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Prosperity and Freedom under Franco *The Grand Invention of Tourism*

In 1967, a prolific commercial filmmaker and staunch supporter of the Franco regime named Pedro Lazaga directed the smash-hit comedy *El turismo es un gran invento*. The film begins with an effusive documentary tribute to the industry that, at the time, was rapidly transforming Spanish coastlines and becoming a source of fascination throughout the country. The result is a startling portrait of a newly modernized Spain that gleefully belies the country's image as Europe's backward, impoverished outpost. A stream of panoramic aerial shots surveys newly constructed resorts: along the sparkling waters of the Mediterranean, modern high-rise hotels flank beaches bustling with suntanned vacationers in bright swimwear. To the tune of a hip "dabadabadaba"-style cocktail lounge track entitled "Me gusta hacer turismo," one reverse zoom after another reveals vast landscapes of tourist sprawl, visually echoing the explosive pace of construction. "Tourism! Tourism! Tourism!" shouts a male voice-over, "It's a magic word that everybody is using nowadays, whereas just yesterday, although it was in the dictionary, nobody knew what it meant." In the background, the lyrics of the jazzy jingle proclaim, "It's a stimulating way to learn! Forget about your problems!"

Tourism development in 1960s Spain was, in fact, almost as rapid and dramatic as *El turismo es un gran invento* suggests. Needless to say, however, during the so-called happy sixties, not all Spaniards were frolicking at the beach or even pleased that many pockets of the country, thanks in part to soaring tourism revenues, had suddenly been catapulted into full-scale consumer capitalism. A significant portion of scholarship on the decade has focused on increasingly ardent

expressions of political unrest such as labor strikes, the resurgence of nationalist movements in Catalonia and the Basque Country, widespread student protests, and a flourishing underground leftist resistance movement.¹ In the face of such unwieldy social and market forces, the Franco dictatorship often appeared to be losing what had thus far seemed like a stranglehold on Spanish society. Scholars have tended to argue that the increasingly frequent clashes between the state and civil society were evidence that Francoism was locked in a losing battle against democratization.² The regime's own push toward economic and technological modernization, it is often said, ultimately backfired by undermining its legitimacy, and the arrival of new ideas along with tourists is generally presumed to have accelerated the dictatorship's decline.

However, a close look at commercial films of the 1960s such as *El turismo es un gran invento* in relation to the regime's newsreel production, political rhetoric, and administrative structure reveals a more complex state of affairs.³ In order to adapt to the changing times, the Franco regime was elaborating and improvising highly innovative new strategies for exercising power that were oftentimes effective precisely because they consisted of loosening control. In other words, the so-called *dictablanda*—that soft hand of dictatorial rule said to characterize the regime's later years—was effectively readjusting its grip. During its early years, of course, the regime deliberately practiced intimidation tactics, assuring citizens that a strong hand was necessary to uphold the ideological cause defended by Nationalist forces during the Spanish Civil War (metaphysical notions of Providence, national glory, spiritual purity, and so forth). In the 1960s, in contrast, the regime restyled itself as a champion of secular knowledge about economics and planning, and projected an image of the government meant to serve as a screen for positive identification. The state now purported to be the imagined vehicle for entrepreneurial ambition, a higher standard of living, and Spain's exhilarating journey into a European-style modernity populated by big buildings, bikinis, and Seat 600s.

This chapter argues that the construction of a new conceptual framework for exercising dictatorial rule was only possible because the business of dominant ideology relocated, as it were, from the battlefield to the beach. That is, the spectacle of tourism enabled a paradigm shift in the regime's modes of governance. In that context, films such as *El turismo es un gran invento* that emblazoned the tourist boom constituted an "art" of governing—an aesthetic supplement to government administration proper that proved instrumental in the effort to rearticulate the relationship between the state and Spanish citizens. The following pages take *El turismo es un gran invento* as a metatheoretical guide of sorts for an analysis of tourism's centrality to the new ideas about the state that defined late Francoism. As we will see, tourism indeed proved to be a "grand invention" in this regard. By taking on a life of its own in the cultural imaginary, tourism enabled Franco's Spain to bill itself as a paradise of prosperity, freedom, and efficient planning that proved oddly at home among Western liberal democracies.

Dictatorship, Governmentality, and Cultural Studies: The Invention as Device

Although I argue that the spectacle of Spain's tourist boom proved crucial to the perpetuation of the Franco dictatorship, I also wish to emphasize that tourism was not an invention to which the regime held exclusive rights. It is true that many of the sources that produced images of tourism in the country were primarily propagandistic in nature, particularly newsreels and state-made promotional materials such as postcards, handbooks, and posters. The meaning of tourism was also produced, however, through private initiatives, such as souvenirs or the industry's nonstate marketing venues, many of which were tied to foreign investment. Therefore, while the regime clearly held a political stake in the spectacle of mass tourism, the industry's multiple ties to both public and private interests, in both the national and the international arenas, blurred the precise reach of the state in the portrayal of the new touristy Spain, and gave way to a more scattered, piecemeal configuration. Given the circumstances, the representation of tourism can hardly be treated as a monolithic, "totalitarian" undertaking or even as a conventional propaganda tool as it has been suggested. More precisely, tourism in 1960s Spain provided an ambiguous symbolic terrain in which the discourses of state institutions overlapped in suggestive ways with those of an emergent global consumerism.⁴

To the extent that the tourist boom was a makeshift concept constructed gradually, even haphazardly, through symbolic channels both public and private, it constitutes the kind of "grand invention" Michel Foucault described under the rubric of the device (*dispositif*). In his writings on the analytics of government published in the late 1970s and early 1980s, Foucault describes the device as a hub of diverse signifying practices—including the modes of representation associated with both bureaucracy and commercialism, with state and nonstate actors—that condition or "dispose" behavior (*Dits* 298). Hardly part of a master plan devised by Machiavellian rulers, the device is the result of an "ad hoc assemblage of ways of thinking and acting" articulated through a combination of any number of venues, from philosophy to public safety to leisure offerings (Rabinow xvi). Originally, the improvised tool has a specific strategic aim, such as attending, as tourism did in Spain, to the balance of payments or to the reparation of diplomatic relations. However, the device emerges as such when its original tactical rationale becomes generalized and abstracted, and begins to act as a paradigm for the entire task of governing. As a source of power, the device is highly effective precisely because it operates in a relatively autonomous and seemingly benign fashion; it is more of a new common sense than a deliberate political strategy. As Foucault describes it, the device has only tenuous, nebulous connections to politics proper and is strictly peripheral to the rule of law. It therefore facilitates modernity's "double movement" by which large-scale discursive networks saturate daily life, while at the same

time the agents of such discursive activity are increasing diffuse (Foucault "Governmentality" 230).

The device is central to the larger phenomenon Foucault referred to as the "governmentalization of the State," which he considered essential to the survival of modern statehood itself (245). Foucault defines "governmentalization" as the emergence of an ensemble of institutions, rationales, calculations, and reflections—indeed, of devices—"which has as its target population, [and] as its principal form of knowledge political economy" (244). Since Foucault's "governmentality" refers to disembodied knowledge and abstractions concerning efficient economic planning and the common good, the figure of the sovereign ruler (such as a dictator) is no longer at the center of power relations, and overt disciplinary measures are downplayed, dispersed, and reformulated. Foucault is quick to point out nonetheless that sovereign power and violent repression do not disappear as a result of governmentalization. They are simply rationalized as a means to an altruistic and pragmatic end (i.e., the optimal management of the wealth, well-being, and security of the people). Discipline, then, takes a back seat to devices,⁵ and governance is, or at least is perceived to be, a largely voluntary, participatory phenomenon, a collective effort to make life better.

I would argue here that the play of perception and appearances—that is, the aesthetic dimensions of governing, its "art"—are an essential and yet understudied component of governmentality, and one accentuated by late Francoist public discourse, particularly in the representation of the tourist boom. In 1960s Spain, prevailing ideas and impressions about statehood and governmental activity—what Pierre Bourdieu called the "meta-capital" of the state—came to exert a special power of their own (see also Aretxaga; Trouillot). Highlighting those aesthetic dimensions of statehood, however, means departing from the bulk of scholarship on Foucauldian governmentality, which has focused primarily on issues of policy, and instead connecting governmentality with the concerns of cultural studies scholarship by extending the objects and practices examined to questions of representation (Bratich, Packer, and McCarthy).⁶ To that end, Tony Bennett highlights the similarities between Foucauldian political scientist Mitchell Dean's description of governmentality and cultural studies guru Stuart Hall's definition of the "cultural turn" in scholarship in the humanities (50–52). His goal is to show both that cultural studies requires us to rethink what it means to undertake an analytics of government, and, conversely, that the notion of governmentality is essential to cultural studies, a field that has largely limited its interest in Foucauldian theorizations of power to the more familiar notion of discipline. I agree with this assessment and view Francoism as a case in which governmentality is a more productive framework for the study of cultural production.

Such a contention may at first seem misguided. Not only has the Franco regime never been studied within the framework of governmentality; nearly all scholarship undertaken under the rubric of governmentality is focused on specific

features of Western liberal democracies (Dean 131; Gordon 6). Foucault himself was primarily interested in the genealogy of modern states, of which Franco's Spain has been commonly viewed as western Europe's most notorious exception. Moreover, the vast majority of studies on the way power operated in Spanish society under Franco have argued that the Franco regime was, from start to end, the very antithesis of modern governance. Pointing to the regime's emphasis on religious orthodoxy and violent imposition of traditional social norms, scholars on cultural production under Franco have, in my view, overemphasized the regime's taste for atavism. Modern dictatorships also have their modern side, if only because they emerged against a backdrop of twentieth-century bureaucratic, social, and economic phenomena. Particularly after economic liberalization, official Francoist ideology was primarily articulated in relation to the transformations of Western modernity. In fact, just such reasoning has led a small minority of scholars of governmentality to extend their field of inquiry to dictatorships and even to fascist states. Their work has ultimately revealed, in a twist reminiscent of Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer's thesis in *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*, that undemocratic features of governance are not an exception to modern democracy but rather are among its constitutive necessities. The study of dictatorial regimes ultimately reveals not the illiberality of fascism but, as Mitchell Dean puts it, the "illiberality of liberalism" itself.⁷

Moreover, assertions that the Franco dictatorship was some sort of isolated incident, aberration, or interruption within the "normal" unfolding of Western modernity unwittingly feed clichés about Spain's supposed exceptionality. In fact, tourism was itself offered as evidence of Spain's special place in the modern world. After all, officials implied, Spain was now the nation chosen not only by God but also by millions of foreign consumers. It would be a mistake, however, to accept at face value Francoism's attempts to associate itself with a rarefied past of imperial glory and religious crusade, or its claims to spiritual or cultural superiority. I aim instead to place a greater emphasis on the continuities between Francoism's avowed exceptionality and the liberal democratic "normality" of other European postwar societies and of Franco's most loyal ally, the United States (in other words, the countries from which the tourists were pouring in). My focus follows in part from another of Foucault's claims—that, in order to analyze power, one must look at the "antagonisms of strategies." Foucault argued, for instance, that "to find out what our society means by 'sanity,' perhaps we should investigate what is happening in the field of insanity. And what we mean by 'legality' in the field of illegality" ("Subject" 780). Such logic led him to make the controversial assertion that in order to understand how power operates in liberal democracy, we might best look at what are taken to be "pathological forms of power" (779). One must expose how fascism, Stalinism, or Francoism "used and extended mechanisms already present in most other societies" (779). I would add that, if Foucault is right, then we can—indeed, we must—invert his proposition. That is, any effort to understand what is construed as the "pathological" form of

government exercised under Franco must necessarily take into consideration the extent to which Francoism “used, to a large extent, the *ideas* and the *devices* of our own [liberal democratic] political rationality” (779; emphasis added).

The spectacle of the tourist boom was, by and large, the showcase for the regime’s self-congratulatory fraternizing with the “free world.” Tourism was a device that celebrated access to or at least identification with the newfound economic and social opportunities that were said to accompany modernization. And yet it was through the very venues of identification with Spain’s touristic reinvention that tourism demarcated new parameters of thought and action for the country’s inhabitants. The power exercised through the spectacle of tourism, in other words, was constructive rather than repressive. As opposed to domination through brute force, the essence of this type of power, which is distinctly modern, is “to structure the possible field of (willful) actions of others” (Foucault “Subject” 790). It is in this sense that power can be most effectively exercised through narratives of emancipation and (self-)improvement, and through the very ideas about what it means to become modern. Therefore, in addition to recalling the brutal physical repression the Franco regime continued to practice until its last days, one must recognize in the spectacle of Spain’s tourist boom a distinctly modern mechanism of power, the efficacy of which is derived paradoxically from the impression of liberation.

Metatourism and “Soft” Power

Inventions such as tourism in Spain reveal the fundamentally decentered nature of power even in the context of a right-wing military dictatorship. The decenteredness I wish to highlight in this section, however, does not have so much to do with the regime’s notorious disorganization, rampant corruption, and constant infighting, or with its forfeiting to U.S. military interests, international financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the European Economic Community, or to the investors who bought up large portions of the Mediterranean coastline. Although these too are important considerations, I am primarily interested in the way power, under Franco, was decentered by its own symbolic craftiness. The spectacle of tourism created the impression that the task of development was a collective and collaborative effort involving the active participation of the entire Spanish population. Tourism created the discursive conditions through which people could bind themselves willingly to a prescribed constellation of mind-sets, behaviors, and opportunities, and ally themselves with hegemonic forces in the pursuit of their own success story. They could now play a leading role in the administering and marketing of something understood as “Spanish culture.” In other words, the spectacle of tourism effectively enjoined people to begin to govern themselves and others.

El turismo es un gran invento points to a suggestive correlation between the functioning of power under late-Francoism and the artfulness of the spectacle of

tourism. The film turns out to be the allegorical tale of the grand invention that restores an impoverished and backward nation to its rightful glory. After the gushing introduction, the film cuts abruptly to a markedly distinct scene—an isolated inland village where several locals grimace at a dry, barren field. Among them are two icons of Spanish comedy, José Luis López Vázquez and Paco Martínez Soria. “That’s what we have to do here!” exclaims the latter, playing the part of the mayor. “What was the Costa del Sol until now? Nothing! . . . They were worse off than we are, and just look at them now. . . . We’ve been left out and, what’s worse, we’re backward and underdeveloped.” Reflecting sadly on the continued exodus of the local youth population, the townsmen devise a scheme to save their village, Valdemorillo, by turning it into a tourist destination. To learn how the industry works its magic, the mayor and the town secretary (López Vázquez) travel to Torremolinos, a flourishing tourist hot spot on the Mediterranean Costa del Sol. In a series of comic mishaps and slapstick gaffs, these two bumpkins prove to be out of place amid the modern amenities of mass tourism—they sunbathe in dark suits, drool conspicuously over women in miniskirts and bikinis, faint on discovering the steep restaurant prices, and so forth. Nonetheless, convinced that they can create their own Torremolinos at home, the villagers manage to secure government sponsorship and are eventually included on the list of officially sanctioned cultural attractions. Their rags-to-riches story ends with the ecstatic announcement of plans to construct the village’s very own Parador Nacional hotel.

Despite *El turismo es un gran invento*’s overt allegiance to official ideology, when read against grain, the film offers a useful point of entrance into a critical discussion of how the story of the tourist boom itself exercises a form of modern, decentered state power, and of how careful analysis of the representation of tourism reveals the deeper symbolic fabric of late Francoism as a whole. After the townsmen observe firsthand how tourism works in Torremolinos and decide to transform their village, they are delighted when they happen on a newspaper article that quotes the minister of information and tourism: “Every corner of Spain must be converted into a tourist zone to be admired by the world. Straight from the minister’s mouth,” declares the mayor. “And he knows more than anybody, and has a heart of gold.” These words encourage the townsmen to travel to the Ministry of Information and Tourism to request subsidization from the minister himself. In other words, they turn to the prescribed development strategy and bureaucratic channels of Spain’s touristic reinvention in their own search for solutions. Tourism—a commercial endeavor administered in conjunction with state planning—becomes their promise of wealth, modernization, and a reaffirmation of their cultural identity. The villagers thus demonstrate how the plans of the average Spaniard can be at one with large-scale economic and social planning, how individual ambition finds its ideal expression in the goals of both the state and capitalist development.

It was no coincidence that the film’s depiction of enthusiasm for tourism development coincided with heavy media coverage in Spain of a massive influx

of labor (mostly men who had given up on Spain's failing agricultural industry) into the service industry. A series of articles published during the summer of 1968 in the popular current events magazine *Triunfo* under the title "Vacaciones a la española" attempt to capture the various ways—professional, psychological, as consumers, and so on—in which Spaniards became implicated in the tourism boom and in the telling of its story. *Triunfo's* "anthropological tour of beach culture" explains, for instance, how

in the Mediterranean coast's business of sun and sand, no one has passed up the opportunity to dip into the profits. Fishermen quit fishing and make a living by giving boat rides to tourists. With a little spare lumber, anyone can set up a refreshment stand or an ice cream cart. (Carandell *Triunfo* 323, 30)⁸

Moreover, by that point Spaniards themselves had begun to enjoy their own fun in the sun as domestic tourism spiked. Salaries for wage laborers increased and paid vacations became more common, enabling the domestic population to vacation along the Mediterranean coast in mass numbers. One of the articles of the *Triunfo* series explains how the residents of Madrid would anxiously anticipate trips to Benidorm, a tourist center in the province of Alicante:

This magic word Benidorm, pronounced "Benidor" by people in Madrid, rang continuously in our ears throughout the entire year: "I'm going to 'Benidor,' you're going to 'Benidor,' he's going to 'Benidor,' I can't wait for summer so that I can go to 'Benidor.' . . ." In civil workers's discussions, in conversations at the office, in the murmuring of secretaries, this word was uttered more than any other when talking about the next summer vacation. (Carandell *Triunfo* 322, 15)⁹

Perhaps as important as the actual movement of people or the building of hotels was the way tourism came to occupy, as this quotation highlights, a central role in consciousness. Filtering into everyday speech, plans, and modes of expressing community and social status, tourism conditioned the way people conceived of work, leisure, and the national geography. In other words, a certain notion of tourism was shaping Spaniards' view of themselves and their country.

Likewise, what I will call the "metatourism" of *El turismo es un gran invento* does not simply depict a social reality of development in 1960s Spain. More precisely, the film illustrates the imperative of identifying with tourism as a discursive formation, of adopting it as one's own, and thus of contributing to its manufacturing and dissemination. On the one hand, by depicting the villagers' tour of the tourist industry itself, the film cannot help but denaturalize the industry's meaning for spectators, even as it attempts to articulate an official story of the tourism boom. In fact, as the film shows, the tourism to which the villagers sub-

scribe is itself primarily a representation, something they read about in newspapers and magazines, see at the movies, or hear about secondhand. In order to corroborate, authenticate, and individualize the story, making it one's own, the necessary task is not to obtain firsthand knowledge of the industry, as a literal interpretation of the film's plot might suggest. Rather, the villagers'—and the film's—tour of the tourist boom is itself a required symbolic supplement that, in this case, comes in the form of a fiction of personal experience. The trope of tourism therefore operates in a circular fashion as the invention necessary for its own (re)production, both a means and an end, at once an interpretive key for experiencing modernization and the definitive emblem of development-era Spain. By pursuing the dream of tourism through touristic means, the characters performatively constitute tourism as a model of thought, a way to frame their experience. In this sense, the film's own representational strategies reveal, however unwittingly, the extent to which the self-reflexive, decentered power embodied by the characters is premised on the self-referential character of all discursive formations. Tourism's effectiveness as an invention or a device (that is, as an art of governing) hinges on the innately self-referential quality of the signifier, a discursive vacuum in perpetual need of being reconstituted and reenacted.

Just as the story of tourism must constantly refer back to itself, *El turismo es un gran invento* demonstrates that people become national subjects only to the extent that objects themselves become active agents, and only insofar as objectification brings subjects into being. The villagers are, in short, both inventors and part of the invention. This ambiguous ontological status becomes clear during the moments in which the main characters act as spectators within the film. Having first marveled at the spectacle of mass tourism from the sidelines (the rural countryside) and then as bumpkins out of place in Torremolinos, the villagers later become active agents of Spain's tourist development, soliciting funds and making plans for the new Valdemorillos. By narrating the process by which one emerges as a fully capacitated subject of Spain's touristic reinvention through spectator observation of the industry, *El turismo es un gran invento* attributes a central role to public discourse in subject formation, and thus suggests a theory of power articulated vis-à-vis representation and spectatorship. Recipients of the larger story of tourism, Spaniards are objectified by discursive formations. Furthermore, the enthusiastic response of the characters to the spectacle of tourism is, in fact, the only intelligible reaction to the story of tourism, given the ideological schemas of the Franco regime. As Annabel Martín has pointed out in reference to the possibilities of spectator response offered by Francoist cinema and by official ideology broadly speaking, "the only dialogue possible with the state is one that expresses alliance with it" (*Gramática* 67). Yet, as we see in the film, this mode of addressing the spectator is nonetheless decidedly positive in ontological terms. The film incorporates the objectified spectator as an active participant in the construction of the tourist nation. Tourism's narratives of emancipation, its routes to fun, freedom, and

national pride are only experienced by those who have already been subjectified through—or “sutured” into—the story.

The Administration of Tourism as Information

In *El turismo es un gran invento*, the state institution that sponsors the village’s reconversion is the Ministry of Information and Tourism (MIT). As we will see in this section, the origins and activity of this highly unique component of the Franco regime demonstrate tremendous concern with the representation of tourism in addition to its development as an industry, and how the official portrayal of the tourist boom itself led to profound changes in the regime’s own image. Created in 1951, the MIT was a response to the international political arena that had emerged after the defeat of the Axis powers in 1945. After the fact, Franco attempted to claim (falsely) that Spain had maintained neutrality in World War II. Viewed, however, by western Europe and the United States as an unfortunate fascist leftover, the regime was blacklisted in diplomatic circles. In 1946, the United Nations even considered deposing Franco and reinstalling the Spanish monarchy. This threat coincided with the peak of the internal insurgency of the *maquis* or guerrilla resistance to the regime, which was, in turn, fueled by the hope that international intervention would put an end to the dictatorship (Preston 557–59). It was becoming increasingly apparent that the regime would have to make amends with liberal democracies if it hoped to survive.

Initially, the changes designed by regime officials to repair diplomatic relations proved to be almost entirely cosmetic. Numerous superficial overtures and propagandistic stunts were launched to create a veneer of democratic legitimacy. For instance, as early as 1947, the highly disingenuous Ley de Sucesión (Succession Law) nominally restored the Spanish monarchy but effectively truncated heir Juan de Borbón’s campaign to be crowned king. The law was ratified by an equally contrived and showy plebiscite designed to demonstrate popular support for the regime. Still, empty political window dressing was enough to move American representatives to save Spain from UN economic sanctions that same year. Since relations between the United States and the Soviet Union were already rapidly deteriorating by 1947, it was in the strategic military interest of the United States to adopt Franco as an ally in its anti-Communist agenda. Spain held tremendous geopolitical worth at the dawn of the Cold War, given its location at the hub of the Atlantic, Europe, and Africa. In order to justify alliance with Spain, the United States needed only to prioritize Franco’s commitment to the fight against Communism over his deplorable human rights record. The regime, of course, welcomed the reversal of fortune. By 1949, American banks were loaning millions of dollars to the regime, American naval crafts were docking in Spanish ports, and Franco was regularly using the term “democracy” to describe his dictatorship.