imaxe que devolvía o azougue atopaba un eco amortecido nun rostro de xuventude, conxelado décadas atrás] (Fraga, 2020: 26).

16 It is significant that to highlight the importance of *place* in the narrative of documentaries, Jaime Solá's text constructs sentences that give space the status of the subject of the clause instead of a circumstantial complement of place.

17 Original Galician: *"O tempo detido nas paisaxes semella una esixencia para a elaboración da perda. A paisaxe ten un tempo ancorado na memoria e as imaxes se animarán de novo á volta terma do traballador emigrado mentres segue fóra da casa. Se se produciran cambios na súa aldea, na súa paisaxe antropolóxica, toda a operación narrativa migratoria, todo o sacrificio, resultará en balde e a identidade ferida."*

18 Original Galician: *"O territorio convértese nun espazo abstracto, no que nada cambia nin pode cambiar; no que non hai conflito nin cicatrices de loita."*

19 Both the visual and semantic dimensions of "postcard" images in correspondence cinema are based on the dominant Galician pictorial models of the 1940s. The principles of the regionalist movement persisted after the end of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), with a predominantly local, folkloric style promoted and awarded in national fine arts exhibitions. This was the case of prominent painters such as Fernando Álvarez Sotomayor, Carlos Sobrino Buhigas, and Francisco Lloréns before the war; and Julia Minguillón and Julio Prieto Nespereira, as heirs to this aesthetic, which was embraced after the conflict by the Franco regime in its efforts to extol human nobility, whereby Galicia, according to Carlos López Bernárdez, became an "idealised, pure territory, an Arcadia crowned with a halo of perfection (...) Galicia is a kind of refuge of spirituality, a humble and simple land" [Original Galician: *"territorio ideal e puro, unha Arcadia revestida dunha aureola inmaculada (...) Galiza é unha especie de refuxio de espiritualidade, unha terra humilde e sinxela"*] (López, 2011: 29).

20 This premise requires a supporting argument, which is provided in detail by Santos Zuzunegui and Imanol Zumalde, who develop Henri Langlois's theory on the

absence of chance in the scenes shot by the Lumières' first camera operators. While the organising principle explained by Langlois is certainly discernible in some scenes, in many others chance is clearly the predominant factor.

21 Original Galician: *"A malladora na eira da miña casa."*

22 Original Galician: *"Nesta secuencia sitúa un dos momentos decisivos da relación do público coa súa mirada. Con esas imaxes familiares asimila a comunidade galega emigrada á súa propia comunidade familiar, e con ela comparte o espazo íntimo da súa infancia dándolle un sentido colectivo á súa volta persoal: todo permanece, a nai agardaba a chegada. Estas licencias familiares de Arís foron criticadas por Seoane, que as considerou coma interferencias inadecuadas na aprehensión fílmica de Galiza. Pode que Seoane estivera no certo, pero Arís non buscaba o reflexo do real, senón que termaba do mito do que se dotara a comunidade emigrada. Co agasallo da secuencia da nai, invocaba a nai de cadaquén, ela convertérase na 'miña nai' de todos, na fortuna de retornar á matria e á nai."*

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RESTITUTION OF MEMORY: IMAGES AND TRACES IN GALICIAN CORRESPONDENCE FILMS

Abstract

The genre known as "correspondence cinema" is mainly determined by the spectator/émigré's gaze. Constructed with obvious expressive and technical flaws that even approach the level of amateur cinema, this type of film was nevertheless capable of almost immediately triggering memories of a home and a time left behind. The restitution of a memory is made possible not only by the subjectivity of the spectator, but also by the *modus operandi* of the filmmakers who recorded this footage of local landscapes, faces, processions, rituals, work in the fields, etc. Based on a classification of these documentaries and an analysis of the mechanisms of their mise-en-scène, the aim of this article is to explore the reasons behind the extraordinary evocative power of the images filmed in Galicia, the homeland left behind, for screening at emigrant centres in host countries.

Key words

Emigration; Memory; Galicia; Latin America; Correspondence cinema; Restitution; Nostalgia.

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RESTITUIR EL RECUERDO. IMÁGENES Y HUELLAS EN EL CINE GALLEGO DE CORRESPONDENCIA

Resumen

El conocido como «cine de correspondencia» viene determinado, sobre todo, por la mirada del espectador/emigrante. Construidos con evidentes carencias plásticas y gramaticales, cercanas incluso al cine *amateur*, este tipo de films, sin embargo, eran capaces de suscitar de un modo casi inmediato el recuerdo del hogar y del tiempo perdido. La capacidad para restituir un recuerdo no viene dada solo por la subjetividad del espectador, sino también por el *modus operandi* de los realizadores que registraban esas tomas compuestas por paisajes, rostros, romerías, ritos, tareas del campo, procesiones, etc. A partir de una catalogación de dichos documentales y del análisis de los mecanismos que conforman su puesta en escena, se pretende profundizar en las razones del fuerte poder evocador de las imágenes filmadas en Galicia, la tierra abandonada, para ser proyectadas en los centros de emigrantes de ultramar.

Palabras clave

Emigración; recuerdo; Galicia; América; cine de correspondencia; restituir; nostalgia.

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

BEATRIZ BUSTO MIRAMONTES

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 archetypical 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 CGAI[1]—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 Aris 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] (Luís 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
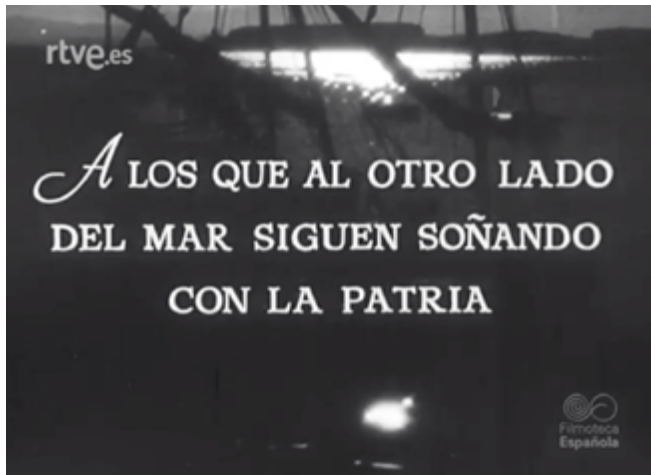
Figure 1. Opening credits, *Galicia y sus gentes* (1951)

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 Aris'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 Aris's documentary, but in this case framed for tourism. This narrative of a scenic Ga-

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

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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 levaime 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 ó río/como o río busca ó 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 levaime 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

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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

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Referencia de este artículo

A WANDERING ARCHIVE: HERBERT KLINE AND THE TRANSNATIONAL ITINERARIES OF ANTI-FASCIST FILMMAKING*

DAVID WOOD
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Introduction

In 1952, the US filmmaker Herbert Kline directed the feature fiction film *The Fighter*, an adaptation of Jack London's short story "The Mexican" (1911). The film tells the story of Felipe Rivera, a revolutionary from the town of Pátzcuaro in the Mexican state of Michoacán who settles in El Paso, Texas, in the hope of joining a group of exiled Mexicans who are planning to overthrow the dictatorial regime of President Porfirio Díaz (American Film Institute, 2019b). As the narrative unfolds, we discover that Felipe's town was burned to the ground and his family, friends and fiancée were tortured and killed by Díaz's federal troopers, as punishment for refusing to reveal the whereabouts of a revolutionary guerrilla leader. *The Fighter* could be considered an example of Hollywood's fondness for exoticising the Mexican Revolution in the years immediately after World War II; other examples of this tendency include *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre* (John Huston, 1948) and *Viva Zapata!* (Elia Kazan, 1952), films that tend to use the Mexican war as an epic background largely emptied of its revolutionary content.[1] However, a closer examination of *The Fighter* reveals that the film could be characterised as a political and personal project in which the character of Felipe serves as a kind of alter ego of Kline himself. Like the Mexican revolutionary in his film, Kline travelled back and forth between the United States and Mexico in those years on a quest for social justice while fleeing repression in his native country—in Kline's case, that of McCarthyism.

As will be shown in this article, Kline's fervent anti-fascist convictions led him to produce a heterogeneous body of work in a diverse range of countries over the course of fifty years, nearly always with his own resources. He made films in Spain during the Civil War; in Czechoslovakia just before the Sudeten Crisis; in Poland at the time of

> THE NOMADIC ROVING THAT CHARACTERISED KLINE'S PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL HISTORY (…) REQUIRES A PARTICULAR APPROACH, EQUALLY NOMADIC, TO THE RESEARCH AND THE ANALYSIS OF ITS ARCHIVE, COVERING A VAST DISTANCE NOT ONLY GEOGRAPHICALLY BUT ALSO CONCEPTUALLY IN RELATION TO CERTAIN IDEAS ABOUT FILM AS AN EPISTEMOLOGICAL OBJECT

the Nazi invasion; in Britain at the beginning of World War II; in Mexico during the institutional consolidation of the Revolution; in Hollywood in the 1940s; in Palestine on the eve of the foundation of the State of Israel; and again in Mexico, during the presidency of Luis Echeverría in the 1970s. At the same time, he moved between fiction film, political documentary, docudrama and art documentary. *The Fighter*—the first independent production by former Warner Bros. producer Alex Gottlieb—was the last film Kline made as a Hollywood director before his fall from grace in the McCarthy era. When his turn came to testify before the House Un-American Affairs Committee (HUAC) in the early 1950s, he refused to name names or to abandon his anti-fascist convictions. As a result, after *The Fighter*, more than twenty years would pass before he was able to release his next film in the United States, the documentary *Walls of Fire* (1973), dedicated to "the three greats" of Mexican muralism, David Alfaro Siqueiros, José Clemente Orozco, and Diego Rivera.

Kline's constant roaming and his versatility as a filmmaker led him to describe himself colloquially as a "film gypsy".[2] In the draft of his autobiography (a kind of scrapbook that combines autobiographical writings with original manuscripts, film projects, correspondence and press cuttings compiled over the course of sixty years), Kline refers on several occasions to his nomadic nature—his "film gypsy wanderings" (Kline, n. d.: 51)—as an essential part of his filmmaking praxis. The nomadic roving that characterised Kline's professional and personal history has made it difficult for his films to find a place on mainstream or art film circuits, as his work lacks the kind of stylistic or geographic unity and continuity over time that generally define the filmographies of the directors who form part of the film canon. Moreover, this object of study requires a particular approach, equally nomadic, to the research and the analysis of its archive, covering a vast distance not only geographically but also conceptually in relation to certain ideas about film as an epistemological object.

In a sense, Kline's self-designation as a wandering filmmaker seems to find an echo in the concepts of "intercultural cinema" and "accented cinema" coined by Laura Marks (2000) and Hamid Naficy (2001), respectively, to describe films made under conditions of exile, diaspora and migration. However, these analytical frameworks have only a limited usefulness for examining the work of Herbert Kline. Both Naficy and Marks analyse the work of filmmakers chiefly from "third world" countries who have immigrated or been forcibly displaced to "the cosmopolitan centres of the North", and whose films therefore reflect the (post-)colonial context of their production conditions. Naficy also refers to filmmakers from the "first world" who have travelled to countries in the "Global South" for political and creative reasons, such as Chris Marker and Joris Ivens. We would argue that Kline's status as a "wandering filmmaker" places him in an interstitial place between these two categories.

Kline's career bears certain resemblances to the career of the Dutch filmmaker Joris Ivens, described by Naficy as a "great wandering cineaste" with an "accented" oeuvre who (like Kline) "travelled nomadically from one troubled spot of the world to another to document what he saw" (216).

In contrast to many of the other filmmakers studied by Naficy, Ivens, like Kline, is not a filmmaker of the South who migrated to the North, but a director from the North whose political and creative interests led him to travel to different countries of the South. Naficy describes Ivens—but also Luis Buñuel—as a "peripatetic and nomadic Western subject [.... who] had the freedom—despite many obstacles—to roam the world, touching down here and there like the wind, and make films." This distinguishes him from those filmmakers who travelled in the opposite direction from the "third world" to the "first": exiles or post-colonial creators who have to deal with racism and a feeling of "outsiderism", who lack the freedom of someone like Ivens because they are subject to a "type of choiceless deterritorialization and reterritorialization that breed pessimism and paranoia" (219). It is undeniable that Kline had a privileged position as a white male from the "Global North" with connections in Hollywood and in the upper echelons of artistic and cultural worlds both in the United States and internationally; and like Ivens, and like photographers of the same era such as Henri Cartier-Bresson or Robert Capa, his wandering was driven by his artistic and ideological interests. However, in Kline's case, it was ultimately the political persecution he suffered in his own country for standing by his convictions that led him to spend much of his career working in Mexico, a country that today is considered part of the "Global South".[3] Moreover, Kline's films differ from the cases analysed by Marks and Naficy in what is perhaps a deeper—and, we would argue, hugely significant—sense. According to these two authors, the production conditions that characterise films of the diaspora, migration and exile give rise to a degree of formal or stylistic experimentation, resulting in films that in a way embody the violence and conflicts associated with these types of experiences: a "haptic, or tactile, visuality", as Marks calls it (2000: 2), or a cinema of "dislocation" that is "informed by the tensions

and ambivalence of exilic liminality", in Naficy's case (2001: 22, 275). However, when analysing Kline's filmography as a whole what becomes apparent is not a particular set of formal or stylistic features, but the diverse range of techniques, genres and styles used in his films. This suggests that beyond certain recurrent tropes, there is no stylistic signature in his work that ostensibly expresses the experience of migration. We would argue that this diverse range of techniques and styles is not so very different from that of recognised *auteurs* such as Ivens. Nevertheless, it may seem that the uneven and discontinuous nature of Kline's work would undermine any reading of his filmography from the perspective of Naficy's concept of "accented cinema".

Although the categories of "accented cinema" and "intercultural cinema" help us to conceive of Herbert Kline's career in nomadic terms, the features of his work that indicate the circumstances of uncertainty, personal risk and political persecution under which he made his films are the very same features that expose the gaps, inconsistencies, discontinuities and disjunctions present in his filmography. For this reason, despite the undeniable technical, aesthetic and narrative value of many of the films that Kline made both within and outside the commercial circuit, the aim of this study is not to focus on these features in order to vindicate him as a filmmaker or to integrate his work into some kind of counter-canon. Instead, the objective here is to tease out what the nomadic condition of Kline, his films and his archives can reveal about the value of film for articulating a historical reflection on what it means to make "useful cinema". This term, coined by Haidee Wasson and Charles Acland (2011: 3) to refer to "films and technologies that perform tasks and serve as instruments in an ongoing struggle for aesthetic, social and political capital,"[4] can help us locate Kline's creative process in a context marked by financial uncertainty, war and political repression. The analysis of his filmography in its entirety

therefore does not constitute an attempt to identify certain stylistic features that would make it possible to place his films homogeneously within the parameters of an auteur style that could contribute to his "canonisation". On the contrary, the objective is to expose the displacements, interruptions, discontinuities and gaps that speak almost as eloquently as the films themselves of the experience of filmmaking under the conditions described above.

The first question that arises when embarking on the study of an inconsistent, discontinuous, and geographically dispersed filmography like Herbert Kline's is where to find the films, and the documents related to their production, distribution and audience reception; where to find the signs of repression, the documentation on the unrealised projects and the reasons why they never got off the ground. The evidence suggests that most of the films and materials that document the difficulties he faced are not in film archives, and the few that can be found there are merely isolated cases. We have managed to locate prints of Kline's films in the Filmoteca Española in Madrid, the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York, the Jerusalem Cinematheque, the Filmoteca UNAM (the film library of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México), and the Cinémathèque Française in Paris. With the exception of the MoMA, none of these archives hold more than four titles by the filmmaker. On the other hand, documentation related to the films has been found in other archives not specific to cinema, associated with solidarity campaigns and humanitarian organisations, research centres dedicated to collective memory, archives of political and activist organisations, general archives and personal collections. In fact, it could be argued that just as Kline described himself as a film gypsy, researching his films requires the identification and reconstruction of a kind of wandering archive, scattered across a wide range of institutions around the world, each operating with its own very different system and institutional agenda. This article constitutes an initial attempt to map out this wandering archive, and to establish certain parallels between it and Herbert Kline's nomadic career.

A WANDERING ARCHIVE FOR A WANDERING FILMMAKER

Herbert Kline's work as a filmmaker is marked by gaps and silences that produce an inconsistent—and at times incoherent—picture of his career, rendering it difficult to periodise. However, an examination of the archives that document his praxis can fill those gaps with projects that never came to be realised. Catherine Benamou adopts the concept of the *longue durée* (long duration), coined by Fernand Braudel, for the analysis of Orson Welles's unfinished film *It's All True* (1941) (Benamou, 2007: 3). The classification of unrealised projects like this one over an extended time-frame represents an expansion of the "geohistorical lens" to go beyond the more immediate circumstances of a given project. This approach, which makes it possible to document not just a creative process but also the historical or cultural processes that influence it, seems a particularly useful way of assessing how roaming and repression gave shape to Kline's career. Obviously, Kline cannot be described as an extremely personal filmmaker like Orson Welles, an artist of the big screen who fought against huge obstacles to consolidate his status as an *auteur*. However, it would also be very reductive to label him a mere director of commissioned films. We should not underestimate his importance as a creator who played a key role in the construction of films resulting from partnerships and negotiations with a wide range of agents and shaped by different cultural and political factors. Indeed, his unique career requires a category of its own, specific to a wandering filmmaker who used cinema to forge a political vision as ideologically consistent as it was stylistically unpredictable.

The considerations outlined above raise some questions about the methodological implications of this study. As noted above, to appreciate the full complexity of the connections and tensions between Kline's wanderings as a filmmaker and the various social, political, and creative factors associated with them, any analysis of his oeuvre also needs to involve mapping out an equivalent route for the research. Beyond contributing to studies of this filmmaker in particular, this exploration offers an opportunity to reflect on how film history is constructed and the role played in that construction by archives and institutions that store, preserve and ensure access to prints of films and documents related to them. In other words, the analysis of a filmmaker like Kline lends itself particularly well to a complex, multifaceted research method that rejects both the *auteur* logic that places creative responsibility with the director, screenwriter or leading actor while ignoring the role that other factors play in the final form of the film—an idea also present in Naficy's concept of accented cinema—and the mythologising logic of film history associated with cinephilia that sometimes pervades film libraries and archives, as reflected in the documentary *Le fantôme d'Henri Langlois* [The Ghost of Henri Langlois] (Jacques Richard, 2004) and exposed in studies by Hagener (2014: 299) and Frick (2011: 3-26). The tentative category of Kline's wandering archive—drawing on the concept of media archaeology as defined by Thomas Elsaesser (2004: 103)—might constitute a first step in this direction.

Based on these assumptions, we have established three periods of different lengths that help shed light on the relationship between the nomadic nature of Kline's filmmaking praxis and his political identity as an anti-fascist filmmaker. The intention of this periodisation is not so much to reconstruct a linear progression with a teleological orientation that could give Kline's filmography a degree of stylistic or narrative homogeneity; rather, these periods are intended to function as an-

HIS UNIQUE CAREER REQUIRES A CATEGORY OF ITS OWN, SPECIFIC TO A WANDERING FILMMAKER WHO USED CINEMA TO FORGE A POLITICAL VISION AS IDEOLOGICALLY CONSISTENT AS IT WAS STYLISTICALLY UNPREDICTABLE.

alytical categories that provide a framework and a common narrative for the displacements (both physical and symbolic), divergences and discontinuities that characterise the filmmaker's career. It is important to stress here that the objective is not to minimise or obscure the disjointed, nomadic nature of his praxis, but to inscribe it in the broader context of anti-fascist internationalism and of the vicissitudes faced by individuals who adopted this type of political identity. The first period, which covers Kline's production from 1937 to 1940, includes films he and those he worked with made under the "Popular Front" banner in Europe; the second period, covering the decade from 1941 through to 1952, is defined by the continuation of his anti-fascist project after the end of the Popular Front era; and the third period, covering the nearly three decades from 1953 to 1981, refers to the years when Kline could not make a single film because of his blacklisting in the McCarthy era, as well as the years when he began directing again, making his last three films.

THE CULTURAL FRONT YEARS (1937-1940)

In the 1930s, Herbert Kline forged his political identity in the context of anti-fascism, and more specifically as part of what came to be known as the Cultural Front (Denning, 2011). Both anti-fascism and the Cultural Front formed part of the "Popular Front" initiative launched by the Third Communist International (Comintern) at its Seventh World Congress in 1935. At that time, the

Comintern abandoned the "social fascism" theory—which identified social democratic parties as enemies in the class struggle—and began promoting alliances between social democratic and revolutionary leftist parties with the aim of halting the advance of Nazism and fascism around the world. The Cultural Front was a way of giving a name in the 1930s to the interrelationship between the political and cultural dimensions of American cultural industries and apparatuses, and to partnerships established by "artists and intellectuals who turned the 'cultural' dimension into part of the Popular Front" (García López, 2013: 51). From 1937 to 1940, Kline made his first films in an international context fundamentally shaped by these fronts that waged a war on fascism and Nazism. All of these films were made in co-directing partnerships with a large group of filmmakers from different countries who had joined the anti-fascist movement.

Kline had begun his professional life in the early 1930s as editor for the magazine *Left Front* in Chicago, and subsequently moved to New York to become the editor of *New Theatre* magazine, which subsequently expanded its purview to include dance and cinema as well (Vallance, 1999), changing its name to *New Theatre and Film*. At the end of 1936, he left his well-paid position as director of this magazine and used his own savings and donations from family and friends to travel secretly to Spain to support the Republican cause during the Spanish Civil War (Kline, 1937a). Shortly afterwards, he was commissioned by the Medical Bureau to Aid Spanish Democracy (MBASD) to direct his first documentary, *Heart of Spain* (1937), in collaboration with the Hungarian photographer Geza Karpathi (who would go on to pursue an acting career in Hollywood as Charles Korvin). The film was produced by Frontier Films, an independent studio that Paul Strand, Leo Hurwitz, and other filmmakers of the Cultural Front worked for. The following year he continued his work for the MBASD and Frontier Films,

this time co-directing *Return to Life* (1938) and its French version, *Victoire de la vie* (1938), with Henri Cartier-Bresson. In parallel with these films, Kline and Cartier-Bresson also filmed a silent film that was hugely popular at the time, *With the Abraham Lincoln Brigade in Spain* (1938).

During those months, Kline met up again with the woman who would become his life partner, as well as the producer of his films during the most crucial years of his career: Rose Harvan, an American born in Czechoslovakia who had gone to Spain to work as a nurse for the MBASD. A little later, in the spring of 1938, after a contact of Kline's in Germany informed them that Czechoslovakia was to be Hitler's next stage of operations, Kline and Harvan moved there to continue their commitment to fighting fascism through film, teaming up with Hans Burger and Alexander Hackenschmied, who after emigrating to the United States would change his name to Alexander Hammid (Cook, Maloney, 1939). Together they produced the documentary *Crisis*, which the critic for *The New York Times*, Frank S. Nugent, acclaimed as "one of the best political documentaries of all time" (Nugent, 1939).

The anti-fascist principle that had underpinned the "Popular Front" doctrine was weakened when Hitler and Stalin signed the Molotov-Ribbentrop non-aggression pact in August 1939. Nevertheless, many of the intellectuals and artists that belonged to the Cultural Front continued to call for the intervention of the US government in the fight against fascism, as they had been doing up until then. That same year, Kline developed an interest in Latin America and began working intensely on a project related to the rise of Nazism in the region that to a large extent anticipated the proposition of cinematic pan-Americanism of the early 1940s. But the project stalled or was set aside due to the more urgent matter of the Nazi invasion of Poland and the outbreak of World War II, as the team made up of Kline, Harvan and Hackenschmied made *Lights Out in*

Europe (1940), a documentary about the Nazi advance in Poland and the defence of Britain.

The films that Kline and those he worked with made in Europe in the 1930s contributed to the anti-fascist cause in several ways. Firstly, the films made in Spain were exhibited on non-commercial but strongly politicised circuits and helped to raise funds for the purchase of ambulances and medical equipment and to send volunteers who had fought with the International Brigades in the Lincoln Battalion back home. Secondly, the films made in Czechoslovakia, Poland and Britain made it onto the commercial film circuit, helping to raise the public profile of the anti-fascist agenda. And thirdly, all these films received an enthusiastic response from critics, so that (to paraphrase Joris Ivens) not only did they achieve "direct political and ideological action [and] immediate substantial action," but also, through their aesthetic values, they constituted "a historic act of testimony for the future" (Segal, 1981: 5).

In any case, beyond his artistic concerns, Kline always prioritised the objective that his films should contribute to furthering a cause. For this reason, archival research on his career necessarily requires shifting the focus from film archives (without ever ignoring them altogether) to other types of collections—in this case, archives related to solidarity campaigns and the history of political and workers' movements—where film is only of partial or even marginal importance. For example, many of the documents related to the production of the films that Kline made in Spain for the MBASD and for Friends of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade (FALB) can be found in the archives of the Spanish Refugee Relief Association (SRRA) (Spanish Refugee Relief Association Records, 2021).[5] This collection, which contains documentation related to organisations that were active during the Spanish Civil War, is held at Columbia University's Rare Book & Manuscript Library and includes more than 340 boxes of documents dated from 1935 to 1957 (Columbia University Li-

brary, 2007). Most are administrative documents, including official reports, correspondence, pamphlets, photographs and advertising material for the SRRA, the MBASD and the North American Committee to Aid Spanish Democracy (NACASD).

The creation of this archive was the result of a donation from Herman Reissig, Executive Secretary of the Spanish Relief Campaign (1942), and from Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade (VALB), shortly after the creation of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives (ALBA, 1979). However, part of the ALBA collection was deposited in Brandeis University, and since the year 2000 it has been kept at New York University's Tamiment Library. Consequently, some of the documents related to the films Kline made in Spain, but also in Czechoslovakia and Britain,[6] are also held at this centre, which collects documentation in all formats related to the history of labour, the Left, political radicalism and social movements in the United States, with a special emphasis on communism, anarchism and socialism (New York University Libraries, 2021a; 2021b).

Although both the SRRA and ALBA archives have sections organised by proper names, the documents related to film productions nearly always extend beyond those assigned to their creators, and in many cases they are scattered across various files labelled with the titles of the films in question or the solidarity campaigns that sponsored them. However, although it would be problematic to classify him as an *auteur*, Herbert Kline's legacy has also been organised according to a more strictly individual principle in the collections at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) and at Syracuse University. The first of these collections is of special interest here, because the social and cultural mission of the USHMM links it in a way to the SRRA and ALBA archives. Moreover, in historical terms, it is possible to identify a certain continuity between the anti-fascist project shared by the SRRA and ALBA collections and the condemnation of Na-

zism that defines the philosophy of the USHMM. It is no accident that this institution is presented to the public as a "living memorial to the Holocaust that inspires citizens and leaders worldwide to confront hatred, prevent genocide and promote human dignity" (USHMM, 2021a). The "Herbert Kline Papers" are held at the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies. As a "generator of new knowledge and understanding of the Holocaust" this centre partners with associated institutions and produces publications and programs to contribute to the creation of a new generation of teachers, authors and researchers with the aim of ensuring the continued growth and vitality of Holocaust studies (USHMM, 2021b). The Herbert Kline document collection contains correspondence, documents and photographs related to Kline's films that provide evidence of the conflicts related to fascism and Nazism in Europe in the 1930s and early 1940s, as well as documents related to the production of *The Forgotten Village*, a film made by Kline and his team in Mexico in 1941.

CONTINUITY OF THE ANTI-FASCIST PROJECT (1941-1952)

In the 1940s, with Europe at war and subsequently with the anti-communist persecution in the United States, Latin America became for Kline a site of possibilities to continue the anti-fascist project. After his first attempt in 1939 to make a docudrama about the rise of Nazism in Latin America, Kline declined the opportunity to keep working in Hollywood for Warner (Kline, n. d.: 34) and teamed up again with Harvan and Hackenschmied to make *The Forgotten Village*, with a screenplay written by John Steinbeck and music composed by Hans Eisler. The film is a docudrama set in rural Mexico that tells the story of the efforts of a boy and a young teacher to convince a village's indigenous inhabitants of the benefits of modern medicine to combat colitis. It was the first

production made by Kline in Mexico, a country that years later he would recognise as his second home (Kline, 1983).

In this film, Kline had to reconcile his anti-fascist agenda with the modernising, developmentalist ideology that Steinbeck brought to the production (Pineda Franco, 2019; Geidel, 2019). Pineda Franco suggests that while the film aims to endorse the achievements of the outgoing radical government of Mexican President Lázaro Cárdenas (1934-1940) in heading off the proto-fascist threat of presidential candidate Juan Andreu Almazán, Steinbeck's script was concerned "not so much with a struggle against fascism [...] but with one against the cultural habits of rural Mexico, [... which] had to be sacrificed for a liberal, modern society to be born" (2019: 20). Even so, in his own writings about the filming of *The Forgotten Village*, Kline draws attention to the connections between the Mexican project and his previous experiences in Europe. In July 1940, while filming the riots that broke out between the supporters of Almazán and those of future president Manuel Ávila Camacho (footage that would not end up being included in the film), Kline expressed his desire to frame the film in a contemporary context marked by the urgency of the political moment: "The scattered scenes of violence reminded us of the dead and wounded we had known in Europe—the Spaniards, the Czechs and the Poles who fell before the fire of soldiers and 'fifth columnists' of Hitler and Mussolini" (Kline, 1940). Locating the film's creative process (although perhaps not the final product) in the broader time-frame of Kline's career, *The Forgotten Village* could be described as a link in a chain of international anti-fascist filmmaking that would be reinforced in his subsequent projects.

In the final years of World War II and the early post-war years, Kline moved back and forth between Mexico and the United States to work in the film industries of both countries without ever fully integrating into either. After requesting

leave from Metro Goldwyn Mayer, where he was working in the early 1940s,[7] he made his second Mexican feature fiction film, *Cinco fueron escogidos* [Five Were Chosen] (1943), which, unlike *The Forgotten Village*, was a product of the Mexican film industry. Set in a Yugoslavian town invaded by the Nazis, the film constituted an "update of the French film *Les otages*" [The Hostages] (Raymond Bernard, 1939) (Ramírez, 1992: 69) and at the time it was considered the first anti-Nazi film made in Mexico.[8] On this occasion, Kline teamed up again with the Mexican filmmaker Agustín Delgado, who had worked as a camera operator on *The Forgotten Village*, and who served as co-director on *Cinco fueron escogidos*, with Xavier Villaurrutia as screenwriter. Subsequently, also in Mexico, Kline shot an English version of the film, *Five Were Chosen* (1944), with a script by Budd Schulberg and with Rose Harvan playing one of the leading roles. A year later, Kline and Delgado worked together on *El mexicano* [The Mexican] (1944), based on an adaptation of the Jack London short story of the same name, with a script written by Delgado himself together with the Mexican writer José Revueltas. Although Kline ultimately abandoned this production,[9] he would use the same story for the aforementioned film *The Fighter*, which he would direct eight years later in the United States. After these four years working in Mexico, Kline would never work again for any of the major studios.[10] The three films he made in those years—*A Boy, a Girl, and a Dog* (1946), *The Kid from Cleveland* (1949), and *The Fighter*—were all independent productions, and in 1952 all doors in Hollywood were closed to him by the forces of McCarthyism.

In most of these films, Kline's anti-fascist commitment is expressed in the choice of anti-Nazi subject matter (*A Journey for Margaret*, *Cinco fueron escogidos/Five Were Chosen*) or their resemblance to what had been the aesthetic of the Cultural Front, either in terms of the social themes (*The Forgotten Village, The Kid from Cleveland*) or the idea of resistance against oppression

(*The Fighter*). In practically all of them there is an emphasis on the importance of the collective and of solidarity between different social groups. The narrative motif of a character who refuses to betray his comrades in the fight against the enemy also sometimes appears, which could be interpreted as an allegory for Kline's own situation at that time in his career, marked as it was by political persecution.

Separate mention is warranted for *Beit Avi/ My Father's House* (1947), a fiction film with documentary elements about refugees from Nazi extermination camps who arrive in British Mandatory Palestine after World War II and before the creation of the State of Israel. For this project, Kline went to Palestine to direct what is considered to be one of the first films made in that country, commissioned by the Jewish National Fund and produced by Kline together with the writer Meyer Levin, who also wrote the screenplay. Although Kline's work in Palestine was limited to this one production, which was somewhat out of keeping with his work in Mexico and Hollywood in those years, it is nevertheless indicative of Kline's habit of wandering in search of places and themes related to Nazism and its consequences.[11]

During this period Kline produced most of his films independently, seeking financial support through agreements with distributors such as Mayer & Burstyn (which specialised in the distribution of neorealist films in the late 1940s) or United Artists. As these films were not associated with the kind of solidarity campaigns that had resulted in the production of *Heart of Spain* and *Return to Life*, the material documenting this era is dispersed across a multitude of archives and collections including those mentioned above, as well as others located in the United States, Mexico and Israel. In this respect, the material from this period that is perhaps easiest to locate is that related to the films that Kline made in Hollywood because, although many were independent films, they were made in a context that, as Frick (2011)

and Slide (1992) demonstrate, is characterised by a highly developed archival capacity. For example, material related to the production of *Journey for Margaret* and *The Kid from Cleveland* (including manuscripts, screenplays, photographs and production documents) can be found in the Academy Film Archive and the Margaret Herrick Library of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences.[12] Of special interest for the analysis of *The Forgotten Village* is the material preserved at the CREFAL (Regional Cooperation Centre for Adult Education in Latin America and the Caribbean) in Mexico, which also holds the only print that we have been able to find of the Spanish version of *The Forgotten Village* (*El pueblo olvidado*, on 16mm). Documentation was also found in the archives of this institution containing information on the inclusion of the documentary in educational programs aimed at indigenous communities in the geopolitical context of the Cold War and the consolidation of Mexico as a key player in the new world order (Geidel, 2019; Wood, 2020).

It is worth adding that Kline's recurring partnerships with prominent figures in the fields of art and culture—coupled with the fact that he has never been characterised as an *auteur*—means that many of the documents related to the productions mentioned above are preserved in the archives of the people he worked with. For example, the well-documented studies by Molly Geidel (2019) and Adela Pineda Franco (2019) on *The Forgotten Village*[13] draw largely on the archives of John Steinbeck, referring to sources such as John Steinbeck Personal Papers in the Stanford University Archives and Steinbeck's documents in Annie Laurie Williams' records at Columbia University. Similarly, some of the documentation related to *Beit Avi* was found in the Meyer Levin collection in the Rare Books and Manuscripts Library at Boston University.[14]

PERSEVERANCE (1953-1981)

On September 18, 1951, Herbert Kline was called to testify before the HUAC. The Hearst Newsreel Collection at UCLA contains raw footage of a newsreel with recordings of the hearing, whose content description defines Kline as a "commie who would not answer questions." As noted above, Kline's refusal to testify against his professional colleagues—like so many other filmmakers who were blacklisted during the McCarthy era—marked the beginning of a long period of close to twenty years when he could not work in Hollywood or get any of his film projects off the ground. Nevertheless, this period is of special interest for the purposes of this article, as it is precisely the evidence of the projects that Kline conceived, wrote and tried to make happen—but that never saw the light of day—that truly reveals the extent to which his commitment to radical democracy kept him out of circulation during the dark days of the communist witch hunts in the United States. In the 1950s alone, he took numerous projects to different stages of development (synopsis, treatment or screenplay): *The Yankee* (1952), *Sparks Fly Upward* (1953), adaptations of Jack London's novel *Star Rover* (1953) and Daniel Dafoe's *Moll Flanders* (1955) and a project about Barabbas titled *The Thief and the Cross* (1959).[15]

In those years, Kline searched relentlessly for partnerships and funding for his projects from friends and new partners "who didn't mind [his] leftist background" (Kline, n. d.: 2). In the early 1960s, he wrote the screenplay for a film about Simón Bolívar that caught the interest of Hy Martin, president of Universal Pictures on the East Coast, who laid down the condition that the leading role be played by a Hollywood star. Anthony Quinn expressed interest in playing Bolívar in response to a request from Kline, but the actor's exorbitant fee prevented an agreement from being reached and the project was shelved. A short time later, Kline accepted a work offer from Bart

Lytton, a screenwriter who had also fallen from grace in the McCarthy era, but who, after making a fortune in banking, opened the Lytton Center of Visual Arts with the archive collection of the Danish producer and director Mogens Skot-Hansen. Since Lytton offered Kline and his family financial support, his wife, the curator Josine Ianco-Starrels, ended up directing the centre, while Kline supervised the permanent collection, dedicated to pre-cinema artefacts, and a wall installation on 20th-century film history (Kline, n. d.: 61; The Architectural Digest, 1963: 136-137). Kline ultimately returned to Mexico, where he found someone to support a new project, *Walls of Fire*, marking his return to documentary direction after having been banned in Hollywood for twenty years.

In *Walls of Fire*, Kline combined the experience he had acquired in museum curation with his unshakeable commitment to fighting fascism. As a result, this documentary paying tribute to Siqueiros, Orozco, and Rivera showcases the potential of public art to critique and transform society. For the production of *Walls of Fire*, Kline had the support of Gertrud Ross Marks and Edmond Penney, although by far the most important backing came from the painter Siqueiros himself and his partner Angélica Arenal. The documentary premièred in 1971 in Mexico, and in 1973, after winning the Golden Globe for Best Documentary, it was released in the United States, where it received an Oscar nomination. Thanks to the film's success, Kline obtained support from the French Ministry of Culture and the Cinémathèque Française, among many other institutions in the art world in France and other European countries (American Film Institute, 2019a), for his next documentary, titled *The Challenge... A Tribute to Modern Art* (1975), which would also be nominated for an Oscar in the Best Documentary category. With Orson Welles' narration enhancing the film's prestige, *The Challenge...* explored key factors behind the origins of modern art while also constituting a

living archive of major figures such as Pablo Picasso, Alexander Calder, and Peggy Guggenheim. At the same time, beyond its clear intention to make art accessible to the general public, it is hard to overlook the fact that many of the artists featured in *The Challenge...* had identified as staunch anti-fascists in the past. The concept of modern art itself, historically associated with the avant-garde, was dismissed by the Nazis as "degenerate art", as evidenced by an article included in Kline's scrapbook about the exhibition "'Degenerate Art': The Fate of the Avant-Garde in Nazi Germany", organised by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) in 1991 (Kline, n. d.: 23).

With his last documentary, titled *Acting: Lee Strasberg and the Actors Studio* (1981), Herbert Kline not only offered a portrait of the mastermind behind "The Method" and the inspiration for and director of one of the most influential acting schools of the 20th century, but also sought to recover the image of a friend and colleague who, along with Harold Clurman, had promoted the Theatre Group, which was associated with the Cultural Front in the 1930s. Together with Clifford Odets, Kline, Clurman and Strasberg had taken part in one of the most memorable episodes in the history of the American Cultural Front when in December 1934 Odets sent his unpublished play *Waiting for Lefty* to the magazine *New Theatre and Film*, where Kline worked as editor for several years. Thanks to the success the play enjoyed a few months later, the magazine, which had begun as a self-financed publication with a small readership and contributors who offered their work free of charge, became recognised as one of the benchmark publications of the Cultural Front. Although this story and others of that era were left out of his last documentary (Kline, 1985: 8-10), it could be argued that it was this legacy that inspired his final film, just as it had inspired so many of his other projects.

This long period of Kline's career is extensively documented in the collection containing his most

personal records, donated in 2009 by his daughter Elissa Kline to Syracuse University (Special Collections Research Center). Like other collections, it contains material related to his anti-fascist commitment in the 1930s and 1940s, but it also includes family correspondence and notes for his aforementioned autobiography, as well as scripts and correspondence related to projects that never made it to the screen during the period that Kline was banned from working in Hollywood. Just as documentation related to other projects that the filmmaker worked on with prominent artistic and cultural figures can be found in the archives of those individuals, the Sala de Arte Público Siqueiros in Mexico City—which houses the Centro de Documentación e Investigación Siqueiros—contains numerous documents related to the production of *Walls of Fire*, a film about which there are practically no references in the other collections mentioned above.[16] The document collection has been especially useful for this research as it contains an abundance of correspondence between Kline, David Alfaro Siqueiros, and Angélica Arenal (Siqueiros's life partner and business manager), as well as correspondence between the couple and the producers Gertrud Ross and Edmond Penney. This correspondence is dated from 1967 to 1983, and thus covers the period of the film's production practically from its inception, as well as the events following its release in Mexico (1971) and the United States (1973). The document collection in the Siqueiros Archive also contains the screenplay to the film, an extensive press kit and promotional material.[17] Both the Kline collection at Syracuse University and the Siqueiros Archive also include references to the last two documentaries directed by Kline,[18] although this is a part of his filmography that will be explored in future research.

CONCLUSION

As this article has shown, exploring Herbert Kline's career as a whole from the perspective of his nomadic filmmaking praxis can shed some light on a creative trajectory that at first glance may seem inconsistent, heterogeneous and filled with gaps and contradictions. Specifically, analysing Kline's oeuvre with a *longue durée* approach reveals a filmmaker on a quest for ways of carrying out an anti-fascist cinematic project at different historical moments and in a wide range of cultural and political contexts. This approach makes it possible to identify connections, for example, between a series of political documentaries about the Spanish Civil War, a docudrama promoting the modernisation of healthcare in rural Mexico, a Zionist drama made just prior to the foundation of the State of Israel, a Hollywood baseball movie, and a series of documentaries about modern art.

It has been argued here that what characterises Kline's work is the *absence* of an authorial signature, as this absence constitutes a reflection of the uncertainty, migration, and persecution that conditioned his creative production. In light of the above, it could even be argued that Kline was a wanderer not only in geographical terms but also in terms of style, as he conceived of filmmaking from an instrumental or utilitarian perspective. Although it is not absent *per se*, style in Kline's films tends to be largely subordinate to the nature and needs of the subject matter, the approaches of the people he worked with, the financial possibilities, and the infrastructure of the production environments in which he operated. Rather than asserting a definitive creed in relation to the documentary or realism, Kline repeatedly plundered generic codes and aesthetic paradigms to consolidate a social or political agenda that varied according to the historical moment and the geographical location without ever losing its anti-fascist dimension. Ultimately, the analysis of Kline's wandering archive shows us that to uncover the grey areas of

film history, we need to abandon the assumptions on which that history is founded and explore its inconsistencies, deviations, and dissonances. ∎

NOTES

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1 For more on Hollywood's approach to the Mexican Revolution, see Miranda López (2010).

2 We believe it important not to misconstrue Kline's expression "film gypsy" in ethnic terms, as it should be understood as an allusion to the nomadic condition that characterises Kline's filmmaking practice, a condition that has also historically been associated with the Roma people. To avoid confusion or offence, throughout the article we employ the alternative term "wandering filmmaker".

3 Revealing in this respect is a conversation between Bertolt Brecht and Hans Eisler cited by Kenneth H. Marcus, who reports that the German playwright confided in Eisler that "in the film world the people I know are [William] Dieterle, [Fritz] Lang, [Henry] Koster and [Herbert] Kline." Marcus draws attention to the fact that all of these filmmakers were exiles like Brecht, except for Kline (Marcus, 2015: 214). He also notes that most of them ended up excluded from commercial film circuits due to their leftist convictions.

4 Wasson and Acland refer mainly to films made in an institutional context. However, as they specify in the introduction to their book, the concept of useful cinema is multi-dimensional and flexible enough to include "experimental films and a variety of didactic films that are fictional as well as non-fictional, narrative as well as non-narrative" (Wasson & Acland, 2011: 4),

5 Prints are preserved of *Heart of Spain* on 35mm film, and of *Return to Life* on 16mm, in the MoMA and in Filmoteca Española. Tamiment Library & Wagner Labor Archives has a 16mm print of *With the Abraham Lincoln Brigade in Spain* (Tamiment Library & Wagner Labor Archives, 2021).

6 The MoMA has restored prints of *Crisis* and *Lights Out in Europe* in its archives. Both were included in the "Documenti e documentari" section of the Il Cinema Ritrovato festival, directed by Gian Luca Farinelli (2019 and 2018, respectively).

7 The film he was directing for MGM was *Journey for Margaret* (1942), a drama about an orphan girl in London during the Blitz, which due to disagreements between Kline and the managers of the London Underground ended up being completed by W. S. Van Dyke, who was credited as its sole director.

8 Jueves de Excélsior (1942, 29 October). Lumière dice... *Jueves de Excélsior*, p. 38.

9 The press of the day described Kline as the person responsible for the project, with Budd Schulberg as screenwriter (Motion Picture Daily (1943, 9 July). Kline is in Mexico for 'The Mexican'. *Motion Picture Daily*, p. 6.

10 He did work as a screenwriter for RKO on *Youth Runs Wild* (Mark Robson, 1944), and for Universal Pictures on *Illegal Entry* (Frederick De Cordova, 1949). The latter film, set in the United States and Mexico, tells the story of a Polish refugee and Dachau survivor who falls victim to a human trafficking gang.

11 Although the opening credits present it as a simple "story of the people of Palestine, and not of its politics", the film expresses clear sympathies with the Zionist cause.

12 The University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) has nitrate prints of these films on 16 and 35 mm, respectively.

13 There are prints of *The Forgotten Village* in various institutions; for example, UCLA, the Stanford Theatre Foundation, the MoMA and the Filmoteca UNAM all have 35mm nitrate prints.

14 We would like to thank Mikael Levin for helping us to track down these documents, as well as the print of the film preserved in the Jerusalem Cinematheque.

15 The script for this project is preserved at the University of Delaware ("Herbert Kline collection related to the film *Barabbas: The Thief and the Cross*"). We would like

to thank Julia Dudley, a librarian at the University of Syracuse, for bringing this collection to our attention.

16 We would like to thank Mónica Montes Flores, Director of the Centro de Investigación y Documentación Siqueiros, for providing access to the materials related to the production of *Walls of Fire* in the Sala de Arte Público Siqueiros.

17 The Filmoteca UNAM has a 16mm print of this film. We would like to thank Ángel Martínez, head of cataloguing at the Filmoteca UNAM, for his help in locating this print.

18 UCLA has a 35mm print of *The Challenge... A Tribute to Modern Art* (1975) and the Cinémathèque Française holds a print of *Acting: Lee Strasberg and the Actors Studio* (1981).

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A WANDERING ARCHIVE: HERBERT KLINE AND THE TRANSNATIONAL ITINERARIES OF ANTI-FASCIST FILMMAKING

Abstract

This article analyses the transnational and itinerant work of the US anti-fascist filmmaker Herbert Kline, whose career spanned five decades from the 1930s to the 1980s. Kline's urge to combat Nazism and fascism and to promote radical democracy through film took him to Europe, the US, Palestine and Latin America. Taking as our starting-point the theories by Naficy and Marks on diasporic and exilic cinemas, but avoiding an authorial approach, we take up Kline's own self-definition as a *film-gypsy* to account for a highly heterogeneous and discontinuous oeuvre that comprises finished and uncompleted films as well as unmade film projects; and documentary, fiction and dramatised documentary films. Furthermore, the article proposes that the scholarly study of a filmmaker such as Kline calls for a multiple and complex research methodology in order to fully account for what we call the filmmaker's *gypsy archive*.

Key words

Herbert Kline; Cinema; Anti-fascism; Internationalism; Archive.

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UN ARCHIVO VAGABUNDO: HERBERT KLINE Y LOS ITINERARIOS TRANSNACIONALES DEL ANTIFASCISMO CINEMATOGRÁFICO

Resumen

Este artículo examina la itinerancia transnacional de Herbert Kline, cineasta estadounidense antifascista cuya carrera se extiende desde la década de 1930 hasta mediados de 1980. A lo largo de cinco décadas, Kline se desplazó por Europa, Estados Unidos, Palestina y América Latina, siguiendo el impulso de combatir el nazismo y el fascismo y promover la democracia radical a través de su práctica cinematográfica. Partiendo de las teorizaciones de Naficy y Marks sobre el cine de la diáspora y el exilio, pero eludiendo el enfoque autoral, tomamos la autodefinición de Kline como *cineasta vagabundo* para dar cuenta de una obra enormemente heterogénea y discontinua que comprende documentales y ficciones, películas finalizadas y otras incompletas, así como proyectos que nunca se desarrollaron. Por lo demás, el artículo propone que el estudio de un cineasta como Kline requiere de una investigación metodológica múltiple y compleja para poder dar cumplida cuenta de lo que denominamos el *archivo vagabundo* del cineasta.

Palabras clave

Herbert Kline; cine; antifascismo; internacionalismo; archivo.

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COLONIALISM, EMIGRATION AND THE IMPERMANENCE OF IMAGES: A LATENT TRUTH BELOW FOG LEVEL

RICARDO ÍSCAR
LYDIA SÁNCHEZ
SERGIO VILLANUEVA BASELGA

In analogue photography, an image is created when photons of light strike the film, affecting the silver halide crystals that cover it. The image is thus left waiting to be developed, when it is transformed into pure metallic silver. Until then, it is a latent image. Any part of the image that is underexposed is said to be below fog level, meaning that there is no information there that can be revealed.

When we shoot a film, we record what we see, but there is information added to the image that travels with it, incognito, unbeknownst to us. Archive footage often has a life independent of its author; it is like an orphan that nevertheless contains an interpretable genetic and cultural code. This is why films taken by Europeans in the colonies in the 19th century revolt today against their creators, revealing an image, latent for many years, of exploitation of the Other, of supposed racial, cultural and religious superiority.

This article analyses the latent information in colonial images and connects it with the theory of the coloniality of power developed by the Peruvian sociologist Aníbal Quijano. Reinterpreted, these images offer a snapshot of Eurocentrism. At the same time, this study identifies a connection between colonialism and contemporary emigration by analysing various examples of films that reinterpret colonial images or that use archive footage to explore emigration and the mark that it leaves on families. The films analysed include *Moeder Dao, de schildpadgelijkende* (Vincent Monnikendam, 1995), *Immagini dell'Oriente: turismo da vandali* (Yervant Gianikian, Angela Ricci Lucchi, 2001), *African Mirror* (Mischa Hedinger, 2019), *Leur Algérie* (Lina Soualen, 2020), *Radiograph of a Family* (Firouzeh Khosrovani, 2020) and *We Were So Beloved…*(Manfred Kirchheimer, 1986). The article concludes with a differentiation of the function of archive footage as an illustration or evocation of the past from its use as an archaeology or ontology of the image, considering the deteriorating effect that time has on film and its spectral nature.

ARCHIVES AS A GENRE

Cinéma vérité is essentially a way of recording a moment that is only really captured as a reflection, a shadow of what we were a second earlier. The succession of images reproducing a presence in the present still belongs to the past, even if it is the contemporary past. In this sense, there is very little difference between an image taken of you today and an image of your grandparents taken decades ago. Both essentially tell the same story and will be ontologically the same in a few years, even if we are better off ignoring the fact.

As Jaimie Baron suggests, any image will turn into archive material eventually, unless it disappears altogether before it gets the chance (2013: 21). With a bit of luck, many of our photographs, films shot on Super 8, or digital videos will end up in film libraries, forgotten in an attic somewhere, or displayed anonymously at a flea market. They will lie in wait for someone to discover them and use them to tell a story quite different from the original. Reading Hall (2001), images of the past can serve to shed light on history and attempt to reconstruct it, albeit always only ever in a partial and biased way, invoking their status as evidence, the certainty of existence asserted by every image (notwithstanding their interpretation). But they can also serve for reflecting on images themselves, on their referential value, on concepts like time and space or the culture that created them.

Esfir Shub was a pioneer in the use of archive footage for the purposes of historical reconstruction. Her 1927 film *Padenie dinastii Romanovykh* (Fall of the Romanov Dynasty) exposed the distance between the rulers and the people in Tsarist Russia, a gap that led to the Revolution of 1917. It is worth highlighting that for Shub the footage she was working with was relatively contemporary, generally no more than 15 years old. Its value for her was therefore essentially demonstrative.

The use of archive material to illustrate a supposed historical truth has been a method adopted by countless filmmakers since Shub's ground-breaking work. Most of us have grown up watching films about World War II created using old black-and-white footage with voiceover narration. In such films, archive material adopted its traditional role of evidence of something that happened and support for a persuasive argument related to a major historical event, although the end result is still a mythologised history. Archives are even used as proof of some aspect of the past that is reproduced and self-justified in the present (Hallam & Roberts, 2011).

But there are other possible readings. Images do not always show what we think we see. Actions we film at one point in time, when they do not originally form part of a closed narrative—and sometimes even when they do—can reveal different information that we were not aware of. Time changes everything, including cultural codes and the way we interpret images. What we think is right in one era may cease to be so years later. The revision of footage filmed by imperial authorities in their colonies from 1895 up until those colonies won their independence provides evidence of this.

IMAGES OF COLONIALISM

A few years before the Lumiére brothers invented their cinematograph in 1895, the European powers met at the Berlin Conference to agree on the terms of their effective occupation of the African continent. Thus, after slavery had been abolished, the exploitation of Africa's native populations and riches was legitimised. The Congo, as the personal property of King Leopold II of Belgium, was a paradigmatic example. With the exception of Abyssinia (Ethiopia) and Liberia, the entire African continent was divided up between France, Britain, Germany, Portugal, Spain and Belgium. This was of course in addition to all the other possessions of these and other empires across the globe, such as the Dutch, the Ottoman, or the vast Russian empire, in an imperial club that would be joined

CINÉMA VÉRITÉ IS ESSENTIALLY A WAY OF RECORDING A MOMENT THAT IS ONLY REALLY CAPTURED AS A REFLECTION, A SHADOW OF WHAT WE WERE A SECOND EARLIER. THE SUCCESSION OF IMAGES REPRODUCING A PRESENCE IN THE PRESENT STILL BELONGS TO THE PAST, EVEN IF IT IS THE CONTEMPORARY PAST

at the end of the century by the United States and Japan. The rise of empire at the end of the 19th century was due to the expansionist needs for raw materials brought by the Industrial Revolution, and to the rise of nationalism.

Photography,[1] and later cinema, documented the dominated countries extensively, for anthropological, propagandistic or exoticising purposes. As Santana Pérez (2011: 22) argues:

> From the outset, the primordial conception of photography was not as a pastime or a form of artistic expression; rather, its purpose was clearly to fulfil a social, military and political function. It would become an effective tool in the hands of European and American colonialism and imperialism.

Keenly aware of the power of the camera as a propaganda tool, government departments created in the 1930s in Belgium, France and Britain used film to produce colonial propaganda (such as the Belgian Fonds Colonial de la Propagande Économique et Social). In Spain, the country's colonial mission in Equatorial Guinea was promoted in some of the *NO-DO* newsreels made by the Franco regime. Odartey-Wellington mentions the case of a production company named Hispania VTR that wrote a letter in 1926 to the Spanish governor of the island of Fernando Po "proposing to film a documentary titled *Cinematographic Information on Fernando Po*," which would be "the most beautiful propaganda that could ever be made about our possessions in the Gulf of Guinea" (2015: 62). But what story did these images really tell? In reality, it was a story of prejudice and capitalist exploitation, as Odartey-Wellington (2015: 61) explains:

> Documentary film is constructed on asymmetrical power and subjugation, sometimes concealed, engendered by the marginalisation and exoticisation of the foreign culture. The documentary and other media for capturing images, such as photography, are useful tools for imperialism.

This revision of the past ties in with the influential decolonising work of Frantz Fanon (1961) and Albert Memmi (1957) and subsequent explorations in post-colonial studies by Edward Said (1978) and Walter Mignolo (1995), among others. From this perspective, after the independence of most colonies during the second half of the 20th century, colonial history and the images that served to justify it have been reinterpreted. Two notable examples of this are Vincent Monnikendam's *Moeder Dao, de schildpadgelijkende* (Mother Dao, the Turtlelike) (1995), and the films of Yervant Gianikian and Angela Ricci Lucchi. Both of these examples are discussed below.

Moeder Dao, de schildpadgelijkende uses archive footage taken in the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia) between 1912 and 1933, filmed by Dutch businessmen and settlers to document their way of life and work in their factories. The main intention was to demonstrate the effectiveness of colonisation: how modern their factories were, how well their employees worked, or how their religion had saved the native population. The settlers had brought Western customs, music, transportation, education and healthcare. However, what the images reveal sixty years later is the settlers' ignorance of the culture, religion, and ancestral customs of the Indonesians. We see businessmen dressed in white and wearing the classic pith helmets; priests trying to cross rivers that are strange to them, falling in and finally being carried by locals; shivering children receiving baptism with sombre expressions on their faces (whether for the importance of the moment of official accept-

Figure 1. Still frame from *Moeder Dao, de schildpadgelijkende*

ance into the faith or out of pure terror we cannot tell); priests trying to put together a Western music band with a group of Indonesian youths; locals on a production line working mechanically while gazing fearfully at the camera. It is thus footage that reveals a truth quite different from what was originally intended.

Monnikendamm's extraordinary film (figure 1), with its skilful use of sound and editing, is also a product of its time. The director places the world of Indonesia's natives in opposition to the colonial invasion using a legend that tells the mythical origins of the world, while the soundtrack is often used as a counterpoint that supports the reinterpretation of the images. For example, in one sequence we see a priest instructing a group of young people in the catechism while we hear Gregorian chants, added by Monikendamm, mixed with jungle sounds, thereby reinforcing the absurd nature of the missionary project. As Santana Pérez argues, missionaries used photography "to bear witness to their Christian actions and to the 'great achievement' of their evangelism of the indigenous population. Photography had to praise the greatness of Christ in these virgin lands and the 'valour' and serenity of his instruments, the missionaries" (2011: 23).

At another moment in the film, a tracking shot takes us down a long passage while we hear a low noise typical of a horror scene. We are inside a hospital. The images that follow, to the same sound, are difficult to look at: children and babies covered in blisters and rashes, and people with parts of their bodies eaten up by ulcers or leprous sores. Despite the psychological impact of the images, the horror of this scene facilitates a different reading, not documented in the footage: that colonisation exploited the indigenous people, constituting a great evil that also brought disease and death, but one of the few positives may have been the work of doctors and nurses. The images in *Mother Dao, the Turtlelike* leave no doubt as to the effects of colonialism and demonstrate that the past is always open to interpretation, as is the film itself..

Archive images provide the raw material for all the analytical and political work of Yervant Gianikian and Angela Ricci Lucchi, who appropriate found footage to give it new meanings. In *Dal Polo all'Equatore* (From the Pole to the Equator) (1986), they work with the huge volume of footage taken by the pioneering Italian filmmaker Luca Comerio (1874-1940), who was appointed camera operator to the king. Comerio filmed the arrival of Italian forces in Libya in 1911 and safaris from the South Pole up to Africa, only to spend his final years forgotten and in penury. Seventy years later, Gianikian and Lucchi re-filmed his still frames, acid stains included, to tell a story very different from

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THE SETTLERS HAD BROUGHT WESTERN CUSTOMS, MUSIC, TRANSPORTATION, EDUCATION AND HEALTHCARE. HOWEVER, WHAT THE IMAGES REVEAL SIXTY YEARS LATER IS THE SETTLERS' IGNORANCE OF THE CULTURE, RELIGION AND ANCESTRAL CUSTOMS OF THE INDONESIANS

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the one imagined by Comerio: a critique of imperialism and colonialism. This, along with critiques of war and physical, social and political violence, constitutes the core of their filmography.

At the beginning of another, later film, *Immagini dell'Oriente: turismo da vandali* (Images of the Orient: Vandal Tourism) (2001) an intertitle with a quote by Giovanna Marini signals the direction the film will take: "The white man possesses a quality that has led him down the road: a lack of respect. The white man stops for nothing." These lines, chanted by a single voice like a prayer, is repeated over footage of rich maharajahs on a boat, together with rich white men. The images take us on a journey around India, where the white men are welcomed and honoured by the country's powerful. We see parades, marching elephants (figure 2), parties, white men visiting cities and monuments, drinking tea and being attended by servants; but we also see ragged children staring at the camera and working in the fields. The music and chanted lines serve to punctuate images shown in slow motion, in different tones, reframed, or as negatives. All of this has an alienating effect that serves to sharpen our gaze, making us notice details, and reflect on our own era rather than being transported to another time. Instead of historical evidence of the past, what this found footage offers is a new reading that brings them into the present so that we can see something of ourselves. Indeed, the tourism of the elite shown in the images is close to our mass tourism today, which treats the world as a spectacle rather than a place for human engagement. It is a tourist trip to the former colonies whose other side is the contemporary phenomenon of emigration to the former imperial metropolises.

Monnikendamm's film and the work of Giankian and Lucchi are both intimately related to decoloniality, a concept theorised most extensively by Aníbal Quijano, who argues that rather than ending with the end of coloniality, colonialism has continued thanks to economic imperialism

Figure 2. Still frame from *Immagini dell'Oriente: turismo da vandali*

and globalisation, and that it is intrinsically linked to power. The theory of decoloniality offers a critical view of Eurocentrism and a conception of the world based on the ideas of race and capitalism. According to this idea, the countries that were colonised, beginning with Latin America, need to liberate themselves from the legacy of Eurocentric power that still holds sway in their economies, cultures and societies, starting with the notions of race and the nation-state.

According to Quijano, in the conquest of the Americas

the colonisers codified the phenotypical features of the colonised in terms of colour and adopted this as the emblematic characteristic of the category of race. This codification was probably first established in the British colonies of North America. Blacks there were the most important exploited group, as most of the economy relied on their labour; but

they were also the most important colonised race, as the indigenous peoples did not form part of that colonial society. Consequently, the dominant peoples called themselves 'whites' (2000: 246).

The work of Rene Gardí, which will be discussed below, exemplifies this prevailing Eurocentric attitude.

DECOLONISING THE COLONISER'S GAZE

Gardi was a Swiss writer and filmmaker known in the 1960s for his African travel books and films like *Mandara* (1959) and *Die letzte Karawane* (The Last Caravan) (1967). Sixty years later, another Swiss filmmaker, Mischa Hedinger, made *African Mirror* (2019), a film that revises footage shot by Gardi in Cameroon in the 1940s and 1950s, without altering it, but by interspersing it with interviews that Gardi gave on Swiss television and reflections written in his diaries. As the title suggests, the association of all these elements and the passage of time reveals that what these films really reflect is a paternalist, colonial gaze. Gar-

Figure 3. René Gardí filming

di idealised northern Cameroon and the region of Mandara, while underestimating the capacity of the Africans to adapt to change. His failure to view the Africans as equals reflects the prejudices described by Gutiérrez Rodríguez (2018:17):

> Colonial difference is based on the idea that the colonised population is fundamentally different and inherently inferior to the colonisers. It conceives of the Other as radically unassimilable, oscillating between positions of strangeness and similarity. Immigration policies reiterate this racialised objectification reminiscent of colonial times.

In this way, images that years ago formed part of a closed narrative now reveal the Eurocentric, colonial mentality concealed below the fog level of a supposedly well-intentioned anthropological gaze. Gardi's footage (figure 3) is used in *African Mirror* as a cumulation of evidence to construct a subtle argument: ultimately, how we film and how we look is always a reflection of our own preconceptions. When we look at others, we see our own self-portrait.

This idea of race, of an opposition between "whites" and others, whether African, indigenous or Asian, between rulers and ruled, is what Quijano argues supported the construction of Europe "as a new identity" and the expansion of European colonialism around the world. The colonial project required a system of production, exploitation and product distribution articulated "around the capital-wage relationship […] and the global market. Included in this system were slavery, servitude, small-scale commercial production, reciprocity and wages […]. In this way, a structure of production relations was established that was new, original and unique in world history: global capitalism" (2000: 2).

Traditional colonialism ended when the colonies gained independence, but this did not end their dependence on colonial power structures. This is reflected in emigration and the attitude towards it in the former colonising nations, as the very idea of the nation-state, according to

Figure 4. Aïcha and Mabrouk in *Leur Algerie*

Quijano, was constructed based on criteria of supposed homogeneity and identity. Thus, these nations view emigration, coming mostly from the former colonies, involving other races, as a source of instability. Yet this immigration is partly the result of colonialism and of the inequalities generated by this "colonial power matrix", as will be explored below.

FAMILY MEMORIES AND TRAUMAS OF EMIGRATION

Emigration is conceived of as a dream, a promise, and a need. Behind this conception lies the reality of the journey and the difficulties associated with the adaptation process. In the new country, the old homeland becomes an idealised place to which the emigrant hopes to return. However, in most cases the return never happens or the homeland fails to live up to the ideal because the emigration experience has left an indelible mark. This new reality of emigration and the difficulties adapting inherent in the foreigner's experience are evident in the two films analysed below. Both use archives to look back on the past, but in very different ways, in terms of both how they reconstruct memory and the reasons for the failure to adapt. The first deals with an Algerian family of humble origins whose dream to return to their homeland turns into a worn-out myth that ulti-

mately fades away; the second deals with a well-off Iranian family who, on returning to Iran, confront the opposite problem of adapting to their homeland. Both films end in separation and it is only the daughter or the granddaughter who is able to exorcise the ghosts of the past, free of a single national and cultural identity.

In *Leur Algérie* (2020), the director Lina Soualem films her grandparents, Aïcha and Mabrouk, a pair of Algerian emigrants who have lived in France for more than sixty years and are now separated (figure 4). With her camera in hand, Soualem asks them about their past, how they met, their wedding night, the reasons why they emigrated, why they separated and why they have never returned to Algeria. The granddaughter talks to her grandparents and constructs their memories by mixing the conversations with family archive footage, some of which was taken by her father years ago, or with excerpts from the documentary *La Guerre d'Algérie* (1972) by Yves Courrière and Philippe Monier. She also uses numerous old photographs and home movies, and films some of the reactions (such as her grandmother's nervous laugh) triggered by watching the footage or by her insistent questions. Her father, a theatre actor, helps her and thus becomes a third character. He himself is afflicted by the dream of returning to a mythologised Algeria, a dream he has never realised. The reality was France and the silence of emigration.

Soualem films her grandfather visiting the old knife factory where he worked all his life, with a nostalgic yearning for the past and, without realising it, for one of the constants of the colonial and post-colonial world: factories and manual labour. It was a phenomenon that spread across Europe in the 20th century, as Encarnación Gutiérrez (2018: 17) points out:

> In the late 1940s and throughout the 1950s, subjects of the British colonies in the Caribbean and the Indian subcontinent came to the UK. These British citizens were seen as outsiders in the nation and

were constructed as immigrants. In France in the 1950s, a similar situation occurred when the citizens of the French colonies in North Africa came to Metropolitan France. The presence of these (former) colonial subjects in the seat of the empire challenged the public myth that the European nation-states were isolated from the networks of colonialism and imperialism.

This incongruence finds expression in these old emigrants. The Algerian grandfather represents work in the Thiers factory and behind this there is nothing but his silence. The grandmother represents the home and dedication to the family. We see her in the kitchen looking at archive material or videos of weddings and family reunions. These two dimensions, the workplace and the home, form the binary of emigration, as the sociologist Abdelmalek Sayad (2010: 165) argues:

> There are two essential dimensions that structure the whole condition of the worker's existence: the workplace and the home. All his life, all of his greatest claims involve these two dimensions. [...] This is the specific nature of the immigrant worker, and therein lies much of the history of immigration.

Soualem thus speaks to us of the impoverished background of her grandparents and their ancestors in Algeria, while also illustrating the disparate nature of their personalities: the silent, curt grandfather, and the lively, cheerful grandmother. Little by little she constructs a family portrait while immersing us in the history of French colonisation, of the exploitation and repression of the Algerian people and the emigration that kept France's factories running. The archive images serve to conjure up the past and as a catalyst, as the director herself suggests with reference to the footage from *La Guerre d'Algérie* (1972): "It was to be able to talk about Algeria and the political context with my grandparents and to position them in history, particularly in relation to the Sétif massacre in 1945, because they were still in Algeria and lived just 20 kilometres from there. Showing

those images to my grandmother was a way of reactivating her memory a little."[2]

Leur Algerie contrasts the country left behind with the country dreamed of, turning the dream into mundane, prosaic reality, and what was real in the past into a mythologised memory. The old Algerian immigrants are the consequence of a particular French policy. After colonisation and emigration, the dream of returning home will never be realised. We are also confronted with the difficulty foreigners have adapting and assimilating in a nation-state constructed according to particular patterns of identity. As Abdelmalek Sayad (2010: 168) suggests:

> Immigration requires the existence of national borders and territories; it requires the existence of foreigners. The figure of the foreigner itself compels us to talk about the nation state.

Figure 5. The parents in *Radiograph of a Family*

Sayad (2010: 168) also points out the absurdity of the foreigner's naturalisation process, which is dependent on an arbitrary act:

> At ten minutes to midnight, a person is Algerian; at one minute after midnight—that is, when the act appears in the Official Gazette—he is French. It is an act of magic on which naturalisation is constructed.

This sleight of hand has practical consequences of extraordinary significance for the emigrant, but it does not turn that emigrant into a different person. It would not be until the third generation, the director's, that the two nationalities—Algerian and French, as well as Palestinian—can coexist without coming into conflict with each other. *Leur Algerie* portrays the dissonances of the emigrant experience and the contradictions of the receiving country. The two separate homes of the filmmaker's grandparents seem to symbolise the difficulty of reconciling two territories, the practical reality of a life in France and the emotional connection to Algeria, without really belonging to one or the other. The act of emigration itself caused a rift that is hard to heal. But returning is not easy either, as will be discussed below.

Firouzeh Khosrovani takes us on a journey in the opposite direction in her film *Radiograph of a Family* (2020), in terms of both her way of using archive footage and the subject of the film itself: the effect that ideological differences have on a family. The director tells the story of her parents (figure 5), how they met and got married (her mother had her wedding in Tehran with only a photograph of the groom, as he was studying medicine in Switzerland at the time), the prosperous life in Europe, the vacations in the snow, the parties, the jazz, and the subsequent return to Iran and what this meant for the family. She thus reconstructs a part of the inner history of the Iranian diaspora of the 1960s. It is also the story of two misfits: her mother, faithful to very strict traditions, is unable to accept Switzerland's secular society and liberal values, while her father, accustomed to the European lifestyle and culture, cannot integrate into the fundamentalist society of the Ayatollahs after his return to Iran. In this way, Khosrovani shows us two polarised positions: a liberal man with a love of art and a religious woman who follows the path of the Islamic revolution and finds her destiny there. Unlike the grandparents in *Leur Algerie*, the parents in *Radiograph of a Family* stay together in the same home in Tehran, yet at the same time they are in reality irrevocably separated, because Khosrovani's father is a stranger in his own home; his emigration experience was a one-way journey, as the country he returns to is not the one he left.

It is important here to consider the historical context: in the 1950s, Iran's democratically elected prime minister, Mohammed Mosaddegh, nationalised the oil industry. In response, the British and American secret services orchestrated a coup in 1953 to depose Mosaddegh and replace him with Shah Reza Pahlavi. This would be the first coup d'état organised by the CIA in a foreign country, an act of post-colonial domination in this case for the benefit of the oil company BP (British Petroleum).[3] It was in those years that Khosrovani's father emigrated to Switzerland to study medicine, specialising in radiology. In 1979, after her father had returned to his family in Iran, the Shah's dictatorial monarchy was overthrown by the people's revolution instigated by the Shiites, and the Islamic Republic was established. In this revolutionary context, the mother would find her life's purpose in religion.

To reconstruct the relationship between her parents and to show the clash between two different conceptions of the world, the filmmaker uses the voices of an actress (for her mother) and an actor (for her father) who read letters and perform dialogues written by the director herself. These scripts are combined with 140 family snapshots and excerpts from home movies shot by friends and family on Super 8 and 16mm film. But in addition to this footage, we see images of anonymous

men and women, who under other circumstances could have been her parents, taken from Iranian and Swiss television broadcasts showing life in the 1950s and 1960s. The archives thus become a vehicle for imagining what their past could have been, while suggesting other lives and other possible stories parallel to the lives of her parents. In the same way, the hypothetical dialogues are reconstructed to suggest a past known well to the director, who personifies herself as a little girl painting over the broken pictures of her family to refashion their faces and figures, or hiding from the explosions in the streets of Tehran during the revolution. The archive material thus serves not only for illustration but also for suggestion.

The memory recalled is simply a narration, a construction made out of fragments of reality. But the referential use of archives, rather than inserting them for the purpose of illustration or evidence, inspires trust. Behind the fictional elements, a genuine memory thus emerges, just as the poetic form reveals the reality behind it. The journey and the return both result in alienation, as the mother cannot adapt to a new country and culture because her firm connection to her own country and culture prevents it, while the father, whose return becomes a kind of internal exile, is a stranger in his own land. Ideology is a difficult barrier to cross, sometimes even harder than geographical distance.

ARCHIVES AS EVOCATION AND SURVIVAL

Throughout history, emigration, exile and diaspora have appeared as different sides of the same phenomenon: people who are forced to leave their family, their home and their country to begin a new life. One of the most noteworthy examples of this can be found in *We Were So Beloved* (1986) by the American filmmaker Manfred Kirchheimer, a film that offers one of the most accurate portraits of the emigration of Jews from Nazi Germany.

The film presents the Jewish community of Washington Heights, a neighbourhood located in Upper Manhattan. Curiously, the neighbourhood owes its name to Fort Washington, built to hold back the British troops during the American War of Independence (1775-1783). From 1933, when Hitler took power in Germany, a large number of Jewish families, followed later by concentration camp survivors, emigrated to this neighbourhood. Fifty years later, Kirchheimer interviewed these emigrants, talking to them with the intimacy of a friend and neighbour. His father, who is featured in the documentary, emigrated to the United States in 1936, recognising the troubling signs for the future in Saarbrücken, taking his family with him.

The director was just five years old when he arrived in New York. His own history entitles him to sit down with these witnesses and to use his own reflections, spoken in a voiceover, to guide the narration. The intimacy of the setting, as the characters are interviewed in their homes, talking in the kitchen or on the sofa, makes them seem comfortable despite the tragedy they are describing. The oral narration, the force of the word to bring the memory to life, in a manner similar to the testimonies in Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah* (1985), guides a narrative in which close-ups and medium shots display their full force. However,

Figure 6. Still frame of happiness lost in *We Were So Beloved*

unlike Lanzmann, who was radically opposed to the inclusion of any archive footage as a tool for reconstructing the past, Kirchheimer makes use of archives to reconstruct part of the life of a community, to create the atmosphere, the spirit of an era. The footage is not used for the purpose of illustration, or to support a persuasive argument, but simply for the purpose of evocation. The intention is not to demonstrate but to imagine what was and what could not be.

Testimonies and photographs (figure 6) piece together the life of a perfectly integrated community whose members refused to believe that they, German Jews, could suffer the same fate as their counterparts in Poland; that they were so German that some of them would not have hesitated to enlist in the Hitler Youth if they had been allowed, as Max Frankel, the editor of the *New York Times* and a friend of the director's, openly admits.

Instead of illustrating an era, the archival material evokes a loss. During shots of photographs of different families in the 1930s, dressed in the bourgeois style of the period, the director comments in a voiceover: "Here, even those who were orthodox could not easily be told apart from their Christian compatriots. They dressed modishly,

UNCLAIMED IMAGES HAVE A HIGH PROBABILITY OF BECOMING ARCHIVAL MATERIAL, TESTIMONIES THAT WILL BE REINTERPRETED IN SOME FAR-OFF FUTURE, IF THEY MANAGE TO SURVIVE. EVEN FOOTAGE THAT HAS BEEN FILMED AS A LINK IN A NARRATIVE CHAIN MAY SOME DAY BE USED IN ISOLATION, AS EVIDENCE OR TO REVEAL CULTURAL PATTERNS OR HIDDEN PREJUDICES. A NEW GAZE MAY UNCOVER INFORMATION THAT IS STILL LATENT, BELOW THE FOG LEVEL OF THE IMAGE

they did not know Yiddish, they were not ghettoized, and lived among their neighbours." The director's own family could trace their history back to the 17th century and the arrival of the Jews in Germany 1,700 years earlier. In 1930, there were half a million Jews in Germany. Little by little, they were turned into another race, persecuted and forced to flee. Not even the rabbis could believe it, and they recommended against leaving Germany, as one interviewee recalls. The Jewish community was so integrated that despite the events unfolding, some people still had friends there and even understood certain attitudes. For example, Melitta Hess says to her son, Walter Hess, after telling him he should forgive the Nazis: "I don't know if I were out, maybe you would have gotten a brown suit on, and maybe you would look pretty good, to save your life."

Walter Hess himself acknowledges that what he regrets most about Nazism was the fact that it instilled a feeling of inferiority in him. In terms of its consequences, Nazism was also a colonising ideology in keeping with what Osterhammel and Jansen call "the fulfilment of a universal mission," referring to the fact that after the 16th century European expansion was presented "as a contribution to a divine plan that had to be executed among the heathen, as a secular mandate for colonialism to 'civilise' the 'barbarians' or 'savages', as the 'white man's burden', etc. The conviction in European cultural superiority was always invoked as the rationale" (2019: 20).

But the film doesn't shy away from issues of racism or classism within the Jewish community itself, as German Jews distinguished themselves from Polish Jews, whom they sometimes looked down on. One witness responds to a question from the director by remarking that American Jews have no right to speak negatively about the arrival of Hispanic immigrants to the United States, as they themselves suffered the consequences of racial stigmatisation. This raises the question of whether such racism is specifically contextual or

something more dangerous, more inherent in human nature.

More than a film about the atrocities of the extermination camps, *We Were So Beloved* is a portrait of a community of people who never wanted to leave their homeland, who were not in financial need, but who merely had a different background. These were people who lost all their belongings, their savings, and ultimately their family members. They lost so much that most of the photographs shown in the film are the few that survived. In the final scene we see the director together with a survivor, showing a picture of her parents and her two sisters, who died in Theresienstadt. They are shown happy and smiling in the black and white image, blissfully unaware of what was to come. We who look from the present have the advantage of knowing their future. They hadn't even been able to hold onto that photograph. The daughter, the only survivor, received it later from her aunt, after coming to America. Archives acquire this quality not just of a trace, of an evocation of a lost future, but of resistance, of a fleeting moment of survival.

ALL FILM WILL BECOME ARCHIVAL

Figure 7. The couple from *The Bells* in *Light is Calling*

What will be left of our films and photographs? How will our history be read? Unclaimed images have a high probability of becoming archival material, testimonies that will be reinterpreted in some far-off future, if they manage to survive. Even footage that has been filmed as a link in a narrative chain may some day be used in isolation, as evidence or to reveal cultural patterns or hidden prejudices. A new gaze may uncover information that is still latent, below the fog level of the image.

But material stored in film libraries or private collections is also in a process of constant transformation. Archival material can be used to explore its own essence: the constant deterioration of the celluloid that reflects the impermanence of all matter. The original purpose of the material is secondary, whether it was fiction or documentary, or whether it was about travel, empires, or emigration. All these images were believed to hold the moment, yet all of them will vanish, devoured by time.

In his short film *Light Is Calling* (2004), Bill Morrison makes use of excerpts from a silent film, James Young's *The Bells* (1926), with old footage on which much of the image has corroded. In the frame-by-frame animation we can make out a woman's face and a young soldier (figure 7), a carriage, a love story amid acid spots that move in a manner similar to Stan Brakhage's dyed and scratched images. The result is closer to abstract expressionism than mainstream cinema. But there is a narrative: not so much a love story as a story about two people who once acted in a silent film, who became fictional characters and who have now become a painting, in pure form, disappearing into nothingness, into spirits, into a chemical reaction.

It is in this treatment of images of the past that archives find their true essence, in the passage of time acting on the material and transcending it. The reality is this footage of moments of happiness, of people who have doubted, worked, and

loved, who we know have died and who have therefore also suffered. The essence of the images is in displaying the people themselves, their existence, fading and disappearance; their meaning lies in the relationship with the person who looks at them without being able to escape the specular nature of the image, transcending it. The anecdote becomes the essence. Is in this sense where de decolonial reflection made by Aníbal Quijano becomes relevant: when archive images transform anecdotes into essences, they legitimize homogenization dynamics of colonial societies. As Ann Laura Stoler (2010) affirms, when we treat archives as processes and not as objects, we make emege the logics that convert images of a time into the essence and the normal and, thus, their analysis unmasks how colonial dynamics forged.

Reality is not merely the historical fact, whether of colonialism or emigration, travellers or mere weekend tourists. It is that same past contained in the images, those faces that are no longer present but that lived the series of events, just as we do now. The essence of archives is also the awareness that these people are now only imprints on chemical or electronic material, a representation in a state of transformation. A similar idea was narrated by the writer Adolfo Bioy Casares in *The Invention of Morel* (1940). In this novel, the images of a few long-dead tourists are reproduced on an island using Morel's machine. The machine reproduces them as if they were real, although they know that they can also die if the machine, blown by the wind, should break down. All of this is observed by the island's sole inhabitant, who is in love with one of the images. When he dies, he in turn will become an image, together with the woman he loves.

In the same way, old images have a kind of mummified quality, as their corrosions and scratches are like strips of linen cloth. They speak to us from the afterlife, not only about what happened in the past, but also about what is happening now. It is happening to us at this very moment.

Even while we are alive, we are disappearing. That is the most dreadful fact of all. ■

NOTES

1   Even the explorer John Hanning Speke took cameras on his journey to find the source of the Nile, as did Charles Livingstone, the brother of the famous explorer (Santana Pérez, 2011: 27).

2   Interview with Lina Soualem by Fabien Lemercier. Lina Soualem. Réalisatrice de Leur Algérie. "J'avais besoin de briser ce silence." Visions du Reél 2020. Cineuropa. 05/05/2020. https://cineuropa.org/fr/interview/388163/

3   Taghi Amirani's film *Coup 53* (2019) documents the intervention of MI6 and the CIA to overthrow Mosaddegh and regain control of the oil industry for British Petroleum, formerly the Anglo-Persian Oil Company.

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Immagini dell'Oriente: turismo da vandali (2001). 62 min. Dir: Yervant Gianikian & Angela Ricci Lucchi

La Guerre d'Algérie (1975) 2h 34 min. Dir: Philippe Monnier & Yves Courrière

Leur Algérie (2020).1h 12min. Dir: Lina Soualem

Light Is Calling (2004). 7 min. Dir: Bill Morrison

Moeder Dao, de schildpadgelijkende (1995). 90 min. Dir: Vincent Monnikendam

Padenie dinastii Romanovykh (1927). 90 min. Dir: Esfir Shub

Radiograph of a Family (2020). 82 min. Dir: Firouzeh Khosrovani

Shoah (1985). 9h. Claude Lanzmann

We Were So Beloved (1986). 2h 25 min. Dir: Manfred Kirchheimer

COLONIALISM, EMIGRATION AND THE IMPERMANENCE OF IMAGES: A LATENT TRUTH BELOW FOG LEVEL

Abstract

This article considers the latent information in colonial images and connects it with the theory of the coloniality of power developed by the Peruvian sociologist Aníbal Quijano. Reinterpreted, these images offer a snapshot of Eurocentrism. At the same time, this study identifies a connection between colonialism and contemporary emigration by analysing various examples of films that reinterpret colonial images or that use archive footage to explore emigration and the mark that it leaves on families. The films analysed include *Moeder Dao, de schildpadgelijkende* (Vincent Monnikendam, 1995), *Immagini dell'Oriente: turismo da vandali* (Yervant Gianikian, Angela Ricci Lucchi, 2001), *African Mirror* (Mischa Hedinger, 2019), *Leur Algérie* (Lina Soualen, 2020), *Radiograph of a Family* (Firouzeh Khosrovani, 2020) and *We Were So Beloved* (Manfred Kirchheimer, 1986).

Key words

Archive; Colonialism; Emigration; Decoloniality; Documentary film.

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IMPERMANENCIA DE LAS IMÁGENES, COLONIALISMO Y EMIGRACIÓN. UNA VERDAD LATENTE BAJO EL NIVEL DE VELO

Resumen

El presente artículo reflexiona sobre la información latente en las imágenes coloniales y lo conecta con la teoría de la colonialidad del poder del sociólogo peruano Aníbal Quijano. Estas imágenes, reinterpretadas, constituyen una radiografía del pensamiento eurocéntrico. Así mismo establece un nexo entre el colonialismo y la emigración contemporánea. Para ello se analizan diversos ejemplos fílmicos de reinterpretación de las imágenes coloniales, así como de la utilización del material de archivo para reflexionar sobre la emigración y la huella que esta dejó en el núcleo familiar. Entre los films analizados se encuentran *Moeder Dao, de schildpadgelijkende* (Vincent Monnikendam, 1995), *Immagini dell'Oriente: turismo da vandali* (Yervant Gianikian, Angela Ricci Lucchi, 2001), *African Mirror* (Mischa Hedinger, 2019), *Leur Algérie* (Lina Soualen, 2020), *Radiograph of a Family* (Firouzeh Khosrovani, 2020) y *We Were So Beloved...* (Manfred Kirchheimer, 1986).

Palabras clave

Archivo; colonialismo; emigración; decolonialidad; cine documental.

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Referencia de este artículo

ULKOMAALAINEN/UTLÄNNINGEN/ YABANCI (1979-1981-1983) – A MOST TYPICAL MIGRANT ARCHIVAL OBJECT*

JOHN SUNDHOLM

This essay is written in the spirit of the vast number of recent studies that have questioned and deconstructed established notions and practices for (film) archives, while also transforming that criticism into practice by constructing counter-archives and mapping existing alternatives.[1] However, despite such important initiatives, which have been significant for the studies of migrant and transnational cinemas and have made it increasingly difficult to reproduce a conventional national—and often nationalistic—history, there are still some key problems affecting the theory and practice of alternative or diasporic archives. Every archive, marginal or hegemonic, is not only a place of power but also executes power, decides what to exclude or include, not to mention the fundamental question of what that constitutes the archival object. While these are challenges that affect every archive, I would argue that they are particularly pertinent for independent, or minor, migrant cinemas.[2]

I will explore these questions by presenting the case of the Finnish-Swedish-Turkish *Ulkomaalainen/Utlänningen/Yabanci* [Foreigner] (Muammer Özer, 1981). This film constitutes an unruly object of cinema that has migrated in different ways, together with its filmmaker, across national borders, languages and media formats until finally being digitised in 2020 by the Swedish Film Institute into its Finnish version, *Ulkomaalainen*. The one and only out of the four versions to receive its premiere as a digital copy in the autumn of 2021 at the annual Restored Festival, organised by Deutsche Kinemathek in Berlin.

The trajectories of the film since its first version(s) as *Utlänningen/Yabanci* and its subsequent appearance in prints, negatives, tapes and digital files, as well as its current digital form as *Ulkomaalainen*, make the film a most typical object of migrant cinema, not in the sense of "being typical of" but rather in the sense proposed by David E. James in his now classic book *The Most Typi-*

cal Avant-Garde: History and Geography of Minor Cinemas in Los Angeles (2005). James' assertion that minor cinema practices, "a rainbow coalition of demotic cinemas: experimental, poetic, underground, ethnic, amateur, counter, non-commercial, working-class, critical, artists, orphan, and so on" (2005: 13), constitute the most typical avant-garde, is essentially a paraphrase of Viktor Shklovsky's suggestion that *Tristram Shandy* is the most typical novel (Shklovsky 1991). This should not be interpreted to mean that Sterne's novel is typical in the sense of constituting an archetypal exponent of the genre (which it is not), but that *Tristram Shandy* encompasses everything that characterises the novel as a genre. James' intention is thus to show that the heterogeneous range of minor cinema practices in Los Angeles, which operate outside Hollywood even though they are not necessarily standing in opposition to that commercial centre of film production, are in fact the true avant-garde. Similarly, my aim here is to show how *Ulkomaalainen/Utlänningen/Yabanci*—which reached its hitherto final archival form in Finnish as *Ulkomaalainen* in 2020—questions the idea of what constitutes an archival object and encompasses everything that characterises the history of the archiving and circulation of an independently produced immigrant film, i.e. the most typical migrant archival film object.

HISTORY AND HISTORIOGRAPHY

Independently produced films by migrant filmmakers—whether professional, semi-professional or amateur—challenge most common-sense practices when it comes to scholarly and archival procedures. This is because such films have often been produced under difficult conditions with limited resources, a fact that needs to be considered when studying the work. They thus reflect their conditions of production and are not a result of a privileged free will to choose "a poor image", "a raw look", or alternative forms of distribution.

Moreover, such films rarely have the opportunity of being shown to the general public, or of catching the interest of gatekeepers such as film critics. This in turn is because independently produced films by migrants seldom achieve any kind of regular or established distribution. And the few that do often play a minor role, as a marginal part of a larger program or context. This also makes it notoriously difficult to trace the history of their circulation.

This invisibility of these filmic objects, due to the conditions of production and distribution, is reenforced by their multilingual character, meaning that they have been filmed in a language other than the local hegemonic one(s). Thus, they have been viewed as linguistically foreign and "othered". This linguistic estrangement (which is always the product of the current hegemony of language use) is one of the main reasons why national archives have traditionally shown little interest in such films and have been reluctant to give them the status of historical objects by including them in their collections.

In addition to being as invisible as their creators, migratory filmic objects are also vulnerable and unstable objects of study. This makes them particularly challenging for film studies. However, as Paolo Cherchi Usai has argued in *The Death of Cinema*, the idea of the filmic object as "the model image", a stable, pristine entity, is nothing more than an ahistorical abstraction:

> If all moving images could be experienced as a model image (that is, in their intended state, in an intention visible in every part of them even before their actual consumption), no such thing as film history would be needed or possible (Cherci Usai 2001: 21).

Another implication of Usai's dictum, which has been taken up most notably by the proponents of so-called New Cinema History, is that we should shift our focus from film as text and object of interpretation to film as object(s) in circulation.[3] This is particularly apt for migrant filmic objects

as these have usually circulated as a single print, constituting precarious objects that thereby emphasise the networks and social relations of which the films become a part, and which are their vital condition. Hence, it is a question not only of how a film circulates and is being received, but also of how the filmic object itself changes. The historiography for these films is thus rather a historiography of cultural and social relations, of uses and practices, while the filmic object itself is often in constant flux, always migrating. This poses some crucial challenges for archival practices and calls some fundamental procedures of archiving into questions, as the film is a fugitive object that will now be preserved and fixed as an original filmic object in order to serve as an expression of history. The paradox is that this often goes against what the history of the film and its various prints and tapes actually constitute.

PRODUCTION

The history of production, re-production, distribution and circulation of *Ulkomaalainen* is convoluted. It covers a lengthy period, involving different geographies and heterogeneous material because the film has appeared in different versions over the years. The film was originally shot in Finland and Turkey during the years 1973-1978.[4]

Ulkomaalainen is a semi-documentary film that was edited and directed by Özer, who also plays the leading role. Most of the footage was shot by Özer and his childhood friend Kemal Çinar; Özer filmed most the documentary footage, whereas Çinar was responsible for the fiction scenes (in which Özer is usually the protagonist). Others who contributed to the camera work were Muammer's Finnish wife, Synnöve Özer, (who had no previous training in filmmaking), and Oguz Makal (who would become one of the most prominent scholars of film studies in Turkey). It was Makal who shot the brief sequences in super-8 showing a Turkish Labour Day demonstra-

tion. In addition, there is a substantial amount of found footage and other pre-existing visual material. There is extensive material from an unknown Turkish propaganda film, although Özer also uses images from Turkish newspapers and magazines. Overall, this polyvocal, multi-material and semi-professional way of filmmaking reflects the conditions of production: *Ulkomaalainen* was completely self-financed and therefore dependent on a network of friends and the extensive use of pre-existing material.

Özer began working on his film while he was a student at what at the time was Finland's only film school, the University of Art and Design in Helsinki. He had ended up in Helsinki as a refugee after taking the opportunity to escape when he was temporarily released from prison awaiting trial in Turkey. While imprisoned, he had been tortured. Before leaving Turkey, he had made a few shorts and commercials, and he would continue shooting short political documentaries arriving in Finland. Compared to the rest of his filmography at the time, *Ulkomaalainen* was by far his most ambitious project. He would, however, be unable to finish the film in Finland, and in 1978, after finishing film school, the Özers decided to move to Sweden where there were better opportunities for filmmaking. In addition to the far superior material resources for filmmaking at the Swedish Film Institute and the public television broadcaster, Sweden had also established co-ops and organisations like *Filmcentrum* and the Stockholm Film Workshop (*Filmverkstan*), which distributed or produced documentaries and short films. Due to increasing immigration (in contrast to Finland, which at the time was more a country of emigration, predominantly to Sweden) there was also a plethora of cultural organisations for immigrants.[5] Muammer Özer's first years in Sweden would turn out to be very productive, and eventually he would manage to shoot several feature films in Turkey towards the late 1980s and

AFTER ARRIVING IN SWEDEN, ÖZER CAME INTO CONTACT WITH THE STOCKHOLM WORKSHOP FILMVERKSTAN AND HE STARTED IMMEDIATELY TO WORK ON SHORT FILMS THAT DEPICTED THE EXPERIENCE OF IMMIGRANTS IN SWEDEN

early 1990s that were Turkish-Swedish co-productions.[6]

After arriving in Sweden, Özer came into contact with the Stockholm workshop *Filmverkstan* and he started immediately to work on short films that depicted the experience of immigrants in Sweden. He would also complete *Ulkomaalainen* in two versions, with different voice-overs, one in Turkish and the other in Swedish, which were produced without any aid from the film workshop. The finished films were of substantial length, 88 minutes, which is quite uncommon for a documentary intended to be distributed on 16mm film.

The Swedish version has an interestingly accented polyvocality due to that neither of the three voice-overs speak standard Swedish. Muammer's wife, who belongs to the Swedish-speaking minority in Finland, has a distinct accent, and the other two voices, both male, are even more othered: Muammer hardly knew Swedish at the time and speaks the language with great effort, while the Özers' Finnish friend, Erkki Ryynänen, has a noticeable Finnish accent.

The use of voice-over and the lack of any dialogue gives the film a clear documentary and didactic character. However, the main storyline is fictitious and the film moves freely between fiction and documentary, containing both direct documentary imagery and symbolic, subjectively expressionist sequences. After a visionary prologue in which we are shown a man who is going to hang himself on a bare tree in the midst of a frozen waste, we are introduced to a young Turkish man who arrives in Helsinki looking for work. His dream is to earn money and to become wealthy and free. The narrative unfolds along the two main strands of documentary and fiction. The first uses a voice-over and images that recount the immigrant's efforts to find employment, obtaining the necessary work and residence permits. The subjective and expressionist imagery is accompanied by music or sound effects that represent the migrant's experience in the new country. The feelings of alienation increase until the migrant is reminded of the political situation at home in Turkey. This shift of perspective takes place when a childhood friend gets in touch, sending him letters and packages with magazines and newspapers about the ongoing political struggle back home. His situation in Finland does not improve, and finally, when he receives a telegram that informs him of his friend's death, he realises that he also has to take up the political struggle in his new country: not as an immigrant, but as a worker, and without being tempted by the promises of consumer capitalism that will only result in the reification of his life-world and his socio-emotional condition.

CIRCULATION AND CULTURAL REASSESSMENT

According to Muammer Özer, the first two versions of *Ulkomaalainen* were shown at a few minor festivals in both Sweden and Turkey.[7] I have not been able to find any documentation of these except for one screening in Sweden during an extended program that ran for ten days in December 1979, titled *Människa på väg* [Human on the Move]. This program of films by and about immigrants was co-organised by the Immigrant's Cultural Association and the Swedish Red Cross at the Swedish Film Institute. It is characteristic of the Swedish context that the focus was exclusively on immigration, even though the 1979 version of the film had overtly political content. The focus

is on the political economics of migration and in the Swedish version a female voice-over presents a Marxist analysis of the dynamics of capitalism and the exploitation of a cheap migrant workforce. However, the film not only addresses the question of migration and the circulation of cheap labour from a Marxist political position, but also takes a stand on the turbulent political situation in 1970s Turkey. *Ulkomaalainen* also differs from the usual migrant stories in the way it establishes its geographical counterpart, i.e. the immigrant's place of origin. Özer does not depict a private home that is left behind, and which he longs for nostalgically, but a political struggle that his protagonist has abandoned. Some of the footage from Turkey is very graphic, showing mutilated bodies, but Özer also gives space to two of the most legendary militant left-wing figures of the early 1970s, Mahir Çayan and Deniz Gezmiş, who were executed in 1972 by the military regime (Çayan and Özer were in fact imprisoned at the same military prison in Turkey).[8] That it is this political emotional homeland that the migrant has left behind is stressed by the use in the film of the poetry of Nazim Hikmet and the music of Ruhi Su, both celebrated radicals who spent considerable time in prison due to their political opinions and activities.

In terms of overall content, *Ulkomaalainen* is thus not a very typical migrant film, as the retelling of the political situation in Turkey, the lead-up to the coup in 1971 and its aftermath take up a substantial part of the story. However, thematically and stylistically in particular, it is a representative exponent of independent, exile and migrant filmmaking, with an aesthetic that corresponds directly to Hamid Naficy's concept of "accented cinema" (Naficy, 2001). The style of the film is characterised by an aesthetic that reflects the existential conditions of its production. It has an open structure, and is fragmented, autobiographical and multilingual, characteristics that Naficy argues are a reflection of the migrant's position and response to her/his diasporic and displaced situation. However, the entanglement of the two different discourses of documentary and fiction, in which the political didactic is particularly strong, calls for another perspective on migrant and exile cinema, an approach that is less anchored in a textualist-aesthetic position. Here, I would like to draw attention to Zuzana M. Pick's work on the exile and migrant cinema of Chile of the 1970s and 1980s, research that preceded Naficy's as it was published in the 1980s (Pick, 1987, 1989).[9]

One of the peculiarities of the Chilean cinema of the 1970s and 1980s is that it was predominantly made elsewhere. It was a cinema of migration that has forced the National Cineteca in Chile to collect films made by Chilean exiles during the years of the Pinochet regime. Pick does not approach exile and migration cinema as necessarily being embodied in, and expressed through, certain stylistic or narrative formulas, but instead considers exile from a consistent perspective of culture and production. Her point is that a filmmaker in exile has "to reassess cultural practice", which implies that you not only have to change your language and aesthetics but also have to undergo a more fundamental process: to reassess not only your methods and skills but also who and where you are, and consequently to ponder how to articulate and communicate that new experience (a reassessment that does not necessarily lead to accented filmmaking) (Pick, 1987: 54). Your situation is fundamentally new; existentially, materially and politically. Muammer Özer has described it as a new becoming, but as one in which you are subordinated: when you are forced to learn a new language as an adult, you are "like a child in a new country" (Özer, 2001: 8, my translation). Another Turkish immigrant, the German-Turkish author Emine Özdamar has expressed it more poetically: in the foreign language, she argues, "words do not have a childhood", an idea that also stresses the themes of loss and alienation (Özdamar, 1998: 44, my translation).

An essential part of the reassessment of cultural practice that is brought to the fore is the renegotiation of what we consider to constitute the so-called subject-object divide that is so important in filmmaking and cinematic aesthetics: the question of what is outside or inside, objective or subjective, imagined or real. Do we look at the screen as a window out to a surrounding world? Do we see a narrative ordering of the images or sequences, or rather a series of images that direct our gaze back on ourselves? One of the striking characteristics of *Ulkomaalainen* is the persistent blending of documentary and fiction, of found footage and staged scenes—thereby suggesting the constant presence of a surrounding world with which we have to renegotiate our relationship. And for the migrant filmmaker this is not only a question of aesthetics, but also of the actual filmic object that is in circulation, because your lack of access to the established channels of circulation also forces you to reconsider where to show your films and in which form and format. The reassessment that Pick considers to be the main condition of exile and migrant cinema is thus a practice in a very direct and material sense, in addition to the aesthetical and stylistic features (defined by Naficy as "accented"), which of course are also part of your re-evaluation of your practice. The migrant filmmaker must seize any opportunity to make a film and get it distributed, to be prepared to revise prints and copies in order to reach a bigger audience. As a migrant, no subject-object relationship can be taken for granted and you will have to be prepared always to renegotiate your relationship to the surrounding society.

This is why Özer cut the film by more than half its original length in 1981 in order to increase the opportunities for exhibition. The first version had a Turkish voice-over that apparently also reached minor festivals, although again documentation on this is lacking. In 1983, an opportunity arose for Özer to have the film broadcast on Swedish television as part of a program slot for Finnish immi-

ÖZER CUT THE FILM BY MORE THAN HALF ITS ORIGINAL LENGTH IN 1981 IN ORDER TO INCREASE THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXHIBITION

grants. The Finns were at the time Sweden's largest immigrant group, providing the country with a cheap labour force who took care of the same tasks that the character played by Özer does in *Ulkomaalainen*. Another short, *Jordmannen* [The Earthman] (Muammer Özer, 1980), which also depicts an immigrant story and which Özer shot and completed after his arrival in Sweden, had already been broadcast on Swedish public television in 1980, and would be shown again in 1984 in the Finnish programming time slots scheduled for Saturday mornings. While *Jordmannen* was subtitled (it has both dialogue and a voice-over), *Ulkomaalainen* was provided with a Finnish voice-over because it has no dialogue. It was broadcast on Swedish television on the 26th of November 1983, as a 37-minute short on a Saturday morning, as part of the 90-minute program titled *Finska program* [Finnish programs], sandwiched in between a short documentary on boxing in Finland and the weekly news in Finnish. It is the material for that print (sound and image negatives) that has been deposited in the archive of the Swedish Film Institute and that thus constitutes today's archival object out of which the current digital copy has been made. In other words, the preserved material of the film consists of one picture negative and two different soundtracks, one in Turkish and another in Finnish. Although I have not been able to track the history of the circulation of the Turkish version, the Finnish one was made exclusively for the broadcast in Sweden. There is thus no short version of *Ulkomaalainen* with Swedish voice-over and the film has subsequently been a linguistically "foreign" object whenever shown in Sweden.

When *Ulkomaalainen* was cut down to its current length—it could not really be described as a re-edit as the shorter version has the same order of the sequences—it not only achieved another linguistic belonging but also created new possibilities for circulation. Being shot on 16mm film was always an advantage if the duration was not more than 60 minutes because the print could fit on one reel, making it possible to take full advantage of the mobile technology that the 16mm projector still constituted in the 1980s. Özer had tried to expand the distribution opportunities by having the film transferred on to a U-matic tape, which was also taken for distribution by the Swedish co-op, *FilmCentrum*. However, at the time the possibilities offered by U-matic were actually more limited than those of 16mm film, as it never enjoyed the same level of use by schools and associations as the more affordable, portable 16mm projector. On the other hand, one of the crucial consequences of the shorter version of *Ulkomaalainen* was not only that it was better suited to the widely used 16mm technology and to television program duration policies, but also that it consolidated immigration as the focus of the film. This was because the new edit of the film stressed its accented character (in Naficy's sense) and it was more fragmented due to having been shortened considerably. And because of the conditions of distribution and circulation, the film became better suited to migrant (or accented) cinema, as it were.

ARCHIVAL AFTERLIFE

As independently produced immigrant films are exceptional in terms of production, distribution and actual circulation, they are also exceptional as objects of study. The trajectory and history of *Ulkomaalainen/Utlänningen/Yabanci* is a paradigmatic example of this. Established theories of archival practice, such as Giovanna Fossati's ground-breaking book *From Grain to Pixel: The Archival Life of Film in Transition* (2009), reflect the shortcomings of common archival practices. However, the categorisations used in Fossati's book are nevertheless useful for exploring the problematics of a migrant archival object such as Özer's film.

Fossati distinguishes between four approaches to the archival life of film: "film as original", "film as art", "film as *dispositif*" and "film as state of the art" (Fossati, 2009: 117-131). Of these four categories, the first three are of direct relevance to a film like *Ulkomaalainen*. The "film as original" approach can be considered the very foundational idea of the archive. When you claim that there is an original object you establish an artefact and argue for its preservation. As Fossati argues, although the idea of the original can certainly be questioned and problematised, to claim originality for an artefact is a necessary aim of archival practices (Fossati, 2009: 117-123). When working with independently produced migrant cinemas, the act of establishing the original is an ultimate archival goal, as this is a way of acknowledging the film and its filmmaker. However, as in the case with *Ulkomaalainen*, the question of the original is not really relevant when there are different originals, with substantially different later versions that could equally be claimed to be originals too. Nevertheless, the "film as original" framework is such a strong part of the institutional idea of cultural heritage and of any national archive that it is difficult to ignore. It is a claim that will have to be made for a film in order for it to be acknowledged.

For the "film as art" approach, Fossati identifies two different meanings (Fossati, 2009: 123-126). Archival faithfulness to film as medium, the imperative that a film has to be archived in its original format, or the approach that a film constitutes a unique product of an *auteur* and therefore has to be archived in a way that is true to the director's original intentions. Because a film such as *Ulkomaalainen* is a precarious object in migration, it has been forced to appear in different forms

WHEN WORKING WITH INDEPENDENTLY PRODUCED MIGRANT CINEMAS, THE ACT OF ESTABLISHING THE ORIGINAL IS AN ULTIMATE ARCHIVAL GOAL, AS THIS IS A WAY OF ACKNOWLEDGING THE FILM AND ITS FILMMAKER

and formats, which are all of equal importance to the director or to those who were involved in the making of the film. Thus, a common-sense archival theory that presupposes a stable object is not able to deal with such a volatile film as *Ulkomaalainen.*

While both the "film as original" and "film as art" frameworks are based on the idea that there is a single artefact that is to be the object of preservation, of storage and confirmation, Fossati's third category, "film as *dispositif*", deals with exhibition and programming (Fossati, 2009: 126-130). *Dispositif* is the situation "where the film meets its user", which, according to Fossati, "allows for a different way to look at films, namely, as dynamic objects where the material and conceptual artifacts are bound together" (Fossati, 2009: 127). "Film as *dispositif*" implies that every time a film is being shown it acquires a new meaning, an idea that highlights the challenge for any archival practice when faced with an object such as *Ulkomaalainen*. While Fossati tends to focus on the idea of the same object being shown in different venues and through different technologies and media formats, it could well be argued that the different formats of *Ulkomaalainen* constitute different *dispositifs*, different ways of mediating and communicating a particular narrative for different audiences and different language communities, in the forms of tape, print or digital file.

Of course, the three approaches, "film as original", "film as art" and "film as *dispositif*" overlap. They also express three different ways of implementing archival policies. "Film as original" is at the very core of an archive's authority but the question is how much it actually contributes to our understanding of the meaning of a particular film, since a film should not be—and in fact is not—bound to a particular object or print. What *Ulkomaalainen* shows is that a single film always gives rise to different films—in terms of reception, different prints or tapes, and versions—and that these form part of the history of that particular film. As the German archivist Enno Patalas suggested, all those poor 16mm prints of German silent classics that had recorded music and were screened at the wrong speed in the 1950s should be archived because "these versions belong to the history of these films as much as their supposed 'original' versions" (Patalas, 1998: 29). Patalas thus concludes that "[e]ach print is a kind of 'original', and each performance unique" (Patalas, 1998: 38). This should not, however, be considered an argument in line with Borges' well-known parable about the making of a full-scale map, "On Exactitude in Science", the scientific fantasy of being able to map history in its totality. However, for marginal or minor and independent migrant cinema in particular, Patalas' statement has a completely valid and direct meaning as both the prints and actual screenings are fewer in number, being a film culture that has a subordinate position, a culture of exception and vulnerability in which every occasion thus bears more significance. The question is how all of this may be accounted for in the archival afterlife of the current version of *Ulkomaalainen*, the modified version of a previous film that gives only one perspective on its history as a film—and that reproduces that new history when screened in its current digital format.

CONCLUSION: ARCHIVAL AFTERLIVES

Ulkomaalainen is a typical exile and migrant film, and archival artefact, given its history as a cinematic object and its trajectory relative to questions of film heritage and historical acknowledgement.

The fact that it is a film that exists in several languages but that belongs nowhere makes it characteristic of this type of film. *Ulkomaalainen* was not finished until Özer moved to Sweden and, as mentioned above, it was originally of a feature-film length and had a voice-over in Swedish that represented an accented polyvocality in its use of voice-over. The lack of dialogue emphasises the documentary and didactic aspirations of the film but also stresses the displacement of the migrant and allows the film to travel across cultures. It is always easier to subtitle a film that only has voice-over, or a voice-over in another language could even be created. When there is no dialogue, the language is never embodied in the people on the screen, and thus the film may migrate more easily.

Another peculiarity of *Ulkomaalainen* is that the film has never actually been screened in the country where most of it was made, and that in Sweden the main context of exhibition has been the Finnish immigrant community. In Turkey, *Yabanci* has been screened at minor film festivals. The film has therefore been largely misplaced and has never existed in relation to its surrounding society. In 2020, when the film was digitised by the Swedish Film Institute and was taken up for distribution by Filmform (Sweden's archive for artist's film and video), it became acknowledged as a part of the Swedish film heritage. The digital format increases its accessibility but is only able to offer one part of a quite complicated history of migration that extends across countries and different conditions of production. *Ulkomaalainen* thus raises interesting questions about archival policies, film heritage, film history and the history of circulation and distribution. These can never be answered as such but would have to be addressed through programming that raises the questions in new ways, i.e. by showing different versions in different contexts.

Ulkomaalainen/Utlänningen/Yabanci is a film that has two primary production contexts: Finland and Turkey. Yet although it tells a story about a Turkish migrant in Finland, the film only has a proper public screening history in Sweden, where it was broadcast on television in a context targeting another immigrant community. The film raises questions not only about where it belongs, but also about how we construct and reproduce a film heritage, what we acknowledge as historical objects and communities within the framework of a nation and a national archival apparatus such as the Swedish Film Institute. As the Institute is the most powerful organisation for film in Sweden, its historical acknowledgement of *Ulkomaalainen* is significant. This politics of recognition has begun receiving governmental and institutional support in recent years, and this change in cultural policy is partly responsible for the digitisation of the film. With the aim of embracing diversity and Sweden's multicultural history, the Swedish Film Institute has also begun to allocate resources for making artefacts such as *Ulkomaalainen* accessible and acknowledge it as part of Swedish film's cultural heritage. While digitising and archiving the film is certainly a positive step, it is not enough merely to establish *Ulkomaalainen* as a historical object to which we now have access. For such a typical migrant archival object, the different versions and forms should also be made available in order for its complicated history to be displayed, and its migratory and material history to be acknowledged. Archiving and programming are connected, and since a most typical migrant object such as *Ulkomaalainen* is a fugitive object, this connection should always be brought to light in order to expose the convoluted trajectory of *Ulkomaalainen/Utlänningen/Yabanci*. Its history and programming should not be limited to one digital

copy, but expanded to multiple prints and copies, to archival afterlives. ∎

NOTES

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1 See for example Blouin and Rosenberg (2011) for a comprehensive overview from the archivist's point of view. In her recent appeal for a global approach to audiovisual heritage, Giovanna Fossati mentions a number of alternative and diasporic archival projects (Fossati 2021). Fossati's essay also contains a self-criticism of her seminal work published in 2009.

2 See Andersson and Sundholm (2019), pp. 115-130 and Sundholm (2021).

3 Two seminal anthologies on New Cinema History are Maltby, Bilrereyst and Meers (2011) and Bilrereyst., Maltby and Meers (2019).

4 The film also includes a very short segment in Germany, shot by Özer, who resided in Munich for a while before returning to Turkey and being imprisoned.

5 See Andersson and Sundholm (2019) for different associations and organisations that became important for immigrant filmmakers in Sweden.

6 *En handfull paradis/Bir avuç cennet* [A Handful of Paradise] (1987); *Kara Sevdalı Bulut/Det förälskade molnet* [The Cloud in Love] (1990); *Hollywood-rymlingar/Hollywood Kaçakları* [Hollywood Fugitives] (1998).

7 Interview with Muammer Özer, 15 October 2021.

8 1960s Turkey was characterised by an increasing political radicalisation that led to violent clashes between left and right wing, and the emergence of militant extra-parliamentary groups. Mahir Çayan and Deniz Gezmiş were the leaders of two leftist factions, the Turkish People's Liberation Party/Front and the Turkish People's Liberation Army, which in 1970 began engaging in what has been described as urban

guerrilla warfare (Zürcher 2004). The unrest led to a military coup in March 1971 and the beginning of a turbulent and violent decade that plunged the country into almost continuous civil war throughout the 1970s. In 1980, a new military coup took place.

For a discussion and critique of Naficy's concept "accented cinema", see Andersson and Sundholm (2019).

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ULKOMAALAINEN/UTLÄNNINGEN/YABANCI (1979-1981-1983) – A MOST TYPICAL MIGRANT ARCHIVAL OBJECT

Abstract

This article explores the history and archival trajectory of the Finnish-Swedish-Turkish film *Ulkomaalainen/Utlänningen/Yabanci* [Foreigner], made by the Turkish immigrant Muammer Özer. By examining the connection between the history of its production and of the distribution of its various versions, it is argued that this film constitutes "a most typical migrant archival object'. This kind of film is always a fugitive object, and thus both archiving and programming has to consider its heterogeneous history as well as its multiple forms and versions.

Key words

Muammer Özer; Archive; Historiography; Programming; Migration.

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ULKOMAALAINEN/UTLÄNNINGEN/YABANCI (1979-1981-1983) – UN OBJETO DE ARCHIVO MIGRANTE EXTREMADAMENTE TÍPICO

Resumen

El presente artículo explora la historia y la trayectoria archivística del filme finlandés-sueco-turco *Ulkomaalainen/Utlänningen/Yabanci* [Extranjero], realizado por el inmigrante turco Muammer Özer. Mediante un estudio de la conexión entre la historia de su producción y la de la distribución de sus distintas versiones, se argumenta que la película constituye «un objeto de archivo migrante extremadamente representativo». Esta clase de película es siempre un objeto fugitivo, y por ello tanto el archivo como la programación debe tener en cuenta la heterogeneidad de su historia así como sus múltiples formas y versiones.

Palabras clave

Muammer Özer; Archivo; Historiografía; Programación; Migración.

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AN INFINITY OF TACTICS. HUSSEIN SHARIFFE'S ARCHIVE IN MOTION*

ERICA CARTER
LAURENCE KENT

In January 2014, the Khartoum-based independent production house and film training centre, the Sudan Film Factory (SFF), launched the first edition of the Sudan Independent Film Festival (SIFF), an international event now staged annually in January in multiple venues across Khartoum. Described on the SIFF website as a "gateway" for new channels of exchange between Sudanese and global film cultures, SIFF's week-long programme of screenings, discussion fora and networking events is designed "to remind people that…Sudan… was once renowned in the field of cinema and….still has its heart beating for this art" (*Arab Weekly*, 2019). References in calls for participation to the "revolution that is our people" align SIFF with the democratic movements that ousted the Islamist autocrat Omar el-Bashir in 2019. But they also reach back to cinematic histories embodied in the film oeuvre that is the focus of this article. The Festival begins annually on January 21st: the date of the passing of the late filmmaker,

artist, poet, writer and public intellectual Hussein Shariffe. Shariffe is "cherished" by the Sudan Film Factory as a filmmaker whose "human and artistic values" the organisation aims to uphold, but whose memory it wishes to "transform" into an annual "celebration for cinema" on multiple sites across the Sudanese capital.

SIFF is not alone in paying such warm tribute to Shariffe. In his lifetime (1934-2005), Hussein Shariffe came to prominence as a contemporary artist working in a cosmopolitan idiom that blended western, North African and Arab visual languages. A vocal advocate of anti-colonial and democratic cultural resistance, Shariffe was also a pioneer of Sudanese independent and experimental film. His artistic career began at the Slade School of Fine Art in London, where he studied from 1957 to 1959. He staged his first solo show already in 1957, in London's Gallery One; after graduation from the Slade, he returned to Khartoum, working as an artist, lecturer, critic and

documentarist, before taking on a role as Head of Cinema in Sudan's Department of Culture.

In 1973, Shariffe returned to London to complete the experimental film *The Dislocation of Amber* (1975), alongside *Tigers are Better Looking*, an adaptation from a short story by the white Creole modernist writer Jean Rhys, and his graduation film from the UK National Film School in 1979.[1] Moving between London and Khartoum through the 1980s, Shariffe eventually fled into exile following Sudan's 1989 Islamist military coup. His final home was Cairo, where he continued to perfect an art practice that roamed across disciplinary boundaries between film, poetry, literature and painting, or indeed cooking and interior decor, art forms that made his many temporary homes "never empty of colour": open destinations, writes his daughter Eiman Hussein, for "everyone, family and friends" (Hussein, 2020: 88).

Hussein Shariffe died in Egyptian exile in 2005. This article centres on attempts since that date to retrieve, archive, and recirculate his extant film works. It presents a film artist whose oeuvre is at once singular in its visual and aural language, resonant of specifically Sudanese histories of an exile and diaspora cinema of mobility, and productive of an archive practice whose point of departure is the very transience of its most cherished objects, including, or perhaps centrally, as we hope to demonstrate, the several unfinished films that made up a significant portion of Hussein Shariffe's film oeuvre. Between 1973 and 2005, Shariffe directed and/or (co-)produced at least nine films: the documentaries *The Throwing of Fire* (1973), *The South-East Nuba* (1982), *Not the Waters of the Moon* (1985), and *Diary in Exile* (co-directed with Attiyat al-Abnoudi, 1993). Alongside the visionary *Tigers are Better Looking* and *The Dislocation of Amber*, Shariffe was working when he died on a further experimental work, *Of Dust and Rubies: Letters from Abroad*. A cinematic interpretation of nine poems of Sudanese exile, *Of Dust and Rubies* would however remain

unfinished, as would two documentary works-in-progress: *Alwathiq*, a portrait of a 1980s Sudanese Robin Hood-esque figure executed by crucifixion during the period of Shari'a law under the military dictator al-Nemeiri; and *Dawood*, a biographical portrait of the singer Abdel-Aziz Muhammad Dawood (aka Abu Dawood).

Shariffe's archive shares with that of film artists from other minor (experimental, independent, diasporic) cinemas the twin problems of material degradation and spatial dispersal (Andersson and Sundholm, 2019: 117-119). Archival locations for several prints have yet to be confirmed at the time of writing, as does their status as negatives, reversal film, or impaired copies which, as Lars Gustaf Andersson and John Sundholm have suggested, confound "the ultimate archival goal...of originality and authenticity," since in this as in other archives of migration and exile, original prints are unidentified or lost (Andersson and Sundholm, 2019: 118). Writing on immigrant cinema archives, Andersson and Sundholm point to the apparent "disorder" of migrant archives "where very few objects are related to the canonical, national, auteur-oriented cinema practice" shaping established archive collections (Andersson and Sundholm, 2019: 123). The task facing researchers is thus at once pragmatic—one of assembling and rearranging artefacts disarranged by often traumatic histories of displacement or expulsion—and conceptual, involving the identification of archival logics that might accommodate the uneven and dissimultaneous histories from which the archive has emerged.

That Shariffe's films are as geographically scattered as are Anderson and Sundholm's immigrant archival artefacts is certain. Similarly dispersed are the photographs, scripts, published writings, scrapbooks, festival programmes, correspondence and other ephemera uncovered since 2005 in private and institutional archives across Khartoum, Cairo, London, Oxford, Los Angeles and Berlin. These problems of dispersal and material decay

situate the initiatives we detail below on the one hand within the field of minor cinema archiving as a practice of multidirectional assemblage. Like Andersson, Sundholm and other scholars keen to displace migrant cinemas from "de margin" to "de centre", in Isaac Julien and Kobena Mercer's famous phrase, our own work on Shariffe has begun by collecting and rearranging in new configurations the films and other material and virtual artefacts that constitute Shariffe's filmic legacy (Julien and Mercer, 1988: 2). There is an open-source archive in the making as we write; it builds on curatorial ventures to screen and discuss Shariffe's films in globally interconnected public fora, lending them transnational visibility through mini-retrospectives, online as well as face-to-face discussions, and two film essays exploring the films' potential for new future lives.

But the work we present below also differs from migrant or diasporic film archiving in European or western milieux. In projects led by European cinema scholars, the effort is often to secure an "archival life" for immigrant, experimental or political cinemas that are conventionally banished to the periphery of national film history and heritage. The specific call in respect of cinemas of migrant mobility is for a "redistribution of space" in the archive that enables recognition of migrant cultural production and immigrant experience within local and national public and film culture (Andersson and Sundholm, 2019: 129).[2] This model of a displacement of historical attention from periphery to national centre sits uneasily, however, with archive work on colonial cinemas whose constitutive condition is one of extraterritoriality and precarious national cultural sovereignty.[3] Sudanese cinema is just one example of a film culture born in colonial territories in the interstices between colonial, ethnographic, military and amateur film; shaped later by anti-colonial and decolonial filmmakers migrating restlessly between postcolony and metropole; and reconfigured repeatedly as the postcolony

succumbs to the duress of neo-imperial geopolitics and anti-democratic forces closer to home.

In the case of Hussein Shariffe, we are confronted, in sum, with archival objects born into states of displacement, situated temporally in polycentric and overlapping histories of transnational mobility and fracture, and dispersed spatially around Shariffe's various stations of migration, transnational travel, and exile. Artefacts in this archive have no single or fixed point of origin, no settled destination, and as yet, no singular framing aesthetic or institutional logic enabling coherent strategies of preservation, archival documentation, and recirculation. In the rest of this article, we present a series of curatorial and archival experiments through which the group of archivists, curators, artists, family members and film scholars to which we belong have in recent years explored potential archival logics, strategies and tactics for Shariffe's film archive-in-motion. Our focus is on three case studies. An opening discussion of a single archival artefact—Issue 1 of Shariffe's mid-1960s cultural journal *Twenty One*—examines the geopolitics of the exilic archive, highlighting the specific challenges for archive practice of objects born into the political turmoil of decolonisation and Cold War. Turning secondly to Shariffe's last, unfinished film, *Of Dust and Rubies*, we recentre attention on questions of presentation and curatorship. Since 2018 a series of transnationally circulating workshops and research projects has developed around *Of Dust and Rubies* in collaborations between the Arsenal Institute for Film and Video Art, Berlin, and multiple partners across Khartoum, Cairo and London. Framed by the Arsenal's conceptualisation of "archive work as a contemporary artistic and curatorial practice", these efforts to generate through performative curatorial practice a "living archive" for Shariffe's oeuvre began with workshop presentations of this remarkable film to a range of international publics (Schulte Strathaus, 2013).

We discuss in this context the state of incompletion in which *Of Dust and Rubies* remains suspended, and analyse curatorial approaches that unlock the potential of such unfinished works to meet the constitutive instability of Shariffe's dispersed and exilic archive with similarly fluid poetic and mnemonic practices of remediation and historical refiguring. A final section of the article outlines our plans for an open-source, hybrid digital and analogue archive of Shariffe's film oeuvre. That archive remains under construction at the time of writing—so this article itself, analogously to Shariffe's unfinished films, remains in a state of incompletion, drawing what must be for now only interim conclusions, but pointing forwards in what we hope are constructive ways towards a future of creative uncertainty for his film oeuvre, with all the fears and hopes that such fragile futurity holds. First, however, we move back in time to investigate one small fragment from Shariffe's archive: a digital copy of a 1964 journal issue that marks both a milestone in Shariffe's contributions to Sudanese film culture, and a test case for archive practices adequate to the history of breaks, mobilities and transitions from which his films emerged.

AN ARCHIVAL OBJECT IN TRANSITION: *TWENTY ONE*, ISSUE 1, 1964

Amongst the documents scheduled for inclusion in our open-source archive is the first issue of what was to have been a weekly journal edited by Shariffe, the English-language *Twenty One. A Magazine from Africa*. The journal launch fell within a period of intense artistic productivity for Shariffe. Following his 1960 return to Khartoum, Shariffe taught for four years at the College of Fine and Applied Art. Here he joined other artists including the friend and mentor who would later recruit him as Head of Cinema in the Sudanese Ministry of Culture and Information, Ibrahim el-Salahi. Like Shariffe, El-Salahi was formed ar-
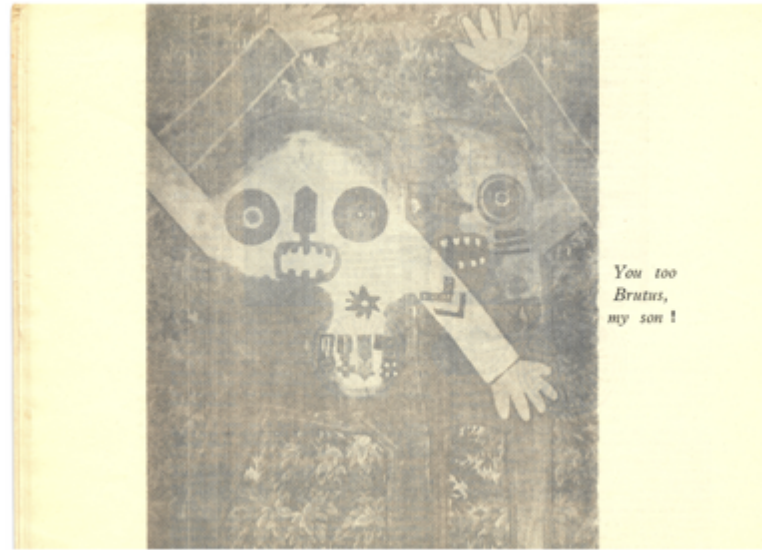
Figure 1. Source: *Twenty One. A Magazine from Africa,* 1(1). Hussein Shariffe Family Archive

tistically through earlier encounters with transnational modernism; he too had studied at the Slade, but also contributed to the influential Mbari Artists and Writers Club, an experimental arts and drama workshop in postwar Ibadan, Nigeria, whose participants included writers Chinua Achebe and Gérald-Félix Tchicaya, playwright Wole Soyinka, and the club's expatriate founders, the writer/editor and painter duo Ulli and Georgina Beier (Hassan, 2012: 10).

El-Salahi was a key figure in the Khartoum School, the loose association of modernist artists who emerged in Sudan in the late 1950s, generating work that married western modes of abstraction and experiment with African art as well as Arabic calligraphy and geometry, decoration and ornament, and poetic or spiritual practice (Hassan, 2012). As the art historian Salah Hassan notes, the group's "complex, multifaceted, fluid" Sudanese modernism disrupted binary distinctions between West and non-West through artistic languages that blended idioms from global modernisms with art forms from the culturally diverse populations of post-independence Sudan. Although polarized "for political and ideological

reasons" into northern "Arabic" and southern "African" cultures, modern Sudan, observes Hassan, boasts a national culture in which "almost every major African ethnic or linguistic group is represented" (Hassan, 2012: 15). The political thinker Ali Mazrui has described Sudan as a nation of "multiple marginalities" (Mazrui, 1969): a country traversed by multifarious divisions and interconnections between Arab-Islamic and African cultural worlds; perched historically on the geopolitical margins between competing empires; and a nation searching still for an identity capable of encompassing what the writer Jamal Mahjoub terms Sudan's "heritage of criss-crossing cultural hybridity" and "manifold diversity" (Mahjoub, 2018: 118)[4].

Though Shariffe resisted a positioning of his own practice within defined movements or tendencies, he certainly shared with the Khartoum School a commitment to artistic modes that militated against the "dichotomous duality" of Sudanese national culture (Mazrui, 1969). Visible in the copies of *Twenty One* now available in Shariffe's emerging archive is thus a striving towards multiplicitous expressive structures and idioms capable of encompassing the pluricultural and complexly geopolitically entangled realities of mid-1960s Sudan. Issue 1 of the journal, for instance, is arranged in a collage structure that intersperses what appear to be Shariffe's own highly abstract images of political turmoil with unattributed architectural illustrations and design motifs. The images serve as visual commentary on written contributions including Shariffe's own opening editorial, commissioned articles on topics ranging from Sudanese poetry to contemporary politics, and articles reprinted or extracted from global press organs commenting on the prospects for "much hoped-for unity" in a multi-ethnic and democratic Sudan (Shariffe, 1965).

Shariffe himself aspires in his founding editorial to a "new national consciousness" that might meld together the country's often antagonistic cultural strands. Under the heading, "A Beginning", Shariffe thus offers the journal as a "bridge between Africa and the Arab World with both whom (*sic*) we inescapably have so much in common" (Shariffe, 1965: 1). The publication of *Twenty One* in English suggests that this goal is to be served by a politics of address that connects a multi-ethnic and pluricultural Sudanese art practice to global publics. But perhaps most striking about the first issue are the marks it bears of a political catastrophe that threatens such global connectivity. *Twenty One* subsists today only in fragmentary print and digital copies discovered thus far in London and Khartoum. Though occasionally cited in political and cultural histories of 1960s Sudan, the journal is uncatalogued in the electronic indexes of the Global North. This fragile archival imprint, but also the insistent focus in the journal's opening issue on contemporary politics—on the "problem of the South", a "hole in the national charter", "elections and after"—reflect its origins in the then still ongoing struggle against militarization, Arabization and Islamicization policies of Sudan's first post-independence period of military rule (1958 to 1964). Four months prior to the launch of *Twenty One*, in October 1964, Sudan had seen a revolt against military rule beginning with a civilian strike by university academics and other professionals, carried forward by a political coalition under the umbrella of the United National Front, and culminating in a general strike, the end of military government, and the resignation as Head of State in November 1964 of the military leader General Ibrahim Abbud (El-Affendi, 2012).

Twenty One emerges, then, out of the maelstrom of intellectual and artistic dissidence that triggered political revolution and, eventually, completion of the long transition from Sudanese independence in 1956, to civilian rule and successive elections in 1965 and 1966. The prominence in Issue 1 of the US journalist and writer Melvin J. Lasky accentuates the Cold War context framing this and other anticolonial struggles across the Af-

Figure 2. Source: *Twenty One. A Magazine from Africa,* 1(1). Hussein Shariffe Family Archive

rican continent. A pre-eminent figure within the US anti-Communist Left, Lasky was renowned for his founding editorship of two significant Cold War cultural journals, the German *Der Monat* and the English-language *Encounter*. Lasky also authored the (western, white, liberal centrist) "intellectual's guidebook" to anti-colonial struggle, *Africa for Beginners* (1962). His anti-Communist commitments in the African context are visible in a lead article for *Twenty One* that proselytises for a new *Farbenlehre* (Goethe's philosophy of colour): an aesthetic theory and practice that will heal a world "hysterically blinded by whiteness and blackness", while avoiding the "new fashioned dictatorship of the Left" that Lasky sees emerging under African socialist leaders including Nasser and Nkrumah (Lasky, 1965: 4).

From its very first issue, *Twenty One* bears, in sum, the intersecting traces of convulsive, or what we have termed "catastrophic" geopolitical transitions and revolutionary shifts. Catastrophe as it is understood in classical dramaturgy or liberal history implies an end of days, from the Greek *katastrophe*: an overturning, or precipitous end. In 1965 Sudan, it is however the second meaning the

term acquires in mid-twentieth century mathematics that seems more apposite: catastrophe as a seismic fracture that transverses two-, three- and four-dimensional phenomena, shattering existing geometries, generating unforeseen bifurcations, interruptions, loops, and unstable outcomes. *Twenty One* is bestrewn with the visible debris of such processes of splintering, dislocation and spatio-temporal refiguring. A graphic image of popular uprising accompanies Shariffe's opening editorial; later, an abstract portrait of Brutus murdering Caesar evokes the intimate violence infesting political orders in militarized states. Notable throughout is the staccato style and inconclusive tone that situates Shariffe's writing within unfinished histories: "Facts.....The source of the trouble is really.....But this simply cannot be....the damp corners of the cabinet must be sprayed with political flit...The Prime Minister is so far only a conciliatory force" (Shariffe, 1965: 2). Shariffe's editorial ends meanwhile with a caveat shows historical time itself eluding capture in this moment of turmoil, such that, "Regretfully, and because of circumstances not under our control, some of the material in this issue may be slightly dated" (Shariffe, 1965: 2).

We see in *Twenty One*, in sum, an artefact from Sudan's 1964 revolution that surfaces in the archive as an object in spatio-temporal transition: one that points temporally back and forth to lost pasts and hoped-for futures, and spatially, through its layering of anti-colonial and Cold War references, to both local and global sites of struggle over viable Sudanese futures. The questions raised for archive practice by an artefact born into this state of contingent volatility relate, moreover, not just to what we are describing as Shariffe's archive of catastrophe, but to other collections that carry similarly the marks of political turbulence, cultural contestation, territorial dislocation, and of course lost utopias—for surely *Twenty One* embodied a utopian gesture of affirmation, launched as it was in a moment when "so much is at stake"

and the "popular uprising of October" was "only a beginning" (Shariffe, 1965: 1-2).

TRANSITION, COUNTERPOINT, DEIXIS

Some recent observations on film-archival practice by the distinguished scholar of film heritage and digital film culture, Giovanna Fossati, highlight the archival strategies that may be appropriate for artefacts located, like *Twenty One*, within spatio-temporal constellations set in motion by fractures in the historical continuum or a shifting of the tectonic plates of local or national (here, Sudanese), and global histories—in the case of *Twenty One*, the story of a global Cold War and its intersections with struggles for decolonisation, nation-building, and popular sovereignty. Discussing in a different context the convolutions of archive histories (her focus is on media history and the analogue-digital shift), Fossati suggests of conceptions of "transition" in moments of epochal rupture that they should be understood not teleologically, as movements between settled ontological states, but as conditions of "constant in-betweenness": so the transition from analogue to digital media is marked for instance as much by simultaneities, intersections and recursive loops, as by differences or linear developments from "A" (analogue) to "D" (digital).

Intriguingly, Fossati suggests further that transition, understood now not as monodirectional development, but as "back-and-forth" or circulatory movements around fluid technological, historical and spatial constellations, may be an "inherent characteristic of film (archival) practice" (Fossati and van den Oever, 2020: 133). Fossati continues:

> "transition" is a spatial term (derived from Latin transitio, "going across"), and therefore also conveys a sense of "back-and-forth" movement...It is that continuous back-and-forth (or dialogue or conflation) between past and present; obsolete and new technologies; old and new practices; and theo-

retical frameworks developed at different points in time and in different contexts, that has been so central to media research disciplines, including those that focus on....archival objects and practices (Fossati and van den Oever, 2020: 133)[5.]

We followed Anderson and Sundholm earlier in pointing to the need for revised archival logics capable of framing archive practice in respect of postcolonial, diasporic or exile cinemas-in-motion. Fossati's observations direct attention towards just such a mobile logic of archival practice and film-historical knowledge production. The shift she proposes from temporal to spatial archival epistemologies allows a conceptualisation of archival objects—in our case, the films and other media artefacts and ephemera that are the legacy of Hussein Shariffe—as objects in transition, located precariously within intersecting local, national, regional and global circulatory flows, and demanding an archival and curatorial practice that meets their immanent, now joyous, now traumatic fluidity with similarly mutable tactics of retrieval, restoration and recirculation in contemporary contexts.

In the case of the founding issue of Shariffe's *Twenty One*, such a practice would mean investigating the journal, not as the source for an auteurist history of Shariffe as a giant of postwar Sudanese film history (though he was certainly also this), but as an artefact that reveals the constitutive instabilities of the multi-sited and temporally fragmented exilic and diasporic film practice in which Shariffe was engaged. Art and archival historians Liz Bruchet and Ming Tiampo point the way methodologically for such a spatially and temporally multiform investigation in their study of what they term the "contrapuntal" relations shaping histories of student and alumni practice at Shariffe's *alma mater*, the Slade (Bruchet and Tiampo, 2021). Focussing on the period "between imperialism and decolonization" (1945-1989), Bruchet and Tiampo trace the careers of numerous students attracted to the Slade "from throughout

the British Empire and around the world" by the institution's secular ethos and internationalist artistic commitments. Their description of what they term these students' "contrapuntal" practice derives from Edward Said's 1984 essay "Reflections on Exile". Said borrows this musical term to identify exile as a cultural condition involving on the one hand a doubling or pluralising of perception, and on the other, expressive structures that replicate musical counterpoint with what Bruchet and Tiampo describe as "imitative fugue[s].... a reckoning with colonial pasts from which emerges a new polyphony" (Said, 2000: 398; Bruchet and Tiampo, 2021: 6).

Bruchet and Tiampo are keen to extend Said's notion of contrapuntalism, moving beyond exilic art practice to encompass diasporic and migrant experience amongst the numerous Slade students and alumni who shuttled between stations of migration and remigration in the postwar period of decolonisation and Cold War. This expansion of Said's insights to include multiple states of migratory mobility seems pertinent to an artist transitioning, as did Shariffe, from the voluntary global journeys of his early career, to exile in Egypt after 1989. Shariffe features accordingly in Bruchet and Tiampo's research as one of numerous Slade alumni whose "contrapuntal" practice confounded the centre-periphery structure of imperialist cultural thinking by asserting—as for instance in Shariffe's early London exhibitions—"the presence of Empire in the metropolis". Artistic productions born of circulatory journeys around routes of postcolonial migration and remigration, exile and diaspora constructed meanwhile precisely that "transnational counterpoint" to Eurocentric art practice to which Said's term refers. Hence for instance the play of alternating call and response between local and global publics initiated in Shariffe's urgent call in *Twenty One* for a global and multi-voiced artistic and intellectual response to revolution in Sudan. Hence too his use of hybridizing European-African aesthetic strategies

including remediation (as in his translation in *Twenty One* of a scene from Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* into a stark visual commentary on Sudanese political violence); adaptation (*viz.* his later reworking in *Tigers are Better Looking* of a Jean Rhys story as a comment on London's black African presence); or creolization, as, again, in Shariffe's Julius Caesar image, whose robotic human figures recall the grotesque political caricatures of European Dada or New Objectivity, while gesturing simultaneously, through the overlay in the image of a delicate leaf motif, to arabesque design elements from Hellenic, Islamic, and Mediterranean Renaissance art[6.]

Bruchet and Tiampo's repurposing of Said on contrapuntalism allows, in sum, a metaphorical understanding of *Twenty One* as a quasi-musical constellation of notes, chords, voices and melodies that calls out to and is answered by voices from within the multiple modernisms shaping postcolonial cultural futures. The journal stands in this sense as the historical trace of a specifically Sudanese contribution, led by Hussein Shariffe, to global cultural dialogue in a moment of decolonisation and imperial decline. But *Twenty One*'s archival significance is by no means exhausted by its function as a referent or index for postcolonial cultural histories. Such archival ephemera possess a double ontology: they carry the indexical imprint of postcolonial histories, but they have at the same time a mobile and relational quality as signposts, or what we will term in our next section deictic markers (pointers) towards related objects or figures within historical ensembles.

In linguistic theory, deixis has the pragmatic (as opposed to semantic) function of establishing the temporal and spatial location of the enunciating subject. What the Danish linguist Otto Jespersen termed the deictic shifters establishing the situational context of the enunciating subject include pronouns ("I", "we", "they"), verb tenses, or adverbial phrases distinguishing "here" from "there", "now" from "then", "once upon a time"

from "in the future", and so on. Such deictic markers are everywhere evident in the first issue of *Twenty One*. Shariffe repeatedly invokes the "we" of a Sudanese people in revolt, repudiating the "they" who are the supporters or fellow travellers of military junta, and inviting the implied "you" of the readerly community to stand in solidarity with artists and public intellectuals fighting for a democratic Sudan. The journal reveals itself thus as a historical object situated deictically within a mobile constellation of relations with local and transnational cultural actors.

Put differently: *Twenty One* is enmeshed within, and also helps direct and shape precisely that back-and-forth movement across sites, practices, human actors and ontological states which is for Fossati a founding condition of archival objects. In our next section however, though we continue the investigation of the archive's deictic utterances that *Twenty One* prompts, we are concerned no longer with a print document, but a film—Shariffe's unfinished *Of Dust and Rubies*—and with archival strategies to resituate this remarkable work within the lived relations of contemporary transnational film culture. Deixis will be understood now as a strategy that moves beyond the linguistic, encompassing both tactics within film language—the use of scale (the move from close-up to long shot), onscreen and offscreen looking relations, performance (what Béla Balázs termed the "mute pointing" of the actor's body), or spectatorial address—and the performative strategies of archival screenings that resituate this neglected film in new spatiotemporal constellations (Balázs, 2010b: 39; Verhoeff, 2012: 572). Our interest centres on *Of Dust and Rubies'* capacity to gesture beyond its own boundaries, resisting an indexical function as the finished trace or imprint of a postcolonial presence, and pointing instead, again like Fossati's artefacts in transition, backwards to fractured pasts, laterally or transversally to contemporaneous events and actions, and forward to still unfolding artistic and political futures.

EXILE AND DIASPORA IN THE LIVING ARCHIVE: *OF DUST AND RUBIES. LETTERS FROM ABROAD*

Initiatives to reassemble, recontextualise and re-present the cinematic archive of Hussein Shariffe began already shortly after his death in 2005. Efforts centred on Shariffe's third unfinished film project, the experimental *Of Dust and Rubies. Letters from Abroad*. First conceived in 1998 as a visual translation of selected poems of Sudanese exile, the film also registers experiences from Shariffe's long sojourn in Egyptian exile from 1989 to 2005. Shariffe chose far-flung locations that evoked for him the mountain, urban, desert, plain and riverine environments of his Sudanese home. Like the images of water and sand that also populate Shariffe's film, locations in *Of Dust and Rubies* serve as metaphorical overlays for the homeland from which he was dispossessed: Sudan is revisited in the streets of Cairo and Alexandria; the Red Sea to Cairo's east; the White Desert to the west; then back towards the capital for explorations of the ornamental gardens of al-Qanatir. Shot over a five-year period between 2000 and 2005, the film subsists today only as a collection of rushes: cinematic refigurings of rhythms, images and tropes from poems by exiled compatriots including Abdel Rahim Abu Zikra ("Departure in the Night"), Mahjoub Sharif ("The Traveller"), and Ali Adbel Ghayoum ("Whirlpools of the 20th Century"), to name but a handful.

An archival document from June 2005—a funding proposal calling urgently for posthumous post-production support—is a first milestone in what was to become the long story of the film's rescue from the oblivion of incompletion. Shariffe had died earlier that year, but screening invitations remained open following the film's acceptance for inclusion in festival programmes at Venice, Locarno and Fribourg. Shariffe's daughter Eiman Hussein worked swiftly with the Cairo-based artist and curator Heba Farid to assemble

a task force under the umbrella of the film's production house, the Khartoum Sudanese Studies Center. The aim was to complete and premiere *Of Dust and Rubies;* stage an exhibition of Shariffe's paintings; and publish an accompanying volume. Collaborators included three remaining members of the *Of Dust and Rubies'* directorial team: assistant director, production designer, artist and former student of Shariffe Hassaan Ahmed Ali; the photographer Claude Stemmelin; and the production manager and former associate of Egyptian director Yousef Chahine, Mohamed Eissa.

Extant elements of *Of Dust and Rubies* included in 2005, according to Hussein and Farid's proposal, an estimated five hours of colour footage on 35mm and Betacam; stock images scheduled for inclusion alongside photographs of paintings by Shariffe; an original musical score; and a recording of Hussein Shariffe reading the film's nine poems, slated as one possible element in a sound montage that would augment each sequence of *Of Dust and Rubies* with music, song, chant and oral narration (Hussein and Farid, 2005). Hussein and Farid's ambitious timetable foresaw completion of a first edit by November 2005. Post-production, together with a book and exhibition, were to be finalized in time for a March 2006 premiere at the Fribourg International Film Festival (FIFF).

In the event, though FIFF 2006 did stage a brief homage to Shariffe, the tribute took place without a screening of the then still unfinished *Of Dust and Rubies.* It would indeed be fully twelve years before the film would find a public platform and a different life in workshops and screenings led from 2018 to 2022 by the Arsenal Institute for Film and Video Art, Berlin. By the end of the 2010s, the Arsenal was known for pioneering experiments in what the institution itself dubs "archive work as a contemporary artistic and curatorial practice" (Schulte Strathaus, 2013). The term signals the core features of the Arsenal's response to a situation at the turn of the millennium in which it had few resources to ride the transition

from analogue to digital film. The Arsenal had begun life as a film club, later an independent art cinema, and, from 1971, instigator and programmer of the Berlinale International Forum, later also Forum Expanded. By the early 2010s, it had amassed a unique collection of some 10,000 international independent, experimental and political films. But the Arsenal had no archival mandate; prints were often degraded after long years serving the institution's principal mission of screening for public access; and funds were lacking for preservation, restoration and recirculating in new formats (Schulte Strathaus, 2013: 25).

Under the guidance of its co-director, the archivist and curator Stefanie Schulte Strathaus, the Arsenal met this apparently calamitous conjunction of scarce resources and archival decay with strategies for a radical reinvention of film archive practice. Since 2011, the Arsenal has staged successive large-scale projects for a living archive that sets film history in motion through creative collaborations with filmmakers, artists, performers, curators, activists, writers and scholars. Akin to other living archives that "marry the archival and the artistic" (Sabiescu, 2020: 63), the Arsenal's three signal projects to date—*Living Archive*, focusing on the Arsenal's own collection (2011-2013), *Visionary Archive*, a "collaborative translocal experiment" in African film history and practice (2013-2015), and the multi-institutional, transnational, interdisciplinary cultural heritage project *Archive außer sich* (Archives beyond/beside themselves, 2017-2021)—conceive the archive not as a site of storage that "arrests time, stops all motion", but a platform for collaborative creative practices that mobilize archival objects to produce new senses of a history on the move (Røssaak, 2010: 12).

The Arsenal's engagements with *On Dust and Rubies* are exemplary both of this commitment to living histories, and of the Arsenal archive's self-definition as a borderless space that reaches "beyond itself" (*außer sich*) into transnational

and global arenas. After an approach by Heba Farid, the Arsenal began archive and curatorial work on this and other Shariffe titles with a two-day workshop followed by a public presentation within the 2019 Berlinale Forum Expanded programme. Participants were Eiman Hussein and Stefanie Schulte Strathaus, alongside Talal Afifi, Director of the Sudan Film Factory, President of the Sudan Independent Film Festival, and a long-term associate of Hussein Shariffe (including as an actor in *Of Dust and Rubies*); the Egyptian filmmaker Tamer el Said; and Haytham el-Wardany, a writing and translator born in Cairo and living in Berlin. The five watched the rushes together and presented first thoughts in a public screening and panel discussion on the film's lived pasts and possible futures. The workshop later itself become peripatetic, following Shariffe's own transnational journeys in December 2020 with a mini-series of online screenings and panels organized within our own London-based research project, *Circulating Cinema. The Moving Image Archive as Anglo-German Contact Zone.* We detail in the final section of this essay our further hopes to bring the workshop to Khartoum, with preparatory steps already accomplished, including a summer 2021 student research project at King's College London, and an essay film presentation by student researchers Deem bin Jumayd, Niya Namfua and Mai Nguyen at the Arsenal's September 2021 archive festival, *Archival Assembly #1.*

On its virtual and analogue journeys since 2005 around new global destinations—Khartoum, Cairo, London, Berlin—the fragmentary constellation that is *Of Dust and Rubies* has created its own glistering dust trail of festival and events programmes, project proposals, databases, correspondence, photographs, new audio-visual documents including event recordings and a 2021 video essay. One such document returns us to questions of trace and deixis: to the capacity of *Of Dust and Rubies*, that is, to point, precisely in its incompleteness, towards modalities of exilic

movement embodied in Shariffe's transnationally dispersed cinematic archive.

The media scholar Nanna Verhoeff suggests a distinction in archival practice between the trace as a (sometimes nostalgically invested) "sign of pastness", and deixis as a function that "unhinges... pastness as an absolute", shifting attention to the "situatedness of [the image's] present', and reinventing the "pastness the trace carries" as "a bond with the present moment" (Verhoeff, 2012: 582). Verhoeff joins Senta Siewert in identifying in the performative practice of archival screening the potential for a re-experiencing of pastness as a "historical sensation" oriented to future time (Verhoeff, 2012: 583; Siewert, 2020: 108). The two scholars are by no means unusual in identifying in film as a time-based medium a capacity to revive dormant historical time through archive screening (Wood, 2010). Specifically pertinent to *Of Dust and Rubies* is however Verhoeff's understanding of live screening as a performance that moves archive film from a status as historical trace, to a state of temporal heterogeneity that binds present to past through "deixis....a destination-index, a trace towards the future" (Verhoeff, 2012: 583).

One film work generated since 2005 by the Arsenal's *Of Dust and Rubies* project illustrates well this capacity of archive screenings to unanchor and spatio-temporally reorient what Shariffe himself dubbed the "unhoused...energies" of his exilic film practice (Hussein and Farid, 2005: 5). The 2019 Berlinale panel on Shariffe's unfinished film was recorded on film, and the footage edited into a quietly reflective film essay by Tamer el Said, *Of Dust and Rubies: A Film on Suspension* (2020). The film intercuts presentations by panel participants in the 2019 workshop with silent sequences replaying extracts chosen by each speaker from Shariffe's original rushes. Each panelist is prompted by the extracts to reflect on memories and meanings unleashed as Shariffe's long dormant footage comes finally to new life. For Eiman Hussein, shots of marching feet, an uniden-

tified corpse, a skeleton in the sand recall an experience of exile that was endured personally by her father, but that remains pervasive in other global experiences of dislocation, exile, isolation and loss. Haytham el Wardany finds in Shariffe's rushes by contrast, not the gaze of an exile, but of an immigrant filmmaker writing "letters from abroad" (the film's subtitle). *Of Dust and Rubies*, observes el Wardany, reconfigures not only Sudanese but also Egyptian memories as it breaks free of Egyptian cinema's stock urban locations, ranging instead across desert and mountain landscapes, and prompting through its evocation of a Sudanese experience dispersed across Egypt's own most remote locations, what he terms in his contribution to the Berlinale panel new forms of "solidarity with other forms of life".

For Stefanie Schulte Strathaus similarly, the seascapes she selects for screening evoke transnational, indeed global meanderings. The sea as a place of unruly movement is a regular trope in Shariffe's film. It appears at times in turbulent close up, at times in long shot as the scene of action for figures of myth and fantasy: sirens, mermaids, mermen—queered, outlandish, other-worldly bodies that surge into the image foreground, disrupting "systematically secured" identities, suggests Schulte Strathaus, and aligned in that sense with Shariffe's own resistance to the nativist identity politics of authoritarian regimes.

Knowledge in Shariffe's film, Schulte Strathaus concludes, derives as it has in ancient mythologies since the Odyssey "from the experience of migration". Yet as Talal Afifi reminds the Berlinale audience, there is also a counter-movement in Shariffe's film: not Ulysses' circular journey, nor indeed any narrative arc suggesting a single return, but instead a scattering to dispersed havens within the mobile "counter-space" of a global Sudanese diaspora (Gilroy, 1995). Afifi's evocative commentary on his re-encounter with *Of Dust and Rubies* is worth reprising in some detail, since it shows more precisely the pertinence of

accounts of deixis in the archive for a film that enfolds the viewer, during what Francesco Casetti terms the "effectuated act" of its exhibition, in a shared experience of both present transnational mobilities, and diasporic pasts (Casetti, 1998: 44). Casetti's seminal account of deixis in film draws on the speech act theory of J.L.Austin to stress the relational nature of film spectatorship (Austin, 1962). Filmic enunciation, Casetti observes, mobilizes both the illocutionary and perlocutionary dimension of communication: the capacity of image and sound to assert, commit, declare, warn, direct attention (illocution), and through "perlocution", to effect change in the viewer through persuasion, inspiration, imagination, remembering and so on (Casetti, 1998: 44).

Exactly this pattern of deictic call and response is traced by Afifi in his description of his own viewing process. Though he is the film's lead actor, Afifi will wait almost two decades before seeing *Of Dust and Rubies* for the first time in the Arsenal's viewing room. The shock is immediate: the film, he tells the Berlinale audience, was "something I knew very well, but I was seeing it with my eyes for the very first time….myself, my face and features from years ago, my body". One reel (perhaps but not certainly Shariffe's first) begins *in medias res*: feet running on sand, Afifi's face in extreme close-up, two cuts that increase the shot distance as he looks steadily to camera. The look is ambivalent: it holds the viewer's attention first through the many inferences of immediacy that are characteristic of direct address—the suggestion of intimacy, honesty or authenticity, agency, stillness (Brown 2012). Afifi's look also has decolonial significance, engaging the viewer as it does, through looking back, in what Paula Amad terms a "visual riposte" to an order of Eurocentric and colonial vision that claims uninterrupted voyeuristic access to views of subordinate African bodies (Amad, 2013)[7].

As Afifi looks to camera, he issues however not just a challenge, but also an invitation to fu-

Figure 3. Talal Afifi. Source: *Of Dust and Rubies. Letters from Abroad*

ture audiences, effecting a melding of past and present by engaging us as viewers, and Afifi himself in an unmediated encounter with the face of his own lost past. Direct address is also not the only source of a deixis that situates viewer and viewed in Afifi's chosen extracts in an experience of simultaneous historical time. A shot of Afifi on horseback galloping across a desert landscape reengages him in a visceral experience of the pace and tempo of a young life in Cairo: a mix of "adventures, joys, sorrows," and what he mischievously dubs "mysterious socialist groups." Further facial close ups, meanwhile, are no mere mirrors for self-identification, but perform instead for Afifi a social function as an expressive ensemble whose movements and rhythms articulate collectively shared temporalities and "supra-individual" affects (Kappelhoff, 2016: 5-7; Balázs, 2010b: 109). Close shots of his own face, Afifi comments, "flooded me with memories, scenes and pictures": a mnemonic stream that becomes a torrent as later images of his own walking body, or of children playing in Cairo streets and byways evoke for Afifi a diaspora of "four million Sudanese" escaping al Bashir's Sudan, "scattered across the alleyways, nights, days, furnished apartments, transport and cafés….".

Watching *Of Dust and Rubies* furnishes for Afifi, then, a memory of diaspora as a space of possibility: the location of an identity that is "humane", he says, because it is revealed in this film through playful experiment and tentative movement across the imaginary landscape of a pluricultural, multi-ethnic and democratic Sudan. Afifi's observations recall the British Caribbean scholar Stuart Hall in their recognition of diaspora as what Hall engagingly calls a "Humpty Dumpty phenomenon." Humpty Dumpty tells a story, Hall reminds his readers, of a shattered body that "can never be put back together again" (Hall and Schwarz, 2017: 199). Such irreversible shattering is the fate of diasporas; yet for Hall, as for Afifi, this violent dissemination of bodies and cultures constitutes the diasporic condition also as a site of resistance: the source of a challenge to the "deadly, pathological impulses" fuelling autocratic fantasies of the "elimination of difference"; an "emergent space of enquiry" that sustains (and herein lies the affinity between diaspora and the formal operations of filmic deixis) a "double consciousness" of "being both here and there"; and the destination-image for a future that embraces the "double inscriptions" of metropole and colony, centre and periphery, national and transnational belonging (Hall and Schwarz, 2017:140-143).).

UNFINISHED FILM, UNCERTAIN ARCHIVE

Hall reaches for a filmic analogy to describe what he finally summarises as a mode of "diasporic thought" whose "lifeblood" is montage (Hall and Schwarz, 2017: 177). As an unfinished film, however, *Of Dust and Rubies* suggests the rather different, and perhaps more uncertain understanding

of film in its relation to diasporic thinking with which we now conclude.

Pivotal to the experience of watching unedited rushes is, *contra* Hall, precisely the absence of purposive montage. No sealed connections exist between shots, sequences, times and spaces, sound and image; the film has no sequential logic; the silence that fills the screen evokes the absent aural presences of music, street noise, voices, ocean waves, the rustling wind. Filmmaker Tamer El Said speaks in the 2019 Berlinale panel of the ethical questions raised by exposure of a work in such unfinished form. Is this, he asks, too intimate a revelation of the filmmaker in his fragility and nakedness? Or does the film's unfinished state mirror Shariffe's approach to film itself as a medium in flux? Does it merely evoke more keenly an approach to cinema as what Eiman Hussein calls Shariffe's modernist "tapestry" of image, music, painting, poetry, sound, movement, noise? Does it highlight more sharply his films" conditions of emergence in states of displacement; does it make manifest in generative ways the "infinity of tactics" mobilized, suggests Shariffe's anthropologist friend and collaborator, Sondra Hale, by artists experimenting in extraterritorial locations with new relationships to a sense of home (Hale, 1996)?

These questions of the ethics, aesthetics and historicity of the unfinished film as one amongst many archival fragments from Shariffe's deterritorialised life are addressed in the two further initiatives to which we now finally turn. In summer 2021, funding was granted by King's College London for a student research project on Shariffe's archive. Deem bin Jumayd, Niya Namfua and Mai Nguyen were recruited to help assemble and

"Cinema is composed of fragments
not only in the sense of its multiple sequences that are strung together,
but also in its framing of an image cut from a larger whole,
and again in its positioning of the camera which can never be a totalizing point of view
but only the multiplication of infinite points of view on an event.
That is, in every act of recording, cinema demonstrates the opposite,
the impossibility of documentation,
revealing incompletion as its founding condition."

Janet Harbord, *Ex-Centric Cinema*

In July 2021, we (Deem, Niya and Mai) joined Erica Carter and Laurence Kent on this project

Figures 4 and 5. Source: *Towards a Cinema of the Incomplete: A Video Essay on Hussein Shariffe's* Of Dust and Rubies

archive the digital artefacts amassed during our twelve months of previous research on Shariffe. At what became, despite pandemic conditions, an exhilarating live event, the Arsenal's September 2021 *Archival assembly #1* in Berlin, bin Jumayd, Namfua and Nguyen presented their collaborative *Towards a Cinema of the Incomplete: A Video Essay on Hussein Shariffe's* Of Dust and Rubies.

The essay intercuts fragments from *Of Dust and Rubies* with citations from the film's poem cycle, other archive documents, and recorded conversations amongst the project group. Its title

gestures to reflections from the film scholar Janet Harbord that are quoted in an opening montage. In her book *Ex-Centric Cinema*, Harbord draws on the philosophy of Giorgio Agamben to explore films resonant of "[a]n unlived history, that is… not confined to a parallel track or the discrete margins of existence but operates forcefully in giving contour to the life that is lived, to the cinema that has come to be". In Harbord's account, the "cinema that we have" appears as a social machine or *dispositif* framed by the container logic of narrative or genre conventions, and by the industrial strictures of copyright law, global production and market norms (Harbord, 2016: 2). Those normative arrangements, suggests Harbord, banish to the realm of the "ex-centric" films by amateur, experimental and otherwise "unauthorized" practitioners of the past. Of unfinished films, she suggests that these are by contrast exemplary of an unauthorized shadow that haunts the object we call cinema, and whose fragmentary condition reveals an ontological feature that is in fact immanent to the film medium. Harbord continues:

> Cinema is composed of fragments not only in the sense of its multiple sequences that are strung together, but also in its framing of an image cut from a larger whole, and again in its positioning of the camera which can never be a totalizing point of view but only the multiplication of infinite points of view on an event. That is, in every act of recording, cinema demonstrates the….impossibility of documentation, revealing incompletion as its founding condition (Harbord, 2016: 47).

Framing *Towards a Cinema of the Incomplete* with this citation from Harbord, Bin Jumayd, Namfua and Nguyen explore in their essay the quotation's pertinence to archive work on Shariffe's *Of Dust and Rubies*. The essay's slow pace enables close attention to what Harbord might term Shariffe's 'unauthorized' experimental aesthetic. "I see myself essentially as a painter," wrote Shariffe, "but I also come to life as a filmmaker" (Khalid, 2020). This intermedial commitment is visible

Figure 5. Source: *Of Dust and Rubies: Letters from Abroad*

in painterly images of the sea that blur into abstract patterns of reflections and hidden colours; or camera tilts upward to a setting sun, vibrant lens flares dancing on the image surface as Shariffe searches for the perfect contingent effect of light. While these passages reveal *Of Dust and Rubies* as structured around the interlinked visual logics of modernist collage and abstraction, and arabesque mosaic, repetition, scrolling and intersecting line, the film's debt to lyric poetry is visible in travelling shots and montage sequences whose rhythms mimic the cadences of its poetic antecedents. The "grassy meadow of pomegranates/With ripe branches, moist, joyful" of poet Mohammed el Mekki Ibrahim's "My People" thus becomes in Shariffe's rendering a playful montage of fruit trees whose "branches and leaves tremble in the breeze and glitter when touched by the light"; the "suns that have fallen" in Mohammed al Faitory's lament for a tyrannised people, "Sacred Dust", assumes visual form meanwhile as a "shivering sea", with circles of light "resembling quivering suns" (Shariffe, n.d)[8.]

Philosophically then, Shariffe's film appears in *Towards a Cinema of the Incomplete* as aligned with the "aesthetic of open-endedness" that the unfinished film embodies (Harbord, 2016: 25). The questions posed in our project of the ethics and politics of archive work with *Of Dust and Rubies* are by contrast less satisfactorily addressed in Harbord's account. 'Ex-centric' cinema is for Har-

bord an untimely phenomenon that, while it exhibits a potential to grasp realisable futures, also sustains in what she calls its "impotentiality"—its refusal of absorption within the cinematic machine—a "resistance" to immediate imperatives "to be productive, compliant and identifiable as subjects within a system" (Harbord, 2016: 25).

Harbord's observations have clear purchase for the minor forms that are the "underbelly" of commercial cinema cultures in the Global North (Harbord, 2016: 25). They have a more troubling resonance in postcolonial or exile cinemas caught in too many instances between contemporary states of industrial fragmentation, economic precarity and violent dispossession, and in the case of historical film, decay, dispersal and loss. The dialectic of absorption and expulsion that Harbord identifies in western cinema cultures shapes differently independent cinemas of the South that emerge from their inception—and this most poignantly, in the context of this current article, in contemporary Sudan— into contexts of infrastructural fragility, artistic compromise, and political violence. Harbord's observations on the archive, too, downplay the ambivalences of the Foucauldian account on which she draws: so there is little in her book on what Foucault terms the archive's heterotopic quality—the state of joyful disorder in the archive that fosters unforeseen kinships amongst artefacts and bodies—and arguably too much on the archive's disciplinary functions: its arrest of historical time, its spatial closure as a "scrap heap" that suspends film in a state of unbelonging and loss (Harbord, 2016: 25).

We hope to have shown by contrast in this article the capacity of archive work to deploy exactly that "infinity of tactics" which is for Sondra Hale the hallmark of exilic practice amongst artists "no longer bound by the "homeland",....nourished by the metaphor of return" and "freed up" to engage, as does Shariffe in *Of Dust and Rubies,* with the exilic hauntings, but also the cultural possibilities of new locales (Hale, 1996: 2). We

have presented a range of projects to repossess and reanimate artefacts "on suspension" in Shariffe's archive, restoring their quality as objects in spatio-temporal transition that gesture ("deictically", we have proposed) backwards to submerged pasts, sideways to unorthodox elective affinities, and forward to future pasts. Our work continues from early 2022 with development work on a bilingual Arabic-English AtoM (Access to Memory) open-source archive combining artefacts from our existing digital repository, Hussein Shariffe's family archive, and newly collected or donated materials. Our plans for an analogue repository allowing public access to Shariffe's physical archive for audiences, researchers and practitioners in the Northeast Africa region remain, like Shariffe's films, "on suspension". In what remains at the time of writing a moment of agonising political turbulence in Sudan, we glimpse both in Shariffe's films, and in the networks of solidarity and friendship generated by work on his archive, a resource nonetheless for the cultural futures to which Shariffe was dedicated, and that endure in his still emergent archive-in-motion. ∎

NOTES

1 Now the National Film and Television School, following renaming in 1982.

2   See also, Dagmar Brunow on migrant archives and women's archive (Brunow, 2017).

3   Cf. Ozgur Cicek on Kurdish cinema as that without national territory (Cicek, 2016)

4   See also, (Woodward, 2003: 2-13); (Mahmoud, 2018: 118).

5   Cf. Fossati, 2018

6   Cf. Brunow on remediation (Brunow, 2017)

7   See also, Fanon, 1994

8   Thank you to Mai Ngyuen for her "Of Dust and Rubies, Shot List" (2021)

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AN INFINITY OF TACTICS. HUSSEIN SHARIFFE'S ARCHIVE IN MOTION

Abstract

The filmmaker, artist and poet Hussein Shariffe died in Egyptian exile in 2005. This article centres on attempts since that date to retrieve, archive, and recirculate his extant film works. It presents a film artist whose oeuvre is at once singular in its visual and aural language, resonant of specifically Sudanese histories of an exile and diaspora cinema of mobility, and productive of an archive practice whose point of departure is the very transience of its most cherished objects. We discuss in this context the state of incompletion in which many of his films remain suspended, and analyse curatorial approaches that unlock the potential of such unfinished works to unlock the unrealised potentials of Shariffe's dispersed and exilic archive. We further outline our plans for an open source archive of Shariffe's film oeuvre. That archive remains under construction at the time of writing—so this article itself, analogously to Shariffe's unfinished films, remains in a state of incompletion, drawing what must be for now only interim conclusions, but pointing towards a future of creative uncertainty for his film oeuvre, with all the fears and hopes that such fragile futurity holds.

Key words

Hussein Shariffe; Living archive; Unfinished film; Deixis; Sudanese film; Exile; Diaspora.

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UNA INFINIDAD DE TÁCTICAS. EL ARCHIVO EN MOVIMIENTO DE HUSSEIN SHARIFFE

Resumen

El cineasta, artista y poeta Hussein Shariffe murió en el exilio en Egipto en 2005. El presente artículo se centra en los intentos realizados desde entonces por reunir, archivar y volver a poner en circulación las obras cinematográficas que aún se conservan de él. Presenta a un artista cinematográfico cuya obra destaca por emplear un lenguaje audiovisual particular, remitir a historias específicamente sudanesas de un cine de movilidad del exilio y la diáspora y generar una práctica de archivo cuyo punto de partida es la propia transitoriedad de sus objetos más preciados. En ese contexto, repasamos el estado inacabado en el que muchas de sus películas permanecen suspendidas, y analizamos perspectivas curatoriales que dan rienda suelta al potencial que esas obras inacabadas tienen para, a su vez, dar rienda suelta a los potenciales del archivo disgregado de exilio de Shariffe. Más adelante resumimos nuestro plan de creación de un archivo abierto de la obra cinematográfica de Shariffe. Durante la redacción de este artículo, el archivo sigue en construcción, de modo que este mismo artículo, de forma análoga a las películas inacabadas de Shariffe, permanece en estado inacabado, extrayendo lo que por ahora deben ser tan sólo conclusiones provisionales, pero apuntando a un futuro de incertidumbre creativa para su obra cinematográfica, con todos los temores y esperanzas que alberga un futuro tan frágil.

Palabras clave

Hussein Shariffe; archivo viviente; película inacabada; deixis; cine sudanés; exilio; diáspora.

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USES OF THE ARCHIVE IN SPANISH POST-COLONIAL DOCUMENTARIES*

MIGUEL FERNÁNDEZ LABAYEN

ELENA OROZ

1. COLONIAL IMAGINARIES, ARCHIVES AND POST-COLONIAL DOCUMENTARIES IN SPAIN

Although Spanish colonialism continued right up to the final third of the 20th century, Spain's memory of its colonial past is practically non-existent, particularly in relation to its last outposts in Equatorial Guinea (until 1968) and North Africa (until 1975). In the specific case of cinema, the volume and substance of cultural representations of different colonial regions, historical periods and political developments in metropolitan Spain has been quite uneven. For example, North Africa played a key role in the discourses that triggered the regeneration of the *raza española* (the "Spanish race") during the early 20th century, the Spanish Civil War, and the Franco dictatorship (García Carrión, 2016; Martin-Márquez, 2011), resulting in a visual and cinematic culture that served as a vehicle for nationalist discourses and racial and

gender stereotypes more familiar to the public than those related to Spanish Guinea (Ortega, 2001; Elena, 2010; Martin-Márquez, 2011).

In the contemporary post-colonial context, the country's colonial legacy in Africa has been explored in only a handful of recent Spanish films. It is both significant and indicative that the groundbreaking film *Black Island* (Lejos de África, Cecilia Bartolomé, 1996) was considered a difficult work to analyse, due not only to its complex production and development process but to its status as a kind of orphan piece, making it hard to place in a tradition that it could "dialogue with, break away from, challenge or resist", existing in a territory "unconquered by both the popular imagination and the more prominent academic and cultural discourses" (Ortega, 2001: 87-88).

Two decades later, in a socio-political context in which Spanish colonialism is still absent from school curricula and only just beginning to creep into public debates, there is an increasing number

of audiovisual productions dealing with the colonial legacy in Africa, although some of these take positions aligned with neo-colonial perspectives (Santamaría Colmenero, 2018). Series such as *The Time in Between* (El tiempo entre costuras, Antena 3, 2013-2014) and films such as *Palm Trees in the Snow* (Palmeras en la nieve, Fernando González Molina, 2015), adapted from the novels of the same name by María Dueñas and Luz Gabás, respectively, and animated documentaries like *One Day I Saw 10,000 Elephants* (Un día vi 10.000 elefantes, Alex Guimerà, Juan Pajares, 2015) constitute a selection of stories that Sara Santamaría Colmenero argues "draw on narrative strategies used previously in novels and films about the Spanish Civil War and the Franco dictatorship, with the aim of restoring the public memory of former colonists, justifying their participation in the colonial system and asserting their historical legitimacy" (2018: 447).

In contrast with these offerings imbued with nostalgia and exoticism, in the realm of non-fiction we can find numerous productions that offer a less favourable view of Spanish rule in Guinea, Morocco and the Sahara. These include *Memoria Negra* [Black Memory] (Xavier Montanyà, 2006), *Western Sahara* (Left Hand Rotation, 2013), *El ojo imperativo* [The Imperative Eye] (María Ruido, 2015), *The Impossible Cities* (Las ciudades imposibles, Chus Domínguez, 2018), *Manoliño Nguema* (Antonio Grunfeld Rius, 2019), the webdoc *Provincia 53* (Laura Casielles, 2020) and *Memorias de ultramar* [Overseas Memories] (Carmen Bellas, Alberto Berzosa, 2021), although this is by no means an exhaustive list. Others that could be added include the exhibitions commissioned by Juan Guardiola, such as *Colonia apócrifa* [Apocryphal Colony] (2015) and *Provincia 53. Arte, territorio y descolonización del Sáhara Occidental* [Provnce 53: Art, Territory and the Decolonisation of Western Sahara] (2018), which featured contemporary artistic videos alongside propaganda films.

This boom, associated with the progressive reception and acceptance of post-colonial criticism

THE ARCHIVES, IN THE FORM OF MEMOIRS, ARE PRESENTED AS A MEANS OF ALMOST COMPLETELY TRANSPARENT ACCESS TO THE PAST

in the arts, has only just begun to have an impact on scholarly discussion of the contemporary documentary in Spain (Martin-Márquez, 2011; Cerdán & Fernández Labayen, 2013; Guardiola, 2017). These studies have focused on independent and/or artistic non-fiction and have helped to anchor the theoretical discussion dealing with these practices and to begin mapping recent documentary production that could be described as post-colonial. Specifically, Guardiola (2017) analyses a selection of works associated with video art that focus on the Latin American context, addressing issues of post-colonial historiography, epistemology, subjectivity and geography.

The aim of this article is to contribute to this field of study with the analysis of three recent documentaries that focus on the asymmetries arising from imperialist logic to examine personal, scientific and/or institutional colonial contexts from a perspective close to post-colonial criticism of the archive. The films analysed here are *África 815* (Pilar Monsell, 2014), a family documentary exploring Orientalist imaginaries associated with Western Sahara; *On the Names of the Goats* (De los nombres de las cabras, Silvia Navarro, Miguel G. Morales, 2019), an essay film about the projections of the colonial imaginary on the Canary Islands; and *A Storm Was Coming* (Anunciarion tormenta, Javier Fernández Vázquez, 2020), a historiographical study of colonial domination over the Bubi people in Equatorial Guinea.. These films all belong to the aforementioned list of documentaries that tie in with post-colonial theory[1] and their distribution has occupied an interstitial space between independent documentary circuits and museums (Guardiola, 2017). This is certainly

the case of África 815, which was subsequently adapted for exhibition at the Virreina Centre de la Imatge in Barcelona under the title África 815: Paraíso perdido [Africa 815: Paradise Lost] (2017), while *On the Names of the Goats* is a successor to a video installation titled *Torrente de piedra quemada* [Torrent of Burnt Stone] (2017), which also drew on the film and audio archives of the Canarian anthropologist Diego Cuscoy.

In theoretical terms, this study adopts the concise definition of post-colonial cinema proposed by Sandra Ponzanesi (2017), as a conceptual space that opens up occluded frames and proposes an engagement with the visual that is de-colonised, becoming a mode of relational representation to make room for what are often repressed, omitted or unofficial histories, both of nations and of subaltern communities or groups. On the other hand, the archive is conceptualised here in line with contemporary approaches inspired by the "archival turn", which understand colonial archives as techno-social devices that at once produce and exclude cultural facts and identities (Stoler, 2002, 2009). Based on the foundational work of Michel Foucault (2002) and Jacques Derrida (1995), these perspectives take the archive as a concept that not only regulates historical discourses and establishes epistemic hierarchies, but also houses "records of uncertainty" (Stoler, 2009) about their own status. In short, these perspectives highlight the fact that the colonial archive constitutes a conceptually privileged space for subversive readings that can shed light on the gaps in history, give them form, and offer possible opposing views (Burton, 2006; Stoler, 2002 and 2009; Amad, 2010).

With this conceptual framework, the analysis offered here focuses on the creative uses of the archive that are visible in the films—their arrangement and conversion into filmic material— and on the representations of colonial otherness present in the footage used, based on persistent colonial tropes intended to naturalise racial, national and gender differences (Shohat, 1991). These readings also facilitate the exploration of what Paula Amad (2013) calls "the history of colonial structures of seeing" as a way of understanding and questioning violent formulas of domination and their visual expression in cinema and photography.

2. *ÁFRICA 815*: THE OTHER IN THE FAMILY ARCHIVE

Pilar Monsell's first feature film, África 815, explores the life of her father, Manuel Monsell, focusing on his homosexual relationships, chiefly with Maghrebi men during his military service in the Sahara in 1964. The director alternates interviews with her father at his seaside apartment in Málaga with archive material consisting of Manuel's memoirs, family albums, snapshots stored in boxes and Super-8 films of his parent's travels. As the filmmaker herself describes it, the film functions as "a genealogy of a family's colonial romanticism" (personal interview, 2 November 2021), taking an approach to her father's past as a formula for making sense of his decisions.

The film begins with a prologue showing moving images of the sea, while Monsell tells his daughter about a dream he had about the destruction of Barcelona, the city where she lives. This is followed by some Super-8 footage of a seagull flying, of a young Manuel in a swimsuit on the beach with one of his children in his arms, and of Manuel sleeping in his bed in Málaga. His memoirs are then presented in a frontal view on screen (Figure 1), as an elaborately bound book bearing his name and the title of the text: *My Memoirs. Volume II, 1957-1976. La vie en rose*. Next, we see the director's hands leafing through the book, passing over the copyright registration certificate, the table of contents, and a few other pages. This image fades to black and we hear Monsell herself reading in a voice-over: "I joined the army on the 5th of March 1964: the day of my liberation." At the end of this sentence, a photo of a 27-year-old Manuel appears, marching as the first in a long

Figure 1. Visualisation of father's memoirs in *África 815*

line of Spanish soldiers in the desert. The voice-over continues to discuss Manuel's experience of "liberation": "My number was 815; my destination: El Aaiún, Sahara. I was overjoyed because all my wishes had come true: to go as far away as possible from Madrid and from home, to see the African continent and make use of my medical degree for the first time."

In these first minutes there is a careful insertion and arrangement of personal archives and, by extension, archives of the Monsell family. The archives, in the form of memoirs, are presented as a means of almost completely transparent access to the past. It is a past that functions as a continuous present for the audience, who gradually become aware of Manuel's other desires: to be surrounded by attractive young men and be able to engage in sexual relations with them. In this return to a formative period and to his everyday experiences in Africa, the film draws us into Monsell's memories, which give meaning to his love life, professional life, and of course, family life. By playing this way with the written and visual texts from Manuel's past and his statements in the present, we come to see how he made use of his professional authority (physician), his greater life experience (27 years old when he arrived in the Sahara, some six years older than most of his companions) and his hegemonic racial and social

position (white and wealthy, compared to the lower-class Moroccan youths he mixed with) to exploit this colonial destination for sexual purposes.

The function of the archive here is that identified by Derrida (1995: 36): "The archive is not, we repeat, a question of the past. […] It is a question of the future, the question of the future itself, the question of a response, of a promise and of a responsibility for tomorrow." It is with this objective that Monsell wrote, recorded, bound and distributed his various volumes of memoirs, in the hope, as he states in the dedication in Volume 3, that his three children would read them. This future dimension of the archive is documented by the director, who organises this legacy as a kind of personal response to the family breakdown described in her father's diaries.

At the same time, through a meticulous selection of materials, the film involves us in Manuel's experiences, which function as surprising revelations for the viewer, a series of sexual and family histories that appeal for our response. The intention of this appeal, operating through the director's reading of excerpts from the memoirs, is not so that we might pass judgement on his life, but to position us as an audience sympathetic to a man who on several occasions recognises his own failure. This sensation is accentuated all the more by the contrast between the wanderings and experiences of the young Manuel, with an identity in constant physical and emotional flux—in his travels around Africa, but also when with his wife—and the sedentary existence of Manuel today, now old and practically immobile in his seaside home.

Unsurprisingly, previous studies of the film have identified the formal and narrative strategies developed by the filmmaker as key to the construction of the tension between proximity and distance for her father and the issues explored

(Oroz, 2017; Thomas, 2020). The director operates as an intermediary for the spectator and as a character, albeit a supporting one, in Manuel's Orientalist queer story. As its synopsis suggests, the film is constructed around Pilar's encounter with "the paradise lost to which he will attempt to return" (Monsell, 2015). The colonial trope of the paradise lost is reinforced by the air of reverie that pervades the film, from the dreams of the old Manuel that begin and end the film to the fanciful nature of his life goals. Manuel's liberation in the Sahara, where he gives free rein to his homosexual passions, ties in with what José Esteban Muñoz (2009), in his reconsideration of post-Stonewall queering processes since the late 1960s, would describe as a "utopian feeling" and "futurity" generated by queerness. It is tempting to read Manuel's African period as a collective sexual explosion, a kind of homoerotic celebration outside the patriarchal heterosexuality of Francoism, although culturally and socially tolerated within certain expressive limits (Martin-Márquez, 2011). However, Manuel's subsequent cloistered life upends this possibility and confines it to the space of individual utopia, as a possible example of the breakdown of the homosexual dream and of Spanish-African coexistence in the body of the Spanish nation.

It is in these terms that Gustau Nerín (2017) has criticised the film for naturalising the position of "colonial and economic domination" of the protagonist, a victim of the homophobic Spanish establishment, while "rendering the submission of the Saharans invisible." This reading questions the film's critical capacity as a post-colonial artefact. In other words, in this story about the family institution, it is important to evaluate the place given to those *other* subjects: the friends and lovers in whom the colonial tensions and dynamics were perpetuated.

On the narrative level, as noted above, the documentary plays with Manuel's transnational odyssey, beginning in 1964 with his wild youthful passions, continuing in the 1970s with the silent, distanced trips he made with his wife, and culminating in the mutual exploitation and disappointment with his Maghrebi lovers in the 1980s, as a prelude to his solitude and progressive physical decline. In filmic terms, this transnational mobility is refilmed by Pilar Monsell by capturing and reframing images of her father. In these snapshots—showing Manuel posing and smiling, confident, surrounded by colleagues, patients and friends—we find an extension of colonial visual practices that place Moroccan boys in a scene with camels, sand dunes and palm trees serving as an exotic background (Figure 2). As Sarah Thomas (2020) suggests in her analysis of the film, the men accompanying Manuel look at the camera in a way that seems to challenge the spectator. This constitutes an echo of what Paula Amad calls "visual riposte", referring to the visual response of the colonised bodies captured by Monsell's cameras, embodying an "ethical intent to return, or at least to interrogate, the gaze" (2013: 52). The attention that the filmmaker gives to these moments exposes the plurality of gazes, ranging from Manuel's blissful happiness to the less enthusiastic and more guarded expressions of the young men who embrace him. This triangulation of gazes—photographed subjects, camera and spectators— gives rise to a unique process of recognition that contains a high level of estrangement literally generated by what Sara Ahmed (2000) calls "the encounter with the stranger" (or foreigner). These encounters, which as Ahmed notes never occur on equal or harmonious terms, unleash a series of tensions beginning with sexual identity (Manuel's) and family identity (Pilar and Manuel's) and ending with the economic, romantic and racial conflicts arising from Manuel's asymmetrical social and emotional relationships with his Maghrebi lovers. It is in this sense that the film functions as a post-colonial documentary and invites us to reflect on how colonialism operates, its permeability and complexity when articulating any stable identity based on the colonial

Figure 2. Asymmetries of the colonial gaze in *África 815*

project. As Ahmed suggests, "we need to ask how contemporary modes of proximity reopen prior histories of encounter" (2000: 13). In this sense, the work on the family archive in África 815 facilitates a reassessment of the coding and construction of these boundaries between personal, family and stranger that are founded on Orientalist tropes of colonial otherness.

3. *ON THE NAMES OF THE GOATS*: MEDIA ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE ENCOUNTER WITH OTHERNESS

On the Names of the Goats is a documentary constructed exclusively on the basis of film footage, photographs and audio recordings of various kinds, compiled over two years through a laborious search for colonial images associated with the Canary Islands in Spanish and international private and public archives. While in the context of colonial encounters Monsell explores visual technologies primarily in order to problematise subjectivity from an intersectional perspective, Navarro and Morales stress the role they play in the construction of a "specular antagonism" (Amad, 2013: 50). The film juxtaposes audio and visual recordings without clearly identifying sources or dates, offering a multi-layered story that somewhat cryptically expresses a wide range of discourses

on Canarian cultural identity—its consolidations and resignifications—based on the prevailing colonial logic in political and scientific discourse.

The unifying theme is the audio and visual recordings taken by the archaeologist and anthropologist Diego Cuscoy (1907-1987), whose studies of the Canary Islands' Indigenous Guanche people and rural society had a huge impact on the archipelago's collective imaginary (Gil Hernández, 2021). As Silvia Navarro points out (personal interview, 17 November 2021), Cuscoy's research was immersed in a complex discourse marked by fantasies about the primitive Other. In his first audio recording, he characterises himself as a kind of adventurer-explorer, an image that inevitably evokes the idea of the bearer of civilisation and truth (Fanon, 1967: 188). While we see shots of his team exploring caves, he tells us in a voice-over:

> For me, archaeology has never been an end but a means. What has concerned me is the human experience of this man who preceded us. The pre-Hispanic past of the Canary Islands seemed enthralling to me [...]. It is about bringing two worlds face to face: the world of the Conquistadors and the world of the Aboriginals.

This disjunction between Indigenous and coloniser has already been hinted at in the opening sequence, which suggests a continuum between colonialism and Cuscoy's scientific praxis, as he describes his purpose as being to "demonstrate the powerful force of the ways of life of the Guanches and how they resisted the pressure of other ways that were strange to them" (Gil Hernández, 2021: 232). The film begins with a series of black-and-white shots taken from the sea that highlight the isolated nature of the island and its rugged terrain. This is followed by titles from a news program alternating with shots from a fiction film about the conquest of the Americas. While the images evoke the colonial trope of a *terra incognita*, the intertitles in English point out how the conquest of what had once been virgin territory resulted in a radical transformation in the name of progress, where

the ancient dwellings of the Guanches (the caves) were replaced with architectural constructions.

Cuscoy's interviews and his choice of informants—mostly goatherds, an occupation invariably associated with the image of the Guanche—reflect the exoticism that the anthropologist Fernando Estévez González (2011) suggests has characterised ethnographic approaches to the archipelago: "Since the Conquest, the numerous travellers who have come to the islands, upon finding nothing appealing in the 'living' and 'real' Canaries, have quenched their thirst for the exotic with the 'dead' and 'imagined' Aboriginals" (Estévez González, 2011: 151). Cuscoy's audio recordings convey some vagueness and inconsistency in the contemporary goatherds' responses to questions about the diet, religious beliefs and funeral rites of the Guanches. However, as the film suggests, it is the very same data collection techniques—interviews and visual documentation of customs, sometimes performed specifically for the camera[2]—that produce a kind of *animation* or *updating* of the object/subject of study, so that the goatherds at once confirm and become a form of surviving primitive otherness in the modern world. Illustrative in this sense are the introductions/ classifications that Cuscoy offers of his interviewees, emphasising their physiognomy and character, or their tools and larders located in caves. In consonance with recent observations by Roberto Gil Hernández about the Guanche imaginary, the film suggests that they do not exist but "persist in the form of feelings that are transferred between bodies and objects that still evoke their memory" (2021: 223).

Similarly, the compiled and remixed visual archives, which presumably cover a period from 1920 through to the 1970s, document goatherds and peasants of both sexes carrying out their everyday tasks, as well as objects that evoke the memory of their *ancestors*, found in archaeological excavations (ceramics, mummies and skulls) and subsequently catalogued and exhibited. The phantasmal quality of these vestiges is underscored by the sporadic insertion of decaying film footage (Figure 3) and an electronic soundtrack that adds a sense of eeriness to the archival material.

The archaeological imaginary is foregrounded after another of Cuscoy's monologues about the impact that the arrival of Sabino Berthelot (1794-1880) had on the ethnographic study of the Canary Islands, after the "discovery of Cro-Magnon man in 1868 and the observation of the similarity between Cro-Magnons and the Guanches." Indeed, as Estévez González (2011) points out, it was thanks to his work that Canarian ethnography was founded on raciology and the supposed advances of craniometric techniques, thereby adopting the teleological, racial and national principles of modernity. As an ironic comment, the film includes an interview Cuscoy conducted with a goatherd whom he asks to list the names they use to classify different types of goats (hence the film's title), a taxonomy that proves amusing for its precision and length. Superimposed over the list is a series of frontal shots of goatherds and banana pickers captured by a voyeuristic camera, inviting us to decode their physiognomy in an echo of a previous shot (Figure 4) accompanied by a voice-over of an announcer in an old Spanish newsreel asserting that "among these women [female workers] we can see good examples of the primitive race." This sequence not only exemplifies how the visual representation of racial and colonial Others was defined by a logic drawn from zoology (Amad, 2013; Burton & Mawami, 2020), but also (like Monsell's film) offers a series of "visual responses" characteristic of post-colonial intellectual and artistic approaches to such archives, concerned with identifying moments when the subjects consciously and defiantly return or rebuff the colonial gaze, which have been interpreted as expressions of subaltern scopic agency (Amad, 2013: 56).

As discussed above, this documentary presents the Guanches as a colonial trope based on
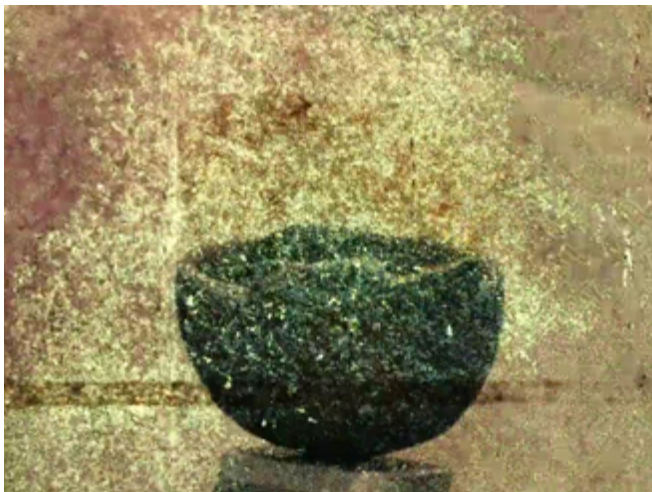
Above. Figure 3. Phantasmal quality of Guanche remains in *On the Names of the Goats*
Below. Figure 4. Racial taxonomies in *On the Names of the Goats*

the complex positioning of the archipelago in the early period of Spanish/European colonialism in the 15th century and its consolidation in the 19th century thanks to anthropology. The final pillar in this articulation of colonialism would be the Franco dictatorship's *"Segunda Conquista de Canarias"*, a "second conquest" based on increased economic and political intervention by the Spanish State, cultural standardisation and a revival of the pre-colonial past for the purposes of Spanish ultranationalism (Gil Hernández, 2021). The film includes audio recordings of the dictatorship's first propaganda material, which, founded on the Falangist principle of a destiny united by a global

mission, depicts a singular vision of the nation's past by positioning the archipelago as an intersection between the African continent and the Americas on the basis of its crops:

> Tomatoes and bananas, red and yellow, are the Spanish flag on the islands. The Canarian tomato brought by our Conquistadors from the Americas […]. Cochineal provided by our African empire.

Through this propaganda presented in its final section, the film renders explicit the connotations of gender typical of imperialist rhetoric (Shohat, 1991), rife with metaphors such as the *fertility* of the occupied land thanks to the heroic and patriotic intervention of the Spanish, and of course the *spiritual mission* of Spanish expansionism based on repeated references to the Virgin of Candelaria, embraced as a patron by the obscure, polysemic *primitive* Guanches regardless of the obvious contradictions with other deities. While at the beginning of the film Cuscoy is introduced emerging from a cave (presumably unveiling the enigmas of the mysterious native), the final shot shows him entering another grotto, hinting at the uncertain and specular nature of his project. At the same time, the filmmakers expose the colonial archive—anchored here at the intersections between anthropology, popular culture and nationalism—as a space that can be challenged (Stoler, 2009), while also providing evidence, paraphrasing Ella Shohat (1991), of the implicitly archaeological function of visual technologies for deciphering buried civilisations.

4. *A STORM WAS COMING*: BIAS OF THE ARCHIVE AND ORAL COUNTER-MEMORY

Our final object of study is *A Storm Was Coming*, a film that arose out of Javier Fernández Vázquez's interest in visual anthropology and historical memory in Spain (Maldonado, 2020). The latter is a topic he had explored previously in his films as part of the Los Hijos collective, together with Natalia Marín and Luis López Carrasco, such as

Figures 5 and 6. Estrangement effects of the archive in *A Storm Was Coming*

Los Materiales [The Materials] (2009), a reflexive documentary that depicts the futile attempts of filmmakers to collect definitive memories of the Spanish Civil War (Cerdán, Fernández Labayen, 2017) and *Enero, 2012 o la apoteosis de Isabel la Católica* [January 2012 or the Apotheosis of Isabella the Catholic Queen] (2012), a film included in Guardiola's study mapping post-colonial cinema in Spanish (Guardiola, 2017). The collective would return to the theme of Spanish colonialism in Árboles [Trees] (2013), which recounts legends of resistance by the Bubi people, as well as assimilation measures in the form of missions, prisons, and the construction of cities.

Fernández Vázquez's first feature film on his own interrogates Spanish colonialism in Equatorial Guinea, a process involving a policy of segregation that began in the second half of the 19th century and came to an end upon independence in 1968. The film focuses on a paradigmatic episode in Spain's violent repression of the Bubi people (García Cantús, 2008; Siale Djangany, 2016) on the island of Fernando Poo (now Bioko): the capture and death, under suspicious circumstances, of King Esáasi Eweera (1899-1904) due to his refusal to submit to Spanish authority. After an introduction that describes the use of force by Claretian missionaries in 1882—carried out by the *krumanes* (African labourers in Spain's service)—

to get the Bubi to join the mission, we are shown a series of photos from the General Archives of the Administration, carefully composed to give particular emphasis to the symmetry of the space, its labyrinthine nature and the vast quantity of documents it holds. A post-production effect has added sound to the image of a passageway (Figure 5), giving the whole institution a spectral quality: the archives as the structure of the modern-colonial State. A slow fade-in from white reveals a dossier titled "File 59, Detention and Death of Bokuto Sas" containing the official documentation of the case. This visual effect will be repeated every time we are shown archive photographs of the scenes of the case (Figure 6), such as the mission in Concepción or the hospital and dungeon at the port of Malabo, which are gradually superimposed over images of them today, hinting at the oblivion that casts a shadow over this episode of history and, by extension, over Spanish colonialism in general.

With these manipulations, as simple as they are effective, the shots establish an approach to historical documents in line with the aforementioned post-colonial perspective as described by Stoler (2009), applied precisely to the bureaucratic archives of the colonial State. As Stoler suggests, any examination of the complex government technologies inscribed in the archive requires a consideration of the biased nature of the records,

identifying the possibilities of enunciation, the endorsement of certain narratives, the repetition of testimonies along the chain of command and the authorities that validate the production of the archive itself (Stoler, 2009: 21). In short, as Foucault (2002) would point out, it requires decoding the system for what can be expressed.

Whenever the file is presented, its content is recited word-for-word by different Spanish actors, recorded in a studio on the director's instructions. Each actor gives a voice to one of the colonial authorities who prepared the reports: the Civil Guard, the governor, the court official for the Spanish Territories, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in an effort to clarify the circumstances of Eweera's death and the presumable discontent of the Bubi. These reports, as Siale Djangany (2016: 181) argues, express a "rhetoric of dissimulation and the lyricism of bad taste" exhibited by the Spanish authorities on the island as a prerequisite for their impunity. Fernández Vázquez has suggested that these documents can be read as "the script for the cover-up of a crime" (Maldonado, 2020). The film exposes the contradictions between the testimonies, the invalidation of one authority to the benefit of another, and the absence of key witnesses, such as the African corporal of the Civil Guard who arrested Eweera. What Stoler calls the "hierarchy of credibility" (2009: 23) is constructed here on the basis of absences, inconsistencies and misrepresentations aimed at protecting the political and religious authorities, concealing the violence and the selective, punitive extermination of the Bubi.

Towards the end, a title informs us of a direct consequence of this episode: the creation of the Organic Statute of the Local Administration (1904), establishing that "the natives may be required to work for the public administration." This would be just one clause in a new law that established the *Patronato de Indígenas* to manage the workforce, placing the natives under the protection and guidance of the Claretian Missions (García Cantús, 2008). While the prologue already foreshadowed the prominent role played by the Claretians in the assimilation of the Bubi (through religious submission in order to integrate them into the system of production), the inclusion of an excerpt from the Hermic Films production *Una cruz en la selva* [A Cross in the Jungle] (Manuel Hernández Sanjuán, 1946) reinforces this idea, with the pompous voice-over describing the missionaries as "the vanguard of our spiritual empire in the world."

In addition to examining the production of the archives and their effects, *A Storm Was Coming* contrasts the reading of the files against sequences that document the oral memory of the Bubi people. The film includes the agreement reached with two of the participants: the filmmaker can record their voices, but not their images; instead, he uses shots of the locations where the main events took place. This collage of overlapping memories—which at times, we can infer, are recalled collectively—undermines the colonial narrative. The recount is filled with details that call into question the official version, underscoring the punitive nature of the king's death and the consequences of a repression whose violence intensified in 1910 (García Cantús, 2008): a policy of silence and erasure. The absence of images of the interviewees extends to a meticulous use of photographic archives characteristic of post-colonial readings, which simultaneously affirm and deny the colonial gaze for the contemporary audience. In this way, the photographs documenting the subjugation of the population are shown for only a few frames before suddenly fading to black. If, as Amad ultimately suggests (2013: 64), the "returned gaze" is the effect of certain modes of seeing by a historically and/or racially distanced spectator, the director undermines this mitigating possibility that the archive could offer.

In short, while revealing how the Spanish colonial State, which at the beginning of the 20th century still had to be propped up, effectively in-

formed personal memories, this film presents itself as an archive of alternative oral testimonies that could serve to assert future collective narratives. Indeed, Fernández has identified symbolic reparation as an objective of his project (Maldonado, 2020), expressed in a final gesture of transmission of a subaltern memory that has hitherto been denied: the philologist Justo Bolekia, a participant in the collective storytelling, together with his daughter, both looking at the camera and reading a poem written in Bubi that recounts an alternative version of Eweera's death.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Despite the geographical and historical diversity of the Spanish imperialist narratives explored in the films analysed here, all share a concern with presenting colonial archives—private, scientific or institutional—as complex technologies of power, subjugation and exclusion. These films reveal the painful histories resulting from colonial modernity: the Orientalist imaginary as a persistent feature of coloniality, the epistemic violence that characterises traditional ethnography, and the conquest and repression of local cultures.

As documentaries classified here as post-colonial, their approach to the archive involves the simultaneous consideration of documents as sources and as objects, as "epistemological experiments" that reveal and conceal illegitimate facts and knowledge (Stoler, 2009: 87). In exploring this duality, the films identify a series of traditional colonial tropes—paradise lost, *terra incognita*, the primitive savage—constructed on the basis of intractable intersections between race, gender and sexuality, and expose their visual sources by seeking signs of resistance against the colonial gaze that are not always possible. On the other hand, all three films shed light on the elisions, misrepresentations and contradictions present in the archives to show how official, national and personal histories are necessarily founded on these

inconsistencies (Burton, 2006: 2) in their articulation of a stable identity nevertheless based on unresolved conflicts. Rather than documenting the past, these films stress how processes of knowledge transfer mediated by the archive have both personal and social echoes in the present.

These approaches to the archive—resulting from research carried out over more than two years—could also be thought of as "self-conscious ethnographies" (Burton, 2006: 6) that inscribe their encounter with the archive onto the filmic text as an experience that is socio-political, but also physical and emotional. All three films expose the materiality of the documents and/or their location as an inextricable feature of the history that the archive may tell. At the same time, their strategies of enunciation/conversion—specifically, of written and/or oral records—hint at a position that is *a priori* distanced yet open to complex emotional inflections. While this is clear in Monsell's reading of her father's memoirs and in Cuscoy's own reflexive observations on his scientific praxis, it is also discernible in the disruptions introduced by Fernández in his orchestration of the voices representing the colonial authorities.

The heterogeneity and reflexivity of these films reverse the colonial imaginary's occlusion or its neo-colonial reactivation in Spain, participating in an expansion of the archive through a post-colonial gaze—entailing the revelation of sources that were hitherto practically unknown—to trigger debates in the present about race, sexuality, national identity and political memory whose roots can be traced back to violent colonial encounters. ∎

NOTES

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1 In addition, the three films are directed by filmmakers of the same generation, all having been born in the early years of the Spanish transition to democracy: 1978 (Morales), 1979 (Monsell), 1980 (Fernández) and 1986 (Navarro). Their production processes therefore share an interest in the construction of memory and colonial history mentioned above.

2 This refers particularly to a recording taken by Cuscoy of a woman in a patio making and painting an earthenware jar *for the camera*, although the creation process shown is not actually the traditional method (personal interview with Silvia Navarro, 17 November 2021).

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USES OF THE ARCHIVE IN SPANISH POST-COLONIAL DOCUMENTARIES

Abstract

This article analyses a series of recent documentaries articulated from archival material linked to Spanish colonial processes and imaginaries in the Sahara, Equatorial Guinea and the Canary Islands, contributing to the limited debates on Spanish postcolonial documentary. Specifically, it focuses on *Africa 815* (Pilar Monsell, 2014), *De los nombres de las cabras* (Silvia Navarro Martín and Miguel G. Morales, 2019) and *Anunciaron tormenta* (Javier Fernández Vázquez, 2020). This research examines the creative approach to various archives and colonial tropes to address how these documentaries interrogate history and the imperialist structures of vision and knowledge. Within this history, these films take institutional and personal documents as epistemological experiments (Stoler, 2009), in which colonial power relations that produce facts, taxonomies and cultural identities are inscribed.

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USOS DEL ARCHIVO EN EL DOCUMENTAL POSTCOLONIAL ESPAÑOL

Resumen

Este artículo analiza una serie de documentales recientes articulados a partir de material de archivo vinculado a los procesos e imaginarios coloniales españoles en el Sáhara, Guinea Ecuatorial y Canarias. En concreto, se centra en *África 815* (Pilar Monsell, 2014), *De los nombres de las cabras* (Silvia Navarro Martín, Miguel G. Morales, 2019) y *Anunciaron tormenta* (Javier Fernández Vázquez, 2020). Con el ánimo de contribuir a los escasos debates sobre el documental postcolonial español, esta investigación examina la aproximación creativa a diversos archivos y los tropos coloniales presentes en los mismos, para dirimir cómo estos documentales se interrogan por la historia y las estructuras imperialistas de la visión y el conocimiento. Dentro de esta historia, estos films toman los documentos institucionales y personales como experimentos epistemológicos (Stoler, 2009), en los que se inscriben relaciones de poder coloniales que producen hechos, taxonomías e identidades culturales.

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RECONSTRUCTING THE REPRESSED VISUAL ARCHIVE

Interview with

SUSANA DE SOUSA DIAS

SUSANA DE SOUSA DIAS
RECONSTRUCTING THE REPRESSED VISUAL ARCHIVE[1]

IVÁN VILLARMEA ÁLVAREZ

NIEVES LIMÓN SERRANO

Political events of recent years have dragged Europe back into an age that we once believed we had left completely behind us. The return of fascism and the outbreak of war have totally transformed life on a continent that had seemed to be moving towards the peaceful coexistence of its many different nations. War did not even seem imaginable for most of the European population when Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, just as we were finishing this interview with Susana de Sousa Dias. This Portuguese filmmaker has dedicated much of her career to re-framing images kept in military, corporate and police archives in order to recover the repressed memory of an ominous past that unfortunately seems to be attempting a comeback in the 21st century.

De Sousa Dias's filmmaking career has been defined by a desire to explore the collective memory for the purpose of reconstructing moments that could not be recorded, or worse still, that were intentionally erased, teasing out of the historical narrative a more honest interpretation of what happened. The four films discussed in this conversation have sought to expose blind spots that historians have overlooked or concealed about the long period of the Salazar dictatorship[2] (in the feature films *Still Life* [Natureza Morta, 2005], *48* [2009] and *Obscure Light* [Luz obscura, 2017]), or about the Ford Motor Company's project in the Amazon rainforest in the mid-20th century (in the featurette *Fordlândia Malaise* [2019]). In her reviews of the discourses associated with these

voices of power, de Sousa Dias signals the presence of silenced voices, suppressed images and erased individuals that were always there, however much our idea of the past has been filtered by the narrative of the victors.

Using her hands with an approach that is almost artisanal, Susana de Sousa Dias explores the albums of mug shots of men and women who became political prisoners under the Salazar dictatorship, the propaganda images of the Portuguese colonial wars, and the archives of the Ford Motor Company to offer insightful counternarratives that challenge our perception of the reality constructed in the historical period in question. In the process, this filmmaker not only comes up with new creative strategies for representing these suppressed voices and perspectives, but also points to the epistemic injustice implicit in the fact that these testimonies were never recorded before. In this way, her films achieve two objectives: first, they confront the audience with evidence that they have been subjected to a discourse of the past that is quite unreal; and secondly, they empower those individuals whose experiences have been deemed, in the best of cases, to be of secondary importance. The faces and the words of these individuals are moved into the foreground in all these films and sometimes even take

up most of their content. As the filmmaker herself explains in this conversation, the "right form" for showing this material may be the result of editing processes with spatial or temporal depth in order to confront the audience with certain faces—the faces of the repressed—for long stretches of time. Her films thus posit an idea of cinema as action, but also as an immersive experience.

This way of working is based on meticulous archival research work that prioritises the photographic image as a medium of expression. Taking static images as a starting point, de Sousa Dias carefully re-frames the depersonalised and criminalised gazes of victims of police repression and colonialism in order to give them back their humanity. In this and other ways, her films expose the naturalised oppression of certain narratives that has gone on for decades, while also revealing how subjectivity can be used to recover the memory of an entire country. In the midst of the release of *Journey to the Sun* (Viagem ao Sol, 2021)—a new feature-length documentary co-directed with Ansgar Schaefer—and in the middle of various international trips, Susana de Sousa Dias took time out over several weeks to talk to us about all these gaps in history, and above all, about her personal way of filling them in. ∎

Every archive functions as a tool for thinking, classifying and organising (García Ambruñeiras, 2014), but its discourse can be deconstructed and challenged through subsequent appropriation and reinterpretation. Where does your desire to delve into archive images and re-contextualise them come from?

My interest in archive images began when I started doing research on Portuguese cinema of the 1930s and 1940s, the years when the dictatorship was at the height of its power. I discovered a number of productions I hadn't known about, from propaganda films to simple newsreels. For example, I was struck by the profound paternalistic racism of the films of the *Missão Cinegráfica às Colónias de África* (Film Mission to the African Colonies)[3] of the late 1930s, and the meetings between Portuguese and German youth, with Nazi flags displayed. These images clearly exposed the fascist roots of the regime, but also the construction of an imaginary whose repercussions continue to be felt today. But the real inspiration came later, when I saw the albums of mugshots of political prisoners in the archives of the PIDE/DGS[4] and the images in the army archives (CAVE).[5] In that case it wasn't just surprise or curiosity but shock, something I couldn't explain or verbalise. I can say that I only began to fully comprehend the reasons for my troubled reaction ten years after first seeing those albums. And in the case of the army archives, I realised how extraordinarily repressed the Portuguese Colonial War was, not only in society—that was already clear to me—but also, especially, within my own family. It was a moment when everything was turned upside down, as if time itself had come undone. Those two moments were so disturbing that they changed the direction of my work, and in a certain sense, my life as well.

Do you think your films make subversive use of archives (especially the police archives) to construct an alternative to official discourses?

My films are always based on blind spots and gaps: words that were never recorded or were cut short, images that don't exist, history that was erased. I don't think it's subversive; archives, especially the PIDE/DGS archives, are the ones that subvert the realities they document.

And how do you manage to give cinematic form to that desire?

I've thought a lot about that question. In my films, the cinematic form always arises as the result of a problem. In the case of *Still Life*, it was the problem of wanting to use archive images to show the other side of the dictatorship and having nothing except images produced by the dictatorship itself. So how can I show this other side? In the case of *48*, the problem was the absence of images and documents about the torture. The Italian historian Enzo Traverso (2007) talks about "strong memories", which are supported by the official institutions and the State, and which are more likely to be historicised, as opposed to "weak memories", which are underground, forbidden, concealed. My films operate in the territory of the latter. The desire is not so much to subvert as to reveal something that was hidden, that people don't see or don't talk about. Well, perhaps that is the subversion, using the archive itself to do that, although for me it was a natural decision, as at a certain point I realised that the images reveal much more than they seem to.

Your audiovisual approach to the archives seems to have two main thematic lines: the images of colonial and neo-colonial experiences (in *Still Life* and *Fordlândia Malaise*) and images of the dictatorship's repression (in *Still Life, 48* and *Obscure Light*). What are the differences in your way of working with photographic archives dealing with different themes?

The differences aren't necessarily in the themes of the images, but in the film I'm making itself. For me, it is very important to try to find its form,

because the form *forms* the content. I have to find what I call the "fair form", which is different from one film to the next. I always work with two types of structure: the horizontal, which is visible to the public; and the vertical, the invisible, which constitutes the real basis of the film. The editing is extremely important in my work process because it is the moment when the film is really born. In *Still Life*, for example, I used montage within the shot, editing with visual and spatial depth, which was necessary to get inside the images, to see what there was inside them, to find the signs of a reality that has been concealed. In *48* I also used montage within the shot, only this time with temporal depth: the shot, in this case made by filming images of police files, was altered through duration, taking on different meanings, although visually it is always the same. *Fordlândia Malaise* was a completely different process: I didn't make use of slow motion to work on the archive images, but just the opposite, because I wasn't interested in getting inside them. The way to problematise them involved precisely the opposite process: acceleration. The first part of the film, which is only made up of archive images, has hundreds of shots, many of just a single frame. It is an interstitial editing: what is hidden comes out in the spaces in between.

Beyond working with archive images, some of your films also construct audio archives based on testimonies like the ones we hear in *48* and *Fordlândia Malaise*. What is the function of this type of testimony for you?
Ultimately they function as counter-archives. When we read the criminal proceedings that the imprisonment of political prisoners were based on, what we hear is the voice of the political police, even in the supposed transcriptions of these prisoners' statements. We know they were tortured, but you can't find a single reference to this fact, which is why it is so imperative to collect these testimonies. As for *Fordlândia Malaise*, the

film also explores a case of repression: there is an official history of Henry Ford's project in the Amazon rainforest, and there doesn't seem to be any other. There is a lot of talk of Fordlândia as Henry Ford's utopian city or as a ghost town—it even appears in several online rankings of the ten spookiest abandoned cities. The truth is that one designation is the corollary of the other: once the utopian city project failed, it seems that nothing more than a ghost town can exist there now. That is the dominant episteme—the prevailing orthodoxy. The reality, however, is quite different. The testimonies serve to contradict the official narratives.

Do you think that the way you collect these testimonies can bring out lesser known aspects of historical processes and events dominated by other discourses and narratives?
Definitely. In a sense, it is a way of "brushing history against the grain" as Walter Benjamin put it, finding the echoes of silenced voices.

Jacques Derrida (1997) compared archive images to ghosts of a repressed past. What do you want to show contemporary audiences through your reinterpretation of archive footage of the Salazar dictatorship and the Ford Motor Company?
Basically, the idea is to confront the audience with what has been repressed. And to appeal to them, trying to break down the idea of the passive spectator. In 1976—just two years after the Carnation Revolution—the Portuguese philosopher Eduardo Lourenço wrote a text titled *O fascismo nunca existiu* ["Fascism Never Existed"], where he explained how quickly the word "fascism" was erased from public discourse and memory, leading to the repression of the 48-year dictatorship. When I made *Still Life*, which I finished in 2005, the images I showed had rarely been seen before; people rarely talked about the Colonial War, and even less about the men—not at all about the women—who were jailed as political

prisoners. In 2007, however, images of the dictator came back into the public space and a television contest acclaimed him as the greatest Portuguese figure of all time.[6] Political prisoners, on the other hand, were still absent from the public space; they were still not recognised as historical subjects. This situation has only begun to change in the last few years, but we cannot forget that since the end of the last century a process has been under way to criminalise the revolutionary and anti-fascist tradition. And quite apart from this, there is clearly a problem today with the transmission of memory. That is why my work with these images exposes what isn't thought or talked about. For me, it is very important to let people see these images, not passively, as if we were learning about the history of something that happened in the past and is now over, but actively, immersing spectators in an experience, and at the same time making them think about their own present. In *48*, it was very important to confront the audience with women and men who are prisoners, instead of confronting them with former prisoners, which is actually the current status of the person speaking. By only showing the photographs from the police file, I force the audience—symbolically positioned in the place of the incarcerator, which is an uncomfortable position—to be confronted with the gazes of the prisoners directly, rather than the gazes of ex-prisoners, which is the present condition of those who speak (Figure 1). The images from the Ford archives, on the other hand, refer to a past that in reality is not yet over. They are images of an official history that is still denying everything outside itself. Basically, it always comes down to the same questions: What history is this? Who wrote it? Why is it continuing in our present and influencing our future? How can we fight it? The images are there to make us think.

Figure 1. Photograph of the police file for Maria Antónia Fiadeiro, reproduced in *48* (2009)

CONCEALED ARCHIVES AND EXPOSED ARCHIVES

The digitalisation of images from the past and their availability online has changed our relationship with archives, which have been transformed from concealed archives into exposed archives. This supposed accessibility, however, contrasts with the tendency to find online only what we already knew existed. What kind of artistic strategies do you think can help make the exposed archive visible and give it new meaning to keep it from becoming merely a new version of the concealed archive?

There is a wide range of artistic strategies and ultimately they depend on the artist. On the one hand, it is no longer possible to work with archive images without considering the visual world they are embedded in, because today images also constitute the raw material of the world; they construct it; they act on it. On the other hand, one of the problems with the exposed archive is the idea that everything is visible and anything you don't see doesn't exist. This problem seems to me to be one of the most pressing issues. And also, as you said, only looking for what you already know exists, not because you want to, but because there

is a whole system of algorithms that points you in that direction. Basically, we need to find ways of getting around that system and not falling for simplifications. When I was making *Fordlândia Malaise*, I was quite amazed by the images you could find online, some reproduced by people who had never been to the former company town and others taken by people who had just passed through it. The images are all similar—which is what usually happens with pictures taken by tourists—but in this case not only are they showing a place; they are confirming an idea, the idea that Fordlândia is a ghost town. Yet if you go there, it is impossible not to realise that it is not a ghost town. It is as if the imaginary had already been seized by an external construction, which is dreadful.

During the creative process for your films, how necessary is it for you to study photographs and pictures?

It is absolutely essential: it is necessary to observe an image for a long time in order to understand it beyond the superficial informational level. Sometimes, it seeps into us; there are areas that start to open up to the senses. But it is always necessary to keep digging through its layers, because past one layer you always discover another: inside an image there are always others hiding and it takes time to detect them. There are different ways of looking: it can be active, more analytical observation, a viewing that allows the image to permeate us, or just a quick sideways glance, a kind of glimpse of something that is present and suddenly lights up... In the case of the editing process, sometimes what happens is that I'm not looking directly at the image and I realise that there is a tempo that isn't right. When I was editing *48*, I spent a lot of hours looking at the images, sensing their duration in the tempo of the editing. I could spend a whole day with a single image. But here as well is another important factor: looking not just with your eyes, but with your body as well. And I think also with the hands, which is why I always

edit my own films. I may have occasional editor assistants, but the film is created during the editing process, through a thought that is built using the hands. And then there are also the gestures, hands that don't just type but fluctuate, trying to measure tempos, rhythms, and intensities. The truth is that everything is connected to the tempo and the duration. And to the creation of a space. For years I used to edit in the dark. *Still Life*, *48* and *Obscure Light* were all edited in the dark. The only light I would see when I was editing came from the images themselves. In fact, the darkness extends beyond the editing: at a certain point I started living in the editing room, keeping food there, blankets, a place to lie down. *Fordlândia Malaise*, on the other hand, was edited by daylight.

How do you get access to these archives? What challenges—technical, related to footage content, etc.—have you faced in your work with this *sensitive* material?

There are a lot of challenges, ranging from overcoming the obstacles created by the archives themselves, to trying to obtain the images with the best quality possible, which sometimes is simply impossible, because they were digitalised at a time when telecines clearly didn't meet today's requirements—but as they're already digitalised, nobody is going to look for the originals—or because one part was digitalised and the part still on film automatically becomes inaccessible. It's as if it had ceased to exist, or worse still, as if it had never existed. And the content of the footage is also a very complex question: you need to think about the reason why an image is being shown, how it is going to interact with the other images, what it is doing and how. For example, in *Still Life*, I showed images of the most violent part of the Colonial War. ARTE [the co-producer] asked me to take them out of the film and I refused. At that time nobody talked about the Colonial War, so it was essential to drag these images out from under the carpet and bring them to the public.

On several occasions you have stressed how important it is for you to organise and sequence the photographic material you work with. What selection criteria have you used to construct your films?

I always know the material I'm going to work with very well; I always do some in-depth research before I start the process of constructing the film. I spend a lot of time with the images, looking at them, before selecting them for the editing stage. During editing, I work out which ones are really essential and I try to get the most out of them. In this process, each image is always an active entity: I never know beforehand what exactly its place will be in the film as a whole. There are all kinds of elements that I work on and discover simultaneously: image, sound, structure, etc.

How much material generally gets left out and how much ends up in your films?

One of the things I've had to learn to do is to mourn for unused material. Most of the images, not to mention the testimonies, end up left out. There were images I started editing *Still Life* with that for me were absolutely essential to the film, but that in the end I realised didn't fit. I was very distressing. That's why it is so important to have time for the process, to recognise that the image doesn't fit and to accept it. In *48* it was also very hard. The testimony of each person appears just once in the film, which is made up of cells, sixteen of them, one per person, and we are only in each cell once. This was one of the most problematic aspects of the film, in fact: sometimes people said some extremely significant things, but I could only put in the beginning or the end. The choice was radical: either I had to cut one thing or another, or make a totally different film that would not have been *48*. That process was very hard for me, despite the fact I believe—especially in this film—that less is more. And in reality, for me, this was the just way to make this film.

THE MIGRATION OF IMAGES

Images spend decades in a process of migration from archives to artistic works and from analogue formats to digital formats. On that journey, your films offer the audience the chance to view photographic material in a very particular way. In fact, the tools of digital post-production facilitate their manipulation, viewing and resignification by allowing filmmakers to slow them down and reframe them, combine them freely, superimpose and juxtapose them, make micro-movements over each photograph, etc. Are these effects related to aesthetic considerations or to other factors?

I never put the aesthetic question in first place. The aesthetic is something that emerges out of the process. For example, when I was making *Still Life*, during the viewings in the archives, I realised that sometimes there were signs inside the shots of the internal disintegration of the message that the regime was trying to convey. To be able to view these shots attentively I had to slow down the film in the editing room, moving forward, rewinding, and pausing. The formal principles of the film—re-framing, slowing down the speed and fading to black—are linked to this process. In other words, these principles, which could be understood as merely aesthetic, in reality emerged out of a number of factors: the need to open these images up to something more than their immediate meanings, a questioning of the aesthetic and historical value of the archive image, an ethical stance in relation to the images, but also a particular conception of image and of history that underpins my work. The same was true of *48*. The decision to show only images from police files and not to include the faces of the speakers today was not based on aesthetics but on substance, with implications of a political nature. In other words, apart from wanting to confront the audience with the men and women who had been political prisoners, as I explained above, there was the issue of not want-

ing to create a break in time that might have the effect of hollowing out the words and images. If I had shown the faces of the people today, the photograph would lose its power and become a mere illustration of how that person looked when they were young. And the testimonies would be immediately consigned to the past. But the process here is precisely the opposite: it is about understanding how the past reaches into the present and how it is interconnected with our own times. For me, aesthetics cannot be dissociated from politics.

To what extent are the images transformed during this process? Are they still the same images or are they now different?

The images are the same, but they are viewed in a different way. My films are not based on the *détournement* of the images, but on their *renversement*, on turning them around, putting them back-to-front, changing a particular order in order to discover something, switch it in the opposite direction. This operation, in contrast with *détournement*, isn't intended to decontextualise the images and produce new meanings beyond what they themselves contain, but to work on them within what they already potentially contain, within their original substance. This operation requires not only a very attentive viewing but a very clear awareness of the conditions for the production and development of images, and of their historical context.

THE PHOTOGRAPH AS A DOCUMENT AND A SYSTEM OF IDENTIFICATION

Historians like Hayden White (1988) describe photography as a basic tool that allows us to tell, represent and understand history. Do you feel that with the archives you are creating a new visual history of the places, events and people portrayed in those same archives?

I think that every filmmaker, every artist, is essentially adding pieces that can contribute to a new understanding of things, and in the specific case of working with archives, they contribute to the development of a new visual history, or better still, new visual histories. The question here is the way cinematic tools are used. Jean-Luc Godard talked about "the form that thinks" in opposition to "the thought that forms". Hayden White calls attention to the "content of the form", meaning the ideologies concealed in all varieties of narrative forms, which is something that applies both to historiography and *historiophoty*. When the thought forms or when the narrative shapes thinking, nothing new can come of it. The thinking form, on the other hand, is alive; instead of a skeleton it has a nervous system in a constant state of becoming. Artistic historiography—let's give it that name for now—doesn't pin things down; it opens them up, and out of that opening new understanding can emerge.

The use of photographs to identify all kinds of prisoners is a common practice in the history of this medium. There are even various "prison photographers" who, without undermining the uniformity of this type of image, manage to place their own personal stamp on some of their portraits. Have you ever found any kind of authorial stamp on the photographs in the police files you have worked with? Have you ever identified any of these photographers?

There are noticeable differences between photographs, which also have a lot to do with the era when they were taken and the materials used—we need to remember that it was a dictatorship that lasted 48 years—but I never identified any specific authorial stamps, because I never examined them from that perspective. I've always asked about the photographers, but I have never been able to identify them.

What resources do you use to give a new meaning to these portraits, i.e., to recontextualise and redefine the dehumanised images in the police archives?

Duration. And working with the coexistence of heterogeneous timeframes. In the case of *48*, it was also essential to maintain the integrity of the photograph, in the sense of not interrupting it, cutting it, or juxtaposing it with other images of a different kind. It is a montage within temporal depth, as I explained before, where the way the image and the sound are articulated is crucial. A single image is transfigured through the duration. Its status shifts, sometimes swinging between opposite poles. The same image can be established both as an archive image and as a memory image; as an objective image or a mental image; as a familiar image or an image infused with strangeness. Another crucial aspect is the gaze: who is looking and who is being looked at. Sometimes, the audience observes the images through their own gaze; on other occasions, they observe through the mediation of the words of the prisoners themselves, when they refer directly to the photographs. Still other times, I tried to turn the audience from the observers into the observed. In any case, the condition of the shot changes from a formal point of view, acting on the spectator's perception and placing their neutrality in doubt. In reality, the resources are quite simple: slow-motion, fades to black, and the use of black screen. The fades to black don't just make the image disappear: they themselves act, eliciting post-images. In the same way, the black screens are not inert, but quite the opposite: they have space inside them, and they also act; among other things, they erase the boundary between the space of the film and the space of the movie theatre and become a projection screen for the spectators' imaginary.

Do you also work with private archives?
Yes, above all with personal collections, with images that form part of the family history of the people I film; a family album with photos of people living underground; family albums of Austrian children; in short, images that I discover through contact with people, so I get access to them nat-

urally. *Journey to the Sun*, for example, is a film made mainly with personal collections, although it also uses footage from public archives. It is a film that has a unique status in my filmography, as the idea to make it wasn't mine; various hands were involved in the work, including the editing, which was completely new for me. It was a co-direction with Ansgar Schaefer, who has been my producer for a long time—as well as my husband—and the one who came up with the idea. They are photographs and home movies from the 1940s and 1950s that raise different kinds of questions, as in most cases they are images subject to the codes of family representation of the era when they were created: you need to know who held the camera in the family context—usually the male figure—and how each image can be mediated by that gaze. However, instead of getting inside the images by zooming in, as I did in *Still Life*, where the reframed image is enlarged, this time I tried to keep the original size of the image, using small frames to highlight certain details. One of the reasons for doing this is related to the fact that the children always appear on the fringes—of the images, of history—and I wanted to make this explicit. Another important aspect of this process was to try to tell the story through the gaze of the children instead of through the gaze of an adult reflecting on childhood experiences. There are moments in the testimonies of childhood memories, when we clearly hear the voice of those children talking inside the adult. What have those children seen? And what do the family images that feature them conceal or reveal? The film was born out of this articulation.

COLONIAL MIGRATIONS IN *STILL LIFE*

Still Life presents the Colonial War as the beginning of the political death throes of the Salazar dictatorship. The film, in this sense, seems to have a forensic dimension, as if reviewing the images made it possible to conduct an autopsy

on the political regime that produced them. How would you describe the selection process of the specific images that were ultimately included in this film?

It was an extremely long process. I looked at hundreds of hours of archive footage and I ended up selecting around twenty hours of images as the basis for the editing stage. I then went onto the first stage of organising these hours into predetermined sequences. It is important to understand that the film was conceived of around the notion of "exhibition": exhibition as an action of placing something in somebody's view, as a way of shedding light on an object, etc. This involved conceiving of a spatialised structure, as if the audience were in a space with several rooms, as the sequences were thought of as rooms: the colonies room, the church room, the freedom room, etc. The intention here is not merely to exchange one word (sequence) for another (room), but to adopt a different conceptualisation with different implications; it is another way of thinking and doing. And there was one very important aspect: at a certain point, I realised that, say, around ten shots weren't necessary to convey an idea, but that at times only one of those shots was enough—provided that you got into it in depth, in a process of montage within the shot. That is why the first version of the film had around 45 minutes of archive images, while the final version, which is 72 minutes long and which I finished a year later, has a little more than 12 minutes of archive images, apart from photographs. I thought a lot about each image. It was a construction with minimal elements, but they were worked on with precision. I looked for images that in many cases were neglected, apparently irrelevant vestiges that were not part of the grand history but that reveal a lot about what time has repressed. Jacques Rancière (2013: 23), in his analysis of the opening scene to *The Last Bolshevik* (Le tombeau d'Alexandre, Chris Marker, 1993), explains that "history is that time in which those who have no right to occupy the

same place can occupy the same image." That is one of the powerful aspects of the archive image: the appearance, often in the background or on the fringes, of the ones history forgot.

You have explained elsewhere (Armas 2012) that the initial image of the little monkey moving towards a human hand (Figure 2) establishes a connection between your individual memory—of an uncle in the army who returned from the war with a similar monkey—and the collective memory—of many other people who interpreted that image in a similar way. But to what extent can that image (or any other image) be polysemous?

That is precisely the idea. Actually, the initial image is not there because of that connection. People often ask me to explain the meaning of that image and I reply that it isn't my aim to reduce the images to a single meaning. Images are open to different readings, and that is one of the purposes of the film. However, I usually explain my private reason, which is as you say, the intersection of my memory with the collective memory: a lot of army men returned from the war with a monkey, and those monkeys remained in the memory of a lot of people. Well, today probably only the oldest would remember, but at the time when I made the film, that memory was still very widespread.

How many meanings can coexist in a single image, in your opinion?

Many. It depends on the use you make of the images. We can make an image say everything and its opposite, especially when we subsume it to a text or a narrative. Chris Marker proves this very well in the film *Letter from Siberia* (Lettre de Sibérie, 1958), in the sequence on Yakutsk. Then there are editing processes that can subvert the original meaning of an image, by association. These were some of the difficulties I faced when I was editing *Still Life*. I didn't want to use text because it would always end up inducing one reading of the images, and I also wasn't interested in subvert-

Figure 2. First image in *Still Life* (2005)

ing the image to the point that its interpretation was extrinsic to its original content. This issue got complicated as I was working with propaganda images, which were produced to convey a very specific message. I have never treated images as fixed points in the course of history: the reading of an image depends on a lot of factors, such as the historical moment when it is viewed and also who is viewing it. Marcel L'Herbier once said that the camera "shows us what those who saw could not see." Seeing an image at the time it was made is completely different from seeing it fifty years later: the meanings open up. Georges Didi-Huberman says that it isn't enough to find nouns or adjectives in relation to images to say what they are; you need to see what they do. I've never treated images as lifeless things. I've always tried to see them in their dimension as events.

Do you think it is possible to interpret the image of the monkey as a reference to the colonial migration processes that lead people (and animals) away from their homes?

I think the image is very powerful and has many possible interpretations.

And even as an allegory of the miniaturising of the Portuguese and African peoples under the Salazar dictatorship?

I never looked at it that way, but I admit that it is a reading that the image could suggest.

One of the most intense moments in *Still Life* is the way you zoom out on photographs of different women arrested by the PIDE, halfway through the film (Figure 3). Is that another connection between individual experience and collective experience?

Yes, it isn't isolated individuals being imprisoned, but the whole of society that is subjected to surveillance. Until that moment, I had only shown images from police files sequentially, one after another. In fact, the film begins with a series of juxtaposed images of political prisoners, looking at us: men and women directly confronting the audience. For me, it was very important to start the film with this confrontation to the viewer. At the moment when I zoom out we no longer see individuals, as it is the whole of society that is represented there.

Your reinterpretation of the Salazar dictatorship's archives in *Still Life* and *48* gives a lot of attention to looking at the camera, which becomes an act of resistance against colonialism and repression. What do you see in those gazes?

If we look at the images produced over the decades, many of which are propaganda, we can see that there is a fictional dimension in them, in the sense that the classical rules of fiction cinema—for example, never look directly at the camera—are observed in these documentary images. One of the most significant cases for me was a scene

showing Portuguese troops apparently fraternising with the residents of a village in Guinea-Bissau that I found in the army archives. These images were on a reel of rushes, shots from different sources all patched together, which weren't included in the final cut of any film. The soldiers are interacting with women who are lined up, their bodies in predetermined positions, each one in the required spot. Their looks, however, are aimed straight at the camera; they are looking straight at it fiercely, confronting it. It is no accident that these images were not included in any film: the fierceness of their gaze undermines any physical or cinematic device set up by the Portuguese. In the gaze of the political prisoners, there is often this confrontation as well, especially in the case of people who belonged to political organisations, such as the Portuguese Communist Party. The bodies have to be in the required positions, but nobody can control their outward expression.

Figure 3. Photographs of female political prisoners in *Still Life* (2005)

What type of emotions do you identify in those gazes?

When I opened the PIDE/DGS identification albums for the first time, I was extremely disturbed by those faces and by the range of expressions discernible in them. When people talk about forensic photography, they often refer to the way it de-subjectivises people: depersonalised faces, captured by the police system or by the law enforcement system that is the forensic photographic device. I thought a lot about this, but the thing is, when you are dealing with the context of political prisons, the situation changes: there is a moral imperative, of struggle against an unfair system; but there is also shock or even terror when you're caught by this system without understanding why. That is why these images are so powerful and disturbing. And instead of the de-subjectivising effect, what happens is exactly the opposite: the subjectivity is expressed very intensely.

How long could you spend slowing down and re-framing the images containing these gazes until you find the right rhythm and tone to identify and highlight these emotions?

A long time. A long, long time, really. In fact, as I explained earlier, the first version of *Still Life*, which was around an hour and a half long, included around 45 minutes of archive footage. It was over the course of the following months of editing that I began to get inside those images, to be with them without the time pressure. The film was partly financed by ARTE France – La Lucarne, a TV slot dedicated to art-house cinema, so they gave me set deadlines. Fortunately, they agreed to give me more time and I managed to get an extra year on the deadline originally stipulated to finish the film. At that time I was doing my master's thesis and I received a grant from the Faculty of Fine Arts [at the University of Lisbon], where I work as a lecturer, which allowed me to work full-time on research for two years, including the production of the film. Actually, the same thing happened

with *48*, which was part of my doctoral thesis, but in that case it was three years. During that time I could concentrate fully on each film. The thing is that the relationship with time not only changes during the editing process, but time itself stretches and draws out in every dimension of life. While I was editing *48*, a strange and unexpected thing started to happen to me, as despite being immersed in editing the film, eating and sleeping in the editing room, whenever I stopped to take a break I would experience every minute of that small interval very intensely. When I would read, for example, I practically lived every word, as if I were reading with my whole body. I started having private time to read poetry. Time to walk. This temporal dimension, which is basically internal, is essential for working with images.

The images of political prisoners included in *Still Life* exhibit considerable social diversity: European women, African men, children and adolescents, etc. Was that diversity already present in the organisation of the archives or was it highlighted by you afterwards, for the film?

A few of the identification albums are categorised, albeit partially, but they are the exception: people in uniform, African men, etc. There is the page I filmed that groups women together, but most of them are scattered throughout the archives. For me it was very important to show this diversity and highlight it in the film, because it was a regime that affected all of society; anybody could be arrested. However, the process to be able to film these images was full of obstacles, beginning with the refusal of the director [of the archives] at the time to grant me authorisation to do it. This person managed to hold up filming quite a lot in 2003, but she couldn't stop it. Getting access to photographs showing this social and generational diversity was a Kafkaesque process, because the archives required authorisations from every person who appeared in the photographs, or if they had passed away, I had to submit authorisations

from their heirs, death certificates... in short, it was very complicated because they didn't even let me touch the photographs to see the names that were on the back. And in a dictatorship that lasted 48 years with so many people arrested, you can imagine how hard that made things. It would have been easy, as in fact it was, to contact the better-known political prisoners, but what about the huge numbers of anonymous people? If you submit to the restrictions of the *archons*, as Derrida rightly called them, history will always be biased.

Archive images have a synchronous quality, because they portray a here and now, but they also allow a diachronic reading, as they can be organised into series. *Still Life*, for example, has a sequence that shows what remains (the dictatorship, the repression) through what changes (the ageing of the prisoners and of the rulers of the dictatorship). How did the idea of this editing approach occur to you?

The film is based on a particular conception of the image and of history. At the time I began working on the project, Didi-Huberman's book *Devant le temps* (2000) had just been published.[7] Then *L'image survivante* (Didi-Huberman, 2002)[8] came out, and there was also a new edition in French of the writings of Aby Warburg, who wasn't talked about much in those days. These two authors opened up a way of thinking about the archive image and the construction of history through moving images, which other authors would subsequently build on. The question of the overdetermination of the image, the concept of the symptom, the "extreme formula", "seeing or knowing", which Didi-Huberman (1990) explains in *Devant l'image*[9] (an image presents us with a dilemma between seeing and knowing, and ultimately either we know or we see), were key elements for the conception of the film. Walter Benjamin's notion of history against the grain, the idea of the ragpicker of history who goes around picking up mundane bits and pieces,

and especially the notion that a fact of the past is not an objective fact but a fact of memory, requires us to think about history and its temporal modes in a different way.

That is why the film has two basic principles: not to make use of the oral or written word, and not to be chronological. Actually, there is a macro-chronology, but the film works with anachronism: every sequence has within it images filmed in different eras, without any chronological organisation, because history is not a simple continuous process, or a form of knowledge that can be established by means of a causal discourse. At the same time, I didn't want to make the images subordinate to a text that would influence how they should be read. The film's logic is different. It wasn't important to explain the context of the Portuguese dictatorship either. For me, it was more important to draw on the features common to all dictatorships in order to reflect on this period and what survives of it into our times. But of course, it was important to provide anchor points, time markers: Portugal's admission to NATO, the beginning of the Colonial War, etc. The dictator is one of those anchor points, perhaps the most direct marker, because through him we perceive the passage of time, as Salazar was in power for 42 years (Figure 4). And in relation to the political prisoners, there was also another dimension that was very important to me: it wasn't just about giving visibility to the years that pass—which were many and show that people were arrested several times, or that they spent a long time in prison, in some cases more than two decades—but also to give visibility to the dictatorship's efforts to destroy these people, not only physically, but also mentally.

Many of the colonial images included in *Still Life* are enigmatic for contemporary international audiences, such as the sequence where some African women are carrying a European army officer on their shoulders, or the sequence showing Portuguese soldiers interacting with African

children (Figure 5). Could you explain the context of these images?

Both images are official propaganda. In the first one, the officer is Colonel [Arnaldo] Schulz, Governor of Portuguese Guinea [from 1965 to 1968]. This image appears in the film after the zoom out over photographs of female prisoners and before the scene of African women staring down the camera that is filming them. The second image was taken from one of the films about the psychosocial actions of the army, which sought to show the supposed support that the Portuguese military received from the people of the former colonies and their benevolent treatment of those people. By eliminating the music and the narration from the film, which induce a very specific reading of the images, and deconstructing the shot showing the children, we see a different reality emerge. These films were intended to convince the Portuguese population that Portugal was a cohesive, multi-racial and multi-continental country, in line with the theories of Gilberto Freyre, a Brazilian sociologist whose work would become one of the main ideological pillars of the regime, with consequences that endure to this day.[10] His concept of Lusotropicalism is still alive today and

Figure 4. António de Oliveira Salazar in *Still Life* (2005)
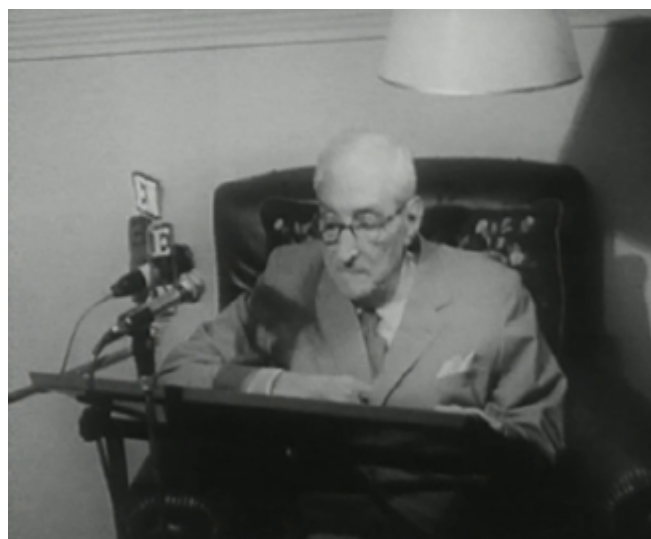
Figure 5. Propaganda images during the Colonial War included in *Still Life* (2005)

forms part of the imaginary of many Portuguese men and women, including many born since the country's transition to democracy.

THE MISSING IMAGES

The presence of images of the Colonial War in *Still Life* contrasts with the absence of images from the colonial police archives in *48*: in a film about missing images (the images of the exact moment of torture), that added absence (the lack of images of African political prisoners) opens an even bigger gap that you decide to make explicit in the film through the image of an almost imperceptible nocturnal landscape. Years later, *Fordlândia Malaise* is also in a way a film about missing images. How do you deal with these absences?

It's always complicated. In *48* I dealt with them with a lot of anguish, as it was a film based on the articulation of police file photographs and testimonies by the people who appear in them. What can you do when those images don't exist? The solution certainly did not come immediately, be-

cause I thought a lot about what I could do. Finally, I made the decision to incorporate that absence into the film, exposing and problematising the limitations of the archives and the fact that there are images that are missing. When there are no images, I'm not going to invent them; instead, I'm going to make that absence explicit, in this case in an extreme way, through the insertion of a black screen. As of that moment, I broke the system of the film, and once it was broken it was hard to go back: once the disruption was created something new could emerge. The next testimony was already edited differently and I decided that the blackness of the film stock would be inscribed on the black screen which in turn leads into the blackness of a night. In the case of *Still Life*, the idea was to show the other side of the dictatorship, beyond what the images filmed at the time revealed, using archive images only. I realised right away that I didn't have all the images I needed, but the key is never to give up. *Fordlândia Malaise* was a different case, as it was a film made under very specific conditions, created out of a process that immediately integrated solutions to those absences.

And how do you conceptualise those missing images?

My films are founded on gaps, but problematising them doesn't lie specifically in the absence; it lies in the encounter with something that disputes that absence. In other words, the premise is never "since this doesn't exist, how am I going to show it?" My process is precisely the opposite: my films are born out of an encounter with something that can reveal a blind sport, something that has no image. In the case of *48*, the original idea wasn't based on the fact that there were no images of torture, but the recognition that the images in the police files revealed something that we didn't have an

image for. *Fordlândia Malaise*, on the other hand, is about blind spots in the history of Fordlândia, one of which is the history prior to its foundation, for which there are no words or images. The encounter, in this case, happens through the oral recreation of the myths by some of its inhabitants, to fill an existential void resulting from the absence of history, giving shape to a link that had been lost. It is what potentially exists in a presence that could be faint, that could be found where you look for it least, in the humblest vestiges that the historical constructions have left behind them.

To what extent is it possible to reconstruct these kinds of records?

Although my films are born out of the perception that there is something that can reveal a particular blind spot, the confrontation with the absence is always present. The absence cannot be reconstructed with words and images because it can never cease to be an absence. This is perhaps the paradox that lies at the heart of my films: by looking for ways to fill a gap, I am simultaneously making it explicit, exposing its relentless existence. So these records aren't reconstructed, but created, sometimes with imaginative leaps, like the inhabitants of Fordlândia do.

NEO-COLONIAL MIGRATIONS IN *FORDLÂNDIA MALAISE*

Fordlândia Malaise is the result of your partnership with the French artistic collective Suspended Spaces. How did that partnership arise?

I met Françoise Parfait and Jacinto Lageira when I was in Paris doing my doctorate. It was through them that I met other members of Suspended Spaces and they got to know my work. A few years later, in 2016, we decided to organise an international conference in Lisbon based on the research and artistic experiences of the collective. It was my first partnership, and it resulted in a text published in *Suspended Spaces #4: a partilha dos esquecimen-*

tos (Dias, 2018: 153-159). In 2017, they invited me to join the Fordlândia project, which was held in 2018, and I've been working with them since then.

Did you already know the story of Fordlândia before receiving this invitation?

No, it was the first time I had heard about this former "company town".

The Ford Archives are available online, on the website of the Henry Ford Museum of American Innovation, where—in February 2022—you can access 184 photos related to the activity of the Ford Motor Company in Brazil. When did you begin to explore those archives?

I started my research on Fordlândia and its history before travelling to the Amazon. In addition to consulting publications, I also looked through a lot of images produced by the Ford Motor Company that are scattered across its various websites. I began researching the archives themselves in more depth only after returning from my trip, when I had a clearer idea of what I was going to do.

How much does the Ford collection have of exposed archive—being available online—and how much does it have of concealed archive—given the incomplete or skewed nature of its discourse, and everything it doesn't show about the history of Fordlândia?

The big question here is really what is concealed. The official archives we can access online, the Henry Ford digital collection, is in keeping with the idea disseminated by the more recent images, which are available on myriad websites: the idea that the story of Fordlândia is a story of an ideal city imagined by Henry Ford. When I began researching, I found much more information about this project. One of the essential books I found was Greg Grandin's *Fordlandia: The Rise and Fall of Henry Ford's Forgotten Jungle City* (2009). My initial idea was to focus on the issues of power and on the inherent violence of the project and to take

some of the stories documented in Grandin's book as a starting point. As I continued my research, however, I began to realise that this was not a story of the past, because life in Fordlândia goes on today. The only thing I didn't understand was the relationship the people had with the project's ruins—at the time it seemed to me that it was in ruins—and even their physical distance from the ruins. It was only when I went there that I understood that this was also a story of the present and that there was life after Henry Ford. And of course, there was life before too. The Amazon, contrary to the popular myth, was anything but virgin territory. And this was the situation: there are the images produced by the Ford Motor Company, films and photographs that in reality are propaganda material, as is the short documentary film produced by Disney, *The Amazon Awakens* (1944), which is available online; and there are Ford's buildings, powerful constructions that iconically represent this world. But then there is everything that has been concealed: the story from the point of view of the local population, both of immigrants to the region and of the Amerindians, the story of those who live there today; in short, the story of those who, following Walter Benjamin, can be described as "the vanquished": vanquished by the force of the epistemologies of the North that obliterate everything that falls outside their system, and vanquished as well by the political system of their own country. This ended up being the focus of the film: the blind spots of a history which, in accordance with the dominant narrative, is focused entirely on Ford's project.

Structurally, *Fordlândia Malaise* appears to be divided into three parts with different styles and content that seem to reflect the times of the landscape: the past (in the opening sequence), the past in the present (through the descriptive shots in black and white) and the future of the present (in the closing sequence, in colour). When did you decide to establish this structure?

That is a very interesting question because the whole key to the film lies there. The truth is that when I travelled to Fordlândia I didn't know I was going to make a film. I went to see whatever I could find and I began working with micro-situations. As I began meeting people and talking to them, and as I was being confronted with the buildings, the soundscapes of the place, which were incredibly rich, I started working out what to film and how to do it. The film bears the mark of this process. At first, I thought of making a series of short little video pieces, to be exhibited simultaneously. Then something happened that came out of an incredible coincidence: on the day of my departure to Portugal I met Vicente Franz Cecim, the writer from the Amazon, and I read the first pages of his book *oÓ: Desnutrir a pedra* (2008) while I was on the plane. And something clicked: that sudden moment when the film appears in your mind, as a whole; it takes off, comes into existence in its own right without actually existing yet. The same thing happened to me with *Still Life*: there was also a click, and suddenly the film appeared before me. After that it was very complicated to make. With *Fordlândia Malaise* it was the same: the structure came out of that, a sudden flash.

The opening sequence functions as a flashback through the images from the Ford archives. Your way of filming and editing these images uses a different strategy from the one in your previous films: after working with slowing down and re-framing the images of the dictatorship, now you work with serialising, repeating and speeding up the images, even with a flicker effect. Why did you choose this new visual and discursive strategy?

The structure initially had three parts: the first was a visual history of Fordlândia told by the Americans, through the images produced by the Ford Motor Company; the second focused on the tension between the strong memories, embedded in the Fordist structures, and the weak memories,

conveyed orally; and finally, the sequence in the graveyard, of Benjaminian quality, as if the angel of history had managed to stop the tempest that drags it into the future and called for the vanquished to rise up, bringing their voices into the present, changing the course of history. Then, after production had started, a fourth, shorter part was added.

When I was working on the editing process, thinking about how I could create this visual history, I realised that the archive images constituted what people already knew about the North American project, and that if I focused too much on them, I would be perpetuating the dominant narrative (Figure 6). Furthermore, it made no sense to immerse myself in those images to show what had been repressed. It made no sense to use slow motion to create a counter-archive. I wanted to get out of those images quickly, not give the audience too much time with them, so I decided to speed them up instead of slowing them down, using an interstitial montage, and through those interstices, to reveal what was—and still is—latent in them, because the problems aren't just in the past; they are a reality that endures: the women, obnubilated by the male world; the power of nature, which is not a mere resource as capitalism and religion would have us believe; the workers, etc. The aim was to use the soundtrack and the images to create a kind of revolution: of the people, of nature, and of the images themselves.

The landscape of Fordlândia is an open-air archive of its recent history, through the marks and vestiges that the Ford Motor Company has left on the terrain: the destruction of the jungle, the construction of buildings, streets and highways, the parcelling of the land, etc. Your way of filming this landscape adopts a two-edged strate-

gy that is descriptive—in the static shots and the pans at ground level—and also performative—in the aerial pans. How much is there of reaction and how much of planning in this way of filming? There was no planning, and in fact that was the difficulty. How can you film something when you don't know how it will be presented or where it is going to be shown? Hence the importance of the production process through micro-situations, as I explained before. I'll give an example. I knew that I wanted to deal with the power issues that the Ford project raised. The water tower, a visual and architectural symbol of that power, would therefore be a key structure that would be filmed in any case. Then I asked myself, if I could only film a small number of shots of Fordlândia and I had to limit them to the water tower, how would I film it? I knew that I wanted to see Fordlândia from the perspective of the tower, or at least at that height: that is the shot that signals the beginning of the second part of the film and that maintains the integrity of a sequence shot that in this case is circular. But I also knew I would have to go beyond this power symbolically, placing the camera above the

Figure 6. Ford Motor Company archive photograph included in *Fordlândia Malaise* (2019)

Figure 7. Final image in *Fordlândia Malaise* (2019)

level of the tower; basically, to go above the maximum height of Ford's tallest construction. That is the last shot in the film, when we finally leave Ford's history (Figure 7). The whole shooting process was very physical, combining spontaneity with rationality.

When and why did you decide to use a camera drone?

When I started preparing the trip and I thought about the equipment I would take, I realised it was important to get a sense of how the urban layout had marked the land, to be able to see the scars it had left. To do this, I would have to observe it from above, taking advantage of the vertical perspective, so I decided to take a drone with me. Later, at the site, I became aware of a paradox: I was filming a region that had suffered terrible violence with a machine of vision that is itself an instrument of power. This led me to try other ways of handling the drone and to take advantage of

its versatility, trying to overcome the ideological apparatus inherent in the instrument itself. This aspect also involved the connection to the body, and not just to the gaze. I didn't look through the drone; I looked *with* the drone, trying to see what it saw not through the screen but through its physical relationship with the space. And always accompanying it, insofar as was possible, keeping myself in movement, sometimes bringing it very close to my own body.

The disembodied voices of the inhabitants of Fordlândia, meanwhile, fill the gaps in the Ford Archives and create another discourse about the local history. Who are these informants? Where did you find them?

The first thing I did when I got to Fordlândia was to try to get in contact with some of its inhabitants, so I went straight to the church, which is located on a promontory in the middle of the region, because I was sure the local priest would

know the community. He was the one who introduced me to Fordlândia's present, telling me its recent history. I was especially interested in finding older women, to get to know a point of view that hasn't been given attention—this is a history told by men—and, at the same time, to hear memories that were closer to a bygone era. What happened next was a succession of meetings where one person led me to another. I spoke to Raimunda da Silva, a woman of more than seventy who had arrived in Fordlândia when she was just a little girl, with her parents, who worked there—and she herself ended up working in the rubber plantation. I found the children by accident: they were playing next to the basketball court and I started talking to them. One very important person was Maria do Carmo Barreto, a former teacher born in Fordlândia who now looks after the graveyard. I talked to her again in 2019, on a second trip I made to Fordlândia, and more recently in 2021. This is a project I decided to take further due to the complexity of the place, its inhabitants and its history, and what it reveals to us about our world today. Júnior Brito, who composed and wrote the music featured at the end of the movie, was one of the key people for the film: I am still in contact with him and I filmed him again in 2019 and 2021. In the film, I decided only to use their voices and not to turn these people into "characters" because I was interested in the collective dimension of history and the power of the spoken word. Right now I am editing the second part of what will become a diptych, with *Fordlândia Malaise* as the first panel. It is going to be called *Fordlândia Panacea* and it is based on recent findings on site, placing the focus on the big gap in the history of this former company town: What was there before the Ford Motor Company arrived?

And finally, why did you decide to end the film in colour?

It was a spontaneous process. The film was conceived of in three parts, as I explained before.

While I was editing, I decided to put in the shot of Isaac, the dancing child: every time I started filming him, he would start dancing, and he would stop when he decided to; it didn't matter whether the camera was still filming him, whether the stage was still set for him (Figure 8). He had—and has—the freedom to leave the scene when he wants to; it is the freedom of the body, of a de-colonised time in opposition to the industrialised time imposed by Ford. As you said, it is the future of the present, within the potential life that Fordlândia has today. ∎

NOTES

1   This text has been written as part of the research project "Cartografías del Cine de Movilidad en el Atlántico Hispánico" [Cinematic Cartographies of Mobility in the Hispanic Atlantic] (CSO2017-85290-P), financed by the Ministry of Science and Innovation-State Research Agency, and funds from the ERDF.

2   The years of the Salazar dictatorship can actually be broken down into various political stages: the Military Dictatorship (1926-1928); the National Dictatorship (1928-1933); and the *Estado Novo* (1933-1974). Taken together, these stages comprise the longest lasting authoritarian regime in Western Europe in the 20th century. António de Oliveira Salazar was prime minister from 1932 to 1968, which is why his name is often used to identify the whole period.

3   La *Missão Cinegráfica às Colónias de África* was an initiative of Portugal's Ministry of the Colonies in 1938 to promote and unite the Portuguese empire through the production of a series of films in territories under colonial rule: Guinea, São Tomé and Príncipe, Angola, Cape Verde and Mozambique.

4   The *Polícia Internacional e de Defesa do Estado* (PIDE) was the political and investigative police force responsible for matters related to the foreign service, borders and state security from 1945 to 1969. From 1969 until its dissolution in 1974, it was known as the *Direção-Geral de Segurança* (DGS).

5 The Portuguese army's film archives, the *Centro de Audiovisuais do Exército* (CAVE), contains all the photographs and footage taken by the *Secção Fotográfica e Cinematográfica do Exército* since its creation in 1917.

6 Susana de Sousa Dias is referring here to the program *Os Grandes Portugueses*, broadcast on Radio Televisão Portuguesa (RTP) from October 2006 to March 2007.

7 This text has not been published in English but does have a Spanish translation: Didi-Huberman, G. (2012). *Ante el tiempo. Historia del arte y anacronismo de las imágenes*. Buenos Aires: Adriana Hidalgo Editora.

8 English translation: Didi-Huberman, G. (2017). *The Surviving Image: Phantoms of Time and Time of Phantoms: Aby Warburg's History of Art*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press.

9 English translation: Didi-Huberman, G. (2009). *Confronting Images: Questioning the Ends of a Certain History of Art*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press.

10 Gilberto de Mello Freyre was a Brazilian sociologist, anthropologist and writer. His best-known work is *Casa-Grande & Senzala* (Freyre, 1933), a book that analyses social, sexual and racial relations between Portuguese settlers and African slaves in Brazil and argues for the virtues of miscegenation, developing the ideological construction referred to here by de Sousa Dias.

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Figure 8. Isaac in *Fordlândia Malaise* (2019)

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SUSANA DE SOUSA DIAS. RECONSTRUCTING THE REPRESSED VISUAL ARCHIVE

Abstract

Interview with the Portuguese filmmaker Susana de Sousa Dias about her creative work with images from police files and colonial archives.

Key words

Susana de Sousa Dias; Portuguese cinema; Documentary cinema; Salazar dictatorship; Portuguese Colonial War; Collective memory; Archive images; Photography.

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SUSANA DE SOUSA DIAS. RECONSTRUIR EL ARCHIVO VISUAL REPRIMIDO

Resumen

Entrevista con la cineasta portuguesa Susana de Sousa Dias sobre su trabajo creativo con imágenes de archivos policiales y coloniales.

Palabras clave

Susana de Sousa Dias; cine portugués; cine documental; dictadura salazarista; guerra colonial; memoria colectiva; imágenes de archivo; fotografía.

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(DIS)AGREEMENTS

ARCHIVES-IN-THE-MAKING, VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES AND MIGRATION: OUTREACH AND INNOVATIVE SCHOLAR- SHIP IN AUDIOVISUAL-BASED RESEARCH PROJECTS AND ASSOCIATIONS*

introduction

MIGUEL FERNÁNDEZ LABAYEN
ELENA OROZ

This edition of (Dis)Agreements is the product of our own experience with the conceptualisation, organisation, and development of an online open archive that compiles and shares a collection of films, videos, and other documents related to migration and mobility across the Atlantic. In the context of the research project *Cinematic Cartographies of Mobility in the Hispanic Atlantic*, we have launched the Archive of Cinematic Mobility (ACM)[1] with the aim of compiling a database of feature films produced in Spain and Latin America (covering all countries in the region and all of their different film histories) whose narratives deal with or depict issues of human mobility, migration and displacement. In addition, the archive includes amateur films and experimental videos taken from some of the regional film archives in Spain (Filmoteca Vasca, Filmoteca de Andalucía and CGAI-Centro Galego de Artes da Imaxe), and also offers the results of the video workshops that we conducted over the course of our four-year project.

This is not the place for an in-depth exploration of the technical, material, legal, theoretical, and methodological discussions that influenced the conceptualisation and creation of the ACM. Suffice it to say that we faced the challenge posed by what Michelle Caswell (2021: 15) has described as the gap between the perspective of humanities scholars on "the archive" and the complicated realities of "actually existing archives", a material reality closer to the everyday experiences of librarians, archivists, and scholars specialising in information studies. The focus of this section is

therefore inspired by our own need to encourage a conversation with and between colleagues all over the world who have pursued or are currently pursuing similar projects. Our admiration from afar for the diverse range of collective practices and efforts outlined in this section thus gave rise to the dialogue presented here, which hopefully will trigger further discussions about how and why we, who for the most part are film and media scholars, sought to develop audiovisual archives dealing with migrant experiences. We were intrigued by the social and intellectual principles underpinning each initiative and, at the same time, we wondered how each one reconciled the humanistic and material dimensions of the archive mentioned by Caswell.

In short, we have brought together researchers to talk about the work being done in the following initiatives: Archive/Counter-Archive: Activating Moving Image Heritage[2] (2018-2024 SSHRC Partnership Grant), a Canadian research project involving more than 17 community- and artist-run organizations in Canada dedicated to compiling diverse narratives of Indigenous, LGBTQ, immigrant and women's histories; the Archivio delle memorie migranti/Archive of migrant memories (AMM),[3] an Italian association that collects, disseminates and produces audiovisual material on migration based on participatory methods; ITHACA. Interconnecting Histories and Archives for Migrant Agency,[4] a European research project focusing on narratives of migration that aims to produce a "Superarchive" containing experiences on migration; the Make Film History[5] project, a British initiative that fosters the creative reuse of archival material; and finally, the Reel Borders[6] project, a Belgian-based project funded by the EU that looks at the ways cinema has imagined and represented borders. This heterogeneous group of research programs speaks in multiple ways about the diverse interests, topics and strategies pursued to analyse and audiovisually archive human displacement.

Drawing on contemporary discussions about archives and vulnerable communities, questions arose about who archives, what is being archived and how the archive is being presented. In this sense, issues of access and social justice cut across all of the different initiatives and interventions presented in this section. As Diana W. Anselmo has pointed out in her introduction to a recent publication on "Alternative Archives", archival work benefits from "being expanded along the intersectional lines of gender, race, class, ethnicity, nationality, and sexuality" (2021: 163). All of these issues have been considered and included in the extraordinary work carried out by the researchers and the teams and projects they represent. At the same time, as Anselmo also points out, the need to reconsider the affective dimensions of these archives and, in the long term, to present these initiatives as collective works open to public debate and new political perspectives on migration is what makes these projects important, not only for current debates about the work of film and media scholars but also as a way to bridge the gap between the academic world and the world we all live in.

In her recent call for "a global approach to audiovisual heritage", film curator and professor Giovanna Fossati proposes that we need to "rethink representation and inclusion of global audiovisual heritage and re-balance access across borders and economies" (2021: 128). Among her recommendations for a change of mindset and archival practices, Fossati mentions the need to develop new methodologies of research, preservation, access, and exhibition, as well as the promotion of "long-term knowledge exchange" between archivists and researchers from the so-called Global North and the Global South. Taking up Fossati's recommendations, we offer this conversation between scholars and activists deeply engaged in the study and presentation of documents and the archiving of film and video productions that explore and result from human

mobility. We accept responsibility for the limited scope of the sample. Of course, to build on Fossati's inspiring work, further conversations and intellectual, cultural and material interaction need to be encouraged not only among the participants in the exchange documented here, but with other academics and professionals from around the globe. ■

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discussion

1. Could you briefly explain what your research projects are about and how it is structured? Specifically, could you summarize your main goals and the reasons that led you to set it up?

Archive/Counter-Archive

Archive/Counter-Archive: Activating Canada's Audio-visual Heritage (A/CA) is a research-creation partnership involving over twenty-five archival organisations and cultural repositories for audiovisual (AV) and other media in Canada along with four university partners: York (Lead), Concordia, Queen's, and Toronto Metropolitan University. This project focuses on the challenges and generative opportunities afforded by diverse media archives belonging to Canada's Indigenous Peoples (First Nations, Métis, Inuit), Black communities, People of Colour, women, LGBTQ2+ and immigrant communities. Through artist residencies, creative counter-archives, and innovative new scholarship, we are calling attention to collections that are most vulnerable to disappearance and inaccessibility. Through our network, we are dedicated to sharing resources and developing creative methodologies for understanding what AV archives mean to a new generation of researchers, scholars, artists, archivists, and activists. Through experimentation and research, we are committed to developing an archival action plan for community based and artist-run collections in Canada.

The project is structured through eight case studies and supported by five working groups devoted to specific themes: Epistemology of the Archive; Education & Counter-Pedagogies; Technology and Innovation; Cultural Policy, Intellectual Property, and Rights Ecosystems; and Indigenous Methodologies. It is funded through a CDN$2.5 million Partnership grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC). Now in its fourth year, the seven-year project involves over fifty academic researchers across Canada, over seventy-five graduate students and is in the process of constituting an international advisory board.

Our project is oriented toward four concrete goals:

Create practice-based knowledge: we are conducting eight strategic case studies, each one corresponding to specific AV collections, tied to specific problems around preservation, and driven by community interests. Through collaborative research, Archive/Counter-Archive will establish best practices in terms of creating culturally appropriate systems of digital and analogue preservation, methodologies, and protocols.

Train and mentor: we are developing pedagogy, training, and mentoring tools shaped by best practices in community contexts and protocols of Indigenous methodologies. We aim to train and mentor the next generation of curators, archivists, cultural activists, scholars, digital humanists, and cultural policy and intellectual property (IP) specialists to advance moving image heritage preservation, accessibility, and presentation in Canada. This training will attend to the complex ethical and political issues of protocol, cultural property issues, and intersectional claims on national heritage.

Build a sustainable media-rich series of books with Concordia University Press. These books explore the new theoretical, methodological, and political questions that arise from the evolving nature of archives as keepers of memory and collective histories. Aiming to create a dialogue among scholars, artists, archivists, librarians, curators, and policy makers, this

book series seeks to challenge the hegemony of traditional archival institutions that have historically neglected or marginalised women, Indigenous peoples, the LGBTQ2+ communities, communities of colour and immigrant histories. We will produce two versions of each publication where appropriate—one online (containing additional, digital content) and the other in print. Our research as well as our case studies and final exhibitions will be collected and documented in these books.

Foster an AV Archive Network in Canada: Archive/Counter-Archive is helping to create a network of smaller archival organisations, researchers and policymakers invested in identifying and addressing the challenges and new epistemologies that surround 21st century archives. In particular, we aim to determine the special needs of AV preservation across different community contexts. This will form the basis for designing an action plan for Canada's community-based AV archives. It is important to emphasize that the concept of the counter-archive is not set in opposition to major institutional archives; in fact, archives at all levels of funding and organization face obstacles of mandate, resources, and training (albeit at different scales). Rather, the counter-archival impulse seeks to energise and activate the potential of the archive and the multiple, intersectional histories embedded in collections, and to bring them into public view and discourse.

Archive of migrant memories

For the past fifteen years, the Archive of migrant memories (Archivio delle memorie migranti, AMM) has been working with transnational migrants by supporting mixed groups of asylum seekers, volunteers, media operators, and researchers in a collaborative project aimed at collecting, preserving and disseminating self-narrative stories and testimonies of (and by) transnational migrants coming to Italy. In recording these narratives, we have sought to stimulate public awareness of the migrant condition in Italy, and to favour self-expressive forms of migrant voices as necessary traces of their coming and settling here in order to reconstruct their own memory of their arrival and destiny. Based on sociologist Abdelmalek Sayad's intuition that immigration and emigration are "two sides of the same coin", the research also tries to refashion the public representation of transnational migratory processes by looking at their "totality", linking the "here" and the "there" (the place the migrants left and the place they have travelled to), which is all the more relevant for foreign subjects roaming between former colonial empires and an uncertain and still undefined postcolonial present. Connecting the memory of Italy's colonial past with the memory of recent migrants from former Italian colonies seemed to us an urgent task in order to redefine Italy's multicultural national memory.

Despite the obstacles posed by the rigidly bureaucratic regulations for obtaining citizenship, the increasing number of new citizens of foreign origin in Italy is enriching the debate over the nation's memory and its capacity for reappropriation or inclusion. Even if multicultural coexistence is officially acknowledged as part of the globalised nation, Italian society still appears to be suspicious of its own hybrid memories and their implicit aspiration to a different national sense of belonging that questions the exclusionary political-cultural establishment and its foundations. From this point of view, migrants today and always are frontier-makers, creators not just of diaspora communities but also of cultural mediation, catalysts for resident communities whose physical and symbolic boundaries are constantly shifting and intersecting.

The associations' main activities are:
Participatory video workshops with migrants, with the aim of producing self-narratives;
Interviews and narrative circles for the creation of self-narratives;
School workshops about self-narratives and anti-racism;

Dissemination activities (screenings, public events).

Throughout its history, AMM has been funded by:

- Private foundations interested in fostering migrants' participation and new, grassroots-based and informed stories about migration in Italy/Europe, especially through creative and participatory methods (Lettera27; Open Societies; The Waldensian Evangelical Church).
- National public funds (Ministry of Culture's MigrArti Project; Italian Agency for Development Cooperation - AICS; Italian Office against Racial Discrimination - UNAR) for specific projects in cooperation with other organisations and institutions.
- Schools (from all over Italy) and cultural centres (Goethe Institut Rome, MAXXI Museum Rome).
- The European Commission.

Our partners are mainly other associations and NGOs, universities, cultural centres and institutional archives.

The research team is currently made up of four people, supported by one expert in communication and two administrative/project management team members.

Make Film History

As cultural heritage organisations digitise their collections and increase public access, moving image portals like the Irish Film Institute Player (IFI Archive Player),[7] the Northern Ireland Screen's Digital Film Archive player (DFA),[8] the British Film Institute (BFI) Player[9] and BBC iPlayer[10] provide audiences with virtual screening rooms to view their shared audiovisual history on demand. But the creative reuse of moving image archive material remains problematic, beset by questions of copyright law, rights clearance and "fair dealing" exceptions, and an audiovisual archives sector without a standardised framework to open up access to this material for creative reuse by young

filmmakers working in education and in the community. Young filmmakers cannot access this material without significant funding from film funds or broadcasters to pay commercial licensing fees.

The Make Film History project has addressed this problem by developing a new, sustainable model for the creative reuse of archive material for non-commercial use by young filmmakers, supported by our project partners, the British Film Institute, BBC Archive Editorial, the Irish Film Institute and Northern Ireland Screen. Our partners have contributed almost 300 films to the scheme as well as staff time for research and digitisation of assets, and operational and technical support.

The project asks: "How can we license moving image archive material for creative reuse by young filmmakers for education, training and community use? How can the creative reuse of this material increase community engagement with hidden cultural heritage and strengthen communities through new work created by emerging filmmakers reflecting on the past and developing talent for the future?"

Funded by Britain's Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and the Irish Research Council, the project has created a new research network around the creative reuse of archive material by young filmmakers, developing new partnerships between academic researchers and a range of non-academic partners: audiovisual archives and cultural heritage organisations who preserve and license this material; schools and training providers developing new talent in the creative industries; and regional film festivals who bring the local film community together. To date, 75 higher education institutions and eleven film festivals and training organisations have signed up to the scheme.

Ithaca

The H2020 ITHACA project (Interconnecting Histories and Archives for Migrant Agency) focuses on migration narratives in the past and present,

analysing them in a rigorous historical framework, whilst adopting an interdisciplinary, comparative and transnational approach. To this end, it involves a consortium of eleven partners from countries of origin, transit and destination of migrants in Europe, Africa, the Middle East and Eurasia. The project deepens the various forms of narratives on and produced by migrants, considering them as agents of social change, historically retracing causes, transformations, and effects of migration narratives, and highlighting silenced voices.

At the heart of the project is the creation of a digital platform collecting databases on past and present migration narratives, and offering media tools and applications to policymakers, practitioners, and migrants. ITHACA is also committed to organising participatory, artistic and training activities to foster the engagement of key stakeholders, including scholars, archivists, museum curators, practitioners, NGOs, returnees and potential migrants. These actions aim to raise awareness, inform the public debate, and disseminate thoughtful recommendations for present and future policies of relief, empowerment, inclusion, and participation.

There are about 50 researchers involved in the project: they are representatives of different disciplines, such as history, anthropology, sociology, philosophy, linguistics, archival science and communication. ITHACA has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (GA no. 101004539). We are also establishing institutional partnerships, especially with NGOs, national and international organisations, as well as museums and cultural institutions (for instance, with the Museé National de l'Histoire de l'Immigration of Paris).

Reel Borders

The Reel Borders project studies the different ways in which films imagine borders. How do they contribute to, complicate or contest hegemonic understandings of borders? One of the driving motivations behind the project was that film is often overlooked as a site of struggle for important societal issues and that it seemed particularly relevant to address this in relation to borders, as they have an important symbolic dimension. The different sub-studies in the project concentrate on (a) border imaginaries in films, (b) cinema culture practices and (c) participatory film practices. These sub-studies are articulated quite differently in each of our border cases: Ireland and the UK; Spain and Morocco; and Turkey and Syria. At the moment, we are five researchers (but not all full-time) and we received funding from the European Research Council (Starting Grant). Our main partners are academic institutions that host us during fieldwork in the different border regions.

2. What role does the audiovisual archive play in the project? How do you understand and use the archive, both theoretically and practically? What kind of methodologies do you use?

Archive/Counter-Archive

The audiovisual archive is central to our project. Our primary concern is with media art, documentary, and independent film and video archives as they exist in different communities and circumstances. We are concerned with intangible archives that exist within a range of situations: traditional memory institutions, artist-run centres, communities, homes/private life. We are particularly aware of the urgencies for preservation of film, video, and community heritage in various artist-run centres and media distribution organisations, where undervalued media works and collections by women, Indigenous, queer, and media makers of colour are deteriorating and vulnerable to continuing erosion. Under-funding and other limitations on archival expertise and human resources have restricted priority to these under-studied and neglected materials.

Traditional archives have invariably been shaped by ideological and political narratives about a nation's history, in Canada, as a white European settler colony. But, as we argue, they are also shaped by contestations, theorisations, and practices of the archive that come from feminist, queer, and Indigenous, Black, and People of Colour (IBPOC) scholars, archivists, and activists, who have provoked a reconsideration of the authority given to the archive and of what the archive contains. This legacy of contestation helps us consider the emergence of counter-archives, which are often linked to community archives that emerged from counterculture and social justice movements of the 1960s and 1970s.

The notion of the counter-archive puts the emphasis on the political, resistant, and community-based nature of minoritised communities' engagement with archival materials and protocols. Counter-archives disrupt conventional narratives and enrich our histories. They embody not only a theoretical approach to conceptualising archives but also a focus on modes of practice—practices that resist the universalising force of dominant techniques of documentation and standardisation at work within most institutional archives, libraries, and museums. Counter-archives seek to challenge the hegemony of traditional archival institutions that have historically neglected or marginalised women, Indigenous peoples, LGBTQ2+ communities, communities of colour and immigrant histories—and the audiovisual materials produced by or documenting these communities.

Archive of migrant memories

The Archive of migrant memories was created out of the necessity to collect, share and acknowledge the everyday stories of people who, through a combination of choice, determination, and external forces, decided to leave their country in search of a new future, and eventually settled in or transited through the Italian peninsula. The Archive's aim since the beginning has been to invite researchers and migrants to produce participatory oral, written and audiovisual narratives so as to enable migrants to familiarise themselves with collection, archiving and dissemination practices related to their own stories and testimonies. This participatory process has brought Italians and non-Italians together not just for academic research but for a unique ethical and political project that aspires to turn transnational migration into a shared collective heritage.

The idea of compiling an archive of audio and visual memories made by and for migrants came out of the joint effort of a group of field researchers, refugees and asylum seekers originally from the Horn of Africa, together with schoolteachers and cultural operators interested in making *migrant memory* a valuable *shared concern* for all. Through

the daily welcoming and care of immigrants at an Italian school in Rome, and the decision to base teaching methods and materials on the lived experience of transnational mobility, learning Italian was conceived as a necessary *survival* measure for migrants who wanted to honour the memory and dignity of their migratory journey to Italy. Narrating their own story soon became a way of recovering from the anguish of the journey, and of expressing their personal needs and desires.

Our previous educational experience comes from a collaboration with *Medici Contro la Tortura* (Doctors Against Torture), who worked with us on the first attempts at recording stories of migrants and asylum seekers, including accounts of traumas they suffered on their journeys or in the country of origin, transit or destination. With the active participation of migrants in the creation of listening groups as opposed to face-to-face encounters, we gradually reconstructed their life experiences (including traumatic ones) and transformed them into materials for sympathetic listening and self-reflection. Through a combination of public and private funds, and the input of media experts who joined our volunteers and researchers, we began organising events and exhibitions and creating participatory video-testimonies and documentaries.

We have explored the communicative and community-building potential of the audiovisual materials as a mediating tool in a multicultural and multilingual context of learning and the exchange of experiences. We have screened our audiovisual works to small audiences, schools, community centres and university groups, and we have made them available to migrant communities and social networks. In this way, the Archive has begun its *migration* to public forums and media.

Make Film History

The project focus is the creative reuse of the audiovisual archive by young filmmakers in education. Through the practice research of student projects, young filmmakers critically engage with film and social history and create their own responses to found fragments of audiovisual history.

Once licensed by an educational institution, over two hundred films can be downloaded by tutors for use in the classroom, on campus or online. Students browse our website, choose an archive film to respond to and request download access to the film, integrating clips of up to two minutes into their own documentaries.

Ithaca

The audiovisual and, more generally, digitised documents have a crucial role in the project, especially in the construction of the ITHACA digital platform. To better inform the present, what we need is to create an adequate corpus of well-archived oral, written, and audiovisual sources, records, and archival collections to back in-depth studies of internal and external historical mobility across Europe and in the Mediterranean area. Many more attempts have to be made at archiving, digitising, cataloguing or preserving direct migration sources in the European context at the levels of government, NGOs, migrant communities and individual stakeholders.

One of the main aims is to save fragile and endangered sources of the recent past or of the present. At the same time, the response to this task cannot be *emotional* or disorganised. The task of meticulously compiling documents, ordering them into coherent categories, establishing detailed and well-structured archives, and developing exhaustive research aids is vitally important.

Beyond the urgent need to preserve the narratives of migrants and on migration, we want to enhance them for the production of historical knowledge as well as for more effective development of policies to govern migration flows. The basic idea is to build a digital archive that preserves and analyses memories of migration, both for scholars and for practitioners, policymakers and migrants themselves.

The idea is to allow the analysis of migration narratives in an open perspective, in time, space and their roots, to facilitate the identification of recurring elements, diversities and ruptures that will enable more effective research, reflection and policy making.

Reel Borders

We have started building databases of *border films* for each of the three cases, quickly realising that this exercise also involved thinking about demarcations of national versus transnational cinema, professional versus amateur cinema, documentary versus fiction, etcetera. The question of the archive comes in because it allows one to obtain a more diverse view on films that are relevant to the border imaginaries, beyond the traditional canon and beyond the usual lists. In the case of Ireland and Northern Ireland, for instance, we discovered that there are a lot of relevant films that form part of amateur archives and we are now using this as a starting point to question and complicate dichotomies of amateur and professional filmmaking in border imaginaries.

For example, we are collecting in-depth interviews with the directors of the Irish Film Institute (Kasandra O'Connell) and the Digital Film Archive of Northern Ireland Screen (Francis Jones), as well as with promoters of independent initiatives that have been focused on collecting and archiving amateur film and audiovisual footage of crucial historical periods and places (such as the Prisons Memory Archive[11] and the Belfast Archive Project[12]). By putting in dialogue these institutional and non-institutional archives, we analyse the different policies for acquiring, preserving, disseminating, and representing amateur films in both Ireland and Northern Ireland, looking at the role they play in building a notion of cinema memory in post-conflict societies and young nations.

3. What relationship does the archive have with the experiences of migrant people? What kind of material do you have, and how do you work with it?

Archive/Counter-Archive

Our case study on the Winnipeg Film Group (WFG) is a great example of how Archive/Counter-Archive's approach in terms of counter-archives can both reveal the erasure of the contributions made by minoritised communities and further help create new materials. Founded in 1974, WFG is central to any history of independent and experimental filmmaking in Canada. The A/CA case study is extending the preservation efforts WFG itself has undertaken in recent years, digging deep into their archives to identify those films sidelined and subordinated in conventional histories of the organisation—in particular, films made by Indigenous people, the Black community, and people of colour, many of whom arrived as migrants to Canada, whether directly or as second or third generation children of migrants. These works have the capability of transforming our understanding of the city, its cinema, and the cultures that converge here. In addition to identifying and preserving these works, an artist-in-residence will work with and in the WFG archive, having carte blanche to both create and critique, to recognise the possibilities that WFG opened up for independent filmmakers over the course of its history, but also to acknowledge the exclusions and elisions that complicate and compromise these achievements.

The WFG artist-in-residence program builds on other successful residency programs that A/CA case studies have featured. Archive/Counter-Archive partnered up with Library and Archives Canada (LAC) to create two inaugural artist residencies there. Jennifer Dysart (autumn 2019) and Nadine Valcin (winter 2020) worked with LAC's archivist Caroline Forcier-Holloway to activate, remediate, and engage with AV collections at LAC and to create artworks that imagine new counter-archives. Dysart's work examined various films from the colonial era that often end up in archives without information about the Indigenous people and communities shown. Her goal was to identify the families shown in the Keewatin Missions film, housed at LAC, which shows the Catholic archdiocese covering much of central and northern Canada in the 1950s. Nadine Valcin's film, *Origines*, is a two-channel media installation that uses footage from Claude Jutra's 1963 film À Tout Prendre (Take it All) to explore his then lover and film co-star Johanne Harrelle's complicated quest for identity as a Black Francophone woman in Canada.

Since we are located in Canada, it is imperative for us to adopt an intersectional perspective that takes into consideration the genocidal displacement of Indigenous peoples through the settler-colonial histories of English and French European conquest. To be clear, Indigenous peoples are not migrant communities—and yet the legacies of colonialism have effectively positioned Indigenous people as minoritised communities in Canada. "From Birchbark Scrolls to Online Activism: Archives at Urban Shaman and Shoal Lake 40 First Nation" explores the relationships between archives, art, and Indigenous First Nation Shoal Lake 40 in relation to the city of Winnipeg and Anishinaabe archival protocols. This case study activated archives through praxis-based and relational Indigenous methodologies that oriented AV material through the land and its histories, expanding the archive beyond traditional colonial forms of documentation. In July 2021, Urban Shaman hosted Angelina McLeod's show *Mide-wigwas: Transmediating*, curated by Daina Warren and Jessica Jacobson-Konefall. This exhibition came out of McLeod's research at the City of Winnipeg archives and the Glenbow Museum in Calgary. At the City archives, she assessed over 1,000 photographic images for the exhibition, considering Shoal Lake 40 First Nation's relationship to Winnipeg in the present and

future. In early 2020, just before the pandemic, McLeod visited the Redsky birchbark scrolls at the Glenbow Museum, analysing the audio files created by James Redsky, explaining the scrolls' narratives, meanings, and histories.

The Arnait Video Productions case study focuses on a collection of films and production materials created by Arnait (originally the Women's Video Workshop of Igloolik) in Nunavut. A team of A/CA researchers from Queen's University, through their Vulnerable Media Lab, have been collaborating closely with the Arnait video collective of Inuit women to remediate and digitise the Arnait archive and keep it alive and well. The collection encompasses thirty years of stories, interviews, production materials, and documentation. We have been working to make the digitised films and media content available to the collective and, in consultation with Arnait members, to make some content accessible to the general public.

A/CA is committed to further centring Indigenous methodologies and archival protocols. In 2021, we held a Summer Institute, led by Stacy Allison-Cassin, focused on "The Practice of Indigenous Metadata and Knowledge Organization." These discussions will be further developed during the *Indigenous Archives Gathering* event set to take place in October 2022, organised in collaboration with the ImagineNATIVE film and media festival, in Toronto. The *Indigenous Archives Gathering* will bring together Indigenous artists, film and media specialists, archivists, curators, Knowledge Keepers, Elders, memory workers and scholars from across Canada. Themes of traces and care will be explored through three perspectives: 1) access; 2) engagement; and 3) activation of archives from different First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities from multiple regions. The central focus of the *Indigenous Archives Gathering* will be media art archives and related intangible archives that exist within traditional memory institutions, artist-run centres, communities, and homes/private life. The aim is to foster conversa-

tions and allow participants to share knowledge and identify needs, best practices, and experiences about the current state of Indigenous media art archives in Canada. The presentations and outcomes of this gathering will be published as a part of A/CA's publication series.

Archive of migrant memories

In our project migrants are considered the main actors of the narrative and of archiving practices. They are involved not only in the narrative phase, but also in the dissemination of the sources they have produced or gathered. We have texts, multimedia self-narratives, participatory video products, academic writings concerning our methodology and projects. We use them in dissemination events such as school workshops, public screenings, academic conferences and public events. Sometimes we also use materials that were produced and archived in the past in order to produce new materials that acquire new meanings in the present.

Make Film History

We have several films reflecting the migrant and the refugee experience.[13] These have prompted very interesting responses from students, including *The New Road* (2020), a graduation film made by Iranian refugee Sinai Noor in the M.A. filmmaking course at Kingston School of Art. Here is an excerpt from the film's IMDB synopsis: "The film glimpses the life of an art student who fled to the UK in 2018 and a Hungarian who fled to the UK in the 1950s—both representing the common refugee experience in modern times."

Ithaca

Mainstream and scientific accounts of forced migration and, in particular, irregular human mobility toward Europe are often plagued with over-simplistic, fragmented, and at times even rhetorical representations of the relationships between migrants travelling across borders and the

wide array of facilitators, *passeurs*, and/or smugglers accompanying them along these routes. According to most of the narratives disseminated by the media, by policymakers but also by some studies, migrants are depicted as irrational and basically desperate and passive actors exploited by hardened and unscrupulous criminals whose profile is often overdetermined by the perspective of criminal justice and border control measures. Alternative narratives, however, especially those collected from migrants themselves, point to the intricate web of social and cultural processes, relations and dynamics underlying border-crossing, as also reflected in the complex array of relationships that migrants and facilitators actually establish with each other. Hence, the ITHACA project will identify similarities and/or discrepancies between these two different narrative fields, paying specific attention to the need to incorporate migrants' perspectives and experiences into the production of knowledge about the phenomenon.

The materials collected on the ITHACA digital platform will be chosen from a wide range of typologies and chronologies: from the Middle Ages to the present, and from historical documents, mostly preserved in the archives, to interviews and recordings made by migrants themselves.

Reel Borders

In Ireland, we work mostly with amateur film archives made in Ireland and Northern Ireland, but also in England and North America as they have been the main destinations of Irish migrants since 1845 due to the Irish Potato Famine. In the case of Morocco-Spain, we have video archives made by migrants from Guinea Conakry, Côte d'Ivoire, and Cameroon who have crossed the borders of Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, and Ceuta, and film and video archives of independent filmmakers made on both sides of this border. What unifies such a diverse sample of archives is their capacity to reveal the common colonial past and to understand the *migrant archive* as a site for negotiating the geopolitical locations of cinema beyond nation-states. For the archives coming from the migrants who record their attempts at border crossing, these archives mean a *mobile* practice of both filmmaking and placemaking. In any case, the archive might be seen as a transversal site of memory that criss-crosses nations, periods, and cultures and that therefore addresses a global history of mostly forced mobilities.

4. In what ways does the project encourage engagement with hidden or lesser-known audio-visual heritage and how does it expand the notion of cultural heritage? How do your archival practices challenge official narratives about nationhood, history, and identity?

Archive/Counter-Archive

Our work with the Regent Park Film Festival (RPFF) is a good example of the kinds of projects we have been developing with diverse communities in Canada. RPFF is a community partner and part of the research network of A/CA. It is a non-profit cultural and educational media arts organisation grounded in Canada's largest and oldest public housing neighbourhood, which hosts Toronto's longest running (since 2003) free community film festival. RPFF is a staple in the community. In addition to an annual festival in November, it offers year-round screenings, an annual School Program, workshops, and community events at no cost.

RPFF is dedicated to showcasing local and international independent works relevant to people from all walks of life. The key constituencies that RPFF serves are IBPOC communities, people with low incomes, people who live in public housing, and Regent Park residents, many of whom were part of different historical waves of immigration to Canada, including contemporary migrants. The films RPFF presents break stereotypes and show that no one place or person has just one story. This past November at their 19th Annual Film Festival, RPFF featured a panel, "Disrupting the Archives," that showcased the works of A/CA's two artists in residence at LAC. The panel featured the artists along with the archivist at LAC who supported them. RPFF also screened the media arts works through their digital platform.

To commemorate its 20th anniversary in 2022, RPFF commissioned four local IBPOC artists (prioritising gender diversity and those from Regent Park or similar communities in Toronto) to produce digital media arts works that engage with the history of Regent Park. The basis for their artistic engagements will include visual source material such as archival footage of Regent Park (e.g., documentaries, news coverage, home videos from residents), as well as narrative media forms set in Regent Park (e.g., short and feature films, web series episodes, music videos). The commissioned projects will have opportunities to use film source material and audiovisual archives as part of their new artistic work. They will creatively respond to any film source material (with permission) or tell their own story that is rooted in the history of Regent Park.

The project is titled "Regent Park Made Visible" because it showcases and artistically engages with the history of a quickly changing community through visual responses. The title also references RPFF's last artistic commissioning project, Home Made Visible (2018-19), where six works were commissioned to engage with digitised home movies of IBPOC Canadians and reflect on the power of how archives shape our relationship to the past and shared identities on colonised land. The 80 preserved films are in a collection at the Clara Thomas Archives at York University.

Archive of migrant memories

To build a migrants' archive together with the actors of migration has been for us not only an educational choice but a sign of welcome to the newcomers to our society: to empower their testimonies so that they can be spoken and heard, and to ask our fellow citizens simply to listen and allow them to express themselves and to be publicly recognised. Our objective has been to keep records, and leave public traces, of the transnational identity that has slowly but steadily been manifesting itself in Italy in the recent past. It is for this reason that the Archive has been for us a tool for change and an instrument of "memory action", a space in which narrated and shared memories may

become circular, reciprocal, narratable, and where established dichotomies (citizen/migrant, lawful/clandestine, us/them) are openly questioned.

Through the involvement of bigger institutional archives—such as the ICBSA (National Institute for Sound and Audiovisual Heritage) in Rome (see below)—we also try to attract the interest of institutional bodies and civic communities—especially those playing a key role in shaping public memory—in the *minority* but no less substantial stories of our contemporary condition. The aim is to hold central institutions more accountable for decentralising, denationalising, and decolonising the public sphere in order to make it more inclusive and aware of the memory gaps between communities.

Make Film History

By working with our project partners, we make films about hidden or lesser-known audiovisual heritage accessible to young filmmakers in education, not just for viewing but for inclusion in their films. We work with the curation teams of our project partners to make the selection of films as diverse and inclusive as possible and are responsive to requests from students and staff at participating institutions. We are about to add another 80 films from BBC Archive on the themes of the environment, diversity, and mental health and neurodiversity.

The project has created a new research network around the creative reuse of archive material by young filmmakers, developing new partnerships between academic researchers and a range of non-academic partners, audiovisual archives and cultural heritage organisations that preserve and license this material, schools and training providers developing new talent in the creative industries, and regional film festivals that bring the local film community together.

Ithaca

To dismantle the current public debate, often based on rhetoric and prejudices, the ITHACA project intends to investigate the narratives on migrations and migrants produced by different actors (policymakers, media, humanitarian workers, public authorities).

The identification, description and access to archives, both international and institutional, are crucial in this sense. But also extremely important is the exploitation of sources associated with the present, such as audiovisual platforms or social media. If we want to understand migration as a long-term phenomenon, we need to compare *traditional* historical sources with those testimonies that are used today to transmit and define the experience of and about migration.

Reel Borders

By working with participatory filmmaking we hope to expand the scope of stories and voices when it comes to border areas. This will complement and complicate more institutional narratives about the border. At the same time, we want to use the project to explore how film can be a way to develop future imaginaries, thus also complementing the heavy focus that (institutional) archives usually put on historical memory and national identity.

5. How do you approach mediation and the transfer of knowledge to society at large? What are the main outreach initiatives designed for social engagement? How do you work with the archive in educational and artistic contexts?

Archive/Counter-Archive

A/CA fundamentally aims not only to preserve and activate existing archives, but also to think about the future of AV archives. In that context, we are training the next generation of archivists through internships at our partner institutions and developing guidelines and best practices for the preservation of counter-archival materials. Similarly, we are currently writing a report that will analyse current federal and provincial/territorial policies and funding programs for community-driven archives that include audiovisual archives in Canada. This report will lead to policy recommendations that will help support the evolving media archive ecosystem.

Furthermore, we are digitising and historicising various films and videos that are currently deteriorating—in effect helping these works to find a new life and to be shown to new audiences. Several of the films we helped preserve are now back in circulation and can be shown to new audiences, be it in classrooms or in theatres. Several of our researchers are creating various pedagogical and educational guides (led by Chloë Brushwood-Rose in the Faculty of Education, York University) that will enable these films to be used in classes of any topic and level, in both secondary and postsecondary settings.

Archive of migrant memories

In the past ten years the following outreach activities for wider social and cultural engagement have been pursued:

The DiMMi Project

DIMMI (Diari Multimediali Migranti/Multimedia Diaries by Migrants) is an Italian storytelling contest aimed at collecting and giving publicity to stories by people from foreign countries who live

or have lived in Italy or in the Republic of San Marino. The contest has a dual objective: soliciting, collecting and preserving migrant self-narratives, and contrasting anti-migration stereotypes through multimedia representations of personal experience.

Originally supported by the Region of Tuscany in 2014 with the aim of raising citizens' awareness and promoting their social involvement, in 2018 it became a national project financed by the Italian Agency for Cooperation and Development for issues such as peace, memory and intercultural dialogue. The DIMMI project has resulted today in the creation of a growing collection of migrants' diaries housed in the Archivio Diaristico Nazionale (National Diary Archive) at Pieve Santo Stefano, where each year a DIMMI Prize is awarded.

AMM has participated in the DiMMi project from the start, cooperating in the collection of testimonies and life stories and sharing its own experience of collecting, producing and preserving audio and video self-narratives.

The Mutti Prize

Cultural policies encouraging film production (along the lines of the Arts Council in the UK) and direct investments by television channels (such as Channel 4, Artè and ZDF) are rare in Italy, and with few exceptions there is virtually no support for cinema from the global South. The Mutti Prize for foreign and Italian filmmakers of migrant origin was created in 2008 by Officina Cinema Sud-Est in collaboration with the Bologna Cineteca with the dual aim of promoting new forms of self-representation through films and documentaries and of stimulating the development of more inclusive cultural policies.

The prize is awarded to foreign and Italian authors from Asia, Africa, Eastern Europe, the Balkans, the Middle East, Central and South America who have lived in Italy for at least twelve months. The prize is the only Italian venture of this kind for migrant and/or foreign filmmakers resident in Italy, created to support art and inclusion in the field of cinema. The prize helps to select a film project presented by a migrant or foreign director who receives 18,000 euros to support film production.

For foreign filmmakers or Italian filmmakers of migrant origin living in Italy it is almost impossible to find funding for their work.

AMM was invited to join the Mutti prize in 2012 after one of its migrant directors, Dagmawi Yimer from Ethiopia, won the prize that year.

The FRMM-Migrant Memories Network Collection
The Migrant Memories Network Collection (FRMM) hosted at the ICBSA (National Institute for Sound and Audiovisual Heritage) in Rome contains audiovisual material on transnational memory and mobility in Italy. The collection originated with an agreement signed in 2012 between the Archive of migrant memories, Circolo Gianni Bosio, the University of Naples "L'Orientale" and the Central Institute for Sound and Audiovisual Heritage. In 2021, the agreement was renegotiated between AMM, Circolo Gianni Bosio, the Global Humanities degree program at the University of Rome La Sapienza, the National Diary Archive of Pieve S. Stefano (DiMMi project) and the Central Institute for Sound and Audiovisual Heritage.

The main objective of the FRMM is the preservation of the audio and visual heritage produced by intercultural and transnational projects in a network of different individuals involved in recording social and cultural interactions currently taking place in Italy. The collection focuses specifically on the preservation of audio and video documents created by people with different historical, cultural, social, and linguistic migration experi-

ences, which are constantly growing in number in the country. The collection comprises memoirs, narratives, music, writing, sound and video testimonies—produced by foreign communities in Italy and by individual migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers—with the aim of making them part of the national heritage accessible to the public once they are included in the national archiving network of the National Institute and its preservation and evaluation system.

ITHACA H2020 project
More recently, AMM has received a grant from the EU's Horizon2020 programme, in the context of the ITHACA project *Interconnecting Histories and Archives for Migrant Agency: Entangled Narratives Across Europe and the Mediterranean Region* (g.a. 101004539). In this project, AMM is in charge of coordinating research activities concerning present migration narratives, with partners in France, Jordan, Italy, Morocco, the Netherlands, and Tunisia; it is also carrying out specific research on current migration with migrants in Italy and Tunisia. AMM focuses its research on self-narratives and participatory methods. The research is based on a series of *narrative circles*—group workshops involving five to eight people each—with people from Afghanistan, Sub-Saharan Africa and North Africa. These *narrative circles* aim to foster collective exchanges of life stories between migrants and Italians involved as researchers, practitioners, and activists. Particular attention is paid to the participants' reflections on the meaning, significance, and effects of self-narratives in their experiences.

At School with the Other
Drawing on our experience in 2013 of producing an educational toolkit based on one of our films (*Va' Pensiero. Itinerant stories*, Dagmawi Yimer, 2013), AMM has devoted part of its activities to disseminating migrants' self-representation in schools, through self-narrative laboratories ai-

ming at reproducing the same participatory process adopted with migrants in the classroom. The core idea behind AMM's workshop is that experiencing self-narratives, and the complex relational dynamics they entail, increases one's ability to listen carefully to other voices.

Make Film History

Since our launch symposium in September 2020, we have run a series of events that have taken three forms: industry panels and workshops, exploring the key themes and research questions of the network; creative workshops and virtual film camps where young filmmakers can engage with archive material on short film projects, mentored by professional filmmakers, and regional archives and training organisations can pilot creative reuse in a festival setting; and follow-on events where some of the work produced through the project has been screened for the local community.

Some of the films produced have been showcased at film festivals in Cork, Rathmullan, Glasgow, Leeds and London. As part of last year's BFI Future Film Festival, 605 people attended an online workshop led by Turner Prize-winning artist and filmmaker Jeremy Deller, which demonstrated the value of the Make Film History collection and led to new institutions signing up to the scheme. We held another sold-out workshop yesterday with filmmaker Charlie Shackleton at this year's edition of the festival.

Ithaca

The development of a digital platform will highlight the importance of network analysis in historical appraisal, allowing new levels of complexity and reaching a wider public. This last point underscores the historian's importance as mediator, a particular element that has emerged recently with the development and spread of so-called digital public history. Within ITHACA, social science researchers, archivists, curators, humanitarian workers, migrant and refugee associations and digital developers collaborate together. Crucially, this interdisciplinary approach will be associated with a solid and rigorous documentation search.

Another fundamental initiative planned in the ITHACA project is the so-called Policy Council System: the project results will be verified each year with actors outside the academic community, in particular policymakers, practitioners, migrants, and experts on migratory phenomena from civil society. This will allow academic research to interact more effectively with society and help to *translate* research results into policy briefs and recommendations, i.e., operational proposals to inform the migration policies of governments and practitioners.

Reel Borders

Since we are still in the early stages of the project we are not able to give a lot of details on this yet. However, in one sub-study of the project participatory processes are central and the aim is to collaborate with people living in border areas, with community organisations and local filmmakers. Our objective is to develop outreach initiatives that emerge from these participatory processes. We will make short films together with participants about their border experiences and we plan to develop ways to make these films visible to a wider audience as part of film festivals or an (online) exhibition. In this way, we can hopefully bridge the scientific, artistic and educational domains.

6. At this point, could you summarize some of the main findings of the project?

Archive/Counter-Archive

Here, we focus on how the partnership network has yielded results at this halfway point to demonstrate the critical importance of cross-pollination across archival, artistic, and academic communities. Partner organisations have been crucial to the work happening on the project and are embedded at all levels in the structure of our case studies and working groups, training opportunities, and knowledge mobilisation. Collaboration is imperative to the project. Embedding partner organisation involvement in all aspects of the project has helped to bridge conversations and shared concerns for the future of AV preservation and archiving across the sectors engaged.

Partner organisations of different sizes have different needs. The challenge has been how to balance and respond to their needs. For example, due to COVID-19, ArQuives (Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives) has needed another space for their MITACS postdoctoral researcher to carry out archival work while following safety protocols. We connected ArQuives to another archival space at the Sexuality Representation Centre at the University of Toronto (overseen by Patrick Kielty) so that research could continue safely this year.

Training and mentorship are cornerstones of A/CA. One of our research findings is that training must be designed to attend to the complex ethical and political issues of protocol, cultural property issues, and intersectional claims tied to notions of national heritage. Despite COVID-19, our trainees have been provided with training in Indigenous protocols, metadata creation and knowledge architectures through annual workshops. Via the Vulnerable Media Lab at Queen's, students are being trained in the latest best practices for AV digitisation, archival digital asset workflow, and long-term storage. Our academic partner, the Film and Photography Preservation and Collec-

tions Management program at Toronto Metropolitan University, has organised annual media rich internships at memory institutions and archives across Ontario and Quebec. Whether at a small artist-run centre or at LAC, these placements have given students hands-on training in managing AV assets, including the management of their records and metadata. Our Summer Institute, "Locating Media Archives", in spring 2021 provided 37 students from across Canada with training in Indigenous preservation protocols, and the ethics surrounding AIDS activist archives and vulnerable media. In total, 20 academic courses have been developed alongside 12 seminars, workshops, and master classes.

One of our most significant research findings has come from our Indigenous case studies to help us understand the complex protocols of Indigenous archives. The Indigenous Methodologies Working Group identified a need to gather Indigenous artists, academics, archivists, curators, Elders, and community members to build on the A/CA network and research mandate, to delve deeper into the state of Indigenous archives. This includes a focus on ancestral knowledge, storytelling and memory keeping, as well as strategies of archival preservation and activation within community or memory institutions—embodied and/or intangible. A successful grant was co-written by the team to support the aforementioned *Indigenous Archives Gathering* in 2022.

Archive of migrant memories

Over the years, we have come to the conclusion that besides basic aspects of life such as income, housing and documentation, one of the *basic needs* of migrants is a context of mutual intercultural understanding. Our participatory activities clearly show that the quality of narration, the kind of details migrants are willing to share about their live experience, and the possibility of expos-

ing unexpected and non-conventional viewpoints on migration in the public sphere strongly depend on a careful arrangement of an inclusive listening context.

Make Film History

We are currently writing a Creative Reuse Guide, which will summarise the main findings of the research network phase of the project. The project won the 2021 Excellence in Unlocking the Value and Potential of Archives Award from FIAT/IFTA, the world's leading professional association for those engaged in the preservation and exploitation of broadcast archives.

Ithaca

The project has been running for a year and in 2022 it will begin on-field activities and discussions with stakeholders and policymakers. What has already emerged in the first year of work, unfortunately hampered by the pandemic situation, is the importance of thinking from a multidisciplinary perspective. The ICT design of the digital platform, which is now at an early stage, has succeeded in bringing together scholars from different disciplines: their research perspectives will come together in a unified architecture and will therefore dialogue with each other. The outcomes of this challenge are what we will measure and reflect on over the next three years of the project.

Reel Borders

We are just at the start of a long data collection period, so it is unfortunately too soon to talk about definite findings. However, having concentrated mainly on the Irish and Northern Irish border so far, we have managed to find some promising paths for our research.

The border between Ireland and Northern Ireland, where we have started our research, is a unique space for the experience of film. Despite its troubled history marked by the tug of war between Ireland and the UK, religious sectarianism and the violence associated with paramilitary groups, the porosity of the border and its underlying social relations have consolidated local cultures related to film. Many associations promote film festivals, film screenings and many other activities in these border towns, allowing many people to travel across the border to attend these events.

On the other hand, we have realised that the lack of a sustained local film industry in Ireland until the 1970s contrasts with the fruitful work of Irish amateur filmmakers, who were producing snapshots of the most relevant events of the beginning of the 20th century in pre- and post-partition Ireland. These amateur collections today constitute a social and historical heritage to understand the local film culture in Ireland, which diverges from the visions of some foreign companies, like British Pathé or Topical Budget, who were framing (and visually *promoting*) a divided Ireland even before the partition. In this sense, the research by scholar Ciara Chambers is seminal.

7. What will happen to the archive once the project is finished?

Archive/Counter-Archive

The fate of the films, video, and other documentation preserved and activated by A/CA—including the project's own records—remains an open and active question for the project leadership team. Although the digitised films are preserved in perpetuity at the Centre for Advanced Computing at Queen's University, they are not publicly accessible. The oft-ignored vulnerability of born-digital collections is a concern for A/CA and the reason that it abandoned its initial plans for a digital online portal, as its main planned research dissemination outlet was unstable given the changing nature of digital portals and platforms. The rapid obsolescence of digital platforms (e.g., websites, CD-ROMs) has led A/CA to move to a media rich book series that has media elements that will be planned for longevity.

Each case study is dealing with questions of how to archive its collections and how to find local and specific solutions to the problem of preservation. Most of the major independent film and video distributors in Canada – CFMDC, Vtape, VIVO, WFG, GIV – are members of A/CA, and each have become "accidental archives": over time, the media works that they distribute have often become the sole copy, raising complex legal, ethical, and resource questions. These organisations have been wrestling with these issues for some time, and we hope that the knowledge-sharing and training facilitated by A/CA, including a report on copyright and IP by the Cultural Policy, Intellectual Property, and Ecology Working Group, will have positive long-term effects for the sector.

The vulnerability of AV media and its documentation is a dilemma for the entire independent AV sector in Canada, where state funding supporting artists and researchers has rarely considered questions of archiving. The Canada Council for the Arts supports the production and dissemination of art works, but not their preservation, which is deemed others' responsibility. Yet archives in Canada, from the national through provincial, regional, and municipal levels, are severely under-resourced. Community archives are particularly vulnerable, partly because most archivists are trained in paper-based archival methods, which often render AV materials outliers in collections. Moreover, the resources required for proper archiving of film, video, and digital media—specific to each format and physical material—is beyond the capacity of most small archives. A basic goal of A/CA is to bring people from across the archival sector (from LAC to local archives) with the film and media arts community (from TIFF to artist-run centres), together with academic faculty and students, in order to share expertise, resources, and experiences. The sustainability of this knowledge network will be monitored over time. We are hoping that the A/CA project will not simply end but continue as a network managed by the Independent Media Arts Alliance (IMAA) or one of the other partners on the project.

Archive of migrant memories

As a small association we have established robust relationships with other institutions in order to guarantee the preservation of our archive in the long term. Both the FRMM-migrant memories Network Collection at the ICBSA in Rome and the Ithaca superarchive meet this goal.

Make Film History

Our research network funding finishes in March 2022 but the project will continue and the licensing agreements for the archive material do not expire until 2030, sustaining the life of the project.

Ithaca

The archive is designed to survive and continue to grow. The consortium has already foreseen

that the ITHACA digital platform will continue to live and grow: at the end of the project, the project coordination will keep the platform running and a special tool (MigrApp) will allow anyone who logs on to record and deposit their *narrative* of/about a migration. The idea is to create an open project and, above all, a prototype: it is an experiment at the service of the scientific community and society, which we expect will be expanded in the future and shared with other similar projects thanks to the principle of interoperability of data that inspires us.

Reel Borders

In a way, our project is making its *own* archive with the films created in the workshops, which re-make and give new meaning to the archives of others. In this sense, we can talk about the *migratory* nature of the archives enabled by the hyper-mediatisation of images in today's digital landscape—which means that we can contribute to creating a site for new generations to renegotiate previous discourses of (symbolic, territorial) borders by taking advantage of the polysemic value of the archives for the imagination of new futures.

We also hope to have screenings of these films at the end of the project and to circulate them in other border communities. This is still an idea that we have to work on, but our aim is to plan film exhibitions (with the consent for the screening of these films by each author) and to create an archive of new voices and perspectives on borders. ∎

| conclusion

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In the preceding pages, we have orchestrated a meeting of scholars to share theoretical, ethical and material concerns and their manifestation in research experiences with moving images on migratory phenomena. Our main objective has been to create a space for international academic exchange, an enriching experience that generally takes place at conferences, but that has been drastically reduced in recent years due to the restrictions imposed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Considering the effect that this situation may have had on these projects, in terms of impact and dissemination of research outputs, our purpose has been to shed light on recent projects where archival research and creation are central and an awareness of the openness of archival production and access is always kept alive. Although most

of the projects presented here tend to be centred around a national framework due to the nature of the sources of funding that support them, their attention to migration and their investment in local contexts have transnational repercussions. As noted in the introduction to (Dis)Agreements, in line with Giovanna Fossati's observations on global archival practices (2021), we believe that scholars and professionals involved in archival practices need to pursue inclusive collaboration when developing new epistemological and technological approaches to digitisation and the activities related to the different collections in order to correct numerous asymmetries. These inclusive collaborations call for interaction not only between the Global North and the Global South, as Fossati proposes, but also between institutional

and non-institutional archives, as can be inferred from the projects described here. As noted throughout the dialogue, unofficial archives like these become *counter-archives*, not necessarily in the sense of being anti-official archives, but rather in their comprehensive effort to cover a wide range of highly vulnerable film and media materials and practices that have traditionally been excluded/occluded from institutional archiving processes and official historical records and narratives. Among other interests, these initiatives show a particular concern with documentary, independent and amateur films and videos, productions by Indigenous collectives—particularly present in Canada, with Winnipeg Film Group or Arnait Video Productions—or videos created by migrants arriving in Italy, on which the Archive of migrant memories is based.

Our experience with the Archive of Cinematic Mobility has raised many of the questions posed to our colleagues here, particularly those related to the return of these materials to the communities concerned and the social knowledge transfer to society at large. It is revealing that these experiences—despite their geographical, economic, institutional and developmental differences—constitute a clear example of how film studies on human mobility and cinema—which include migration processes, exiles and refugees—advocate for direct critical intervention in the public space. Under these terms, research is not only about searching, retrieving, cataloguing these materials and sometimes making them available online, but also about reciprocity and dialogue between academics, archivists, artists, students, activists and grassroots communities. Specifically, we can identify a clear commitment to participatory dynamics that often include the use by young people

of film materials that are unknown or inaccessible to them outside the collaborative contexts these projects have built.

At the same time, a crucial aspect that concerns both the migrant archive and these projects is the preservation of materials and their open access through digitisation and online dissemination. Initiatives such as Making Film History are only possible thanks to a strong institutional commitment and previous efforts by film libraries. However, legal issues establish limitations on the duration and geographical scope of the project. The vulnerability and complexity of digital collections therefore seem to require a constant dialogue between different archives, film libraries and researchers for their long-term preservation.

Finally, the emphasis on the role of academic institutions as mediators or facilitators raises important ethical and political questions—and, in the case of minority communities, access, protocols, and archival management have been the subject of significant debate (see O'Neal, 2015). As the Archive of migrant memories explicitly points out, these projects also question institutions in the sense that an inclusive public sphere (sensitive to the differences between vulnerable communities) can only be articulated "through the decentralization, denationalization and decolonization of archives," in the words of Gianluca Gatta and Sandro Triulzi. As has been discussed in these (Dis)Agreements, the migrant archive not only reveals different colonial legacies whose histories connect with current migratory phenomena, but also allows the construction of a pluralist national and cinematic memory. In conclusion, migrant archives constitute a space for negotiating geopolitical locations of cinema beyond nation-states.∎

\(DIS)AGREEMENTS

NOTES

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The different conversations took place by e-mail from October 2021 to February 2022. For the Archivio delle memorie migranti (AMM), Alessandro Triulzi wrote the answers to questions 1, 2 and 5 and Gianluca Gatta those of questions 3, 4, 6 and 7.

1 Available at https://humanidadesdigitales.uc3m.es/s/cine-de-movilidad/page/inicio

2 Available at https://counterarchive.ca/welcome

3 Available at https://www.archiviomemoriemigranti.net/about-us/?lang=en

4 Available at https://ithacahorizon.eu/

5 Available at https://www.archivesforeducation.com/makefilmhistory

6. Available at https://reelborders.eu/Home

7 Available at https://ifiarchiveplayer.ie/

8 Available at https://digitalfilmarchive.net/index

9 Available at https://player.bfi.org.uk/

10 Available at https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer

11 Available at https://www.prisonsmemoryarchive.com/

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ARCHIVES-IN-THE-MAKING, VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES AND MIGRATION: OUTREACH AND INNOVATIVE SCHOLARSHIP IN AUDIOVISUAL-BASED RESEARCH PROJECTS AND ASSOCIATIONS

Abstract

The (Dis)Agreements section brings together four research projects and an association engaged in the preservation, creation and restoration of archives, especially audiovisual archives, connected with migratory phenomena and subaltern communities. The dialogue with the researchers of these initiatives—based in Canada, Italy, the UK and Belgium—covers the origins of these projects and explores their goals, their theoretical and ethical positions, their relations with grassroots communities, their outreach activities and the difficulties associated with preserving the materials included in their archives in the digital era. In general, these projects take a critical approach to traditional archives, functioning as counter-archives whereby the institutions operate more as facilitators than as repositories or proprietary organisations.

Key words

Audiovisual archives; Research projects; Border cinema; Migration cinema; Vulnerable communities; Outreach.

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ARCHIVOS EN CONSTRUCCIÓN, COMUNIDADES VULNERABLES Y MIGRACIÓN: TRANSFERENCIA E INVESTIGACIÓN INNOVADORA EN PROYECTOS Y ASOCIACIONES AUDIOVISUALES

Resumen

La sección (Des)encuentros reúne cuatro proyectos de investigación y una asociación comprometidos con la preservación, generación y remediación de archivos, fundamentalmente audiovisuales, vinculados a fenómenos migratorios y comunidades subalternas. Este diálogo mantenido con los/as investigadores/as de iniciativas transnacionales afincadas en Italia, Canadá, Reino Unido y Bélgica recorre los orígenes de estos proyectos y explora sus objetivos, aspectos teóricos y éticos, las relaciones con comunidades de base, las actividades de transferencia y las dificultades de preservación de unos materiales, per se precarios, en el entorno digital. En líneas generales, estas propuestas parten de una aproximación crítica al archivo, configurándose como contra-archivos en los que las instituciones operan como entidades facilitadoras, antes que como depositarias y propietarias.

Palabras clave

Archivos audiovisuales; proyectos de investigación; cine fronterizo; cine de migraciones; comunidades vulnerables; transferencia.

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VANISHING POINTS

TYPOLOGICAL VARIANTS OF THE SPANISH AUDIOVISUAL ESSAY*

NORBERTO MÍNGUEZ ARRANZ
ALBERTO FERNÁNDEZ HOYA

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the last two decades, the number of audiovisual creations being made outside the traditional production system has increased exponentially. A significant proportion of these films can be placed in the category of the contemporary audiovisual essay, defined either as a "culmination of the documentary film" (Weinrichter, 2007: 23), with an especially clear tendency towards authorial subjectivity since the final years of the last century, or as a genre of its own, albeit still maintaining obvious points of contact with the documentary genre and with more experimental and even avant-garde cinema (Català, 2005).

This is a type of creation with a prominent hybrid component (García Martínez, 2006) that is difficult to pin down in a specific genre (Català, 2014b). While in strictly quantitative terms these films still make up only a small minority of global production, they exhibit an extraordinary capacity to reflect on complex realities and to transform discourses. They thus constitute an important phenomenon in contemporary filmmaking that undeniably places them in a "innovative and influential position" (Mínguez & Manzano-Espinosa, 2020: 24).

The increased presence of the essay film has been closely linked to the widespread adoption of new technologies that have made production processes simpler and more economical, while also giving filmmakers greater freedom and independence:

> In the filmmaking world, essay-thinking acquires unexpected qualities whose existence would not even be suspected in other realms where an essayistic approach might be taken. This is due to two factors that are absent from other essay forms: images and technology (Català, 2019: 51).

Cinema is thus fertile terrain for the creative exploration of the essay as a unique initiative

for reflection on a given reality: a technological development that draws equally on the discursive potential of audiovisual language, its versatility and its heterogeneous, hybrid nature. This combination of elements is ideal for the creation of works made with an extraordinary freedom of thought, in which "the film essayist reflects through images that are rhetorically articulated by the technological possibilities" (Català, 2014a: 40).

As noted above, the asystematic nature of the audiovisual essay makes it hard to establish clearly delimited generic boundaries. However, it is possible to identify a number of recurring features, some of which were already present in the literary essay, for which a specific nomenclature has developed over the course of the form's historical evolution.

There is a general consensus that Michel de Montaigne's famous *Essais* (1580) constitute the birth of the modern essay and the origin of the name that would come to be used for this literary practice. However, essay writing can be traced back much further than the 16th century, to prominent precursors such as Plato, described by Luckács as the first and "greatest essayist who ever lived or wrote" (Luckács, 2010: 29), as well as figures like Plutarch and Seneca (Torné, 2016: 10).

It is possible to chart an evolution of essay writing, with its various branches and reconstructions constituting a long trajectory of explorations and creative transformations (Gómez Martínez, 1981; Aullón de Haro, 1992; Cruz, 2021). Tracing these precedents to the modern essay can help us to identify a set of features that "restrict the use of the term" (Arredondo, 1988: 168-169) while still offering a degree of conceptual flexibility. These features are:
— a communicative, reflexive, or didactic purpose;
— a subjective position of the author in relation to the text and to its readers;
— a wide range of subject matter, covering all kinds of issues and with the possibility of mixing different topics;
— prose of a literary style with no predetermined structure, admitting exposition and logical argument, along with digressions, in a concise text that is not intended to be exhaustive.

Many of these features have been integrated fully into the contemporary audiovisual essay, such as the strongly subjective presence of the authorial voice, the use of a fragmentary approach and an open-ended quality: "it is radical in its 'non-radicalism', in the refusal to reduce everything to a principle, in the emphasis of the partial over the whole, in its fragmentary nature" (Adorno, 1962: 19). These aspects do not undermine its extraordinary potential for reflection, in a genuine quest for knowledge that takes directions distinct from those of science, while also avoiding the kind of aesthetic, social or political approach that bears qualities of a manifesto.

The essay film, which would become one of the "indispensable discoveries of modern cinema" (Monterrubio, 2018: 54), has departed conceptually from its literary equivalent, diversifying and exploring new territories that also push the possibilities of filmic discourse beyond conventional practice, widening the boundaries of the form with the aid of the heterogeneous potential that characterises it, to vest the reception of its message with a greater polysemic weight.

THE ESSAY FILM HAS DEPARTED CONCEPTUALLY FROM ITS LITERARY EQUIVALENT, DIVERSIFYING AND EXPLORING NEW TERRITORIES THAT ALSO PUSH THE POSSIBILITIES OF FILMIC DISCOURSE BEYOND CONVENTIONAL PRACTICE

In line with this multiplicity of signifiers and openness to different meanings, the audiovisual essay also draws on another element that is central to its construction and development: the editing, which, for many authors, is where "the film is really born" (Peydró, 2019: 224).

There are a number of valuable studies dealing with the essay film, although not necessarily from an essayistic perspective or with the aim of establishing a taxonomy. One of the most influential scholars in the field of documentary analysis and theory is Bill Nichols (1997, 2001), who has developed a classification of different modes of documentary (poetic, expository, participatory, observational, reflexive and performative). Some of Nichols' categories could be applied to the essay film, although the fact that the essay itself is not included as a category constitutes a considerable limitation.

The relationship between subjectivity and the essay film is explored in depth by Laura Rascaroli (2009), in this case based on a conceptual framework that is clearly essayistic. Although her objective is not really to establish a taxonomy or offer an exhaustive definition, she does hint at a few categories that are useful for this study, such as the filmed diary; others that she proposes have been dismissed either because they are extremely rare (such as the notebook), or because they have been subsumed in another category in our taxonomy.

In his research on the essay film, Timothy Corrigan (2011) identifies various essayistic modes (the portrait, the travel essay, the diary, the editorial essay and the refractive essay), offering a detailed definition and a brief history of the genre. Although creating a complete taxonomy is not his basic objective either, his work constitutes a valuable contribution that has also been extremely useful for the structural approach described in this article, which aims to present a more exhaustive and wide-reaching study in an effort to cover all possible variants without spending too much time on the analysis of specific titles, in the interests of offering the most comprehensive overview possible.

Of all these important contributions to this field of study, we have found the approach taken by Isleny Cruz (2019) to be the closest to our own. Cruz identifies various modes of essayistic enunciation: the creation documentary, appropriation and editing, the essay-video, canonical essayism, the self-referential film, the letter-video and the testimonial record. We adopt several of the categories proposed by Cruz and add a few that she does not consider, such as the mockumentary, the socio-political essay, and the historical-memorial essay.

2. SYSTEMATISING THE ASYSTEMATIC

The basic objective of this study is to establish an overarching typology for Spanish essay films with the scope to categorise the widest range of variants possible and also to contribute to an understanding of films of this kind made beyond Spain's borders.

This research draws on the results of a project in collaboration with the Cervantes Institute ("*Variaciones ensayísticas en el audiovisual español contemporáneo*") that involves several lines of research, including the design of a catalogue of two hundred films produced in Spain that constitute a representative sample of the formal and thematic diversity of the audiovisual essay. This catalogue can currently be consulted at the CVC (Centro Virtual Cervantes) section of the Institute's website.[1]

We acknowledge the contradiction inherent in the idea of systematising the asystematic, as the aim is to understand the variants of the audiovisual essay, while recognising that this typology cannot be equated with a traditional classification of film genres, which often involves thematic categorisations that are not possible in the case of the essay due to its non-topical nature. Moreover,

precisely because these films tend towards the asystematic, typologies of the audiovisual essay are never fixed or immobile spaces, but instead should be understood as categories that are determined based on the predominance of certain features that may coexist with others that are less pronounced.

A representative sample has been established for this study through the application of various selection criteria. The first of these was a qualitative consideration related to the presence in the films of certain features that define the audiovisual essay. The reference framework was based on the defining features outlined by Mínguez & Manzano-Espinosa (2020) as well as the relationship between the range of features identified and the necessary diversity of the sample. A second criterion was time-related: the sample is essentially contemporary, as 77.5% of the films selected were made since the year 2000. A few productions made earlier that were considered significant have also been included, as these enrich the sample without undermining its contemporary nature. A third selection criterion involved the expressive aspects of the films, ensuring that the formal diversity of the audiovisual essay was effectively represented.

Taking into account the complex, hybrid nature of the audiovisual essay, we have structured

Image 1

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE COMPLEX, HYBRID NATURE OF THE AUDIOVISUAL ESSAY, WE HAVE STRUCTURED OUR TAXONOMY AROUND THREE KEY ELEMENTS THAT ARE ALWAYS PRESENT IN THE ESSAYISTIC MODE, BUT THAT MAY VARY IN PREVALENCE. THESE THREE KEY ELEMENTS ARE: SUBJECT, LANGUAGE, AND REFERENT

our taxonomy around three key elements that are always present in the essayistic mode, but that may vary in prevalence. These three key elements are: subject, language, and referent (Image 1). In the essayistic mode, there is always a subject who uses language to express an idea about an object (the referent). Essayists calibrate the tools at their disposal, giving precedence or greater visibility to one of these three elements, and the audiovisual essay taxonomy described below is based on these calibrations. The precedence or greater visibility given to one element does not imply the absence of the others. While the categories proposed here are intended to be useful for the purposes of classification, it is important to recognise that an essay can simultaneously exhibit features belonging to different categories, although one usually predominates over the others. We would therefore argue that this study makes two original and significant contributions: a) it provides a taxonomy of audiovisual essay variants (although individual audiovisual essays are not analysed here, the research is the result of such analysis, and thus for each film identified a brief explanation is given of why it belongs to the category indicated); and b) it applies a conceptual framework that is specifically essayistic (rather than using documentary theory) with the aim of incorporating enough categories to reflect the diversity that characterises the audiovisual essay.
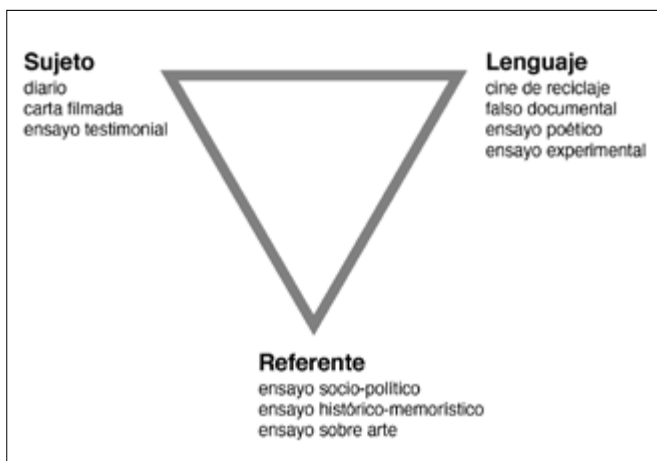
3. A PROPOSED TAXONOMY

Based on the analysis of the films that comprise the sample, the variants described below have been established.

The diary

One of the most radical forms of essayistic subjectivity is that where the protagonist expresses his or her own experience as a subject directly in the first person. An example of this variant can be found in *Mapa* [Map] (Elías León Siminiani, 2012), a diary film in which the director embarks on a journey to find himself (Image 2). He talks about big issues such as love, death and the uncertainties of life, but from a domestic perspective. This humble tone and the expression of emotions that are highly personal and yet at the same time universal elicit a powerful empathy for the narrator-protagonist. The film is constructed with a hybrid blend of objectivity and subjectivity, documentary and fiction. It combines an autobiographical narrative with a reflexive dimension expressed in the different lines of thought developed in the film. Siminiani thinks in images and words, and often the ideas are contained precisely in the form, i.e., in the way that texts, words and images interact.

Image 2

The filmmaker offers us a map of his own identity by turning his life into filmic material. Like any map, the film makes use of codes, which in this case become a new language of their own, a kind of creative idiolect that breaks certain conventions and connects easily with the imaginary and the emotional education of a generation. *Mapa* manages to articulate not only the route but also the architecture of a journey that is at once geographical and emotional.

Guest (José Luis Guerin, 2011), subtitled *Diario de registros* [Logbook], could also be placed in this category. It is also a travelogue, although in this case the "I" is not focalised so much on the director as on an observer whose subjectivity is expressed in the particular nature of a gaze. What is observed is as important as the construction (and sometimes even the deconstruction) of the gaze itself, which watches and listens in public spaces, but sometimes slips into the private, intimate space of the characters as well. It is a gaze that observes unexpected encounters, while at the same time achieving an extraordinary balance between a strong aesthetic sense that takes meticulous care with images and fragmentary footage sketching an open portrait whose composition must ultimately be articulated by the spectator. Although the film's testimonial component may sometimes give it the appearance of a news report, its approach to people and situations bears a humanistic sensibility that is far from common in journalistic work.

The filmed letter

While written correspondence has a long tradition as a medium of communication and as a literary genre, its limited presence in film is compensated for by some very special expressive possibilities. In contrast with the monologic quality of the diary, the filmed letter creates a dialogic space in which the

"I" addresses and responds to a "you". These two unobtrusive figures share a space and time that are always deferred, based on the construction and deconstruction of absence, distance and intimacy. This site of communication has the quality of a threshold between the dialogic exchange with the other and the self-sufficient solitude that characterises writing (Violi, 1987: 87). It is in effect an intimate space, conducive to reflection, understanding and feeling. This unique space has two addressees: one is the interlocutor, the "you" who exchanges a discursive position with the "I"; and the other is the audience, who undoubtedly determine the communicative device of the filmed letter. This category has a communal dimension due to the necessary shared authorship, but it also has a programmatic quality based on the expectation of a reply, of a discursive continuity. This is a feature that makes the filmed letter something risky, fragile and always tentative, and therefore very much in keeping with the essayistic spirit.

An interesting example of this mode is the correspondence between José Luis Guerin and Jonas Mekas.[2] This filmed correspondence reveals two different sensibilities: the spontaneity of Mekas, who leans towards improvisation, and the greater concern with composition of Guerin, who seeks a more deliberately planned mise-en-scène. Despite the duplicity of voices and gazes, these filmed letters constitute a return to cinema's roots, to craftmanship: in both cases it is filmmaking with humility, without any intention to preach and with profound respect for the randomness of life. Like Kiarostami and Erice in their film series *Correspondences* (2005-2007), these directors share a creative ethic that implies a kind of resistance against the constraints of industry production, and this enables them to turn their gaze towards little everyday things for long enough to allow the spectator this same contemplative experience (Mínguez, 2019: 171).

The testimonial essay

In this category, the essayist's voice gives way to a third person's. The perspective is still subjective, but the discourse is not journalistic, as it continues to be dominated by primordially essayistic features, such as the asystematic, the avant-garde and the dialogic. An example of this type of film is *Yo me lo creo* [I Believe It] (Terrorismo de autor, 2016), a long sequence shot interrupted by three fiction film scenes. The shot is a close-up of Antonio Ruiz (Image 3), who looks directly at the camera and speaks without moving his lips. Spectators are exposed to a listening exercise with no possibility of escape, testing their resistance. Ruiz speaks in the first person about his pain in a face-to-face encounter that forces us to listen and to look into the eyes of someone talking about things that are far from pleasant.

Image 3
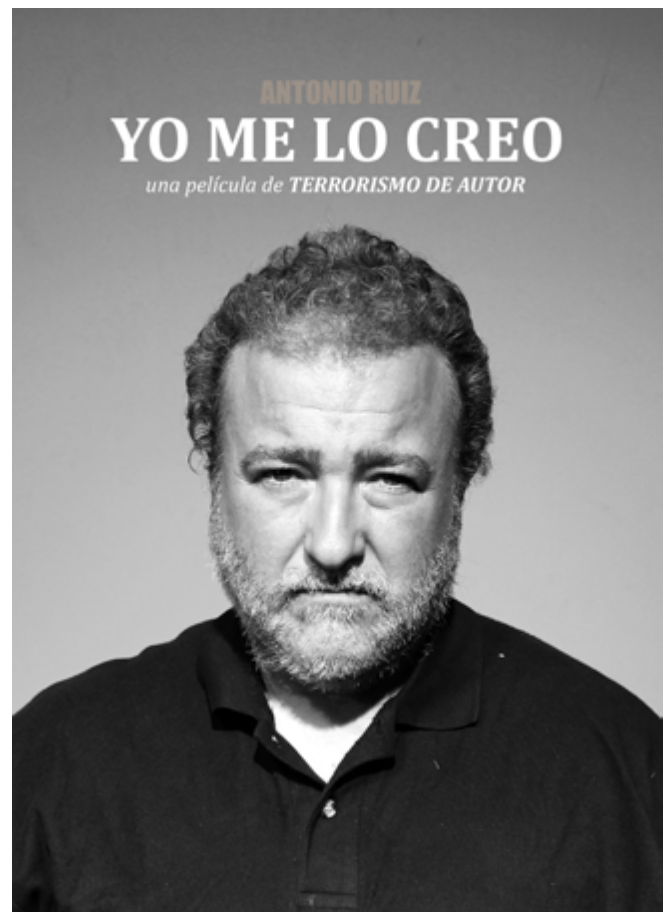
Through this confrontation, the discourse delves into issues such as the economic crisis, the cracks in democracy, exploitation, and injustice. The mise-en-scène and the formal choices result in a powerful social and political positioning that gives rise to an insightful discourse and an intellectual and emotional bluntness that cannot help but affect the spectator.

For *A Squirrel Improvises* (Improvisaciones de una ardilla, 2017), Virginia García del Pino chose the testimony of philosopher Josep María Esquirol to reflect on contemporary politics and the role that the media play in them. The form chosen is very simple: over silent footage previously recorded and edited by the director, the philosopher improvises a series of reflections. Sometimes the reflection deals with the content of the images, while at other moments it departs from the visuals to explore more far-reaching ideas. The rupture results from the contrast between the calm, thought-provoking speech and the scenes showing us the machinations of politics. Behind the scenes at a rally, journalists waiting outside parliament, and a sea of microphones and cameras recording a politician's declarations prompt a reflection on the degeneration of information production, the tyranny of the news update and the more theatrical aspects of politics. However, the final decision on the meaning of it all is in the hands of the spectator, who is offered a calm and attentive gaze.

The found footage film

Two modes that inevitably adopt an essayistic approach are the found footage film (archival film, appropriation) and the mockumentary. Both cases involve a process of resignification entailing a reflection on the value and use of images, and often also on the meaning of what is depicted and the way that meaning is constructed. A paradigmatic example of the archival film is *Canciones para después de una guerra* [Songs for after a War] (Basilio Martín Patino, 1971), a film constructed using material from various sources (archive footage, fiction films, press cuttings, photographs, posters, advertising), patched together over a soundtrack of popular songs from the 1940s. It is a complex text in which the music interacts with the images to trigger the spectator's emotions and memory by placing the focus on the everyday life and society of Spain in the years after the Civil War. The film offers us a collage, an open, emotional text that allows the spectator considerable freedom for reflection. Patino refuses to articulate a seamless discourse about the past and this requires a dialogue that places demands on the spectator.

María Cañas experiments by mixing documentary and fiction, film and television, and old footage with more recent images. She appropriates this material and makes it her own, as her gaze is not distant or condescending but fused with the warmth within these images which, to use Didi-Huberman's expression (2012), are images that burn in contact with reality. *Holy Thriller* (María Cañas, 2011) is a short piece that is representative of the type of work that this filmmaker does and that illustrates perfectly how the ideas an essay conveys can be contained in the form, in the way the images have been cut and assembled with other images and other sounds. Although some authors identify the reflexive capacity of the audiovisual essay with its verbal component, this piece demonstrates that it is possible to generate ideas through a montage made up only of images and music. *Holy Thriller* (Im-

TWO MODES THAT INEVITABLY ADOPT AN ESSAYISTIC APPROACH ARE THE FOUND FOOTAGE FILM (ARCHIVAL FILM, APPROPRIATION) AND THE MOCKUMENTARY. BOTH CASES INVOLVE A PROCESS OF RESIGNIFICATION ENTAILING A REFLECTION ON THE VALUE AND USE OF IMAGES

Image 4

age 4) reflects on the potential of contemporary culture to integrate the sacred and the profane, the local and the global, but also on a certain melodramatic tendency underpinning different spheres of Spanish culture. Following Josep M. Català (2009), this piece could be described as an essay on the emotions, on their construction using images, on the possibility of reconfiguring them, on the relationships between private and public imaginaries, and on the intimate history that serves as a background for and an alternative to a supposedly fixed and absolute official history.

The mockumentary

Every mockumentary is an essay because it either contains or incites a reflection. To illustrate this category, we cite two mockumentaries that reflect on memory, the image and the writing of history: *El grito del sur. Casas Viejas*[3] [The Cry of the South: Old Houses] (Basilio Martín Patino, 1995) and *The Mist in the Palm Trees* (La niebla en las palmeras, Carlos Molinero & Lola Salvador, 2006). Although both films adopt a documentary rhetoric, they ultimately transgress the genre system because their intention is not so much to represent reality as to establish a critical argument that can impart knowledge.

El grito del sur. Casas Viejas uses the rhetoric of historical documentaries that combine archival footage, witness statements and expert analysis. The difference here lies in the fact that although it is based on a real event, the director combines true and false statements and documents. The film bears all the hallmarks of documentary authenticity that would be expected of a non-fiction film, but it plays with the spectator by offering hints that its authenticity could be questioned; in other words, it mimics the tools and rhetoric of historical discourse while at the same time discrediting such discourse and undermining its institutional credibility.

The Mist in the Palm Trees revolves around the (fictitious) figure of Santiago Bergson and the events that marked his life, some of which are historical. The spectator never knows where Bergson is speaking to us from, but his discourse is dominated by an autobiographical tone. The footage used is diverse in nature (fiction, archive footage, scientific and artistic images, home movies, etc.) and the film engages in a massive operation of decontextualisation, i.e., a process of re-inscribing signifiers that exert a kind of emotional and intellectual violence amid images that burst with energy. This manipulation strips the images of their supposed objectivity and subjects them to a critical exercise that questions science as a discourse of authority and its capacity to solve certain social problems, thereby undermining our boundless confidence in the power of scientific reason and technology. The editing in *The Mist in the Palm Trees* forces us to ask a lot of questions, adding to our work as spectators and creating a text characterised by its lack of certainty and its incoherence, which thus contravenes the standards of traditional historical and scientific discourse.

The poetic essay

Poeticity is a qualitative element observable in very specific practices of the literary essay. Howe-

Image 5

ver, its possibilities expand in the audiovisual essay, where the multiplicity of codes and the editing facilitate a certain degree of lyricism as a complementary feature of various categories. *Calles y sueños* [Streets and Dreams] (Eduardo Menéndez Madina, 1998) offers an example where the poetic dimension becomes decisive at certain moments in the film.

The Silence before Bach (El silencio antes de Bach, Portabella, 2007) proposes an intense dialogue between music and film through the figure of a cultural icon, a celebrated German composer who transcends boundaries. The film's expressiveness lies in the exploration of filmic possibilities while seeking to construct meaningfully independent sequences and evading the linear narrative tradition inherited from literature.

Another film of the poetic essay variant, *Los mundos sutiles* [The Subtle Worlds] (Eduardo Chapero-Jackson, 2013), is constructed around Antonio Machado's poetry collection *Campos de Castilla*, released on the centenary of its publication (Image 5). Taking the work of this renowned Sevillian poet as its main point of reference in itself suggests a discourse with a markedly poetic theme and form, a directorial intention that is

hinted at by the title of the work itself and that continues with the subsequent proposition of a whole poetic architecture.

Through the use of a first-person voice-over directing the argument, and drawing on support from music and images, *Odio los paraguas* [I Hate Umbrellas] (Adrián Perea, 2017) is a metaphorical work that focalises the disappointment and disillusion of romantic relationships on a supposed animosity towards umbrellas, objects intended to offer shelter, but which ultimately prove unreliable and wear out.

The experimental essay

José Val del Omar, whose creations in the 1930s have earned him recognition as the precursor to Spanish experimental cinema, and the late Javier Aguirre, whose filmmaking career stretched over five decades, constitute two major figures whose work could be included in this category.

If the essay film is an exploration of the limitations and possibilities offered by audiovisual language, this quest for expression pushes even further when there is a clear commitment to experimentation. Examples of this are creations such as *Travelling* (Luis Rivera, 1972), or the ani-

Image 6

of sound, offers an imagining of the site of Italy's Palazzo Altoviti consumed by the waters of the Tíber.

In *Walsed* (Alberte Pagán, 2014) the Galician filmmaker proposes a deconstruction of the experimental classic *Vision Fantastique* (Eugène Deslaw, 1957) reducing its sixty minutes of footage to just over three, using both its images and its soundtrack. In addition, Pagán reverses the images and compresses the sound onto two channels, one of which is also reversed.

The socio-political essay

Mercado de futuros [Futures Market] (Mercedes Álvarez, 2011) is a film that deals with crisis, understood as the deterioration of a situation but also as a radical transformation of the world (Image 6). The film observes events and different locations of the city of Barcelona: a real estate showroom, a conference on management, a trading office, the remains of an apartment that is being cleared out, an old man tending a garden beside the train tracks, young people practising parkour.

Mercado de futuros is a contemplative film that gives spectators room to observe and freedom to reflect on what they see. It confronts us with familiar problems and situations, but the pace and organisation of the images allows us to glimpse what the media do not usually show and to consider it from a reflexive perspective. On occasions words guide the reflection and at other moments we bear witness to speeches or conversations captured on the spur of the moment that interact meaningfully with what the images show us. The film is posited as a quest, a confrontation with reality along a path whose direction will only be discovered at the end of the journey. The apparently unconnected events and locations are configured for the spectator as questions that do not necessarily allow for a definitive answer, but instead offer lines of thought about a society that seems to be focused more on the future than on the present.

mated films of Rafael Balerdi (*Homenaje a Tarzán*, 1969) and José Antonio Sistiaga (*Ere erera baleibu Izik subua aruaren*, 1968-1970), who, inspired by the creative work of Canadian animator Norman McLaren, painted their images directly onto the celluloid. Numerous films of this category have been produced in recent years, such as *Evacuación* [Evacuation] (Colectivo Los Hijos, 2011), *Dress Rehearsal for Utopia* (Ensayo final para utopía, Andrés Duque, 2012), and *The Fifth Gospel of Kaspar Hauser* (O quinto evanxeo de Gaspar Hauser, Alberto Gracia, 2013).

Pal Altoviti´07 (Samuel Alarcón, Bárbara Fluxá, 2007) is a film that invites each spectator to participate in the ultimate construction of its meaning. The abstract setting with no specific space or time, established by an opening shot that is finally revealed to be underwater and an unsettling use

Image 7

Las variaciones Guernica [Guernica Variations] (Guillermo G. Peydró, 2012) is an essay based on the painting Picasso was commissioned by Spain's republican government to paint for the Spanish pavilion at the 1937 Paris International Exposition. The film juxtaposes sections of *Guernica* with images of visitors to the museum who come to see the painting (Image 7), and with archive footage and audio mostly taken from different news programs. In one way or another, all the images and audio recordings selected allude to different forms of violence perpetrated by the authorities on the civilian population: from demonstrations repressed by the police in Santiago de Chile, Barcelona, and Cairo, to threatening images or declarations of dictators such as Bashar-al-Assad or Gaddafi, as well as a conversation between members of a US military helicopter crew while they fire on civilians and reporters in Iraq. The reflection is articulated by reorganising and juxtaposing images that allow spectators to reconsider their perspective, giving new meaning to familiar signifiers. The first operation involves rescuing Picasso's painting from its current status as a commodity for tourist consumption. Juxtaposing the painting with contemporary images effectively restores the painting's original meaning as a protest against the cruelty and brutality perpetrated by Franco's forces on the civilian population. This interaction gives the contemporary images and audio, extracted from the flow of daily news and placed in contact with one another, a meaning that rescues them from the banality of that flow so that we can see in them a destructive logic that triggers our conscience. This essay sketches out an aesthetic and political position while at the same time creating a dialogic space that enables the spectator to think freely based on the material offered.

The historical-memorial essay

As essays often do, Guillermo G. Peydró's *La ciudad del trabajo* [City of Work] (2015) draws on a pre-existing object, in this case a work of architecture (Image 8), to offer a reflection on history and memory. This is not a traditional historical documentary but an essay that reflects on a historical reality by positioning itself around it. The starting point is the Universidad Laboral de Gijón, a building whose construction began in 1946 and took ten years. The film shows its evolution, its spaces and activities, interspersing the soundtrack with the filmmaker's reflections, dialogues from fiction films and audio from an old newsreel from the period. The Universidad Laboral, originally intended to be an orphanage for the children of miners, ended up becoming an architectural project of colossal dimensions, in keeping with a regime that needed to form new Spaniards. The interaction between fragments of fiction and non-fiction offers reflections on different aspects of the Franco dictatorship: Catholic indoctrination, the dignity of work, education as a means of social control, an inflated nationalism that exalted the grandeur

Image 8

of Spain over the foreign. The film conveys its ideas through its editing of images and dialogues, creating a broad interpretative space for spectators to develop their own reflections.

Another example of this category, albeit one that features a higher degree of subjectivity and poetic weight, is *The Sky Turns* (El cielo gira, Mercedes Álvarez, 2004). The filmmaker goes back to her hometown and observes the gap between two eras, one that is vanishing but still shows signs of life, and the other in the process of establishing itself. This exploration, which

Image 9

takes on the tone of an intimate diary, is based on a contemplative gaze with a reflection organised around two timeframes: the first, the time of the village and its inhabitants (the seasons, everyday activities, memories); and the second, the historical time that emerges from the landscape around the village on every turn (dinosaur fossils, a dolmen, Roman ruins, an Arabic tower). These timeframes are superimposed on each other and come into contact, because the town's inhabitants coexist naturally with the traces of other civilisations, understanding themselves as part of a civilisation that is disappearing (Image 9). Slow-paced and largely unscripted, the film exudes an attitude of respectful waiting for things to happen, a tranquil gaze that is able to find beauty and poetry in the people and landscapes it depicts, resulting in an encounter between subjectivity and a world whose temporal limits stretch beyond memory (Mínguez, 2012: 69).

The art essay

The opening titles to *The Imaginary Garden* (Le jardin imaginaire, Guillermo G. Peydró, 2012) expressly identify it as an essay film and a film about art. It begins with an epistolary prelude whose tone and flavour recall the French master of the

film essay, Chris Marker. This introduction speaks to us from a sculpture garden created by Máximo Rojo in a town in the Spanish province of Guadalajara (Image 10), a collection of sculptures that constitute outsider art, unconstrained by institutionalised culture or by the market. This example of *art brut* is only the beginning of a journey that will lead us through Paris in search of traces of the essay and encounters with different artists and creative spaces. On this journey, the film reflects on itself and affirms its proximity to poetry and music, revealing itself to be an intellectual and emotional lesson that requires a gaze of its own.

Another example of this type of is *Train of Shadows* (Tren de sombras, José Luis Guerin, 1997), another film with a profound self-awareness, although its capacity for self-reflection is oriented towards the metacinematic. The film constructs a very clear enunciation that reflects more with images than with words, demanding an active spectator who needs to understand different codes and intertextual references. This dialogic quality offers a reflection on time, on how the image attempts to capture it, and a certain awareness of cinema as a language on the verge of extinction. This twilight tone recalls the inevitably fleeting nature of human existence. *Train of Shadows*

moves freely between fiction and non-fiction; it is a fictional tale disguised as a documentary. This transfiguration and the film's experimental component provide the ideal circumstances for the reflection it proposes.

4. THE AUDIOVISUAL ESSAY AS AN OPEN SPACE

The development of this taxonomy entails a difficulty that is inherent in the multifarious and complex nature of the audiovisual essay, with creations that exhibit a number of hybrid qualities that could place them on the boundaries of several categories. As possible lines of future research, new genres arising from current digital practices could be considered, such as the interactive multimedia documentary (Gifreu-Castells, 2011), with its different formats and platforms, as well as the possibility of transmedia narratives in the context of non-fiction (Gifreu-Castells, 2016).

The audiovisual essay connects with other cultural movements associated with new technologies and new developments in self-expression. This form stands in opposition not so much to the scientific method as to the structures of scholarship with other interests and concerns not strictly

Image 10

related to the needs of knowledge. The essay does not impose predetermined scientific frameworks on reality; instead, it accepts reality in all its complexity even if that means being unable to fully understand or encompass it. It could be argued that the essay film is objective insofar as it unhesitatingly recognises its own subjectivity.

As noted above, the audiovisual essay cannot be conceived of as a set of discrete compartments, as the categories are fluid spaces that can combine features and tendencies to varying degrees. *Variaciones Guernica* is a political essay, but it is based on a work of art and at the same time is an archival film that uses editing to resignify the images and enable us to see them from a different perspective, while *The Sky Turns* is a historical-memorial essay which at the same time has an essentially poetic expression. Similarly, *Train of Shadows* has been categorised here as an art essay, but it is also a mockumentary and is sometimes labelled as experimental. Placing a film in one specific category therefore requires the identification of its predominant feature. The typology proposed here is not intended to set fixed boundaries, but to establish a map of formal and thematic aspects within which essay films may move with considerable freedom. It is a cartography of connected and sometimes overlapping territories that operates around three key elements: subject, language, and referent.

The dominance of the subject opens up a range of possibilities depending on whether it is defined by an "I" (diary, autobiography, self-portrait, travelogue), an "I"/"you" that gives rise to a dialogic pattern between two subjects (filmed letter), or the third-person perspective that characterises the testimonial essay. In the second case, it is the language that takes on greater importance, which may be based on reflection through exploration or innovation (experimental), or through a resignification (found footage film, mockumentary) or a quest for an expression that prioritises the aesthetic (poetic essay). In the third case, the subject and language do not disappear but are more subtly present be-

cause the reflection foregrounds the referent, giving rise to a wide range of themes that can be summed up in terms of three recurring possibilities: the socio-political essay, the historical-memorial essay, and the art essay. In short, it is our belief that a considerable number of films normally labelled as documentaries would benefit from a more productive and rigorous analysis if they were interpreted in light of the taxonomy outlined here, as it may provide a better understanding of the complex nature of these works and the relationship they establish with the spectator. ∎

NOTES

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1 The catalogue can be found at: https://cvc.cervantes.es/artes/cine/ensayo/catalogo.htm

2 The correspondence established between José Luis Guerin and Jonas Mekas was an initiative commissioned in 2011 by Jordi Balló for the Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona in the context of an exhibition titled *Todas las cartas. Correspondencias fílmicas* [All the Letters: Film Correspondence]. The correspondence between Guerin and Mekas covers a period of seventeen months with a total of nine letters.

3 This film was written and directed by Basilio Martín Patino for Canal Sur Televisión in 1995 and formed part of *Andalucía: Un siglo de fascinación* [Andalusia: A Century of Fascination], a seven-episode series on the identity, history and myths of the Andalusian region.

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VANISHING POINTS

TYPOLOGICAL VARIATION IN SPANISH AUDIOVISUAL ESSAY

Abstract

Taking as a starting point a review of the literary roots of the essay and an analysis of two hundred representative Spanish essay-films, this article proposes the establishment of a typology in order to study the Spanish audiovisual essay by identifying those variables that draw a geography of formal and thematic aspects that best define it. In this way, the typology proves its operability around three main areas of influence that allow different degrees and levels of expression: subject, language and referent. The predominance of the subject gives rise to the diary, the film-letter or the testimonial essay. In the second option, it is language that acquires preponderance through poetic essays, found footage films, experimental essays or documentary fakes. In the third option, the reflection puts the referent at the front, giving rise to the essay on art, the socio-political essay or the historical-memorial essay.

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VARIANTES TIPOLÓGICAS DEL ENSAYO AUDIOVISUAL ESPAÑOL

Resumen

Partiendo de una revisión que repasa las raíces literarias del ensayo y del análisis de doscientas obras representativas, el presente artículo propone el establecimiento de una tipología aplicada al estudio del ensayo audiovisual español, mediante la identificación de aquellas variables que trazan una geografía de los aspectos formales y temáticos que mejor lo definen. De este modo, se demuestra su operatividad en torno a tres grandes ejes de influencia que permiten diferentes grados y niveles de plasmación: el sujeto, el lenguaje y el referente. El predominio del sujeto da lugar a variantes como el diario, la carta filmada o el ensayo testimonial. En la segunda opción adquiere preponderancia el lenguaje dando lugar al ensayo poético, de reciclaje, experimental y al falso documental. Por último, cuando la reflexión pone en primer término al referente, surgen el ensayo sobre arte, el socio-político o el histórico-memorístico.

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VISUAL AND METAFICTIONAL STRATEGIES FOR THE RECLAMATION OF A LEGACY IN *CANDYMAN* (NIA DACOSTA, 2021)

ALEJANDRO LÓPEZ LIZANA

1. INTRODUCTION: "BELIEVE IN ME"

Throughout the film, the monstrous villain in *Candyman* (Bernard Rose, 1992) displays a relentless obsession with maintaining a place in the collective memory. His preferred victims are those who speak his name five times in front of a mirror, an act that itself implies the sceptical disbelief of the speaker: Candyman kills those who don't take him seriously, and in so doing, he feeds his own legend. This is why he feels compelled to intervene when Helen Lyle, a PhD student researching urban legends, discovers a criminal gang exploiting the evil spirit's reputation. With an earthly culprit to blame for the murders in Chicago's Cabrini-Green housing project, Candyman runs the risk of losing the faith of his believers; to prevent this, he must spill more innocent blood so that his legend might live on.

Meanwhile, Helen's encounter with the supernatural plunges her into an existential crisis that grows worse when she is wrongfully charged for the murder of her friend Bernadette, and finally pushes her over the edge when she discovers her striking physical resemblance to Candyman's former lover. The monster, determined to work a *miracle* that will assure his immortality, seduces Helen into joining him. Although she ultimately betrays him to save the infant Anthony from the fire that almost consumes all three of them, Candyman keeps his promise. After her death, a mural of Helen is painted on a city wall in Cabrini-Green, and her addition to the Candyman legend is rendered complete when, embracing her new spectral nature, she murders her husband in revenge for his cheating on her with a student.

The spiritual transcendence that Candyman promises Helen is not limited to her transformation into a ghost but also involves her integration into a story that is worthy of being remembered and (re)told (Wyrick, 1998: 101). And indeed, this quest for immortality is consummated as well on

a metacinematic level, as the huge success of the first film ensured that Candyman's legacy would carry on thanks to the all-too-predictable production of sequels. The most recent addition to the franchise—*Candyman* (Nia DaCosta, 2021)—explores this idea of a legacy once again: at the climax to the film, when Anthony bids his girlfriend goodbye after being assimilated into the spectre, all that he asks of her is for her to tell everyone about what happened so that his story is never forgotten. In this way, the never-ending repetition of icons that characterises the horror film genre allows Nia DaCosta and Jordan Peele to play a metafictional game that combines Helen/Anthony's determination to get to the bottom of the Candyman legend, Candyman's own need to be talked about, and the relationship between the creators of the sequel, their product and the original film on which it is based. Anthony's resurrection of Candyman (who had been dormant for years) thus effectively alludes to the revival of the saga itself by means of its 2021 instalment. This revival should be understood not merely in commercial terms but also on a thematic level. Challenging the notion that the tiresome production of sequels and remakes was one of the symptoms (or causes) of the crisis that afflicted the horror genre in the 2000s (Hantke, 2010), *Candyman*'s status as a sequel actually enriches the film as it expands the idea of legacy inherent in its predecessor.

At this point, it is worth considering the thematic continuity between the two films. Mikel Koven (1999: 158) cites Danielson (1979) and Wood (1979) to argue that the evolution of horror as a genre and of monster-victim dynamics in particular reflect the tensions of contemporary society.[1] Along the same lines, Knöppler suggests that the production of a remake reveals either the continued relevance of the themes explored in the original film or the need to update them in accordance with the current cultural climate (2017: 10).[2] In this sense, a comparison of two different films in a franchise can reveal how the themes they deal with have evolved over time (2017: 12). In the specific case of the 2021 *Candyman* instalment, Falvey, Hickinbottom and Wroot (2020: 5) identify its screenwriter, Jordan Peele, as a leading exponent of "revisionist horror", a contemporary movement characterised by the use of "the genre's dark thematic currency as a means of scrutinising prevailing social anxieties."[3] It could therefore be expected that his adaptation of *Candyman* would be written with the aim of revising the issues of race raised in the original film.

In view of the considerations outlined above, this article explores the context in which the 2021 sequel to *Candyman* revises the 1992 film that inspired it, and how the ideas of legacy and memory, which are key to the plotlines of both films, are reflected in the design of the saga and in its potential political reading.

2. EXAMINING THE PAST

Before the release of *Candyman* in 1992, the African American community had no horror icon that could be compared to the likes of Freddy Krueger, Michael Myers, or other slasher stars. In 2012, Virginia Madsen, who portrayed Helen Lyle in the film, suggested that Candyman was created with the idea of being "an African American Dracula" (Caprilozzi, 2012). Twenty years earlier, however, Madsen had feared that audiences would reject the idea of a Black killer and had even remarked: "I don't think Spike Lee will like this film" (Lovell: 1992).

In fact, Clive Barker's short story "The Forbidden", on which the film was based, makes no reference to Candyman's race. As Madsen points out, Bernard Rose thus knew that the film would become a talking point when he chose Tony Todd to play the title role and decided to change the setting from Liverpool to Chicago (Caprilozzi, 2012). Nevertheless, his idea was not welcomed by all critics. While acknowledging that the film attempts to offer a well-intentioned social critique,

Judith Halberstam argues that ultimately the horror "[…] stabilizes in the ghastly body of the black man whose monstrosity turns upon his desire for the white woman and his murderous intentions towards black women" (Halberstam, 1995: 5).[3]

It is worth noting that Jordan Peele, screenwriter and producer of the 2021 sequel, has justified his reclamation of the franchise by asserting the importance that the original film had for his generation (Collis, 2020). Moreover, for the film's co-writer and director, Nia DaCosta, it was crucially important that this time the story should be articulated through a "black lens" (Travis, 2020). This decision may be interpreted in two ways: on the one hand, the role of primary audience is assigned to black spectators, whose existence is not usually taken into account in this type of film (Sobande, 2019: 239) and for whom the real horror often involves seeing themselves reduced to "abject figments of white imagination" (Wester, 2012: 25); and on the other, the 2021 *Candyman* drops the character of Helen to focus instead on Brianna and (especially) Anthony, whose experience is the film's main focus. In giving the lead role to a middle-class white woman, the 1992 *Candyman* was accused of perpetuating the cliché of the white saviour (Briefel & Ngai, 1996: 79), and even of undermining the appropriation of the *privilege* of scaring and being scared, which for the first time in the history of the genre was held by the Black community (Briefel & Ngai, 1996: 85, 90). But in contrast to the first Candyman, Anthony is not a mere reflection of blackness understood as a representation of monstrous otherness,[4] but a feeling individual[5] who is undergoing a gradual process of physical and psychological deterioration.

As will be discussed further below, there are undeniable parallels between Anthony and Helen. First of all, both are outsiders in Cabrini-Green who decide to investigate the Candyman legend for selfish reasons. Driven by their (possibly prophetic) desire for recognition, these investigators immerse themselves in the testimonies of locals and experts to reconstruct a legend that they have unwittingly been a part of all along: Helen as a reincarnation of Daniel Robitaille's former lover, and Anthony as the *miracle baby* of the first instalment, destined to revive the belief in Candyman among the residents of Cabrini-Green, who had sworn never to summon him again after the events of 1992. The main difference between the two is that while Helen maintains her individuality when she is turned into a spectre, Anthony merges with Candyman after he is gunned down by the police. DaCosta and Peele introduce the idea here that Candyman was never really just one man; instead, he is a kind of *hive*, made up of hundreds of victims representing all the pain and the injustices suffered by African Americans (Langston League, 2021: 43). By being turned into a symbol of intergenerational trauma, the idea that Candyman punishes those who do not believe in him takes on an element of social struggle. Accordingly, DaCosta's inversion of the hegemonic vision of monstrosity with the character of Anthony can be extrapolated to his victims. While in the original film Candyman murders an innocent Black woman, in the sequel he only attacks white people who exhibit some form of deplorable, racist behaviour (the bullying by the girls in the school bathroom, the tyrannical attitude of the gallery owner, the lofty disdain of the art critic, or the brutality of the police). This distinction addresses another common concern of African American artists: the popular depiction of violence and oppression of Blacks against Blacks (Wester, 2012: 254).

Moreover, the representation of the monster as a collective connects with the titling of the 2021 film simply as *Candyman*, without a number or subtitle to identify its position in the saga (a common practice for remakes but unusual for a direct sequel). Just as the spectre is revealed to be an amalgam of different faces and stories, the matching title suggests that the continuity in relation to the 1992 film is not linear but a case of con-

Image 1. Troy tells the story of Helen. © 2020 Universal Pictures and MGM Pictures

vergence around the same mythology. The way the 2021 version is placed in the franchise also contributes to this effect: by taking only the original Bernard Rose film as its point of reference, ignoring both *Candyman: Farewell to the Flesh* (Bill Condon, 1995) and *Candyman 3: Day of the Dead* (Turi Meyer, 1999),[6] the saga as a whole is effectively turned into a collection of testimonies that do not always agree with one another. In this way, the coexistence of different versions of the story is a reflection of the way its protagonists reconstruct the legend based on mutually contradictory sources.

Helen's absence in the 2021 *Candyman* is also used as a way of exploring this question. At the beginning of the film, Brianna's brother tells the couple a version of the Helen Lyle legend that is very different from the one we know: after a series of murders, she tried to burn a baby alive,

THE MATCHING TITLE SUGGESTS THAT THE CONTINUITY BETWEEN THE TWO FILMS IS NOT LINEAR BUT A CASE OF CONVERGENCE AROUND THE SAME MYTHOLOGY

but she threw herself into the flames when the locals of Cabrini-Green managed to subdue her and seize the baby from her. Just as striking as this apocryphal version of the events is the way that DaCosta depicts them, as the story is represented with a shadow puppet play that interrupts the scene at Anthony and Brianna's apartment. These puppets are used repeatedly throughout the film as a substitute for the traditional flashback or direct narration by one of the characters. Notably, one of the initial sequences also uses them to foreshadow Candyman's appearance, although on this occasion it is revealed that it is a child playing with them. Beyond their potential for creating tension, the tone of fable or children's game reinforces the sense that the story being told is not reliable. Finally, in relation to one of the questions discussed above, the use of shadow puppets also completely eliminates the need to depict explicit violence against Black victims.

In contrast, in the opening scenes to the 1992 film, Candyman's voiceover is followed by a close-up of Helen at her university, interviewing a student whose story about the spectre is presented in the form of a flashback. Later, at the dinner where Professor Purcell explains the death of Daniel Robitaille in detail, there is no visual support

to the story; instead, the camera focuses entirely on the professor's speech. These two strategies are combined in the 2021 *Candyman* when Anthony meets Billy Burke, the Cabrini-Green resident who is the first to tell him about Candyman. It is noteworthy that the only cases where the film makes use of flashbacks are the moments when Billy talks about his experiences as a witness; all the other stories, including the moment when Anthony discovers that he was the baby in Helen's story, are presented using shadow puppets. As a direct testimony, the veracity of Billy's flashback is beyond doubt, and his status as an expert is confirmed when we see him reading a novel by Clive Barker (the extracinematic source of original Candyman story). In an ironic twist, however, the child we see playing with the puppets at the beginning of the film turns out to be Billy himself as a small child, as he has been plotting Candyman's return for years and has been manipulating Anthony to achieve it. In this way, the contrast between the realism of the flashback and the playful folktale quality of the shadow puppet theatre serves as a strategy that plays with the spectator's expectations. While the exploration of the space between legend and reality was already central to

the first *Candyman* (Wyrick, 1998: 89-91), DaCosta and Peele take this question further by making use of a false dichotomy between apparently contradictory narrative devices that end up sharing authorship.

3. PARALLELS AND MIRROR VISIONS

As noted above, some critics have pointed out that the killer-victim dynamic between Candyman and Helen served to perpetuate traditional gender and racial binaries. More recently, however, Lucy Fife Donaldson has suggested that the connection between the two characters is portrayed using complex strategies of representation that depict them more as doubles than as binary opposites (Donaldson, 2011). Although these two different propositions need not be mutually exclusive, the replacement of Helen with Anthony in the 2021 sequel not only avoids the problem that afflicted its predecessor but actually leverages this image of the double to emphasise the relationship between the two films.

First of all, contrary to the norm for "final girls" in slasher films (Clover, 1992), Candyman never tries to kill Helen or Anthony, but instead engages in an emotional destabilising strategy that foreshadows a special destiny for both characters. In his analysis of the scene where Candyman appears to Helen for the first time, Donaldson (2011) notes that the disruptive nature of the encounter is structured around Helen's visual experience: the shot of her face, in a trance-like state, is interrupted by the image of the monster and by fleeting cuts to the graffiti of Cabrini-Green, revealing both the neighbourhood's growing malaise and the supernatural quality of the phenomenon. Anthony, meanwhile, is rendered catatonic by his successive encounters

Image 2. Billy with the Clive Barker book. © 2020 Universal Pictures and MGM Pictures

with Candyman, although the definitive trigger is the conversation with his mother when she confesses the truth about his origins. Like Helen's scene in the original film, a long shot of Anthony's face is interrupted to show both the source of his grief (his own mother while she tells him the story) and a series of unreal images (various cuts to the shadow puppets). The similarities in visual composition serve a dual narrative purpose, as in addition to accentuating Helen's and Anthony's status as victims, they occur just when Anne-Marie recalls the moment that Helen saved Anthony's life.

Image 3. Anthony experiences an illusion in the mirror. © 2020 Universal Pictures and MGM Pictures

Secondly, part of Candyman's destabilising strategy consists in making Helen/Anthony look guilty for crimes they have not committed. For Ian Conrich (2015: 112), this exchange of guilt is one of the defining features of the post-slasher.[7] Due to the fact that a supernatural entity cannot be charged with murder, Helen is pursued and arrested for Candyman's crimes. This obviously drains her psychologically, however much she may declare herself incapable of committing such heinous acts. The sequel adapts this premise to its purpose of social commentary, with the police gunning Anthony down without evidence and even coercing Brianna to testify against him. However, although it is true that neither of the two characters have actually killed anyone, both films play with the idea of guilt at a structural level: Helen, through the position of superiority she assumes when she arrives in Cabrini-Green, sacrifices herself in a kind of atonement for the white liberal hegemony that keeps the neighbourhood in its deprived state (Briefel & Ngai, 1996: 79, 88), while in 2019, Anthony cannot deny that he is one of the artists and intellectuals responsible for the neighbourhood's gentrification.

At this point, the parallels and connections between the saga's three main characters are made explicit in the sequel in scenes such as the elevator scene or the art critic's visit, when Anthony sees Candyman's reflection instead of his own, foreshadowing their inevitable union. This of course involves one of the most predominant visual elements in the film: the mirror. In practical terms, it is a frequently used object in horror films due to its potential to surprise and subvert expectations. For example, Clive Privler's murder takes place in an art gallery filled with looking glasses that reveal Candyman's reflection while the invisible spectre exacts his revenge. On the other hand, in the scene where Anthony summons the spectre, the mirror is shrouded in shadow: the camera focuses on Anthony and Brianna, and the spectator's inability to see what the characters see reduces the tension of the moment. The mirror's ability to attract and redirect the gaze gives it the quality of a door into the supernatural, and consequently, a space of confrontation, but also

THE MIRROR'S ABILITY TO ATTRACT AND REDIRECT THE GAZE GIVES IT THE QUALITY OF A DOOR INTO THE SUPERNATURAL

of introspection. The ritual requires the summoner to keep his gaze fixed on his reflection while he speaks Candyman's name five times;[8] in other words, the summoner must be able to endure his or her own gaze. Generally, Candyman's victims are able to perform the ritual without remorse because they don't believe in its consequences—or, by extension, in Candyman. The only exception is Brianna: fully aware of the monster's existence, she uses the invocation to punish the police officers who killed Anthony, which is why she herself is not targeted in the massacre. In return, the ritual requires her to actively seek out and confront her own gaze, in an external expression of her battle with her own conscience.

In relation to the introspective potential of the mirror, one innovation of the 2021 film over its predecessor is the idea that the mirror's reflection can serve to change the perspective of the observer. This is at least the purpose behind Anthony's installation for the art gallery: based on the Candyman legend, his idea is to install an ordinary mirror which, when opened, reveals a small, ominously lit room filled with paintings portraying the suffering of the Black community. The invitation to the game is in turn an invitation to reflect, to confront reality, but Anthony plans it at a point when he does not yet believe in the supernatural. Later, after Clive and his girlfriend have been murdered in the gallery, Brianna catches Anthony in a trance in front of the bathroom mirror: this is the point when he begins to submit to Candyman's hypnotic powers, symbolising a change to the meaning of the mirror for him.

Another interesting aspect of Anthony's installation is its outward resemblance to Helen's mirror. In the original film, when Helen removes the medicine cabinet from the bathroom wall, she finds a hole connecting her apartment to the one next door. She thus discovers that her apartment was built according to the same plans as the apartment blocks in the nearby Cabrini-Green neighbourhood, which in turn provides a rational

explanation for the deaths attributed to Candyman, given that anyone could get into one apartment from another through the mirror. Both this theory and Anthony's installation constitute a vain attempt to domesticate the supernatural quality of the spectre based on the premise that it is possible to *uncover* the truth just as easily as it is for both characters to reveal a hidden room. Once again, the 2021 *Candyman* becomes a reflection of its 1992 counterpart, with the exception that in the new film the game of mirrors operates on two levels: Anthony is connected to Helen and Helen is connected to Candyman through a place of residence whose architectural similarities to the Cabrini-Green apartments are obscured by the dramatic socioeconomic differences between the two neighbourhoods (Briefel & Ngai, 1996: 81).

The importance of urban space in both films is obvious right from their opening sequences. In the 1992 *Candyman*, an aerial shot follows cars driving down one of the many freeways that criss-cross the city. After this opening shot, the Philip Glass music gives way to the sound of Candyman's voice, speaking to the spectator while a huge swarm of bees rises up and engulfs the city skyscrapers. Then, finally, Helen appears. As Abbot points out, while the monster's monologue is typical of the slasher, the shot of the Chicago cityscape establishes an urban setting that is highly unusual for the genre, which until then was more commonly set in rural or residential areas than in the heart of a big city (Abbot, 2015: 69-71). The 2021 *Candyman* opens with a quote from the original film: immediately after the flashback presenting the story of Billy and Sherman Fields, the camera similarly moves through the streets of Chicago, but this time with a POV from the ground looking up. Instead of Candyman and his swarm of bees, the sequence culminates with a rotating shot that finally focuses on Brianna's brother and his partner, who are on their way to the dinner where Troy will tell them the story of Helen Lyle. In this way, the sequel is presented as a reflection

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of the original, from which it has inherited the notion that the hero and the villain of the story are connected through the urban landscape (Abbot, 2015: 70).

The editing thus foreshadows are key moment in the storyline of both films. The failed Cabrini-Green housing project constitutes a convention of the slasher film that Carol Clover refers to as "the terrible place", an apparently safe setting that ultimately proves fatal for the protagonists (Clover, 1992: 30-31). Far from being a faithful, realistic representation of Cabrini-Green, the cinematic version of this residential area depicts a maze of passages and tunnels reminiscent of the Gothic tradition (Abbot, 2015: 76), dispossessed of its inhabitants in order to convey the illusion of a remote, forgotten wasteland (Briefel y Ngai, 1996: 82). The terrible place evokes a "concentration of memories" that blurs the divide between the real and the imaginary (Abbot, 2015: 70).

4. ART AND MEMORY

A perfect example of how the cinematic version of Cabrini-Green is depicted as an epistemological labyrinth is the slogan "Sweets for the sweet" that

appears in graffiti scrawled on the walls around the neighbourhood. On the one hand, the phrase alludes both to Candyman and to the local drug trade, encouraging a twofold reading of the urban setting on mythical and historical levels; and on the other, the atmosphere of decline turns a real-life setting into the perfect location for the slasher film's "terrible place" (Abbot, 2015: 75). Moreover, for Wyrick, graffiti is a symbol of the repossession of the city by its marginalised inhabitants[9] and reminds us that Helen's attempts to appropriate this space by imposing meaning on it culminate with her being *possessed* by the graffiti that immortalises her after her sacrifice (Wyrick, 1998: 93). In this sense, the burst of mental images of this graffiti used by Candyman to destabilise Helen symbolises the effective demolition of her preconceived ideas about Cabrini-Green. Prior to this point, in fact, the method Helen applies to her research in the neighbourhood reveals a treatment of space as a mere source of data to support her theories; as Donaldson (2011) points out, the camera position and the editing are focused on Helen's gaze rather than on the details of the location, and the researcher's over-confident attitude suggests that she would rather ignore reality (in-

Image 4. Anthony taking pictures of the walls of Cabrini-Green. © 2020 Universal Pictures and MGM Pictures

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cluding the potential danger she faces) if it means she can extract more information.

It is worth noting that in Clive Barker's original short story, Helen is not doing her thesis on urban legends but studying graffiti in Liverpool. This transition from image to word as an object of study is reversed in the 2021 film through Anthony, an artist who is desperate to shake himself out of a creative slump. Although both characters arrive in Cabrini-Green with the same equipment to document their findings (a photo camera and a recorder or a notebook), the importance that these objects have for each of them is inverted: it is no accident that the first thing we see after Anthony's encounter with Billy is the protagonist painting in his studio, while Helen spends her time transcribing notes for her thesis. This foreshadows a shift towards the visual that is expressed in various ways. For example, as noted above, shadow puppet sequences are inserted into the sequel to support the narration; conversely, the scene in the original film where Helen interviews the student places obvious emphasis on the orality of the act, with the camera focusing on the tape recorder and on Helen's attentive expression. Moreover, as Koven suggests, the flashback that presents the story could be interpreted as a mirror universe within the diegesis, with Helen listening to her student's story in the same way she would watch a movie (Koven, 1999: 161). For Bernard Rose, Koven argues, cinema is "a medium of narration [...] linked to traditional oral storytelling" (Koven, 1999: 161), but DaCosta's conception seems to be quite the opposite; thus, the reflection of this "story within a story" is located precisely in the "work of art within art" that Anthony presents at his exhibition.

Of course, Anthony's profession represents another connection to Candyman through Daniel Robitaille, the monster's *alter ego* in the original film. Robitaille, an acclaimed artist of his day despite being the son of a freed slave, was lynched by a mob for having a sexual relationship with a white woman. As part of his punishment, his assailants cut off his hand and replaced it with a hook, an act that Wyrick interprets as a kind of castration that prevents him from being able to express himself artistically and dooms him to repeat the violence he has suffered, perpetrating it on others (Wyrick, 1998: 110). In the original *Candyman*, whose plot revolves around the relationship between Candyman and Helen, the hook could be understood in the context of the slasher's fondness for sharp weapons, which result in a more *intimate* death (Clover, 1992: 32). In the sequel, however, Robitaille's story becomes just one more among thousands of unjust deaths that must be remembered, which is in turn what inspires Anthony to begin painting the faces of dozens of unknown people as Candyman's influence over him grows stronger.

In a way, the transition from one film to the other could be summed up in the shift from the "be my victim" appeal that the monster directs specifically at Helen to the "say my name" tagline featured in the marketing campaign for the sequel: the invitation to perform the ritual that summons Candyman is maintained, but it is stripped of its intimate nature and acquires a tone of reclamation through the connection of the name to the memory of the victims who now form part of the spectre. When Anthony joins the hive and is no longer able to compensate for Robitaille's artistic castration, the monster confers upon Brianna the task of keeping his legend alive. As a gallery director, she is called upon not only to tell others about

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THE TRANSITION FROM ONE FILM TO THE OTHER COULD BE SUMMED UP IN THE SHIFT FROM THE APPEAL "BE MY VICTIM" THAT THE MONSTER DIRECTS SPECIFICALLY AT HELEN TO THE TAGLINE "SAY MY NAME" FEATURED IN THE MARKETING CAMPAIGN FOR THE SEQUEL.

Images 5 and 6. Lighting in the art gallery and police car scenes. © 2020 Universal Pictures and MGM Pictures

what happened, but to show Anthony's work to the world. While Wyrick (1998: 104) argues that what motivates the original Candyman is a "retributive cyclicality" that lacks a revolutionary purpose, Peele and DaCosta's reinterpretation maintain the character's thirst for vengeance but channel it through art towards an enduring call for social change.

Once again, this idea points towards a meta-cinematic reading of *Candyman*. While a connection has been suggested between the legend of the monster and the films themselves, the quality of reclamation in the spectre's final appearance in the sequel is consistent with DaCosta aim in updating the saga. This time, however, the filmmaker plays with reality and fiction in a way that depends decisively on the visual by exploiting the assumptions of the slasher genre. In the story, Anthony uses violent images, dark colours and all kinds of expressive excesses to ensure that his paintings affect the viewer, but his work is dismissed by the art critic who finds the message to be too obvious and unoriginal. Although her attitude changes when Clive's death gives Anthony's work some media coverage,[10] it is already too late: she is also murdered by Candyman, and the crime marks a turning point for Anthony, whose portraits become increasingly horrific as the

spectre's influence over him grows stronger. This conclusion suggests that the visual excesses that typify the slasher (Abbot, 2015: 68) offer an ideal way of grabbing society's attention: the originality demanded by the art critic is thus dismissed in view of the urgent nature of the message that the art is seeking to convey. Along the same lines, the process of destabilisation that Anthony suffers as Candyman draws closer to him is much more physical than Helen's, with several scenes revelling in the progressive decay of his skin and his flesh.

Furthermore, the original *Candyman* made use of camera and sound effects to create sensory illusions that highlight the monster's dreamlike quality and mark a break from ordinary daily experience (Abbot, 2015: 73). The sequel, on the other hand, adopts a naturalist aesthetic that anchors the events in the real world, in keeping with the approach of the neoslasher (Adams, 2015: 96), while maintaining its predecessor's strategy of destabilising the realistic setting. The mechanism used to achieve this, however, is different from the device used in the first film, as it more often involves playing with the lighting (as in the elevator scene) and with the palette of colours. Specifically, the killing of Clive and his girlfriend exploits the location of the art gallery to tinge the atmosphe-

re in blue and red hues, a chromatic choice that links the scene to the film's denouement (with the police car sirens lighting up the dark streets of Cabrini-Green). Once again, DaCosta establishes a connection between artistic expression and social injustice that reveals the ethical intent of her film.

5. CONCLUSIONS

According to Briefel & Ngai (1996: 90), the horror genre is an inadequate vehicle for addressing the issues that *Candyman* (1992) attempts to explore, because "social reality murders myth." Nevertheless, Nia DaCosta and Jordan Peele use a strategy involving the appropriation of the Candyman legend in order to examine the intergenerational trauma of the African American community. The result is an ambitious effort in which the concept of legacy inherent in the character, its visual iconography, the sequel's relationship to the rest of the saga, and the slasher genre all converge in a reclamation of the revolutionary and healing potential of art both inside and outside the diegesis. Although DaCosta is not the first filmmaker to explore issues of racism through horror (Pisters, 2020: 158-68), her contribution confirms Leeder's hypothesis that the conservative climate following the election of Donald Trump as president may have favoured the development of the genre (2018: 87).[11] On the other hand, the cyclical nature of horror cinema and the constant return of its monsters (Wyrick, 1998: 113) serves as a reminder that the injustice embodied in Candyman has by no means disappeared. With historical precedents as recent as Michael Brown (2014), Tamir Rice (2014), Walter Scott (2015), and George Floyd (2020), the scene where the police murder Anthony in the denouement to the new *Candyman* represents an explicit condemnation of ongoing institutional racism in the United States, where the monster's obsession with having us speak his name is reshaped as a call to remember the victims.

NOTES

1   Similarly, Douglas Kellner suggests that Hollywood horror films after the 1960s have often offered symbolic representations of "both universal fears and the deepest anxieties and hostilities of contemporary U.S. society" (Kellner, 1996: 271).

2   On the other hand, as Adams points out, the aesthetics of the horror genre tend to reflect both the trends of the genre itself and the other media consumed by its target audience (Adams, 2015: 93). This means that DaCosta's *Candyman*, as a product of its time, cannot be considered in isolation from the latest trends in horror and slasher films; in fact, DaCosta's film displays the "obsession with assaulting the body in protracted and inventive ways" (in Anthony's gradual process of physical decay, but also in the complexity of Candyman's murders) and the distrust in human nature cited by Conrich as defining features of the genre since the September 11 attacks (Conrich, 2010: 3-4).

3   Cfr. Briefel & Ngai (1996: 85, 90) and Kydd (1995: 63).

4   For further exploration of this idea, see Sobande (2019: 240). The conception of horror as a normality threatened by the monstrous can be traced back to Wood (1979).

5   Sobande (2019: 242) offered the same analysis of the protagonist in Peele's directorial debut, *Get Out* (2017).

6   There is a case similar to the title of the 2021 *Candyman* in *Halloween* (David Gordon Green, 2018), which also has the same title as the original instalment of its franchise (John Carpenter, 1978) and serves as a direct continuation that ignores all the other sequels. However, while there were already two films titled *Halloween 2* (the 1981 film directed by Rick Rosenthal, and the sequel to Rob Zombie's 2007 remake, released in 2009), the first *Candyman* sequel was actually only known as *Candyman 2* in Spain, as in the rest of the world its original title was *Candyman: Farewell to the Flesh* (Bill Condon, 1995) (and, therefore, numbering the film would not have caused confusion).

7   For Conrich, the "post-slasher" represented a period of transition in the development of the genre, from the end of the era of the classical slasher up until the

mid-1990s. However, there is no scholarly consensus as to the dates and names of the different periods, as other labels, such as neoslasher, are often used to refer to *Scream* (Wes Craven, 1997). Sotiris Petridis proposes a different classification, including *Candyman* in the classical period (1974-1993) and its original sequels in what he refers to as the "self-referential era" (1994-2000), and concluding his chronology with the neoslasher era, from 2001 to 2013 (Petridis, 2019: 1-3).

8 A variation on the ritual can be found in urban legends such as the Bloody Mary legend, which almost certainly served as inspiration for Candyman (Koven, 1999: 159-160).

9 The official study guide for *Candyman* links graffiti to the collective memory, but also to its use in the golden age of hip-hop as a way of claiming territory (Langston League, 2021: 35).

10 This attitude exposes the thin line between the celebration of African American art and its exploitation, as well as the tendency to promote African American art based on trauma for commercial ends (Langston League, 2021: 34).

11 In fact, Leeder identifies Peele precisely as the first and most important exponent of this trend. Similarly, Sobande (2019: 239) has also analysed *Get Out* in the context of Trump's electoral victory.

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VISUAL AND METAFICTIONAL STRATEGIES FOR THE RECLAMATION OF A LEGACY IN *CANDYMAN* (NIA DACOSTA, 2021)

ESTRATEGIAS VISUALES Y METAFICCIONALES PARA LA REIVINDICACIÓN DEL LEGADO EN *CANDYMAN* (NIA DACOSTA, 2021)

Abstract

In 1992, *Candyman* (Bernard Rose) made history by featuring the first African American villain in a big slasher production. Nearly thirty years later, Jordan Peele and Nia DaCosta have brought back the killer with the hook to explore the current state of the fight against racism in the United States. This article explores the ways in which the new *Candyman* (Nia DaCosta, 2021) leverages its status as a sequel to examine the notions of legacy and memory inherent both in the Candyman legend and in the reclamation of the stories of victims of racist violence. It is argued that the film uses its place in the saga, the conventions of the slasher genre, and the visual mythology originally established by Rose to create an intricate metafictional game exploring the problems of confronting a traumatic past. Central to this discussion is the motif of the mirror, whose importance to the story is related to the numerous narrative and visual parallels between the two films, and to the call made to the audience to reflect on an uncomfortable reality that is given an enduring form through art.

Resumen

En 1992, *Candyman, el dominio de la mente* (Candyman, Bernard Rose) hizo historia al presentar por primera vez a un antagonista afroamericano en un *slasher* producido por un gran estudio. Casi treinta años después, Jordan Peele y Nia DaCosta han recuperado al asesino del gancho con el fin de abordar el estado actual de la lucha contra el racismo en Estados Unidos. El presente artículo investiga cómo la nueva *Candyman* (Nia DaCosta, 2021) aprovecha su condición de secuela para profundizar en las nociones de legado y memoria que son inherentes tanto a la leyenda del monstruo titular como a la reivindicación de las víctimas de violencia racista. Se argumentará que la película se sirve de su adscripción a la saga, de las convenciones del *slasher* y de la mitología visual establecida por Rose para crear un intrincado juego metaficcional que aborda la problemática de afrontar un pasado traumático. Central a esta discusión es el motivo del espejo, cuya importancia para la diégesis se relaciona con los numerosos paralelismos narrativos y visuales entre ambas películas y con el llamamiento a que el espectador se enfrente a una realidad incómoda de mirar pero que perdura gracias al arte.

Key words

Candyman; Legend; Memory; Legacy; Sequel; Slasher; Horror; Metafiction.

Palabras clave

Candyman; leyenda; memoria; legado; secuela; *slasher*; terror; metaficción.

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THE ISOLATED STILL FRAME AS SUBLIMINAL AGENT: ANALYSIS AND CATEGORISATION

JAVIER SANZ-AZNAR

JUAN JOSÉ CABALLERO-MOLINA

0. INTRODUCTION

There are various ways that a film spectator can be influenced without being aware of it. In all cases, the spectator processes certain stimuli at the neural level, but those stimuli do not reach the threshold of the supraliminal (conscious) level, as they are stored entirely on the subliminal (unconscious) level.

The move from subliminal to supraliminal is determined by neural correlates of consciousness (NCC), which constitute the smallest neural processes that need to occur for a stimulus to be consciously perceived (Crick & Koch, 1990). It is believed that after an initial low-level processing of stimuli, the brain decides not to complete certain processes, and thus the stimuli that triggered those processes do not reach the conscious level. Far from constituting a limitation, this is a preventive mechanism that vests the human cognitive system with a protection from the threat of hypersensitivity and even perceptual saturation (Wang *et al.*, 2019).

Among the possible options to design subliminal stimuli in the cinematographic environment (García Matilla, 1990; Molina, 2012, 2013), such as masked fades (Sanz-Aznar y Caballero-Molina, 2021) applied in *Psycho* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1960) or in *The Exorcist* (William Friedkin, 1975), one of the possible options for designing subliminal stimuli that has attracted the most attention is the technique of embedding a single still frame[1] in a place where it doesn't belong, so that although it goes unnoticed, it can condition the subsequent perception of the film by spectators, who are never made aware of the manipulation that they have been subjected to.

The effectiveness of this technique should be assessed with caution. The fact that the subliminal stimulus is so fleeting and is immediately followed by a series of supraliminal stimuli has led many theorists to conclude that the potential for

manipulation offered by such stimuli is quite limited (Broyles, 2006). Nevertheless, that such stimuli have the potential to affect spectators is beyond scientific dispute, as it is agreed that they initiate low-level neural processes that can influence the processing of subsequent stimuli (Pan *et al.*, 2017). However, it should be noted that there are no scientific publications on quantitative experiments that prove the effectiveness of subliminal stimulation within the cinematographic medium.

The operation of these subliminal stimuli, which constitutes the object of this study, depends on the fact that before the series of neural processes necessary for conscious perception (NCC) can occur, the visual input is replaced by another input that inhibits those neural processes because the cognitive system is required to initiate the processes associated with the new stimulus. This prevents the spectator from becoming aware of any stimuli displayed for an insufficient amount of time. Yet although they are not consciously perceived, these subliminal still frames trigger neural processes that influence the development of subsequent neural processes (Berkovitch & Dehaene, 2019). Various experiments have demonstrated that by inhibiting neural processes before the NCC are completed, subliminal stimuli effectively alter the processing of subsequent stimuli (Liu *et al.*, 2020; Berkovitch & Dehaene, 2019).

In short, the impact of the subliminal still frame on the spectator does not consist of the communicative transmission of a message, but of an attack on the spectator's cognitive system. How this happens and the different manifestations of this phenomenon is the object of this study.

1. THE ISOLATED STILL FRAME AS SUBLIMINAL STIMULUS

In an experiment on subliminal stimuli containing information of importance for the completion of a task without reaching the conscious level due to the lack of time they appear on screen, partici-

pants were asked to count red stars appearing on a black screen (Liu *et al.*, 2020). The level of difficulty of the test varied, as anything between 5 and 19 stars could appear over a span of 1200 milliseconds (ms). During this time, the study subjects might or might not be exposed to subliminal audiovisual or exclusively auditory stimuli. The auditory stimuli consisted of a voice beneath the threshold of hearing stating the number of stars that appeared on the screen, while for the audiovisual stimuli the appearance of the number of stars shown on the screen was added for 5 ms. The results of the experiment demonstrated that when participants had to say how many stars had appeared on the screen, the perceptual error in the task was slightly lower when they had received the subliminal stimuli, thus confirming the effectiveness of such stimuli on the perception of supraliminal stimuli.

The aggressive film editing technique involving the compression of the viewing time afforded to the spectator so that a visual stimulus will fall into the subliminal range requires an understanding of the concepts of *objective threshold* and *subjective threshold* (Cheesman & Merikle, 1984). These two concepts refer to the amount of time necessary to trigger the neural processes without reaching the conscious level. The objective threshold must be exceeded in order to initiate low-level cognitive processes without activating the processes that would make the subject conscious of the triggering event. Below this objective threshold, the stimulus does not affect the individual in any way. Meanwhile, the subjective threshold is the level at which the processes required for the NCC occur, at which point the stimulus enters the subject's consciousness. This means that in order for an event to be unconsciously perceived, it must fall somewhere between the objective threshold and the subjective threshold. Consequently, the term "subliminal" can be attributed to any image that the perceiver is unable to report after it has been displayed for a span of time that is too short for conscious perception but long enough to

A CINEMATIC SUBLIMINAL STIMULUS CAN BE IDENTIFIED AS ONE FRAME, AS IT IS ONLY WITH A SINGLE FRAME THAT THE OBJECTIVE THRESHOLD COULD BE EXCEEDED WITHOUT ALSO EXCEEDING THE SUBJECTIVE THRESHOLD

trigger low-level neural processes that could influence subsequent stimuli.

The subjective threshold is estimated to be between 30ms and 50ms slower than the objective threshold (Cheesman & Merikle, 1984), and any stimulus is assumed to exceed the subjective threshold if it falls within the range from 32ms to 80ms (Armstrong & Dienes, 2013). Based on these reference figures, the objective threshold can be difficult to gauge; however, bearing in mind that at a standard playback speed of 24fps a frame is visible for 41.67ms, from a neuroscientific perspective a cinematic subliminal stimulus can be identified as one frame, as it is only with a single frame that the objective threshold could be exceeded without also exceeding the subjective threshold.

2. EVOCATIONS OF THE SUBLIMINAL STILL FRAME

The subliminal image withdrawn from the spectator before reaching the subjective threshold lasts long enough to trigger what is known as the innate alarm system. This is a defence mechanism that facilitates the processing of stimuli as quickly and effectively as possible, with the objective of speeding up reaction times to cognitive inputs, while also enhancing response effectiveness. This neural process has been demonstrated to be much faster and more effective than other neural mechanisms associated with consciousness (Terpou *et al.*, 2019). When people are exposed to an image for less than 16.7 ms, they

are given a sufficient time margin to trigger the same neural mechanisms that react to a potential threat without actually becoming conscious of the fact (Williams *et al.*, 2006; Liddell *et al.*, 2005).

The activation of the innate alarm system also triggers the autonomic nervous system (ANS), associated with the fight-or-flight response. This in turn sets off the emotional evaluation processes that operate in the state of cognitive alert to a potential threat. From this moment, the attention is aroused, the focus of interest is narrowed, and the subject is immersed in a higher state of receptiveness. Thus, according to some studies (Liu *et al.*, 2020), these subliminal audiovisual impulses have the generic capacity to enhance an individual's cognitive attention to the stimuli that follow them.

The masked priming paradigm involves the presentation of a subliminal stimulus, referred to as a *prime*, followed by another, known as a *mask*, which is normally supraliminal. The intention of the mask is to inhibit the neural processes by means of a new stimulus, ensuring that the prime stimulus does not reach the conscious level (Van den Bussche, Van den Noortgate, & Reynvoet, 2009). Finally, the image that is the focus of the required task is displayed. This image is known as the *target*, as it is the stimulus that serves to measure the effect of the prime.

In the context of a study based on textual stimuli (Berkovitch & Dehaene, 2019), an experiment was conducted involving the successive presentation of an initial mask for 100 ms, the prime input for 33 ms, a subsequent mask with a duration of 100 ms, and then finally the *target*. After viewing this series of visual stimuli, the participant was required to answer a question about the grammatical category of the target. Variations on this pattern were also conducted, displaying the series of stimuli with or without the subsequent mask. The question about the unmasked target was answered 10 ms more quickly than the one

about the masked target, thereby confirming that the mask slowed down response time.

As part of the same research project, as many as four other experiments were conducted, with variations related to the consistency or inconsistency between the prime and the target, the subliminal or supraliminal nature of the masks, and adjustments to the time interval between the prime and the target, known as stimulus-onset-asynchrony (SOA).

Based on this series of experiments, it was found that a prime stimulus belonging to a particular grammatical category could speed up processing of a target belonging to the same grammatical category, facilitating faster responses. Another significant finding was that the characteristics of the subliminal stimulus generate expectations about the subsequent stimuli. This effect is more intense if the mask is consciously perceived, and slightly less so if the mask is subliminal.

From these experiments it was concluded that subliminal prime stimuli induce a syntactic context that influences the processing of subsequent stimuli perceived consciously as targets. This is what is defined as syntactic priming. Various studies confirm the unconscious search for semantic and syntactic consistency in the series of visual images (Cohn & Kutas, 2017; Vodrahalli *et al.*, 2018), opening up the possibility of verifying whether the same search for contextual consistency can also be extrapolated to subliminal images. For this reason, when trying to categorise different types of subliminal still frames, it is important to distinguish those that maintain consistency with the shot they accompany from those that disrupt that consistency (such as the insertion of a black-and-white frame in a colour series).

One last aspect that subliminal images can influence relates to their emotional valence. In a study where faces wearing expressions consistent with states of happiness or sadness were shown at intervals of 14ms, 40ms, or 80ms, an EEG identified the presence of the component of the event-related potential (ERP) associated with the perception of faces, known as the N170, regardless of whether the input had been subliminal or supraliminal (Lai *et al.*, 2020). Moreover, in the same study, it was found that N170 latency was longer for the 14ms inputs than it was for those of longer durations. These findings suggest that the N170 may be the epiphenomenon of an unconscious face perception prior to the information processed reaching the supraliminal level. This study confirms that the detection of external facial information is the result of an immediate and precise neural process, even when it does not occur consciously.

It is also worth noting that according to the same study, happy faces showed a bigger neural response when they were detected consciously, while sad faces did so when they were not detected consciously. In other words, not only did the results trigger neural processes related to face perception before this information was conscious, but also these processes can be differentiated based on the emotional valence reflected in the face displayed as a stimulus.

In short, it can be concluded that the human brain appears to be disposed to distinguish between different emotional valences of facial expressions without even any need for the subject to be conscious of having perceived them.

3. CINEMATOGRAPHIC MANIFESTATIONS OF THE SUBLIMINAL: DEFINITION AND CATEGORISATION OF THE FLEETING FRAME

Still frames associated with the subliminal level have always been categorised in a narrow or homogeneous way, but in fact, it is important to note that substantial differences can—and should—be identified in different subliminal frames, through the delineation of clear categories based on their appearance, content, behaviour, or purpose.

Despite the fact that to date there is no empirical evidence of its potential impact on the cine-

matographic environment, these isolated images, discursively out of place, are vested with the legitimacy conferred on them by the narrative and the dramatic universe to which they belong. In other words, these images are never arbitrary, random, or gratuitous, but designed to have a specific impact on the spectator, with a meticulously assigned function in the context of a particular scene or dramatic action. In short, these images fulfil a pre-established function. And although they are never supposed to advance the story since they are never even perceived on a conscious level, they are certainly intended to influence the spectator.

In order to distinguish between different types of subliminal still frames, certain variables need to be identified, such as whether the frame is semantically and/or syntactically connected to the frames that follow it, what kind of graphic or compositional qualities it possesses (from figurative or geometric forms to shapeless images), or whether it reinforces its own presence as a monochrome break in the regular, fluid continuum of the discursive chain through the use of white, black or any other colour that disrupts the orderly flow of frames. Beyond these aspects, another question to consider, as noted above, is whether the frame introduces an emotional valence by inserting a face that might affect the perception of the subsequent supraliminal images. Only after considering the variables described above will we be able to determine the cognitive effectiveness of this device, and to formulate useful parameters for its design, function, and location.

It is patently clear that there are different categories of subliminal frames, beginning with a type that really should be excluded from the list because it exceeds the time limit discussed above of a single still frame (despite the fact that the vast majority of specialised studies continue to refer to subliminal stimuli composed of two or more frames). Such images constitute a category that should properly be labelled "false subliminal images" to highlight the inappropriate nature of their

institutionalised use as an example of something which, in reality, they are not.

While discrediting the inclusion of images made up of more than one frame in the subliminal category, it is worth reflecting for a moment on whether the single-frame subliminal image can be classified as a shot. To this end, it is necessary first to trace the appearance and gradual institutionalisation of the term "shot" itself, to when, in the 1910s[2] (Altman, 1996), the lexicon associated with the new art of cinema began being standardised on both sides of the Atlantic. As Emmanuel Siety points out, the French term *plan* (shot) was initially used to designate "Each of the flat surfaces perpendicular to the direction of the gaze representing degrees of depth"[3] (Siety, 2001: 55). Over time, it ceased to be used to refer to an entire scene, but instead came to mean the series of different shots that comprised it. It was then that the unity of the scene was broken down in an evident desire to draw the spectator's gaze into the dramatic development through a more intimate and dynamic point of view. Epstein (1988) would define it as anatomical decades before it would come to be recognised and characterised by McLuhan (1996), and immediately thereafter by others like Bonitzer (1995), as an inherent feature of hot media.

This is what constitutes the *small visual trauma* caused by the change of shot, according to Jacques Aumont (2000). This sensory reaction is at once enhanced and reduced or concealed by the insertion of an isolated frame, lacking time and space and stripped of point of view. It is neither the product nor the return of a gaze; its purpose is to subvert, in more than one sense, the unity of the scene. It should therefore not be confu-

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IT IS PATENTLY CLEAR THAT THERE ARE DIFFERENT CATEGORIES OF SUBLIMINAL FRAMES

THE FLEETING FRAME IS OF COURSE INSERTED BETWEEN TWO CUTS, AND ESTABLISHES A TENSION BETWEEN THEM, PLAYING WITH OUR SENSES AND OUR COGNITIVE SYSTEM; BUT IT IS NOT A SHOT NOR IS IT INTENDED TO BE ONE, BECAUSE NEITHER ITS FUNCTION NOR ITS BEHAVIOUR CORRESPOND TO WHAT WE EXPECT FROM THAT DISCURSIVE UNIT

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sed with a shot, despite the fact that it may technically meet the rudimentary, tautological and inadequate definition of the concept offered in *Aesthetics of Film*, as "any piece of film that runs uninterrupted between two shot changes" (Aumont *et al.*, 1985: 41).

The fleeting frame is of course inserted between two cuts, and establishes a tension between them, playing with our senses and our cognitive system; but it is not a shot nor is it intended to be one, because neither its function nor its behaviour correspond to what we expect from that discursive unit. With this in mind, the more precise classification of "fleeting or invasive frame" will be used here to describe the manifestation of what this study identifies as the presence of the subliminal image in film.

4. USES OF THE SUBLIMINAL STILL FRAME IN CINEMA

Alfred Hitchcock makes use of one of these floating frames in the conclusion to *Spellbound* (1945),

when Dr. Murchison (Leo G. Carroll) ultimately shoots himself in a POV shot underscored by the dramatic added effect of a red still frame covered almost completely by an explosive cloud[4] when the character fires the gun into his own face/into the camera. The disruptive embedding of this frame has the effect of emphasising a highly unusual (especially for classical Hollywood's strict production code) and defiant act of suicide experienced by the spectator in the first person. The projectile fired at the spectator is sensory and cognitive in nature. The case described here can be analysed in figure 1.

By deconstructing the action described above into frames, we can identify one of the frames acting unexpectedly as a transition into the still frame where the image of the explosion appears fully formed. The subliminal stimulus is thus foreshadowed, i.e., it is not inserted abruptly. This raises the question of whether this example conforms to the principle outlined above, that in order to be deemed subliminal the stimulus must be contained in a single frame. In other words, although in this case the stimulus is shown clearly in a single frame, it is in a sense already anticipated in the frame that precedes it.

An interesting aspect of this frame is the sudden and violent intrusion of bright red in a black-and-white film. On the cognitive level, information on movement and position is processed in the parietal cortex much more quickly than information on colour and shape, which are processed in the temporal lobe (Milner & Goodale, 2006). This gives the spectator the perceptual sensation that the red tinge of the explosion actually invades the

Figure 1. Fragment from the end of the film *Spellbound* where the embedded subliminal still frame is located. Note: The time code is in Hour:Minute:Second:Frame format

01:54:34:23   01:54:35:00   01:54:35:01   01:54:35:02   01:54:35:03   01:54:35:04
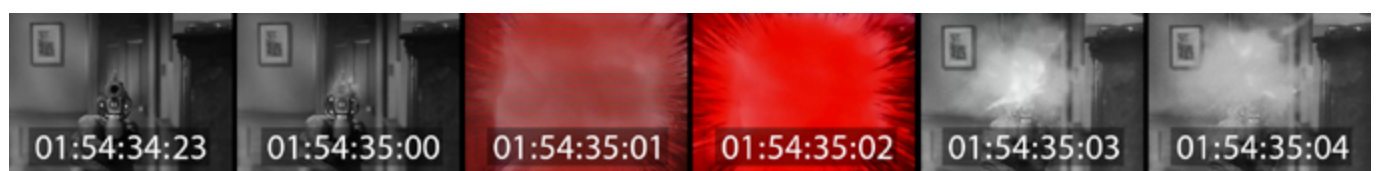
Figure 2. Fragment from the film *Se7en* where the subliminal still frame showing a close-up of Tracy's face is inserted. Note: The time code is in Hour:Minute:Second:Frame format

subsequent frames as well, despite the fact that the colour is no longer present.

Among contemporary filmmakers, David Fincher is without doubt one of the most decisive and emphatic in the use of this device referred to here as the fleeting frame, earning himself the title of a true master of the subliminal (Marimón, 2015). In the final sequence to *Se7en* (David Fincher, 1995), set in the middle of a vast oilfield where the macabre series of murders orchestrated by John Doe (Kevin Spacey) will come to an end at the very moment that the detective, David Mills (Brad Pitt), discovers that his wife, Tracy (Gwyneth Paltrow), has been brutally murdered by the ruthless psycho-killer. When Mills suddenly receives a disturbing package containing (as he alone confirms) his wife's head, he points his gun at the killer and prepares to fire. In the moment immediately prior to the gunshot, Fincher inserts a fully subliminal image, contained on a single frame, in the form of a photograph of the protagonist's wife, as shown in figure 2.

The severed head is thus perversely evoked without having to be gruesomely displayed. Its presence is limited to an insinuation through the effective combination of an off-camera reference and a subliminal image. The head shot acts as a kind of flash intended to convey the shock experienced by the character on the screen, engaging us in the traumatic mechanism that immerses us in Mills' homicidal rage. Its fleeting appearance expands, infects, and shapes the dramatic action that follows, directing it towards its anticipated conclusion. The shock provoked by this fleeting frame, embedded so aggressively in the discursive chain, spreads and numbs the effect of what happens next. The act and even the sound of the gunfire are unnecessary once this powerful, subliminal perceptual-cognitive trigger has been pulled.

In other words, this image acts as an engine or driver for the action, effectively precipitating the gunshot. But beyond its enigmatically disruptive presence, the image is underpinned by its macabre justification, consisting of using a hypothetical mental flash to show something which, in the compositional strategy that precedes it, is an obvious POV shot that has been withheld from view.

At the same time, in the midst of this shift from the external to the internal, from the perceptual to the psychological, there is clearly an inversion process at work, which translates the living image of a lifeless severed head into the close-up of a face infused with life and joy, while at the same time isolated, frozen, suspended in a completely static format (as both a photograph and a still frame). The intrusive image serves as a palliative, a parody of the trauma that displaces that which *must not* be seen, to make it even more devastating. And this makes it a craftily designed detonator of the trauma. The image is affirmed in its effective absence, triggering the psychological process of rumination.[5]

Two examples of the recurrent use of a subliminal still frame throughout a film can be found in *Sunshine* (Boyle, 2007) and *Cloverfield* (Reeves, 2008). In the first film, this strategy can be found in a scene where the space travellers board an abandoned ship. While they do so, the torches they carry cast shafts of light into space, dazzling the

THE SHOCK PROVOKED BY THIS FLEETING FRAME, EMBEDDED SO AGGRESSIVELY IN THE DISCURSIVE CHAIN, SPREADS AND NUMBS THE EFFECT OF WHAT HAPPENS NEXT. THE ACT AND EVEN THE SOUND OF THE GUNFIRE ARE UNNECESSARY ONCE THIS POWERFUL, SUBLIMINAL PERCEPTUAL–COGNITIVE TRIGGER HAS BEEN PULLED

spectator for a few moments when those shafts are aimed directly at the camera. It is in these flashes of light that Danny Boyle embeds fleeting frames showing the faces of each of the missing crew members, thereby eliciting a sensation of their phantasmagorical presence (figure 3).

As a culmination to this discursive strategy based on the use of fleeting frames, Boyle concludes with a rapid-fire series of seven still frames, each one showing a close-up (all from an overhead view) of the euphoric face of a missing crew member, resulting in cognitive saturation. On a technical level, over the course of this sequence a

total of nine different still frames are used, three of which are shown a second time at the end of the sequence. The scene therefore contains a total of 12 subliminal stimuli.

Once again, as noted above in the case of *Se7en*, the allusion to the dead is not through images that convey a negative emotional valence but through subliminal still frames with an emotional connotation that is completely antithetical to the context of the story. The images chosen are both happy and frozen, creating an absent presence that recalls what is no longer and never will be, as if a chilling spectral presence were filling the spaces of the empty ship.

The case of *Cloverfield* is more striking for its eccentric nature, as the frames inserted here are the product of appropriation. All these frames come from iconic works of classical horror or fantasy like *King Kong* (Merian C. Cooper & Ernest B. Schoedsack, 1933), *The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms* (Eugène Lourié, 1953), and *Them!* (Gordon Douglas, 1954), as shown in figure 4.

In this case, a conceptual dialogue is established between these early black-and-white films, contained in the subliminal still frames, and con-

Figure 3. Subliminal still frames shown during the ship-boarding scene in the film *Sunshine*. Note: The time code is in Hour:Minute:Second:Frame format
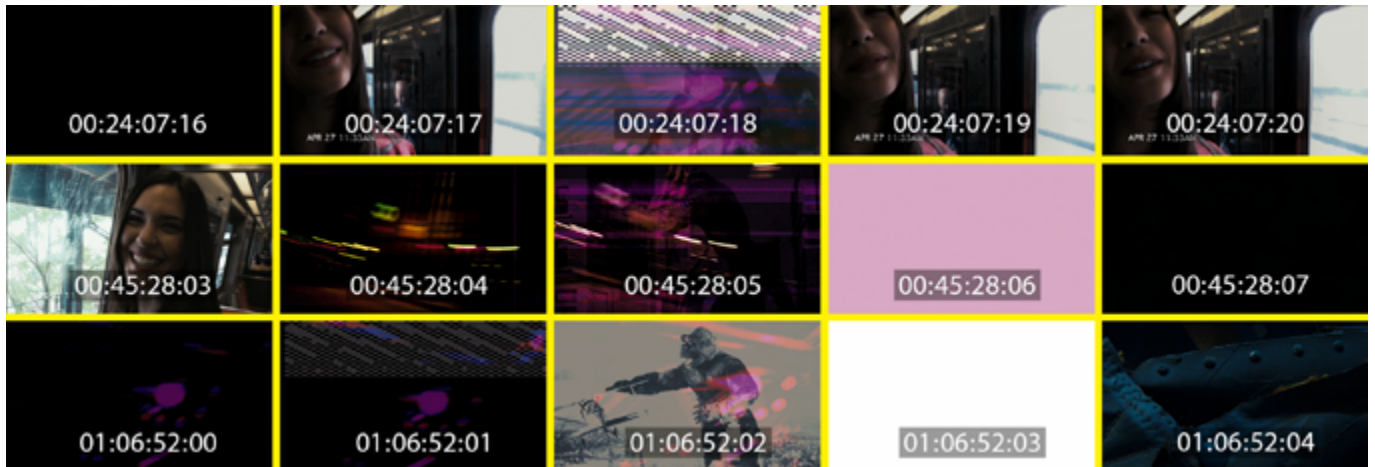
Figure 4. Fragments from the film *Cloverfield* containing subliminal still frames. Note: The time code is in Hour:Minute:Second:–Frame format

temporary cinema based on the new film, whose creators, despite having access to the full arsenal of technological resources available to the film industry today, have made a specific decision to place the monster outside the focus of attention as the action unfolds, never becoming fully visible and never confronting the protagonists face-to-face (except on one occasion more than half-way through the film and another near the end). The monster is portrayed throughout the film through the devastation it causes, but also, in a more playful and mischievous way, through a number of isolated still frames that furtively orchestrate this peculiar tribute. In this way, the monster gives up its place to a fleeting anthology of monstrosity on the subliminal level, understood as something sensed rather than perceived.

This technique effectively positions *Cloverfield* in the monster movie tradition established by Roger Corman and subsequently built on by *Jaws*, whose editor, Verna Fields, took a particularly modest approach, managing the presence of the monster with the utmost caution. Here, the central focus is shifted from the monster towards certain characters who are fighting tirelessly to survive. By giving up its explicit presence in this way, the monster seems to guarantee the suggestion of its omnipresence.

On the formal level, in order to make the terror more convincing, *Cloverfield* relies on the cover of darkness, while following in the tradition of the "found footage" subgenre with the simulation of an—improbable—discovery of video recordings taken by the very characters involved in the events on their mobile phones.

The way the subliminal stimuli are presented in *Cloverfield* closely resembles the aforementioned experiments testing the masked priming paradigm, displaying the stimulus that is to be concealed as a prime, and accompanying it with masks that ensure it is kept below the subjective threshold. In this sense, the approach adopted in *Cloverfield* is extremely precise and effective in keeping the stimuli concealed from the spectator's consciousness.

5. CONCLUSIONS

As this study has clearly shown, an isolated stimulus like that of the fleeting frame can give us access to a hypothetical or potential image. That image, stripped of materiality and connections, benefits from total virtuality, distinguishing it from other images in terms of its appearance, behaviour, and function; because of its dissociated position, free of any diegetic or narrative purpose,

> THE FUNCTION OF THE SUBLIMINAL STILL FRAME LIES IN ITS COGNITIVE IMPACT ON THE PERCEPTION OF THE SUBSEQUENT SHOTS, GIVING RISE TO WHAT HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED HERE AS A FLEETING OR INVASIVE FRAME. THIS SUBLIMINAL STILL FRAME CAN AFFECT THE SPECTATOR IN VARIOUS WAYS DEPENDING ON ITS FORMAL STRUCTURE AND CONTENT, BUT ONE EFFECT THAT EVERY SUBLIMINAL STILL FRAME HAS ON SPECTATORS IS TO INCREASE THE ATTENTION GIVEN TO THE SUBSEQUENT STIMULI

it is able to extend or project itself onto supraliminal images, *infecting* them.

This image must remain on the screen for a sufficient amount of time, at least long enough to permit a perception that exceeds the objective threshold, at which point various neural processes begin to be triggered. However, it should not reach the subjective threshold, as otherwise it would enter the spectator's consciousness. Based on the academic literature in the fields of neuroscience and experimental psychology, transferred to cinematography this time interval would be equivalent to a single still frame.

From this we may conclude that this isolated stimulus cannot properly be described as a shot, since it does not have the time span that would qualify it as such, and it does not offer any kind of point of view associated with the narrative or dramatic development of the film. The function of the subliminal still frame lies in its cognitive impact on the perception of the subsequent shots, giving rise to what has been identified here as a fleeting or invasive frame. This subliminal still frame can affect the spectator in various ways depending on its formal structure and content, but one effect that every subliminal still frame has on spectators is to increase the attention given to the subsequent stimuli.

Given how a subliminal still frame affects the spectator in accordance with its characteristics, various elements have been identified here for the development of a preliminary taxonomy of subliminal still frames. In this respect, substantial differences can be identified in terms of the fleeting frame's relationship with subsequent stimuli and the way it is made to influence them. For example, it is important to discern whether the subliminal still frame establishes a relationship of semantic or syntactic consistency with the shots that follow it, given that this determines the effect on the expectations that the frame may elicit. Another relevant consideration is the graphic nature of the still frame, which may range from a figurative image (either related or unrelated to the story) to a monochrome frame or a real or abstract visual motif.

Finally, this study has found that there are subliminal still frames which, beyond their potential cognitive impact, also aim to alter the emotional valence associated with the stimuli that follow them. This type of subliminal still frame is based on the use of faces with a specific emotional charge, which, as discussed above, can trigger a perverse mechanism of emotional inversion.

In this way, through an analysis of the spectator's cognitive system, it has been possible to establish some ontological principles applicable to the subliminal still frame, determining the cinematographic threshold that separates an unconscious reaction from a response belonging to the territory of the supraliminal. At the same time, this study has described elements that could facilitate the categorisation of the different possibilities offered by the subliminal still frame. ∎

NOTES

1 Orthogonal processes involve processing the same event via separate neural pathways, generating independent processing chains between them, while a collinear process involves a continuous processing chain.

2   Roger Crittenden (1991), a specialist in the field of editing, dates its first appearance at around 1910.

3   My translation: "chacune des surfaces planes perpendiculaires à la direction du regard représentant les profondeurs".

4   Hitchcock, along with a few other major filmmakers like Akira Kurosawa, introduced this technique of inserting flashes, usually produced using monochrome still frames.

5   Rumination is a symptom of post-traumatic stress disorder, involving a repeating intrusive thought related to the event that triggered the disorder (Conway *et al.*, 2000).

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THE ISOLATED FRAME AS SUBLIMINAL FACTOR: ANALYSIS AND CATEGORIZATION

Abstract

Among the possible subliminal stimuli that a film may contain, the focus of this study is on those that are viewed for such a short time that they do not enter the spectator's conscious mind. This occurs when the viewing time of the stimulus does not exceed the subjective threshold but is still long enough to have an impact on the spectator, triggering certain neural processes that influence the reception of subsequent supraliminal stimuli. The on-screen duration of this stimulus must necessarily be limited to a single still frame, as the subjective threshold will be exceeded if there is more than one. For this reason, it is not possible to speak of a "subliminal shot," but only of a "subliminal frame." This fleeting frame has no influence on the narrative of the film, as it does not have any time span, nor is it capable of influencing the narrative or dramatic development of the film; however, based on the cognitive and emotional impact it can have on the images that follow them, subliminal frames can be distinguished and categorised according to their nature and characteristics, with a view to determining their cognitive effects, and formulating useful parameters for their design, function, and location.

Key words

Subliminal; Cinema; Film; Conditioning; Frame; Spectator; Psychology.

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EL FOTOGRAMA AISLADO COMO AGENTE SUBLIMINAL: ANÁLISIS Y CATEGORIZACIÓN

Resumen

Dentro de los posibles estímulos subliminales que puede contener un film, el que nos ocupa es aquel que por permanecer poco tiempo a la vista del espectador no llega a ingresar en su consciencia. Esta situación se genera cuando el estímulo no consigue superar el umbral subjetivo, sin que la falta de tiempo de lectura deje de comportar el condicionamiento del espectador, al desencadenarse determinados procesos neuronales que inciden sobre aquellos otros supraliminales sucesivos. La duración cinematográfica de este estímulo no puede sino establecerse en un único fotograma, al resultar cognitivamente superado el umbral subjetivo si aparece más de uno. Por esta razón, no se puede hablar propiamente de plano subliminal, sino de fotograma subliminal. Este fotograma fugitivo no conoce influencia en lo referente a la narrativa del film, ya que no contiene dimensión temporal alguna, ni es capaz de incidir en la evolución narrativa o dramática; pero, dada su capacidad de impacto cognitivo y emocional sobre las imágenes sucesivas, nos permite diferenciar y taxonomizar la concreción de su manifestación en función de su naturaleza y características, con el objeto de establecer su efectividad cognitiva y parametrizar la mejor manera de formular su diseño, funcionalidad y ubicación.

Palabras clave

Subliminal; cine; película; fotograma; condicionamiento; *frame*; espectador; psicología.

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Authors must certify that the submitted paper is original and unpublished. If it isn't, the Executive Editorial Board must be informed. Except for exceptional cases justified and decided by the Executive Editorial Board, the journal will not accept papers with content previously published in other media. The journal will not accept papers that repeat or reiterate ideas already featured in books, websites, educational texts or any other format. In the case of dissertations, the source of the paper must be properly explained in a footnote. *L'Atalante* believes that originality is a key requirement of academic activity. The Executive Editorial Board reserves the right to retire any text at any given time of the evaluation and publication process because of this reason.

The selected articles will be published in a bilingual edition (Spanish and English). The authors of the texts accepted for publication must pay the costs that result from the translation or proofreading - in the case of providing, along with the original, a translated version - of their article. In all cases, and in order to guarantee the quality of the translations and the unity of linguistic criteria, the text must be translated or proofread by the translator recommended by the journal. His work will be paid in advance and via Paypal by the authors.

Text format and layout

What follows is an excerpt of the publishing guidelines. Those interested in them may visit the complete version in Spanish and English, and download the template for the submission of original papers at the website www.revistaatalante.com.

- The length of the article must be between 5,000 and 7,000 words (including notes, references and complementary texts).
- Articles must be submitted via the website of the journal (www.revistaatalante.com), as an .rtf, .odt or .docx file, using the template provided for this purpose. The files of the author's statement (.pdf) and images (.psd, .png or .jpg), if any, must be uploaded to the web as complementary files (step 4 of the submission process).
- Articles must be formatted in Times New Roman, size 11 and justified.
- The text must be single spaced, with no indentation whatsoever (including at the beginning of the paragraph) and no space between paragraphs.
- The title and subheadings (section titles) must be written in bold.

GUÍA DE PRESENTACIÓN DE ORIGINALES

Recepción y aceptación de originales

Los autores han de certificar que el texto presentado es original e inédito. De no ser así, se comunicará esta circunstancia al Consejo de Redacción en el momento del envío. Salvo excepciones justificadas y por decisión del Consejo de Redacción, no se aceptará bajo ningún concepto que los artículos recibidos incluyan contenido publicado anteriormente en otros soportes. Esto significa que no se aceptarán textos que repitan sin aportar elementos novedosos ideas ya desarrolladas en libros, páginas web, artículos divulgativos o cualquier otro formato escrito u oral, vinculado o no con la esfera académica. En el caso de tesis doctorales se ha de indicar la procedencia de dicho texto en una nota al pie. *L'Atalante* considera que la originalidad es un requisito clave de la actividad académica. En el caso de que este tipo de prácticas se detecten en cualquier momento del proceso de evaluación o de publicación, el Consejo de Redacción se reserva el derecho de retirar el texto en cuestión.

Los artículos seleccionados serán publicados en edición bilingüe (castellano e inglés). Los autores/as de los textos aceptados para su publicación deberán asumir los costes que se deriven de la traducción de su artículo o de la revisión en el caso de facilitar, junto al original, una versión traducida. En todos los casos, y con el fin de garantizar la calidad de las traducciones y la unidad de criterios lingüísticos, el texto deberá pasar por el traductor de confianza de la revista (al que se le abona su servicio por adelantado y a través de Paypal) y el coste derivado de su trabajo será asumido por los autores/as de los artículos.

Formato y maquetación de los textos

A continuación se refiere un extracto de las normas de publicación. Los interesados pueden consultar la versión íntegra en español e inglés, y descargarse una plantilla de presentación de originales en la página web www.revistaatalante.com.

- La extensión de los originales oscilará entre 5000 y 7000 palabras (incluyendo notas, referencias y textos complementarios).
- Los textos deberán enviarse a través de la página web de la revista (www.revistaatalante.com), siempre guardados como archivo .rtf, .odt,o .docx, utilizando la plantilla proporcionada para dicho fin. Los archivos de la declaración del autor (.pdf) y de las imágenes (.psd, .png o .jpg), si las hubiere, deberán subirse a la web como ficheros complementarios (paso 4 del proceso de envío).
- Los textos se presentarán en formato Times New Roman, tamaño 11 y alineación justificada.

In the text, the following word processor functions must not be used: tables, bullets and numbering, columns, hyperlinks, footnotes, text boxes, etc.; any numbering must be handwritten.

L'Atalante does not offer any compensation for the published articles.

In order to facilitate compliance with these rules, all required materials are available for download at the Documents for Authors section of the journal's website.

El interlineado será sencillo, sin sangría en ningún caso (tampoco a principio de párrafo) y sin separación adicional entre párrafos.

El título y los ladillos (los títulos de los epígrafes) se pondrán en negrita.

En el texto no se utilizarán los siguientes recursos propios de los procesadores de textos: tablas, numeración y viñetas, columnas, hipervínculos, cuadros de texto, etc. Cualquier enumeración se hará manualmente.

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