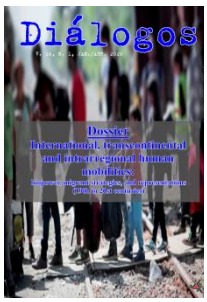

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Representations of Basque Exiled Children on the Big Screen: From "The Other Tree of Guernica" to "Route 66"

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Óscar Álvarez Gila
Universidad del País Vasco, España. E-mail: oscar.alvarez.gila@gmail.com

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Key words: Exiled children; Spanish Civil War; Basque Government; cinema; television.

Representations of Basque Exiled Children on the Big Screen: From "The Other Tree of Guernica" to "Route 66"

Abstract: During the Spanish Civil War, the Basque autonomous government implemented an organized evacuation to send Basque children to other European countries. The memory of this exile started to be recovered during the decade of 1960, in Spain as well as abroad. This article makes a comparison between the two earliest representations of Basque exiled children on the screen. On the one hand, the novel (and latter, a film from 1969) *The Other Tree of Guernica*, in which the mainstream discourse of Francoist Spain is depicted. On the other hand, a 1963 episode of the American television series *Route 66*, whose protagonists were Basque exiled children. In the comparison similarities and differences are highlighted, as well as the different political context in which they emerged.

Palabras clave: Exilio infantil; Guerra Civil española; Gobierno Vasco; cinematografía; televisión.

Representaciones de los niños exiliados vascos en la gran pantalla: De "El otro Árbol de Guernica" a "Route 66"

Resumen: Durante la Guerra Civil española, el gobierno autonómico vasco procedió a la evacuación de la población infantil a otros países europeos. La memoria de este exilio infantil comenzó a ser recuperada durante la década de 1960, tanto en España como en el exterior. En este artículo se establece una comparación entre las dos más tempranas representaciones del exilio infantil vasco en la pantalla. Por un lado, se analiza la novela (y posterior película, de 1969) *El otro árbol de Guernica*, que refleja el discurso generado sobre este particular exilio en la España franquista. Por otro lado, se analiza un capítulo de 1963 de la teleserie norteamericana *Route 66* cuyos protagonistas fueron niños exiliados vascos. En la comparación entre ambas representaciones se identifican las similitudes y diferencias, así como el diferente contenido político en el que se encajan.

Palavras-chave: Exílio infantil; Guerra Civil Espanhola; Governo Basco; cinematografía; televisão.

Representações de crianças bascas exiladas na tela grande: de "A outra árvore de Guernica" à "Route 66"

Resumo: Durante a Guerra Civil Espanhola, o governo regional basco começou a evacuar a população infantil para outros países europeus. A memória desse exílio infantil começou a se recuperar nos anos 60, tanto na Espanha quanto no exterior. Este artigo estabelece uma comparação entre as duas primeiras representações do exílio infantil basco na tela. Por um lado, analisa-se o romance (e mais tarde o filme, de 1969), *A outra árvore de Guernica*, que reflete o discurso gerado nesse exílio em particular na Espanha de Franco. Por outro lado, é analisado um capítulo de 1963 da série de televisão norte-americana *Route 66*, cujos protagonistas eram crianças exiladas bascas. Na comparação entre ambas as representações são identificadas as semelhanças e diferenças, bem como os diferentes conteúdos políticos em que se encaixam.

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Basque Exiled Children from the 1936-1939 Spanish Civil War: History and Memory

Between July 1936 and June 1937, the Basque Country became, in warfare lingo, the theater of operations of the Spanish Civil War in the easternmost part of the so-called *Frente Norte* (Northern Front). While other areas of the region were soon held by the rebels (a conglomerate of the traditionalist military, the conservative Catholic Church, royalists, right-wing parties and the Spanish version of fascism) that rose up in arms against the democratically elected government of the Second Spanish Republic. The legal authorities of the provinces of Biscay and Guipuzcoa managed to organize their defense, after splitting from the rest of the territory that remained loyal to the legal regime. By the beginning of October, the Basque Country was granted home rule thanks to a statute of autonomy approved by the Spanish parliament. By then, however, the newly formed Basque Autonomous Government only effectively controlled the province of Biscay, after halting the advance of the rebel troops on its border with Guipuzcoa. For several months, this government acted as the sole legitimate power of Biscay, not only organizing military resistance, but also establishing every aspect related to the civil and political administration of the province.

Evacuation of non-combatant children was one of the first endeavors of the government in order to keep the youngest part of the population safe from the dangers and menaces of a war whose frontline was only a few kilometers away from the most populated cities and towns, which had started to suffer intense bombings (MAYORAL GUIU, 2011, p. 8). As the frontline of the war approached the conurbation of Bilbao and bombings became more devastating, especially after the destruction of Durango and Guernica in two aerial raids led by German military planes, efforts to evacuate the children intensified, with the help of British Army ships. According to Alonso Carballés (1998, p. 152-153), during the first half of 1937, 32,000 Basque children were sent abroad to destinations such as France, Great Britain, Belgium and the Soviet Union. These children were around 20% of the total infant population of Biscay and Gipuzcoa at that moment (ALTED VIGIL, 2005, p. 115)[1].

Recent historiography in Spain, and specifically in the Basque Country, has paid attention to the history of the so-called *Niños de la Guerra* (Children of the War), as they were commonly known after the end of the war. As with other aspects related to the war experience, the post-war exile of supporters of the Spanish Republic was also a taboo topic for historiographic production in Francoist Spain. Therefore, it was not until the death of the dictator Francisco Franco and the transition of the political regime towards democratization in the late 1970s that exile started to be

[1] In fact, as Alted Vigil states, Basques represented the overwhelming majority of all the refugee children sent abroad from the areas loyal to the Republic. The bulk of this exile was directed to Western European countries, with minor flows to other places such as Mexico (450 refugees), Switzerland (800) or Denmark (about 100). In the case of the Soviet Union, most of the evacuees were actually members of families with Communist affiliations (VILAR, 2006, p. 28).

scientifically analyzed by the Spanish academia (VILAR, 2006, p. 44-45). Focus was also put on the exile of children: in the case of the Basque Country, since the decade of the 1980s, several researchers, such as Legarreta (1984), Arrien (1991), Bell (1996), Alonso Carballés (1997, 1998, 1998b, 2013) and Alted Vigil (2003, 2005), deepened their research about the topic and unraveled most of the aspects related to the formation, development, evolution and disestablishment of the various colonies of Basque children that were instituted abroad during the war. Therefore, we can say that the history of Basque exiled children is no longer, as Alonso Carballés had stated at the end of the 1990s, "a forgotten history" (1997, p. 168).

Nevertheless, long before the first scientific historical interpretations arose, non-academic views had already developed and were rooted in the processes of recovery and construction of socially shared memories in the Basque Country, and, to a certain extent, in Spain as a whole. Even during late Francoism, stories of exiled or refugee children's experiences had been able to break the wall of imposed (and self-imposed) silence about the consequences of the defeat in the Civil War for those who fought against the victorious rebels. But more than two decades after the end of the war, during the 1960s, the dictatorship was involved in an attempt to put in place internal modernization and change of the external image of the regime. This new discourse focused on a limited, politically non-contentious definition of "reconciliation" and became the main motto of the "25 Years of Peace" celebrations during the middle of the sixties, not only using the traditional means of institutional propaganda from the State, but also other ways of dissemination such as art and cinema, with the overall objective of "giving the celebration a more conciliatory tone [...], highlighting that peace is for all and linking peace with progress."[2] (NIETO FERRANDO, 2006, p. 3, my translation).

In this context, refugee children from the Civil War would play a pivotal role: unlike the rest of living survivors, such as politically active groups within Spanish exile, children epitomized the image of innocence. While their painful experiences of war, escape and rupture with their homeland and culture could be easily shared with any Spanish exile, those who supported Francoism could also appreciate and even be prone to share the very same experiences through compassion. Children were a group of fellow nationals who, in spite of being till then perceived as members of the "enemy" ranks until then, could be regarded as less ideologically stained and, therefore, not responsible for the Civil War like the adults who participated in it (UBIETO GARCÍA, 1973). Children could therefore exemplify the hope for reconciliation in Spain as the Francoist regime understood it and wanted it to be understood.

[2] "dando un tono más conciliador a la celebración [en la que] se exaltará la paz "de todos", estableciendo una fuerte conexión entre ésta y el progreso." (NIETO FERRANDO, 2006, p. 3).

This article will analyze the two earliest examples of on-screen representation of Basque exiled children during the decade of the 1960s in Spain and abroad. First, it will focus on the 1969 Spanish film *El Otro Árbol de Guernica*, which gives us an insider view of the Francoist dictatorship that was still ruling the country almost three decades after the Civil War. Secondly, a relatively unknown example from American television will be presented: the episode entitled "Peace, Pity, Pardon" from the third season of the TV series *Route 66*, first aired in 1963. Finally, some comparative conclusions on the differences and similarities of both views will be presented.

Inner representation. *El Otro Árbol de Guernica*, from Literature to Cinema

As seen before, it was not by coincidence that a few years after the commemoration of the "25 Years of Peace," a novel whose main subject was to offer a description of the experiences of a group of Basque refugee children was granted the National Prize of Literature of Spain in 1967: *El Otro Árbol de Guernica* ("The Other Tree of Guernica"), by Biscayan writer Luis de Castresana. Based on his personal memories as a refugee child, the novel is a kind of dramatized autobiography whose main protagonist, named "Santiago Celaya," is the alter ego of the writer himself; however not every element, situation or character depicted in the text represents an accurate account of true historical facts.

The novel starts with the evacuation of Santiago and his sister Begoña from Bilbao soon after the war broke out, when they are included in a program managed by the newly created Basque Autonomous Government with the material aid of British Army ships, which were in charge of bringing refugee children across the blockade imposed by the rebel Spanish Army. After a short stay in a holiday camp in France, they are sent to Belgium, where they are taken care of by different families. Due to a bitter argument with the couple that had hosted him at their home, Santiago ends up in an orphanage in Brussels where he meets other Basque and Spanish refugee children, as well as Belgian children who were already living there. During close to three years that they live in exile (from 1936 until their return in 1939), Basque children in the orphanage manage to organize themselves, using a tree in the schoolyard that they name "the Tree of Guernica," the symbol of Basque home rule, as a symbolic link with their homeland and culture (DE PABLO, 2012, pp. 648-649; LUENGO TEIXIDOR & DELGADO CENDAGORTAGALARZA, 2006, 25-26). The film ends with the return of Santiago, Begoña and the rest of the children by train across France towards Francoist Spain, where they feel the radical changes in the social and political landscape after the war.

The novel achieved early success and rapid recognition by both the readership and critics. The Francoist regime also reacted quickly, giving it, as previously mentioned, the highest official

recognition for a work of literature in Spain. Even though his close family had mainly backed the Republican side during the Civil War, Castresana had no problem in starting to work as a journalist in the so-called *Prensa del Movimiento* (the official Francoist system of press, the only one legally admitted because there was no freedom of information). He combined his work with a career as a writer, using the Spanish language but developing "Basque topics" in a restricted way that could be accepted by the regime. His work aligned perfectly with the new narrative the regime wanted to offer to new generations of Spaniards about the Civil War, based on offering exiles permission to return and reintegrate in exchange for accepting the legitimacy of the regime, in the ideological context of the previously mentioned celebrations of the "25 Years of Peace" (PIÑOL LLORET, 2018, p. 112).

Due to its surprising success, the novel was soon transformed with a high degree of accuracy into a screenplay for a film that was finally released in 1969 under the same title as the novel, *El Otro Árbol de Guernica*, directed by Pedro Lazaga[3] and produced by Pedro Masó Producciones and C.B. Films (GONZÁLEZ, 2001, p. 220). Extreme efforts were carried out to enhance the accuracy of the film, for instance trying to film the outdoor locations in the very same places where the story unfolds, but nonetheless the film obtained much less success than the book (ALONSO CARBALLÉS, 1998b, p. 174). Soon after, the first critical studies on the author and his novel appeared, from specialists both in literature and, more recently, in history (among others, UBIETO GARCÍA, 1973; OTEROS SECO, 1981; ROGERS, 1981; ALONSO CARBALLÉS, 1998b; GONZÁLEZ, 2001; ALONSO CARBALLÉS, 2013; GONZÁLEZ-ALLENDE, 2014).

El Otro Árbol de Guernica was not the first movie filmed in Francoist Spain that had developed the topic of exile after the Civil War. But as Piñol Lloret states, "exile was an inconvenient topic for Francoist film production," and therefore "while political exiles can be found in some movies, when they were given visibility it was only with the aim of benefiting the interest of the regime." (2018, p. 11, my translation).[4] Moreover, since the first fictional depiction of political exiles appeared in a 1948 film in Spain, few of the characters introduced in the films were usually represented as repentant, reformed men or women repudiating their previous political affiliations. But this movie, like the novel it was based on, marked a shift in the way the regime addressed the issue of the historical account and outcomes of the war itself, and the portrayal of exiles in particular.

In this light, for the first time, it was acceptable to publicly mention the existence of the Basque Autonomous Government that ruled Biscay until the conquest of the province by Francoist troops in June 1937 with no derogatory language –referred to both in the novel and in the film

[3] Information about the film is available on: (IMDB. El otro árbol de Guernica).
[4] "El exilio fue un tema incómodo para la cinematografía franquista […], cuando se les dio visibilidad fue para redundar positivamente en los intereses del régimen." (PIÑOL LLORENTE, 2018, p. 11).

simply as the "Gobierno de Euzkadi."[5] Alonso Carballés (1998b, p. 172-173) recognizes that *El Otro Árbol de Guernica* –primarily the book– constituted a "milestone," a "qualitative leap" that changed the way the memory and recognition of Basque exiled children in Spain was presented. After two periods of "silence" (until 1945) and of "hidden memory" (until 1967), not only was their experience no longer a shame to be concealed, but also an important piece within a wider policy of "reconciliation," obviously within the strict limitations of a dictatorship that, even in a timid process of opening-up, was still a dictatorship. Therefore, from then on, and up to the recovery of democracy in Spain, "the protagonists could use this book as reference point for their own history."[6] (ALONSO CARBALLÉS, 1998b, p. 174, my translation).

The very same reasons that led *El Otro Árbol de Guernica* to its early success can also explain the abrupt loss of influence and, to a certain extent, the book's fading into oblivion after the end of Francoism and the change of the political regime in Spain (ALONSO CARBALLÉS, 1998b, p. 176). Once democratic rule was restored, and especially after the Basque Country's right to home rule was recognized in the new constitution, a new statute of autonomy and the reconstitution of the Basque Government, all the elements of the official discourse of late Francoism started playing to its disadvantage. What was regarded at the beginning to be an example of neutrality and "lack of Manichaeism" in the way the war was described, "receiving congratulations from both sides," got transformed into a transmitter of "a concept of national identity that [was considered] favorable to the Francoist regime." (GONZÁLEZ-ALLENDE, 2014, p. 120).[7] Therefore when the first associations of Basque refugee children started organizing themselves in an effort to recover and spread the memory of their experiences in the early 1980s, *El Otro Árbol de Guernica* could no longer play the same neutral role of being the common dramatized depiction of their experience as it had been so far. Even a last attempt to bring it onto the screen (a television series produced in 1977 by state-owned "Televisión Española") could not stop a process that made both the book and the movies based on it practically unknown to newer generations.

[5] It is remarkable to notice the acceptance of the term "Euzkadi," a neologism in the Basque language created at the end of the 19th century by Sabino Arana Goiri, the founder of the Basque Nationalist Party, to name the political project of an independent Basque Country. There is no mention whatsoever, neither degrading nor congratulatory, in the book itself about the government: it is only described neutrally as the institution that organized the evacuation and took care of the children abroad. Nonetheless, in the film we can notice some degree of censorship in the visual elements. For instance, at the beginning of the film, there are some takes filmed in front of Bilbao's city hall, the same place where the children were convened for the evacuation. Nonetheless, none of the takes present the whole façade of the building, in order to avoid the depiction of the flags that would be standing at that moment (the Spanish Republican flag, and the Basque one).

[6] "[…] los protagonistas contaron con esta obra como referente inmediato de su propia historia." (ALONSO CARBALLÉS, 1998b, p. 174). Also on the topic: Alonso Carballés (2013, p. 110-111).

[7] "[…] una concepción de la identidad nacional que resulta propicia al régimen franquista." (GONZÁLEZ ALLENDE, 2014, p. 120).

A view from abroad. *Route 66* against Francisco Franco and Fidel Castro.

However, *El Otro Árbol de Guernica* was not the first cinematic production in which the experience of Basque exiled children was featured. While all the studies on the topic –most of them, as we have seen, focused almost solely in Spain– coincide in considering Lazaga's film as the first on-screen appearance of this topic ever, six years before the Spanish film was released, another representation –in this case, an episode of a well-known American television series– had already introduced the question into its main plot, introducing some of those Basque exiled children as main characters. It was in the episode named "Peace, Pity, Pardon" of *Route 66*, produced by CBS and aired in the United States from 1960 to 1964.[8] This is considered one of the first examples of a "road movie" turned into a television series, adapting its model to the language of the new medium. Even the use of such an iconic title, the name of the highway that linked Chicago all the way to Los Angeles, underlines the symbolic meaning it had acquired in United States pop culture, enhanced by the "physical and imaginative dimensions" given by literature, cinema, television and music (NODELMAN, 2007, p. 165).

The general structure of the series was quite simple. The two main protagonists of the series were two friends, Tod Stiles (played by Martin Milner) and Buz Murdock (played by George Maharis), who start a journey across America in an iconic Corvette. By the beginning of the third season (to which this episode belongs) Buz disappears from the series, introducing a new leading character in his stead: Linc Case (played by Glen Corbett). Every episode takes place in a different location across the country. In fact, as Duncan says, "very few of the episodes actually took place in the real Route 66" (2005, p. 10).[9] This was the case of "Peace, Pity, Pardon," which brought the two main protagonists to Florida, far away from the route from which the series took its name.

In this long journey to nowhere, while looking for a perfect place to settle down, Tod and Buz (later, Linc) act like errand heroes who get involved in solving the problems of people they meet on route, while also trying to solve their own. This gave the plots, characters and situations depicted in each episode a complexity of meanings that go far beyond the usual content of family-directed television entertainment. As Alvey (1997, p. 143) states,

> *Route 66* was the early 1960s' answer to both Kerouac and the Joads –not the usual stuff of prime time adventure, to be sure. Shunning domesticity on a medium –and network– loaded with family comedies, echoing *On the Road* and anticipating *Easy Rider*, premiering at the dawn of the New Frontier and ending in the shadow of the Vietnam War, *Route 66* occupies a unique place in both the television terrain of the 1960s and the popular culture of the road.

[8] Information about the film on: (IMDB.Route 66*)*. This was the 26th episode, aired in the 3rd season, first broadcast on 12 April 1963.
[9] Also: (WOOD, 2019, p.70).

This is probably the reason why the episode analyzed dared to dive into a highly political issue. In fact, there were two political issues, one from the present and the other with a historical projection: the Cuban Revolution, on the one hand, and the Spanish Civil War on the other. The opening credits show Tod and Linc arriving at the parking lot of *Tampa Jai Alai*, one of the most active courts of Basque *pelota* in 1960s' Florida: from the beginning, it becomes clear that the plot will be focused around the life of two jai-alai players, Quiepo and Largo Varela (played by Alejandro Rey and Michael Tollan, respectively). The election of Latino actors for these characters with Spanish-like names was not made by chance. Even though Jai-Alai is a Basque sport (its name means "happy game" in the Basque language), in the American context it was regarded to be a Latin American game. In fact, this game had arrived to the United States via Mexico and Cuba, always linked to gambling.[10]

This link could actually explain the success it achieved among the American public, crossing the boundaries of the Latino community, as it was one of the few gambling activities allowed in most of the American territory. Tod and Linc meet the Varela brothers in the boardinghouse they are hosted in, where they realize that they are more than simple professional sportsmen: they are also committed to anti-Castro political activities within the Cuban refugee community in Florida. Their stormy relationship with a third brother, Ramos Varela (played by Víctor Gabriel Junquera), which happens to be a leader of the Revolution who had decided to remain in Cuba, becomes the central story line of the screenplay. As usual, the protagonists of the series develop a personal commitment to them and offer their help to Quiepo in his attempt to contact his brother in Cuba. But in addition, it is also made clear that the Varela brothers were not actually Cuban, but Basque in birth and origin.

Here, we can assume that these characters were initially supposed to be only Cuban. A search in the personal records of Stirling Siliphant (UCLA), who wrote the screenplay, has given no answer as to how the depiction of those characters in the early versions of the script could have been, but it was commonplace at that moment in Hollywood not to acknowledge any link whatsoever between Jai-Alai and Basques, but to understand it as a typical feature of the Latin American cultural and social landscape. Early representations of this sport in American cinema – and, needless to say, its link with gambling– always appeared either when a film´s plot was located in a Latin American country, or when it was interesting to enhance the racial, stereotypical features of a Latin American character (ÁLVAREZ GILA, 2013, p. 32).

This was the case, for example, of the 1949 film *We Were Strangers* (dir. John Huston, Columbia Pictures) or the 1950 film *Crisis* (dir. Richard Brooks. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer), that take place in Cuba and an unnamed Latin American country respectively. In fact, it was only in the 1959

[10] A brief history of the Basque sport of *pelota* in its diverse varieties, including Jai-Alai, in Urza (1994).

film *Thunder in the Sun* (dir. Russell Rouse. Carrollton Inc.) when this sport was for the first time understood as an ethnic element of Basqueness (ÁLVAREZ GILA, 2008, p. 25). Yet because of the bad quality and poor performance of this B-series film in the box office, its impact on a possible change of the equation "Jai-Alai equals Latin American" was almost irrelevant. In an industry that tries to avoid abrupt novelties in the way different national characters are stereotypically presented (KRACAUER, 1949), this equation remained strongly rooted thanks to the power of a long line of previous films in which it was reinforced, rather than contested.

Nevertheless, these widespread presumptions in the cinematic industry clashed with the reality of the game in Florida. In the different Jai-Alai courts that operated in several Floridan cities (Tampa, Orlando, Miami) as gambling enterprises, there were mainly –if not only– Basque players working there. It was therefore demanded by the necessity of accuracy of the series' plot to explain how a family of Jai-Alai players, that in Florida had to be Basque, ended up engaged in the Cuban exiled community. The solution was to make the players both Basque and Cuban at the same time in the screenplay. By the beginning of the episode, when the characters are still being introduced, Quiepo Varela visits a Catholic school in Tampa; while looking at the children in the playground, he starts a conversation with Cipriana, one of the teachers of the school, allegedly a Cuban exile herself. In this conversation Quiepo explains his own history in a long take reproduced here: the Varela brothers were actually Basque refugee children that could not return to their homeland after the end of the war and were brought by a Catholic priest taking care of them, "Father Sebastiano," to Cuba, where they grew up.

[174] CIPRIANA
You went to school here?

QUIEPO
In a camp - in Stoneham - in Lincolnshire - in England - with my brother Largo.

CIPRIANA *(a beat)*
Lovely country, England.

QUIEPO
I am a Basque... We were given shelter by the English.

CIPRIANA
(softly; testing him with the key question)
Father Sebastiano?

[175] *EXTREME CLOSE ON QUIEPO reacting to the name.*

[176] *EXTREME CLOSE ON CIPRIANA watching his face.*

[177] *CLOSE TWO SHOT - QUIEPO AND CIPRIANA.*

QUIEPO *(pressing her)*
I am being watched! How many questions must I answer?

> CIPRIANA *(significantly)*
> I am curious about Father Sebastiano.
>
> QUIEPO *(a beat; then digging back)*
> In the camp, there were three thousand of us...
>
> *CAMERA DOLLIES IN on Quiepo. He brings the painful memory back.*
>
> QUIEPO
> Father Sebastiano came from Vizcaya... Right here - next to my eyes - after a quarter of a century - I have his face... a sad face... My children, I have come from Spain... from Bilbao... to tell you God's will... a heavy will, but one we must all bear. Yesterday... on the nineteenth of June... the tanks of the enemy crossed the Nervion and entered Bilbao... Our capital, my children, has fallen... it is the end of Basque independence.
> *CUT TO:*
> [178] *THE LAUGHING FACES OF THE CHILDREN enjoying the antics of Sheena.*
>
> [179] *CLOSE ON QUIEPO There are tears in his eyes.*
>
> QUIEPO
> Largo and I -though we were not yet six years- could not accept. We fell upon the Father. We struck him with twings [sic: twinges]. We struck him and we wept and he wept with us, welcoming our blows as though this might draw from us some of our anguish. (UCLA)[11]

Additionally, the late introduction of this long explanation also allowed the scriptwriter to establish interesting lines to connect the vital experience of the Varela brothers with the resolution of the episode. Quiepo and Largo receive a message from Cuba, sent in a quite confidential way by their brother Ramos. After strong debates between fear, duty and love, Largo refuses but Quiepo decides to accept to meet Ramos off the coast of Florida, where he is informed that his brother fears for his life in Cuba, because different groups within the Revolution have started fighting each other, and due to this, he had decided to bring his own daughter, Carlota, to the safety of exile. Then a group of loyal Cuban militiamen attacks and shoots both brothers dead. Tod and Linc are able to rescue Carlota and bring her to the United States, where she is put in the hands of Largo, the last surviving brother, to be taken care of. The experience of child exile is repeated in one more generation, therefore linking past and present.

One of the most noticeable features of the description of the history of Basque exiled children is how outstandingly accurate it becomes, showing a thorough process of previous research on the topic. First of all, Stoneham camp was actually the first and one of the most important points of destination and residence for Basque refugee children sent to the United Kingdom, ever since evacuation to this country started from the port of Bilbao in May 1937 (CLOUD & ELLIS, 1937; also: BELL, 1996).[12] Even the number of refugee children quoted in the script ("three thousand of us") approximately matches the factual amount that were relocated to the camp. Secondly, it is true that among the custodians of the children there were indeed some Catholic priests, as it was the

[11] The actual dialogue in the final version of the movie differs a little from the script, but only with minor changes that do not affect its content.
[12] Information on this camp, collected by the: (ASSOCIATION).

policy of the Basque Autonomous Government to counteract Francoist propaganda that had identified their opponents as revolutionaries, supporters of Marxism, and fighters against religion. In fact, in July 1937, all but two Spanish bishops had signed a "Collective Letter on the War in Spain" in which they supported Francisco Franco and declared him the leader of a Crusade in defense of the Catholic Church (the bishop of Vitoria in the Basque Country and the archbishop of Tarragona in Catalonia refused to sign it, and had to go into exile from Francoist Spain). Finally, June 19, 1937 was the actual date when the rebel army captured Bilbao, seizing it from the hands of the loyalist Basque Army, and forcing the escape of thousands of fighters and the Basque government itself into exile.

There are, however, other affirmations that can be disagreed with. For instance, even though the physical isolation of the Basque Country from the rest of loyalist Republican Spain allowed the Basque government a significant degree of *de facto* autonomy in the government of the territory under its jurisdiction, there is a consensus that the territory was neither legally nor practically independent. Basque political autonomy was based upon a law passed in the Spanish parliament, and the president of this government ruled it in the name of the legitimacy of the Spanish Republic (MORENO GONZÁLEZ 2018, pp. 364-365).

But the biggest discordance between fiction and historical facts comes from the description made in *Route 66* of a later departure of those refugee children with the priest Father Sebastiano from England to Cuba, not returning to the Basque Country. There is no evidence of such kind of secondary migration ever happening in the case of Basque exiled children in any Western European country they were sent to. Soon after the end of the Spanish Civil War, most children had been repatriated from France, Belgium or the United Kingdom, with few exceptions in the latter case: about four hundred children remained in England and Wales, either because they chose to stay, or because they had become orphans or their parents were unable to take care of them (usually due to post-war repression and imprisonments).

Besides, it is true that there was a noticeable presence of Basque clergy in Cuba during the entire 20th century, some of which had received prominence in post-Revolution Cuban politics, for instance the Basque Franciscan friars (AMORES CARREDANO, 2006, p. 762) that owned the most important Catholic journal on the island, *La Quincena* (ÁLVAREZ GILA, 1993, pp. 50-51). But none of those Basque priests in Cuba had ever arrived to the island bringing any refugee children with them. Cinematic productions, including fictional television series, do not need to be historically accurate but instead show what is usually defined as "suspension of disbelief," that is: a resemblance with truth that can be accepted as such by an audience. The fact that the presence of post-Spanish Civil War Basque refugee children in Cuba cannot be supported by any historical account is not an obstacle to make it acceptable for the sake of giving the screenplay an element of

verisimilitude (to explain how two anti-Castro Cuban militants are actually Basque jai-alai players) and of providing the plot with an element of intergenerational complexity merging different experiences of child exile through a direct link.

Finally, in spite of the visible efforts of documentation on Basques and their history, the scriptwriter could not escape from the burden of the stereotypical images that Hollywood had managed to construct around Basques so far. The use of improbable names for the three brothers in fiction, names that may sound Hispanic but make no sense for native speakers of Spanish,[13] as well as other components in the construction of a film (choice of actors, the Spanish-like music used to introduce characters, and so on) link the public back to a Hispanic cultural environment. Basques, regardless of their ethnic peculiarities, were no more than one group within a larger branch of Latinos, just like the Cubans. This could have also been used to help make the transition of the protagonists between these two identities easier to accept and understand by viewers. The fight against dictator Fidel Castro in Cuba, which is assumed to be the main objective of the episode, had to be understood as a continuity of previous fights against another dictatorship, like Basques had done opposing Francisco Franco in Spain.

A comparison: One exile, two discourses?

As the two movies were produced and released quite close to each other and describe, in the case of Basque exiled children, a similar set of historical facts, it is not surprising that some elements of the structure of the narrative discourse and the characters that stake the plot are remarkably similar both in the Spanish film and the American series.

In both narrations, for instance, the abrupt separation from family and homeland suffered by the children in a context of general violence is clearly stated as a trigger for a similarly abrupt end of childhood and an unexpected (and also undesired) rite of passage towards adulthood (ROGERS, 1981, p. 184-185). Life would never be as it was before for those children, notwithstanding the fact that, while in *El Otro Árbol de Guernica* the children are sent back to their parents' home in Spain, in *Route 66* neither of the Basques had any chance to do the same and return to the homeland,

[13] It is true that both “Largo” and “Ramos” are words that can be found in the Spanish language (meaning “Long” and “Bouquets” respectively), but they have never been used as personal names. With regard to the name of the main protagonist, “Quiepo,” it is simply nonexistent in Spanish, a pure invention of the scriptwriter. The only resemblance I have been able to find is the family name of one of the leaders of the rebels that fought against the Spanish Republic and backed the dictatorship of Francisco Franco, General Queipo de Llano. Maybe the scriptwriter could have had him in mind when giving his name to Quiepo. If so, it would be a colossal paradox, as General Queipo de Llano was one of the executors behind the forced exile of the Basque children. Besides, there is also a kind of “Italian” contamination in the names, as happens with the family name of the children (in some places referred to as “Varella,” in Italian fashion) or the name of the priest that hosted them, “Sebastiano,” clearly Italian (in Spanish it should have been “Sebastián”). Needless to say, no attempt to give the characters Basque names is made, Basque being a language different from Spanish, whose traces can also be found in personal and family names.

therefore extending their status of exiles endlessly. In fact, after the end of the war, physically returning to the homeland did not mean coming back to the way things were prior to the conflict, but to a totally new political situation that was unknown and strange for them, and demanded, as in the case of those that migrated to foreign countries, a sort of adaptation.

To recognize themselves as belonging to the side that lost the war was a second element of similarity between the main characters of both productions. Santiago saw himself as "a defeated militiaman or political exile going back to the homeland," and could not avoid "feeling sad because of the defeat of his side."[14] (GONZÁLEZ ALLENDE, 2014, p. 129, my translation). Even in their late evolution, when they are no longer youngsters, Santiago and Quiepo still present a similar pattern. By the end of the novel and film, Santiago turns away from his apolitical discourse, changes his preceding alignment with the Republic in an act that prefigures the path that his alter ego, the writer himself, would follow in the real world as an acritical, integrated member of the cultural intelligentsia of Francoism in the Basque Country. Quiepo, for his part, evolved into a rejection of the Castroist regime derived from the Cuban Revolution, whose ideologically Marxist basis could be linked to most of the political parties that had fought for the Republic in the Spanish war. But this evolution is presented in both cases as a fundamental continuity of rejection of hardcore dictatorships: Quiepo keeps on fighting autocracy, transferring the target from Franco to Castro. Santiago (or better said, Castresana himself) is somehow acknowledging the official image of transformation in his novel that the Francoist dictatorship wanted to disseminate with a new language of reconciliation.

Some secondary roles are also quite alike. Among them, the central adult characters of both productions stand out. In *El Otro Árbol de Guernica* the adult acting as an anchor and mirror for the children in exile is Don Segundo, a schoolteacher that had accompanied them since their departure from Bilbao (ROGERS, 1981, p. 185). In *Route 66* this father figure is played by Father Sebastiano, the Catholic priest who also accompanied the children throughout all three stages of their journey into exile, from Bilbao to Havana via England, whose refugee camps had been the first destination after departing from home. They also reflect a core feature of the structure of an organized evacuation as was the case of Basque children: there were always responsible adults in charge of taking care of them abroad, either Basques nominated by the autonomous government, or locals collaborating with the teams of support created in the host countries. Those two adults mark the line of contact and continuity of the children with the homeland, to be maintained during their whole experience of exile. Don Segundo (a teacher) and Father Sebastiano (a Catholic priest) are fictional

[14] "[...] un miliciano vencido o un exiliado político que retornaba a la patria y que se sentía triste por la derrota de los suyos." (GONZÁLEZ ALLENDE, 2014, p. 129).

but nonetheless quite accurate depictions of the personnel who acted as intermediaries among the children, Basque authorities and foreign families and institutions that provided shelter for them.

On the other hand, these cultural texts present a fundamental difference in the way they understand the politics behind the discourse, and their respective views on Francoism. While the view from the Spanish movie is aligned with the official, propagandist discourse elaborated by the regime during the 1960s in order to get rid of the image of repressive dictatorship and make it more acceptable in the international arena, the American series offers an idealized but nonetheless fiercely anti-Francoist discourse on the repressive totalitarianism of his regime, even at a moment when Franco had obtained not only international recognition but had also become a close ally of the United States in the context of the Cold World, especially after the agreement between the two countries in 1953 (SAITUA, 2019, p. 240-242).

This can explain why the title of the episode ("Peace, Pity, Pardon") is directly taken from the speech given in Barcelona by the President of the Spanish Republic, Manuel Azaña, two years after the beginning of the Civil War, on July 18, 1938: a discourse that highlights his main political message: the search for freedom, then and now, is the most important legacy one generation must pass on to the next:

> RAMOS
> How many times must I tell you Azana's words from the agony of our Civil War? "When the torch passes to other hands, to other men, to other generation, let them remember, if ever they feel their blood boil, the lessons of those who fell in battle -those who now, protected by their maternal soil, feel no hate or rancor, and who send us with the sparkling of their light, the message of the eternal Fatherland which says to all its sons: Peace, Pity, Pardon." (UCLA).

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